

**Towards a Non-Representational Geography of Artistic  
Practice**

**D.Phil**

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## Abstract

Geography's engagement with art has a long and varied history which, consistent with broader disciplinary developments, has progressed beyond a focus on the representational content of art products to consideration of artistic practices and experiences. However, persistent tendencies to consider artist, artwork and artistic spatiality as distinct and essential render the 'geography of art' under-equipped to address the emergence through artistic practice of particular, contingent, mutable and excessive spatialities and subjectivities. With its emphases on practice, affect and experimentalism, I draw on geographical and psychological non-representational thinking – philosophically, methodologically and analytically – to generate an account of such emergent spatialities and subjectivities. I explore artistic, material and implicit means through which they emerge, from within artistic practice, on both an experimental and auto-ethnographic basis. Working alongside participating artists, I varied the spatial and material conditions of our respective practices to encourage participants to do, think about and articulate their artistic practices differently, and employed interview techniques intended to facilitate access to and articulation from implicit or pre-reflective understanding.

Four substantive papers consider different aspects of artistic practice in the context of different theoretical literatures. Through these papers, I argue that artistic practice is a form of mythological thinking without explicit mythic content, and identify paired reciprocal processes of interrogation through which spatialities and subjectivities emerge. I propose that the combination of experimentalism and particular material affects within artistic practice sustains a skills-challenge imbalance, which drives further experimentation and generates increasingly individualized practices. I also argue that artistic practice provides both access to and articulation from implicit understanding, allowing the conveyance of implicit meaning both on its own artistic terms and by facilitating explication into linguistic form.

I conclude that, collectively, these varied aspects of artistic practice constitute interpenetrative processes whereby the material and implicit function as one, and that by attending to these processes through the creative and analytical means introduced here, geography's capacity for a non-representational understanding of artistic practice is greatly enhanced.

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## Introduction

*“...the artist and the geographer have different conceptions of thing; they share a different philosophy. The real landscape, to the geographer’s way of thinking, does not tell the truth; but the rebuilt landscape in the painter’s mind does express a truth. The painter sees the angles, the depths, the lights, the colours, and recreates them as an artist. The painter decodes the record; when the painter is also a geographer, the geography is depicted with a privilege that other geographers do not have.”*

(Quoniam, 1988: 3-4)

*“...thinking the research conducted by art as the enactment of thinking is seriously essentializing. Should the artist-researcher really be better equipped for enacting thinking than another researcher?”*

(Cassar, 2009: 236)

Taken together, these quotations lead to issues that lie at the heart of this thesis, which explores non-representational concerns with practice, materiality and the implicit in seeking to understand artistic practice as simultaneously world-making and self-making. I generate such an understanding of artistic practice by staging encounters between non-representational geography and psychology, through an attention to the empirical details of artistic practice as revealed both by my own artistic practice and that of participating artists. Despite, and to a significant degree courtesy of, the difficulties involved in working with issues of materiality and the pre-reflective, different themes emerge through which we might understand the space-times of artistic practice. These themes include the psychological phenomenon of flow in artistic practice, considered here as a

constitutive spatio-temporal refrain, and synaesthetic gesture as a means by which implicit understanding is explicated in artistic practice. Further examples are an affirmative understanding of mythological thinking operative in artistic practice, and experimentation as a means of accommodating the co-existence of practices of different proficiency within a single artist's practice at any one time. Both individually and collectively, these themes support the development of a non-representational geography of artistic practice.

The extracts above also reflect contemporary disciplinary concerns that become evident in the unfolding research and developing thesis. Such concerns relate to the ways in which it is appropriate for geographers to think about and work with art, artists and artistic practice; whether art provides unique or privileged access to the world; and how geographers can engage with different ways of understanding the world that avoid ocular perspectives that deny or at best de-valorize other senses and sensibilities with and through which we know the world. Alongside the emergence of a non-representational geography of artistic practice, in which I generate vocabularies and methods for the further development of such geographies, I also contribute particular interjections to these debates with a view to informing the ongoing interpenetration of artistic and geographic interests and practices.

Structurally, this thesis is organized into four main parts. Following the 'four paper' route, the required substantive papers are presented in, and constitute, Part 3, while each of the remaining three parts can be considered a substantive chapter. Evidence of submission of the four substantive papers is provided in Appendix A. For the frontispiece to each of the four parts, I present an artwork that I produced as part of the research process, which has relevance for the content of the part with which it is associated. The

relevance of each of these works is outlined by way of a concluding vignette to the part to which it relates.

In terms of the textual content of the thesis, Part 1 sets the interdisciplinary background for my research, drawing on geographical, psychological and philosophical literatures to ground my work in uncertainties surrounding our understanding of artists, artworks and artistic spaces. In addition, and as detailed later in Part 2, I employ auto-ethnographic engagement with practices, both artistic and otherwise, to explore first-hand issues emergent from the review of the literature. Part 1 also locates my research within geography's disciplinary lineage, nestling among the development of non-representational geography, and the resurgence of geography's interest in art and artistic practice. It further argues for a non-representational and post-phenomenological orientation that deals with the varied aspects of artistic practice in their collectivity, complicity and co-constitution rather than atomistically as discrete entities of artwork, artist and artistic space. At the end of Part 1, I introduce the guiding questions that help to steer this research and outline how these questions impart particular emphases to the research methodology, as an entry-point to the detailed account of my research methods in Part 2.

Subsequently, Part 2 addresses the fieldwork and analytical methods that I employed, and explains my methodological choices, innovations and developments in relation to participant recruitment, experimental design and procedural modifications during analysis. Part 2 also considers issues of data quality and outlines the steps taken to ensure robustness of research design and execution, attending specifically to issues of sample size, trustworthiness and reflexivity, and conducts a critical review of the effectiveness of these methods and measures. Finally, Part 2 introduces the participating artists, providing

brief biographical details and outlining both their own descriptions of their artworks and artistic practices and their practices as witnessed in the research sessions.

In Part 3, I present four papers that detail and discuss key findings emergent from the research, with each focusing on different aspects of the practices of participating artists and drawing on distinct bodies of literature to explore the issues raised by the research from both geographical and psychological perspectives. As a brief precursor to what lies ahead, *Spatialization and Subjectification* explores the means by which subjectivity and spatiality emerge in artistic practice and considers artistic practice as a form of mythological thinking in its capacity to trouble distinctions between the real and ideal, the individual and social, the iconographic and the narrative. *Discipline and Discordance* picks up on the function of experimentation in the increasing individualization of these artists' practices and in particular on the potential for the perseverance of proto-practices (practices from outside the norms of the field) even at high levels of expertise, resulting in the characterization of artistic practices as 'parasitic' in drawing on different frames of social and professional reference and different degrees of adherence to practice norms. *Faltering Flow* addresses particular material processes and affects within these artists' practices focused around a period of ontological uncertainty in the evolution of the artwork in which material vitality and agency play an acute part in the artistic practice experience. Finally, *Geography meets Gendlin* attends to the role of the implicit in artistic practice and the potential for the explication and conveyance of implicit understanding both linguistically and artistically.

Part 4 pulls together the emergent findings and points of discussion from these papers to generate a more comprehensive and integrated account of these artists' practices as evidenced through this research. In so doing I both provide answers to the guiding research questions introduced at the end of Part 1, and contribute to contemporary

disciplinary concerns regarding how geographic and artistic interests and practices can work most productively together. In addition, Part 4 considers the broader implications of this research for future geographical endeavour, by attending to matters of both substance and process, with a view to stimulating further geographical inquiry into, through and with artistic practice.

Subsequently, the conclusion presents a synopsis of the research outcomes and implications, as well as an account of the original disciplinary contributions made by the work, philosophically, methodologically and conceptually; and affirms the substantive outcomes in answering the research questions.

## Part 1: Framing a Non-Representational Geography of Artistic Practice



*Figure 1. Material and Immaterial (2012)*

*Watercolour, ink and embroidery detail on canvas (Approx. 40x40cm)*

## 1.1 Introduction

During the solidification of geography as a discipline, three periods of substantive engagement between the practices of geography and art have been identified which moved geography's interest in art beyond description to interpretation (Marston and de Leeuw, 2013): colonial expeditions that generated maps, diagrams and visual depictions of distant lands; the reactionary turn in the 1970s to art as a way of describing subjective experience following dissatisfaction with the quantification of geography in the early twentieth century; and the exposition of social relations, power and politics through studies of landscape and architecture.

While acknowledging the interaction of geography and art at least as far back as the days of exploration and empire-building if not to the Greco-Roman period (Marston and de Leeuw, 2013), my focus here begins with more recent analyses and interpretations of landscape paintings by the likes of Dennis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cosgrove, 1984, 1988; Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988; Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988), which serve as iconic landmarks in the interpenetration of geography and art. In particular, their conjoining of geographical concerns with art and landscape provides an enduring connectivity between these two thematics. I chart a necessarily selective account of the development of geography's interest in art, which in several ways mirrors that of geography's interest in landscape, since these contributions. I also take up the interdisciplinary baton of identifying and addressing problems and challenges that remain persistent in artistic-geographic inquiry despite significant changes in emphasis and method through its development. These difficulties are laid at the door, primarily, of ongoing tendencies to think atomistically about artist, artwork and artistic space (specifically the studio), as ontologically distinct rather than co-constitutive.

Having identified the risks associated with the primacy of such philosophical groundings, I proceed to advocate a non-representational attitude towards geographical engagement with artistic practice as a means to circumvent these difficulties. Situating my research in a non-representational and post-phenomenological context paves the way for the introduction of guiding questions that help to steer the research programme, encouraging us to rethink matters of spatiality, subjectivity and materiality in artistic practice in their collectivity, complicity and co-constitution.

## 1.2 The Evolution of Geographies of Art

Increasing use of aesthetics in social science research has been motivated by post-positivist critiques of traditional approaches to research presentation (Glass, 2008). Over the past three decades, geography's own engagement with art and artworks has become a diffuse field of activity involving a range of artistic media, geographical thematics and artistic doings in what has been termed a 're-turn' to creative practices within the discipline (Hawkins, 2013). Within this burgeoning literature some work focuses on particular artistic genres, such as Cosgrove's (1985) work on the evolution of the landscape idea; particular media such as embroidery (Parker, 2010) and lace-making (Makovicky, 2010); or particular artists, including David Cox (Daniels, 1984), Peter Lanyon (Crouch and Toogood, 1999), Andy Goldsworthy (Matless and Revill, 1995) and Bridget Riley (Rycroft, 2005). Methodologically, research has evolved from the interpretation of finished artworks to the creation and exhibition of artworks within a research process, often now including installation, monumental and environmental art forms (Morris, 2011; Morris and Cant, 2006), as well as drawn or painted pictures. While there are examples of individual researchers undertaking their own artistic practice to communicate creatively their research experiences (Edensor, 2000; Wylie, 2005), increasingly arts-based social science research is conducted through collaborative approaches between researchers and artists, such as those between Mackenzie and Taylor (2006) and Foster and Lorimer (2007). In addition, recent years have seen an increase in creative practice-led doctorates (Biggs, 2009) in which creative work is submitted along with a written thesis with both being of equal or near equal importance (Hockey, 2003).

The literature displays a bewildering array of art forms that are employed, from painting (Daniels, 1984) and drawing (Guillemain, 2004) to woodworking (Marchand,

2010) and sculpture (Morris, 2011; Morris and Cant, 2006). There is also a variety of uses to which art works and artistic practices are put both within and beyond the social sciences, from generation of research data (Guillemin, 2004; Reynolds and Lim, 2007) to the presentation and dissemination of findings (Lafrenière and Cox, 2013), and the simultaneous execution of both (Edensor, 2000; Wylie, 2005). In addition, a variety of reasons are provided for doing so, ranging from the perceived benefits of accessing empathic understanding and emotional engagement through artistic practice (Lafrenière and Cox, 2013; Taylor, 2004), perceived therapeutic benefits for those dealing with illness or trauma (Guillemin and Westall, 2008; Locsin et al., 2003; Reynolds and Lim, 2007; Taylor, 2004) or the perceived enhanced transformative effects of presentational forms of communication (Lafrenière and Cox, 2013). Finally, a host of different actors are involved in the employment of arts-based research besides professional artists themselves, including children (Rosenblatt and Winner, 1988; Wilson, 1997), patients (Guillemin, 2004; Locsin et al., 2003; Reynolds and Lim, 2007), and other non-artists (Fayena-Tawil et al., 2011).

Within this diversity of research endeavour, a number of developmental shifts can be identified which, directly or indirectly, lead to the contemporary interdisciplinary terrain upon which my own research is grounded. In contrast to earlier geographic use of artistic practice as primarily a means of description, as in the case of gazetteers of colonial explorers (Marston and de Leeuw, 2013) or early twentieth-century analyses of landscape (Cornish, 1935), the geographical analyses and interpretations of landscape paintings from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries by writers such as Dennis Cosgrove (Cosgrove, 1985) and Stephen Daniels (Daniels, 1984), with their focus on iconography (Cosgrove, 1984; Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988), highlighted the potential to learn about the socio-spatial conditions of previous periods from the cultural

artefacts of the time, moving geography's use of art from description to interpretation (Marston and de Leeuw, 2013). Probing the meaning of an artwork within its historical context allowed the way of seeing that had been given visual expression within the painting to be communicated (Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988), illustrating through the iconography employed at once wider social conditions and the particular social status of the artist or their patron (Prince, 1988). However, despite the acknowledgement that the landscapes depicted in art were ideological and conventional, presenting a particular position and perspective rather than an objective reality, consistent with previous descriptive geographical engagements with art such analyses focused on the visual representation and its assumed reliability as a record of a reality. Providing that the viewer of the work was familiar with the type of environment in the painting and understood the artistic conventions employed, the information in the painting was considered not to be greatly diminished by the lack of objectivity in the work (Rees, 1973). The meaningful relation was that between the artwork and society at large, and although the artwork was acknowledged to be a perspectival representation, this perspective was deemed to have been depicted reliably. Paralleling certain geographical understandings of landscape, the artwork here is conceptualized as a way of seeing (Wylie, 2011) or representation of an area, either as an objective representation of reality or as generated from a particular perspective. In either event, the artwork is considered to be passive, to be looked at or worked upon.

A more active geographical understanding of art similarly parallels a more active conception of landscape. Speaking to the material record within the landscape of the social and economic as well as physical forces that served to shape that landscape (Wylie, 2011), the idea of art as landscaping recognizes the power of art to shape as well as to reflect socio-spatial environments. This idea of landscaping is most clearly

seen in monumental or installation art (Morris, 2011; Morris and Cant, 2006) in which the art installed changes the landscape into which it is installed. However, it can also be seen in the preservation within landscape paintings of landscape ideals. Artistic icons have the potential to become revered as meaningful symbols of regionally distinctive cultural landscapes (Osborne, 1988), such that painted landscapes came to represent a much larger area than had been intended by the artist (Rees, 1973). Relatedly, the identity of the artist also gains emphasis with this notion of landscape, whereby the rural idyll, represented and preserved in paint or text, takes on local totemic value such as ‘Constable Country’ or ‘Hardy’s Wessex’. This raises questions as to where the power lies in this preservation and personification of the landscape: in the hands of the artist, the depiction of the work, or the interpretation of the viewer, and emphasizes the interpenetration of each in the others. Whether through the installation of material forms into environmental settings or through the application of ink, paint or pastel to paper, artists are landscaping: laying out the grounds in the production of a landscape that functions beyond its material artistic form through networks of social relations and meanings, with implications for the very landscape depicted and created. Artworks are productive as well as reproductive.

In a similar vein, critical social geographers have highlighted the productive nature of art, for example in relation to the contested nature of home-based studio spaces (Bain, 2007) and the role of artists in urban regeneration, whether through studio location (Bain, 2006; Zukin, 1989), the production of public art (Deutsche, 1988) or culturally oriented development strategies (Zukin, 1995). Such studies simultaneously portray artistic and social practices as shapers of landscapes, and landscapes as shapers of artistic and social practices. Whether domestically or socially considered, practices of art shape the landscapes and environments in which they function, just as the

landscape paintings interpreted by Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) served to reinforce the socio-economic conditions depicted within them.

Art has also been explicitly studied as a personal form of spatial knowledge-making in the context of individual artists' practices. In such studies, artworks are informative not solely in terms of the social life they depict but in terms of the identity, personality and values of the artist behind the work, such as Peter Lanyon's strong identity as Cornish (Crouch and Toogood, 1999) and Andy Goldsworthy's land sculptures which work the land in a practical engagement with the rhythms of a rural life with which he is familiar (Matless and Revill, 1995). Here, expression is at least as important as representation, and we start to see a coming together of artist, artwork and place in artistic-geographic inquiry. The expansion of Goldsworthy's artistic practice overseas (Matless and Revill, 1995) brings additional insights, not only in the multiplicity of sites and environments within which his artistic practice takes place, to which the resulting works speak, and in which they are emplaced, but also in the expanding 'inter-site' realm of his practice; a virtual realm of potential cross-fertilization of personal place relations and art- and place- making practices. As with the installation and monumental art forms discussed earlier, the construction of Goldsworthy's land sculptures changes the environment into which they are emplaced, thus altering the scope afforded by that environment (physical or virtual) for future aesthetic and spatial experiences, providing for the co-evolution of artist and landscape through the artistic practice that binds them.

Such artistic practices also draw on ideas of landscape as dwelling or practical engagement in the landscape (Wylie, 2011), and can be further seen in individual and reflexive accounts of the writer's own aesthetic and artistic engagements with places, such as those of Wylie (2005) and Edensor (2000). Such approaches to spatial

knowledge making employ artistic practice as an alternative means of accessing and experiencing the environment at hand, as well as of communicating that experience to others through immersed experience rather than detached observation. Artistic practice is no longer the sole purview of the artist, but can instead be employed by artists and non-artists as a means of experience and expression. This democratization of artistic practice as spatial knowledge making practice opens up the possibility of myriad new approaches to geographies of art in which artist, artwork, place relations, artistic practice and research practice can all be co-located. Despite a current lack of consensus concerning the degree of artistic proficiency required on the part of the geographer wishing to undertake artistic practice within their geographic inquiry (Lafrenière and Cox, 2013; Marston and de Leeuw, 2013), the recent burgeoning of collaborative and practice based approaches to such inquiry is testament to their potential.

The developmental trajectory of geographical understandings of art has, like that of conceptions of landscape, been characterized by an increasing emphasis on activity and practice, the broadening of consideration of senses beyond the visual to the embodied and pre-reflective and the growing recognition of the mutual configuration of person, place and material in activity. This movement, epitomized in the growth of non-representational geography, encourages us to think about this mutual configuration in its connectivity, thereby helping us to overcome three ontological assumptions, implicit within the brief disciplinary account provided above, upon which 'geographies of art' have traditionally been premised. The first is an assumption of a clear ontological distinction between subject and object in which agency is deemed to reside solely in the hands of the artist and the artwork is construed as an inert object. Secondly, a representational perspective is adopted towards the art object,

whereby the role and value of the artwork is perceived to lie within its conceptual content and representational verisimilitude in relation to that which it depicts. Thirdly and finally, Euclidian notions of space are employed in which different spaces can be compartmentalized as absolute.

Due to their determinism of the geographies subsequently crafted, these assumptions contributed to the establishment of early geographies of art that reinforced notions of artist, artwork and artistic spaces as static, ontologically distinct and capable of atomistic analysis. Considering each of these supposedly distinct aspects of artistic practice – artistic space, artwork and artist – individually, the limitations of such a disjointed approach to artistic practice can be made apparent. In addition, emerging research threads can be drawn out both to affirm non-representational thinking as an appropriate philosophical orientation with which we might think through geography's engagement with art, and to configure guiding research questions that help to shape the subsequent research methodology. It is to this effort that my attention now turns.

### **1.2.1 From studio as artistic space to the spatialities of practice**

‘Geographies of art’ have traditionally addressed the issue of place in artistic practice with one of three spatial foci: the place in which the art is created, such as the microgeography of the studio (Daniels, 2011; Dewsbury and Naylor, 2002); the conceptual space of that which is represented by the artwork (Schmajuk et al., 2009); and the taskscape as bounded by the dimensions of the artwork (Carolan, 2007; Lorimer, 2005). While both conceptual space and taskscape have received some geographic attention, and notwithstanding disciplinary developments in its artistic ‘re-turn’ that have started to remap geographies of art beyond the studio and gallery (Hawkins, 2013), the studio retains its primacy in both geographic and other disciplinary literatures on art as both the site of artistic production (Nelson et al., 2005) and source of identity (Bain, 2004; Makovicky, 2010). However, this restrictive view of the studio overlooks at least three other characteristics of spatiality in artistic practice: the multi-functionality of the studio; the diversity of sites of artistic production and the excessiveness of artistic practice.

While the artist’s studio is popularly perceived to be a site of artistic production, it is also a site for storage and exhibition (Bain, 2004; Crang, 2003). Not only is the studio itself multi-functional, but it is also not the sole site of production employed by artists. For artists who do not have their own dedicated creative space or studio, the site of production can vary from the dining room or lounge to the external environment, drawing or painting outdoors or in cafes. Furthermore, alternative domestic sites of production also function in multiple ways for storage and exhibition purposes, highlighting a greater diversity and inter-changeability of spatial functionality in artistic practice than is traditionally acknowledged. Finally, even artists who do have their own dedicated creative space or studio report ‘studio-creep’, whereby their

artistic practice is not confined within the bounds of the studio itself, but expands beyond its walls to the rest of the domestic environment. While previous reports have depicted the studio as a clearly demarcated spatial realm (Bain, 2004; Nelson et al., 2005) that is fiercely defended by the artist against incursion by other family members and wider responsibilities, the excessiveness of artistic practice that extends beyond its own allocated space is less well researched and documented.

While it is tempting to adopt unchallenged the archetypal notion of the art studio as the canonical site of creativity (Daniels, 2011), to do so risks taking for granted its limits and boundaries and upholding the assumption of spaces as static, closed and materially constant (Jacobs, 2006). The significance identified in several previous studies (Bain, 2004, 2007; Nelson et al., 2005) of the spatial control exercised by the artist in maintaining autonomy over their studio space suggests that while the demarcated studio may constitute an ideal towards which some artists strive, lived reality may be closer to a messy contingent interpenetration of artistic, familial and other spatialities across permeable boundaries (Agnew and Livingstone, 2011).

Being alert to these inter-spatial and multi-spatial capacities in artistic practice raises questions as to the nature of the geographies that might arise from a focus on material practices, and entices us to “open out new spaces of and encounters with art and art-making” (Cant and Morris, 2006: 858). Two specific factors encourage consideration of micro-scale artistic practices in geographical research: the increasing recognition that art is more than visual (Cant and Morris, 2006), and the acknowledgement that place perception involves knowing in action (Pinch et al., 2010), which includes bodily activity as well as visual processing. As a spatially situated activity artistic practice is proposed as a means of both conceptual and practical inquiry (Ryan, 2003), and as a process of both inquiry and meaning making (Leavy, 2009). Furthermore,

place perception is both conceptual and precognitive (O'Neill, 2001), involving both visible space and action space – the space perceived through the experience of the body (Walker, 2004). As such, artistic practice offers valuable insight into place relations through its creation of explicit knowledge from tacit knowledge (Riley, 2010; Taylor, 2004) in the sites of artistic production. Specifically, Harriett Hawkins has highlighted “the way in which art offers the potential to think (and practice) space differently” (Hawkins, 2011: 468). To explore this potential for myself, and as outlined in the following vignette, I conducted my own artistic practice, paying particular attention to the generativity of spatiality through this practice as it unfolded.

### *Stitching artistic spatialities*

To explore the way in which art can help us to think and practice space differently in relation to my own artistic practice, I recorded the micro-geography crafted by one thread and the other actants that it co-opted into the creation of a small embroidered catkin (Figure 2).

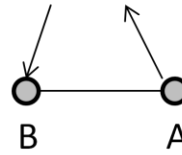


*Figure 2. Embroidered catkin detail (2011)*

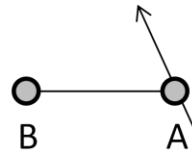
The first step in producing this diminutive element (13mm long) was to find and retrieve the right thread (no.254), my scissors and needle from the sewing box in the studio (which also serves as a library, study and storeroom), and to locate the fabric and the small wooden embroidery hoop that would hold the fabric taut from the stacked crates under the art table. Once I had measured the fabric, cut it to size and secured it in the hoop I could settle down for an afternoon's sewing in the lounge. Although the art table is ideally located in the brightest part of the studio I only use this for the preparatory and concluding stages when a flat surface of a certain size is essential. For the bulk of my artwork I need to be able to pull the thread in any direction without banging into hard furniture. Consequently I relocated with my paraphernalia to my usual spot on the sofa. Here I untwined the six strands in the skein of thread to extract just one, which I threaded onto the needle. The first stitching task was to establish a lattice work of threads that would form the inner structure of the three dimensional form. At this stage I introduced a second thread (no. 2): another visit to the sewing box. After more untwining and needle-threading, I could now start the catkin proper.

For this I needed an array of several bullion stitches side-by-side. Bullion stitch involves winding the thread around the needle several times to form a linear stitch with an elongated sausage-roll effect in which the body of thread stands proud of the fabric onto which it is attached (see Figure 3 overleaf in relation to Figure 2 on the previous page). The greater the number of times the thread is wrapped around the needle, the longer the resulting stitch, and the thicker the thread or the greater the number of threads used the thicker or more substantive the resulting stitch.

**Step 1.**  
Bring the needle up at A and  
down at B.



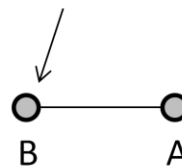
**Step 2.**  
Bring the needle part way back  
up through the fabric at A.



**Step 3.**  
Wind the thread around the  
needle several times.



**Step 4.**  
Take the whole needle back  
down through B



Finished stitch



*Figure 3. Instructions for bullion stitch*

Once I had a series of stitches side by side in a small block I faced the most intricate part of the exercise: sewing the ends of each stitch together to form a cylinder. As I did not want any errant threads sticking out from my catkin, I positioned the ends of the thread in the centre of the catkin so that they could not be seen. Along with the inner lattice of thread, water soluble fabric provides rigidity to the finished form as it forms a liquid adhesive on contact with water, which solidifies the stitched element as it dries. The need for water is another reason for working downstairs, as the studio itself has no water supply. Having dunked and squeezed my catkin to dissolve the fabric I could then leave it to dry and harden for a day or two.

If I continued with my account, I would return to the crates to find the wire and pliers needed to attach the catkins to the artwork, and in so doing would highlight the thread-ends on the reverse of the artwork that support the work on its viewing face and the fugitive fragment that I encountered ground into the stair carpet: a rogue thread (no. 254) inadvertently transported there presumably on my clothing. However, even this short exercise illustrates that to equate my studio with my artwork would be misleading. Although not necessary for current illustrative purposes, if I were to consider all of the materials involved in the artwork, I would also include a host of other actants such as the camera that I use for my detailed work, the hazel tree in the garden that provided the inspiration for the work, and the meteorological conditions giving rise to that particular frost event. Seemingly then, taking such a detailed material approach to recording the crafting of an artistic geography sensitizes us to the diversity of spatialities that are spliced together during this crafting. The conceptual space of the (yet to be finished) work, the dynamic taskscape that is defined only in its enactment, the action space of the artist, and the presumed distinctiveness between domestic and artistic functional zones are brought into intimate and indeterminate interpenetration by the serpentine co-ravelling of the threads in their constitution of the catkin. My own artistic micro-geography no more reflects the “idealized spatial form of the studio” (Bain, 2004: 171) than do those of Bain’s participating artists.

This brief reflection on my own practice as a hobby artist provides a simple but clear illustration of this spatial multiplicity and mutability. Performed spaces are not discrete but articulate their own spatialities (Gregson and Rose, 2000). Rather than assuming that because I have a dedicated creative space at home that is where my artistic practice takes place, thereby predetermining the artistic spatiality under consideration, employing artistic practice itself to enact and delimit its own spatial

bounds generates very different artistic spatialities. Evidently, artistic practice is not confined to the art studio, even for those artists who manage to maintain a dedicated creative place. Consequently, the primacy commonly attributed to the studio as a place of creative practice risks neglecting both the porous boundaries of the studio as practically inhabited and the diversity of places in which such practice occurs, and thus under-represents the full complexity, fluidity and diversity of place relations enacted in artistic practice. Instead we should be mindful of Sullivan and McCarthy's (2009) call for greater attention to be paid to the artist's experience of bringing the image about and Daniels' (2011) encouragement to attend to the articulation of skills and materials within artistic practice, as it is the material activity of the artist that unites the artist's inhabitation of conceptual space, taskscape, action space, studio and wider environment.

The multiple and overlapping roles of sites of production and exhibition, as well as the interconnectedness between and simultaneous experience of multiple spatialities in artistic practice, draw attention to the artificial and divisive nature of spatial distinctions that although analytically convenient are not experienced in practice and may obscure rather than reveal place relations in artistic practice. A multiplicity of material micro-geographies that both traverse the studio and extend beyond it at once constitute the conceptual space, delimit the taskscape and define the action space. In contrast to the traditional view of the studio as a singular space with a defining coterminous functionality, spaces of artistic practice are multiple, overlapping and simultaneously constituted through artistic practice. Recognizing this, we are better placed to allow the materialities of artistic practice to impress spatiality upon us rather than seeking to impose our analytically convenient yet practically and experientially porous spatial distinctions on artistic practice.

### **1.2.2 From artwork as object to artistic materialities**

Previous geographic research on art has largely focused on the artistic product rather than the artist's experience (Harrison, 2000), prioritizing visual imagery over practical processes (Cant and Morris, 2006; Sullivan and McCarthy, 2009). Assuming a clear ontological distinction between artist and artwork, the artwork is presented as an inert object (Brown, 2001; Olsson, 1991), the academic value of which is deemed to lie in its conceptual content and representational verisimilitude (Cant and Morris, 2006; Carolan, 2007; Lorimer, 2005). However, the primacy historically and popularly afforded by geographic-artistic inquiry to representation in art neglects two important and related issues: the difficulty inherent in defining and delimiting the work of art, and the performative aspects inherent in the processes of its production (Bakker, 2005).

The ontology of art has been described as an “embarrassment of riches” (Thomasson, 2005: 221) and is a source of much debate in both philosophical and aesthetic literatures. With regard to the artwork itself, particular questions surround what counts as a work as distinct from a mere thing (Danto, 1964; 1981; Irvin, 2005; Lamarque, 2010); and what type of object an artwork might be (Thomasson, 2005). Further debates concern the relation between a work and the material of which it is constituted, and the different identity and survival conditions for each (Lamarque, 2010); the relation between a whole work and parts of that work (Danto, 1964; Thomson, 1998); and the relation between the artwork and its artefact (Dilworth, 2001b; Thomson, 1998). Work identity issues also surround the degree of damage and repair that a work can undergo yet remain the same work (Irvin, 2005; Thomson, 1998), and whether the work resides in the idea, in the preparatory or preliminary works, or only in the finished piece, e.g. the painted mural (Dilworth, 2001a; Lamarque, 2010).

The relational and intentional properties of artworks also attract debate (Irvin, 2005; Lamarque, 2010) in which issues of provenance and historical circumstances (Danto, 1981; Wreen, 1990), the importance of art theory (Danto, 1964) and the context of a work's production (Margolis, 1998) moderate the importance granted to the intentions of the work's creator (Thomasson, 2005). One particular aspect of this debate concerns the definition of aesthetic properties (Matravers, 1996) and often focuses on the issue of indiscernibility as a means of exploring the relation between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties (Danto, 1981; 1999; Hopkins, 2005; Lamarque, 2010; Margolis, 1998, 2000; Wreen, 1990). In using relational comparisons with other works in order to draw out differences in the aesthetic experiences of two artworks that cannot be discerned perceptually as a pair (Hopkins, 2005), both the relational aspect of artworks and the role of interpretation in determining their properties as well as their meaning are highlighted. Interpretation provides yet more grounds for debate, with uncertainty persisting with regard to the relationship between objects of interpretation and modes of interpretation (Lamarque, 2010); between the object of interpretation and the content of interpretation (Irvin, 2005) and the relative value of constructivist versus realist and monist versus pluralist approaches; and the implications of interpretation for the object itself (Nehamas, 1981; Stecker, 1997) in the determination of its ultimate meaning (Irvin, 2005).

As well as theoretical difficulties in isolating and defining the artwork, there are practical difficulties too, as elucidated in Thomson's (1998) consideration of the relation between a statue of King Alfred and the clay from which it was formed. While Thomson is concerned with the ontological status of, for example, King Alfred's arm if it is broken off, dropped on the floor and replaced with a new arm, my own concern is more with the experiential and existential implications of the particular material

practices involved with the removal, reformation and reattachment of the appendage(s). Rather than asking after the status of the severed arm in relation to the artwork, I would ask about the role that the amputating and reattaching of the arm played in the creation of the artwork. Similarly, in my earlier account of my own creation of the stitched catkin, questions could be posed as to the influence or power of the soluble fabric and the off-cuts of thread and even the water that are not evident in the finished artwork but were essential to its creation. Such questions do not arise, cannot arise, if our consideration of an artwork starts only once its process of creation has ceased.

The overriding focus on the conceptual content of the finished artwork overlooks all of those materials, tools and practices that are constitutive of the finished work even though they might be excluded from it, which I call the 'material excess'. While my use of this term includes notions discussed by Derrida and Seeley, it is not restricted to these. Derrida (1987) defines the *parerga* as that which constitutes the inside of an artwork as an inside, such as the frame and signature, and the *subjectile* as that which recedes from view as the artwork progresses, such as the canvas on which an image is painted, while Seeley (2011) uses the term 'biograffiti' to denote the smudges and smears around the edge of an artwork. In addition to these concepts the 'material excess' also includes materials such as the shards of glass, clods of clay or off-cuts of threads that participate in the production of the artwork but are not themselves included within the final form, instead being discarded or becoming encrusted on the floor or ground into the carpet. With such a perspective the notion of what constitutes an artwork is broadened, along with the field of participating actants demanding recognition.

Looking beyond artwork as representation, it becomes apparent that this representation is produced through practice and performance (Ryan, 2003). In contrast to its popular perception as a sedentary and passive past-time, the body is far from inactive during artistic practice. Rather, it is engaged in a complex negotiation between steadiness and action, securing both the balance and poise of the body as a whole and the targeted, often tool-oriented (Banfield and Burgess, 2013; Sulaiman et al., 2010), active engagement with materials. Reflecting the growing recognition of the liveliness of nonhuman entities, such as Appadurai's (1986) social life of things, and Bennett's (2010) thing power, whereby agency is no longer confined to humans but is afforded to non-human actants (Latour, 2005), other participants in artistic practice demand recognition. To ignore the central role of materials in making the idea of making is reduced to technique (Bunn, 2011). Tools, equipment, materials, and the emerging artwork all have the capacity to have an effect (Bennett, 2010) as lively participants (McCormack, 2008a) in artistic practice. The artwork and its constituent parts are agentive rather than inert.

While the geographic consideration of materialities as lively or agentive is gaining ground in a number of sub-disciplines, this is as yet an underdeveloped area of inquiry within geographies of art. The power of the artwork to interject into and reshape landscapes, and the power of the artist, through their work, to shape socio-spatial conditions and practices, have been acknowledged for some time, but the active role played by the tools and materials of artistic practice in determining the resulting work have been less thoroughly explored. Indeed, despite efforts to bring materialities more fully into the fold of geographic analysis, such efforts can be considered linguistically shackled and poorly equipped to communicate effectively about materiality affects.

It is material processuality that seems most resistant to linguistic capture and conveyance, and it is material processuality that is least well explored; yet this same material processuality features strongly in artistic practice, as indicated above. If we are to take materialities and material processuality seriously in artistic-geographic inquiry, we need to grapple with these issues, both materially and linguistically. However, in order to do so, given the relative paucity of previous literature on material processuality within geographic literatures on art, we need to stray beyond our sub-disciplinary focus and draw on conceptualizations of material processuality in relation to broader geographical literatures. Having taken stock of the current disciplinary understandings of material processuality, I proceed to develop these lines of thinking further by engaging in my own material practices of the kind that do feature in the geographical literature before concluding this section by redirecting these lines of inquiry to geographical consideration of artistic practice.

### ***Disciplinary understandings of material processuality***

The liveliness of things has enjoyed geographic attention for some years, as evidenced by growing disciplinary adoption of relational ontologies in which agency is no longer attributed only to humans but also to objects and networks of relations (Latour, 2005), and the increasing recognition of the power of a nonhuman entity to make a difference, such as Bennett's (2010) thing power. Such developments belie the apparent simplicity of the thing, exposing the duplicity of multiple conceptualizations of thingness. While often cited in relation to thingness, Appadurai's (1986) focus on commodities as a specific type of thing restricts the utility of this work in discussions of what a thing actually is. More comprehensive consideration of thingness can be found in the writings of Heidegger, yet despite the apparent specificity of Heidegger's classifications, different works speak differently to thingness. In *The Origin of the*

*Work of Art*, Heidegger (2011) preceded current attempts to move beyond the thing to consider what constitutes a thing by distinguishing between three aspects of the thing: the pure thing (that around which properties are assembled), the mere thing (the manifold of that which is given to the senses) and the work (that which manifests something other than itself). On the other hand, in *Being and Time* Heidegger distinguished between persons, things (without functional use) and paraphernalia (the use of which is defined by its functional role) (Blattner, 2006), in which his definition of the latter echoes that of equipment within *The Origin of the Work of Art* as that which is determined by its usefulness.

Other authors similarly focus on functionality in order to distinguish between categories of thing. Using the term thing to denote a broad class of entities that appear only when needed, Baudrillard (1996) conceives of all things as functional, but he also presented a more detailed four-fold classification of things. In this Baudrillard defined an object as having two functions (to be put to use and to be possessed), a utensil as referring to the world and therefore incapable of being possessed, a gadget as that which answers no need other than to function, and a gizmo as that which works but cannot be named. Similarly, Brown (2001) emphasized that occasions of contingency disclose the physicality of things and compared the thing with the object. For Brown, the thing denotes a massive generality that we can only glimpse briefly on occasions when the thingness of an object becomes apparent through the failure of the object to function for us. The object therefore asserts itself only in relation to a human subject seeking to use it.

Two main perspectives can be identified in the works considered here: in the writings of Heidegger and Brown thingness is a property of objects, whereas for Baudrillard and Appadurai, the thing is a category of entity. Featuring in each of these

conceptions of thingness are two relations that appear inescapable: that between objects and subjects, and that between thingness and objects. In the past decade calls have been made for us to break the chain of causation between subject and object (Kearnes, 2003), and disciplinary endeavours to attend to things (as agentive objects) and thingness (as materiality) can be read in this light. However, such calls cannot be fulfilled either by inverting the traditional subject-object relation to assert the agency of objects (Latour, 2005) and their role in constituting human subjects (Brown, 2001) or by attending to the level of thingness/materiality rather than that of objects. An inverted relation of causation is still a relation of causation, and thingness or materiality remains inextricably bound with the thing or object that it materially constitutes.

Despite these difficulties, recent focus on materiality has stimulated a new appreciation for the force of objects and their constituent components, whether through expressive action (Kearnes, 2003), the ideational effects of the material world (Brown, 2001), or the informational enrichment of materials through association with others (Barry, 2006). It has also catalyzed consideration of materiality and corporeality, shifting the register of materiality to redistribute the 'in here' of the human (Whatmore, 2006). In another direction, the inherent practicality of our engagement with things also features in non-representational thinking on the performative and the virtual, which questions how we bring the world into being (Dewsbury, 2010a) and grapples with processual thisness (McCormack, 2010) rather than physical thingness.

My intention at this point is to mull over some of the assumptions, approaches and practices employed in work on materiality, with a particular focus on the potential for the very subject-object and object-thingness interdependencies to work for as much as against exploration of material transformations. Such a perspective acknowledges the

inter-dwelling of the material and the representational (Kearnes, 2003) and conceives of matter as meaningful physicality (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004) in relation to which different associations make present different material properties and affects (Hawkins, 2010). In doing so I suggest that there is much still to be gained in seeking to make thingness, as distinct from the thing, work. By playing with the inherent instability of matter we can attend to points in material processes at which material-representational associations change (Bakker and Bridge, 2006) in order to elucidate the continual re-inscription of the social and the material (Jasanoff, 2004) in interactions between objects, materials and social practices, without recourse to object fetishism (Bakker and Bridge, 2006). At such transformational junctures, the associations evoked can contradict those that might be expected from the material form that evokes them, a phenomenon that is framed in terms of Deleuze's vagabond materiality as that which is hidden by what it is between (Deleuze, 1979) and brought into dialogue with de Cosson's notion of (s)p(l)ace as an indefinable nothing area with no clear boundaries (de Cosson, 2008). In contradistinction to notions of the hybrid as a unification of distinct parts, in this nothing area the entity is neither one thing nor the other, but different and mutually exclusive associations can be alternately and instantaneously brought forth, and which cannot be clearly delineated. In this way, I conceptualize such phenomena as evidencing a period of chimerical instability in processes of material transformation. As a first step, though, I outline some of the difficulties and challenges that appear persistent in geography's treatment of materiality despite the many advances made by both vital materialist and non-representational geographies in recasting central disciplinary concerns of subjectivity, corporeality and agency.

Reflecting this intertwining of object and thingness, Grosz's (2001) numerous terms for different notions of thingness – object, matter, substance and noumena – hint at the perennial struggle to avoid the conflation of object and material. The scale of this challenge is revealed by previous commentaries highlighting that such a conflation has led to a geographical focus on physicality rather than materiality (Brown, 2001; Lees, 2002), in which attention is directed to the function of the form rather than the behaviour of the materials constitutive of that form. This conflation also implicitly assumes that one object consists of one substance, but material is not a singular concept (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004; Roe, 2010), and such an assumption risks disciplinary under-representation of the diversity and multiplicity of materialities simultaneously at play (Latham and McCormack, 2004). In addition, the focus on physicality and presence further conceals the complexity of materiality by assuming stability and endurance of form and matter, yet there is nothing inherent to matter that ensures brutality or stability (Kearnes, 2003). To assume material stability risks constraining geographical endeavour in two ways: excessive focus on context, and under-appreciation of diverse processes of materialization.

Addressing the focus on context first, Hawkins' (2010) examination of a carrier bag's de/re/materialization in different use contexts through habits and associations highlights the capacity for a material quality to be beneficial in one situation but troublesome in another. This work charts an enlightening revelation of the dynamism of the mundane materialities of everyday life, but here it is not that the material properties of the carrier bag change between situations but that those that are foregrounded in each situation are practically and socially contingent. This volatility of what is afforded by the carrier bag in different contexts illustrates the centrality of function to consideration of materialities and highlights the scale of the challenge in

grappling with material processuality independently of the practical use of objects consisting of that material. Similar context-specificity is encountered in other attempts to chart this processuality, such as Pfaff's (2010) pursuit of a particular mobile phone in Swaheli trading networks, and Pereira's (2010) investigation of the life of coca/cocaine in the Andes. Illuminating and informative in their own right, the centrality of contextual factors in these accounts further illustrates the difficulties inherent in addressing materiality independent of object use. Such difficulties raise questions as to whether it is possible to grasp the processual nettle, at ontological, epistemological and methodological levels, without objectifying and socializing the materialities that we study.

Attending now to diverse processes of materialization, the industrial development of more durable synthetic materials that can delay decay (Leslie, 2005) demonstrate the instability inherent in materials, and in assuming material stability we ignore the impossibility of fully governing the behaviour of materials (Barry, 2010). Even in work that does consider the process rather than the presence of matter, a tendency has been identified to equate materialization with concretization or solidification (Barad, 2007), overlooking other processes of materialization such as fluidity, dissipation, blending and erasure. Rather than conceiving of materiality as necessarily constituting presence and solidity, the immaterial and the absent (Latham and McCormack, 2004) must also be incorporated. Consider, for example, Bennett's (2010) account of her encounter with a dead rat in which she highlighted the power of the rat to capture her attention and direct it to other items in its vicinity. The strength of the psychological phenomenon that Bennett evocatively illustrates is illuminated if we remain alert to the equal power of an object to induce visual neglect of other objects in the vicinity. The visual attention triggered by an encounter with an item such as Bennett's rat is

selective, and excludes as much as it includes. We need to be as mindful of what is absented as what is presented, which might be more readily accomplished in a process of absenting and presenting than in a state of absence or presence.

Pereira's (2010) study of coca/cocaine in the Andes is particularly pertinent to the current discussion as she specifically comments that a simple focus on materiality is insufficient for her analysis due to coca's multiplicity and transitivity, and instead combines a materiality approach and commodity network analysis. However, and as noted above, if materiality does not preclude transitivity and multiplicity, then perhaps "a simple focus on materiality" (p385) could cater for greater complexity than might otherwise be assumed. My point here is not that Pereira's study should have employed a materiality approach but merely that such an approach need not have been precluded on the basis of its presumed simplicity. It could be argued, for example, that the adoption of a commodity network analysis tends towards a focus on the different products/states in which coca/cocaine is consumed and traded rather than the transformations in the materiality of coca/cocaine that occur in changing it from one product/state to another. Many contributory materials and material processes might not be evident within a final product even though they are constitutive of that product, and these contributory factors might be better captured with greater rather than lesser sensitivity to materiality.

In this light, then, what seems to be lacking from disciplinary wrangling with materiality is less the capacity of a materiality approach to grapple with multiplicity and transitivity, and more the availability of specific methods, concepts and techniques to realize this capacity in the field. To explore these issues further, I reflected on my own practical engagement with material processuality in an activity variously addressed in geographical literature (see, for example, Patchett, 2010; Roe, 2010) –

meat processing – in order to inform my thinking about material processuality in an activity in which such issues are currently under-explored: artistic practice.

### *Material processuality in practice*

It was during my own engagement with a particular food preparation procedure that I was rendered acutely sensitive to material processuality, giving rise to my thinking about critical junctures in processes of material transformation in terms of chimerical instability. This also emphasized the value of intimate practical engagement with materials in the process of our thinking about those materials and their processuality, in the context of practices with which we are unfamiliar.

In preparation for keeping chickens (for meat as well as eggs) I wanted to practice plucking, drawing (gutting) and preparing birds for the table to check that I had the stomach for doing so, and bought a brace of the first game birds that I found in a butcher's shop – pheasants – for this purpose. There were a number of instances within this process of transforming the bird from fully feathered and intact to plucked and jointed that shared a certain feature – a sense of perversity – that hints at a potentially illuminating lens through which material processuality might be accessed. Although these instances all evoked both fascination and repulsion in me, I employ the term perversity here in the sense of waywardness in order to conjure up a sense of the materiality affects generated that contradict the expectations established by the social relations and discourses that constructed the material bodies (Bakker and Bridge, 2006) of the birds as bird and the birds as meat. Whereas I might anticipate particular affects given the form of the thing in front of me, those that arose were not those anticipated. My engagement with the pheasants generated in me an affectively charged sense of perversity. In contradicting the affects that I expected these materialities acted waywardly – perversely – in relation to the material object that they constitute.

The first of these instances was the point at which the birds were half feathered and half denuded, when they resembled neither animal nor meat but an inbetweenness of being: a bird-meat-thing to which I was unable to relate either affectively as animal or purposively as meat. At this point the birds hovered in a chimerical state of bird-meat-thing in which the entity was neither one thing nor the other, but in which different aspects of it fluctuated between animality and meatfulness: alternately recoiling against the sensation of touching the flesh and against that of touching the feathers. This powerful affective impact was at odds with my conceptual understanding of the task, and reflects the confusion and overlap between the associations that I held in relation to bird as bird and those in relation to bird as meat as the birds transformed from one to the other. While materially their progress was unidirectional, socially and affectively this was not the case. In this chimerical state the behaviour of the materials constitutive of the thing acted perversely in relation to the thing's start and end states, frequently conflicting with the function of the form associated with its respective states. The bird-meat-thing in its chimerical state did not have a clearly identifiable form or function against which to evaluate its material behaviour.

Another example of this sense of perversity or waywardness of materiality affects occurred during dismemberment. The materiality of the pheasant's wing did not change upon its separation from the rest of the bird's corpse: its shape, manipulability and tactility all remained the same, and yet the sensation of holding the wing transformed from being one of indifference to one of disgust. The subsequent existence of head, feet and wings as now separate items altered again my relations with the bird-meat-thing. It had resumed its animalism but it no longer had the beauty of the intact bird. Now it spoke with savage honesty about the 'what is no more-ness'

of the creature before me. Despite the bird-meat-thing progressing ever closer to meatness it could not yet shake off its original birdness, either morally or materially. Perversely, the removed wing seemed to have regained its animality even though overall the pheasant was closer to meat than bird. Subsequently, the process of transformation from bird to meat was neither unidirectional nor constant, and there is not always a clearly identifiable thing of which to speak. Instead, it seems that different versions of the thing (Mol, 1999) can be called forth by the materiality affects of its transformational progress, whereby different and changing associations make present different and changing material properties and affects (Hawkins, 2010).

This chimerical perversity, in which different realities may clash (Mol, 1999) or interfere with each other (Law, 2004) in the dialectical battle of certainty and ambiguity (Olsson, 1991) might reflect Bloch's notion of the material as 'not yet' (1968, cited in Anderson and Wylie, 2009), and Kristeva's notion of abjection as a massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness with "a 'something' that I do not recognize as a thing" (Kristeva, 1997: 230). In particular, Kristeva specifies that what causes abjection is that which disturbs identity or order; the in-between or the ambiguous, and emphasizes that this affectivity of that which does not yet appear as a thing is due to the structures of meaning that govern and condition people (Kristeva, 1997). However, the emphasis on anticipation in Bloch's 'not yet' and Kristeva's abjection seems to capture only half of the chimerical state, as not only is the bird as meat 'not yet', but the bird as bird is 'not still'. Not yet, yet neither not still. Equally though, this speaks more to the form of the bird-meat-thing than to the material affect of the bird-meat-thing. Thinking instead in terms of Roe's (2006) practical aesthetic, it was in this chimerical state that the pheasants as both bird and meat had greatest impact. The bird-meat-thing was powerfully one thing then instantaneously powerfully

the other, demonstrating a chimerical instability. Like a Necker cube I was unable to sustain the bird-meat-thing as one thing before the other thing imposed itself upon me. Bird and meat could not co-exist yet neither could they be sustained alone. Not yet, yet neither not still.

This notion of chimerical instability is reminiscent of Deleuze's discussion of vagabond materiality (Deleuze, 1979), described as what is hidden by what it is between. In drawing on Husserl's idea of corporeality as inseparable from both processes of deformation of which it is the site and qualities susceptible to greater or lesser intensity, Deleuze's vagabond materiality is a concept well suited to the inbetweenness of the bird-meat-thing. The instances of chimerical instability can be considered unstable catalytic junctures in the process of deformation that transforms the birds from bird to meat and that generates affective qualities of varying intensities. The hiding of this vagabond materiality by what it is between also highlights the indiscernibility of the limits of this chimerically unstable state. The affect is felt abruptly but it does not indicate whether its cause was a sudden onset or a gradual accumulation of impactful micro-steps. Known only through instantaneous affect that reveals nothing of its scope or scale, this chimerical instability exemplifies an indefinable nothing area with no clear boundaries (de Cosson, 2008). Evading clear definition by being hidden by what it is between (Deleuze, 1979), this nothing area is both subjected to and constituted by what it is between (de Cosson, 2008). Where meaning collapses, this radically excluded abjection (Kristeva, 1997) is also reciprocally excluding, confronting what it is between by the contemporaneous impossibility of the associations that it calls forth in its chimerical instability.

The chimerical instability highlights the diversity and multiplicity of functional forms that are simultaneously but antagonistically drawing on their common materialities

during material transformation. During chimerical instability the same material/s evoke two or more functional forms, which are fully and equally supportable by those material/s, yet the functional forms are mutually exclusive.

Bringing this brief digression back to our concern with geographies of art, we see that on a number of fronts we are unable to delineate or define an object, thing or material form in any absolute sense. The growing acknowledgement of the power of nonhuman actants to have an effect (Bennett, 2010; Latour, 2005); awareness and exposition of the multiplicity and duplicity of material states, processes and affects; recognition of the constitutive outside of artworks or their 'material excess', such as Derrida's notions of the *parerga* and *subjectile* (1987) and Seeley's 'biograffiti' (2011); and notions such as chimerical instability which seek to capture the non-identity of entities during material processuality, together confuse the assumed ontological distinctiveness of the artwork and undermine the emphasis on representation in geographies of art. Consequently the artwork is no longer deemed an inert representational product of human activity but is identified as excessive and materially diverse. Both the artwork and its constitutive materials (both within and beyond the work itself) actively participate in and perform their own emergence and/or erasure. Armed with more appropriate conceptual and methodological tools with which we can engage with the processuality of materials that are constitutive of artworks even though they may be separate from those artworks, we would be better placed to welcome these excessive and diverse materials and their affects into artistic-geographic inquiry.

### **1.2.3 From artist as agent to artistic agency**

The idea that a passive artwork is produced by an active artist has a long history, and is encapsulated in Dewey's (1934) proposal that the artist carries into their work all that they are; that the artist invests something of the person that they are into their creation. Even Derrida's (1987) discussion of mutuality between artist and artwork, in which the source of the artwork lies in the artist and the source of the artist lies in the artwork, is concerned more with the identification of one in relation to the other than in the emergence of each in the emergence of the other. In this light, artistic practice is seen as a process of self-externalization, in which the resulting artefacts preserve and declare ways of experiencing the world, clarifying and transposing individuality into an enduring form (Crowther, 1993). Seen in this way, individuality or subjectivity is not altered by the artistic practice, only seen more clearly and granted longevity: the artwork is the end product of the artistic practice.

The strength of this belief in creativity as innate is not surprising given the long history of the Renaissance view of the artist (Lamarque, 2010; Sennett, 2009) and trait-based conceptions of subjectivity, personality and creativity (Caspi et al., 2003; McCrae and Costa Jr, 1997; McCrae and John, 1992), in which personal qualities are biologically based and unchanging over time or with circumstance. However, other theoretical perspectives might also account for this sense of innateness, including both behaviourist and social-cognitive paradigms, which emphasize the influence of external factors and events in generating elements of stable and elements of changing personality over time (Allemand et al., 2010; Hartup and Van Lieshout, 1995; Selfhout et al., 2010). Whether participation in artistic practice was instilled in a behaviourist sense through conditioned responses and associative learning or encouraged in a social-cognitive sense through rewards and a growing sense of self-efficacy, artistic

ability and enjoyment may be less innate than is often assumed. There is also growing recognition of variability in personality and identity both over time and between different circumstances, with situated motivational factors recognized as playing a role in personality variability (Bandura, 2008; Ellemers et al., 2002; Lester, 2007; Mischel, 2004). Such perspectives indicate that dynamic and contingent rather than static and absolute understandings of subjectivity are increasingly in order. However, even Bandura's anti-humanist denial of a reified self in favour of emergent interactive agency (Bandura, 2008) excludes consideration of non-human agency in the emergence of personality, identity or subjectivity, which in the previous section was identified as a key feature of artistic practices. What is needed for present purposes is a notion of agential construction of subjectivity but with a broader notion of the agent to include the non-human, and an emergent notion of subjectivity that draws on the full range of human experience including the pre-reflective as well as the situatedness and relationality afforded by social-cognitive theories. Subjectification here is framed as a process of particularization rather than individualization, which avoids totalizing, humanizing and internalizing accounts of the 'subject', and as such emphasizes the emergence of subjectivity/ies, rather than self, identity or personality. Such notions are accommodated by ethological perspectives. In the next section I outline ways in which non-representational geography attends to the non-essential, emergent and contingent, and how this way of thinking underpins this research. For the time being, though, I introduce one particular non-representational philosophy from beyond geography, specifically to speak to these issues in relation to subjectivity.

Ethological or relational perspectives, which consider human beings to reside within rather than stand apart from their environment, consider embodied subjectivity and the world to be reciprocally related both ontologically and causally, with each bringing

forth the other (Crowther, 1993). Geography has drawn variously upon works such as Whitehead's (1920) ethological concept of nature, Massumi's (2002) consideration of the virtual, and the machinic assemblages of Deleuze and Guattari (2004) and Guattari (1995), which themselves draw on lines of thought from the likes of Bergson, Wittgenstein, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. Yet subjectivity remains a vexing issue for non-representational geographies, with questions hanging over its existence, nature and relevance (Rose, 2010; Thrift, 2008; Wylie, 2010). Given the currency and intractability of matters of subjectivity within geography, introducing a stream of non-representational thinking from beyond geography's disciplinary boundaries might energize further development in this regard. To this end, I draw here on the work of Eugene Gendlin, a philosopher and psychotherapist who has proposed an explicitly non-representational philosophy of the subject.

Eugene Gendlin's non-representational philosophy of the subject (the Process Model) offers a different account through which we might productively reconsider questions of human subjectivity in non-representational geographies. Gendlin's body of philosophical work is concerned with the relationship between logic and experiential explication, conceptualizing the implicit as the more than logical (Gendlin, 1995) and seeking to think with more than conceptual structures, forms and distinctions (Gendlin, 1989, 1993, 1997). Gendlin acknowledges a number of philosophers whose thinking has informed his own, stating that "I come *at least* from Plato, Aristotle, Leibnitz, pragmatism, like Dewey, Dilthey, Whitehead, Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Wittgenstein. Without any of those, I couldn't be here in this way" (Gendlin, 2006: 15, emphasis in original). In an autobiographical account (Gendlin, 1989), Gendlin identifies himself as a phenomenologist, except that he says that he is able to work with differences between concepts in a way unavailable to

phenomenologists, discarding mere descriptions and drawing attention to progressions between logical concepts. Gendlin asserts that statements can make mere logical sense or they can lift out more than that:

“If we can follow the next step although it does *not* follow logically from the last step, how does it follow? It moves from what was “more than logical” – from the “lifted out”. That can be seen only in progressions.” (Gendlin, 1989: 406, emphasis in original)

With progression, Gendlin asserts, we do not lose logical power but we find that there is more specificity and precision in progressing from or between concepts than logic alone permits (Gendlin, 1989).

In addition to the Process Model, Gendlin has been at the forefront of the development of experiential psychotherapy, teaching at the University of Chicago for over thirty years, founding and editing the journal ‘Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice’, and influencing Carl Rogers’ development of his client-centered theory and therapy (Gendlin, 1989). Through his interdisciplinary activities, Gendlin has sought to advance our understanding of the function of the implicit or bodily understanding. In seeking to reveal “how something implicit works in the coming of new concepts” (Gendlin, 2009a: 333), Gendlin has developed a step-by-step training system for direct reference to the implicit through which we can originate new meanings and define new concepts (Gendlin, 2009b). Within this system are two specific procedures: focusing, which establishes access to the implicit, and thinking-at-the-edge, which aids concept formation on the basis of our access to the implicit (Gendlin, 2009a; 2009b). Gendlin’s book “Focusing” has been translated into seventeen languages, and he has been honoured four times by the American Psychological Association for his development of experiential psychotherapy ([www.focusing.org](http://www.focusing.org)).

Gendlin presents his model not as a finished product but as a first attempt that works to some extent, and grants “my permission to use it in any form whatsoever, or argue with, do anything with it” (Gendlin, 2006: 8). It is in this spirit that I consider potential points of connection between the Process Model and current geographical concerns with the non-representational subject. As a starting point, Gendlin’s philosophically and psychotherapeutically informed Process Model addresses key geographical concepts including time, space and subjectivity and reflects the three commitments of non-representational thinking outlined by Anderson and Harrison (2010a): a practical and processual orientation, incorporating a wider account of life, and an emphasis on futurity.

### ***Gendlin’s Process Model***

Except where otherwise specified, all references to Gendlin’s work in this section refer to his text *A Process Model* (Gendlin, 2001). A brief note of caution is worth sounding here. As Gendlin introduces a plethora of new concepts and terms throughout his writings, the relations between some of which become fairly convoluted, attempting to encapsulate the headline features without straying into excessive detail while still remaining faithful to Gendlin’s original terminology at times risks the sense of circumlocution. This is particularly the case in relation to notions of a separated process within a whole process, and in fleshing out the implications for futurity and mutuality of the implying-occurring-implying functional cycle that so strongly characterizes Gendlin’s work. In an attempt to minimize this risk I have sought to restrict my discussion to those key features of the Process Model of greatest relevance to current geographical concerns regarding non-representational humanism, and to this end the introduction to Gendlin’s work laid out below focuses on and is structured

around a handful of key concepts and concerns: body-environment process; interaffecting, and time and space.

Gendlin's Process Model is ethological in nature, emphasizing that body and environment are one, and describing the body as a non-representational concretion with its environment. Subsequently, though, four types of environment are introduced: the spectator's environment or the environment of an organism as described by a spectator in their own terms (EN1); the reflexively identical environment in which body and environment are one event/process, implying each other in a non-representational fashion (EN2); the environment that is arranged by the body-environment event/process (EN3); and something within EN2 that may one day affect the life process but has not done so to date (EN4).

In Gendlin's model process comes first, consistent with other non-representational thinkers such as Whitehead's (1920) concept of process as the passage of events and Massumi's (2002) notion of movement as qualitative change. Later in Gendlin's text the terms process and interaction are equated and seem to be used interchangeably, and it is this process/interaction that is EN2 and that goes on in EN3. Those results of the process/interaction in which that life process goes on become part of EN3, and subsequently participate in the ongoing EN2. In other words, the body-environment interaction (EN2) goes on in the body-environment as arranged by that ongoing interaction (EN3), which further feeds into subsequent ongoing interaction (EN2).

Central to Gendlin's interactional model is the notion of a functional cycle in which actions are not determined but instead imply a functional cycle. This cycle of implying-occurring-implying is illustrated with the example of hunger, eating, defecating, hunger in which hunger implies eating but does not determine what is eaten, which further implies the excretion of waste products, which further implies the

onset of hunger. In this way any occurring implies further occurring, and the process/interaction is both the implying and the occurring.

Occurring is defined here as change: something happening. This occurring always happens into implying because the implying is ongoing, and the occurring can change the implying. Consequently, as implying implies occurring and occurring changes implying, implying implies its own change. However, this does not generate a predetermined future because the occurring does not always bring about the change that the implying originally implied. In other words, a functional cycle is implied but an occurring can change what is implied: the future is more open than a determined set of events that is simply yet to be.

With process/interaction coming first, objects are also a function of this process because the process separates out the objects by not occurring without them (the stopped process) and resuming if they recur. Once the process resumes it is no longer implied but occurs. Similarities exist here, too, between Gendlin's object falling out of a behaviour sequence and both Whitehead's (1920) object as an entity that is an ingredient in an event, and Massumi's (2002) thing as all of that in which it is implicated. Just as for Gendlin an object is held stable by the entity's behaviour, such as a mouse remaining constant for the cat that is chasing it, for Whitehead objects are entities that do not pass. Similarly, just as for Gendlin the object is relative to the body-implied behaviour sequence, for Massumi the thing is all of its connections and implications. However, whereas for Whitehead recognition of an object is awareness of a factor not passing in nature (it has been extracted from the process), for Gendlin recognition of an object is its resumption of a process with the body (it is brought back into the process).

This recognition of an object by virtue of its inclusion in a process seems more consistent with the circulating nature of agency among emerging subjectivities and objectivities within non-representational geographies than notions of the object being recognized by virtue of its exclusion from a process. If objects are recognized by virtue of their exclusion from a process only those associated with the stopped process would have agency as the emerging entities included in the ongoing process are not recognized, which conflicts with the circulation of agency among emerging entities in non-representational thinking. By contrast, if objects are recognized by virtue of their inclusion in a process, it is those associated with and emergent within the ongoing process that are granted agency, in line with the circulation of agency in non-representational thinking. However, this circulation of agency among emerging entities in an ongoing process does not deny the influence or agency of the stopped process. The existence of the stopped process, insofar as what does continue does so differently, acknowledges that the objects recognized by their inclusion in the ongoing process could not be recognized as such without the stopping of the stopped process. Gendlin's discussion of the recognition of objects therefore provides for a broad notion of agency, attributing agency to objects recognized by their inclusion in an ongoing process and to stopped processes without which the ongoing process could not go on in the manner that it does. This line of Gendlin's thinking can be explored further through consideration of his notion of interaffecting.

In keeping with other non-representational philosophies, Gendlin depicts a transversal interconnectedness that precedes ontological distinctions, for which his terms of choice are interaffecting or eveving (the interaffecting of everything by everything). Prior to processes and entities being separated out Gendlin speaks of an implicit many characterized by an original interaffecting whereby the interaffecting of the implicit

precedes the implicit being many. While this implicit many has parallels with Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) indissolubility of the singular abstract and collective concrete, and with Massumi's (2002) virtual swarm, whereas Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage extracts and actualizes entities from the virtual realm and Massumi speaks of the emergence of entities from the field, Gendlin specifies that from this implicit many processes are co-ordinatedly differentiated. By this, Gendlin means that they separate only in a co-ordinated way, with their phases implying each other such that each phase of each process is developed only together with some others and only without some others. The exact way that one process is implies how the others are, and each is just so only if the others are also just so. A whole process is implied, out of which particular phases, which could be thought of as sub-processes, are separated through co-ordinated differentiation. Each sub-process only separates out in the way that it does because the others separate out in the way that they do. Consequently, it is the process as a whole that implies the continuation of the resumed process as a whole, not the sub-processes that are separated out through co-ordinated differentiation. Processes imply themselves by implying the whole process, but it is the occurring of the whole process that continues or carries forward the separated process. Happenings themselves determine what the whole is, and the body-process has its own continuity and internal relations between events.

This interaffecting, reminiscent of Bergson's (1911) propagation of modifications throughout the immensity of the universe, determines that interaction is a single system, in which the interaction determines how each component acts. Predating Gendlin's implicit many, Bergson comments that "the perpetuity of their reciprocal actions and reactions, is sufficient to prove that they have not the precise limits which we attribute to them" (Bergson, 1911: 278). In this way what each is, is already

affected by the other. Moreover, what a process is “has already been affected by the differences it makes in the others which affect it” (Gendlin, 2001: 39). Importantly here, this interaffecting does not assume linear temporality. Instead, the present is experienced with, through and by means of the past: the present happens in the remains of the past, and the past functions as already changed by what it functions in. Processes function as already interaffected; through occurring they re-determine their multiplicity, changing the system of possibilities for the functional cycle. As Gendlin specifies, “what occurs is the result of how the effect of each process, part, or difference, is changed by how its effect on the others affects it” (Gendlin, 2001: 40, emphasis in original). The idea of interaffecting, then, provides a point of entry for discussion of Gendlin’s thinking on time and space.

For Gendlin, something is past, present or future depending on its function in the occurring into implying cycle. Through interaffecting, present bodies are physically also the past; the present process goes on in the EN3 body-environment that it has generated and altered, such that EN3 is a past in the present and implying is a future that is in the present. Past, present and future are therefore interlocked but not linear: “the en#3-body is interlockingly one event with its occurring. Now we see that the body’s occurring is also interlocked with the implying into which it happens, and of which it is the changing” (Gendlin, 2001: 96). The old sequence is implicit in the occurring of the new, and the new happens into the implying of the old. For Gendlin, how the EN3 body functions is the past, and how implying functions is the future: occurring regenerates the body but also changes the implying. Consequently, parallels can be drawn between Gendlin’s temporality of the body and Bergson’s (1911) idea of the body as an ever-advancing boundary between past and future, where the past expires in a deed. Where for Bergson the past is exhausted and will only recover an

influence by borrowing the vitality of present perception, for Gendlin this recovery of influence is accomplished by the crossing of everything that happens with everything that has happened (Gendlin, 2009b), such that the past never fully expires by virtue of its ongoing implyings.

In relation to the body's own implying, Gendlin describes this as focaling, which echoes Massumi's (2002) notion of sensation as channelling a field of potential into a local action, except that Gendlin's focaling seemingly allows for greater personal influence in what is implied or channelled. This focaling of many parts, processes and differences into one implying carries forward the body's own implying so that it enacts its own sequence. As such the bodily implying includes a whole context of mutually implicit behaviour sequences that are focaled with the actual environment that happens into it. From this Gendlin develops his notion of behaviour space: a mesh of possible behaviours that the body implies in all directions and respects. Here, Gendlin's work is not dissimilar to that of Bergson's (1911) zone of indetermination surrounding a living being in its activity and giving an estimate of those things with which it is in relation. Furthermore, both Deleuze and Guattari (2004) and Gendlin portray a tripartite process of happening between an extensive realm of immanent possibilities, an action-oriented circumscribed zone of situated actualizables, and those objects, systems and structures that are actualized or occur. Essentially each account presents a progressive narrowing of scope with regard to what each affords: the realm of possibility, the realm of opportunity, and the realm of eventuality.

Describing this behaviour space as a mesh in which any occurring sequence changes how others would occur if they were to form after it, Gendlin again both parallels Deleuze and Guattari (2004) to the extent that both philosophies are characterized by alloplasticity, bringing about changes in the external world/environment, and echoes

Bergson's (1911) zone as a measure of indetermination of the act which is to follow. However, Gendlin also specifies the concept of 'had' space, whereby the body feels and perceives the whole context of implicit behaviour possibilities, taking account of other objects in the space as they are recognized in the context of implicit behaviour sequences. As behaviour always occurs in the midst of other implicit behaviours and as a change in those behaviours, the whole mesh (behaviour space) is carried forwards or continued. Indeed for Gendlin, the "living process can be understood as a sequence of carrying forward wholes" (Gendlin, 2009b: 152).

In summary then, Gendlin's Process Model conceives of an implicit many characterized by an original interaffecting of everything by everything and from which individual processes become separated through co-ordinated differentiation within the implying-occurring-implying functional cycle. The body is a non-representational concretion with its environment, and the body's own implying consists of two broad types: horizontal implying, in which the whole is implied by any part, and temporal implying whereby time is generated. Within the first horizontal type of implying, body and EN2 are one event, differentiated processes imply each other by implying the whole, and any part of any process is also involved in and maintained by many other processes. Within the temporal type of implying, occurring implies further events, each process implies the whole next event, and continuing processes carry stopped processes.

Despite Gendlin's introduction of a kedgerie of concepts within his Process Model, reading across other non-representational philosophies reveals several areas of consistency among these authors. However, Gendlin also adopts particular emphases in certain regards, such as the recognition of an object by its inclusion in rather than exclusion from a process and the personal influence afforded in the focaling of

implying, that set his work apart from existing non-representational influences in geography. It is primarily Gendlin's emphasis on the role of affect and in particular interaffecting, and his explication of the implying-occurring-implying functional cycle that lends his work fresh potential with regard to issues of residual humanism in non-representational geographies, and indeed that allows this personal influence on the focaling of implyings that lies at the heart of agency. It is to this that my attention now turns.

A general concern with how we can account for stasis amidst the dynamism of ongoing flux in non-representational philosophies (Anderson and Harrison, 2010a) is here given specificity in considering how non-representational theories might accommodate a minimal humanism (Thrift, 2008; Wylie, 2010). While non-representational theories neither eliminate nor reassert the subject, they employ distributed, performative and relational notions of subjectivity (Wylie, 2010). However, if in their emergence subjects are radically contingent and irreducibly specific (Anderson and Harrison, 2010a) how can we account for the phenomenal sense of an enduring identity and a personal future?

In criticizing non-representational thinking for not allowing a vision of a future and its lack of an agentic subject, Rose (2010) compared temporality within the philosophies of Deleuze and Levinas. In the former, envisaging a future is deemed by Rose to be untenable because although the permanent presence of the past enables the framing of expectation based on past events the future is fully open, while in the latter the past cannot be achieved and the future cannot be anticipated, rendering the envisaging of a future possible but futile because it can never be attained.

Gendlin's Process Model strikes both a more optimistic note in terms of the potential for forward thinking and agency, and a more measured perspective on the affective

valence of encounters with the uncertain. To see how this is so, we need to consider together what Gendlin has to say in relation to interaffecting and time.

The notion of futurity itself is not problematic either for non-representational philosophies in general, nor for Gendlin's Process Model in particular. As Deleuze and Guattari (2004) propose that events continue to reverberate into the future, the contraction of the past into the present could be conceived as potentially deriving an echoic sense of personal continuity if an entity emergent in the present event resonates with the reverberations of the past. Similarly, within Gendlin's Process Model implying is always unfinished, and we have seen above how past, present and future depend on how they function (how they are changed) in implying-occurring-implying. EN3 is portrayed as a past in the present and implying as a future in the present, giving interlocked but non-linear past, present and future.

As with Deleuze and Guattari, who spoke of a permanent presence of all past events (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004), Gendlin proposes that all events or occurrences continue to interaffect once they have occurred (Gendlin, 2009a). At first glance it might appear then that a Gendlinian sense of enduring identity and personal past is also echoic in nature. However, this would under-represent the importance of interaffecting to human subjectivity in Gendlin's work, at least in my reading of it. In Gendlin's Process Model it seems to me that the most important features for agency and the persistence of subjectivity are that any occurring changes the subsequent implyings and occurrences, and that what occurs has already been affected by the differences it makes in the others which affect it. Thus the occurring of an emergent entity alters its own chances of persisting through its subsequent implyings and occurrences, providing the potential for endurance. That this interaffecting does not tend towards totalization or stasis is due to two factors. The first is that the ongoing affectivity of the past is not a

concretization of past events but a perpetual change in the implying and occurings.

The second reason is that any one event is not emergent from the implying and occurings of just one pre-emergent entity but of numerous such pre-emergent entities, all of which feed into the perpetual flux of inter-affecting.

The key problematic, however, for issues of non-representational humanism is how individuals come to generate not only a sense of a personal past but also that of a personal future if the future is entirely open. While it was noted above that the interaffecting of the present by the occurings and implying of the past provides a means of generating a sense of a personal past through the accumulation of bodily-relevant occurings and implying, it is also possible for both a sense of a personal future and a degree of agency to be accommodated by Gendlin's Process Model.

Whereas for Deleuze and Guattari the future is wholly open and cause and effect are rendered incalculable (Rose, 2010), Gendlin's notion of everything being already interaffected by everything else (both occurings and implying), is closer to Darling's (2010) depiction of potential directions of the past that govern the response of the present. For any one process, including the body, the process implies itself by implying the whole process (Gendlin, 2001). The process therefore implies its own not-fully-determined range of future occurings. The question remains, however, as to how the process can 'know' of these possibilities in advance in order to have a sense of its own future. This question can be answered by considering Gendlin's notion of 'eveving' or interaffecting as processes functioning as already interaffected by how its affects on others affect it. While Gendlin's particular term of eveving may not be to everyone's liking and the notion of interaffecting can be a tricky one with which to grapple, it is not dissimilar to Massumi's (2002) sense of that which emerges changing

the conditions of emergence; it simply stipulates that this is accomplished through an implicit mechanism of affect.

We have already seen that the ongoing interaffecting that results from a past occurring provides a means by which a sense of a personal past might be generated. However, with the Process Model's non-linear temporality this interaffecting also includes the effects on the current process brought about by the future affects implied by different implicit behaviour sequences currently facing the process or body. This generates the capacity for individuals to have an implicit awareness of future potentiality, at least to some degree. Consequently, as processes, individuals not only imply their own not-fully-determined range of future occurrences but, since occurrences and implying mutually imply each other, individuals are also implicitly, or interaffectedly, aware of the not-fully-determined range of possible changed implying that might result from their present occurrences. In this sense individuals are aware that their own occurrences or actions have a capacity (albeit uncertain) to alter future implying and occurrences.

Furthermore, given that processes function as already interaffected, implicit awareness of the changed implying subsequent to a past occurring can also alter the present occurring of an emergent entity because the future implying have already implied the present. Consequently, not only does the ongoing interaffecting resulting from a past occurring influence the present occurring through the direct chain of implying-occurring-implying, but it also influences the present occurring through the present implicit awareness of the possible future changed occurrences and implying contingent upon the past occurring and all the intervening occurrences and implying. In focalizing the many parts and processes into one implying or local action with the body-environment, individuals can thus imply certain occurrences that increase or decrease the relative implying of certain other subsequent occurrences and implying. In other

words, they have a degree of agency. Developing Gendlin's notion of interaffecting to this extent indicates a means by which individuals generate awareness of a personal past, a personal future and a sense of personal agency.

However, neither the range of possible future occurrences nor the range of possible changed implyings is fully determined because, as we saw earlier, occurrences can change the implyings in ways that were not originally implied (Gendlin, 2001). Thus, despite an implicit sense of future potentiality this is neither complete nor certain: the future is open and the interaffecting of everything by everything enables the generation of but a limited and hazy sense of a future self. While the unpredictability arising from the number of participating pre-emergent entities and the perpetual flux of inter-affecting means that such implicit forecasting is not infallible, the continual interaffecting also means that it is not entirely futile.

In summary then, while the uncertainty and multiplicity of environment-concretions in the Process Model prevents deterministic predictions of the future, the enactment of present events can change the relative affectivities in a not-fully-predetermined manner, with implications for subsequent implyings and occurrences. It is therefore possible within Gendlinian philosophy both to envision a future, and to strive towards it, albeit with the caveat that the attainability of this envisioned future is not guaranteed. Integrating Gendlin's thinking into non-representational geographies can accommodate a minimal humanism, allowing for a sense of a personal past, personal future and personal agency within a non-essentialist, non-deterministic transversal connectedness.

Bringing this discussion back to the subjectivity of the artist, of key concern at this stage is the challenge laid at the door of the essentialist view of subjectivity by relational ontologies in which subject/ivitie/s are derived in practice (Grosz, 2001;

Thrift, 1996) and objects are constitutive of human subjects (Brown, 2001) as much as humans are constitutive of artefacts. To consider the artwork to be the only entity generated through artistic practice neglects the contribution made to the ongoing subjectification of the artist by both the process of the practice itself and the artwork resulting from that process: in other words, their interaffectedness. Rather than given and static, subjectivity is a dynamic relation to the world which is constituted bodily through an interplay of ipseity and alterity (Zahavi, 2005). Subjectivity is in a state of constant processual creativity, such that “one creates new modalities of subjectivity in the same way that an artist creates new forms from the palette” (Guattari, 1995: 7). This has important implications for current purposes. As the artist, in their artistic practice, is a specific example of such creative subjectification, artistic practice provides a fruitful avenue for the exploration of subjectivity not only in its idiographic instantiations but also as an archetypal exemplar of subjectification more generally (Guattari, 1995). Artistic practice can be considered both as a type and token (Lamarque, 2010) of the processual creation of subjectivity.

This interaffectedness of artist and artwork is also bound up in issues and practices of spatiality and materiality, in a manner not easily accommodated by the atomistic considerations of artwork, artist and space (studio) that so strongly characterizes previous geographies of art. Consequently, if we are to do justice to this interaffectedness in the exploration of artistic subjectivity and spatiality, we need to ground our work in a more appropriate philosophical footing. To this end, I orient my research within a non-representational ontological understanding, and in the next section I outline the specific features of such an orientation within geography that make it productive for current purposes.

### **1.3 Non-Representational Engagements with Geography and Art**

In light of the difficulties encountered in atomistic approaches to geographical inquiry into art discussed in the previous sections, an ontological foundation is required that can accommodate those aspects of artistic practice that were previously deemed to be distinct and absolute in their inter-affectedness. As already indicated, non-representational thinking provides such a foundation, and in this section I present a summary of the philosophical background and some of the key features of non-representational geography, which make it a prime candidate for the ontological basis of this work. I do so as a first step towards shaping my research design and methodology in Part 2, introducing not only the ontological orientation of my research but also the inevitable implications that such approaches bring for the emphases adopted and questions posed in order to guide the unfolding research.

First, however, a note on terminology is in order as different terms or names are used for a set of thinking styles that are broadly consistent with each other. While many authors use the term non-representational (see, for example, Anderson and Harrison, 2010b; McCormack, 2003; Thrift, 1996, 2008), some preferentially talk about post-structuralist geography in recognition of a broader disciplinary movement (Doel, 1999; Wylie, 2005; 2007), while other writers opt for alternative nomenclatures, such as ‘more-than-representational’ and ‘anti-representational’. Lorimer, for example prefers the ‘more-than-representational’, emphasizing the concern of such work with the more than human and more than textual multi-sensual world (Lorimer, 2005), while Jones advocates ‘anti-representational’ theory on the grounds that it tries to de-represent knowledge to free it up for action (Jones, 2008). Throughout this work I use the term ‘non-representational’ as an indication of its Gendlinian inflection within the suite of non-representational philosophies. My use of the prefix ‘non-’ recognizes that,

despite our representations ultimately being grounded in the first instance in implicit ways of knowing, we have the capacity to draw on the implicit independently of the representational. To my mind, the term “more-than-representational” suggests that representation is at the heart of our thinking and doing and the implicit is an added extra, whereas in Gendlin’s thinking this situation is reversed. I also choose not to use the term “anti-representational” because my emphasis on the implicit is not intended to undermine the role or importance of representation in our thinking and doing, but simply to emphasize the implicit. Gendlin’s Process Model allows us to maintain a link between the representational and the non-representational, yoking the former to the latter but not vice versa. While we can and do develop our concepts or representations from our implicit understanding, not all of our implicit understanding is developed into conceptual or representational form, nor do we need to do so in order to use it. My preferential use of the term ‘non-representational’, then, indicates my concurrence with Gendlin’s perspective concerning the possibility for implicit understanding to function on its own terms.

From a philosophical perspective, non-representational geography has drawn inspiration from a range of sources, including Bergsonian-Deleuzian work on vitality and Nietzschean/Foucauldian considerations of power (Greenhough, 2010), as well as the writings of Derrida and Nancy (Wylie, 2010). Specifically, it is the phenomenological strand of non-representational thinking that I foreground here as such an orientation affords particular understandings of art and stimulates specific methodological emphases, as will be detailed in Part 2. In what remains in this part, however, I discuss the justification for and implications of grounding my work in such a phenomenological footing, and outline the recent development of this grounding in

non-representational geography, as a precursor to the methodological detail provided in Part 2.

Philosophical perspectives on art are many and varied, but the majority of theories of art are made only of the objects of art in order to determine those objects (O'Sullivan, 2001), thereby focusing on what art is as a cultural object. Such perspectives range from art historical accounts of artworks in the context of the period during which they were produced, as in Foucault's discussion of *Las Meninas* (Foucault, 1989), to the deconstructionist or interpretative accounts that read artworks as texts, as in the geographical interpretation of iconography in landscape paintings (Cosgrove and Daniels, 1988). Perspectives also range from formalist approaches emphasizing design, through aesthetic approaches that emphasize the aesthetic properties of the work itself generating an aesthetic experience in the viewer (Carroll, 1999), to expressionist theories that focus on self-disclosure of the artist (Collingwood, 1958). By contrast, phenomenology, with its emphasis on essences and attempts at direct and primitive contact with the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1995), sees art as manifesting or setting forth something other than itself (Heidegger, 2011). As a post-medium notion of art, the phenomenological perspective is more consistent with the concern of the current research with artistic practice than the emphasis of other philosophies of art on artistic products, asking not what a work of art is but what it can do (Malpas, 2011; O'Sullivan, 2001).

In the phenomenological tradition, influenced by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre and with its roots in Nietzsche, pictorial works are deemed to give visible existence to sensory qualities that give rise to certain experiences (Wrathall, 2011). For Nietzsche, building on Kant (Hill, 2005), the artist is a vehicle through which a supersensible substrate to the faculties operates and is intimated, and the power of art is a product of

how it works on viewers affectively (Wrathall, 2011), while for Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, artistic practice is a different kind of seeing that shows us things that we could not otherwise see (Wrathall, 2011). On such an understanding art performs an ontological form of disclosure that goes beyond that which is actually represented, leading beyond the visible to that which articulates it (Hans-Pile, 2011). To this end, art is a particular way of doing phenomenology (Crowell, 2011; Parry and Wrathall, 2011), showing us phenomena more directly than philosophical prose, in the primordial situation of our own being (Merleau-Ponty, 1995; Parry, 2011; Parry and Wrathall, 2011).

While some object-oriented theories and definitions of art allow for the existence of both ‘bad’ and ‘good’ art and others exclude ‘bad’ art from the definition of art (Crowell, 2011), in the functioning of art as disclosing (Hans-Pile, 2011; Wrathall, 2011) or showing otherwise unexpressed experiences (Crowell, 2011; Parry and Wrathall, 2011), the dilemma of defining art in terms of product quality can be set aside as our focus is placed upon what art does rather than how well a particular work of art does it. With its practical focus, though, a related issue concerns the importance of the proficiency of the practitioner. While it might be argued that a more thoroughly trained or more experienced artist would be more capable of disclosing primordial experience in artistic form than a less experienced or beginner practitioner, again the important point is less the quality of the disclosure than the access to their primordial experience afforded to the practitioner by their engagement with their practice. It is therefore the practice of doing rather than the quality of what is done that is at stake. In this light, the appropriate unit for our consideration is akin to Heidegger’s notion of art as an origin or Badiou’s understanding of art as a Truth-Event in which art is a producer of truths (Heidegger, 2011; Kul-Want, 2010). Here, our concern lies not with

either the artwork or the artist but with the artistic configuration; an identifiable sequence of procedures initiated by an event that produces a truth of that particular art, such that a work of art is a local instance of a truth (Badiou, 2010). Consistent with the concerns outlined earlier in Part 1 regarding the pitfalls of compartmentalizing artistic space, artwork and artist, thinking artistic practice in terms of Heidegger's origin or Badiou's configuration enables us to address the totality of artistic practice in the setting forth or emergence of artistic space, artwork and artist.

To speak of a Truth-Event might be taken to present artistic practice as a superior way of knowing or disclosing phenomena and experiences, but this is not the intention here. While for Hegel the appearances of art were more genuine and a higher reality than the things depicted (Hegel, 2010) and for Nietzsche art rather than morality was the highest task and real metaphysical activity of man (Nietzsche, 2000), I align myself more with Cassar (2009) than Quoniam (1988) with regard to the two quotations with which I opened this thesis. While I would accept the spirit of Quoniam's (1988) extract, that an artist who is not a geographer and a geographer who is not an artist might each see different things in the same landscape and might depict the geography of that landscape differently, I would not grant that the geographer who is also an artist would see or depict that landscape or geography in a manner that is necessarily privileged. Similarly, though, I do not wholeheartedly concur with Cassar's (2009) extract either. While I agree that an artist-researcher is not necessarily better equipped than other researchers for their task, I also do not think that to consider the research done by art as the enactment of thinking is necessarily essentializing in the manner of superiority that Cassar seemingly assumes. Research done by art is the enactment of thinking but, in and of itself, is no more so, and no better so, than any other form of enactment of thinking. In both cases, artistic practice is a particular way

of enacting geographical thinking and research, but this does not necessarily render such practice superior to other practices. Even if we accept that there are parallels between the way in which geographers and painters know and represent the world (Rees, 1973), I would argue that in the same way that the perceptive insight of an artist cannot be treated in isolation from the materials through which it is enacted as some transcendental truth (Daniels, 1985), so the perceptive insight of any other practitioner is equally contingent upon the possibilities and constraints of their particular practice. As with all things, artistic practice as the enactment of thinking and research has both its strengths and its weaknesses, which collectively make it a practice that is better suited *for* some tasks than other tasks, and make it better suited *to* some tasks than other practices.

In the current context, a phenomenological understanding of art enables consideration of diverse and excessive aspects of artistic practice, which have traditionally been conceptualized atomistically, in their collective and practical totality. However, the emphasis within phenomenological philosophy on essences does bring with it one particular shortcoming, which is that, in dealing with essences (Merleau-Ponty, 1995; Parry and Wrathall, 2011), phenomenology is consigned to consideration of pre-existing and pre-essentialized entities, leaving it ill-equipped to explore the emergence of, and the conditions of emergence of, those entities with the essences of which phenomenology is concerned. Phenomenology has been criticized, for example, for being insufficient in only invoking the lived body (Deleuze, 2010) and not concerning itself with the coming to embodiment of the body, such as through the de/re/territorialization of the body-without-organs (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). In order to accommodate the emergent aspects of phenomena and experiences, certain adjustments and adaptations are required to phenomenological thinking. Such

modifications are provided for by the development of non-representational thinking in geography, which has its roots in broader philosophical footings than phenomenology alone, and which brings with it certain implications for my research design and method, as will become clear in Part 2.

Following the increase in humanistic approaches stimulated by disciplinary disaffection with positivist methods (Daniels, 1985; Livingstone, 1992; Rose, 1993; Samuels, 1978), which put human experience back as a central concern (Crang, 1998), non-representational geography sprang from social constructivism in the mid 1990s (Anderson and Harrison, 2010a; Thrift, 2008), as concern grew to resolve the tension between the material and symbolic in the mediation of social practices (Daniels, 2004; McCormack, 2004; Oakes and Price, 2008). Nigel Thrift's *Spatial Formations* has been identified as marking the inception of 'non-representationalism' (Lorimer, 2007), which favours the practical, processual and eventful over representation and collective symbolism (Anderson and Harrison, 2010a) on the basis that we come to know things through active experience rather than passive observation (Greenhough, 2010). As part of the performative turn in geography from the mid-1990s, non-representational thinking encourages a change in focus from systems of representation to processes of practice and performance (Dirksmeier and Helbrecht, 2008).

Although a diverse and difficult body of work to summarize, non-representational thinking marks renewed interest in materialist, corporeal and performative ontologies, and adopts action, practice and performance as both object of enquiry and style of research (Popke, 2009). Two primary characteristics of non-representational geography are that it valorizes processes that operate before conscious reflection and it insists on not prioritizing representations as epistemological vehicles (McCormack, 2005). It is noteworthy that despite a growing number of non-representational or more-than-human

scholars and substantial development of theoretical thinking, the development of non-representationally-informed methods is less well advanced (Lorimer, 2010). In seeking to redress this imbalance, my consideration of non-representational theoretical thinking, substantive interests and styles of working here feeds directly into my research design and methodological choices, as outlined in Part 2.

Consistent with the phenomenological perspective outlined above, the focus of non-representational geography is on how rather than what (Dewsbury, 2010a), to the extent that over-emphasis of representation is critiqued (Jacobs, 2006; McCormack, 2003) and the premises of representation are questioned (Barad, 2007), as the production of knowledge is now framed not in the representation of an external reality but in the doing of messy practices (Dewsbury and Naylor, 2002). Thought is conceived as a kind of material intervention, such that if we perform differently we can think differently (Thrift, 2004), with representations not counter-posed to practices but generated through them (Driver, 2003). The emphasis within non-representational thinking on performance, practice, movement, the momentary and emergent (Brace and Johns-Putra, 2010), reminds us of the importance of the processes leading to representation (Brace and Johns-Putra, 2010; Gerlach, 2013; McCormack, 2004) rather than focusing on representations as end products. To this end, non-representational geography does not dispense with representations but reanimates them as active and affective interventions (McCormack, 2005).

Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice, ethnographic approaches and interests in time and process (Thrift et al., 2010), the rise of non-representational thinking in geography has brought about a shift in focus from discourse to practice and from meaning to affect (Whatmore, 2006), and draws upon different assumptions and understandings concerning subject-object relations and how they emerge from a

broader excessive plane (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004) than those afforded by the “classically phenomenological manoeuvre of placing the self in the body and embedding the body in the landscape” (Wylie, 2005: 240). Rather than determining and describing essence (Pels et al., 2002), which formed the focus of phenomenology (Tuan, 1971), non-representational theories share a concern for the sensate and (post)-phenomenological dimensions of existence (Bissell, 2010). Non-representational theorists have reinvented much of phenomenology on the grounds that the world is not static (Thrift et al., 2010) and that non-representational thinking is concerned not with essences but with uncovering conditions of emergence (Simpson, 2009). The affinities between these characteristics of non-representational thinking in geography and Eugene Gendlin’s philosophy, as outlined in the previous section, render Gendlin’s work particularly fertile ground for this research. For this reason, I repeatedly draw on Gendlin’s writings, both philosophical and methodological, and argue for substantial geographical engagement with Gendlin’s work to inform the development of non-representational geography and geography more broadly.

With regard to the current research, such an ontological stance brings with it particular ways of thinking, which help to break down the boundaries traditionally assumed to isolate artist, artwork and artistic space. Informed by non-representational thinking, this research is concerned with questions of how rather than what, asking how spatiality and subjectivity are co-constituted in artistic practice, through which specific practices, by means of which material entanglements, and how the implicit informs such co-constitution. In post-structuralist geography, everything is in a state of becoming in which the fleeting, contingent and immanent gain precedence over the universal and transcendent in an unglunking of pointillism and essentialism (Doel, 2000; 1999). Place, like representation, comes into being through its practice and

performance, being constantly made and remade in a vibrant, quirky and overflowing world (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004), generating multiple and multiplicitous spatialities that escape capture if we think in terms of location or morphology.

Recognizing that humans participate in a shared vital materiality (Bennett, 2010) in which there are many types of actor (Bingham and Thrift, 2000), agency is defined as the power to bring about change (Coole, 2005; Latour, 2005). Agency is no longer a capacity restricted to the human; materiality, too, has the power to make a difference (Jackson, 2000). In what has been dubbed a materialist return (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004) in geography, non-representational thinking calls for perceptual generosity towards the materialities of the world (Anderson, 2005), and a focus on instances where materials achieve particular capacities and effects (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004).

The material and the immaterial are often associated with the empirical versus the theoretical or the lived versus the abstract (Pain, 2004) but as we have already seen, non-representational geography unsettles distinctions between these categories (Daniels, 2004; McCormack, 2004; Oakes and Price, 2008). For example, authors including both Spyer (1998) and Jackson (2000), consider materiality to be a quality of a relationship. Affect too, has been defined in relational terms (Bissell, 2012; Dewsbury et al., 2002; Tuan, 1974; Whatmore, 2006), providing a confluence of relationality between the material and the affective, which is explicitly linked to the passive unconscious modes of experience of place in Tuan's notion of topophilia (Tuan, 1974; 1975).

As well as being post-phenomenological, non-representational thinking is also post-human and post-structural as the subject is seen as neither essential nor structural. The geographic self has been said to have become lost (Ley, 1980), with the self now seen

as derived in practice (Nash, 2000; Thrift, 1996, 1997) or the subject as emergent through boundary making practices (Barad, 2007) in the negotiation of modes of access and ways of orienting to the world (Whatmore, 1997; 2002) and is therefore neither singular nor stable. Subjectivity is seen as intensity, multiplicity, productivity and discontinuity (Thrift, 1996) rather than embodied and essential. With human consciousness extended into the non-human world and agents as unstable and disembodied (Whatmore, 1997), subjectivity is redistributed and the human is seen as co-fabricated with other entities to become more-than-human (Whatmore, 2006). This further blurs the boundaries between subjects and objects, and paves the way for an understanding of artist, artwork and artistic spatiality as co-constituted in practice.

Under such a reading, intentionality is considered less important than background capacities, tendencies and dispositions (Searle, 1995), and non-cognitive aspects of human experience such as intuition and affect are afforded greater status (Bissell, 2012; Dirksmeier and Helbrecht, 2008; Ignatow, 2007; Lorimer, 2008; McCormack, 2004, 2008b; Morris, 2011; Nash, 2000). With thought construed as a material intervention (Thrift, 2004) and materiality as a quality of a relation (Pain, 2004; Spyer, 1998), thinking is no longer restricted to cognition but also encompasses somatic entanglements and affects (Connolly, 2002), and representations find meaning only against a background of an unreflective or unformulated practical grasp on the world (Pile and Thrift, 1995). It is in this unformulated practical grasp that subjectivities come to emergence with materialities and spatialities.

Taking seriously the emphasis within non-representational ontologies on the co-constitution of representation, reality and subjectivity (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004) or entities, their relations and spatiality (Massey, 2005), the artist is presented as neither an essential subject nor a privileged agent, but as relationally co-constituted in

practice. Performance and participation are materialized into emergent realities: artist, artwork and artistic spatiality are co-constituted in artistic practice.

Having adopted a non-representational grounding to the exploration of the co-constitution of subjectivities and spatialities in artistic practice, we are now in a position to determine the nature of the research design, the methods employed and the questions selected to guide the research process, all of which flow from this non-representational orientation.

Together, the three emergent research threads introduced earlier in Part 1 – multiple overlapping and dynamic artistic spatialities; excessive, active and materially diverse artworks; and performatively materialized object/subjectivities – illustrate the limitations inherent within traditional atomistic approaches to geographies of *art*. In order to develop a more holistic and integrative understanding of geographies of *artistic practice* informed by non-representational thinking, my primary research question is indeterminate in its point of entry to the matter of concern. Both recognizing and allowing for the multiplicity and dynamism of entities and forces at play in the emergence and enactment of such geographies, this research asks: *how are spatialities and subjectivities co-constituted in artistic practice?*

This question is supported by three subsidiary research questions, each of which guides a specific methodological focus, as detailed below:

- What artistic practices co-constitute spatialities and subjectivities?
- How are these spatialities and subjectivities negotiated materially?
- How does thinking with the implicit inform our understanding of artistic spatialities and subjectivities?

These questions relate to certain characteristics of non-representational thinking: practices, materiality and the implicit respectively. In recognition that non-representational interest in the world as performative stresses emergent rather than retrospective interpretation (Smith, 2004), my research design and methods are geared towards generating real time as well retrospective accounts of artistic practices. This involves practical engagement with artistic practice as well as interview accounts of such practice as a means of both accounting for the boundary making practices that constitute artistic realities in their enactment, and attending to artistic materialities and material processuality in their unfolding. Furthermore, taking seriously the ideas that if we perform differently we are able to think differently (Thrift, 2004) and that a sinuously post-structuralist geography must be experimental and affective (Wylie, 2005), my research design and methods are intended to establish circumstances in which participating artists perform their practice differently and thereby think about their practice differently. Specifically, I aim to vary the conditions of the participating artists' practices in such a way that they become alert to aspects of their practices that might normally go unnoticed due to their habitual or intuitive nature. I use experimentation as a means of accessing the implicit by changing the conditions of the emergence of subjectivity and spatiality in their artistic practice.

The means by which these methodological foci and emphases are operationalized, in terms of the research design and the specific methods developed and employed in order to answer the research questions, are presented and discussed in more detail in Part 2.

## 1.4 Conclusion to Part 1

Reflecting the issues and themes identified and discussed in Part 1, the artwork used as the frontispiece for Part 1 and reproduced as a thumbnail below, is titled *Material and Immaterial*. The work draws on non-representational interest in the virtual, its emphasis on processes of becoming over states of being, and its blurring of presumed boundaries between the material and the symbolic, the lived and the abstract.

The content of the work depicts a particular research session, held on a city sight-seeing tour bus. The verse emanating from the centre of the piece:

*Gates, walls, town-gown connections*

*Windows: vistas and reflections*

*Cognitive, bodily and ethereal*

*Being: material and immaterial*

...is designed to encourage viewers to spin the work and evoke the sense of disorientation that accompanies efforts to sketch and paint on a moving tourist bus. The origin of each line was rooted in my preparatory research activities but it was the cross-fertilization between the theoretical basis of the verse and the specific experiences of one of my fieldwork sessions that influenced the emerging artwork and subsequently the unfolding research. For each line, theory informed research practice which affected artistic practice which then further influenced research practice.

In my original field notes the first line reflected town-gown tensions rather than connections, but the change in wording reflected my perception of gates and walls connecting as much as dividing different sites within the city. This enhanced emphasis on connections made me more alert to the shared environment of the research sessions

by researcher and participant, and the purpose of the research to find common ground between divergent artistic practices, bringing home to me that it is in our differences that we find our mutuality.

With reference to *windows: vistas and reflections*, the co-existence of both forward looking vistas and backward looking reflections in the same window conjures up aspects of the virtual and the multiplicity of being that characterizes non-representational thinking. These jumbled temporalities have characterized the entire research process, and the emphasis on windows brings into focus the conflicted temporalities involved.

With *cognitive, bodily and ethereal*, the verse influenced both the artwork and the research by drawing attention to the difficulties inherent in defining and distinguishing between the cognitive, the bodily and the ethereal. The artwork reflects this by blurring the boundaries between the fabric on which the verse is printed and the canvas onto which that printed fabric is stitched, and enhanced my theoretical focus on the connections between the cognitive and non-cognitive, the idiographic and the transpersonal.

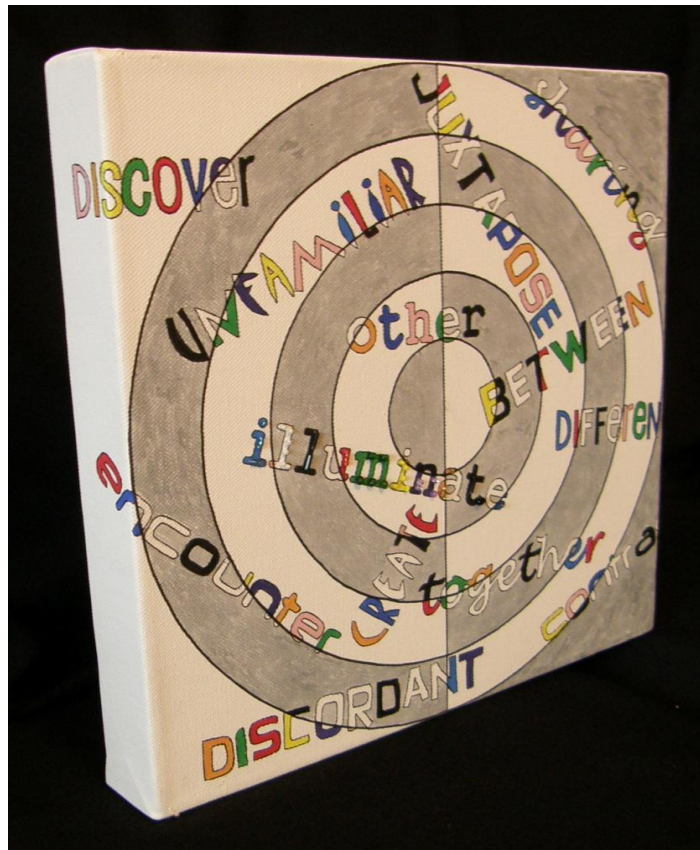
Finally, *being: material and immaterial* reflects both the mutability of the material and the immaterial, and the confluence of material and immaterial factors in the production of the material art form, highlighting the situatedness of the lived experiences of these participants at the confluence of the material and immaterial in their artistic practice.

This verse, which was not planned but which seemed to spring spontaneously to mind, provided a lyrical means of engaging with theory while in the midst of praxis in this particular research session. In turn the experiences of the bus tour led to the refinement

of the verse itself and the emerging artwork and subsequently affected the unfolding research.



## Part 2: Methodological Orientation



*Figure 4. Boundary Understanding (2012)*

*Acrylic and ink on canvas, with bead embellishment (Approx. 30x30cm)*

## **2.1 Introduction**

As outlined in Part 1, situating my research within non-representational philosophies necessarily has implications for the methodological flavour of my work. Further, the non-representational concerns and styles of working discussed in Part 1 directly inform my research design and methodological choices in an attempt to address the current under-developed state of non-representational methods and need for methodological innovation (Lorimer, 2010).

Part 2 addresses these methodological implications and is structured around four sections. Section 1 discusses the conceptual and methodological characterization of my research in terms of two defining features and three areas of focus that emerge from this orientation. Subsequently Section 2 provides an account of the specific methods that I developed and employed in, and the practical and logistical details involved with, the execution of my research. Section 3 considers issues of research quality, outlining the steps taken in order to ensure that this research is thorough and robust and thereby capable of making a contribution to geographical knowledge and practice, and concluding with a critique of the methods employed and their execution in the field. Finally, Section 4 introduces the participating artists and outlines their involvement in the research, as a means of setting the scene for the four substantive papers presented in Part 3.

## 2.2 Conceptual and Methodological Characterization

Consistent with its non-representational underpinnings, this research can be characterized in two main ways. Firstly, as post-phenomenological, in the sense that it considers the ontological indeterminacy to be temporarily resolved through activity (Barad, 2007) and asks after the conditions of emergence (Simpson, 2009) of subjectivity and spatiality rather than seeking to describe their essences (Pels et al., 2002). Secondly, as experimental, in the sense that it draws on the non-representational emphasis on the generous sensibility to the possible (Darling, 2010), openness to the eventful (Kullman, 2012) and shaping arrangements to generate differences (Last, 2012).

While there exist several non-representational concepts which could be employed as a means of going beyond the phenomenological, including the actor-network (Latour, 2005), the rhizomatic assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004), eventful discernment (Whitehead, 1920), and Barad's (2007) notion of the phenomenon, it is Gendlin's (2001) Process Model that I have adopted as my primary conceptual orientation.

Consistent with other non-representational philosophies, the Process Model (Gendlin, 2001) depicts a pre-emergent indeterminacy or transversal interconnectedness and a mechanism of emergence in activity through which subjects, objects and agencies come into being. Gendlin's model, outlined in Part 1, has particular benefits for my research. Firstly, it is explicitly a non-representational philosophy of the subject, and thereby potentially allows for the maintenance of a minimal humanism in non-representational geographies - an issue of much debate in contemporary geography. Secondly, in allowing for a sense of personal futurity, the finished artwork itself and the different opportunities for that artwork, whether an exhibition, sale or for personal

enjoyment, can be accommodated as actants in artistic practice. Thirdly, Gendlin emphasizes the role of affect, coining the particular terminology of *eveving* for the interaffecting of *everything* by *everything*. Finally, Gendlin has also developed a practical methodology for accessing implicit awareness and developing concepts on the basis of the implicit (Gendlin, 2009a; 2006, 2009b) with potential for application in research as well as clinical environments.

The second major characteristic of my methodological orientation is its experimental nature, in the spirit of active engagement with the world and the openness to the unexpected that characterizes non-representational geographies (McCormack, 2010; Thrift et al., 2010), and of allowing ourselves to be infected by the practice or experience being investigated (Dewsbury, 2010b). However, in taking seriously Thrift's advocacy of "concentrating things in such a way as to produce moments in which people ... think about the world a bit differently" (Thrift et al., 2010: 196), I adopted a more pro-active approach to experimentation than simply letting things evolve (Foster and Lorimer, 2007), opting instead to destabilize (Kullman, 2012) participating artists' habitual practices and push the limits of their current conventions (Last, 2012). In essence, I sought to vary the conditions of the research environment - the artistic practice phenomena of participants - as a means of producing some of Thrift's moments.

Adopting a post-phenomenological and experimental methodological orientation to research lends itself to three primary areas of focus: practice, materialities and the intuitive or implicit, each of which is guided by one of my supporting research questions, and each of which entails particular methodological choices. These are outlined briefly below.

## *Practice*

### *What artistic practices co-constitute spatialities and subjectivities?*

It has been claimed that the only means of researching realities emergent within a phenomenon is to make it operate (Bourdieu, 1991) or specifically, to intervene from within it (Barad, 2007). To this end, as well as interviewing participants, participants and I engaged with the purposeful practice (Stewart, 2007) or material thinking (Bolt, 2007) of our art, working alongside each other during production sessions that were held between opening and closing interviews. Encouraging both researcher and participating artists to become infected by the practice under investigation (Dewsbury, 2010b) supported the development of an *a priori* understanding which recognizes things as moving and flowing and encourages a focus on the particular rather than the general (Knappet, 2011). Consequently, the primary research methods in relation to this question were the artistic practices enacted in the production sessions and the analysis of the verbal and visual data.

## *Materialities*

### *How are these spatialities and subjectivities negotiated materially?*

Mindful of Greenhough's (2010) proposal that we understand the world by engaging with its materialities, the production sessions also featured the use of diverse materials and equipment by participants and myself to different degrees in different production environments. Specifically, I employed discordant situations or deviant practices (Hawkins, 2010), such as the use of unfamiliar materials and diverse locations for production sessions, as a means of inciting a response from participants (Greenhough, 2010) and concentrating things in the manner that Thrift suggested in order to produce moments in which people can think differently (Thrift et al., 2010). Consequently, the primary research methods in relation to this question are the experimental use of tools

and materials, the variation in sites used for production sessions, the visual analysis and the closing interviews.

### *The Intuitive/Implicit*

*How does thinking with the implicit inform our understanding of artistic spatialities and subjectivities?*

By juxtaposing my own artistic practice with that of participating artists I sought to generate boundary understanding (Cazeaux, 2008; Olsson, 1991) between our respective practices. In essence, I endeavoured to use one person's artistic practice (my own) to help illuminate those aspects of my participants' artistic practices that they might otherwise overlook, for example because they are intuitive and therefore taken for granted. To this end I ensured where possible that the materials that I used in the production sessions were different to those used by participants, in order to maximize the contrast between our respective practices. Thus, while I drew on my own artistic practice as a research method I did so in order to highlight the intuitive artistic practices and emergent realities of my participants.

The intuitive here is defined in accordance with Gendlin's implicit 'sixth sense' whereby we know or sense something without being able to explain why, such as a sense of distrust on meeting someone for the first time. In order to gain insights from those instances in which participants are implicitly aware of more than they are able to communicate (Gendlin, 2009b; Laurier, 2010) I drew on recent methodological developments such as Gendlin's procedures for 'focusing' and 'thinking-at-the-edge' (Gendlin, 2009a; 2006, 2009b), Stelter's (2010) body anchored interviewing techniques, and Drew's (2006) employment of re-enactment interviewing. All of these approaches aim to reveal the implicit or the pre-reflective, by helping participants to

reconnect with their situated bodily senses retrospectively and patiently teasing out their own verbal descriptions and evocations of those bodily senses.

While not denying stated scepticism as to the ability to access fully the pre-reflective through verbal means (Shinebourne, 2005; Wrathall, 2011), these approaches consider that the implicit functions more intricately than the logical patterns and concepts that provide the everyday expediency of our cognition and communication (Gendlin, 1993). These body-focused interviewing techniques aim to help participants to form an expression for that which they sense but cannot yet say, rather than relying on linguistic conveniences that do not attend to the implicit (Gendlin, 1995).

Consequently, the primary research methods in relation to this question are the analysis of verbal and visual data from the production sessions and body-focused interviewing.

In summary, within a process of action and reflection (Latham, 2003; Taylor, 2004) involving both interview and artistic production sessions, I employed discordant situations as a means of generating boundary understanding between different practices in order to illuminate those aspects of the participants' artistic practices that would otherwise remain submerged due to their intuitive or implicit nature.

Subsequently, I revisited those practices with participants through body-focused interviewing techniques in order to give voice to the implicit aspects of artistic practice that are constitutive of subjectivities and spatialities but that are elusive of traditional research methods. The organization and execution of this process of action and reflection are detailed in the next section.

## **2.3 Research Methods**

### **2.3.1 Fieldwork**

#### *Participants*

Twelve participants were involved in the research who varied in level of artistic experience and proficiency and who were at different stages in their artistic careers.

Two participants identified themselves as hobbyists, two are at an early stage in their artistic career within the first five years of professional practice, and eight are established in their careers. The careers of these artists varied in terms of the balance between the time dedicated to their individual artistic practice and to the provision of art education at a range of levels.

Artists using two-dimensional media, such as drawing, painting and raised relief work such as needle-arts, rather than those using three-dimensional media, such as pottery and woodturning were invited to participate. Primarily this is in response to the findings of research that I had previously conducted for a Master of Research qualification in psychology, which indicated that artists working in two-dimensional media attributed greater control and agency to their materials and emerging artwork than those working in three-dimensional media (Banfield and Burgess, 2013). The current research seeks to explore this phenomenon further, focusing on the material practices and emergent subjectivities and agencies specifically in artists working in two-dimensional media. In addition, my methodological decision to vary the sites used for production sessions as one means of introducing discordance to participants' artistic practices further encouraged engagement with two-dimensional as opposed to three-dimensional artistic media, as the equipment for two-dimensional media can more easily be transported to different locations than that for three-dimensional media.

Participants were identified through publicity materials for the annual arts festival Oxfordshire Artweeks, except the two hobbyists who were identified by one of the other participants. Although arts festivals are now common across the United Kingdom, my selection of Oxfordshire as the geographic area of interest reflects a number of factors, including its historicity, the festival's focus on open house events, its open rather than selective nature, and my own experience of participating in arts festivals both in Oxfordshire and in Dorset.

The first such factor is that Oxfordshire Artweeks is one of the, if not the, longest-running arts festival in the country, from which others have since sprung, and is subsequently well established. As my initial contact with potential participants was through their open house events as part of Artweeks, the relative familiarity that I could reasonably expect of artists with the operation of Artweeks, given the relatively high number of artists who take part on a regular basis, facilitated this initial contact. Secondly, the emphasis within Oxfordshire Artweeks on open house events, rather than group exhibitions organized at a community or district level, also facilitated the identification of potential participants. As I needed to identify individual practitioners with their specific medium of choice, an arts festival that featured a preponderance of individual or solo exhibitions made this identification easier. Thirdly, at present Oxfordshire Artweeks is an open rather than selective event, meaning that anyone can exhibit their artistic creations regardless of formal training, career success or proficiency. Given the emphasis within my research, outlined in Part 1, on the practices rather than products of art, I was less concerned with the formal recognition of quality in a participant's artistic product or practice than with the currency of their practice. While it might be argued that it takes a certain type of person to exhibit their work publicly, and that as a result my research engages only with the more confident

or outgoing members of the art community in Oxfordshire, I would argue that the open nature of Oxfordshire Artweeks encourages participation from those practitioners who are less confident of their skills and the likely reception of their work, because in the absence of both art critics and gallery commissions Artweeks is a relatively safe environment in which to put these to the test. In this manner, Artweeks functions as a test-bed for aspiring artists and their work and a potential stepping stone on the path to either a new career or more substantive income-generating hobby. Consequently, I consider that the open nature of Oxfordshire Artweeks aided rather than hindered participant recruitment, providing me with access to a broader suite of practising artists – in terms of career status, art form and artistic self-confidence – than might otherwise have been the case.

Finally, having participated in Oxfordshire Artweeks myself in 2008, my ability to talk from my own experience about the festival and the experience of staging an open house event aided the establishment of rapport with potential participants and helped me to present myself as someone for whom it was considered legitimate to conduct the proposed research, particularly given my own lack of formal art training. Oxfordshire Artweeks' open policy not only benefitted my access to a broader range of practitioners in terms of proficiency and training, but also facilitated my own identification as a legitimate practitioner in the field of interest. Although I also participated in the Dorset Art and Crafts Fair (the Dorset equivalent to Oxfordshire Artweeks) in 2007, I opted to conduct the research in Oxfordshire rather than Dorset due to both the nature and timing of their respective festivals. As mentioned above, Oxfordshire's festival primarily features open house exhibitions, whereas from my own experience Dorset's festival features community level exhibitions more strongly, resulting in easier identification of potential participants in Oxfordshire. In addition,

whereas Oxfordshire Artweeks is held in May each year and was subsequently ideally located in my research timetable, the Dorset Art and Crafts Fair takes place later in the summer, which did not fit as conveniently within my research timetable.

Notwithstanding the benefits arising from the open nature of Oxfordshire Artweeks, the focus on such an arts organization and festival as the primary means of accessing artistic practitioners does impose certain constraints on the participants with whom the research could engage. Certain knowledge and competencies are required on the part of artists exhibiting at the festival, including an understanding of what Artweeks is and how it functions, and the ability and willingness to stage an exhibition for public consumption. It is also possible that a number of local artistic practitioners chose not to participate in the festival and were thus effectively excluded from participating in this research. Possible reasons for this include logistical factors associated with the Artweeks festival and the specificity of understandings of art and artist established and maintained by the functioning of Artweeks as an organization, which act as barriers to participation for certain practitioners. Addressing the logistical factors first, the demands placed on participating artists in terms of expected exhibition opening hours might be impractical for some practitioners, perhaps due to family or other work commitments, while the emphasis on open house events might discourage practitioners from participating if they feel uncomfortable welcoming members of the public into their home. In addition, the classification of different artistic media or types of practice by Artweeks recognizes some media at the expense of others, with potential implications for engagement with the festival by practitioners of different media across the Artweeks region. Compared to the equivalent event in Dorset, which explicitly caters for 'art' and 'craft', Oxfordshire Artweeks seemingly favours certain practices or media that it deems recognizable as 'art'. As participating artists are required to identify

their practice in relation to a number of specified categories (e.g. sculpture, painting, photography, textiles, digital media), practitioners who feel that their particular practice is not accommodated by the available categories might be discouraged from participating. Although categories of ‘miscellaneous’, ‘mixed media’ and ‘various media’ are also employed by Artweeks, these terms are applied variously to exhibitions featuring more than one medium (whether individually or collectively staged), and certain group exhibitions (such as those staged by schools or support groups for individuals living with certain health conditions), as well as exhibitions featuring a medium not specifically classified (e.g. Japanese flower arranging). Given the potential differences in the number of expected visitors to or sales arising from such exhibitions due to the lack of clarity regarding the nature and status of the practice as an artistic medium, practitioners of media not explicitly recognized by Artweeks might be less inclined to participate in the festival. Consequently, many local artistic practitioners who might otherwise have been able and willing to participate in the research were effectively excluded from doing so by virtue of factors associated with the functioning of Artweeks as an organization and festival, and my focus on Artweeks as a means of accessing potential participants.

This constitutive exclusion of certain practitioners and practices from the Artweeks festival by the functioning of Artweeks as an organization establishes and maintains a certain cultural milieu within the region of its activity, recognizing and supporting some media and practices but denying and excluding others. This productive power is reinforced through the cultural literacy and knowledge assumed among Artweeks visitors and consumers, who engage with the festival on a shared understanding of which practices constitute art, thereby confirming participating practitioners as artists and excluded practitioners as non-artists. My own uncertainty as to how I would be

received as an artist, given that my customary medium is hand embroidery, can be considered indicative of the power of this milieu in determining the level and nature of engagement by practitioners of under-specified media with Artweeks as an organization and festival. In this manner, Artweeks acts as a gate-keeper, providing access only to a certain subset of local artistic practitioners, identifiable as such within this Artweeks-specified understanding of art, with implications for the media and practitioners with whom this research could engage. Although this is offset to a degree by the inclusion within the project of two participants who do not exhibit as part of the Artweeks festival, and one of whom practices a medium (pastels) not explicitly recognized by Artweeks, the functioning of Artweeks necessarily influences the practitioners and practices involved in this research due to the priority afforded to Artweeks as a means of accessing potential participants.

Despite these limitations, I prioritized Artweeks as a vehicle for accessing potential participants due to the purposive rather than representative nature of the research, the higher response rate that I anticipated from face-to-face contact at an open house event compared to unsolicited correspondence either by letter or email, and the ability to approach only those practitioners whose practice was appropriate for the research rather than potentially having to turn away interested practitioners of media unsuitable for the research as part of a less targeted recruitment process.

Using the Artweeks catalogues from the years 2011 and 2012 I compiled a long list of potential participants, based upon the artistic medium under which the artists advertised. From this I devised a short list of potential participants to visit during Artweeks 2012 as a means of finding out more about their work, introducing myself and exploring initial levels of interest in my research. This short list aimed to maximize the number of participants that I could visit during the Artweeks festival and

took into account exhibition location within the city, ease of travel between sites and the opening hours of the exhibitors. The long-list of approximately 50 potential participants reduced to a short list of approximately 30, of which I managed to visit 24. Following Artweeks 2012 I formally invited 16 artists to take part in the research on the basis of their initial expressions of interest, of which 10 kindly agreed. Two further participants were identified by one of these ten artists through a painting group of which they are all members.

All participants were female. This is largely a function of the imbalance in the number of male and female artists advertising in the Artweeks brochure as practising in a medium of relevance to the research. Of those artists advertising under an individual name that clearly indicates gender and under a medium of interest to the research within the city region in the Artweeks catalogue for 2012 approximately 33% were male. My long list reflected the same gender balance, although this fell to 25% potential male participants on my short list. Of those male artists, two fell outside the remit for the research due to the nature of the work exhibited, for example, because the work indicated historic rather than current practice. A further two exhibitions were closed at the time I visited and logistics did not allow me to return. The male artist I did approach in relation to their potential participation expressed initial interest in the research but ultimately declined to take part. Consequently, although there is a gender imbalance in the participant sample, this is, at its heart, a reflection of a genuine gender imbalance in the artistic community as evidenced in the Artweeks catalogue for 2012.

There is also an age imbalance in the participant sample, with only one participant below the age of 40. This is also largely a feature of my methodological and logistical choices. As I needed to identify individual artists, my selection of potential

participants to visit during Artweeks was largely restricted to artists staging solo exhibitions. Given both the cost involved in participating in Artweeks and the simple need for a house or equivalent venue in which to host an open house exhibition, it is not surprising that open house events attract relatively older and more financially secure exhibitors than collective exhibitions, which cater more effectively for younger artists who perhaps do not own their own home or who prefer (or need) to share the burden of cost in hosting an event. It is worth noting that the two participants who had graduated within the three years prior to the research, having undertaken art education following previous careers in their thirties and sixties, staged solo open house events in Artweeks 2012 as they were in a position – financially and domestically – to do so. Consequently, it seems that it is not how recently someone has graduated that influences whether they exhibit individually or collectively, but their age and its associated socio-economic implications. While my inability to associate individual media with individual artists within group entries in the Artweeks catalogue resulted in group exhibitors being under-represented in the research, the shorter duration of practice among younger practitioners who are more likely to exhibit in groups raises questions as to whether it would have been appropriate to involve such young practitioners in this research, as younger practitioners might not have had sufficient experience of their practice to embed the implicit practices of concern to this research. Similarly, had all the participants only taken up their artistic practice recently I would have been concerned that they might not have had sufficient time to establish and embed implicit aspects of their practice. However, only one participant had taken up her practice within the last few years; the others have all been practising their art, either professionally or recreationally, for decades. While the majority of participants took up their artistic practice professionally following a previous career, in most cases

it is primarily their second career that has provided their living, illustrating that artistic practice among these participants is far more than a retirement hobby. As it is the duration and currency of their practice in establishing and exhibiting respectively the implicit aspects of their practices that are important to this research, I consider the age distribution to be more of a benefit than a hindrance.

I originally intended to work with six of the participants individually and six as two groups of three. However, two members of one of the groups withdrew from the research following their initial interviews. As these participants confirmed that they were happy for me to continue to use their interview data, and the third group member was happy to continue as an individual, I did not recruit replacement participants.

Brief biographical details and a summary of the participants' own descriptions of their artistic works and practices, along with a summary of their artistic practices as witnessed during the production sessions are provided for each participating artist at the end of Part 2.

### ***Interview and production sessions***

All preliminary interviews were conducted on an individual basis and these interviews asked questions about the participants' art works, their artistic practices, the materials they use and their usual places of production. The schedule that I used to guide these interviews is provided in Appendix B. Between the preliminary and closing interviews I held two production sessions with each participant, in which I worked on my own artistic practice alongside participating artists (see below for details). The closing interview reviewed the research process, followed up on specific issues from the preceding sessions and incorporated the body focused interviewing techniques. These techniques drew on recent methodological developments in psychology (Drew, 2006; Gendlin, 2009a; 1993, 1995, 2006, 2009b; Krycka, 2009; Stelter, 2010), in particular

Gendlin's methods of focusing, concerned with accessing and attending to the implicit, and thinking-at-the-edge, concerned with developing concepts on the basis of this access to the implicit (Gendlin, 2009a; 1993, 1995, 2006, 2009b). Further detail regarding the application of these methods and their relative effectiveness is provided in Part 3 in the paper *Geography meets Gendlin*. There was a degree of consistency between the closing interview schedules for different participants in terms of reviewing the research process, but each schedule was also tailored to reflect the specific research settings and experiences of the individual concerned. An example of one of these interview schedules is provided in Appendix C. Closing interviews were also held individually, except for the group who were interviewed together, as this reflected the interactivity between these participants during their production sessions.

The production sessions consisted of artistic practice, during which I worked artistically alongside participating artists as a form of present companionship in an attempt to generate places of possibility (Thorburn and Hibbard, 2008) between our respective practices. During these sessions, researcher and participant(s) functioned as co-experimenters artistically in the same location of practice (Sumara, 1998), although as I alone fulfilled a formal research role we were not co-researchers (Wicks and Reason, 2009) academically. For the first production session participants used materials and equipment familiar to them and this session was usually held in a location that was also familiar to the participant, such as their own home or studio. For the second production session, however, I introduced discordance into their practices, requesting that co-experimenters either worked in unfamiliar locations or settings, or used materials and equipment that they would not usually use, or a combination of both. There were some exceptions to this, resulting from the logistics of the research settings. For example, one group of participants met at the home of one participant,

which was a setting familiar for the host but not the other participants in the group. Similarly, where familiar materials and equipment were used in both production sessions, both locations were unfamiliar. In addition, the materials and equipment that I used in a production session were partly determined by those used by the participants. As I tried to maximize the contrast between the materials used by the respective parties, when a participant elected to work wet (e.g. watercolours) I worked dry (e.g. pastels) and when a participant worked in colour I worked in monotone. Again there were exceptions to this practice, but where both co-experimenters worked in the same medium, the production environment was equally unfamiliar to each of us.

My intention in introducing discordance to the second production session was to vary the conditions of an artist's practice, disrupting or disturbing their habitual practice (Crouch, 2003; Harrison, 2000; Hawkins, 2010) in such a way as to alert them to aspects of their practices that they might otherwise take for granted or overlook in standard retrospective interview accounts of their practices. Supplementing the juxtaposition of the practices of participant and researcher as a means of highlighting the implicit or unspoken aspects of the artists' practices through comparison between our respective practices, the introduction of discordance to participants' practices sought to highlight the implicit or unspoken aspects of participants' practices through comparison between their practices in familiar and unfamiliar circumstances. In essence I sought to employ difference in practices as a productive force (Marston and de Leeuw, 2013) in the generation of understanding about those practices. In generating understanding at the boundaries between practices I sought to understand better the practices themselves.

All participants completed two production sessions, except for one group of artists who regularly work together to draw dance and whose public performance of their

work together (scheduled to be production session 2) was cancelled. However, each of these participants completed two activities in their rehearsal (production session 1). These artists also differed from other participants in the nature of the discordance in the research sessions. Despite being familiar with their local rehearsal space and with the dancers and musicians with whom they normally work, as well as with the materials and equipment that they employ in those sessions, the improvised nature of the sessions means that even in a familiar rehearsal environment, the unknown plays a large part in these sessions. While the intention had been to compare the rehearsal and performance environments, the cancellation of the performance did not eradicate discordance from the practices of these artists because discordance is inherent within the improvised nature of their work.

All sessions were voice recorded; production sessions were also video recorded. A summary of the dates and durations of interview and production sessions for all participating artists is presented in Table 1. In addition, for those participants who completed both production sessions, a summary of the media used by participants and researcher, the locations of those sessions and the nature of discordance for participants and researcher for those sessions is detailed in Table 2.

*Table 1. Schedule of interview and production sessions*

Participant	Interview 1		Production session 1		Production session 2		Interview 2	
	Date	Duration	Date	Duration	Date	Duration	Date	Duration
<b>Jane Mollison</b>	07 Jun 2012	1 hr 35	08 Jun 2012	2 hrs 02	14 Jun 2012	1 hr 50	26 Jun 2012	1 hr 59
<b>Laura Degenhardt</b>	15 Jun 2012	34 mins	15 Jun 2012	2 hrs 08	25 Jun 2012	3 hrs 34	02 Jul 2012	1 hr 31
<b>Katherine Shock</b>	24 Sep 2012	27 mins	02 Oct 2012	1 hr 33	12 Oct 2012	1 hr 25	19 Oct 2012	53 mins
<b>Polly Woolstone</b>	31 Jul 2012	31 mins	21 Sep 2012	1 hr 55	11 Oct 2012	2 hrs	15 Oct 2012	43 mins
<b>Philippa Redman</b>	10 Jul 2012	1 hr 06	03 Aug 2012	2 hrs 15	09 Aug 2012	2 hrs 16	16 Aug 2012	2 hrs 04
<b>Yoko Jones</b>	14 Jul 2012	17 mins						
<b>Marnie Watson</b>	03 Aug 2012	26 mins						
<b>Clare Bassett</b>	24 Jul 2012	1 hr 19	04 Oct 2012	1 hr 51	Performance cancelled		09 Oct 2012	56 mins
<b>Susan Moxley</b>	09 Jul 2012	33 mins					08 Oct 2012	29 mins
<b>Kassandra Isaacson</b>	11 Jul 2012	50 mins					18 Oct 2012	53 mins
<b>Jane O'Brien</b>	28 Aug 2012	48 mins	Participant withdrew					
<b>Ticia Lever</b>	14 Aug 2012	34 mins	Participant withdrew					

Table 2. Production session locations, media and nature of discordance

Name	Production session 1				Production session 2			
	Site	Familiarity <sup>+</sup>	Medium	Familiarity <sup>+</sup>	Site	Familiarity <sup>+</sup>	Medium	Familiarity <sup>+</sup>
<b>Jane Mollison</b>	Jane's home	U *	Chinese brush and ink	U*	Jane's husband's allotment	U*	Pencil, watercolour	F
Researcher		U	Soft pastel	U		U	Pen	U
<b>Laura Degenhardt</b>	Laura's studio	F	Oil and oil pastel	F	City sightseeing tour bus	U	Watercolour paint	U
Researcher		U	Watercolour	U		U	Watercolour pencils	U
<b>Katherine Shock</b>	Headington Hill Hall	U	Pencil, ink and watercolour	F	Oxford to Abingdon boat trip	U	Watercolour and pen	F
Researcher		U	Pencil and pen	U		U	Watercolour	U
<b>Polly Woolstone</b>	Researcher's home	U	Oil pastel and inktense <sup>^</sup>	U	Researcher's home	U	Stitch (machine)	F
Researcher		F	Stitch (hand)	F		F	Stitch (hand)	F
<b>Philippa Redman</b>	Philippa's home	F	Watercolour	F	Philippa's home	F	Acrylic, chalk and pastel	U
<b>Yoko Jones</b>		U	Pencil and pen	F		U	Oil pastel and watercolour	U
<b>Marnie Watson</b>		U	Soft pastel	F		U	Watercolour	U
Researcher		U	Watercolour	U		U	Soft pastels	U

NOTES

<sup>+</sup> For familiarity: F is familiar, U is unfamiliar

\* Site or medium may be familiar but not for use in current manner. e.g. Jane Mollison was familiar with the room that we used for session 1 but not as a site of production. Similarly, although she is used to working with Chinese brush and ink she is not used to using them for landscapes.

<sup>^</sup> Inktense is a medium that Polly had recently discovered, which she described as a cross between oil, watercolour and ink. It is applied in pencil form and then blended with the addition of water.

### ***Sketch-notebooks***

All participants whose involvement entailed working outside of their normal practice were invited to keep a sketch-notebook for the duration of their involvement with the research in order to record anything that occurred between research sessions.

Participants were provided with a sketchbook for this purpose. The content of the notebooks and the emergent artworks were used as a prompt for discussion during the research sessions.

### ***Exhibition***

Although I had intended to hold an exhibition of participant works created within the research as part of Artweeks 2013, as a means of thanking the artists for their involvement, this exhibition had to be cancelled due to difficulties in securing a suitable venue for a sufficient duration of event.

### ***Auto-ethnographic artworks***

In addition to my employment of artistic practice as a fieldwork method to juxtapose two people's practices so as to reveal aspects of participating artists' practices that might otherwise go unnoticed, I also used artistic practice auto-ethnographically to explore conceptual and experiential aspects of the research as it unfolded. Recognizing auto-ethnography less as a methodology and more as an epistemological orientation or sensibility to the relationships among experience, knowledge and representation (Butz, 2010), this aspect of the research linked my contemplative theoretical and practical empirical work (Barrett, 2007; Davey, 2006; Dewsbury et al., 2002) through artistic and affective means.

One set of such artworks was developed in parallel with the fieldwork, with one in particular being used as the basis for my practice in one of the production sessions.

These works (*Material and Immaterial*, *Boundary Understanding*, *Absent Presences* and *Producing Moments*) are used as frontispieces for each of the four parts of this thesis, but they are more than illustrative or evidential (Crang, 2003; Iggulden, 2007; Ryan, 2003; Snyder, 1980) as their production served to influence my engagement with both theoretical and empirical aspects of my research as it unfolded. Not only does working visually influence what it is possible to say (Foster and Lorimer, 2007), but working both visually and materially with theoretical concepts in artistic practice can influence how we subsequently work with those concepts academically. The relevance and value of each of these artworks to the research is explained in the conclusion to the part in which it features.

The benefits identified during the production of the original set of auto-ethnographic works led me to undertake a further three after the conclusion of my fieldwork. These works (*Curious Vampirism*, *Ecstasy of Spaces* and *Mutant Rhythmic Impetus*) were undertaken to support my ongoing engagement with theoretical materials during the analysis of the data and write-up of the thesis. These are presented below with a brief indication of their relevance to the latter stages of the research.



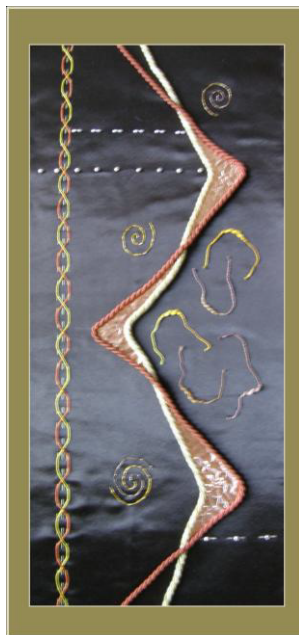
**Figure 5.** *Ecstasy of Spaces* (2013)

*Ecstasy of Spaces* works with ideas of space and place, in particular the elusory nature of spatial memories (Quoniam, 1988), and draws on my own reflections on the ephemeral nature of spatial relations to destabilize notions of solid and consistent spatial identities.



**Figure 6. *Curious Vampirism* (2013)**

*Curious Vampirism* considers the draining of the event for the sake of analytic structures and processes (Dewsbury et al., 2002), questions the relation between event and abstraction in which each is a constitutive absence for the other, and posits abstraction in a more affirmative manner (McCormack, 2012) as its own event.



**Figure 7. *Mutant Rhythmic Impetus* (2013)**

*Mutant Rhythmic Impetus* is a concerted effort on my part to relate more effectively with ideas of temporality (Bergson, 1946; Doel, 2000; Lefebvre, 1991) in artistic practice, but also to entwine this with the varied rhythms of the research process in order to consider the research and its constituent practices as my own mutant rhythmic impetus establishing an existential edifice (Guattari, 1995).

As performative research (Sullivan, 2010), artistic practice can help to push or test our conceptual understanding, with implications for how we develop our academic work both theoretically and reflexively, by changing how we engage with both its contemplative and practical elements. Just as in figurative art pictures are said to be not just representations but depictions of objects that we determine when attending to

what is in front of us (Snyder, 1980), so with these conceptual artworks: they determine the concepts with which I grappled during their production with productive force for how I have employed those concepts subsequently in my academic work. Through this auto-ethnographic engagement with artistic practice, running parallel to the development of the text (Farnell, 1994), I have tried to engage with artistic practice as rigorously as I have engaged with discursive practice (Rahn, 2008) in the working and reworking of theoretical and empirical materials.

### **2.3.2 Analysis**

#### ***Transcripts***

Several methodologies exist for the analysis of verbal data, including grounded theory, thematic analysis, and ethnographic and phenomenological approaches. This research is most closely aligned to phenomenological approaches although, as detailed below, my analytical methods are not a faithful application of these approaches either. As my focus is oriented towards the exploration of experiences rather than the generation of theories, I have not adopted a grounded theory approach. I was also wary of applying a thematic approach as less frequently occurring features can be just as insightful as more common themes, and I wanted to remain alert to nuance in the data as well as the obvious. While some aspects of my research are somewhat ethnographic in nature, such as my co-experimenting with participants, my research falls outside the ethnographic family of research methods in several ways. For example, my engagement with participants was not characterized by prolonged immersion in the worlds of those participants (Banister et al., 1994; Robson, 2002) but by short repeated periods of activity alongside them. In addition, my research focus is on specific

experiences during particular practices, not on social issues or shared cultures (Robson, 2002). Finally, and most importantly, ethnographic research approaches emphasize the need for researchers not to structure the research environment in any way (Banister et al., 1994) whereas my research entailed considerable structuring of the research environment on my part. Rather, given the theoretical underpinnings within which my research is grounded and the exploratory and experience orientation of the study, phenomenological analytical methods seem most appropriate as a starting point for my analysis. However, and as will become clear, my research is not a perfect fit with these methods either.

Phenomenology is reported to focus on the description of meanings (Giorgi, 1983) by attending to intentional objects from the perspective of consciousness (Giorgi, 2009), because all that we can know or speak about must come through consciousness (Giorgi, 1983). While this is consistent with conventional approaches to the analysis of interview data, such a focus on conscious meanings seems ill-suited to non-representational and post-humanist research oriented so strongly towards the pre-cognitive or implicit and the conditions of emergence rather than the essence of content. However, phenomenology has also been proposed to describe experience as lived and things in their appearing such that it has the capacity to go beyond surface meanings to access the implicit (Finlay, 2009). Construed in this manner, phenomenology accommodates not only knowingly intentional acts but also those implicit or pre-reflective aspects of activity that might not feature in discursive accounts of experience. With this performative orientation, more-than-representational experience can be described in more-than-verbal ways and, as discussed in Part 1, artistic practice itself has been posited as a particular kind of phenomenology (Crowell, 2011; Parry and Wrathall, 2011), through which we can go beyond the

visible and expressible to that which articulates them (Crowell, 2011; Hans-Pile, 2011). Both phenomenology and artistic practice can go beyond the representational, and artistic practice is one way in which phenomenology can function. Consequently, phenomenology provides not only my philosophical starting point, as detailed in Part 1, but also my methodological starting point, although the research design still demands a degree of distortion of phenomenological procedures.

The analysis of the transcripts for both interview and production sessions was phenomenologically inspired, but did not adhere rigidly to the procedural steps of descriptive phenomenological analysis (DPA) (Giorgi, 1992, 2009; Smith, 2010). This was so for three main reasons. Firstly, in contrast to focus within phenomenological research on the essences of experience, my non-representational and post-humanist attention is directed towards the identification of the conditions of emergence (Butler, 1993; Nelson, 1999; Simpson, 2009) of experience and subjectivity, concerned with event (Anderson, 2004; Dewsbury, 2003; Doel, 1999; Fraser et al., 2005; Massey, 2005; Thrift, 2000, 2004; Wylie, 2006) rather than essence in recognition that the world is not static (Thrift et al., 2010). Secondly, whereas DPA emphasizes the identification of essences within phenomena and therefore focuses on similarities between accounts, I am as interested in differences between participant accounts and practices as I am similarities. Consequently, my research is flavoured as much by phenomenography (Barnard et al., 1999; Marton, 1981, 1986; Sjöström and Dahlgren, 2002; Svensson, 1997), which highlights differences, as phenomenology. In relation to these first two reasons, my approach here in aligning my work to phenomenology but with greater concern for differences and processes of emergence than is traditional, is reminiscent of Gendlin's description of himself as a phenomenologist who is unconventionally concerned with differences and progression between concepts

(Gendlin, 1989). Thirdly, the available guidance for conducting DPA is specifically designed for the analysis of interview transcripts and not for analysis of practice based research endeavours or other forms of data, and as I sought a degree of consistency between my treatment of interview and practice based data, DPA would only be appropriate for a proportion of the data to which I sought to apply the analysis.

In addition, phenomenological methods require the adoption of the phenomenological reduction (Finlay, 2008, 2009; Giorgi, 2008, 2009; Kvale, 1983) or attitude of openness (Finlay, 2008, 2009) whereby researchers break from their everyday assumptions (Giorgi, 2009) and suspend their presuppositions (Finlay, 2008). On the one hand, this orientation towards discovery, in which researchers are aware of but choose not to define what they are looking for in their data (Giorgi, 2008), is consistent with non-representationally-oriented research, but uncertainty prevails as to whether such pre-suppositions should be bracketed (Finlay, 2009) to engender a degree of neutrality in the research process, rendered consciously present rather than absent (Kvale, 1983), or exploited in order to help shape the emerging research (Finlay, 2008, 2009).

My own view is in keeping with Finlay's idea of a dance between bracketing and exploiting pre-suppositions (Finlay, 2008, 2009), taking care not to influence the unfolding research excessively but being mindful of the impossibility of having no impact on one's own research, and being strategic in the use of one's own involvement in the research for the benefit of the research. Clearly, the phenomenological idea of bracketing has links with notions of reflexivity, and how each is handled in a research process will necessarily have implications for the other. In the following paragraphs I detail the steps that I took to try to attain the phenomenological reduction in a research design slightly at odds with a phenomenological archetype and my strategic use of my

own involvement in the research. How I sought to address the associated issues of reflexivity is addressed later in Part 2 as part of my consideration and evaluation of issues of quality control in my research.

My extensive use of my own artistic practice runs against prevailing advice concerning descriptive phenomenological methods, as the need to attain the phenomenological reduction precludes the researcher from drawing on their own contribution to the research, to the extent that they should minimize their own presence in the data lest they slip into the dual role of researcher and participant (Giorgi, 2010). Clearly, my adoption of co-experimenting as a research method places me firmly in the dual-role category, potentially invalidating the use of DPA. However, two points are worth emphasizing in defence of my unconventional methods.

Although I use my own artistic practice throughout the research process, including as an explicit research method in juxtaposition to the practices of the participating artists, this use of my own practice is not designed to inject my own data into the research findings but to elicit from participants more detailed information about their practices, particularly the implicit or intuitive aspects of their practices, which might otherwise remain unnoticed or be taken for granted (Foster and Lorimer, 2007) within their own artistic conventions (Colloredo-Mansfeld, 2011). Similarly, the use of discordant situations was designed to alert participants to aspects of their practices that they might normally take for granted, disturbing their habitual practices (Harrison, 2000) in order to find what is significant in the cracks between habitual acts (Crouch, 2003).

Secondly, and in addition to these methodological endeavours, juxtaposed discordant practices can also be considered to bring specific advantages that help to counteract my personal immersion in the research environment. The mutual encounter with discordance between co-experimenters helps to protect against the danger of

excessively internalizing local perspectives inherent within situations of co-learning (Prentice, 2008) through the function of discordance in heightening attention to one's own practice and what is different about it rather than encouraging the adoption of the practices of others. Furthermore, discordance can be conceived as an alternative means of attaining the phenomenological reduction by exposing and unsettling those aspects of the researcher's ways of understanding (Hawkins, 2010) and practices that might otherwise inadvertently influence their engagement with the research encounter.

Consequently, although my personal immersion in the research settings as co-experimenter prevented me from minimizing my impact on the research encounters, my impact on the research was designed to maximize the contribution of the participating artists by supporting their awareness of the pre-reflective aspects of their own practices. Additionally, through the introduction of discordance to my own practices as well as to those of participating artists I turned my own research methods back on myself (Buchli and Lucas, 2001) in an effort to distance myself from my own habitual practices (Colloredo-Mansfeld, 2011; Kraut, 2007), thereby compensating to a certain degree for the limited scope for me to attain the phenomenological reduction through conventional means.

The degree of my own involvement in the research, and the transcribing of the voice recordings and analysis of visual data as the research unfolded, also facilitated the emergence of areas of analytical interest while fieldwork was ongoing. Thus, while the formal analysis of transcripts was conducted after completion of all fieldwork sessions to ensure that no one participant influenced the overall findings disproportionately, the practices of fieldwork and analysis were more iterative in nature than the timing of the formal analysis would suggest.

Transcripts for both interviews and production sessions were analysed in their raw form without the imposition of punctuation or the simplification of language, although for the sake of ease of legibility, quotations employed in this thesis have been punctuated and simplified where necessary to convey the meaning succinctly. In contrast to the recommended approach for DPA, I did not rephrase the content of the transcripts into my own phraseology as, for reasons of transparency, I deemed it more important to remain faithful to the language of participants. However, consistent with DPA, units of meaning within the transcripts were identified and extracted. I annotated the transcripts with ‘content tags’ – an indication of the meaning but not necessarily a comprehensive reproduction of the statement – and an indication of the line number in the transcript where the full meaning can be found. An extract from an annotated transcript indicating the identification of these content tags is provided in Appendix D. Having compiled a composite list of all content tags across all research sessions for each participant, these content tags were subsequently reviewed to identify emergent commonalities, discrepancies and threads for further analysis across participants.

Unsurprisingly, the predominant commonalities were those areas of analytic interest that had emerged during the fieldwork. An example of content tags for all participants in relation to one of these emergent areas of interest is provided in Appendix E. An equivalent content summary was developed for each of the substantive papers submitted in Part 3, and these content summaries provided the basis for further analysis and the development of these papers. From this starting point, further detail, nuance and uncertainty within and between transcripts and participants could be unearthed by returning to the transcripts in full. The incomplete nature of some of the content tags was helpful in this regard, as it meant that the analysis remained rooted in the full transcripts rather than becoming abstracted onto the content summaries,

potentially allowing for a fuller more thorough analysis than might otherwise be the case.

### ***Video footage and body-focused interviewing***

Mirroring the approach adopted for the analysis of verbal data, the video footage was analysed to identify units of meaning: actions, expressions or changes in tempo of movement that were either characteristic or uncharacteristic of an artist's practice for that session. This analysis involved a number of steps. On initial viewing I noted down words or phrases that for me reflected the nature of the participant's engagement with their practice and included factors such as the nature of motions (slow, smooth, dabbing, blotting), the nature of marks made (heavy, dark line, rapid squiggle), periodicity (rhythmic, jerky), posture (reverse hold), and orientation to materials (moves paper, no contact with surface). In general, the longer the footage the more repetitive the commentary became. This initial process enabled me to gain a sense of motions and material practices that were both characteristic and out of character for that particular participant in that particular session. I viewed the footage a second time, this time focusing not on the specific engagement of the participant with their materials but considering the broader research setting in order to identify any potential influences on the participant's material engagements that might affect my observations from the first viewing. On occasion this viewing was particularly helpful in highlighting some potentially significant aspects of participant practices that I had not noticed on the more detailed viewing, such as not perceiving that one participant a) was left handed and b) used both hands simultaneously at one point. This broader viewing was also helpful in analysing the group sessions as it enabled real-time comparison of the participants' practices and highlighted very different engagements

with the paper surfaces they were each using, which I might not have noticed had I been analysing each participant separately.

Reconsidering the notes from the initial viewing in light of the second viewing enabled me to revisit particular aspects or periods of the footage to refine my account of characteristic and uncharacteristic features of the participant's practice in that session. This further enabled me to identify shorter clips within the footage that collectively could reflect a range of both characteristic and uncharacteristic features. These clips were then extracted from the overall footage, and those which seemed of greatest research interest were marked for use as the basis for body-focused interviewing techniques in their closing interview. An example of an account of the visual analysis conducted is provided in Appendix F, which outlines the notes made during the first viewing, the broader happenings and features identified in the second viewing, and the cataloguing of extracted clips for use in the closing interview for both production sessions for one participant. A list of extracted video clips for all participants is provided in Appendix G, which also provides a brief description of the content of the clip and indicates those clips that were used in the closing interviews.

Different approaches were used with different participants for this part of the closing interview to explore which approaches are most appropriate for field research. In line with Drew's re-enactment interviewing as a means of recreating experience (Drew, 2006), all participants were prompted to re-enact particular motions if that helped to reconnect them with the production session being reviewed. I also used a combination of a stream-lined version of Gendlin's thinking-at-the-edge (Gendlin, 2009a; 2006, 2009b), which allows participants freedom to express what they want to convey using any means they wish without having to stick within accepted linguistic norms, and Stelter's (2010) experience-based body-anchored interviewing technique, which builds

on Gendlin's work and recognizes the lack of linguistic explicitness in relation to the pre-reflective but does not require extensive training. Participants were asked a sequence of questions such as "if you could give a name or put a word to that (whatever they were doing on the video clip) what would it be?" and "does that convey all that you want it to convey?" and "what is it that that is conveying to me?" in order to give voice to the inexpressible. However, whereas Stelter stipulates that the participant should choose the relevant situation on which to focus, in my research this step was determined by my analysis of the visual data and extraction of particular clips. More information regarding the application of these methods and their varied effectiveness, can be found in the paper *Geography meets Gendlin* presented in Part 3.

## 2.4 Quality Assurance in Qualitative Research

Unlike quantitative research, in which concepts such as reliability and validity abound as means by which to assure the quality of research conducted, in qualitative research there are no agreed criteria (Denzin, 2009) and no consistency of terms (Roulston, 2010) with regard to quality assurance. With increasing acceptance of interpretative paradigms came increasing recognition of the difficulty inherent in attempting to neutralize the researcher's presence and the nature of research as relational and subjective (Wiesenfeld, 2000). Borrowing evaluation criteria from other paradigms has been shown to be problematic (Koch and Harrington, 1998), with concerns raised as to the applicability of quality criteria developed for quantitative research to qualitative research (Coyle, 2007; Mays and Pope, 1995; Robson, 2002; Roulston, 2010; Tracy, 2010; Wiesenfeld, 2000). With a cornucopia of distinct concepts for qualitative excellence (Tracy, 2010), doubts persist regarding the rigour of qualitative research (Hammersley, 2010) and how to evaluate the quality of qualitative research, yet if it is accepted that methods do not discover realities but rather participate in their enactment (Law, 2004), the question arises as to who is setting the criteria for the evaluation of research quality (Denzin, 2009).

Issues of quality have been discussed in relation to qualitative research as a broad church by several authors (Flick et al., 2004; Mays and Pope, 1995; Tracy, 2010; Ziebland and McPherson, 2006) and in relation to subfields of qualitative research. Those specific to subfields include considerations that differ between epistemological orientations (Morrow, 2005), and those that differ between methodological approaches. Two examples of the latter with relevance to the current research relate to action research (Huang, 2010) and the exploration of expressive knowledge (Willis,

2008). While distinct subfields may emphasize different aspects or highlight particular features, such as the nature and degree of participation in action research (Huang, 2010), reading across the literature on qualitative research quality reveals considerable consistency around a set of core characteristics. For example, although Tracy (2010) is alone among the authors cited above in highlighting the need for research to address a worthy topic, and Flick et al (2004) explicitly demand an assessment of the limitations of the research, five of Flick et al's (2004) seven criteria for quality match directly to five of Tracy's (2010) eight quality criteria. Furthermore, some apparent differences between criteria are revealed on closer reading to reflect a difference in linguistic specificity rather than a different perspective on the defining features of robust qualitative research. For example, an assessment of the selected method's limitations as requested explicitly by Flick et al (2004) might be incorporated within either of Tracy's (2010) criteria of credibility or meaningful coherence, as the trustworthiness (credibility) or appropriateness (meaningfulness) of the methods used might only be realistically assessed if a researcher has considered the limitations as well as the benefits of their chosen research methods.

Considering the commonalities between all of the references outlined above, it seems that the key characteristics of robust qualitative research can be condensed into five criteria. To this end, qualitative research should:

1. provide comprehensive disclosure of the research methods employed, which should be both ethical and appropriate to the topic under investigation
2. provide transparency of data handling and analysis procedures, allowing assessment of analytical rigour
3. evidence researcher reflexivity, to ensure appropriate and sensitive application of the methods selected

4. present a plausible, meaningful, consistent and coherent report of findings
5. make a significant contribution to the field, extending knowledge or practice

The research findings and consideration of the potential contribution that this research can make to Geography are reported later in this document (see Parts 3 and 4 and the conclusion), and Part 2 has already detailed both the research methods and data handling and analysis procedures employed during my research, outlining their appropriate fit within the ontological and methodological orientation of the research. However, three core issues related to the quality of qualitative research remain to be addressed in this chapter: sample size and saturation, trustworthiness and reflexivity. While reflexivity clearly features in the condensed list of five quality criteria, the issues of sample size and saturation and trustworthiness do not map neatly onto a single criterion but rather overlap with criteria one and two. For example, sample size must be appropriate to both the research method selected and the topic under investigation, but must also be appropriate for the analytical procedures selected. Similarly, evaluation of the plausibility and coherence of research findings can only realistically be undertaken if assurances have been provided that the application of methods of both data collection and data analysis is trustworthy. Consequently, these three characteristics of qualitative research are discussed in detail below.

#### **2.4.1 Sample size and saturation**

Although saturation - the point at which the inclusion of additional data ceases to yield additional findings or insights - has come to be seen as the 'gold standard' for determining purposive sample size in qualitative research, there are no clear guidelines for its determination (Guest et al., 2006; Morse, 1995). Instead it is described as being dependent upon many factors (Mason, 2010) and thereby specific within the context of

individual studies (Bowen, 2008). The more rapidly saturation is reached the fewer participants are deemed necessary for robust analysis, and saturation is deemed to be reached more quickly with: a narrower research domain, and cohesive and theoretically determined samples (Morse, 1995); participants with expertise as compared to novices; well structured interviews and in studies that look for similarities or generalities rather than differences and specifics (Guest et al., 2006); and the number of interviews per participant, and the research method or design (Morse, 2000).

The number of participants in this research is 12. In light of findings (Mason, 2010) in relation to sample sizes in different types of qualitative research, this might seem to be a relatively small number of participants for a qualitative study. However, several features of the current research mean that this is a suitable sample size for my specific research aims and methods. The first and second such features are the narrow domain of my research, focusing on pre-reflective material engagements with spatiality and subjectivity during artistic practice, and the theoretically determined nature of my sample, for example in relation to the artistic media employed by participating artists, both of which features meet the requirements for smaller sample sizes (Morse, 1995). The third feature of my research that warrants a smaller sample size than some qualitative studies is the expertise inherent within my sample (Guest et al., 2006), with all except two participants identifying themselves as professional practising artists, and the same number having received formal art education. While Guest et al's (2006) notion of a well structured interview could be taken to mean a heavily structured interview, thereby questioning the wisdom of using a semi-structured approach to my preliminary and closing interviews, I am mindful of Morrow's (2005) advocacy that a smaller number of open questions tends to generate more valuable data for analysis than a large number of closed questions. In addition, the guiding questions for the

preliminary interviews are theoretically relevant and those for the closing interview are grounded in the research process and experience. I therefore do not consider that my research contravenes Guest et al's (2006) stipulation of well structured interviews warranting small sample sizes, but rather raises questions as to what constitutes a well structured interview. Similarly, as my analysis looks at both generalities and specifics, and similarities and differences, I neither meet nor miss Guest et al's (2006) justifications for a smaller sample size. Furthermore, of Morse's (2000) justifications for smaller sample sizes, my research not only incorporates multiple interviews with each participant but also incorporates different interview styles and multiple data types. Finally, consideration of the overall research design, including my data analysis procedures, supports a smaller sample size. Although I selected to apply phenomenologically inspired analytical methods to the interview transcripts, following the spirit but not the letter of Giorgi's (1983, 1992, 2008, 2009; 2010) advocated methods for Descriptive Phenomenological Analysis, I have detailed both my justification for diverging from those accepted standards and the manner in which I have done so. I have adhered as closely as is appropriate to the analytical method best suited to the focus of my research given the inclusion of other forms of data in my research to which rigorous descriptive phenomenological analytical procedures are not deemed suitable.

I am also mindful of authors who argue that there is no way of knowing when saturation has been reached (Koro-Ljungberg, 2010) or even that a concept such as saturation is feasible, given that it is always possible to generate new insights from additional data (Mason, 2010). Consequently, I have taken account of different perspectives on saturation and sample size in qualitative research to ensure an appropriate number of participants for robust analysis, but I have also borne in mind

that my research is exploratory in nature rather than directed towards theory development and thereby requires an indicative rather than an exhaustive sample. Following Crouch and McKenzie (2006) I have prioritized intensity rather than extensity of research endeavour, and have sought both to maximize the contribution made by each participant and to secure a degree of consistency in the treatment of the different types of data between the interview and production sessions. I am confident that my intended sample size of 12 is sufficient for robust analysis given the narrow domain of my research topic, the expertise of participants, the multiple interviews and diversity of data available per participant, and the theoretically informed determination of the number and nature of the sample.

#### **2.4.2 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is another benchmark of good qualitative research, adopted in lieu of reliability and validity criteria that would apply to quantitative research and often associated with clear documentation of the research process and transparency with regard to analysis and data management (Mays and Pope, 1995; Morrow, 2005; Tracy, 2010). However, for my research I have adopted a broader notion of trustworthiness, which incorporates robustness of research design, disclosure of methods, transparency of analysis, and faithfulness to participants (Galman, 2009). As the disclosure of research methods and transparency of analysis were detailed earlier in Part 2, I focus here on the steps that I took to ensure trustworthiness in relation to robustness of research design and faithfulness to participants.

To ensure that my research design was robust in addition to the issues of saturation discussed in the previous section I focused on issues of duration, diversity, comprehensiveness and balance. Duration applied to both participant engagement and

analytical process. By engaging with participants on a number of occasions over a period of four or more weeks I ensured that the data generated by each participant presented a more comprehensive reflection of that participant and their artistic practice than might have been secured with a single research encounter. In addition, reviewing the emerging verbal and visual data throughout the fieldwork process rather than conducting all of the analysis once fieldwork had been completed, afforded the analysis greater sensitivity to subtle changes over the course of the research process, not only in relation to participant behaviour, experience and accounts but also in relation to my own research practice. Consequently, the duration of different research activities generated a more thorough analysis.

Similarly, the diversity of artistic media, styles, tasks undertaken, sites employed, and research methods executed provided multimodal data (Dicks et al., 2011; Hurdley and Dicks, 2011). This allowed for triangulation of analysis between data types for each participant, not as a means to generate an average or composite for that participant but to generate a fuller and more nuanced account of that participant and their artistic practice. To ensure that my research was as comprehensive as possible, the ongoing engagement with participants and provision of the sketch-notebooks enabled research-relevant events that occurred between research sessions to be captured and considered. The duration of the research process also allowed for topics previously covered to be revisited if desired and for cumulative accounts and descriptions to be generated for each participant. In addition, the phenomenologically inspired analytical method ensured that all data are considered in the analysis (Ziebland and McPherson, 2006), even if not all of it is reflected in the research report. Finally, to ensure that my analysis was balanced and in addition to the steps taken towards reflexivity outlined below, I actively sought negative cases that would challenge emerging findings (Mays

and Pope, 1995). These steps helped me to consider the data from different perspectives and thereby develop comprehensive, thorough and balanced findings.

I also sought to remain faithful to my participants (Galman, 2009) during both the fieldwork and the analysis stages of my research in other ways. Providing for participant engagement over a period of time and the diversity of means by which participants engaged with the research process maximized the contribution that each participant could make, and the open style of questioning in the preliminary interviews provided as much scope as possible for participants to direct the content of the interview. Involving participants in the body-focused and visual data analyses also provided an innovative means by which participants could reflect on the research process as well as on their artistic practice and allowed participants to develop or review their earlier contributions to and involvement with the research. During the analysis stage I sought to stay as close to the data as possible, keeping the participants at the centre of the interpretation (Savin-Baden, 2004). I also sought to allow thematic issues and findings to emerge rather than seeking out specific topics, although as indicated earlier the degree of my own immersion in the research led to the identification of certain areas of analytical interest in advance of the formal analysis taking place. I also sought to retain both the participants' own language (Barnard et al., 1999) and the nuances (Ziebland and McPherson, 2006) and any inconsistencies between different data modalities or research sessions that emerged in the analysis. As with the triangulation of multimodal data for each participant, I aimed to preserve and reflect any unresolved inconsistencies rather than erase them through an averaging process.

### **2.4.3 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity has been variously defined as explicit self-aware meta-analysis (Finlay, 2002) and active reflection on one's own experience in accounting for the interpretative resources brought to bear during the research process (Burman, 1997). In essence then, reflexivity recognizes that researchers are integral to the world that they study (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003) and is concerned with a researcher's endeavours to account for their own influence on the research that they conduct. In particular, reflexivity in research has been credited with enhancing the plausibility of the research (Koch and Harrington, 1998), providing opportunities for researchers to relate to their data and analysis in different ways (Finlay, 2002) thereby generating more thorough analysis. However, reflexivity has been described as poorly operationalized (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003) and as failing to enhance transparency if attention is drawn excessively to the researcher rather than the research (Tomkins, 2011). While acknowledging the limitations inherent in attempts to conduct research reflexively, reflexivity is considered by some no longer to be a luxury (Denzin and Lincoln, 1995) but a necessity in qualitative research, and a wealth of literature indicates growing sophistication in the quest for reflexive research.

Of Finlay's (2002) five types of reflexivity the current research most closely reflects both inter-subjective reflection as it explores mutual meanings between researcher and participant/s that emerge through the research process, and mutual collaboration as participants are themselves involved in aspects of the analysis, particularly in relation to the visual data. My research does not align with the other three of Finlay's (2002) categories of introspection, social critique and discursive deconstruction as I do not use introspection as primary evidence, I am not addressing power imbalances and I do not focus on linguistic ambiguities.

As indicated when I detailed my analytical methods, reflexivity is of particular significance to my research as a function of two features: my conjoined roles of academic researcher and creative practitioner, and my employment of phenomenologically inspired methods. In relation to the former, reflexivity brings the opportunity to identify one's own multiple and shifting subjectivities (Ogle and Glass, 2006) and the polytheistic context of my dual roles of academic researcher and creative practitioner (Biggs, 2009; Farnell, 1994) introduces a dichotomy of professional subjectivities at the heart of the research design. This multiplicity of roles complicates efforts to balance the scientific demand for objectivity and the emphasis within qualitative research on subjectivity (Tomkins, 2011), and in my particular research required the mediation of the self-seeking partiality of the artist and the studious impartiality of the scholar (Biggs, 2009). This is in addition to the multiple subjectivities that naturally emerge through a research process involving multiple participants, multiple research activities at multiple sites and that is conducted over a number of occasions. It has therefore been essential to try to track the shifting sands of my own subjectivity as the research has unfolded in order to avoid the overshadowing of my participants' perspectives and responses by my own.

In relation to the latter, the phenomenological process of bracketing (Finlay, 2008, 2009; Giorgi, 2008, 2009; Kvale, 1983) requires reflexivity in order for the researcher to absorb the participants' naive descriptions of the phenomenon in question (Louchakova, 2005): in order for a researcher to remove their own influence they must first identify what forms that influence takes. Notwithstanding the difficulty noted previously in attaining the phenomenological reduction during fieldwork because of my active immersion in the production sessions, the notion of bracketing was also modified within my research design, as I sought to employ one person's artistic

practice to illuminate another's, seeking to use subjective processes to enhance objective comprehension (Ratner, 2002) and employed artistic as well as discursive means to think about the research reflexively in different ways (Pagis, 2009). To this end I practised my own version of Finlay's (2008, 2009) dialectical dance between bracketing and reflexivity, both remaining as open as possible to participants' naive descriptions while periodically drawing on my own pre-understandings in an attempt to elicit further or more detailed naive descriptions from participants.

Recommended strategies for achieving reflexivity in research can be employed at all stages of the research process, from preparing for fieldwork through to analysis and receipt of feedback (Ahern, 1999). In the context of my own research, I employed different measures at different stages of the research process. In advance of undertaking fieldwork and in line with Ahern (1999), I produced an account of my own aims, expectations, concerns and values in relation to the research, from my perspective as both academic researcher and creative practitioner to provide a reference for subsequent analysis of participant transcripts. Key issues identified at this stage included my acute awareness of my own lack of formal art education, which I feared would influence artists' willingness to participate in the research and how they related to me throughout the process, and the hybrid position of my traditional medium of hand embroidery between the categories of craft on the one hand due to its use of thread, and art on the other hand due to my preference to design and stitch landscapes in something of a fine art fashion.

Throughout the research process I maintained a research journal of events, thoughts, emotions and responses in order to track and explore my own mobile subjectivities (Ogle and Glass, 2006), reflect on my research experience (Burman, 1997) and for self-appraisal (Koch and Harrington, 1998). This reflected the two key issues

identified prior to fieldwork, as I noted my delight on occasions when participants talked about me as an artist, in particular when Laura suggested that we might hold a joint exhibition, and my defensiveness when Jane O'Brien differentiated her own work as being superior to that of those people who seek to make images work in stitch rather than producing original textile art, as I took this to be disparaging towards my own habitual style.

On my initial reading of the preliminary interview transcripts I conducted Mauthner and Doucet's (2003) recommended voice-centred relational analysis, by taking notes of my own responses to the transcript and the assumptions or perspectives underlying them. This alerted me to the possibility that my analysis of these aspects of the transcript could take on my own perspective rather than that of the participant, thus helping me to bracket my own pre-understandings in order to mitigate this possibility as the research unfolded. Finally, at the conclusion of the analysis the accounts produced for each participant were reviewed to ensure that my analytical interpretations were balanced (Ahern, 1999), providing some assurance that my own subjective responses either to individual participants or specific elements of the research process had not skewed my analysis. My main concern at this stage was that my personal interest in the potential within artistic practice to facilitate awareness of pre-reflective experience, stimulated by my own experience with arts-based techniques in post-traumatic psychological treatment, might cause me to read more into the data from the body-focused interviews than is actually warranted. To guard against this interest overly skewing my interpretation of the empirical data, I ensured that I addressed both less successful and more successful attempts at body-focused interviewing as well as the difficulties and caveats surrounding the employment of these techniques appropriately in developing the paper *Geography meets Gendlin* (see

Part 3), lending this paper more of a methodological flavour than had originally been intended.

#### **2.4.4 Critical Review**

Having laid out my rationale for the methodology developed within this research, in this section I consider critically the means by which I undertook this research and the methods employed. Specifically, I attend to issues surrounding the use of co-experimentation and discordant situations, the participation of two non-professional artists and my own lack of art tuition, my simplified approach to body-focused interviewing, and my modified analytical procedures.

Both the co-experimentation and the use of discordant situations in the production sessions contributed to the research data above and beyond that already generated by the preliminary interviews. In brief the benefits of co-experimentation included providing strong practical evidence consistent with artists' verbal accounts of their practices, thereby reinforcing the credibility of first-hand accounts and supporting the assertion that people can talk about their practices (Hitchings, 2012). However, co-experimentation also brought to light numerous instances indicating that artists' verbal accounts of their practices were either partial or inconsistent with their practices as enacted. These discrepancies indicate complex relations between artist accounts of their practices and the practices themselves, and illustrate the value of interview-draw-discuss (Galman, 2009) approaches to geographic-artistic inquiry. Similarly, the benefits attributable to the use of discordant situations are summarized here as highlighting that the stickiness of an artist to their habitual medium applies regardless of the medium an artist habitually uses and the medium with which they are experimenting, and in spite of benefits the artist identifies in experimenting with

unfamiliar materials and methods. A further benefit is the more thorough-going consideration of the respective practices of the co-experimenters afforded by sustained engagement with and reflection on those practices in discordant situations.

In addition, the injection of discordance was well received, and several participants commented on how valuable their experimental use of different materials and equipment, and experience of different production environments, had been. Several participants commented that their involvement with the research had enhanced their critical understanding of their own practice, and in the feedback that I personally found most gratifying, most participants said that they anticipated their practice benefitting in some way from their participation in the research, either through using different materials, tackling different subject matters, or adopting different practices.

Despite these benefits, there remain four potential points of criticism to be addressed: the fact that not all of the participants were professionally practising artists, the fact that I do not have any formal art training, the restriction of the research to two-dimensional media, and the simplified and combined approach that I adopted to the body-focused interviewing. In the final few paragraphs of this part, these issues are addressed in turn.

While it might be preferable with small sample sizes to ensure that all participants have a high degree of proficiency, this raises questions as to what determines someone's level of proficiency and also suggests that nothing useful can be gained by conducting research with anyone other than an expert. Whether proficiency is determined by the level of course completed, the grade achieved, the length of practice, the number of courses attended and skills acquired, the regularity of sales, the average value of works sold or the prestige of exhibition venues that have shown an

artist's work renders the assessment of proficiency troublesome. The fact that someone has not been formally trained or assessed is not in and of itself an indication of a lack of skill or quality. Yoko, for example, has never attended art school or sought any qualifications but has attended art classes regularly for over 25 years. In such cases it is uncertain whether it is the training or the attainment that is the determinant of proficiency. In addition, the different levels of tuition attained by those participants who took part as a group provided certain perspectives on a number of issues that arose during the production sessions and closing interview that would not have come to light if all participants had been trained professionals, to the extent that this gives a particular flavour to one of the substantive papers presented in Part 3 and poses specific questions that could guide future research. Consequently, while the generally high level of proficiency among these participants, as defined by professional status, justifies a smaller sample size, I would argue that there is considerable ground to be gained by incorporating a degree of difference in experience, tuition or proficiency however defined in the research sample.

A related issue concerns my own lack of formal art education and associated questions concerning the degree to which it is appropriate for academics to conduct research in a field in which they do not possess skills or expertise, an issue which has become contentious with the growth in interdisciplinary doings between geography and art (Hawkins, 2013). While it has been argued that good art-based research should be good art as well (Seeley and Reason, 2008) and that it is inadvisable for non-artists to engage in arts-based research but should instead partner with professionals until they have been trained themselves (Lafrenière and Cox, 2013; Marston and de Leeuw, 2013), it has also been asserted that drawing skills are not important when using drawing as a research method (Banister et al., 1994), and that in the field of health

psychology artistic practice or art-making can be both informative for researchers and helpful for patients (Locsin et al., 2003; Reynolds and Lim, 2007) irrespective of the skill level of the individuals concerned.

My own view is that it has been appropriate for me to use my own artistic practice for research purposes, given my research design. This is primarily because my own artworks have not provided empirical data on which the papers have been based, and my artistic practices and works have been employed as a method to elicit greater detail from participating artists, not to feature in the research themselves. On the contrary, my lack of expertise provided greater contrast with the expert practices of most participants, thereby enhancing the discordance within the production sessions and aiding the experimental design of the research. While I might not have received formal art training beyond school, I have maintained my practice as a hobby over the ensuing twenty years, have attended certain classes, have participated in certain interest groups, and have had some experience of sales and exhibitions, albeit not on the same scale as the professional artist participants.

The response of the participating artists to my level of experience is also informative here. Only one potential participant declined to take part in the research on the grounds that she felt she would be teaching me to paint, and of those participants with whom the topic of my own work was discussed all were supportive and encouraging. I received recommendations on how to re-establish myself as a practising artist, encouragement to re-launch my website and a suggestion regarding a joint exhibition. On balance, I felt that I was taken for what I am: an enthusiastic hobbyist with an unrefined style but an eagerness to develop my practice and incorporate it more fully into my professional life. On the whole, my lack of formal training was not a barrier to securing participation and did not adversely affect the quantity or quality of the data

generated because the data of relevance were not related to my own work *per se*, and on occasion enhanced the data generated by virtue of the contrast between techniques and styles introduced by my own status as a hobbyist.

With regard to the restriction of the research focus to artists using only two-dimensional media, despite having justified this particular focus on both substantive and logistical grounds, it is worth considering whether I would have designed the research differently with hindsight. The answer is that no, I would not. Although restricting the relevant media to those considered to be two-dimensional excluded a large swathe of artistic practice, to include practitioners of three-dimensional media would have undermined both the place and material aspects of the discordance introduced into the production sessions in generating boundary understanding between practices and highlighting otherwise overlooked aspects of artistic practice. As indicated earlier in Part 2, the equipment requirements of three-dimensional media are such that transporting them is difficult, which would have prevented the use of discordant sites of production as a research method. Furthermore, it is not unusual for practitioners of three-dimensional media to draw on two-dimensional media in their preparatory work, such as sketching forms in pencil or experimenting with colours in paint, such that introducing discordance in terms of unfamiliar media and materials would also be harder with artists who work in three-dimensional media. Given the importance of these forms of discordance in generating boundary understanding and highlighting implicit aspects of artists' practices, to jeopardize both place and material discordance through the introduction of three-dimensional media would have seriously compromised the design and efficacy of the research.

Given the emphasis within my research on the role of the implicit, the body-focused aspect of the closing interviews provided an important test for the effectiveness of the

different body-focusing techniques employed. While some participants found it to be an unusual, even uncomfortable, experience to be asked to try to reconnect with an activity they had completed days previously and were now watching played back on a screen, those participants who did so reported after the conclusion of that session that they had found it interesting and potentially helpful, and generally provided deeper or more detailed perspectives on their practices than I generated in my own analysis of the visual data. However, two caveats are worth highlighting. The first is that it might not always be necessary to ask participants formally to try to communicate what they are sensing implicitly, and that it might be problematic to do so. For example, and as detailed in *Geography meets Gendlin* (see Part 3), Jane Mollison spontaneously generated linguistic improvisation but that improvisation ceased when I prompted her for further examples. The second caveat relates to the degree to which it is either necessary or helpful to request participants to try to reengage with their implicit experience of their practice while watching that practice, given the potential for the viewing medium to mediate implicit understanding. In relation to the dance art rehearsals, for example, Clare describes occasions both when an experience that seemed innocuous at the time is found on subsequent reviewing to have been potent, and when the reverse occurs. The elicitation of implicit understanding during visually stimulated recall is not a straightforward affair. While the relative lack of linguistic improvisation from implicit understanding might reflect the lack of training provided to participants in how to attend to their implicit understanding, the occurrence of at least some spontaneous linguistic improvisation suggests that neither training nor explicit directive questioning are necessarily pre-requisites for accessing and communicating implicit experience and sensation. Consequently, although my attempts at body-focused interviewing met with varied degrees of success, these

attempts did contribute to the research data and also raise interesting insights and questions as to the most appropriate approach to accessing and communicating the implicit in research settings.

While there are no doubt ways in which I could have produced more data or more robust data, for example by engaging with more participants or ensuring that all participants were experts, by improving my own artistic skills in advance of the research, or by following procedural DPA guidance more closely, I do not consider any of these to have detrimentally affected the research as each, in their own way, both responded to the needs of the research as it unfolded and brought with it particular benefits that otherwise would not have been realized.

## 2.5 The Artists

Although acknowledging that two participants did not describe themselves as artists but as hobbyists, and that Yoko expressed discomfort at being described as an artist, I refer to all participants as artists throughout this thesis as a convenient way of distinguishing the practices of the participants from my own practices.

All artists consented to be identified by their proper name. In the pages and papers that follow, I refer to all artists by their given or first name, except where participants share a common first name, in which case surnames are also provided. With regard to textual data, in order to indicate the source of material taken from a transcript, sessions are identified as either an interview (“I”) or a production session (“P”), and as either the first or second of such sessions with that participant (“1” or “2”). The line number at which the quotation begins within that transcript is provided after a colon.

Consequently, an indication of (P2:315) following the insertion of a quote identifies that the quotation can be located on line 315 in the second production session for the identified participant. With regard to images of participants’ artworks, the labels selected do not reflect titles attributed to the works by the participants themselves, but are intended to provide a brief indication as to the originator and content, nature or topic of the work.

In this final section of Part 2 I introduce the participating artists. I provide brief biographic details, a summary of the artists’ descriptions of their own artworks and practices, adapted primarily from their preliminary interviews, and a summary description of their practices as evidenced in the production sessions, along with images of some of their artistic output from those production sessions.

## **Jane Mollison**

Age: 71

Medium: mixed (pencil, Chinese brush and ink, watercolour and gouache, felt pens)

### *Biography*

Jane gained a Diploma in Drawing and Painting at Edinburgh College of Art before undertaking art teacher training at Leeds Art College. Jane pursued a career in art education and has worked in several countries including Kenya and China and more latterly in England. Jane has never had to earn her living through her art although she has exhibited in China and in the UK, hosting her first open house as part of Artweeks 2012. Jane participated in the research as an individual.

### *Artworks*

Jane says that what is important to her is that she does a lot of sketching in situ, and that most of the works in her collection are drawings and paintings that she has done on location in places that she has visited on trips or while travelling.

### *Artistic process*

Jane says that she uses a variety of techniques and that she takes quite a few materials with her when she paints to give herself options because she does not know in advance which she will want to use, which depends upon the time available and the nature of the work. Jane says that although she does not go out to paint with a fixed idea in mind, during periods when she was doing a lot of painting she did devise formats in relation to the dimensions of a painting and that she would look for a subject to fit a particular format.

*Production session 1 – Jane’s home*

Jane lays the Chinese paper on felt so that the felt can absorb excess moisture and smooths out the crease in the paper as well as she can using a flat stone. She soaks her brush before she starts and takes a good look at the view so that she can think about the whole composition.



***Figure 8. Jane Mollison, garden***

*Chinese brush and ink*

In the early stages Jane says that she aims to be fairly accurate but with scope for interpretation, and she identifies features that will help to give scale to the composition. She locates the middle of the composition using a brush-based measurement technique and indicates with light ink where the main features will go. She starts by applying the lightest tones and works towards the darkest, planning things out as she goes by incorporating points of reference.

Chance factors rather than strategy determine the order in which things are done. Jane seeks to give an impression of the shapes of things and their relatedness to each other rather than exact accuracy. She paints subjects in the foreground first, and uses the brush to check perspective. She also uses the paper crease to help with alignment. On several occasions she has to leave areas of the work to dry while she focuses her attention on other areas. Jane concentrates on overall shapes and textures, and builds up her work in layers, seeking to capture an impression rather than accuracy.

Jane dabs off running ink with a paper towel and fixes errors by 'cheating': adding white paint to an overly dark area, which had been created by Jane's acknowledged omission in not removing excess ink from the brush prior to application. Periodically Jane puts the work up or stands back from it to determine which aspects need emphasizing. She seeks to maintain contrast in the composition, and concentrates on those areas of the work that will affect the tonal scale of the work as a whole. She repeatedly returns to areas of the composition to check perspective and tonal balance/contrast. Jane waits for the work to dry before making final judgements as to the addition of a rain effect and determining which areas need darkening further to maximize contrast. When the work is finished she will mark it with a red stamp.



**Figure 9. Jane Mollison, orchard**  
*pencil, watercolour and gouache*

Jane plans out the composition as a whole, judging which features of the view will be roughly in the middle of the work. She plans out quickly where the trees will go, being careful to avoid a tree being ‘bang in the centre’ of the work, and paying attention to the spaces between the trees as much as to the trees themselves. Jane seeks to depict the feeling of the trees rather than complete accuracy. Once the trunks are broadly in place she thinks about the tops of the trees and other features in the view such as the fence and the building to the rear.

Once the overall composition is satisfactory Jane draws features in more accurately prior to painting. She looks at the relationships between things and uses this to identify errors and check on perspective. Periodically she stands up to look at her work from a distance. She alters the area of the work that she is working on in response to changes in weather (light, shadow), and given the weather (threatening rain) she uses gouache because it is quicker to mix. Having sketched out the lower trunks she works up the

branches to keep the feeling of growth. Jane concentrates on features in the foreground because of their prominent position, and must wait until the paint in particular areas of the work has dried before she can amend them. In general she works from light tones to dark tones, but not always, because she works on things that take her fancy. Jane is open to using other equipment as the work progresses, such as felt pens for the outline of the foliage. She seeks to avoid sameness so picks out more and more contrast, working from overall impression to concentration on detail.

## **Laura Degenhardt**

Age: 36

Medium: oil paints and oil pastels

### *Biography*

Laura pursued a career in publishing for approximately 10 years before enrolling on an art foundation course. Laura gained a BA in art at Oxford Brookes University before obtaining an MA at Central St Martin's College of Art and Design in London. Within the first three years of her professional practice, she is currently working in rented studio space although is also developing studio space in her home. Laura has exhibited at Oxfordshire Artweeks as well as in London, and she also works to commission.

Laura has recently taken up an art teaching post in addition to her ongoing practice.

Laura participated in the research as an individual.

### *Artworks*

Laura says that her work is about the spirit of place and that her practice processes that very physically so it is a processing of a personal response to place and time with all that's bound up in Laura's individuality and past. Laura describes it as very much a processing of place and time in the present but through the filter of someone who has their own individuality.

### *Artistic process*

Laura says that she begins by careful preparation. She prepares more than one canvas because she does not work on only one painting at a time but tends to have several works in progress at different stages. At the moment Laura says she is working with colour, form and light in a semi-abstract way, referencing a particular place. Laura does not usually include people but if she does she says that they are very indistinct.

She also comments that she does not dictate the outcome of a painting before she begins work on it. Instead, Laura says that she has a vague set of parameters and that possibly she will ‘ditch’ some of them because they turn out not to be relevant as the painting progresses.

*Production session 1 – Laura’s studio*



**Figure 10. Laura Degenhardt, beach**  
*oils and oil pastels*

For Laura, the preparation of her materials and the organization of her space within the studio are important aspects of her practice. It is important for her that she works every day and that she progresses through a gradual transition between home and studio and back again. Laura is currently in a preparatory phase, experimenting with process and materials in advance of working on commissions, and preparing canvases for these works.

Laura works on a number of different pieces simultaneously, and alternates between them according to something on the brush that tells her what to apply where. The size of the works is determined by the space available on the wall, and the paper that she uses for her preparatory work is taped to the wall. She uses this preparatory stage to

get to grips with the paint on the paper before working on the final commissions on the canvases. She finds playing with her process on paper freer even though it is easier to eradicate unwanted marks from the canvas than from the paper, because at that stage there is no end product in mind.

After a period of getting to grips with her materials Laura says that she has entered ‘studio time’, a state of mind in which she is relaxed and confident and during which she develops more ideas about her work and has a clearer sense of direction. This usually sets in after about 30-60 minutes.

For Laura, getting to grips with her materials, engaging with them, is a very physical process. Through the progression of her work Laura’s subject is derived less from the photographs that provided the initial focus and more from within her own mind, with less emphasis on external frames of reference.

With landscape work in particular, Laura’s artistic materials are sculptural, and through the manipulation of the paint she says that she begins to be there, on the beach that she is painting. The place comes alive under the brush.

Her orderly and transitional approach also feature at the end of the day’s work, tidying up and walking back home.

#### *Production session 2 – bus tour*

Laura begins by taking photographs in order to lock her eyes into what she will be depicting and is attentive to which features in the environment jump out to her. She said that she finds that when she works while travelling she works in a faster gear and her mind is more focused. For Laura painting in this way is about looking at and

responding to the environment/scene and the materials, half of which is done sub-consciously.



*Figure 11. Laura Degenhardt, bus tour  
watercolour and pencil*

Laura described her decision not to work with watercolour pencils as she is accustomed to using those and she wanted to work with a medium over which she felt she had less control, needing in her words to be in the ‘danger zone’. She produces several paintings and sketches during the three-hour session.

The succession of works completed during the trip progressed from a tight focus on drawing, through a looser approach to develop a composite piece, and on to a loose but also detailed depiction of the passengers on the bus amidst an impression rather than an accurate representation of Oxford city. She describes an exploratory approach, just seeing where she can take the medium and subject matter, and talks about quickly sketching in parts of several windows in order to generate a composite window.

## **Katherine Shock**

Age: 59

Medium: watercolour, oil, pen and ink

### *Biography*

Katherine did art A-Level and a foundation course at Banbury College, since which she has completed numerous courses in particular techniques. Katherine has a studio in a converted garden building at home although much of her work is done in situ.

Katherine exhibits in Artweeks each year, sells works through a local shop and is currently working on a series of paintings to illustrate a book of poetry about Oxford.

Katherine participated in the research as an individual.

### *Artworks*

Katherine says she has several bodies of work including her illustrations of poems about Oxford, a series of large paintings, a series of abstract works, and another set of landscapes and seascapes.

### *Artistic process*

Katherine says that for her pen and ink work she sits down and has a good look at the scene in front of her and will work directly with pencil, watercolour and pen, whereas if she is doing an abstract piece she works up several studies and sketches before working on the final piece. When painting outdoors she says that she does the sky first followed by the major colour before defining it and strengthening particular aspects with pen.

*Production session 1 – Headington Hill Hall*

Katherine begins by measuring up the scene in relation to her pencil size and position although she says that as usual this approach does not work for her so she resorts to judging by eye as she finds this no less accurate. She comments on the way in which she starts to see more detail in the scene the more she looks at it, citing the railings, the scalloping around the windows and the square pillars set into the wall at different points throughout the session. Katherine begins in pencil, making multiple marks in close proximity to give a mass of lines suggestive of form rather than single solid lines.

Katherine says that she sometimes draws the spaces between objects rather than the objects themselves as this can be more accurate, although not in this instance.



***Figure 12. Katherine Shock, Headington Hill Hall***

*pencil and watercolour*

Katherine often has to make a judgment as to whether a piece still has the ‘spirit of the place’ or whether she needs to start it again. She says that it is important to take a step back periodically and look at what you have done, and she takes remedial steps in the

session to make connections that she had missed and include further details. Katherine comments that although the building looks straightforward to paint it is more of a challenge than she was expecting. She also comments that drawing had become boring and that she was looking forward to the painting part but that the drawing element was important to ensure that the building in the painting did not look as if it would fall down. Although people often comment to her that her work is detailed she says that she does not put in much detail and that she is not worried about getting the clouds exactly as they are but is more concerned with getting the ‘mood of the sky’. Once she has started her painting she says that she is now enjoying the session and indicates that she is frustrated by the rain because she now does not want to stop.

*Production session 2 – boat trip*



***Figure 13. Katherine Shock, boat trip***

*ipad*

On this trip Katherine produced 14 images in a variety of sketchbooks using watercolour in some and ink in others, sometimes with both watercolour and ink. In addition, Katherine worked on her ipad.

For some works it was difficult to discern a spatial progression but in a couple she started at the mid-point before including the main features of the foreground and then latterly the background, more often than not using broad brush strokes to apply general washes of colour. With the key colour features in place she then added more definite lines to suggest form and structure and just a hint of detail, for example in tree branches.

On some works Katherine then used her brush with water in the handle to blend colours together to soften some of the lines. This technique was used with both watercolour and ink works. Katherine worked very quickly, and sometimes appeared haphazard in her application of paint. Her works were suggestive/expressive as much as representational and although she produced scenes or landscapes the predominant features in the works were the main colours and forms in the environment with little detail incorporated.

Although harder to detect spatial progression when working on her ipad the outcome indicated a similar process of highlighting core colours and suggesting indicative form and structure. Many of the motions involved in working on her ipad were similar to those involved with her pen and paint works, just without a mediating implement.

## **Polly Woolstone**

Age: 62

Medium: predominantly textiles

### *Biography*

Polly gained a teaching qualification at Bristol University and taught art for 35 years, including 20 years as head teacher. Lacking time for her own practice during term time, she maintained a sketchbook during holidays but took up her textile practice again upon retirement. Polly is a member of the local Embroiderers' Guild and she often exhibits, for example as part of Artweeks, with other local Guild members. Polly participated in the research as part of a group with Ticia Lever and Jane O'Brien, although as Ticia and Jane withdrew after their preliminary interviews, Polly's participation became individual.

### *Artworks*

Polly describes her work as mixed media. She comes from an illustration background in which she says she loves the textural qualities of the drawn line but more recently has turned to fabrics because she loves their colours, textures and patterns.

### *Artistic process*

Polly says that she does not have preconceived ideas of what she wants to produce or that when she does it usually does not turn out that way. She says that she explores lots of different surfaces and then collages them, chopping them up and putting them together, trying different combinations and working into the surface until she feels that has done enough and that to do any more might be too much.

*Production session 1 – researcher’s home*

Polly is doing preparatory exploratory work for an exhibition on the theme of doors, which she is doing through the Embroiderers’ Guild. The exhibition has size requirements so she is committed to working on a smaller scale than she normally would.



**Figure 14. Polly Woolstone, India (A)**

*oil/wax crayon and inktense*

Polly is working from a sketchbook filled with photos and sketches of Indian doors, which she says she loves. She cuts paper and fabric into similar sized pieces. She uses Indian blocks with patterns embossed on them to create a repeated pattern on the paper using different coloured wax and oil crayons. She then overlays these marks with a medium she has recently discovered called inktense, which she says she uses like crayons but that when you put water on them they become inks. Polly applies them in pencil form and uses a water-laden brush to lubricate and blend the colours. She describes using them variously as being like watercolours although with much stronger colours and as being like oils. She says that she is exploring their versatility.

Polly comments that all of the work she does today might be rejected but that it is good to be constrained to very small bits. She comments that because she is still at the experimental stage of her work she has not yet committed anything to a final piece. Although she acknowledges that she is working outside her comfort zone she has moved herself back into it by introducing patterns into her work, which she loves. She says that bringing her work back into the theme of the door is changing the way she is looking at it.

She describes her process as responsive, fluid and uncertain, saying that when she starts a piece she has no idea where it is going to go but that as she starts to build up the piece she will develop a clearer sense of direction. However, she says that she might even then cut it up and reorganize it: 'if in doubt move it about'. She discusses a choice that she faces as to whether to inject the door element into the work at this early stage or to superimpose it at the end of her work on the piece. She comments on the challenges of selection: what to put in. She completes a number of exploratory works using the same media and colours, although some are on paper and some are on fabric, and then she starts to work on the marks left behind on the pages of her sketchbook by her work with the inks. She says that she suddenly liked the marks left as blotting on the page so she started to work on them as she had done with the original pieces: blending and highlighting colours.

Polly says that she has always used the same colour range but that since her visit to India her colours have brightened and that she now thinks that bright vivid colours are fine providing they are broken up. Polly sets her works to one side to allow them time to dry and experiments with layering one work over the other so that some bits are see-through, and she comments that she will stitch in particular places to pull out certain features because she likes the contrast of detail against suggested areas.



**Figure 15. Polly Woolstone, India (B)**

*crayon, ink, and machine  
embroidery*

Polly begins by leafing through a selection of fabric swatches that she has worked up since the first production session and views them against her base fabric that she wraps around a small canvas frame. She proceeds to cut or tear larger pieces into smaller sections and places some of them on the base fabric, viewing them and moving them around until she is happy with them. She also flicks through her sketchbooks and considers the positioning of the fabric cuttings in light of those sketchbooks.

Polly then glues some of the fabric pieces onto the base fabric and then stitches through both layers using the sewing machine. Once she has selected her threads and threaded them onto the sewing machine she positions the collected fabrics and free-stitches into them, keeping the fabric steady and at times taut, moving it backwards and forwards and side to side with the needle focused in certain areas, then she turns the fabric to change its orientation and repeats the process.

Once those selected fabrics have been stitched together Polly removes the composite fabric from the machine and begins again to cut and tear smaller pieces of fabric and chord, place them onto the composite, move them around and evaluate how they look against the contents of her sketchbooks until she is happy with them, at which point she glues the fabrics down and then stitches them together. This process was repeated four or five times during the session, although towards the end Polly placed fabric onto the composite work and stitched directly into individual additions, rather than gluing and stitching a number of additions simultaneously. Part way through the process Polly also marked out and cut out a mock-up frame from a sheet of paper to help her assess the positioning of the fabrics and their overall effect. At the end of the session Polly conducted a final check of the composite when placed in the mock-up frame against the sketchbooks and then positioned the composite over the small canvas frame, folded the edges around the frame and pinned the composite work in place, ready for securing at home.

## **Ticia Lever**

Age: 55

Medium: textiles, embroidery

### *Biography*

Ticia pursued a career in town planning before undertaking a City and Guilds course in textiles alongside a period of part time work. After that course Ticia did a Diploma at Windsor College and has concentrated on her own practice since. Ticia is a member of an exhibiting group called Haptic Art, is a member of the local Embroiderers' Guild and is also chairman of the Oxford Textile Workshop. She exhibits locally and regionally, including within Artweeks, and has also taught textiles on several occasions. Ticia participated in the research as part of a group with Polly Woolstone and Jane O'Brien but withdrew following her preliminary interview.

### *Artworks*

Ticia says that she does a range of work because she likes to use a variety of materials and threads with different weights and colours. She says that her work is very labour intensive because she does a lot of hand stitching and that she loves organic things such as free-machining. Ticia describes what she makes as very tactile. This year she has explored a theme of birds, particularly British garden birds, for which she had specific equipment made such as Perspex frames so that the birds could be seen through different layers of material.

### *Artistic process*

Ticia says that she is impulsive and wants to get on and do the stitching rather than spend a lot of time sketching. She says that she thinks this is part of her personality. Ticia describes a sense of compulsion, putting a lot of enthusiasm and energy into her

work, and says that she gets withdrawal symptoms if she has not done any stitching for a week or so because she misses it. Ticia comments that she likes fine, fragile things and often wants to convey fragility in her work, such as the fragility of rocks and shoes. She says that layering interests her, seeing through the vulnerability of aspects of nature.

### *Production sessions*

Ticia withdrew prior to the production sessions.

## **Jane O'Brien**

Age: 61

Medium: textiles

### *Biography*

Jane did not originally go to art school but after emigrating to Canada she took up employment in an architectural and interior design company, during which time she became increasingly drawn to soft furnishings and textiles. When she returned to the UK she studied soft furnishings and established her artistic career. Jane has a diploma in the history of art and completed a three-year course at Windsor Art College. She has also taught on City and Guilds Courses. Jane exhibits across the country, including in London with other members of the Designer Crafts Society. Jane is also a member of several textile groups and is currently secretary of the local Embroiderers' Guild

### *Artworks*

Jane says that her work is about the narrative of the human being connected with the textiles associated with those humans during their period. She says that she is particularly interested in the textiles and patterns of the Renaissance period and how they are associated with identity, power, protection and status.

### *Artistic process*

Jane says that she starts with pure observation, sketching, taking notes, taking photographs and absorbing what she's seeing. She starts really looking at the scene and describes a stage in which her head is like being wrapped in a bandage as she tries to identify what the scene is saying to her. She then tries to connect what she is seeing and what it is saying to her with the features of the modern era, reading about and researching her emerging ideas. She describes putting textures together and playing

with it as a collage to balance proportion and colour, using stitch as the connecting line. She says that this collage of balance is the difficult part.

*Production sessions*

Jane withdrew prior to the production sessions.

## **Philippa Redman**

Age: 66

Medium: watercolour and oil

### *Biography*

Philippa specialized in art in the first year of her teacher training but did not undertake an art degree until the age of 60, when she felt she had the time and resources to do her art more seriously. She continues to spend one weekend a month and one week each summer with her current tutor and the other students in the class. Philippa has exhibited in group exhibitions in the past and took part in Artweeks for the first time in 2012. Philippa participated in the research as part of a group with Marnie Watson and Yoko Jones, whom she suggested might also be interested in the research.

### *Artworks*

Philippa says that she focuses on watercolour and oils, and that she has done a lot of watercolour because it is convenient for her weekend sessions. She says she has a sense of colour and an interest in colour as well as an interest in people. When she paints people she works from photographs, usually taken from the television, and she really enjoys painting bigger pieces.

### *Artistic process*

Philippa says that for all her works she does detailed drawings in a sketchbook, even with pieces for which she is using photographs from the television that she has taken herself, or from magazines. She says that she absorbs it all in this drawing process, but after this she puts the photos and drawings aside and paints spontaneously. This is important to her because she likes the idea of blurriness and not having clearly defined edges. She says that watercolours tend to come quickly although still life takes longer

because she does not work as well in her weekend sessions, and that oil paintings take longer still because she can make alterations as she goes: she does not need to be quite so careful. She enjoys capturing a moment.

*Production session 1 – Philippa's home studio*



**Figure 16. Philippa Redman, rubbish (A)**  
*watercolour*

Philippa began by securing tape around the edges of three sheets of paper and then having mixed her paints she applied a wash to each in a different colour using steady sweeping movements that progressed down the sheet. Periodically she wiped off excess paint from brush and paper. She said that she was working from a sketch she had done the previous year and a set of four abstracts that she had based on that sketch. She also said that she was experimenting with colour and seeking a particular layered effect with the transparent qualities of watercolours. Consequently she left the works to dry before moving on to more detailed brush work, although normally she would apply wet paint to wet paint.

Prior to starting the finer brush work Philippa drew an outline of the image she wanted to portray, although this was also a change in her usual approach and she stopped part

way through as she ran out of patience. During the more careful brush work she occasionally changed the orientation of the paper seemingly to provide easier access for the particular stroke due next. She used the same brush for both elements of the painting work. The sheets of paper on which she was working were rarely if ever flat on the table surface: for the washes she held the paper up at one end in her free hand, and for the detailed work the sheets often lay on top of other equipment as she worked on them. Philippa said that she did not think the pieces had succeeded by the end of the session and that perhaps they had been too planned, although she would continue to work on them possibly using other media such as pastel to generate other effects.

*Production session 2 – Philippa's home studio*



**Figure 17. Philippa Redman, rubbish (B)**

*acrylic, chalk and oil pastel*

Philippa used acrylics as the primary medium in this session as she had only previously used them once a long time ago. She said that she was trying to see what would happen if she used them like watercolours and found that although they were not as dry a medium as she had thought, she felt that in some areas she had used it too

thickly. She commented that interesting effects, such as a nice wedge, would develop as the work dries.

Philippa started off doing green but became bored of green so added some blue to make it more interesting. She then says that she strengthened the background to give greater contrast with the oil. She also added chalk to lift specific areas because she had used chalk in her original small-scale trials, and she used oil pastels in other areas that she felt needed something extra.

## **Marnie Watson**

Age: 50

Medium: soft pastels

### *Biography*

Marnie took up art after retiring from running a company with her husband approximately three years ago. Marnie has attended courses at Sunningwell School of Art and attends the same monthly weekend and annual week's tuition sessions as Philippa and Yoko. Marnie does not exhibit or sell work. Marnie participated in the research as part of a group and was introduced to the research by Philippa.

### *Artworks*

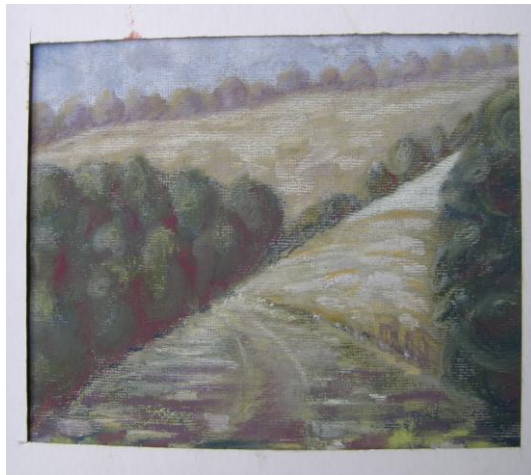
Marnie says that she has worked mainly in pastels. She says that this came naturally to her because in the early days when she was experimenting with different media she found pastels good to learn with because it was easy to correct mistakes. She does a lot of still life work because this is the focus of her monthly weekend sessions but also a lot of landscape as this features during the class's week in the Chilterns each summer.

### *Artistic process*

Marnie says that she spends a lot of time before starting to work looking at the composition and deciding what scene or setting she wants to depict. She then starts with pencil and selects the colours of the pastels that she wants to use. She limits the range of colours that she uses in any one artwork because she says that if she puts too many colours in it just looks wrong. Marnie says that she does not really have a set process but that once she has selected a nice range of colours for that composition she builds it up from there and just keeps going until she finishes it. Marnie comments that knowing when to stop is difficult because with pastels you can keep going and going

but if she does so it just gets dirtier and looks messy. At present she often stops because somebody else has told her to stop at that point. She also says that she has learnt from her tutor that she should build up the whole picture together rather than working in detail in one area and then moving onto another.

*Production session 1 – Philippa's home studio*



***Figure 18. Marnie Watson, fields***  
*soft pastels*

Without the frame that she had intended to use to help transfer the image from one sheet to another Marnie used a ruler to measure the key dimensions and a pencil to mark out a detailed outline, which involved a lot of rubbing out and redrawing. She then cleaned and selected the pastels that she wanted to use for the piece before starting to apply the pastels.

She said that she was redoing a work for the first time, that she had originally done the previous week and that she was seeking to simplify some parts of it, to increase the contrast and to minimize the colours. She used a variety of motions to apply the pastel and used both the narrow and broad sides of the pastels, as well as her fingers which she periodically wiped on a kitchen towel.

Periodically she would lift or shake the paper or blow across it in order to remove the dust. Occasionally she used a putty rubber to lift off some of the detail and strength in particular sections of the work. She started to apply pastels on the sky and horizon and gradually moved forwards/downwards. Throughout the session Marnie worked with the sheet oriented towards her and only lifted the paper from the table to remove excess dust.

*Production session 2 – Philippa’s home studio*



**Figure 19. Marnie Watson, skies**

*watercolour*

Marnie says that she wanted to try something different and selected to focus on skies because I had mentioned something about skies in the last session, and to work from a photograph because she had read Philippa’s dissertation indicating that using photographs in art is acceptable. Marnie worked on several small squares of paper that she had prepared the night before by applying a wash to them.

Marnie says that she did the ‘apricot business’ – a recommended way of painting skies – but with a deeper pink instead of apricot, and realized that she had not left any white

space for the clouds, although following suggestions from others she decided to add chalk later.

Marnie says that she worked wet, added darker colours as she went and then dabbed off the excess to lighten it in places, but she voiced uncertainty as to whether to leave the paint to dry or to dab off excess paint in order to generate the effect she wanted.

She said that she had not waited long enough for the paint to dry on one piece so had scratched that paint, and that in another piece she had inadvertently created mountains instead of clouds. She commented that working in watercolour required a different mindset because she had 'to think backwards'.

## **Yoko Jones**

Age: 61

Medium: watercolour, pencil, charcoal and pen

### *Biography*

Yoko has no formal art training but took up art as a hobby at the age of 36, when she started attending evening classes. She currently attends two classes: a weekly life drawing class at an art studio in London and a monthly painting class with Marnie and Philippa in Oxford, which also involves a week's study trip each summer. Yoko does not exhibit or sell work. Yoko participated in the research as part of a group and was introduced to the research by Philippa.

### *Artworks*

Yoko describes her artwork simply as a profile of herself, commenting that she cannot say more because her artwork is immature, not in depth.

### *Artistic process*

Yoko says that she needs to be forced to start work and that she finds it difficult to get started because she needs to be in the right mood to carve out the necessary time. She says that she has to be in a class setting for this and that she finds working as part of a group helpful for getting her started and for providing comment on her work. She says that the different angle from which other people see her work and the comments based upon that view give her in a sense a three-dimensional view of her work, which brings greater fluidity and something unexpected.

*Production session 1 – Philippa's home studio*

Yoko worked fast and according to Philippa she always does. Yoko herself said that if she does not work fast she goes mad because if she focuses on detail it all falls to pieces. She completed several sketches in pencil and pen of the room in which we were working, panning around from the front to the back of the room.



**Figure 20. Yoko Jones, log pile and house plants**  
*pencil and pen*

Yoko filled several pages in her sketch book, and changed its orientation in line with the view she sought to record, and jotted down notes as she worked. She used her hands and arms to scope out the view and worked from sweeping outline to more detailed infill. She used the pencils before the pen, which only featured towards the end of the session.

At no point did Yoko appear to rub anything out. She said that she would use the sketches and notes to inform other works later either as background or in a watercolour and/or pen drawing.

*Production session 2*

Yoko says that she started by using watercolour as a wash and then applied oil pastels from a limited colour palette to add or suggest detail because when she works outside she uses a limited palette.



**Figure 21. Yoko Jones, tree**  
*oil pastel, pen and watercolour*

Although working indoors, the subject of her works were outdoor scenes: as before Yoko worked on more than one work during this session including a rural scene and an apple tree in the garden. Yoko says that for the sky she did do ‘the apricot business’ although she did not wait until it had fully dried.

She experimented by using oil pastels in two main ways: putting the oil pastel underneath the watercolour wash, which protected white or lighter areas of the work from the colour of the wash giving the effect of sunlight through the trees, and putting the pastel on top of the wash to provide colour detail for the apples.

## **Susan Moxley**

Age: 57

Medium: printing, painting, stained glass and jewellery

### *Biography*

Susan completed courses in print making in both South Africa and the UK, but chose to live in the UK because she could express herself more freely artistically in the UK than in South Africa. Susan worked as an illustrator for several years before committing herself to fine art full time approximately 20 years ago. She has studios both in the UK and in Greece, where she and her husband spend time each year. As well as her ongoing practice, Susan works with Clare Bassett and Kassandra Isaacson on a drawing dance project involving dancers, artists and musicians in collaborative improvisation. Susan participated in the research as an individual, although the production sessions were drawing dance events.

### *Artworks*

Susan says that her artwork is based upon her own experiences and how she feels about things, which she expresses in quite an abstract way. Much of her work relates to the female figure, and her experience of breast cancer stimulated an exploration of perfect versus imperfect female figures. Her work with the dance-art project also reflects this interest in the female form as the dancers are female. She says that the style of her work has changed as her family situation has changed, being more playful for example when her children were small. Susan's work is also symbolic as she has developed a set of symbols for things that are meaningful to her, although they may not be meaningful to other people in the same way. Susan says that it is important to her that the symbolism of her art works in this way.

### *Artistic process*

Susan says that for an artist who has been working for a long time and has their materials around them making an artwork is just ‘using your tools’. She says that there is then a journey of the marks that she has put down influencing what she does next, which she likens to a conversation between herself and the work. Susan says that she often starts with old work or printing plates because they already contain some marks of what she wants to talk about in the new work but she adds different marks over the top to make a new story in the new artwork.

### *Production session 1 – church hall rehearsal session*



***Figure 22. Susan Moxley, work on paper***

*watercolour and ink*

Working to the theme of ‘lyrical and relentless mathematical’, Susan started from a splodge that was already on the paper towards the bottom of the sheet. She started with a pivot stroke that developed into a swirl that meandered across the sheet to the right. She then made bold sweeping marks across the bottom before adding finer more erratic marks down the right side and across the work. She then added wavy lines with

a wider brush and returned to a finer brush towards the top of the work. She finished with darker marks to the right, suggestive of the human form.

Working to the same theme but now with a poem being narrated, Susan began by making a solid circle in the middle of the sheet and extending from this a wide smudge towards the bottom. Susan continued with a horizontal line from the circle to the right edge, and these initial marks were emphasized with additional paint. With ink she applied finer lines in a squiggly more haphazard and more rapid fashion within the bottom right corner, and also incorporated occasional fine marks to the left of the sheet. Susan added bolder broader smears to the top of the work on the right, and included a couple of sweeping arches from bottom centre to bottom left as an echo to the dancer. Finally, Susan used kitchen towel to cover progressively the marks in the bottom right corner and then rolled/curled the sheet of paper to reveal those marks while at the same time concealing those to the bottom left.



*Figure 23. Susan Moxley, projection on wall*

*watercolour and ink*

*Production session 2 (a performance) was cancelled.*

## **Clare Bassett**

Age: 58

Medium: oils, printmaking and watercolour with some brush and ink and pen and ink

### *Biography*

Clare grew up in Canada but came to the UK in a gap year and completed a one-year art course for overseas students at Goldsmith's. After graduating in English and Theatre from the University of Warwick she worked as a film editor and researcher before establishing her artistic career. When she moved to Oxford she joined the Oxford Printmakers and worked collaboratively with other members to gain access to exhibitions and art fairs. Clare established a studio in her garden and now exhibits both in galleries and annually as part of Artweeks. As well as her ongoing practice, Clare works with Susan Moxley and Kassandra Isaacson on a drawing dance project involving dancers, artists and musicians in collaborative improvisation. Clare participated in the research as an individual, although the production sessions were drawing dance events.

### *Artworks*

Clare says that she has two main bodies of work. Until about three years ago her work was figurative depicting solid figures with no background in a slightly surreal unnerving other worldly style. Clare describes these works also as humorous, slightly teasing the viewer, because they cannot be sure what the figures are doing or what the story is behind them. She says that this work explores ideas of solitude and communication. More recently her work in relation to the drawing dance project has been done in the moment, which she says gives it vibrancy. Again there is no background, just the figures and there is no content or story/narrative. She says that

she tries to capture the moment and that it is up to the viewer to try to tell the story.

Comparing the two bodies of work Clare says that her lithographs involve a more intellectual cerebral process in that she knows that there are many ways in which you can look at the work but that the ‘drawing the dance stuff’ is simply responsive.

Whereas with the abstract dance-art there is no sense of wondering what the figure has been doing, with the lithographs pondering the back story is an important feature.

### *Artistic process*

Clare says that with the more narrative work she sits in front of a blank piece of paper and starts to doodle, draw or make shapes and that sometimes at some point she thinks that something interesting could be done with it, for example wondering what it would be like if that hand reached up or that body leant over. She says that the work pieces together in this way and then she plays around with the composition until she is happy with it, at which point she traces the image onto the printing stone, prints her edition of twenty prints and colours each one by hand.

With the dance work Clare’s process has changed over time. Initially she just took a sketchbook, pencil and pen and would draw a basic figure before trying to capture the movement of the arms or drawing stick figures in order to make marks quickly. More recently she has been using brush and ink and a very fine absorbent paper as this is good for quick work. She selects the colours that she will use before starting as there is insufficient time to mix during the dance. She describes this artistic process as ‘simply seeing and doing and seeing and doing and seeing and doing’, although she says that as she becomes more familiar with how a dancer moves there is a tendency to develop her own short hand for certain types of movement, which she sees as dangerous because it means that she’s not responding to what the dancer is doing but has

anticipated what the dancer will do and implements a mark that looked good a previous time when the dancer made that move.

*Production session 1 – church hall rehearsal session*



***Figure 24. Clare Bassett, work on paper***  
*watercolour and ink*

Working to the theme of ‘lyrical’, Clare started by making circular marks in colour at the top left of the paper using two brush sizes. She then made more detailed lines in black ink among the circles and with a thinner brush made dark marks further down the sheet. With a thick brush she made bold smears both vertically and horizontally, rolling the brush from side to side as she did so. Clare then filled in some areas of the work with more paint before finishing with wide sweeping circles and curves towards the top of the paper.

Working next to the theme of ‘mathematical’, which incorporated reference to Einstein, Clare began with medium thickness geometric lines horizontally and vertically. She then used a thinner brush as she made marks that followed the lines that

the dancer made with her body. At different points in the work Clare incorporated numbers either as numerals or as bar-counts. The number two featured strongly. Clare used a large brush to make smears over the top of the geometric lines and then obscured her previous work with broad sweeps across the page before finishing with one last large number 2.



*Figure 25. Clare Bassett, projection on wall  
watercolour and ink*

*Production session 2 (performance) was cancelled.*

## **Kassandra Isaacson**

Age: 64

Medium: drawing, painting, printmaking

### *Biography*

Kassandra began her art training in the USA and then moved to the UK to attend the Ruskin School of Fine Art. After completing her training Kassandra was a founder member of Oxford Printmakers. Kassandra has taken on a number of teaching roles both at schools and through self-generated workshops although she has recently cut back her teaching to prioritize her own practice. Kassandra regularly exhibits through local organizations and as part of Artweeks. Kassandra works with Susan Moxley and Clare Bassett on a drawing dance project involving dancers, artists and musicians in collaborative improvisation. Kassandra participated in the research as an individual, although the production sessions were drawing dance events.

### *Artworks*

Kassandra describes her artworks as paintings, prints and drawings with the emphasis on the drawing as the thing that is fundamental to tying the other two practices together.

### *Artistic process*

Kassandra says that her process has changed through her life's practice but that at the moment all her work starts with drawing, not in the sense of drawing an outline and filling it in but in the sense of matching the vitality of what she is looking at with a drawn mark. She says that she seeks to hold both in drawn and painted form the vitality and immediacy of dance, and she works from sketches done on paper in dance sessions to painted works on canvases that she develops later. She says that her

process is challenging because it throws up technical questions in an ongoing exploration of scale

*Production session 1 – church hall rehearsal session*



**Figure 26. Kassandra Isaacson, work on paper**  
*ink and paper manipulation*

Working to the theme of ‘mathematical lyrical’, Kassandra made a small number of thin and thicker black lines and smudges on a sheet of kitchen towel. Occasionally she unrolled or rolled the towel to cover marks or to make space for new ones. She then moved the kitchen roll from side to side and up and down; lifting, folding and manipulating the towel.



**Figure 27. Kassandra Isaacson, projection on wall**  
*ink and paper manipulation*

Working next to the theme of ‘really really minimal’, which focused on one dot and the rhythm of breathing, Cassandra drew one large black dot in the middle of the sheet of kitchen towel and then used a combination of zoom effects on the camera and manipulation and movement of the kitchen towel to vary the marks that were projected onto the wall.

*Production session 2* (a performance) was cancelled.

## 2.6 Conclusion to Part 2

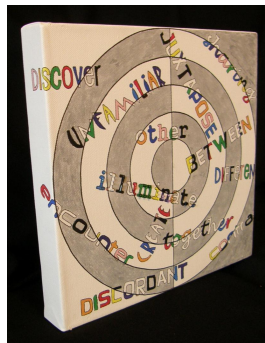
The artwork presented as the frontispiece for Part 2 (and re-presented as a thumbnail below) is titled *Boundary Understanding*, and is a depiction of my research method, which aims to evoke something of the jarring sensation elicited by working outside my own habitual medium.

The thirteen words represent the twelve participating artists and one researcher, and reflect different aspects of the research sessions: juxtaposing practices, experimenting with materials, learning together. The words are oriented at different angles to reflect different perspectives within the research encounter. The positioning of the words, spanning colour/greyscale circles and bending around corners reflects the diversity of form that boundaries can take, and emphasizes the need to read across boundaries and between formats in order to gain the meaning of the individual word and the work as a whole.

The fonts selected reflect the meanings within the words. For example, 'unfamiliar' is in an uncommon font that is difficult to read, while the joined up graphemes of 'together' and 'sharing' suggest working together. 'Illuminate' is the only word embellished with beading, which serves two purposes: the beading catches the light, which highlights the primary function of the research method to illuminate aspects of practices that would otherwise remain unvoiced, and the beading reflects my own customary medium of embroidery, from which this research method largely held me in exile for the duration of the fieldwork.

This work heightened my sensitivity to and appreciation of the balance that it was necessary to strike in the production sessions between the elicitation of divergent

experiences and perspectives and the engendering of a sense of companionship and mutual trust in a shared research activity. It also reflects the multiple positionalities that I adopted throughout the research process, a sole geographic researcher on one hand but an artistic co-experimenter on the other, sometimes enjoying a self-perception as an accepted artistic practitioner and sometimes feeling like an anxious novice in need of tuition. Above all, this work speaks to the complexity and multiplicity that characterized my research methods and practices.



### Part 3: Research Findings



*Figure 28. Absent Presences (2012)*

*Oil pastel and paint, fabric work and embroidery embellishment  
(Approx. 51x40cm)*

### 3.1 Introduction

In Part 3 I present the substantive findings of my research, in the form of four papers, each of which considers different aspects of artistic practice that emerged during fieldwork and analysis and each of which draws on different bodies of literature dealing with topics as diverse as mythology and positive psychology. While there is no linear or consistent narrative thread running sequentially through these papers, in Part 4 their varied findings and implications are brought together in answering the research questions outlined in Part 1.

These papers have been submitted to peer reviewed academic journals, as required by the regulations for a ‘four paper route’ D.Phil, and are presented here as submitted for publication, except that they have been formatted consistently with the rest of the thesis. Each paper is referenced independently both of each other and of the body text of the rest of the thesis.

Evidence of the following submissions is provided in Appendix A:

1. *Spatialization and subjectification in artistic practice as mythological thinking* has been submitted to Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.
2. *Discipline and discordance in artistic dispositifs: putting Foucault into practice* has been submitted to Environment and Planning D
3. *Faltering Flow? Chimerical instability in artistic practice* has been submitted to the Journal of Phenomenological Psychology
4. *Geography meets Gendlin: apprehending affect through synaesthetic gesture* has been submitted to Environment and Planning A

### **3.2 Spatialization and subjectification in artistic practice as mythological thinking**

## **Spatialization and subjectification in artistic practice as mythological thinking**

### **Abstract**

In this paper I explore the processes by which subjectivities and spatialities emerge through artistic practice, attending specifically to the denial of any distinction between real and ideal, the reciprocal interrogation of artist and subject matter, and the interlaced operation of symbolism and narrative. Drawing on both historic and renewed disciplinary interest in poetic imagination, I adopt an affirmative understanding of mythology as a way of thinking, rather than focus on the content of particular myths. I consider consistencies between the identified features of artistic practice and notable characteristics of mythology as a specific mode of thinking. I conclude by suggesting that we can consider artistic practice as a form of mythological thinking, in which particularized, contingent and fleeting subjectivities and spatialities are pre-cartographically instantiated. I also argue for a more affirmative disciplinary understanding of mythological thinking both as a historic influence on the discipline, and relevant to contemporary geographical practices and concerns.

### **Keywords**

spatialization, subjectification, mythology, non-representational, artistic practice

### **Introduction**

This paper argues that we can consider the co-constitution of spatiality and subjectivity in artistic practice in mythological terms. Today, the notion of myth carries negative connotations, broadly conceived as false or fanciful fiction. However, I argue that such a perspective not only neglects the original meaning of myth as truthful narrative (Vico 2002, Lincoln 1999), but also overlooks the operation and

function of myth as a way of knowing. Although there has been some positive engagement with myth in relation to geographical issues in disciplines beyond geography, including leisure studies (Kane 2013) and comparative literature (Thomas 2010), these focus on the content of individual myths: the myth of adventure in New Zealand and the myth of the Zombie in Haiti respectively. Academic database searches suggest only limited explicitly geographical engagement with matters of myth in recent years, and much of that which does exist draws on mythology in disparaging terms, framing myth as false, problematic and to be overcome or abandoned. Such vilification of myth can be seen, for example, in relation to spatial myths of homogeneity, geometric destiny and natural boundaries (Fall 2010), imperial myths of boundless continents and bounded islands (Okihiro 2010), and the myth of the placeless gypsy (Kabachnik 2010). In each case, the author seeks to debunk the content of the identified myth, justifying this effort through their association of myth with falsehood. Okihiro, for example, asserts that: “like the ancient Greeks who sought to free themselves from superstition and myth through observation and science, Enlightenment initiated a disciplining of the world as they knew it” (Okihiro 2010: 756).

To imply that the disciplining of the world only became possible once the scourge of mythology had been cast aside ignores the function of myth in disciplining the world in its own way. Establishing a social identity (Bruner 1962, Burrige 1967, Kane 2013) about which individuals could be informed and to which individuals could conform, myth is at least in part a pre-cartographic way of knowing (Farinelli 2001) and disciplining the world. Further, attributing to myth only its current negative formulation as falsehood pays no heed to the reversal in meaning attributed to its etymological root *mythos* since Antiquity, when *mythos* was an assertive not deceitful

statement and *logos* was the plausible falsehood (Lincoln 1999). Aligning mythology with superstition and isolating myth from observation imposes a realist-idealist division that is alien to mythology in which the real and the fanciful coincide (Farinelli 2001, Cassirer 1955, Bullen 2013, Barthes 2000, Vico 2002), referring to allegedly real events but in a timeless fashion (Levi-Strauss 1955).

Such alignment also presupposes a clear but false dichotomy between mythology on the one hand and rational thought on the other. There has been no clear and singular transformation from mythological to rational thinking (Barthes 2000, Livingstone 1992, Livingstone and Harrison 1981, Kirk 1970, MacIntyre 1967), but co-existence and comingling of the two. Pre-scientific practices such as personification and mysticism continued to be practised alongside emerging rationalist critique (MacIntyre 1967, Livingstone 1992); both pre-scientific and scientific modes of thought share a concern with a quest for unity underlying the apparent complexity of the world (Livingstone 1992, Livingstone and Harrison 1981, MacIntyre 1967); and the association of myth and model as modes of thought through their use of metaphor indicates the embeddedness of mythological thinking in supposedly rational scientific practices (Kirk 1970, Harrison and Livingstone 1982).

Geography is no exception to this connectivity between the mythological and the rational. Although geographical exploration was bound up with attempts to move from cosmological theory in myth to cartographic reality in maps, in creating their own exotic lands mapmakers effectively replaced one suite of myths with another (Livingstone 1992). Equally, Snider-Pellegrini's pre-Wegenerian account of the previous adjacency and division of the continents bordering the Atlantic, although initially dismissed for its similarity to speculative cosmogony (Hallam 1989), subsequently became accepted into knowledge. In addition, geographical concern with

the relations between nature and culture reflects a central and common preoccupation of speculative cosmologies (MacIntyre 1967, Kirk 1970), all of which encourage greater recognition of the explanatory power of myth in the history of geography (Livingstone and Harrison 1981).

Anti-mythological bias is at odds with both geography's disciplinary lineage and current non-representational geographical concerns. Historically, Alexander von Humboldt's (1849) tracing of society's sensations of nature through the poetic imagination of different cultures speaks to the geographical sensibilities that can be preserved and accessed in mythological form, and bears testament to the function as much as the content of mythological thinking. Despite the intervening drive towards scientism, Paul Carter's *Dark Writing* called for the restoration of the excised poetic content of geography and the recognition of the space invoked by geography as mythical (Carter 2009). The emergence and growth of non-representational geography potentially re-opens the door to such mythological understandings due to certain synergies between the mythological and the non-representational. For example, the mythological denial of any distinction between the real and ideal is reminiscent of Bergson's intuition dissolving the realism-idealism debate (Bergson 1911), and its conception of reality only in global terms as a single undifferentiated plane is consistent with other familiar non-representational ideas such as the indissolubility of the singular abstract (Deleuze and Guattari 2004). Similarly, the instantiation of myth through its repetitive performance (Levi-Strauss 1955, Ferrell 2000) reveals its structure in a manner not dissimilar to the notion of the existential refrain outside discursive time (Guattari 1995). Finally, the emphasis within mythological thinking on becoming and events (Cassirer 1955) is at least consistent with current non-representational concerns regarding the impermanence and continual transformation of

subjectivities and spatialities (Doel 1999, 1997, Thrift 1996). Mythology exemplifies the non-representational understanding of representation as performative, and as such mythological thinking – as distinct from individual myths – provides a contemporary but still much overlooked means by which we can think about subjectivity and spatiality.

This paper explores the potential within the notion of mythology to inform non-representational understandings of subjectivity and spatiality, which recognize the double articulation of self and place (Wylie 2005, 2006, Massey 2005). My attention here is directed towards the question of how the functions and characteristics of mythology make it suitable as a conceptual vehicle for thinking about transformational subjectivities and spatialities identified in my research with practising artists. After briefly introducing the artists and research I begin by establishing an initial point of connection between artistic practice and mythological thinking through their shared accommodation of simultaneously individual and collective subjectivities.

Subsequently, I discuss the primary functions and characteristics of mythology, highlighting its capacity to accommodate a number of features of artistic spatializing and subjectifying practices: lack of distinction between the real and ideal, the mutually interrogative nature of artistic practice, and the intertwined employment of symbolism and narrative.

In order to draw out salient points and to address specific concerns of non-representational geography, including the importance of affect, the primacy of performance, and the lack of distinction between the material and the symbolic, I engage with mythology both in general terms and in relation to two unconnected cultures that exhibit both similarity and distinctiveness in their mythological characteristics. The San of southern Africa historically practice rock painting and

etching, and a written language (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2012, Lewis-Williams 2013) enables contemporary access to both mythic narrative and imagery. By contrast, the Nasca of Peru are best known for their large scale ground drawings but developed no identifiable written language (Morrison 1987, Proulx 2006, Steele 2004), such that their mythic narratives were lost with the eradication of the culture following the arrival of the Spanish. Despite these differences, strong similarities between the mythological practices of these cultures speak to the hybrid nature of mythological thinking in mixing forms and disturbing boundaries (Haraway 1991, Lulka 2009, Vigneron 2011, Whatmore 1997, 2002), blurring distinctions between the real and non-real, the material and symbolic, the representational and the affective and performative.

Individual mythic images incorporate complex blends of reality and non-reality (Lewis-Williams 2011), such as the Anthropomorphic Mythical Beings of the Nasca (Proulx 2006) and the rain-animals of the San (Challis et al. 2013), blending aspects of multiple creatures from their everyday environment into one composite mythic form. Highlighting the lack of distinction between the material and symbolic, both Nasca and San are thought to have brought to completion through their rock art meaningful images that they found articulated in the morphology around them (Aveni 1990a, Montelle 2007). Performatively and affectively, connection with the spirit world involved ritual maintenance of mythic images, through social practices such as the rubbing of rock art for the San (Ouzman 2001) and the walking of lines for the Nasca (Jones 2007). For example, the San employed the percussive striking of ‘gong rocks’ (Ouzman 2001), the playing of music (van Hoek 2005) or the performance of dance rituals (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2012, Lewis-Williams 2013) to create a profound atmosphere (van Hoek 2005) or activate potency (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2012)

necessary for a shared public experience that would otherwise be available only to shamans (Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2012, Challis et al. 2013).

Such examples underline the productive potential of mythological thinking to inform disciplinary concerns with thinking hybridity beyond the nature-society dichotomy (Whatmore 2002), and provide direct comparators for the particular aspects of the artistic practices considered here. I conclude that artistic practice can be conceived as a form of mythological thinking which has lost its original explicit mythic content from both its representational and non-representational aspects, and that mythology provides a productive, if currently under-valued, means of engaging with issues of spatiality and subjectivity.

### **Artistic practice *and* mythological thinking**

For reasons of space I provide only scant details of the research and participating artists here; for more information see (details removed for peer review). As in these accounts of my work, in the analysis that follows, the source of the quotations used is identified in brackets at the end of each quotation, indicating whether the research session was an interview (“I”) or a production session (“P”), whether it was taken from the first or second of these sessions (“1” or “2”), and the line number in the transcript where the quote begins. For example, “(P2:153)” indicates that this quotation comes from the second production session and starts on line 153 of the transcript.

Working with 12 practising artists in research that involved semi-structured interviews, two production sessions in which researcher and artist worked alongside each other on their respective artworks, and stimulated recall and review of the research activities based on audio-visual recordings of the production sessions,

enabled me to generate both retrospective and real time discursive and practical evidence of the co-constitution of spatiality and subjectivity in artistic practice. All participating artists lived locally to Oxford, England, and were identified and accessed via promotional materials for an annual arts festival.

Of these participants I worked with three on an individual basis. Jane Mollison (age 71) has retired from a career in art education, which has seen her teach in numerous countries, and uses a variety of media in her practice, which often depicts landscapes or scenery. Laura Degenhardt (age 36) undertook degrees in fine art after an initial career in publishing, and is establishing her art career in Oxford. Laura's medium of choice is oil paint and oil pastel, and she describes her work as being semi-abstract and about her experience of the spirit of place. Katherine Shock (age 59) has completed a foundation course and numerous courses in particular techniques. Katherine uses watercolour, oil, pen and ink, and often works in situ, although she also works more abstractly when in her studio.

Three participants held their production sessions and closing interview as a group.

Philippa Redman (age 66) undertook an art degree following a teaching career, and is currently establishing her practice. Philippa says that she finds landscape boring, preferring to paint people, and works mainly in watercolour and oils. Philippa attends monthly classes with two other participants: Yoko and Marnie. Yoko Jones (age 61) has no formal art training but took up art as a hobby at the age of 36, when she started attending evening classes, and works with watercolour, pencil, charcoal and pen.

Marnie Watson (age 50) took up art after retiring from running her own company, and has attended a variety of courses since, favouring soft pastels. Neither Yoko nor Marnie exhibit or sell their work.

Three further participants were recruited to the research as a group, all of whom work in textile and fibre arts. Ticia Lever (age 55) left a career in town planning to undertake art training and concentrate on her practice. Ticia says that she loves threads and that much of her work speaks to fragility and vulnerability. Jane O'Brien became interested in soft furnishings and textiles during her time working for an interior design company, which led her to undertake art courses. In her work, Jane says that she likes to tell the story of how previous times connect the present day, with particular interest in the status and experience of women. Polly Woolstone (age 62) taught art for 35 years and took up her own practice upon retirement. Polly says that she likes the flexibility of textiles in being able to cut them up and move them about, and much of her work is inspired by colours of India. After the withdrawal of Jane and Ticia from the research following their preliminary interviews, Polly's involvement with research became individual.

The final three artists held their production sessions collectively, as they routinely work together on a project focused on capturing dance in painted form. In addition to this work, each artist pursues their own studio-based practice. Susan Moxley (age 57) has completed art courses in both South Africa and the UK and worked as an illustrator before committing to her own practice approximately 20 years ago. Susan has studios in both the UK and Greece, works in mixed media such as print, paint and jewellery, and says that her work is inspired by her life experiences. Clare Bassett (age 58) initially worked as a film editor and researcher before embarking on her artistic career. Clare works with a range of media including oils, printmaking and watercolour, and much of her work involves prints of monumental figures in unconventional positions that invite an explanation. Cassandra Isaacson (age 64) has undertaken art training in both the USA and the UK, and her focus in her studio work is currently on

working up further the outcomes of the dance-art sessions. Cassandra's primary media are drawing, painting and printmaking.

Reflecting a Renaissance perspective of the artist as essential or innate (Sennett 2009), artists frequently spoke about their artistry as a microcosm of their being (Crowther 1993), or a reflection of their personalities (Lamarque 2010). Jane O'Brien, for example talks about artistry in relation to "the type of person that you are" (I1:375), while Clare comments that "it's in there somewhere deep down" (I1:53). However, this sense of artistic essentialism is counteracted by strong social and institutional influences and affiliations. Jane O'Brien commented that she considered herself fortunate to have had the inspiration of working in a design company in the formative years of her career, while Clare says that she joined the Oxford Printmakers because they offered a more serious combination of practice and training than classes.

This double articulation of essential artistic personality and strong social and institutional influences renders the individual and collective indistinguishable. Jane O'Brien provides an articulate account of this individual-collective hybridity in her work:

"I'm very aware of the woman's situation and that stems too from my childhood. My mother was on her own [through] that difficult time when a woman didn't have status. I can look back and see how my children don't have to deal with that in anything like the way she had to, and so I used that looking back to the Renaissance woman and what was her status? What was her situation? and then of course the textiles came into it, what people wore and why and how and what it represented, so it's quite interesting it goes right through, you know the personal element for me looking at all those situations and those women, so I find that very very fascinating but it's all through textiles that I connected those quite distant things" (I1:558)

Jane pulls out the cultural continuity over time evident in the material forms around her, linking womanhood of today with womanhood of the Renaissance – a contemporary womanhood, personally experienced, that is irreducible to that of the Renaissance yet irrevocably connected to and contingent upon it. In Jane's artistic practice, the irrevocable rootedness of the contemporary and individual in the historic and collective is displayed in material form.

A similar individual-collective hybridity is evident in mythology; exclusively neither one nor the other but a coincidence of the two. Although there is no single definition or type of myth and no clear distinction between myth, legend and folktale (Kirk 1970, Harrison and Livingstone 1982), commonly cited functions of myth include the provision of answers to philosophical questions (Littleton 2002, Daniels 2013) or guidance on personal behaviour and social rules (Burrige 1967, Littleton 2002), establishing community ties and membership through knowledge of myth (Bullen 2013, Tonra and Dunne 1997) and adoption of shared values (Molinié 2004, Holt et al. 1996). Reputedly collective in nature (Yalman 1967, Burrige 1967, Kane 2013), myth is socially framed and transmitted, revealing a people's relationship to reality (Ferrell 2000). However, as a story that one person conceptualizes to reveal their relationship to reality, myth can indicate what is important at either a cultural or individual level (Ferrell 2000). Relatedly, myth in its original mode of oral communication existed only in its performance, conducted by an individual, so is only partially collective, and while myth conveys social messages and values, it is the individual who receives and responds to the myth, forging a relation with their society even if they choose to resist rather than conform. Consequently, not only is myth applicable to individual generation and narration, but even in its more individualized

instantiations, myth is inherently social, such that the individual and collective cannot easily be distinguished.

In art we find a practice that, although commonly assumed to be individual and described in essentialist terms, is enacted in socialized and institutionalized settings. In myth we find a practice that, although commonly assumed to be collective, can be enacted in highly individualized ways, even though in doing so it remains social. Both mythology and artistic practice can be considered as concurrently both individual and collective, giving rise to hybrid individual-collective subjectivities, and paving the way for more detailed consideration of artistic practice as a form of mythological thinking.

### **Artistic practice as mythological thinking**

In this main section, I explore core characteristics of mythology – a lack of distinction between the real and ideal, a reciprocally interrogative process, and the interpenetration of narrative and symbolism – as discernible in varied forms within the accounts and practices of participating artists, arriving at a conception of these contemporary artistic practices as mythological thinking without explicit mythic content.

#### *Lack of distinction between the real and the ideal*

As a means of shaping cultural identities in a medium between fantasy and reality (Bruner 1962, Cassirer 1955), mythology allows for ambiguity in what is represented (Farinelli 2001), and for the instantiation of the object represented in the representation (Farinelli 2001, Cassirer 1955), challenging any notion of a distinction between the real and ideal. Incorporating aspects of multiple creatures in a single composite form, some mythic images act as a conduit between everyday and spirit worlds, as with the

rock art of the San (Ouzman 2001, Lewis-Williams and Pearce 2012) and Nasca (Silverman 1990, Proulx 2006). In such art image-sites any idea of a distinction between real and ideal, natural and supernatural, or distinct spatialities disintegrates.

In Laura's account we learn of a similar experience of spatial hybridization through her co-location in the physical environs of her studio and the artistic environs of her painting:

“the thing about doing a landscape painting for me is that the materials become almost sculptural and you put yourself in the place and then begin to be there through the paint which is a physical thing and the way you sort of spread it it's you you're there you're in it umm and it comes alive under your brush the place there's immense joy in that”  
(P1:458)

Working from photographs of places of which she has personal experience as well as from her memories and associations concerning those places, Laura locates herself within the place depicted through the very materials which, by their physical situation within her studio, confine her to her studio. Through her practice, Laura unites the present 'real' and the distant 'ideal', experiencing both simultaneously, undermining any notion that the real and ideal are separate realms. As with the San's rubbing of rocks, it is in the material practice of her art that the worlds of Laura's studio and her art are one. This is not a case where distinct or pre-existing realms are brought together, but they come into being as one: unity, not unification.

By contrast Susan's work reveals this unity of real and ideal through distancing rather than co-location. Susan works in a number of artistic media, some of which exhibit locational specificity. For example, printmaking can only be conducted in her studio in the UK as that is where her press is located, while jewellery-making could be done in either the UK or at her studio in Greece, but is undertaken in Greece because

of the beauty of the pebbles on the country's beaches. The materials of her artistic practice, which are specific to the locations of her practice, influence the manner in which Susan responds to those locations. Spatiality and subjectivity are mediated through Susan's artistic materials and equipment, as articulated in relation to her paintings of Greece:

“Quite a lot of the paintings that I do that are to do with Greece I do here too because I don't want to copy the sort of obvious beauty of the place. Umm when you're there it's just blue sky and white walls lovely, but underneath it's not, it's scruffy and it's umm well at the moment pretty war torn actually, it's quite umm, and you can see that in the landscape, or you can remember that in the landscape, you don't see it so much but when you, when I, think about it I think about wires and half finished buildings and umm rather tatty piers going down to a boat that's a bit shabby, but when you see it in the bright of sunshine you don't see that, you only see the lovely blue sea and the sky, so I quite like the memory of the place, so although I'm painting those scenes I'm thinking about them from here” (11: 198)

For Susan, both spatial and temporal distance are beneficial for her paintings of Greece, enabling her to overcome the auratic (Latham 1999) or captivating power of its obvious beauty. Susan indicates a need to distance herself from the 'ideal' of Greece in order to access the 'real' Greece. Whereas Susan's appreciation of the beauty of the pebbles in Greece stimulates her jewellery practice in situ, her appreciation of the war torn shabbiness stimulates her painting practice only at a distance from Greece. Unlike the San and Nasca, for whom ritual practices increase both affective and physical proximity to the spirit-everyday manifestation, the relation between Susan's affective proximity to Greece and her physical proximity to Greece is a dynamic one, with implications for the spatializing and subjectifying functions of her artistic practice.

Jane Mollison's work also confuses any distinction between the real and ideal, simultaneously attempting a faithful rendering of the 'real' scene and a subjective construction of her 'ideal' scene. Jane describes going along with what's happening, incorporating into her painting a shed door that had blown open, but equally describes being selective in deciding whether to omit particular features or simply reduce their apparent size. Jane also revealed her manipulation of the circumstances of her painting, effectively changing the 'real' to fit her 'ideal'. Jane painted her husband into the images at a later date in recognition of his role in tending the plants, and left one painting unfinished for a number of weeks while the apples ripened on the trees, as she wanted to include the colour of the ripe fruit. Jane's practice, too, disavows any distinction between real and ideal.

The presentation of such composite or hybrid experiences in pictorial form is both of this world and posits a world (Mooney 2002), opening onto virtual space and time (Crowther 1993) and fabricating a world in itself (Radley 1996). Jane's paintings, for example, mapped out the contours of an experiential space which resonates beyond the image content of the painting (Manning 2009), incorporating extraneous, manipulated and affective elements. These artworks are cartographic in the sense of laying out a spatio-temporal consciousness (Carter 2009), but pre-cartographic in that they are concerned less with the co-ordinates of its form than the experience of its deformation (Manning 2009). In what Carter (2009) calls an angelic topology, space-time is folded and deformed, bringing the present and absent, the real and ideal, the distal and proximal, the past and future into a timeless relationscape (Manning 2009). Both Laura's and Jane's paintings are such relationscapes between different frames of reference (Bingham and Thrift 2000), while for Susan it is Greece that forms the relationscape. This multiple and contradictory positioning (Rose 1997)

results in a subjectivity only partially locatable in space and time (Pile and Thrift 1995), and diasporic belonging (Bell 1999) on multiple axes of identity (Rose 1997). This interweaving and co-constitution of self and place (Montuori 2003, Wylie 2005, 2006, Massey 2005) in these artistic practices is reminiscent of the interweaving of everyday and spirit worlds in San and Nasca rock art but without the explicit mythic reference in its representational, affective or performative aspects. These contemporary art practices, then, can be considered mythological but not mythic.

#### *A reciprocally interrogative process*

Another means by which mythological thinking dismantles any presumed real-ideal distinction also introduces the idea of mythological thinking as an interrogative process. In transcending the distinction between meaning and function (Farinelli 2001), myth carries and conveys meaning regarding the form and function of society, and functions both to normalize (realise) and idealize identity and behaviour. In depicting or conveying social rules, mythology not only reflects society but acts upon it (Lewis-Williams 2013). A uniting mythology facilitates the building of a polity (Tonra and Dunne 1997) in which mythological heroes serve collective ends (Holt et al. 1996) by personifying attributes that are valued in that society. Encouraging members to identify themselves in the image of the myth (Barthes 2000), mythology performs a social reconstruction of reality (Livingstone and Harrison 1982).

The function of myth has been described as presenting or justifying contradictions in society (Levi-Strauss 1955, Levi-Strauss 1967) or as providing models to mediate or overcome social issues (Douglas 1967, Burridge 1967, Barthes 2000). In providing a model of a culture's reality (Montelle 2007) that is lived, their mythic model of reality is real. Myth provides the answers to questions concerning how society

functions, how else society might function, and how individuals are expected to act. This interrogative process in mythology is reciprocal, as in asking questions of society, the questioner is questioned in turn, with the potential to establish, confirm or transform their relation to that which they initially questioned. Mythology is a means of identification, presenting both a taxonomy and ideology (Lincoln 1999) of the world, which both normalizes and idealizes identity and behaviour in a given society by virtue of its transcendence of the split between meaning and function (Farinelli 2001) and its existence between fantasy and reality (Bruner 1962, Cassirer 1955). Myth both informs and transforms; its mutually interrogative process is productive.

In the practices of participating artists, we can see a similar interrogative process. Jane O'Brien, for example, describes her work as looking at the history of pattern in textiles, connecting the historical to the contemporary in material form through a process of interrogation:

“The naivety, the beauty of the pleat-work that’s depicted in the stone. Where does that come from? It comes from ancient Greece, you can see the influence. They’re standing there with such naivety, it’s just the same today you know nothing’s changed in that respect, and trying to see the depth that connects that ancient framework into us with all our media and technology and our over-population this sort of thing, and our speed [and] it’s that [that] I want to try, within the layers of the work using obviously different forms of corrugated cardboard for pleating, pleated silk perhaps, coming up to a very modern form with pleated copper in the fibres, and seeing the same sort of fragility in the human image” (I1: 152)

Jane describes asking herself about the source of the material forms before her and alludes to a research process through which she determines how society is different yet the same in the present compared to the Renaissance, and identifies materials and forms with which she can depict this same-but-differentness in her work through

material continuity. In asking questions of the material world around her and how society has changed yet remains the same, Jane is reciprocally asked questions concerning how she is able to utilize those materials and forms in her work, and what it means to her on a personal level.

As each artist delves deeper into their subject matter, the subject matter also poses questions of the artists, generating understanding of the subject matter, the artist and the relation between them, and performing into being both subjectivity and spatiality. Laura says that her work draws on an imaginary inner landscape to express the –ness of everything from the basis of her own experience, a practice that involves interrogating not only what constitutes the cloudiness of clouds but how that cloudiness can be expressed in artistic form, causing her to question her own capabilities and practice. Similarly, Cassandra depicts her practice as a practical interrogative process of questioning how to make the paper and the paint or ink work together, and what alternative art materials, such as cling film and aluminium foil, would do; questioning that tests not only the capabilities of the materials but specifically her own capabilities in realizing the capabilities of the materials.

Jane Mollison provides a rich account of her practice as an exploratory process of familiarization with the subject matter, in relating her experience sketching a traditional homestead in China:

“After a while a girl of about ten came to watch me and I had drawn an axe that was on the ground and just in pencil I had drawn the handle of the axe umm, but it wasn’t at quite the right angle so I then drew another line for the handle of this axe, and with my pen without saying a word because of course we didn’t have any common language she picked up my eraser and very gently she rubbed out the incorrect line of the axe, so I thanked her. Then I dropped the top of my felt pen she picked it up, she blew out the dust because it was a dusty track and gently put that back on my felt pen. Her mother, who I had just drawn in the distance, came over to see what I was doing and

the girl said to me you haven't - this is just in sign language - you haven't included her cutting, her curved cutting knife, which is attached to her belt sort of at hip level. I mean I'd seen her at a distance and hadn't really noticed it, and it made me realize the importance of that knife that they are agricultural people, it's on them all the time for harvesting and you know getting fodder for the young animals etcetera. And so I immediately included that knife very small scale because it told me something about the culture the agricultural culture, and the fact that this girl thought that the absence of it was important, and it was a little bit like someone doing my portrait and not putting my glasses on you know. I was really touched at her gentle concern, but it also told me something about their community because she was accepting me" (11:255)

In Jane's practice, the incidental plays a formative role in stimulating questions as the artwork unfolds. Jane not only learnt something about the people whom she encountered while sketching but also about herself in relation to that with which she was engaging on both a personal and artistic level. Jane's interrogation of the rural community also caused her to interrogate her own understanding of the cultural differences between the painter and the painted, and evidence that understanding by painting in the knife.

Reflecting the conceptualization of artwork as a site of knowledge and source of questions (Sullivan 2008), it is through this interrogative stance that meaning is actively forged (Coole 2005) as the painter questions reality and responds (Quoniam 1988); an interrogation that progressively becomes a self-interrogation. Through their increasing familiarization with their subject matter and the fusing of multiple mobile axes of identification (Rose 1997) the emerging artist constitutes a particularized contingent and fleeting subjectivity, as epitomized in Jane Mollison's painting of the girl, her mother and the knife.

As with relationscapes, in which the practices of participating artists were considered mythological but not mythic, we can discern a similar transition in terms of the site-

specificity of mythic versus contemporary art practice. The contemporary practices considered here are not site-specific in the sense of completing a mythic figure identified in morphology through an interrogative engagement with their environment, as for the San (Ouzman 2001, Lewis-Williams 2013) or Nasca (Aveni 1990b, Silverman 1990), but in a more general mythological sense. Artists articulate from their own (non-mythic) field of reference through an interrogative engagement with their environment. It is the surface on which they make their marks, and their respective field of reference that distinguishes the practices of contemporary from mythic artists, not the interrogative process.

#### *Transposition of narrative and imagery*

One commonly cited characteristic of myth is that it is a style of narrative discourse (Lincoln 1999, Ferrell 2000), which must be spoken (Levi-Strauss 1955), in which narrative and myth are defined broadly, specifically including imagery. Images are key either because they replace the immediate presence of the things depicted (Cassirer 1955, Farinelli 2001), the myth overall is defined as an intensely concentrated image of the world (Lincoln 1999) or pictures are considered a kind of writing (Barthes 2000). This is consistent with the idea of myth as functioning through dual features of sequences and schemata (Levi-Strauss 1967), narrative and symbolism. However, to assume that mythic images and narratives are distinct, absolute or static, would be misplaced. In mythology, the telling is the tale and the art in its making and viewing is performed (Lewis-Williams 2013). The image is the story (Cole 2011): a complex dynamic allegorical symbolism, the meaning of which lies in the totality of its relations (Kirk 1970). Mythic tales do not convey monolithic meaning but different narrators stress different aspects in different contexts (Cole 2011, Lewis-Williams 2013, Bullen 2013), while mythic images are created and maintained as a fundamental

part of the performance of myth, whether through the rubbing of rock images by the San (Ouzman 2001) or the walking of lines by the Nasca (Jones 2007). Similarly, Laura's co-location through the material practice of her painting suggests a contemporary non-representational interpretation of the mythological unfolding of narrative: the narrative unfolds in the performance of the art.

The first example of the use of narrative and symbolism in artistic practices comes from Jane O'Brien, with the following extract supplementing those presented earlier:

“There's a timeline in a sense and this is what I mean by layers, and this is worked up with paper, print, tissue, stencil, velvet umm, a stencil cut-out, this is referencing the sort of soft furnishing tale if you like, and then it's stitched into, and these are printed images renaissance drawings onto voile, the tissue veil, and then the text printed on voile, so there's always a transparency going through the old textile designs, umm well Italian designs very complicated damask weaving, and then the sort of bringing in the three dimensional tube and the frill. So I'm referencing the use of textiles here but also the imagery of the people, because of course textiles were so important in Italy in the fifteenth century, it was a massive industry for them, umm silk weaving they were the centre really, umm but the dress was so important because the women were wearing these heavy damasks. We use it for soft furnishings today but they were wearing it, and those images, the seeds in the palmettes, symbolized fertility in connection with the virgin Mary so you were wearing all this iconography and all the imagery in your clothes, and the women were obviously very decorated you were only as important as the man you could catch” (II: 500)

We can identify at least two forms of symbolism and two modes of narrative in Jane's account. Jane draws on image or icon in symbolic fashion, as in her use of seeds to denote female fertility, and also on material to symbolize aspects of Renaissance culture, as in her use of damask to denote status. In terms of narrative, we see both a spatial story in her work, as she discovers and depicts the source of particular materials and forms, and a temporal story, as she links the Renaissance to the present day. Notably, and as in myth's duplicity in being simultaneously both meaning and

form (Barthes 2000), Jane does not treat symbolism and narrative in isolation, but works each through the other. It is the use of the damask that tells of the pressure on women in the Renaissance to attain certain status, and it was the repeated employment of pleating that carried the continuity from the ancient to the modern despite the change in the materials that are pleated from stone fluting to pleated copper. In addition, Jane uses lines of stitch in a manner that fuses these iconographic and material symbolic functions, and the spatial and temporal narrative modes, serving to connect present and past in one artwork, and to refer to trade routes in another: “often when I put in a stitch I am referencing back to silk routes” (I1:521). In Jane’s work, symbolism and narrative are very much interlaced: the stitched line embodies both.

In Susan’s earlier account, we can conceive of the pebbles as concurrently iconographic and material representations of the environment of Greece, but Susan also – uniquely among these participants – talks about intentionally developing a personal set of symbols in her artistic practice. This “set of symbols that are to do with me, my experiences” (I1:93), meaningful to Susan, communicate little of her personal experience to viewers. This was evidenced in her account of an inquiry from a previous customer for a second artwork from the same range, which they identified as having “what looks like a tadpole and a mobile phone” (I1:89). Susan’s comment that “of course it had nothing to do with a mobile phone and tadpole, for me those symbols meant something else” (I1:90) illustrates the personal specificity of this symbolism, narrating a story that only she can comprehend. Symbolism, then, is not only diversely employed among artists but multiply and flexibly employed by individual artists.

A similar picture emerges with regard to narrative, with some artists deliberately constructing a narrative and presenting it to the viewer, and others obstructing narrative, inviting the viewer to generate their own. Susan provides an example in

which she drew on third century Middle-Eastern fables relating to vice and greed and used this historic narrative to inform her own narrative about current affairs. By contrast, Laura says that she does not inject narrative into her works because viewers bring their own narrative to a painting, reading into it what they will. Clare goes further, saying that she teases the viewer by deliberately making it unclear what the story is that lies behind the work, saying that one body of her work is:

“characterized by slightly surreal err unnerving other worldly but humorous images where you [are] sort of slightly teasing the viewer or the person looking at the picture, umm very solid figures, not quite sure what they’re doing, what the story is behind it, umm very firm confident figures but not quite in the real world somehow I guess you’d say, a lot of exploring the idea of solitude and communication, you know who is talking to who? What’s the story behind this? Does anybody understand umm what’s happened here? (I1:353)

and describing the other body of her work as:

“really quite vibrant because they’re done in the moment, strong images which again are, again there is no background there is just the figure, so it’s throwing you into concentrating solely on the shape of form, moving form, but the difference is there’s no content in a way, there’s no story, there’s no narrative” (I1:369)

Whether through the unnaturalness of the positions of the figures or the absence of a contextualizing background, Clare deliberately obscures narrative in her work, requiring active narrative generation on the part of the viewer. Here the symbolism lies in the unnaturalness of the figures and their postures, and it is this symbolism that confuses the reading of narrative in the artwork, paralleling the impenetrability of Susan’s personal symbols due to the lack of inter-subjective understanding.

Interestingly, iconography works through narrative in these artists’ practices, just as much as narrative operates through imagery. In the case of Jane O’Brien’s stitched

line, the line only takes on symbolic meaning in the context of the narrative which it tells in its own form. The stitched line symbolizes connection and continuity only in the context of ideas or entities that warrant connecting. So too, with Susan's historic Middle-Eastern fabulist symbolism, which symbolizes vice and greed only in the context of those historic fables. Like the real and ideal, the symbolic and narrative are neither distinct nor mutually exclusive, but exist and function as one. The varied approaches to narrative and imagery evidenced in these artists' practices, sometimes promoting and sometimes obscuring narrative, are reminiscent of Frutiger's characterization of myth as employing symbolism, narrative freedom and prudent imprecision, in which the latter conceals the extent of the myth creator's own intellectual commitment to the myth that they tell (MacIntyre 1967). In artistic practice as in mythology, narrative and imagery work through each other, with variation in the degree of transparency with which the creator's narrative can be discerned.

As with the earlier discussions of relationships and interrogative processes in mythic versus contemporary artistic practices, in relation to the employment of narrative and iconography we also find consistency in terms of mythological thinking alongside a discrepancy in mythic content. As in mythic societies, narrative and imagery work with and through each other in the practices of the participating artists, and it is in the performing of the art that the narrative unfolds, although this unfolding might involve construction or obstruction. Explicit mythic content or reference is not a requirement in contemporary artworks or a common feature in the practices of these artists, although Susan's use of historic fables illustrates that it is also not precluded. Again we see that artistic practice retains a function as mythological thinking, but no longer requires explicit mythic content.

Having explored core features of mythology as they pertain to the practices of these artists, what can we conclude? In the first instance, despite the assertions of these artists that their identity and practice as an artist is in some way innate or essential, we found substantial evidence of subjectivity and spatiality as co-constituted (Wylie 2005, 2006) in practice (Massey 2005, Bell 1999, Coole 2005). Jane Mollison, Susan and Laura provided evidence of the artwork opening onto virtual space and time (Crowther 1993), fabricating a world in itself. In Susan's account we identified the lability of place (Casey 2001) in the variable accessibility to her affective relations to Greece with changing physical proximity to Greece, whereby distance increased Susan's apprehensive ability (Wylie 2006) in her painting but reduced this ability in her jewellery making. All of these examples illustrate that representation is not a process of fixation but a transformational process generative of entities, relations and spatialities (Massey 2005).

Artistic practice fabricates its own world (Radley 1996) in which multiple other spaces are juxtaposed as the artist renders present their diasporic belonging (Bell 1999) on multiple axes of identity (Rose 1997), as evidenced in Jane Mollison's painting of the orchard, and Laura's painting herself onto the beach. In this context artistic spatialities are both topological and mythological. The mutually interrogative relationship between artist and subject matter, mediated through the materials of their practice, leads to the emergence of contingent, fleeting and particularized subjectivities, as seen in Jane Mollison's acceptance by the girl. Symbolism was found to operate through both iconographic and material means, sometimes independently and sometimes in combination, as in Susan's pebbles, while narrative was seen to be either constructed or obstructed through symbolism, either iconographic or material or both; and

reciprocally, iconography was found to operate through narrative, as epitomized by Jane O'Brien's stitched line.

As a conceptual tool, it is the double articulation of the real and unreal in mythological thinking that allows for the instantiation of the object represented in the representation (Cassirer 1955, Farinelli 2001), which renders futile any attempt to distinguish between them, facilitating the fabrication of a world in and through the artwork. It is the transcendence in mythology of the distinction between meaning and function (Farinelli 2001) that enables mythological thinking both to inform and transform, and that supports the interrogative process through which subjectification and spatialization take place. It is the transposing of symbolism and narrative in mythology, where narrative both operates through images and constitutes an imaging of the world, and in which the image is the narrative, which accommodates the multiple and varied ways in which narrative and symbol are inter-laced in artistic practice. Consequently, mythology provides a means of thinking about the subjectifying and spatializing functions of artistic practice, such that artistic practice is a form of mythological thinking that has lost not only the requirement of mythic content from its representational aspect, but also the mythic relevance of its performative and affective aspects. Ritual and affective aspects of traditional mythological practices, such as music and dancing that accompanied artistic practices, used to fulfil their own mythic role in the manifestation of a mythic relationscape, by establishing the conditions necessary for the public sharing of that manifestation. While artistic practice continues to generate relationscapes, the affective aspects have lost their mythical relevance. In relation to the establishment of relationscapes, the reciprocal interrogative relationship between individual and subject matter, and the

transposition of imagery and narrative, artistic practice has lost its mythical content but retains its mythological function.

## **Conclusion**

This affirmative consideration of mythology drew explicitly on both historic geographical influences (Humboldt 1849) and renewed disciplinary interest in the poetic (Carter 2009), arguing that geography's historic engagement with mythological thinking is more substantial than incidental, as the move from description to explanation heralded less a break with mythology than a change in emphasis from its taxonomic to its ideological aspects.

In exploring how the functions and characteristics of mythological thinking might serve as a conceptual vehicle for considering artistic subjectivities and spatialities in contemporary geography, the characterization of both myth and art as simultaneously individual and collective provided the first point of connection between mythological and artistic practices.

Subjectivity and spatiality were co-constituted in the accounts and practices of these artists through three main processes, each of which was accommodated by specific characteristics of mythology. These characteristics were the lack of distinction between the real and the unreal, allowing for the emergence of topological and mythological relationships evident in these artists' practices; the transcendence of the distinction between meaning and function, allowing for the reciprocally interrogative processes between individual and subject matter; and the transposition of symbolism and narrative, which parallels that in artistic practice. I proposed that, in mythic societies, artistic practice was a form of mythological thinking and artistic products and practices held mythic content, but that in the contemporary practices explored

here, artistic practice can still be considered a form of mythological thinking, even though it has lost its explicit mythic content and practice. On this account, artistic practice is a form of mythological thinking that constitutes particularized subjectivities and spatialities through mutually interrogative relationships between emergent entities that become pre-cartographically instantiated in diverse and dynamic symbolic-narrative transpositions.

Myth is far more prevalent and promising than is commonly acknowledged, particularly in relation to its characterization as multiply hybrid, challenging distinctions and disturbing boundaries. Far from being abandoned as a redundant relic of ancient times, mythological thinking is of considerable contemporary relevance and ongoing practical concern. This analysis has shown that mythology can be used productively in terms of its characteristics and functions, without any recourse to issues of the veracity or otherwise of myth's meaningful content. The underexplored potential within mythological thinking for geographical inquiry is considerable, both in relation to other activities that might fruitfully be considered mythological, from dance to politics, and the influence of mythological thinking on social relations, from the interpersonal to the international. There is also cause for a recalibration of geography's disciplinary epistemology, to acknowledge the significant role played, and still played, by mythological thinking in the geographical tradition, engendering both a more honest appreciation of the nature and status of contemporary 'rational' geographical thinking and practice, and an evaluation of the productive potential within geography itself affirmatively conceived as mythological.

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### **3.3 Discipline and discordance in artistic *dispositifs*: putting Foucault into practice**

## **Discipline and discordance in artistic *dispositifs*: putting Foucault into practice**

### **Abstract**

Bringing Foucault's *dispositif* into productive conversation with his notion of parasitic practices, in this paper I explore the divergent tendencies towards habit and experimentation within artistic practices and their implications for our understanding of proficiency. In a twist on Foucault's analyses of the impacts of individual artworks on the fields from which they emerge, I argue for the productivity of considering *dispositif* in more general terms than state apparatuses of security, applying the concept to the maintenance and challenge of field norms and conventions in artistic practice. This framing of *dispositif* highlights greater behavioural symmetry between practitioner and field than commonly entertained, and informs contemporary debates concerning the appropriateness of geographers without formal art training conducting artistic practice as research.

### **Keywords**

Foucault, *dispositif*, artistic practice, proficiency, proto- practices, parasitic practices

### **Introduction**

Set against the recent re-flourishing of geography's interest in art (Foster and Lorimer, 2007; Hawkins, 2011; 2013; Lafrenière and Cox, 2013; Marston and de Leeuw, 2013), in this paper I revisit a key Foucauldian idea (*dispositif*) in relation to a field of activity of interest to Foucault but which is not commonly associated with *dispositif* (artistic practices). I consider *dispositif* as the apparatus securing the maintenance of the field of artistic practice in the face of challenge from experimentation on the part of the practitioner, and extend Foucault's focus on specific artworks to attending to the

practices rather than the products of art. I develop theoretically the co-existence of discipline and discordance – habit and variation – found to be pervasive across artist accounts during fieldwork, drawing upon Foucault’s diverse writings to consider questions concerning the forms that discipline and discordance take, how they relate and the function this serves. Forging connections between Foucauldian ideas of *dispositif* and parasitic practices, practices not uniformly compatible with the conventions of the field, I interject into contemporary debates concerning the appropriateness of geographers not trained in art to use artistic practice in their research by unsettling our understanding of artistic proficiency.

Geography’s interest in Foucault’s writings has seen a recent surge in engagement with biopower as the disciplining of bodies and populations both human (Bailey, 2013a; Bhungalia, 2012) and nonhuman (Holloway and Morris, 2012; Srinivasan, 2013), and a similarly burgeoning interest in *dispositif* and border security issues (Long, 2011; Vaughan-Williams, 2010; Wichum, 2013). However, I draw here on a broader conception of *dispositif* or security apparatus as a series of possible events in a given space; a milieu in which an element tries to affect a population (Foucault, 2007b) in response to an urgent need (Foucault, 1980a). Specifically, I attend to the protection of a distributed community unified by practice rather than a territorially specified community unified through state apparatuses, taking my lead from work emphasizing Foucault’s attention not to confinement but to process, struggle and possibility (Matless, 1992) and recent identification of Foucault with the vitalist and affectual trajectory of non-representational thinking (Anderson, 2012; Philo, 2012). It is, specifically, Foucault’s acute writing about artworks (Thrift, 2007) and his alertness to divergence and differentiation within normalized or received discourses and practices which renders his work on *dispositif* so informative for the current

analysis. Without digressing into lengthy debate regarding the relative merits of different terms (for example, see Bussolini, 2010; Legg, 2011; Pløger, 2008), my particular justification in using *dispositif* is its nature as both concept and tool (Bussolini, 2010), which speaks to the main analytical foci in this paper: generativity in *dispositifs*, and the analysis of networks of power relations at the level of individual practices.

From narrative fiction (Foucault, 1966) to the plastic arts (Foucault, 1968), Foucault's analyses of individual artworks highlight their capacity to operate upon received systems of practices to transform the field that conditions their appearance (Tanke, 2009). Reflecting Foucault's interest in divergence in practice, I attend here to diverging tendencies within artists' practices and their implications for practitioner-field relations. I aim to illuminate artistic *dispositifs* from within in a manner consistent with Foucault's own methods: exploring the comparative variability of localized disciplinary exercises in micro-practices (Coleman and Agnew, 2007).

In tracing how various practices come to be 'cobbled together' in the production of new ones (Donnelly, 1992), I also problematize conventional notions of professional art practice by demonstrating the injection or continuance, even in professional practice, of techniques, methods and materials that would not be considered acceptable by the field. Given the recent boom in geographical interest in art, with increasing collaborative and practice based approaches (see, for example, Foster and Lorimer, 2007; Hawkins, 2011; Hawkins, 2013) and emergent questions concerning the validity of geographers not proficient or trained in art using artistic practice as a research method (Lafrenière and Cox, 2013; Marston and de Leeuw, 2013), this paper also has implications for the tensions and interlocutions between geographic and artistic domains (Hawkins, 2013).

It was in considering how ongoing subjugation dictates behaviour (Foucault, 1980b) in artistic practice – evidenced as discipline – that elements of practice inconsistent with practice norms – identified as discordance – became apparent. Throughout this paper, this relation between practice reinforcement and revolution is a recurring theme, and features in three contexts: the discipline and discordance of the title; tradition and innovation in creativity, and the same relation in the development of expertise. These three are brought progressively into conversation while drawing on Foucault in order to provide conceptual context for the empirical work and empirical critique of the conceptual terrain.

In connecting theoretical reflection with empirical micro-analysis (Wichum, 2013), my empirical content draws on practice-based research with artists. Discussions of artists' practices incorporated real-time commentary during practice, retrospective interview accounts and stimulated recall during the viewing of visual recordings of the artists at work. (For methodological and participant details, see: details removed for peer review). The accounts employed here are those of the ten artists who completed the research, and who vary in their medium and career status:

*Jane Mollison (age 71)* uses a variety of media including watercolours and Chinese brush and ink in her practice, which she has maintained since retiring from art education.

*Laura Degenhardt (age 36)* is establishing her art career in Oxford following a previous career in publishing. Laura works primarily in oils and describes her semi-abstract work as being about the spirit of place.

*Katherine Shock (age 59)* is an established artist who paints watercolour landscapes in situ, but works more abstractly in her studio.

***Philippa Redman (age 66)*** is currently establishing her practice, mainly watercolour and oil paintings of people, following a teaching career.

***Yoko Jones (age 61)*** has no formal art training but has attended evening classes regularly for 25 years, and works with watercolour, pencil, charcoal and pen.

***Marnie Watson (age 50)*** took up art upon retirement, and has attended a variety of courses since. Marnie works with soft pastels.

***Polly Woolstone (age 62)*** taught art for 35 years and established her own textile practice upon retirement. Polly says that much of her work is inspired by colours of India.

***Susan Moxley (age 57)*** worked as an illustrator before establishing her own practice approximately 20 years ago. Susan's work includes print, paint and jewellery, and is inspired by her life experiences.

***Clare Bassett (age 58)*** established her art career following a period working as a film editor and researcher. Clare is a printmaker who also paints using oils and watercolours.

***Kassandra Isaacson (age 64)*** is currently prioritizing her practice over her teaching, and her main media are drawing, painting and printmaking.

As in other accounts of this research (details removed for peer review), where quotations are used in the analysis that follows, the source of the quotation is indicated following the extract, identifying whether the session was an interview ('I') or

production session ('P'), whether it was the first or second of such sessions, and the starting line number for the quotation. The form (P2:204) therefore indicates that the quotation can be found starting on line 204 in the transcript of the second production session for that artist.

The paper is structured around two substantive sections. In section one I outline the forms that discipline and discordance take in these artists' practices, and consider the particular value in the notion of experimentation as a means of thinking about these aspects of artistic practice. I also consider the function served by the experimental negotiation between discipline and discordance in generating increasingly individualized practices over time. In section two I explore different ways in which the discipline-discordance negotiation might be conceived in the context of practitioner-field relations, and highlight the potential for factors outside any field of practice to influence a practitioner at any stage of their development, emphasizing the nature of artistic practices as contingently cobbled together in a manner that troubles conventional notions of artist proficiency. I conclude by arguing that a more practice-oriented working of *dispositif* encourages both a more affirmative appreciation of Foucault's works than is conventionally advocated, and a re-evaluation of notions of proficiency at the heart of contemporary debates concerning the validity of the geographic use of artistic practice as a research method.

### **Discipline and discordance**

Presenting examples of both discipline (regulation) and discordance (variation) in artistic practice, in this section I illustrate *dispositif* as a regulated way of practicing the possibilities of a discourse (Foucault, 2002), which is reinforced not by right or law but by technique (Foucault, 1978) but which is vulnerable to challenge (Bailey,

2013b; Long, 2011). Subsequently, I posit experimentation as a means by which regulation and variation are managed, and consider the function served by this experimental negotiation over time.

The accounts and practices of participating artists evidenced multiple means of self-discipline in order to sustain their practice. Much of this regulation is mediated spatially: the space must be right. For Jane, who works outdoors, the vitality of the environment is important because it allows her to incorporate something unexpected into her work. For Clare, the rightness of her studio for the work that she does is both generated by and generative of her artistic practice:

“to have a space to allow you to get into the mindset where these ideas start to come is really valuable, because you really need [to] open yourself up to the ideas [to] the things that result in making something. So [if] you haven’t got the quiet or the smell of the linseed oil or whatever, to start those things happening or just the space to put a piece of paper down and not be distracted it’s much harder”  
(S1:641)

Supplementing the maintenance of this spatial and material readiness (Relph, 1976), these artists exhibit significant stylistic and procedural discipline. Katherine says that she will usually “need to do a couple of poor ones to get me into the mental process” (S4:171), while Jane habitually works “from general scene to more and more detail” (S4:970) and from lighter colours to darker colours. Additionally, both Laura and Polly comment that they like to work on multiple pieces simultaneously, because it helps to determine the preferred composition (Polly) as the works play productively against each other (Laura).

However, much of this is effortful. From Laura’s “gearing my life around coming in and continuing” (S1:154) to Cassandra’s long-standing frustration at the challenge of “hacking out the space and time to work” (S4: 401), these artists must regulate their

broader life commitments in order to continue their artistic practice. Yoko exhibits the integration of the material, the spatial and the social in the regulation of her practice, committing herself to regular art classes as “somehow I need to be forced” (S1:40) to get started, and using inexpensive equipment that is readily available so that “I don’t have any excuse” (S1:109). It is precisely this elusiveness of discipline that demands such efforts towards productively ordering (Wood, 2007) their social and material environments, establishing commitments that demand and material practices that facilitate their ongoing and increasingly habituated practice.

The social origin of these individual regulated practices is evidenced primarily by attendance at classes and courses, often undertaken in order to revitalize practice (Polly) or advance skills (Marnie). There was considerable evidence of adherence to the norms and practices encountered through training among these artists. Yoko, Philippa and Marnie, who all attend the same weekly still life class, provide particularly clear evidence of this, as their tutor, Norman, exerted a strong presence in the research sessions despite his conspicuous absence. Yoko recalls that “Norman said” that they should copy the paintings of great artists to learn techniques and “Norman said” the wash for skies is apricot, while Marnie jokes that as she is currently struggling to identify when to stop working on a picture Norman tells her when her work is finished, and Philippa comments that “I can’t do Norman’s painting either” (S3:175).

Regardless of their perceived ability to enact the instructions and guidance that they receive, the strength of Norman’s influence warrants particular consideration here, as it varied between different circumstances of practice. During the production sessions, the practices of Philippa, Marnie and Yoko often contradicted Norman’s instructions despite their obvious awareness of those instructions. In some research sessions

Norman was present in both the session and the participant's practice, while in others Norman was present in the session but absent from the participant's practice, sometimes forcefully excluded by challenging his guidance. For example, Philippa at one time stated that "we're always told to do layers but I'm not convinced" (S4:55), maintaining Norman's presence in the session while simultaneously absenting Norman from that practice, emphasizing her own presence in her practice by challenging Norman's advice. This relative presence of artist and tutor is contingent on a number of factors:

Y. [Norman] is always telling us the water should be drinkable for your brush to wash

P. and do you think it should?

Y. oh I don't know, it's up to you. Like I did once by mistake dip [my] paint brush into coffee and umm got this rather nice colour, sort of sepia. So that is his method compared to maybe someone else has got different ideas

P. I think you have to find your own way

M. I think it's probably a good way to start maybe, because I think if you start with too many, I think I would get, mine would be so muddy my watercolour if I didn't really keep it clean, but I think as you get better you can probably not worry about it so much

P. but I think if you want fresh colours transparent colours I think you do have to do that possibly, yeah

Y. because I remember before I went to Norman's class sometimes I get really annoyed, is not getting the clear colours. I didn't realize it was the problem from the water (S2:177)

Norman's presence in the session is clear, but the perceived need for his presence in the practices of these artists varies according to the artist's proficiency (Marnie) and intention (Philippa). While Marnie considers that adhering to guidance becomes less

important with skill, for Philippa there are no hard and fast rules but some rules are helpful to achieve particular effects. For Yoko, allowing Norman's influence into her practice is a matter of personal choice, although she acknowledges in her final comment that doing so exposed the source of a difficulty that she had been experiencing. Despite Norman's presence not always being welcome in their practice, very often his presence is helpful, fuelling the ongoing negotiation of his presence in their practice in different circumstances.

The dependence of the artist on their field or milieu is also evidenced by the disciplinary power of galleries and a buying public. Cassandra explains that "the minute you get too much of an eye to what sells then you have to produce that and it stops being as exciting to work that way" (S1:84), while Polly discusses a friend who is:

"trying to get her work into galleries, and one gallery will take anything as long as it's got seagulls in it and another anything that's got trees, you know, but at the moment she's really enjoying doing abstract, but she's feeling she can't do abstract because the galleries won't take them" (S4:398)

Here, the negotiation of the absence and presence of productive forces takes the form of responding sufficiently to social demands in their work to generate exhibitions and sales while maintaining sufficient absence of such concerns to maintain their own interest in their work.

The relevant field not only makes art objects possible but also defines the conventions of their interpretation (Lamarque, 2010), illustrating the power of persons and texts in opening doors and maintaining boundaries (Pizanias, 1996) in relation to those fields. Through the influence of individual tutors, galleries or art schools that fulfil the surveillance and classificatory functions of *dispositif* (Foucault, 2007b), the

dependence of great strategies of power on micro-relations of power (Foucault, 1980a), and the function of *dispositif* in determining how things should or should not circulate (Foucault, 2007b; Wichum, 2013) are evident. In seeking to learn from more experienced practitioners these artists evidence their willingness to adjust their practices to the prevailing structure of their respective artistic fields (Certeau, 1984), but these micro-relations of power are played out through practice-based processes of the absencing and presenting of productive forces, such that practitioner conformity to their field is situated and relative rather than absolute.

Attending now to discordance – absencing of productive forces – in artistic practice, we find that the transformational quality of *dispositif* allowing for variation and change in practice (Foucault, 1982, 2007a) facilitates our understanding of practices that fall outside the bounds of acceptability for a field, such as Yoko’s accidental discovery of a *sepia* effect and Philippa’s disavowal of practice conventions.

These artists commonly describe their practice as playing (Laura, Marnie, Polly), exploring (Laura, Polly), trying things out (Katherine, Clare) or experimenting (Jane, Katherine, Philippa). A defining feature of this playful experimentalism is to limit or constrain their practice in some way, for example by working on a smaller scale than usual (Polly) or limiting their expressiveness (Kassandra). Somewhat counter-intuitively, Jane observes that “by restricting your options in a strange way you’re increasing them” (S4:956), highlighting the generativity of constraint-based experimentation (Galison, 1995; Pickering, 1995). However, the purpose of this experimentation varied, from exploring new domains and trialling equipment (Galison, 1995) to curiosity as to what will happen (Hacking, 1983).

Katherine outlined her eagerness to “see what I can do” (S4:47) with her first sketches on an ipad, saying that “I hadn’t expected to be able to do what I was doing” (S4:181). Polly talks about “constantly striving to find new ways of expressing myself” (S1:106), while Jane comments that “if you do things another way you actually get a better effect” (S4:700). Such comments suggest that these artists associate their experimentation with skill development (Sennett, 2009), producing new modes of conduct and capacities (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004) and new meanings (Sullivan, 2008).

Other artists targeted their experimentation towards particular materials, making familiar materials unfamiliar (Buchli and Lucas, 2001) in order to discover new ways of working with them. Laura spoke about “experimenting more with my starting layer, my primed surface” (S2:105), Polly describes her exploration of different surfaces and textures, while Philippa describes how she let one layer of paint dry “so I could paint on top and explore the transparent qualities of the paint” (S2:257).

Sometimes these efforts aim to achieve specific effects in the finished artwork. Clare says that she seeks to transfer effects between mediums: “that’s what I’m engaged in at the moment struggling to find out if there’s a way from one to the other” (S1:322), and Laura describes her effort “to investigate creating an intensity of colour on a small scale as opposed to painting large” (S1:219). Equally, though, much experimenting is undertaken without such goals in mind, but rather in the spirit of curiosity as to “what if?” questions. Marnie says that she “wanted to see what would happen if the paint ran” (S4:1200), and Philippa says that she was “trying to see what happens if you use [acrylics] like watercolour” (S3:225).

This constraint-based experimentalism cultivates dispositions that help these artists to think in certain ways, characteristic of ‘thinking-spaces’ (Latham and McCormack, 2009; McCormack, 2008b). Conceptualized as both process and site – generative activity and facilitating environment – thinking-spaces are epitomized by the novel configuration of ideas, things and bodies (McCormack, 2008b). However, while such experimentation illustrates the privileged (productively ordered) contexts with generative constraints definitive of thinking-spaces (Latham and McCormack, 2009), and the unknowability of outcomes within those constraints (McCormack, 2008b), it is not the case with all of these artists that “the trick is to get the constraints right” (McCormack, 2008b: 13). The constraints employed are often not purposively pre-selected but rather emerge from an open-ended wonder-lust. Rather than pre-existing and enduringly present, these constraints are open-ended and contingent (Pickering, 1995), consistent with a Deleuzian notion of experimentation as encounter with that which we cannot yet determine (Davies, 2010) or a Foucauldian notion of thinking as always experiencing and experimenting rather than interpreting (Deleuze, 1995). As an experimental system capable of generating surprises, these artistic practices are activated to generate unknown answers to questions that, in many cases, the experimenters themselves are not yet able clearly to ask (Rheinberger, 1997).

Yoko, Philippa and Marnie’s discussion also highlights the role of accidents in the development of these artists’ practices, as in Yoko’s mistake of dipping her brush into coffee and her justification of her challenge to Norman’s advice on the basis that she liked the resulting effect. Philippa’s preference for working wet results from similar accidental origins, as her delight at the unexpected outcome of the uncontrolled mixing of different paints when working with very liquid paints has evolved into a hallmark of her work. Illustrating the lack of clear distinction between experiment and

accident and the re-iterative relation between them (Balmer, 2004), Philippa now experimentally sets in motion conditions under which desired accidental effects may re-occur.

Introducing now the second instantiation of the constancy-change or reinforcement-revolution relation – the relation between innovation and tradition (Ingold and Hallam, 2007) or creativity and habit (Glăveanu, 2012) - we find that conceiving of artistic practice as an experimental system accommodates the varied playful practices of these artists, from accidental to intentional. We find that it also caters for a specific characteristic of these artists' practices: attending and responding to positive as well as negative practice events and experiences.

Although commonly considered dichotomously, with creativity only occurring if habit can be broken (Bhatti et al., 2009; Glăveanu, 2012; Joas, 1996; Lock, 2011), other perspectives suggest a continuum of innovation from greater to lesser divergence from their respective traditions (Lubart, 2000; Nixon, 2006), emphasizing an ongoing dialectic and interpenetration of habit and creativity (Barber, 2007; 2012; Glăveanu, 2010; Ingold and Hallam, 2007; Montuori, 2003; Runco, 2005). While such accounts recognize the role of convention in creativity (Barber, 2007; 2012; Glăveanu, 2010; Runco, 2005), as in the use of ready-mades during improvisation (Becker, 2000; Sawyer, 2000) or the generative constraints of thinking-spaces (McCormack, 2008a), there remains an emphasis on either negating, violating or forbidding tradition in the generation of novelty (Lock, 2011).

Improvisation is a complicating factor here, as it has been variously defined as exploring constraints to go beyond the already known (Montuori, 2003), suggesting consciously directed activity, but also as highly contingent moment-to-moment

drawing on ready-mades (Sawyer, 2000), suggesting automated activity. Exemplifying the positioning of improvisation as intermediate between habit and innovation, habitual creativity has been described as adjusting to dynamic contexts, improvisation as a response to difficulties encountered in habitual activity, and innovation as the activity undertaken in response to that difficulty with the intention to create novel solutions (Glăveanu, 2012). What all of these accounts appear to omit is any possibility of an actant changing the conditions of the context for their action, and yet this is precisely what these artists do in their playful or discordant practices.

The concept that seems most appropriate for intentionally varying the conditions of a task and responding non-traditionally to positive as well as negative events, with or without the intention to solve problems or generate novelty, is experimentation.

Experimentation has been recognized as an inherent part of the art-making process and defined as discovering the outcome of manipulating materials and methods (Mace and Ward, 2002), which neatly captures the speculative and accidental artistic explorations presented earlier. It has also been proposed that experimentation is not outcome-focused but is a means of gaining new ways of thinking and perceiving (Mace and Ward, 2002), consistent with the idea of thinking-spaces (Latham and McCormack, 2009; McCormack, 2008b). The benefit of considering aspects of artistic practice in terms of experimentation is precisely its capacity to cater for the deliberate introduction of non-traditional techniques, materials and styles from beyond their field, as evidenced in the practices of these artists. Here, specifically, I use experimentation not in the weak sense of letting things evolve (Foster and Lorimer, 2007), but in a more pro-active sense of deliberately changing the arrangements for their practice (Kullman, 2012), while not requiring full hypothesis testing and controlled conditions (Hacking, 1983; Last, 2012).

Consequently, the accounts of these artists exemplify many types of creativity as experimentation, bringing about skill development through practical improvisation in novel situations (Ericsson and Smith, 1991) and new patterns of self-organization through encounters with novel forces (Connolly, 2010), which are introduced both incidentally and intentionally. Some are purposive, such as Polly's desire to find new ways of expressing herself, reflecting an intention to innovate (Glăveanu, 2012), while others are incidental and speak to Mace and Ward's (2002) expansion of modes of thinking, such as Jane's comment regarding the revelatory outcome of working with a different technique. Some reflect more exploratory definitions of improvisation (Montuori, 2003), for example Polly's and Laura's material-oriented endeavours, while others do address particular challenges or aims, such as Clare's attempt to translate between media. These myriad ways in which convention and creativity interpenetrate in artistic practice illustrate the continuously determining relations between continuity and transformation (Foucault, 2002) and raise questions concerning the function served by the co-existence of creativity and tradition. I argue here, drawing on Foucault's (1966) two-fold law and notions of proficiency and expertise, that tradition (discipline) and creativity (discordance) come together in artistic practice to very specific effect, with implications for how we think about an artist's practice and proficiency over time.

The generativity of artistic experimentation suggests a developmental trajectory, but to assume a constant trajectory of expanding practice is misleading because not only must practitioners adopt new modes and methods, they must also disengage from (Freeman and Adi-Japhe, 2008), demolish (Polanyi, 1958) or break the bounds of their previous working styles (Casey, 2004) or habits (Bhatti et al., 2009) in order to conceive of new conceptual spaces of possibility (Boden, 2004; Hawkins, 2010).

However, if disengaging from previous practice habits is so important it is worth considering the role played by the persistence of discipline.

This role might lie in experimentation's need for comparison, attained through the coupled co-production of new and existing phenomena (Rheinberger, 1997), whereby discipline provides the regularities against which we note departures from the norm (Kozbelt, 2009). This co-production enables technique to develop through dialectic between the correct way to do something and willingness to experiment and make mistakes (Sennett, 2009), or a practice of constraint escape and return (Olsson, 1978). Although these artists' described their experimentation as playful it is also a source of uncertainty and fear for many, as exemplified by Clare's comment that "it's good to change and expand but it's quite scary when you know that what you do is fine and it works" (S1:289). This affective power of experimentation reflects the operation of Foucault's two-fold law of disappointment and metamorphosis (Foucault, 1966), whereby disappointment at experimental outcomes encourages the persistence of customary practices, while successful experimental outcomes encourage the transformation of those practices by opening up a new space of freedom to do things differently (Foucault, 1982). By virtue of the two-fold law experimentation increases both an artist's adventurousness and their stickiness to their traditional practice. It is precisely this stickiness of an artist to their traditional practice that they must overcome in order to experiment in the first place. The difficulty inherent in doing so can be seen in Marnie's recognition that "I've just morphed back into my favourite medium" (S3:629); and Jane's observation of my own struggle to depart from my habitual practice:

“you were probably fighting against the scale of the pastels and if you’re embroidery you probably automatically did something small”  
(S2:675)

Through their disciplinary habituation, artists gain a sense of the effects they can achieve in their work that will be accepted by their field. While this provides a sense of security or comfort, Cassandra’s comment about producing only what sells lacks excitement illustrates that it can also generate a desire for change (Boden, 2004; Ericsson and Faivre, 1988). However, to experiment is to invite danger because the outcome is uncertain. Reflecting Foucault’s (1966) two-fold law, experimentation leads neither to equilibrium (Rheinberger, 1997), nor to a perpetual treadmill of a changing baseline of practice but to twin tendencies of continued experimentation and retreat to habit, such that experimentation leads to both its own perpetuation and its own challenge.

In summary, *dispositif* and the two-fold law operate both to sustain an artist’s core practice, and to develop that practice through the experimental imposition of constraints (Gomart and Hennion, 1999), which might or might not be imposed in the service of particular objectives and which come from beyond the field governed by *dispositif*, through the absenting of productive forces. Artistic practice, then, is characterized by experimentalism, which it both exhibits and develops through a tension between bidirectional tendencies of extension of practice through development at its edges and intensification through enhanced adherence to its core. Consistent with Foucault’s *dispositif* accentuating, stabilizing and broadening practice (Foucault, 1980a), the bi-directional tendencies generate increasing individualization of an artist’s practice over time as they build incrementally on their experiments, cobbling together disciplined and discordant practices through experimental efforts that might

be outcome-oriented or ludic in nature. What we have yet to consider, though, is how this individualization relates to the field. This is explored in the next section, in which I draw upon notions of proficiency and expertise as the third instantiation of the constancy-change relation.

### **Parasitic practices**

Considering the practices of these artists and developmental accounts of expertise together with Foucauldian notions of *dispositif* enables us to understand the experimental aspects of artistic practices in the context of practitioner-field relations. This will bring us to an understanding of these practices as parasitic (Foucault, 1966), in which naive or disqualified knowledges re-emerge (Foucault, 1980b), constituting juxtaposed, dispersed and fragmented practices and subjectivities not uniformly compatible with the norms of their field (Legg, 2007). However, this entails a reconceptualization of classifications of proficiency, which raises implications for contemporary debates regarding geographic-artistic interdisciplinary engagement.

The increasing individualization of an artist's practice might reflect a standard artistic developmental trajectory from habituation to experimentation, which would be consistent with accounts of giftedness, whereby individuals develop abilities (as a novice) into competencies (as an amateur) through structured tuition, and then develop these further into expertise through effortful (Ericsson and Charness, 1994) and self-reflective practice (Kaufman and Kaufman, 2007; Subotnik and Jarvin, 2005). Beyond expertise, the giftedness trajectory extends to elite talent or artistry (Kaufman and Kaufman, 2007; Subotnik and Jarvin, 2005), for which technical competency is not sufficient. Artistry requires style (Stephens and Delamont, 2009) or expression (Pickard, 2012) in order to constitute a unique contribution to their field (Ericsson and

Charness, 1994), suggesting that greater experimentation is expected of expert than novice artists. There is certain limited support for such a view in these artists' accounts, in that Yoko and Marnie (who described themselves as hobbyists) spoke less about deliberate experimentation than trained artists such as Laura and Jane, for whom experimentation is fundamental to their practice. Indeed, Marnie's earlier comment that guidance becomes less important as a practitioner develops indicates such a trajectory. However, this confinement of creativity to elite talent seems overly restrictive considering the varied forms of artistic creativity identified earlier. In addition, as the trajectory originates with the novice, it is presumed that the individual has already identified themselves with a field, which makes no allowance for the influence of factors from outside the field of practice.

Taking an alternative perspective, Marnie and Yoko also both comment that they "haven't found the right technique" (S4:574) yet, suggesting an opposite trajectory from exploring alternative practices to settling on the correct one. Such an account can be found in typologies of proficiency that distinguish proto-, novice, amateur and expert practices.

Conducted without the influence of others (Carroll, 1999), and based only on a practitioner's lived experience, proto- practice inherits no tradition and is not accepted as legitimate practice by institutions (Berger, 1980). Generally associated with those outside professional institutions (Boden, 2004), less rule-governed practitioners are better able to conceive of new conceptual spaces of possibility (Boden, 2004; Hawkins, 2010). Although it is doubtful whether any artists' practices occur in total isolation from social or cultural influences (Carroll, 1999; Wilson, 1997), for current purposes proto-practice is minimally influenced by the determinisms of any field.

Novice practitioners are relatively new to practice but operate within a field. Their performance is poorer than that of experienced practitioners (Adelson, 1984) and their practice proceeds incrementally (Larkin et al., 1980; O'Connor, 2005), using local rather than global cognitive operations (Fayena-Tawil et al., 2011). The task for the novice is to organize their own behaviour for competent performance (Hutchins, 1993) as defined by their field.

The amateur is relatively competent (O'Connor, 2005), situated between the novice and the expert, systematically testing and developing their capabilities and sensitivities (Hennion, 2007). The social structures of the field generate determinisms (Hennion, 2007) that govern their practice, the amateur's attachment to which transforms their performance (Gomart and Hennion, 1999).

The expert exhibits superior performance, whether due to greater knowledge (Ericsson and Faivre, 1988; Kozbelt, 2009), greater sensitivity (Ingold, 2011a), or more effective strategies (Adelson, 1984; Chase and Simon, 1973), and whether due to training (Camerer and Johnson, 1991) or experience (Ericsson and Smith, 1991). The expert draws on increasingly complex sequences of operations (Fayena-Tawil et al., 2011), entire procedures (Larkin et al., 1980) and higher cognitive skills (Solso, 2001). As knowledge is proceduralized over time (Kozbelt, 2009) experts increasingly attune their movements without interrupting their flow of action (Ingold, 1994) with increasing synergy between practitioner, tool and material (Gomart and Hennion, 1999).

Such an account would be consistent with a distinction drawn between commercial artists who work conventionally because their livelihoods depend on sales and hobbyists who work experimentally (Vigneron, 2013). However, this contradicts the

relative scarcity of accounts of spontaneous but deliberate experimentation by Marnie and Yoko, and overlooks the active negotiation of the disciplining force of a buying public and the desire for novelty noted earlier. Furthermore, several artists indicate an open future for their practice, including Clare, for whom “as an artist you can’t stop developing or changing” (S1:279), and Philippa, who says “I think you just go on learning” (S4:576).

Consequently, while successful experimentation over time individualizes artistic practice, consistent with the notion of subjectification as a process of individualization (Deleuze, 1995) of discipline and order (Pløger, 2008), to suppose a unidirectional trajectory is overly simplistic. To develop a more varied and dynamic conceptualization of these artists’ practices we need to attend more closely to experimentation as a means of mediation between the practitioner and their field of practice.

To this end, we can characterize proto-, novice, amateur and expert practices as ignoring, conforming, exploring and transforming the social structures constituting the field, suggesting particular synergies with different modes of experimentation, such that it is the predominant style of experimentation and not the proficiency of the artist or the quality of their work that defines the classification. Proto- practitioners effectively ignore, intentionally or inadvertently, social structures of the field because they are outside the field, exemplifying “what if?” experimentation that disregards any field-relevant standards of appropriateness. The novice must conform to the determinisms of their field and seeks to do so by testing and manipulating materials to generate a competent performance as determined by their field. The amateur is able to question or explore the determinisms of their field (Hennion, 2007), and in doing so discover and develop their own capacities as they increasingly pursue experimental

practice beyond the prescriptions of their field. The expert, able to decide which determinisms they uphold or disregard, is able to transform their field by generating novel effects, but only if they do so does their experimental practice become recognized as a hallmark of their work as elite. Although it might be argued that the novice's testing of materials could be aimed at generating specific effects in the same way as the expert, the effects sought by the novice are demanded by the field's determination of a competent performance, whereas those sought by the expert are self-imposed (Stokes, 2001).

In characterizing these classifications in terms of the nature of experimentalism associated with them we can conceive of "what if?" experimentation as exemplifying proto- practice; the experimental exploration by Philippa, Yoko and Marnie of taught practices as novice practice; Polly's experimentation with different ways of expressing herself as amateur practice; and Laura's experimentation with her primed surface as expert practice. However, this typology cannot be seen as strictly delineated or unidirectional, and its classifications are not mutually exclusive, as any practitioner can exhibit multiple classifications of experimentalism in their practice at any one time.

Conformity by the novice does not preclude experimentation as in order to attain novice status conformity demands a change in the foregoing proto-practice, which involves material experimentation. The reproductive aspect of *dispositif*, then, operates to nurture the novice: in pursuing novice status, activity is oriented towards testing materials and refining their practice in socially sanctioned ways. Similarly, a practitioner seeking to conform in terms of their competence as a novice might retain elements of their former proto- practice if they do not adversely affect overall assessments of competency. Equally, an amateur questioning the determinisms of their

field might experiment with proto- practices to increase their sensitivity to their traditional medium through contrast with the alternative (Hennion, 2007; Mace, 1997). Philippa's experimental use of acrylics as if they were watercolours can be seen in this light, increasing her sensitivity to the capabilities of both media. Moving into artistry, the perpetuation of proto-practices might become a hallmark of their practice, having become part of their recognizable style. Where the discipline of *dispositif* (conformity) nurtures the novice, its intentional experimentation both nurtures the novice (through the two-fold law) and preserves the proto-. The proto-, then, is not necessarily antithetical to the expert/elite, but proto- and novice practices can co-exist with the expert and elite. Indeed, a feature establishing a practitioner as elite may itself be of proto- origin: proto-elite practice.

The important point here is that it is the practice(s) rather than the practitioner that is classified. Anchoring our classification of artistic practices in experimentation rather than quality or proficiency enables us to accommodate the complex practices of these artists. In order to consider further how this aids our understanding of practitioner-field relations, we must turn once again to Foucault.

The notion of proto- practices persevering echoes Foucault's insurrection of subjugated, naive or local knowledges that are opposed, disqualified and excluded by the field (Foucault, 1966, 1980b). Rather than wholesale change from one proficiency classification to another, a multiplicity of disconnections and articulations emerge as practice evolves (Foucault, 2002), such that *dispositif* can function in different ways for different elements at different times (Foucault, 1980a). A multiplicity of different practitioner-field relations emerges, mediated through experimentation in different circumstances of practice, as evidenced in Philippa, Yoko and Marnie's discussion of Norman's advice on water quality. Reflecting discontinuities between practices that

juxtapose or ignore each other (Legg, 2007), generated through their differential reproduction (Rheinberger, 1997) in experimentation, the variety and interplay of proto-elite practices among these artists exemplifies equivalents to parasitic discourses which have to be read according to their own architecture (Foucault, 1966).

Such a perspective complicates current debates concerning the degree to which it is appropriate for geographers not proficient or trained in art to engage in artistic practice as a research method (Lafrenière and Cox, 2013; Marston and de Leeuw, 2013).

Firstly, such a perspective troubles our understanding of what constitutes proficiency in artistic practice. If expert or elite practices, by virtue of their experimentation, also entail elements of novice or proto- practice, how justifiable is it to deny geographers untutored in art the freedom to work artistically on the grounds that their practice is therefore proto-? Any difference between those with or without training in the proportion of proto- to expert practices is a matter of degree not kind. Secondly, such a perspective problematizes how we should conceptualize geographic and artistic disciplinary practices in such interdisciplinary arrangements. The persistence of proto-practices complicates the notion of resistance, as such apparent resistance is not necessarily a counterstroke within or disengagement from *dispositif*, but an interjection from outside or addition to *dispositif*. As such, geography can be seen as a source of proto- practices for art (and vice versa). Consistent with arguments that disciplines should be interlocutors and hybrid forms rather than separable spheres (Hawkins, 2013), this perspective suggests that such proto- typical geography-art constellations should be considered productive not problematic.

This brings us to consideration of the operation of discipline and discordance at the level of the field. The perseverance of disqualified knowledges constitutes criticism (Foucault, 1980b) of *dispositif*, and it is this criticism to which *dispositif* must respond

(Brenner, 1994; Foucault, 1980a). Acceptance by a field of a practitioner's persistent proto- or novice practices alongside their more readily acknowledged proficient or elite practices, initiates the bi-directional tendencies of the two-fold law at the level of the field, extending its extremities while also intensifying its core. Reminiscent of security's function to cancel out the reality to which it responds (Foucault, 2007b), this intensification of the field's core reduces the impact of the proto- practice on the field. Subsequently, though, intensification of the disciplinary function of *dispositif* fuels a proliferation of discordant practices in response, spawning functional over-determination and elaboration of unintended effects (Foucault, 1980a), consistent with Foucault's connectedness of an order that is transient (Philo, 1992). Consequently, the functioning of the two-fold law at the level of both individual and field, and the self-reinforcing power of proto- practices through the stimulation of further experimentation, help us to think about practitioner-field relations in terms of greater behavioural symmetry than is commonly entertained.

Although the core is intensified, this core narrows in relation to the overall scope of the field due to experimental permutation and extension at its edges. This raises at least two possibilities concerning radical transformations of the field, such as those attributed to Magritte (Foucault, 1968) and Velázquez (Foucault, 1989). Experimental offshoots might gain proportionately greater credibility as the core intensifies and narrows, such that the field reorients itself around an increasingly dominant offshoot; or a single incremental contribution might provide a unifying connectivity with a number of other offshoots, around which the field comes to orient itself. Consistent with notions of emergent constellations between offspring experimental systems (Rheinberger, 1997), might Magritte's personal contributions have served one of these functions, as a *dispositif* attractor?

Such considerations have implications for how we think about *dispositif* beyond as much as within the world of art, as they indicate a gap in our engagement with *dispositif* between the perceived revolutionary influence of individual works and the operation of structuring determinisms. It is through practices that specific works are brought into being and it is through practices that macro-micro power relations are instantiated, for example by absenting and presenting productive forces. Consequently, practices function as both mediator and medium for practitioner-field relations, and thereby demand greater consideration and interrogation in relation to *dispositif*.

In this light, *dispositif* is recognized as always precarious, replete with the seeds of indeterminacy and alterity, and actualized in the interplay between hegemonic and alternative strategies and knowledges (Bailey, 2013b). With an apparent commonality in response between individual and field, and an important but largely overlooked role for individual practices in the mediation of these responses, Foucault's diverse writings, and particularly their cross-fertilization, provide fertile grounds for geographical inquiry beyond conventional applications of *dispositif* to state apparatuses of security.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has drawn on Foucault's *dispositif* to think through the negotiation of discipline and discordance in artistic practice through varied forms of experimentation. Through the comparative nature of artistic experimentation, the two-fold law simultaneously extends practice into new arenas and intensifies practice in habitual modes, leading to increasing individualization of practice over time.

Bringing *dispositif* into dialogue with notions of expertise and reconceptualizing the framework of proficiency/giftedness as a classification of experimentalism enabled us

to appreciate the capacity of an individual artist to evidence proto- practice in one aspect of their work while also conforming to, exploring or transforming those norms as a novice, amateur or expert/elite. This allowed us to understand these practices as idiosyncratic or parasitic practices that emerge from numerous indeterminate disconnections and articulations (Foucault, 2002) between both socially sanctioned and disqualified knowledges (Foucault, 1966, 1980b), and which have to be read according to their own architecture (Foucault, 1966). The value of Foucault's working of *dispositif* lies precisely in its ability to help us to think about the varied forms of experimentation evident across the proficiency/giftedness typology, a practitioner's movement through it, and their simultaneous occupation of different proficiency classifications within it.

This tracing of artistic *dispositifs* from within contributes in several ways to geographical engagements with Foucault. Furthering our critical working of Foucault, it complicates notions of resistance, as some resistance stems not from within but beyond *dispositif*, and deepens conceptions of practitioner-field relations, as the two-fold law operates in each in such a way that the contesting effect of resistance is as self-reinforcing as the disciplining effect of power. This, in turn, indicates a gap between Foucault's focus on individual artworks and contemporary geography's focus on the macro-affects of *dispositif*, which might effectively be filled by greater attention to practices as part of a broader affirmative critique of geography's engagement with Foucault. This exploration also complicates our understandings of proficiency and questions the relation between the disciplines of geography and art in their resurging mutual interest, with implications for contemporary debates regarding the appropriateness of such inter-disciplinary endeavours.

Despite geography's relative unfamiliarity with Foucault's work in relation to individual practices, the experimentalism in the practices of these artists – afforded by dispositif and demanded by the two-fold law – highlights some of the productive ways in which Foucault can be put into practice.

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### **3.4 Faltering Flow? Chimerical instability in artistic practice**

## **Faltering Flow? Chimerical Instability in Artistic Practice**

### **Abstract**

This paper highlights material agency as a particular source of challenge and negativity in artistic flow experiences, bringing into question both the positivity and skills-challenge balance often assumed to characterize flow. This challenge – localized around a pivotal point in the emergence of the artwork – is essential for the successful completion of the artwork and the experience of flow. This localization constitutes a period during which the artwork is no longer a series of marks but is not yet a finished work (a period of chimerical instability) and is associated with uncertainty as to when artistic activity should cease (a zone of indiscernibility). Particular features of material agency are introduced, which transform the artist's experience of their practice, particularly their temporal and self awareness, which is recognizable as flow, and suggests that we can conceptualize flow as a temporal refrain out of which artist and artwork emerge.

### **Keywords**

flow, skill-challenge balance, artistic practice, phenomenological, non-representational

### **Introduction**

Synergies between issues of concern to non-representational thinking and the psychological phenomenon of flow suggest that the former might be instructive in thinking through the latter. My intention in this paper is to explore flow in non-representational terms by drawing on a certain feature of non-representational thinking

– material agency – to interrogate the experience of flow, in an activity in which both material agency and flow have been reported: artistic practice. This paper builds on previous research (details removed for peer review), which highlighted greater attribution of artistic control by artists to their materials among artists working in two-dimensional media (e.g. drawing and painting) than those working in three-dimensional media (e.g. pottery). I focus here on the experiences of artists working in two-dimensional media to explore the role of materiality in artistic flow experiences in greater depth. Particular features of the material practices of art are found to pose challenges that stretch the practitioner's skills, triggering a focus on and immersion in their practice. Mutual responsiveness between artist, materials and emerging artwork, combined with the disproportionate effects generated by small amendments in the material constitution of the artwork, establishes a transformation in self-awareness and temporal awareness, recognizable as flow. This enables us to develop our conception of flow as a ritual refrain, through which artist and artwork come into being.

By way of introduction, non-representational thinking replaces a preoccupation with representation with a processual and eventful emphasis (Anderson and Harrison, 2010) on how we bring the world into being (Dewsbury, 2010) and adopts a wider, post-humanist account of life (Anderson and Harrison, 2010) that recognizes more-than-human agency (Greenhough, 2010). This gives rise to a world and life affirming philosophy in which human and non-human alike emerge in processes of becoming (McCormack, 2010) and which emphasizes the radical contingency of the subject (Anderson and Harrison, 2010). Simply defined, flow is intrinsically enjoyable (Privette, 1983) and is characterized by total immersion (Bakker, 2005) in an activity, along with a loss of self-awareness and a sense of self-validation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 2002), and is of particular interest to positive psychology, which is concerned

with productive and exceptional rather than pathological aspects of human life (Joseph and Linley, 2008; Maslow, 1971), and emphasizes human flourishing (Schneider, 2011). The similarities between the qualities of experience associated with flow and features of non-representational thinking present a tantalizing opportunity to consider how these two avenues can work productively together.

Specifically, the lack of awareness of self as separate from activity and sense of union with the world reported to occur in flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) bear traces of affective and affirmative rather than solely representational or cognitive connectivity with the world (McCormack, 2010). This, together with alterations in the perception of time in flow, in which external duration or the orderly progression of clocks is rendered irrelevant by the rhythms dictated by the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), suggests that voluntary engagement with practices and activities conducive to flow can be considered a means of manipulating time in practices with force before and beyond reflection (McCormack, 2003). Reminiscent of the establishment of ritual rhythm or refrain freed from discursive time (Guattari, 1995), flow can be considered a disruptive continuity as artists fall in and out of step with the march of their artistic environment (Dewey, 1934), into which artists repeatedly replace themselves through their repeated practice (Bergson, 1911) to re-establish the rhythmic pattern (Bachelard, 2000) of flow. Consequently the conceptual grounding of non-representational theory provides an alternative way of thinking about this psychological phenomenon.

My argument begins by introducing the concept of flow and posing challenges to common assumptions of its overwhelming positivity and a balance between the skills available and the challenges faced within the flow activity. I progress to consider how the less positive aspects of flow and the mismatch between skills and challenges are localized within artistic practices to a period in the emergence of an artwork

characterized by difficulty in identifying the point at which the work is complete. Here, I introduce two notions. During this period, the artwork is no longer a series of incoherent marks but has not yet been ruined by overworking, but neither is it considered complete. The first notion, which encapsulates this aspect of artistic practice, is the period of chimerical instability: the artwork is not underworked, nor is it overworked, yet neither is it complete. It has unstable and ambiguous ontological status. This period is also associated with uncertainty as to when artistic activity should cease, characterized here by the second notion, the zone of indiscernibility. Within this zone, the artist must identify the pivotal point – the point at which if activity ceased the work would be complete – thereby resolving both the instability and the indiscernibility. The challenge for the artist is to discern the pivotal point; the point at which to do any less would leave the work unfinished and to do any more would ruin it. However, this pivotal point is elusive, hence the emphasis on *indiscernibility*. The co-incidence of these two notions – the period of chimerical instability and the zone of indiscernibility – is associated with the ontological realization of the artwork as a completed work, and with an emergent sense of self-validation on the part of the practitioner. These two notions together are proposed as constitutive of both the ontological realization of the artwork and the experience of artistic practice as flow.

Subsequently, the role of non-human actants in the negotiation and resolution of this instability is detailed, along with its necessity to both the successful outcome of the artistic practice and the experience of flow through the challenge generated by the instability-indiscernibility nexus. In particular I focus on characteristics of heterotechnicity – a heterogeneous cooperative framework (Reynolds, 1994) in which artist, materials and artwork act in mutual responsiveness to bring the work to

completion – and heterochrony – profound differences in morphology arising from small changes in the timings of developmental events (Kozbelt, 2009) – as defining characteristics of these material aspects of artistic practice. Finally, I conclude that the characterization of flow activities in terms of heterotechnicity and heterochrony enables us to conceptualize flow as a temporal refrain and to understand better the varying relations between skills and challenges in different experiences and accounts of flow that currently trouble this field of research.

### **Faltering flow?**

Like peak experience – an experience of immense happiness (Hallaq, 1977; Lipscombe, 1999; Panzarella, 1980; Privette, 1983; Thorne, 1963) – flow is characterized by positivity or happiness, a sense of self validation, a sense of wonder and feeling of unity with the world (Lipscombe, 1999; Maslow, 1968). Flow is additionally characterized by self-validation or a sense of control, loss of a sense of a distinct self and deep absorption in an activity that is enjoyable for its own sake (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 2002). Two often-cited characteristics of flow are the overwhelming positivity of the experience, and balance between the challenges faced in the activity and the skills available to tackle them (Bakker, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975a; 1975c; 1991, 1996, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990; Privette, 1983; Zaman et al., 2010). However, some literature challenges these defining characteristics. In Lipscombe's research into peak experiences with skydivers, the risk of the activity, generating terror in the face of danger, played a substantive role in the overall experience (Lipscombe, 1999). Similarly, research into flow among musicians found a disparity between the challenges and skills perceived in relation to the risk of failure in improvisation, which, despite generating negative emotions was considered foundational to the experience being counted as a flow experience (Walker and

Burgess, 2011). Consequently, in at least some instances the experience of negative feelings is associated with an imbalance between skills available and challenges faced, and is constitutive of the experience as an experience of flow.

This paper details my own research with artists, which also identified negative aspects of flow experiences, which are both associated with an imbalance between challenge faced and skills available and constitutive of the experience as flow. This study develops previous research (details removed for peer review) in which artists working in two-dimensional media (e.g. painting) were found to attribute artistic control to their materials to a greater degree than artists working in three-dimensional media (e.g. woodturning). While recognizing that this distinction is not exact, I adopt the same distinction here and focus my concern on artists working in two-dimensional media to explore this perceived material agency further.

By way of brief introduction, the research design involved both interviews and production sessions, in which researcher and artist worked alongside each other on their respective artworks, to generate both retrospective and real time discursive and practical evidence of artistic practice. Interviews were voice recorded; production sessions were both voice and video recorded. All voice recordings were transcribed verbatim.

### *Data collection*

Semi-structured preliminary interviews with each participant lasted between approximately 30 to 90 minutes, and covered topics including the participant's artistic background, practices and products, and examples of instances in which their artistic experience came closest to their ideal and fell short of that ideal. During these interviews, I adopted the phenomenological reduction, seeking to bracket my own

understandings and assumptions in order to be fully present to the participant and their account (Finlay, 2008, 2009; Giorgi, 2008, 2009; Kvale, 1983).

Two production sessions lasting approximately two hours were held with participants, sometimes individually and sometimes as a group. In the first session participants used materials with which they were familiar and the sessions were held in familiar production environments. For the second session the conditions of practice were varied, either by requesting that they use materials with which they are not accustomed to working, or by holding the session in a location unfamiliar to the participant as a production setting, or both. As far as possible, I sought to maximize the difference between the materials used by participants and those that I used, such that when a participant worked in a wet medium (e.g. watercolours) I worked in a dry medium (e.g. pastels). These methods were designed to maximize the contrast between the respective practices of participant and researcher, and to provide a contrast for participants between their habitual practice and their experimentally-derived unconventional practice, in order to help raise participant awareness of those aspects of their practices that might otherwise go unnoticed due to their habitual nature.

Closing interviews were sometimes held individually and sometimes as a group. These interviews explored participant experiences of the research process, followed up on lines of inquiry that had emerged during the production sessions, and reviewed the video footage to elicit from participants accounts of aspects of their practices that might otherwise remain unvoiced due to their habitual nature. General questions concerning research experiences were common across participants; questions concerning emergent issues and video footage were tailored to individual participants.

### *Data analysis*

Descriptive Phenomenological Analysis was applied to the transcripts, following as closely as possible the guidelines described by Giorgi (see, for example, Giorgi, 1992, 2008, 2009). However, the collaborative nature of the research imposed certain limitations on the applicability of such techniques, as it increased my presence in the data (Giorgi, 2010), and the post-phenomenological emphasis of this research oriented the analysis more to the identification and exploration of conditions of emergence of phenomena and experiences than to the identification of essences (Pels et al., 2002; Simpson, 2009).

While each transcript was read following the session to which it related, in order to identify emergent lines of inquiry for follow-up in the closing interview, full analysis was not undertaken until the conclusion of fieldwork to ensure that, as far as possible, the earlier research sessions did not excessively influence the later sessions. Each transcript was read for the first time in its entirety to get a sense of the account overall, before a second reading in which changes of meaning were identified within the transcript and the meaning within each section of text was summarized. Imaginative variation was employed in an attempt to identify the general meaning at the heart of its diverse expressions within the transcript. Finally, due to the post-phenomenological orientation of my current work, my analysis of the transcripts was concerned with the identification of conditions of emergence under which phenomena and experiences recurring in the participant data came into being, rather than the identification of essences and the articulation of a psychological structure of a general experience. It is this orientation that led me to the identification of challenge and material practices that feature in this paper.

Video recordings of the production sessions were analysed in a manner parallel to that of the transcripts, with an initial viewing in full in advance of a second viewing that sought to identify characteristic or ‘meaningful’ actions, speeds and styles of mark-making. This generated a sense of actions and styles of practice that were both characteristic and uncharacteristic for a participant in a particular session. Extracts of visual data, which collectively covered both the characteristic and uncharacteristic practices of that participant were then selected for use in the participant’s closing interview.

### *Participants*

As detailed elsewhere (details removed for peer review), all participating artists lived locally to Oxford, England, and were identified and accessed via promotional materials for an annual arts festival. Ten practising artists, aged 36 to 71, completed the research, two of whom identified themselves as hobbyists, two could be considered early career artists (within the first five years of their professional practice) and the remaining six were established professional artists.

Four artists participated on an individual basis. Jane Mollison (age 71) has retired from a career in art education. She uses a variety of media in her practice, and her work often depicts landscapes or scenery. Laura Degenhardt (age 36) is establishing her art career in Oxford, which involves practice, exhibition and teaching, following a previous career in publishing. Laura works primarily in oils and describes her work as being semi-abstract and about the spirit of place. Katherine Shock (age 59) is an established artist who often works in situ, painting landscapes and scenery in watercolours, although she also works more abstractly when in her studio. Polly Woolstone (age 62) taught art for 35 years and took up her own textile practice upon

retirement. Polly says that she likes the flexibility of textiles in being able to cut them up and move them about, and much of her work is inspired by colours of India.

Three participants held their production sessions and closing interview as a group.

Philippa Redman (age 66) is currently establishing her practice in Oxford following a teaching career, and says that she likes to paint people, mainly in watercolour and oils.

Yoko Jones (age 61) has no formal art training but took up art as a hobby at the age of 36 when she started attending evening classes, and works with watercolour, pencil, charcoal and pen. Marnie Watson (age 50) took up art after retiring from running her own company, and has attended a variety of courses since. Marnie's medium is soft pastels, although like Yoko she does not exhibit or sell her work.

The final three artists held their production sessions collectively, as they routinely work together on a project focused on capturing dance in painted form. In addition to this work, each artist pursues their own studio-based practice. Susan Moxley (age 57) worked as an illustrator before committing to her own practice approximately 20 years ago. Susan works in mixed media such as print, paint and jewellery, producing work that she says is inspired by her life experiences. Clare Bassett (age 58) initially worked as a film editor and researcher before joining Oxford Printmakers and embarking on her artistic career, which employs oils, printmaking and watercolour. Cassandra Isaacson (age 64) has both taught and practised art in her career, although she is currently prioritizing her practice. Kasandra's focus primary media are drawing, painting and printmaking.

In the analysis that follows, the sources of the quotations used are indicated following the extract, identifying whether the session was an interview ("I") or production session ("P"), whether it was the first or second of such sessions, and the starting line

number for the quotation. The form (P2:204) therefore indicates that the quotation can be found starting on line 204 in the transcript of the second production session for that artist.

### **Challenge in flow**

The frequency of reports of exhilaration, immersion, losing track of time, and forgetting themselves indicates a high level of experience of flow across participants. However, despite the passion they have for their artwork, many of these artists related negative or unpleasant aspects of their practice, which are less commonly considered to be characteristic of flow experiences. For these artists at least, the experience of flow during their practice does not preclude periods of negativity. Philippa speaks of an emotional roller coaster and says that there is often a temptation to give up, while Marnie describes a fear of going on and a desire to destroy her work through frustration. The profundity and intensity of these unpleasant and potentially destructive experiences is illustrated by Laura's statement that to achieve a successful work she "will have pushed myself almost with a survival instinct to find the key to make it work" (I2:250), while Polly likens this experience to an athlete's pain barrier, which she has to push through or "it can completely stop you from doing the work" (I1:254). Clearly, these are not minor incursions of negativity but are substantive features in an artistic process of varied affect that take on a sense of physical obstruction and jeopardize the very completion of the work.

These artists successfully complete their works not so much in spite of these negative periods but rather by virtue of them. Katherine comments that "if you don't do the angst getting it roughly right, you're in trouble" (P1:192), while Laura echoes this in stating that "if a painting works, really works and is good, there will have been a stage

towards the end of the process of working on it when I have decided it doesn't"

(I2:248). Polly articulates this particularly clearly:

"I'm also beginning to realize that the fog [that] you sometimes get when you don't know where you're going is an important part of that creative process, [and] the more you do it the more you realize it's not you floundering, it's actually an important part of the process [that] you've got to push yourself through" (I1:244)

and

"it's that total immersion [it's] that having time to push and push and push" (I1:224)

Of particular importance is Polly's association of her experience of total immersion with pushing through her equivalent of the athlete's pain barrier. This coming together of the pleasure and the pain is mirrored by Susan's description of her ideal artistic experience as "a battle, because they all turn out to be a battle, every time you do anything it's a battle" (I1:333). For Susan, too, this period of difficulty is crucial to her optimal artistic experience. These periods of negativity, which entail emotional dips, destructive urges, a sense of adversity, and a desire to abandon the work, are crucial both to the successful accomplishment of the work, and to the experience of their practice as flow.

The second characteristic of flow brought into question by these artists' accounts is a balance between the challenge faced and the skills available with which to face it.

Katherine's sentiment that "the angst of the drawing phase is the horribleness of not being certain of my ability to get the perspective right the proportions right and everything else" (I2:206) is at odds with the skills-challenge balance outlined in the flow literature, and is shared by other artists. Clare talks about having "to get past the how am I going to do this" (I1:314) stage, while Laura describes it as being like

“swaying in the middle of a rope bridge. You can’t go back, you’ve got to keep progressing, but it’s not a comfy experience” (I2:322) because there is “anxiety and fear of failure” (I2:326).

Participants’ experiences of flow feature significant periods of negativity that threaten to prevent the completion of the work. These negative periods are at least partly associated with an imbalance between the artist’s perception of the challenge they face and their skills in meeting that challenge, and are necessary for both the successful completion of the work and the experience of their artistic practice as flow. To consider how these accounts can be reconciled with the existing literature on flow, we need to attend a little more critically to how the issue of the skills-challenge balance has been addressed in the literature.

While a balance or match between skills and challenge is commonly proposed in literature on flow, the ways in which these terms have been operationalized vary between authors (Zaman et al., 2010). Within Csikszentmihalyi’s own writings, this “golden ratio between challenges and skills” (Csikszentmihalyi 2002: 52) has been variously described as a balance between being in control and being overwhelmed (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975a), between the skills or ability to act and the opportunities for action (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975a, 1991, 1996, 2002) or between the perception of skills and challenges which may occur retrospectively rather than during the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975c). Elsewhere the balance between challenge and skills has been associated not with being in control but with exercising control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) in difficult situations, or with the possibility rather than actuality of control and the lack of worry about losing control (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975c; 2002). In some of these accounts, the important factor seems to be a lack of fear of failure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, 2002) whereby a successful outcome is

certain, whereas in others challenge and skill are nearly in balance (Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990) and there is a chance of completing the challenge faced (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991), while in yet others the balance between skills and challenge is such that an individual is stretched to the limit of their abilities and a successful outcome is doubtful (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002).

Given the consistency between the accounts of the artists presented here and previous studies that have found negative aspects of flow experiences and a skills-challenge imbalance (Lipscombe, 1999; Walker and Burgess, 2011), the stretching to the limit of or beyond one's perceived abilities provides the most fruitful way in which to construe the golden ratio between skills and challenge. This stretching of abilities is consistent with the uncertainty and potential for failure expressed by Katherine, Clare and Laura, and is more in keeping with Csikszentmihalyi's emphasis on the centrality of problem finding as opposed to problem solving in creativity, which entails a possible lack of immediate criteria for assessing progress (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975b). In contrast to the assertion that flow usually occurs in activities that provide clear, unambiguous feedback (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975c), the ambiguity or lack of assessment criteria in creative practice remains consistent with descriptions of flow activities if the challenge-skill relationship is one that is stretched rather than balanced. This perspective gains added weight in light of the sense of mastery that is proposed to occur in flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990). If flow brings mastery, it makes sense for skills to be stretched in order for flow to occur. If the outcome is certain then it is not clear how flow can bring mastery, because the skill must already have been mastered in order to meet the challenge. The notion of flow bringing mastery in its wake makes sense only in the context of stretched abilities or skills. This is also consistent with assertions that it is the challenge that leads to the

focusing of attention on the activity at hand (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990). The uncertainty of the outcome brings fear of failure, subsequent to which ensues effort to extend one's abilities, grappling to achieve that which has not previously been achieved and which could not be relied upon as an outcome, but which if achieved brings mastery.

Foregrounding challenge and the stretching of skills in flow leads us to consider the source of challenge in different flow activities. While some challenges are clear, such as the danger inherent in skydiving, in artistic practice the picture is somewhat murkier. Previous research comparing artists working in two-dimensional media (e.g., painting) and those working in three-dimensional media (e.g. woodturning), has suggested that the latter were confident in evaluating their skills but less so the challenge they faced, while the former were less able to evaluate either, due to the different attributions of control in the artistic process and the different function served by feedback between these two groups of artists (details removed for peer review). Specifically, artists working in two-dimensional media attributed control to their materials rather than themselves, and considered feedback on their work to be formative rather than affirmative, as opposed to those working in three-dimensional media. Together, these features made the evaluation of both challenges and skills problematic for artists working in two-dimensional media. As all the artists in the current research work in two-dimensional media, this study presents a valuable opportunity to uncover the source of challenge in artistic flow experiences. To this end, we must attend to the material practices of these artists and in doing so, we are brought to a particular period within artistic practice during which the artwork is no longer a series of incoherent marks, has not yet been ruined by overworking but nor is it yet a completed work; a period characterized by chimerical instability.

### **Chimerical instability**

The challenge and negativity identified in the previous section as foundational to both the successful outcome of artistic practice and the experience of that practice as flow are concentrated around a pivotal point in the emergence of an artwork. Echoing the findings of previous research in which artists reported difficulties in determining whether the work is finished (Mace, 1997; Mace and Ward, 2002), the common challenge for all of these artists – what Polly calls “every artist’s dilemma” (I2:202) – is knowing when to stop. As Marnie comments, “you can keep going and keep going and it’s when to stop and that’s often one of the problems that you can overwork it” (I1:153). The pivotal point, in this light, is the point in the evolution of an artwork at which, if artistic activity stopped, the artwork would be considered complete.

Four features related to this artist’s dilemma emerge from these artists’ accounts. The first is a struggle against a tendency or compulsion to keep going and an associated risk of ruining the work. Marnie calls it a problem stage “where you think I’m going to have to keep at this and I’m really going to ruin it” (I2:719) which for her results in “a muddy mess” (P1:473), while Philippa comments that “it’s whether I can resist doing too much to it, so least is best” (I1:418). These comments of Marnie and Philippa also allude to the second feature of the artist’s dilemma, that there comes a stage in the development of the artwork, that the artwork becomes irretrievable. Susan talks about having to put an artwork aside if it doesn’t work, and Katherine says that this is “a real pain because you’ve messed up something that up to then had potential” (I2:237). The third feature of the artist’s dilemma is that the pivotal point may never arrive. When I asked how Susan knows when that period of difficulty is over, she replied “sometimes you don’t, sometimes it isn’t” (I1:344). The fourth feature of the artist’s dilemma is that even if the pivotal point does arrive, its arrival cannot be predicted or readily

identified: if it could be, the risk of overworking would not arise. Marnie, for example, comments that sometimes it's too late and it's ruined. Clare's testimony provides the most comprehensive account of all of these features of the artist's dilemma:

“the difficult thing is, you know, overdoing [it] so less is often more because you feel compelled to just add another mark and another mark and in the end you just disappear up your own backside so you've just made this big mess and you've lost what was nice, the things that were nice about it” (I1:265)

Considering these features collectively, successful identification of the pivotal point establishes the ontological status of the work as complete. Undoing and reworking previous marks provides some leeway around the pivotal point, but beyond a certain stage the work is ruined and cannot be salvaged. It is this leeway around the pivotal point that generates the chimerical instability between the artwork being underdeveloped and overworked. The negative aspects of an artist's practice are concentrated around an anticipated pivotal point in the emergence of an artwork, which is essential for the successful completion of the artwork, but which may or may not arrive and which cannot be predicted or readily identified. It is this indiscernibility of the pivotal point that brings the risk of overworking. Clare's comment that “less is often more” (I1:265) is telling here, as it suggests a progressive reduction in the scale of adjustments made to a work as the work nears completion (Mace and Ward, 2002). As the artist grapples with this indiscernibility the need for precision increases, which encourages the use of smaller scale and less marked alterations (France and Henaut, 1994) and enhanced sensitivity and responsiveness (Ingold and Hallam, 2007) to changes in material affects.

This experience of negativity therefore describes the zone of indiscernibility around the pivotal point. My use of the term zone of indiscernibility should not be confused

with either the discussion of indiscernibility of two or more artworks in philosophical debates about art (for an example, see Danto, 1999; Margolis, 1998, 2000), or with Deleuze's discussion of a zone of indiscernibility around the artistic process as a whole through which the diagram allows something to emerge (Deleuze, 2005). Instead, my use of the term zone of indiscernibility refers to a narrower episode in artistic practice, specifically orientated around the need to identify the pivotal point at which artistic activity should cease and the artwork is complete.

An artist's engagement with this zone of indiscernibility is also a period of instability when the artwork is neither one thing nor the other. As such, the artwork is chimerical during this period of instability: the artwork has not settled at a point of completion, but hangs between being an incomplete series of marks on the one hand and irretrievably overworked on the other. Similar to notions of 'objectual' practice in which objects are characterized as incomplete, unfolding and non-identical with themselves (Knorr-Cetina, 2001), it is only if activity ceases at the pivotal point that artworks are considered complete.

The zone of indiscernibility and period of instability in artistic practice outlined here are consistent with the idea that sensory indiscernibility is inescapable in artistic practice (Margolis, 2000), although here this sensory indiscernibility performs a specific function at a critical juncture in the evolution of an artwork. Reflecting the centrality to artistic practice of the relationship between spatial and ontological thinking (Barfield, 2006), the coincidence of the zone of indiscernibility and period of chimerical instability is also reminiscent of the heterotropic fantastic, a sense of instability and uncertainty induced by indecision at the edges of a work of art (Lebensztein, 1994). However, my emphasis here is not on the material extremities of a physical work of art, but on the constitutive edges between a completed artwork and

incomplete marks on the one hand, and an overworked mess on the other. In a similar way, but materially and ontologically rather than materially and spatially, the indiscernibility-instability nexus confuses and complicates the definition of the work of art.

The zone of indiscernibility and period of chimerical instability coincide: materially, temporally and metaphysically, but the former refers to the perceptual experience of the artist while the latter refers to the ontological status of the artwork. The pivotal point constitutes the point in the emergence of the artwork when the work is no longer a series of marks but has not yet become “a muddy mess” (Marnie, P1:473): the point at which the artwork is complete and the indiscernibility is resolved. However, as this point can only be reached if the artist successfully ceases activity on the artwork at the pivotal point, and as this is negotiated materially, it is to matters of materiality that we must now attend.

### **Material dialogue**

Having taken problematic aspects of experiences of flow as our starting point, we have been brought to a focused period within artistic practice during which materiality affects are particularly pertinent to artistic experience and outcome. The material aspects of artistic practices play a significant role in their outcomes, bestowing a work of art with its own internal dynamism (France and Henaut, 1994). These participants’ practices reflect the notion of a dialogue between an artist’s concrete practices and their thinking, in which materiality talks back (Dewey, 1934; Sennett, 2009), and through which new forms and images bring possibilities of new meanings (Sullivan, 2008). Not only does the artwork, through its material affects, at least partially determine its own outcome, but through the negotiation of these material affects, the

possibilities of new meanings bring the potential for self validation on the part of the artist. Polly, for example, comments that a lot of problems “you have to solve along the way, it’s not something you know in advance” (P2:219), providing opportunities for self discovery and mastery. However, this sense of emergent forces in the artistic process took varied forms.

For some artists the recalcitrant behaviour of their materials was troublesome, such as Katherine, for whom “sometimes the paints won’t give you what you want out of them, so you get a paint that’s too wishy-washy, whatever you do, it won’t deepen” (I1:203) and who says that “I’ve never yet had the paints working perfectly [you know] they just don’t, it’s not in their nature” (I1:230). In contrast, for other artists the unpredictability of their materials brings vitality to their work, including Philippa who says:

“you put colour into water, a watery surface, you come back maybe the next day and all sorts of wonderful things have happened that I didn’t put there. It’s the sort of pigments taking over [and] that is very exciting” (I1:594)

Similarly, artist responses to what they consider to be mistakes range from remedial steps that Polly takes “to cover up stuff that you don’t like” (I2:451) to allowing the aleatoric factors in their practice to constitute the resulting work. Again, Philippa exemplifies this perspective:

“So that’s appeared now. I could probably get most of that out and correct it but it might be quite nice as a mistake, you know part of the painting” (P1:495)

As well as illustrating various ways in which material acts back (Buchli and Lucas, 2001), exerting their own influence (Hawkins, 2010; Hennion, 1997), these different perspectives indicate general differences in the approaches of these artists to their

practices. While Laura echoes Philippa's openness to the material influence of her work, describing a "process of the painting dictating to me" (I2:270) and "physical materials taking on their own course and showing me the next step" (I2:277), other participants emphasize their decision-making processes. Katherine, for example, talks about points at which she has to make fundamental decisions, and Clare says that if a piece works "it works because of the choices you've made, the decisions you've made all the way through" (I2:618).

This emphasis on artist decision making seemingly contradicts the previously reported attribution of agency by artists working in two-dimensional media to their materials (details removed for peer review). However, artist-material relations are complex. It is not simply a matter of whether the artist seeks to impose their will on recalcitrant materials or whether they relinquish control to those materials. Clare and Katherine, despite emphasizing their decision-making processes, are also alert to and appreciative of unexpected material affects, as evidenced by Clare's assertion that "the thing that gives the best results I think is just [to] let yourself go" (I1:560). Similarly, Laura and Philippa, despite emphasizing the role of their materials, acknowledge the need for them to make decisions, which Laura says she had not anticipated. For Philippa, the very unpredictable effects that she appreciates arise by virtue of her initial decision to work wet, highlighting an interpenetration of decision and submission that differentially characterizes individual artists' practices, even among those working in two-dimensional media.

Rather than a clear dichotomy between controlling and surrendering to the artwork, the practices of these artists are characterized by negotiated agencies and affectivities that can assume varied and dynamic forms, such that artist and material elements operate within a heterogeneous association (Murdoch, 1997). Although perspectives that a

painter's view of their audience while they are working is very different from a fellow actor saying something unexpected and using that to find new inspiration as to where to take the work next (Sawyer, 2000) equate the other actor to the audience, it is equally possible to equate the other actor to the artwork. Conceptualized in this manner, there is no difference between the responsiveness of one actor to the other and that of the artist and artwork to each other. In both instances, changing patterns of convergence and divergence demand critical responsiveness that recognizes multiple sites of agency (Hawkins, 2010).

Polly provides a particularly explicit account of her materials not only as agentic but also as co-operative:

“things are beginning to work together where I feel the composition, the media, are beginning to form themselves into an image that I am beginning to enjoy and feel satisfied with” (I1:273)

Here, Polly positions herself as facilitator and spectator rather than creator, initiating but not controlling the artistic practice process. In such a process materials are vital, generating the work's own internal dynamism (France and Henaut, 1994).

Evidencing material co-operation between herself, the artwork and its constituent materials, Laura's account also portrays a congregational understanding of agency (Bennett, 2010) in the metaphysical determination of the artwork. Laura comments that “I won't dictate to a painting how it should resolve itself I become a channel or a partner in the process with the painting” (I1:239). It is on the basis of these interactions with the work that she is pushed to take particular courses of action. For Laura, the dynamism of the work dictates what the artist may do (France and Henaut, 1994), and the creative power seems to lie in the artwork itself:

“when a painting’s not there I keep going back to it. I keep looking at it, it just draws me back and draws me back. I can’t stop going back to it and looking at it and looking at it, searching for an answer” (I2:295)

For Laura, “the painting has its own reality, its own identity, and when it’s good the painting and I will agree that it’s good and I won’t touch it again. It’s done, it’s finished” (I2:257). In effect, the painting has a will to its own meaning, leading Laura through the process of its emergence and determining the temporal rhythm of Laura’s engagement with her work: “give that a go that works wow, ok where does that step take me now?” (I2:303). Consistent with the view that what is manifest arrives through humans but not entirely because of them (Bennett, 2010), Laura plays a role by doing something in order to make something happen but she does not control what subsequently happens. Not only is it imperative not to control the something that then happens (Hennion, 2001); it is impossible to control the something that then happens because the work has its own internal dynamism (France and Henaut, 1994) and the materials their own incipient tendencies (Bennett, 2010), acting independently (Kearnes, 2003) to achieve their own specific capacities and affects (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004).

We are now able to conceptualize both the artist-material interaction in artistic practice, and the myriad microgenetic capabilities of artistic materialities within that interaction, which together contribute to the ontological indeterminacy of the artwork during the period of chimerical instability. The former is encapsulated in heterotechnicity, a heterogeneous co-operative framework; the latter in heterochrony, the occurrence of large-scale changes subsequent to small-scale variations. By considering these notions in relation to artistic practice, we can elucidate the complex issues surrounding the balance between challenge and skills in artistic flow experiences.

## **Heterotechnicity, heterochrony and the refrain of flow**

With the artist, materials and unfolding artwork operating together, the accounts of these artists suggest a relationship of heterotechnicity: the integration of individuals into a larger co-operative organization (Reynolds, 1994). Here incorporating human and nonhuman actants, and reflecting the lack of a transcendent standpoint in such practices (Stengers, 2010), art materials suggest ways in which artists can work with rather than on them in a collaborative process of co-operative responsiveness that makes present different qualities and affects in ever-changing associations (Hawkins, 2010). In such a system diverse elements co-construct the emerging artwork (Sullivan, 2010): these varied actants participate in a co-operative effort to bring the artwork to completion; to the cessation of activity at the pivotal point.

A particular feature of the materiality affects in artistic practice is their ontogenetic heterochrony, a term borrowed from the biological sciences and applied to artistic practice to describe how profound changes in morphology can arise from small changes in the timings of developmental events (Kozbelt, 2009). Multiple instantiations of heterochrony can occur in the evolution of a single artwork, such as adding, truncating or mutating steps in the creative process. As with heterotechnicity, heterochrony emphasizes the constitutive role played by constraints from the materials themselves in structuring the artistic practice process, but unlike heterotechnicity, heterochrony changes the recipe for the process of creation itself (Kozbelt, 2009), generating its own rhythm of creation and destruction (Bachelard, 2000). It is this heterochronic capacity that generates much of the ontological indeterminacy and indiscernibility of the pivotal point during the period of chimerical instability, because heterochrony brings the potential for constant variation in the artistic recipe, against which context the identification of the pivotal point must take place.

The discussion of ontological indeterminacy in artistic practice during the period of chimerical instability and the associated zone of indiscernibility introduces an important distinction between ontogenetic heterochrony as applied in biology and in artistic practice. In biology the organism must remain viable throughout heterochronic changes whereas it is claimed that this is not the case for the artwork during its development as evidenced by the variation in appearance and quality over an artwork's or artist's lifetime (Kozbelt, 2009). However, the equivalence of an artwork's quality or appearance and its viability is by no means clear. Many participants described volatile emotional experiences, including Marnie's urges to destroy her work and Philippa's temptation to give up, but although they might not have been happy with the quality or appearance of the artwork at those points, the artwork only becomes nonviable once the pivotal point has become unattainable. Until that point an artwork that is deemed to be poor is still capable of being completed successfully. It is important here to note that the pivotal point is not a point on a straight path which the artist is destined to pass through at some point, and which they simply have to recognize for what it is when they get to it. The pivotal point has the potential to move as the heterochronic changes take effect, such that the artist might by-pass the pivotal point entirely. It is not necessarily that the pivotal point has been passed without being recognized for what it is, but the pivotal point has become unattainable through heterochronic shifting and swerving. Ontogenetic heterochrony allows artistic practice to change its own rules and while there is a viability limit to the changes that can be sustained, this viability limit is associated not with the appearance or quality of the work *per se*, but the status of the artwork in relation to its pivotal point; a point which itself changes heterochronically. This distinction emphasizes the ontogenetic function of heterochrony and the indiscernibility of the pivotal point, as it

is the heterochronic variability (recipe mutation) that generates the indiscernibility but which must be overcome if the artwork is to be ontologically realized.

The heterochronic addition, truncation or mutation of steps in the creative process intermittently changes the rhythm of the artistic practice, generating a constantly evolving rhythmic multiplicity with its own productive momentum. The artist becomes part of a self-transformational (Ingold, 2011b) system through an exchange of energy in a duration that activates its own rhythm of creation and destruction (Bachelard, 2000). These features of heterotechnicity and heterochrony bring unforeseen and unthinkable qualities of being (Guattari, 1995) through a discontinuity in artistic practice as the artist falls in and out of step with their artistic environment (Dewey, 1934), constituting “the mutant rhythmic impetus of a temporalization able to hold together the heterogeneous components of a new existential edifice” (Guattari, 1995: 20), bringing the potential for artist self-development through the introduction of possibilities of new meaning (Sullivan, 2008).

This trans-monadic break-out (Guattari, 1995) is experienced by these artists as flow, a phenomenon in which their self-awareness and their perception of time and space are altered in a manner that makes the activity autotelic (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). This allows us to consider the artist’s repeated engagement with their practice as repeatedly establishing a refrain freed from discursive time (Guattari, 1995). The multiplicity of nonhuman actants in the heterotechnic framework allows for immensely complex refrains and qualities of being (Guattari, 1995), while the innumerable and unforeseeable heterochronic potentialities render these refrains and qualities of being highly precarious polyphonies (Guattari, 1995), susceptible to disintegration through further rhythmic discontinuity from subsequent additions, truncations or mutations. The consequences of this precarity are evident in Marnie’s destructive urges and

Philippa's temptation to give up, and also in Susan's account of sometimes having to abandon unsuccessful work. On such occasions, for Susan the refrain has irretrievably disintegrated. The power of the refrain is exemplified by the efforts employed to facilitate its re-establishment. Marnie, for example, talked about putting work to one side temporarily and returning to it later, while both Polly and Laura spoke about the importance for them of working on more than one artwork simultaneously, a practice that enables them to maintain their practice on some artworks while temporarily disengaging from a more troublesome refrain associated with another.

Although the refrain is based not on form or material (Guattari, 1995) the refrain comes about through the material dialogue of artistic practice and in particular its heterotechnic and heterochronic capacities. Flow is thus conceived as a disruptive continuity of relatively short duration, establishing its own rhythmic but fragile continuity through heterotechnic and heterochronic exchanges of energy. Repeated artistic practice replaces the artist into that activity where states melt into each other (Bergson, 1911), allowing a rhythmic pattern to reform in the coming-to-form of an artwork. However, the inherent unpredictability of materiality affects, combined with the self-transformational capacity of the heterotechnic framework means that with each re-establishment of the refrain the states melt into each other in a different way, such that previous experience does not provide assurance as to how to resolve the instability and indiscernibility in future artworks.

In artistic practice there are infinite possibilities for the organization of the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975c) due to its heterotechnic and heterochronic features, and it is this that complicates so efficiently the skills-challenge relation in artistic flow experiences. Not only is the art-making situation made of ambiguous tensions not yet fully articulated (Mace, 1997), but these ambiguous tensions are also constantly

changing in a mutual and multiple responsiveness, and the self-transformational capacities of the framework sustain the skills-challenge imbalance from one period of artistic practice to another. In artistic practice the high number of unpredictable actants in the heterotechnic framework, the non-predetermined ways in which those actants move, change and interact, and their heterochronic effects make it impossible for artists to be certain as to the relationship between the challenge they face and their skills in facing it. In generality then, skills must be stretched in the face of challenge in order to gain the sense of mastery attributed to flow experiences, but in particularity, the manner, degree and number of ways in which those skills are stretched varies between activities, as does the ability to perceive the challenge at hand, the skills available to face it and the nature of the relationship between the two.

Consequently, heterotechnicity and heterochrony come together in artistic practice to generate the period of chimerical instability and the zone of indiscernibility which these artists experience as frustrating but necessary to both the successful outcome of their work and their experience of their practice as flow, by generating a perpetually shifting source of challenge.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has presented flow as an exemplar of key aspects of non-representational thinking and has conceptualized flow as refrain. In particular, the impossibility of determining the nature of the skills-challenge relationship in artistic practice, which complicates conceptions of flow, has been explicitly drawn out in this paper, and has been associated with material vitality in artistic practice, highlighting that the disruptive continuity of flow is produced rather than given.

The negative experience during artistic practice, variously described as a battle or fog or rope bridge, has been identified as concentrating around a pivotal point in the development of the artwork, at which cessation of activity on the work would render the work complete and successful. During this period of chimerical instability the work is no longer merely a series of incoherent marks, yet it has not reached a point of completion, nor has it passed the point of no return after which the work is an irredeemable mess. The challenge for the artist is to identify the pivotal point at which the artwork is both materially and ontologically defined. However, the relationship between their skills and the challenge they face, along with the pivotal point itself, remains obscure by virtue of the agency of the myriad materialities at work in the heterotechnic framework of artistic practice and the multiple heterochronicities that establish and characterize the refrain, changing the recipe of the artwork's creation during its very creation. These material processes are foundational to the resultant artwork, the challenges and difficulties introduced are foundational to the artist's experience of flow during their artistic practice, and the negotiation of multiple and mutable agencies in a heterochronic heterotechnicity has implications for practitioner self-validation.

Employing non-representational thinking to interrogate the phenomenon of flow, this paper has brought two concepts within the context of material artistic practices – heterotechnicity and heterochrony – into productive dialogue with two notions of material and ontological determination in artistic practice – a period of chimerical instability and a zone of indiscernibility. Forging these connections has helped to frame flow in non-representational terms, providing an opportunity to examine the source of skills-challenge imbalance in artistic practice and to explore flow as a ritual refrain constituting the self-transformation or self-validation of artist and artwork.

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### **3.5 Geography meets Gendlin: apprehending affect through synaesthetic gesture**

## **Geography meets Gendlin: Apprehending affect through synaesthetic gesture**

### **Abstract**

Accompanying a growing interest in affect within geography is a persistent concern with how we might apprehend the affective. In this paper I introduce Eugene Gendlin's writings and draw on his conceptualization of the implicit to consider the potential within artistic practice for the explication of formalized concepts from our implicit understanding. Applying interview techniques adapted from Gendlin's methods of focusing and thinking-at-the-edge, which are designed to help develop conceptual understanding from implicit understanding, I consider the effectiveness of both the explication and conveyance of implicit understanding through artistic practice conceptualized as synaesthetic gesture. I propose that artistic practice not only offers its own means of apprehending and communicating the implicit or affective, but also acts as a mediating mechanism in the explication of linguistic meaning from implicit understanding, providing a linguistic handle on affect.

### **Keywords**

affect, implicit, Gendlin, non-representational, artistic practice

### **Introduction**

Grounded in its disciplinary shift of focus from discourse to practice, and from meaning to affect (Whatmore, 2006), non-representational geography emphasizes the affective, emergent and experimental (Wylie, 2010) and seeks to develop a body of work in which we think with the entire body (Thrift, 1996, 2000). As an umbrella term for work that seeks better to cope with our more-than-human, more-than-textual, multi-sensual worlds (Lorimer, 2005), non-representational thinking stresses the

importance of apprehending the connective sensibilities of the affective as processually enactive (McCormack, 2003), but how to go about doing so is something of a slippery issue. Notwithstanding the considerable work already undertaken in non-representational geography with regard to the role of affect (Bissell, 2008; Bissell, 2010; Dewsbury et al., 2002; Lorimer, 2005, 2008; McCormack, 2003; Whatmore, 2006), and the relation between bodily modalities and more-than-human forces (Anderson and Smith, 2001; Bissell, 2012; Lorimer, 2008; McCormack, 2003, 2008b; Paterson, 2011), a range of questions persist concerning how we might apprehend the non-representational without falling back onto conceptual or representational forms (McCormack, 2008a; Nash, 2000; Paterson, 2009).

Responding to these challenges, I consider here two questions. Firstly, can we use our linguistic or discursive capabilities more effectively in our efforts to apprehend the affective? Secondly, are there other-than-linguistic means available to us for apprehending the affective? Despite disciplinary engagement with a host of theorists from Bergson and Deleuze (Greenhough, 2010) to Derrida and Nancy (Wylie, 2010) on issues of affect, I draw instead upon the work of Eugene Gendlin. Gendlin's philosophical grounding supports his own methodological approach designed to facilitate the explication of concepts from implicit understanding. Gendlin's philosophical work addresses the relationship between logic and experiential explication (Gendlin, 1989, 1993, 1995, 1997), and has informed his experiential psychotherapeutic work at the University of Chicago. Through his inter-disciplinary activities, Gendlin advances our understanding of the function of the implicit in the generation of new concepts (Gendlin, 2009a), and has developed a step-by-step training system for direct reference to the implicit through which we can originate new meanings and define new concepts (Gendlin, 2009b). Specifically here, I develop a

research methodology employing explicatory methods adapted from the psychotherapeutic methods of Gendlin to explore the potential within artistic practice to facilitate the explication of conceptual understanding from implicit understanding or affect.

The degree to which we are capable of accessing and articulating the affective or implicit is a matter of continuing debate between those who consider that, however complete and perfect this understanding may be (Poole, 1975) it cannot be communicated (Morris, 2011; Poole, 1975) or reduced to representation (McCormack, 2010; McCormack, 2003), and those for whom we are able to communicate something of our implicit experiences (Tallis, 2004) even if this is only in an imprecise fashion (Shusterman, 2006). Acknowledging the considerable limitations of language (Abrahamsson and Simpson, 2011; Agar, 1974; Johnson, 1990; Lorimer, 2008; Nash, 2000) Gendlin is allied with those who argue that articulating beyond the conventions of language (Grange, 1985; Tallis, 2004) to feel the form-taking of concepts (Manning, 2009) is essential if we are to take seriously the non-representational. In such a light, thinking is more than the discrete final form that it takes in language (Manning, 2009), and representations only make sense against a background of inarticulate understanding (Thrift, 1996).

Manning's notion of the form-taking of concepts is pertinent here, as it echoes Gendlin's notion of the explication of concepts from the implicit. As this paper develops, Manning's terminology and Gendlin's philosophy and methodology are brought into productive conversation in relation to the potential for the explication of the implicit into conceptual form through artistic practice. From a Gendlinian perspective, we can attentively develop new conceptual understanding from our implicit understanding, and recursively we can use our conceptual understanding to

further our implicit understanding. In this way, Gendlin considers that we develop sharp concepts (Gendlin, 2006), concepts that are rooted in our implicit understanding but also intricately and meaningfully connected to other formalized concepts, and that are developed through an iterative interpenetration of implicit and explicit understandings of the same experiential phenomenon or event. Sharpness provides an interesting way of conceptualizing Manning's form-taking of a new concept (Manning, 2009), in which sharpness needs to apply in relation to both the implicit and explicit modes of understanding that the concept seeks to relate and relay.

Consequently, for the purposes of this paper I define sharpness in two senses: firstly as the capacity of a concept to capture effectively all that it was intended to capture by the person generating it; secondly as the capacity of a concept to convey effectively what it was intended to convey to the person receiving or apprehending it.

Importantly, to convey effectively does not mean to convey comprehensively, but to convey in a manner sufficient for its intended purpose. This recognizes the difficulty in specifying meaning that arises from the inevitability that correspondence between parties falls short (Harrison, 2007). Explicating the implicit does not mean conveying all of our implicit understanding but conveying enough of our implicit understanding that any excess is inconsequential; that we do not feel that there is something remaining to be conveyed that we cannot convey. I specifically use the term convey rather than communicate to emphasize the potential to carry or transmit meaning interpersonally without recourse to formalized linguistic conventions, while also not precluding the transmission of meaning in such a formalized manner.

In this paper, I test the potential within artistic practice to facilitate the development of sharp concepts from implicit understanding. Following a brief introductory account of Gendlin's philosophy I present and discuss data generated through my efforts to apply

in field research with practising artists explicatory techniques derived from psycho-therapeutic methods of focusing and thinking-at-the-edge (Gendlin, 2009a,b; Gendlin, 1995). Conceptualizing the role of the implicit in artistic practice as gestural, and bringing Manning's terminology into productive conversation with Gendlin's, I draw on research with individual artists to explore sharpness in its first sense as effective explication from the implicit, and research undertaken with a group of artists to explore sharpness in the second sense as effective conveyance of implicit understanding. I conclude by suggesting that Gendlin provides us with two directions from which to approach the issue of explicating the implicit or apprehending affect, whether this takes linguistic or other-than-linguistic form: developing our conceptual or explicit understanding of the implicit, and our implicit understanding of the conceptual.

### **The implicit**

While I do not dwell here on either the substantive content of Gendlin's Process Model (Gendlin, 2001) or the specific steps involved in the procedures for focusing and thinking-at-the-edge (see Gendlin, 2009a,b for further details), a few characteristic features will convey the essence of Gendlin's work and methods. Consistent with non-representational thinking in geography, Gendlin's first-person approach prioritizes process whereby the first-person process is not within the body but in bodily-implied environment interaction (Gendlin, 2009a). The implicit functions as an unseparated multiplicity (Gendlin, 2009b), and we understand implicitly more than we can separate out (Gendlin, 2009a). The body is a non-representational concretion with its environment (Gendlin, 2001), and we understand and think with our body that functions implicitly, explicating our conceptual systems from this bodily knowing (Gendlin, 2009a). By this, Gendlin means that we know in our implicit concretion

more than we can isolate in conceptual articulation. Although implicit functions exceed concepts we are able to speak from the implicit (Gendlin, 1993) that is palpably sensed (Gendlin, 2009b). Our bodies experience our situations and imply our next actions and words (Gendlin, 1997), and although implicit meaning is never equivalent to words, it is what we mean by saying them (Gendlin, 2009b).

Gendlin considers that concepts do not say what they mean alone but that we think with both concepts and that which exceeds them (Gendlin, 1993), such that we need to consider explicit form together with where it's speaking from (Gendlin, 2006).

Gendlin has developed two practices – focusing and thinking-at-the-edge – to facilitate the generation of new expressions from experience. Together, these methods answer Manning's (2009) recognition of the need for language to remain post-iteratively creative by providing means by which language can express itself in a realm where thought remains pre-articulated. Focusing seeks to access and attend to the implicit or affective, while thinking-at-the-edge is concerned with concept formation from the implicit (Gendlin, 2009a). Not dissimilar to a Deleuzian notion of stuttering ushering in the words that it affects (Deleuze, 1994), focusing encourages us to attend to the unsaid, such as a pregnant 'uhh' (Gendlin, 2006), a pause, blank or gesture that denotes "that" (Gendlin, 1993, 1995), to develop informal ideas (concepts) on the basis of implicit understanding. Thinking-at-the-edge encourages us to use formal conceptual thinking to develop further our implicit understanding. Focusing enhances sharpness in relation to implicit understanding; thinking-at-the-edge enhances sharpness in relation to conceptual understanding. In their interaction we increase our implicit understanding through the use of sharp concepts and also come up with new sharp concepts (Gendlin, 2006), enhancing our capacity both to apprehend and convey the implicit or affective. Once a word or idea has been generated through focusing,

thinking-at-the-edge might ask: if that could mean just what you want it to mean, what would it mean? (Gendlin, 2006, 2009b). This would then be repeated, focusing on the most important aspect of the response, until no further explication occurs, and the emergent idea or concept is sharp.

Specific techniques of crossing and dipping (Gendlin, 1995) are encouraged to generate more implicitly meaningful phrases. Crossing expresses something about one thing in terms of another, generating more meaning when the items are crossed than in isolation (Gendlin, 1997), such as by asking how different aspects of the emergent concept relate to each other. Dipping refers to delving into or revisiting our implicit knowing of a phenomenon or event to formulate a fuller understanding, allowing us to keep the more-than-logical with us (Gendlin, 1995) in the progressive generation of new concepts (Gendlin, 2006). Gendlin seeks both to go beyond the conventions of language and to work with those conventions to access and explicate the implicit from the direction of both implicit and explicit understanding. Crossing and dipping (Gendlin, 1995) serve to embed the explicated implicit within an existing linguistic system. In this way, Gendlin exemplifies deixis, the conjunction of language and actuality, generating an existential grammar of the link between what is spoken and what is extra-linguistically spoken of (Tallis, 2004).

Gendlin's work suggests that even if we do not commonly or conventionally speak from implicit understanding, drawing instead on linguistic convention and thereby constraining our own ability to communicate the non-representational, we have the ability to do so. Although originally developed in psychotherapeutic contexts, in the next section I outline my own adaptation of Gendlin's methods for application in geographical research with practising artists in order to address the core question that stimulates this paper: how can we apprehend and convey the affective?

## **Explicating the implicit**

Artistic practice is particularly pertinent to concerns regarding access to and apprehension of implicit understanding. As a process, art is said to infuse the artist with an experiential understanding of relationships and patterns in nature (Hoekstra, 2007), in which the conscious mind of the artist plays only a minor role (Bateson, 1973), suggesting a strong role for the implicit in artistic practice. Described as giving form to or objectifying human feelings (Ingold, 2011c; Tuan, 1975), art accesses unconscious states via implicit communication where language is limited (Krantz, 2012). With imagery lying across the boundary between thought and sensation (Scruton, 1974), art draws on our pre-conceptual capacities (Polanyi, 1958), suggesting artistic practice as a possible alternative means of working with and from the implicit. Indeed, the purpose of art is considered by some to be to make the aesthetic or sensuous explicit (Bal, 1994; Crowther, 1993), or to render visible forces not themselves visible (Deleuze, 2005; O'Sullivan, 2001; Sullivan, 2010). Through the empathic understanding of the artist (Eisner, 2008; Weber, 2008), art is deemed capable of capturing the ineffable or fusing the sensual and conceptual (Crowther, 1993) in a moment that eludes language (Weber, 2008), suggesting an affinity between artistic practice and Gendlin's methods of focusing and thinking-at-the-edge. Gendlin acknowledges such affinity in his own writings, asserting that focusing is often more effective if an image is allowed to form from implicit understanding before words are found to articulate it, and that working with imagery will be powerfully enhanced if we employ focusing (Gendlin, 1980). The relation between focusing and art has also been developed for clinical application in art therapy, which gains its therapeutic value by providing concrete expression of the implicit or felt sense (Ikemi et al., 2007; Rappaport, 1998). Developing and applying interview techniques based upon

Gendlin's methods in research with practising artists enabled me to explore this affinity between focusing and artistic practice further.

Fieldwork involved working with twelve practising artists of varying experience and career status over a series of four research sessions. The first and last of these sessions were interviews, while the two intervening sessions involved working alongside participants while we each engaged in artistic practice. These production sessions were both voice and video recorded, and involved the use of both familiar and unfamiliar settings and art materials in order to draw attention to aspects of our respective practices that might otherwise go unnoticed due to their habitual or implicit nature. The five artists on whose accounts I draw here, who all practice in and around Oxford, England, are:

***Jane Mollison (age 71)***. Jane has retired from a career in art education, but continues to practice in a variety of media including watercolours and Chinese brush and ink, and her work often depicts landscapes or scenery.

***Laura Degenhardt (age 36)***. Following a previous career in publishing, Laura is establishing her art career in Oxford, which involves practice, exhibition and teaching. Laura works primarily in oils and describes her work as being semi-abstract and about the spirit of place.

***Susan Moxley (age 57)*** worked as an illustrator before committing to her own practice approximately 20 years ago. Susan works in mixed media such as print, paint and jewellery, producing work that she says is inspired by her life experiences.

*Clare Bassett (age 58)* initially worked as a film editor and researcher before embarking on her artistic career, which employs oils, printmaking and watercolour.

*Kassandra Isaacson (age 64)* has both taught and practised art in her career, although she is currently prioritizing her practice. Kassandra's primary media are drawing, painting and printmaking.

For details on the other participating artists and more information on the research, see (details removed for peer review). As in these other reports of this research, where quotations are used in this analysis, the source of the quotation is indicated following the extract, identifying whether the session was an interview ("I") or production session ("P"), whether it was the first or second of such sessions, and the starting line number for the quotation. The form (P2:204) therefore indicates that the quotation starts on line 204 in the transcript of the second production session for that artist.

The methods of primary concern to this paper came into effect in the closing interviews, during which participants reviewed video footage of their artistic practice during the production sessions. These interviews combined three distinct approaches: re-enactment interviewing (Drew, 2006), which prompts re-enactment as a means of recreating experience; a stream-lined version of Gendlin's "thinking at the edge" (Gendlin, 2009a; 2009b), which allows participants freedom to express themselves without having to stick within accepted linguistic norms, and Stelter's (2010) experience-based body-anchored interviewing technique, which builds on Gendlin's work but does not require extensive training. Using different approaches with different participants, I draw here on particularly informative examples to explore their effectiveness.

During the initial viewing, I asked Laura to try to reconnect with her original experience of “engaging with your equipment and materials, the marks you’re making, the effects you’re seeking, and the sensations you’re experiencing”. Before the second viewing I asked her “if you had to give a name or word to the different ways in which you’re engaging with your materials, what would they be?” In advance of the next viewing I asked Laura to “note down in whatever form or format comes to you how you would characterize that clip”. Although I changed the emphasis at this stage from words to formats, Laura’s response remained linguistically rooted, and from the paragraph of text produced I asked Laura to identify three key words or phrases “which are the most significant to convey what you want to convey”, before requesting that she expand on these. Although there was no evidence of linguistic improvisation, repeated and alternating expansion and contraction of the material communicated did generate additional insight into Laura’s implicit experiences and practices in her artwork.

In relation to the first clip, words initially generated included intuitive, challenge, connecting, searching and smoothing. These were subsequently characterized as “to prepare for”, “to get a feel for”, and “colours materials and also the composition” (I2:609), and then were elaborated further. Laura explained that she had been working on paper in preparation for a commission that she would be painting on canvas because working like this locks her into the feeling of the paints, which helps her to overcome her fear associated with working on canvas. In relation to the second clip, in which Laura is seen painting with both hands, I first requested a response to the clip as a whole, which generated the words ambidextrous, physical, sculptural, scrubbing, manipulating and moving. On the next viewing, I asked Laura to isolate her experience of each hand individually, which generated (for the left hand) “control

detail accuracy drawing” (I2:694), and (for the right hand) “scrubbing moving manipulating responding” (I2:696). Laura went on to explain that she was delineating detail with the left hand, with the right hand diffusing the sharper marks that the left hand makes. Particularly telling here is that Laura’s response to the clip as a whole covered only actions attributed to her right hand when she provided an account of each hand in isolation. The work of her left hand did not rate an explicit mention in her summary of the clip as a whole, even though her left hand is her dominant hand. Consequently, despite lacking linguistic improvisation, these methods did generate new insights into the implicit features of Laura’s artistic practice.

Of interest over the course of Laura’s account is her emphasis on physical and textural, rather than visual, aspects of her practice. Despite initially identifying colours and composition, as well as materials, as key concerns, it is the feeling not the appearance of the paints into which Laura seeks to lock herself.

In Jane’s closing interview I selected a video clip that included a comment from Jane during her practice about the brush enjoying itself. Before viewing the video, Jane clarified that “I like the gestural quality of it and I think that’s allowing the brush to sort of enjoy itself” (I2:557). During the video review Jane elaborated further, saying that:

“it’s the texture, it’s letting the brush and of course the paper, the ink, and how damp everything is, getting an effect [but] you’ve got to take the risk almost of how you press it down. Letting an effect develop that you want so the brush is doing the work” (I2:589).

As in Laura’s account, Jane’s emphasis is on physical and textural rather than visual aspects of her practice, with materials, dampness and pressure generating a particular textural effect, reminiscent of Serres’ (2008) emphasis on touch being central to the

painter's practice as a tangible medium necessary before form, colour and tone can exist. Jane's comments associate the brush's enjoyment not only with textural effect and the agentic force of the brush in generating that effect, but also with a gestural quality. Acknowledging Jane's discussion of this aspect of her practice as gestural is not to equate the gesture with the mark on the paper or with a particular body form, but to consider this gestural quality in its unmappable virtuality as a tendency towards movement through which a displacement takes form (Manning, 2009). The gesture begins in advance of the initiation of the marking of the paper and continues beyond the break of contact between brush and paper; the mark that remains is but the artistic trace that bears witness to the passing of a gestural act.

This also affords us a particular understanding of the line, for it is not the case here that the line has gone out for a walk or even a skate (Carter, 2009) in Paul Klee's sense of being free (Ingold, 2007). Rather, as the trace of a continuous gesture (Ingold, 2007, 2011a) the real mastery lies in not letting the hand be free (Ruskin, 1857). For Ruskin, the important point is not that every line should be exactly as we intended but that the line that we intended should be right (Ruskin, 1857). It is the leading line of the gesture – its tendency towards movement – which should be right. Even if the leading line of a gesture is free, the hand tracing the gesture onto the paper must be kept under control in order to render the freedom of the gesture that it traces.

The artistic movement moves into a gesture, bringing the virtual into artistic expression, through an action in which movement, observation and description become one (Ingold, 2011b). Through her preparatory activity on paper, and reflecting Gendlin's notion of body-environment concretion (Gendlin, 2001), Laura ingathers the movement capacity of her materials (Manning, 2009) into a bodily sensitivity and readiness, which is subsequently expressed in her work on canvas. Through her

preparatory work she gets a feel for the preacceleration of her materials, the virtual force of their movements' taking form (Manning, 2009). Jane's account describes how this sensitivity and responsiveness is expressed in her work, literally ex-pressed through her pressure on the brush, which is intended to let the brush itself do the work through its own movement capacity. With her sensitivity to the preacceleration of her materials, Jane sets in motion the virtual force of their taking form (Manning, 2009). Together, Laura and Jane's accounts illustrate the artist's being drawn into the world along paths of observation while drawing it out in gestures of description (Ingold, 2011b), illustrating both the processual primacy and body-environment concretion of Gendlin's (2001) Process Model.

Importantly, Jane continued "you can really scruffle it and you know, you'd like to invent about fifty words you know of all the different textures that can be created" (I2:599). Of note here is the seeming contradiction between Jane's assertion that it is the brush doing the work in generating the effect and her statement that 'you' can really scruffle it, locating the source of control in her hand rather than the brush. Further, Jane's comment about the risk associated with pressing the brush down and letting the effect develop emphasizes the centrality of her hand in negotiating forcefulness and responsiveness, and highlights the extent to which the hand is not free but under considerable control. Similar negotiation is also evident in Laura's account, at least in relation to the practice of her right hand. Both the ingathering and expressing of implicit understanding of material preacceleration is prehended by the hand of the artist.

The hand and its textural and gestural capacities are at the heart of Jane's experience of scruffling in bringing her implicit understanding into artistic expression. In gesture, prehension and comprehension are fused (Tallis, 2003), with the prehensions of the

hand opening the path to apprehensions and comprehensions (Tallis, 2004). For Tallis the hominid hand has been crucial to the development of explicit knowledge from implicit experience in humans at both individual and species levels as its enhanced functionality allowed the development of an instrumentalized relationship with our own bodies (Tallis, 2003, 2004). Constantly iterated through the actions of the hand, the existential intuition [that] I am [this] is the moment of explicit indexicalization (Tallis, 2004), by means of which we translate from implicit to explicit understanding. The implicit understanding of which Gendlin speaks lacks this explicit indexicalization, because we are our bodies-in-our-environments prior to the intuition [that] I am [this]. Gendlin's efforts at the explication of concepts from implicit understanding seek to facilitate the translation of implicit understanding through this indexicalization. The suggestion in Tallis's work that the hand is the conduit that most directly allows us to draw and paint from our implicit understanding suggests that artistic practice can fulfil a similar explicatory function to Gendlin's linguistic explication. Consistent with Collingwood's expression theory of art, in which consciousness generates aesthetic experience out of sensuous experience (Collingwood, 1958), the hand is conscious of that which we know implicitly. The hand is the conduit between the implicit and the explicit, allowing for explication from implicit understanding both linguistically and artistically.

Further emphasizing the importance of the hand in explicating from the implicit, when prompted to generate other such words, Jane responded that "the trouble is I'd have to actually be doing [the] painting at the time" (I2:604), and

"there's a kind of I think you know the sound as well sort of scruffling and umm scrimping across and dabbing and blobbing and umm but there are certain textures that you'd have to actually be doing I think to make the words" (I2:606).

Interestingly, though, Jane had not generated linguistic novelties in her real-time comments during the production session, but only did so while viewing the video footage. Re-enactment also failed to elicit any further linguistic improvisation, indicating more complex relations between implicit doing, viewing and saying than Jane's suggestion that doing will generate saying. In the next section, I explore that complexity through the phenomenon of synaesthesia. This is not to suggest that all, or indeed any, of the participating artists are synaesthetes, but that it might be fruitful to think of the gestural qualities of artistic practice in synaesthetic terms.

### **Artistic implicit as synaesthetic gesture**

For Jane, texture, gesture, sound and lexicon are co-implicated in a deixic conjunction of language and actuality (Tallis, 2004), which hints at a synaesthetic aspect of this gestural element in artistic practice, characterized by multiple cross-transfers between sensory modalities (Jamieson, 2007).

Stemming from the Greek meaning “joined perception” (Hochel and Milán, 2008), synaesthesia is the experience of sensation in one modality when another modality is stimulated (Cohen Kadosh et al., 2007; Mann et al., 2009; Ramachandran and Hubbard, 2001). Perceptual rather than cognitive (Ramachandran and Brang, 2008; Ramachandran and Hubbard, 2003), commonly reported inter-modal couplings include grapheme-colour (Simner and Ward, 2008), number-colour (Ramachandran and Brang, 2008; Ramachandran and Hubbard, 2003), number-form (Gertner et al., 2009; Makioka, 2009; Tang et al., 2008), colour-sound (Ramachandran and Brang, 2008) and music-texture (Eagleman and Goodale, 2009). Theorized as an elevation in implicit awareness of normal cross-modal activations in the brain (Cohen Kadosh et al., 2007; Gertner et al., 2009; Hochel and Milán, 2008; Mann et al., 2009),

synaesthetes commonly report multiple cross-modal couplings as opposed to a single cross-modal pairing (Ramachandran and Brang, 2008), indicating that synaesthetic individuals have the potential for highly multi-sensual experiences. Synaesthesia is also reported to occur more commonly among those who participate in artistic or creative activities (Hochel and Milán, 2008; Ramachandran and Hubbard, 2001), suggesting that creative or artistically inclined individuals might have greater proneness to multiply inter-sensory experiences.

In this light, considering Jane's explication of the multiplicity of sensory experiences through her articulation of scruffling appears well suited to conceptualization as synaesthetic gesture, as does Laura's emphasis on the physical and sculptural rather than the visual aspects of her practice. Laura also talks about having "a deep empathy for what I'm painting, a realness, an understanding of what I want to paint" (I2:440), which she condenses into an appreciation of "the -ness of everything" (I2:462). Laura says "I know what the cloudiness of the clouds is to me. There's a certain kind of textural quality to clouds" (I2:449). This is not a specific texture that is expressed only in the texture of her paints, but also in the colours, lustres and forms of the marks made on the canvas. In her preparatory moving-with (Manning, 2009) her materials, Laura's implicit understanding of clouds is synaesthetically translated into artistic expression through her implicit understanding of the virtual force of the becoming-form of those materials.

Developing this understanding of expression in artistic practice, and bringing into consideration other participants' accounts of their practices, Susan comments that "if we could express it in words we'd write a book, instead it comes out in a visual way" (I1:228). Of particular interest here are Susan's comments that a series of works about her experience of breast cancer "would probably be more expressive emotionally than

probably I am” (I1:165), indicating that she feels able to express more through her painting than through verbal communication alone. For example, Susan:

“hadn’t ever talked about it really before. It was something that I found quite difficult, but these things were so in your face and so umm up front that actually they did become me in that I could talk about it. I don’t know that I could have talked about it before. I did it quietly in my studio and then suddenly I found I had to exhibit them and wow” (I1:169).

Consistent with the understanding of artistic practice as drawing on synaesthetically enhanced implicit awareness, Susan was able to express artistically that which she had not been able to express verbally. The impression that these works made on Susan by virtue of the implicit understanding expressed artistically within them, subsequently enabled Susan to express that implicit understanding verbally too. Drawing together the sensing and capturing of implicit sensibilities and qualities, and the enhanced articulation of the ineffable afforded by its explication through artistic practice, Susan’s account indicates the potential of artistic practice to act as a medium for the explication of implicit understanding as both an alternative to and an intermediary step towards linguistic communication. This both reinforces and develops previous accounts of the relations between artistic practice and the implicit. On the one hand, Susan’s linguistic explication following her artistic explication of her experience of breast cancer reinforces Gendlin’s assertion that focusing is often more effective if an image is allowed to form from felt sense (the implicit) and only then are words found to articulate it (Gendlin, 1980). On the other hand, considering artistic practice as a form of focusing that grants access to and generation of a felt or implicit sense develops previous understandings, in which artistic practice and focusing are related but separate processes (Gendlin, 1980) and in which artistic practice occurs subsequent to felt sense (Gendlin, 1980; Ikemi et al., 2007; Rappaport, 1998). Not

only can focusing be more effective through artistic practice, but artistic practice can aid explication of the implicit without deliberate efforts at focusing, whereby artistic practice is its own means of focusing.

Whether these artists seek to express atmosphere, emotion or the -ness of everything, it is their own implicit understanding of that which they seek, which is brought into artistic expression through synaesthetic gesture. Jane's integration of form, movement, sound and texture in her gestural scruffling shows that although the instrumental functions of symbolic tools are informational and not physical (Langer, 1994), their physical and gestural qualities can constitute an important expressive part of that informational function. Susan's artistic explication of her implicit understanding shows that it is not just meaning based on cognitive knowledge that can be expressed in symbolic media (Langer, 1994), but meaning based on implicit understanding or affect.

The gestural aspects of these artists' practices are an individualizing rather than descriptive mode of expression (Collingwood, 1958; Smith, 2006) and, similar to the linguistic improvisation afforded by Gendlin's explicatory methods (Gendlin, 1993, 1995), are neither formalized nor intellectualized. While artworks can and often do express subjective experiences symbolically (Bal, 1994; Crowther, 1993), they also do so gesturally. As gesture, art here is a sensory thing rather than a text (Lash, 1988), created through a process of feeling where feeling is not only a mode of active perceptual engagement with the world (Ingold, 2011c) or a passing-between of sense modes (Manning, 2009), but an implicit understanding in the world (Gendlin, 1993, 1997, 2001, 2009b). The material-implicit concretion in gestural artistic practices substantially determines their representational and expressive outcomes.

Drawing together the concepts of synaesthesia and gesture provides a productive union with which to think about the bringing into expression of the implicit or affective in artistic practice. To date, though, I have only considered individual artistic practices, and explication from the implicit. In the next section, I consider issues of conveying the implicit. In discussing a project in which artists work alongside dancers and a musician in improvisational settings, I suggest that this activity constitutes a non-verbal form of thinking-at-the-edge, and argue that this conveyance of the implicit or affective can also be considered in synaesthetic gestural terms.

### **Synaesthetic gesture as implicit conveyance**

Susan, Clare and Cassandra work together in improvisational settings, in which painters, dancers and musician respond creatively to one another. Taking turns to work under camera, the artists work on sheets of paper, responding to the dance and the music, and the marks that they make are projected onto the wall behind the dancers, becoming elements of the environment to which dancers and musician then respond in an evolving and interactive improvisational practice. In addition to their improvisational work, each artist develops this work in different ways in their personal practice. All three artists spoke about the differences between their experiences when working off-camera and when working under camera. It is this distinction that I explore here.

Susan comments that “the pieces being projected often look dreadful on paper they mean absolutely nothing” (I2:181), while Clare says that under the camera “you’ve got no such sense of it being a work in itself, it’s a work on the wall on the screen behind you” (I2:395). By contrast, when not working under the camera, Clare says that although it is partly an exercise “trying to capture body movement, shapes, forms, expression, relationship” (I2:363), she is also mindful of which pieces might sell in

their own right. Consequently, when not under the camera Clare might produce an art work as such, whereas under the camera “what you are making is an environment rather than a piece of art on a piece of paper” (I2:410), in which Clare observes that whatever the mark “it creates atmosphere, it creates tensions, it creates moods, whatever, but it’s not representational in any way” (I2:423). In other words, she is looking to capture atmosphere when not under the camera and to create atmosphere when under the camera. It is primarily these off-camera works that are developed further in the studio, which for Kassandra consists of exploring “how that vitality, that spontaneity, that immediacy of a drawn mark can be held in painted form” (I1:170).

The synaesthetic nature of artistic mark-making in these sessions is evidenced most clearly in Clare’s discussion of the difficulty she has in identifying “at what point you find yourself drawing the music as opposed to drawing the dance” (I2:122), suggesting a lack of clear distinction between different sensory modalities. Clare goes on to say that the music:

“allowed the different types of brush stroke and the different types of mark, because that’s what my arm was hearing, but to be honest I couldn’t tell you what sort of music it was he was playing” (I2:140)

Reminiscent of music-form and possibly music-colour synaesthetic cross-activation, Clare considers that it was her arm rather than her ears doing the hearing, and that this hearing and responding took place without engagement with or recognition of the music on a cognitive level. In responding to the music her brush gestured the marks onto the paper in an unseparated multiplicity (Gendlin, 2009b) or moving-with (Manning, 2009) between brush, artist, material and music.

Despite this apparent merging and morphing of sensory modalities into one another, suggesting an implicit affinity between art, music and dance, Clare describes

considerable difficulty in interpreting other performers' intentions. She comments that if a musician pauses or a dancer lies down "other people get twitchy" (I2:156) because group members are still "trying to find a way to telepathically express that this isn't, you know, a folding down" (I2:160), and that "often I feel I've finished but I can't because the action continues, the music continues" (I2:510). However, some non-linguistic communication does take place between performers. Cassandra, for example, describes her work off-camera as enabling her to identify movements for which she can produce a mark under the camera "to which the dancers will respond [because] it echoes or replicates something from their dance" (I2:329). She comments that:

"if I initiate a mark that to me, if I haven't told the dancers this is a turning motion, and if they see it and if they in turn decide, then there's a link going on there" (I2:337).

There is no suggestion here that the performers seek to establish or agree a grammar of gesture that can translate between artistic mediums. Rather, Cassandra seeks to translate between genres in real time, seeking to discover, through her implicit understanding of the preacceleration of the unfolding dance, meaningful marks that she can convey to the dancers through her implicit understanding of the preacceleration of her own art materials, which she then puts to the test when under camera. While Cassandra's off-camera work is reminiscent of focusing, her work under camera can be conceived as a non-verbal form of thinking-at-the-edge, testing her emergent implicit understanding against the understandings of other cultural forms. Cassandra says that in this way she can "pick up a movement or gesture and then put it back into [the dance]" (I2:193) such that "the forms that were being created two dimensionally were being picked up three dimensionally by the dancers" (I2:197).

Clare too referred to this gestural aspect, describing a time when she “just did a line down the middle and suddenly that says OK you’ve got to move apart” (I1:510).

Kassandra further explained the gestural equivalence between the artist’s blank page, the dancer’s lying down and the musician’s pause, while Clare spoke of a figure ‘2’ becoming a character in a dialogue with the dancer through her gestural marks which was “being a bit aggressive and then a bit sorry for itself” (I2:39). In each case, the artistic marks were sharp in conveying effectively between mediums. In these sessions, synaesthetic cross-sensitization occurs interpersonally and inter-medially, as well as intra-personally. Echoing Jane’s observation of time spent living overseas that in the absence of common language “people then act, they don’t explain what they’re going to do or inform, they gently do it” (I1:290), in these sessions artistic marks tell the other performers what to do by doing what they would otherwise say.

This eido-kinetic intuitive understanding (Carter, 2009) or affective contamination (Guattari, 1995) enables bodies to take on the unconscious knowledge of another (Krantz, 2012). At its peak, such interpersonal sharing of subjective states (Han, 2010) becomes entrainment, in which the resonance experienced by individual practitioners synthesizes rhythmically (Kossak, 2009). Clare describes these experiences as “being totally in the zone with everybody involved” (I2:210) and as including “a magic wow factor, a sprinkling of sugar dust” (I2:278), in contrast to other experiences lacking this quality in which she feels that people are “out of sync” (I2:338). Such entrainment occurred when Kassandra manipulated the paper surface rhythmically, a change that was picked up by both artists and musicians as an indication of a slowing of breathing rate. Translated into their own medium, these rhythmic and expressive qualities generated an affective intensity which was palpable even to me as an observer: I found myself holding my breath.

Clare's description of such occasions as sugar dust speaks to the transformative quality of these experiences, requiring the creation of events new enough to catch our attention yet graspable enough that we can relate to them (Manning, 2009). At their heart lies the gestural quality of artistic mark-making. Clare's drawing of a line down the middle of the performance space and Kassandra's manipulation of the paper surface held no essential meaning within them: it was the gesture behind them that conveyed implicit understanding between performers. While verbal instructions carry across contexts, outside of the performance setting such gestures would not be articulated in the same way: they have no claim to permanence as any other time or place renders the gesture ineffective (Cosgrove and Martin, 2001). Although meaningful only within the body-environment concretion (Gendlin, 2001) that generated it, the gesture is apprehended through the implicit understanding of the preacceleration of bodies, both human and nonhuman, that the concretion affords. These artistic gestures either remain as mere mentions if they are not acted upon (Tallis, 2004) or reach the strength of imperative if they command a response (Lingis, 1998). As seen in the contrast between Clare's dismay at her disconnection from the continued interaction between musician and dancer and the wow factor of rhythmic entrainment, the evidence of apprehension of the implicit through the power of gesture lies in the response.

The practices of these artists are replete with gestural aspects that evoke and provoke more than they represent. They act, and in their acting, they do what they would otherwise say. These gestural features, which serve both to convey the implicit and translate it into explicit form, highlight the affective power of image-making. The drawing of lines here is not an abstraction that alienates movement from itself (McCormack, 2008a): the drawing of lines is gesture that beckons further gestural

responses. Recognizing that the apprehension of movement and its gestural re-enactment is fundamental to art (Ingold, 2007), in the conscious hands of the artist, implicit responsiveness is gestured into artistic expression.

### **Conclusion: towards the generation of sharp concepts**

In this paper, I have explored artistic practices in terms of synaesthetic gesture, attending first to the explication, and subsequently to the conveyance of implicit understanding. In this concluding discussion I evaluate the potential evident within these artistic practices for the generation of sharp concepts, and work towards answering the question of how we can apprehend and communicate the affective or implicit.

I defined Gendlin's sharp concept in two senses: as the capacity of a concept to capture effectively what it was intended to capture, and the capacity of a concept to convey effectively what it was intended to convey. Laura and Jane considered the concepts they used to communicate their work to capture effectively what they intended to capture, demonstrating sharpness in the first sense. In Laura's account of cloudiness, conventional language captured a practice that was described as synaesthetically gestural, while in Jane's case, linguistic improvisation elaborated on the notion of gesture in the generation of a new concept for a particular artistic gesture as scruffling. In the dance-art sessions artistic gestures were injected into the session in a non-verbal form of thinking-at-the-edge to fine-tune synaesthetic conveyance of implicit understanding, and demonstrated sharpness in the second sense when they were understood by the dancers.

We can apprehend and convey the implicit both gesturally and conceptually. Concepts are acknowledged as enabling us to connect with others in dialectic (Lingis, 1998), such that speakers (Tallis, 2004) and listeners (Lingis, 1998) can fore-sense the to-be-

spoken. Here, a similar thing applies to the implicit. Our implicit understanding, afforded by our concretion or common sensibility with our environment (Gendlin, 2001; Han, 2010; Kossak, 2009; Smith, 2006), establishes gestural exchanges as dialectic in which gesture is equivalent to concept. The gesture evokes a response and in our response (Lingis, 1998) we show our understanding. We understand such gestures by virtue of our own implicit understanding of the virtual force behind the gesture. Through our awareness of the kinetic dynamics we create when moving, we apprehend the quality of another person's movement or gesture as extended into the character of their particular doing (Sheets-Johnstone, 2011). Artistic practice then, through gesture, provides other-than-linguistic means of conveying implicit understanding, providing one avenue for the potential development of sharp concepts (Gendlin, 2006) from the implicit.

Complementing this alterity is the potential for artistic practice, by virtue of its gestural qualities, to act as an intermediate mechanism in bringing to linguistic expression implicit understanding. This was seen most clearly in Susan's articulation of expressing her experience of breast cancer, but was also evident in Jane's linguistic improvisation. Lexically speaking, words like scruffle are nonsense words, but for Jane they are full of implicit meaning, brought into artistic and linguistic expression through synaesthetic gesture.

Linguistically or artistically, the non-representational can be apprehended from two directions. From the first – focusing – we can use our implicit understanding to generate conceptual terms from a stronger implicit base. Developing previous considerations of artistic practice occurring subsequent to focusing (Gendlin, 1980; Ikemi et al., 2007; Rappaport, 1998), the artistic practices considered here themselves constitute a means of focusing, as in Jane's scruffling or Kassandra's off-camera work.

From the other direction – thinking-at-the-edge – the representational is always already more-than-representational, such that concepts can be utilized as entry points to the implicit, as in Laura’s interrogation of clouds. Art, then, provides its own means of apprehending and conveying the implicit, as well as facilitating the explication of formalized conceptual understanding from implicit understanding.

Consequently, and to close, this paper identifies three key contributions arising from disciplinary engagement with Gendlin’s work. Firstly, the ‘sharp concept’ alerts us to both the explicating and conveying aspects of apprehending the implicit, enabling consideration of the implicit or affect both intra- and inter- personally. Secondly, Gendlin’s formulation of the relation between the conceptual and the implicit allows for mutuality in their capacity to facilitate the explication of sharp concepts. Thirdly, Gendlin has devised specific methods for the explication of sharp concepts with potential to augment our disciplinary toolkit for apprehending and communicating affect. As applied to artistic practice, mark-making as synaesthetic gesture transmits meaning both intra- and inter- personally, facilitating the explication of our own implicit understanding and enabling interpersonal communication both as implicitly conveyed and as explicated into linguistic form.

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### 3.6 Conclusion to Part 3

The auto-ethnographic artwork selected for Part 3 (reproduced as a thumbnail below) is *Absent Presences*. This reflects uncertainty as to who the figure is and whether they are inside or outside the work, and the absence of any content on the exhibited artworks, suggestive of the fieldwork yet to be completed. It is also reminiscent of the ambiguity that several participants incorporated into their work through varied means including layering, colour effects and the blurring of lines.

In each of the four papers presented in Part 3 we can also discern the influence of absent presences. In *Spatialization and Subjectification*, artistic practice conjured into the present of the artist distant times, places and people. In *Discipline and Discordance*, the present force of the field of practice is rendered absent in experimentation while the present influence of the transgressive proto- practice must be rendered invisible to the field for it to continue as a feature of accepted practice until such a time as the practitioner reaches elite status and is able to transform the field. In *Faltering Flow*, the forceful presence of artist and artwork must be negotiated in order for the material effects and affects necessary for the successful completion of the work to be realized, while in *Geography meets Gendlin*, the reflective absence of the implicit is brought to perceptible presence through gesture. This artwork served as a powerful reminder that things need not be present, real or material to have productive force.



## Part 4: Discussion



*Figure 1. Producing Moments (2012)*

*Textiles and embroidery  
(Approx. 30cmx30cm)*

## 4.1 Introduction

Part 3 presented four papers, each of which explored different ways of thinking about these artists' practices, and which, with no consistent narrative thread running sequentially through them, should be considered in parallel rather than in series. In order to answer the primary research question concerning how subjectivities and spatialities are co-constituted in artistic practice, I draw out from these papers in the first instance answers to the supporting research questions introduced in Part 1:

1. What artistic practices co-constitute spatialities and subjectivities?
2. How are these spatialities and subjectivities negotiated materially?
3. How does thinking with the implicit inform our understanding of artistic spatialities and subjectivities?

Subsequently, I work through some of the broader implications that this research holds for future geographic-artistic practice. In particular, I attend to and develop connections with substantive geographical thematics of diagram, experimentation and landscape. In addition, I revisit the contemporary disciplinary concerns identified at the outset of this thesis regarding how geographers can think about and work with art, whether art provides unique and privileged access to the world, and how we can move beyond visually burdened geographical concepts. Finally, I outline the contributions made by this research philosophically, methodologically and conceptually.

## 4.2 Answering the Research Questions

This research was directed by four questions, the primary of which was ‘how are spatialities and subjectivities co-constituted in artistic practice?’ In order to provide a succinct answer to that question, however, we need first to answer each supporting research question in turn. In doing so, I also tease out connections and implications discernible between the papers presented in Part 3.

### 4.2.1 What artistic practices co-constitute spatialities and subjectivities?

In *Spatialization and Subjectification*, the instantiation of spatiality and subjectivity during the practice of art suggested particularity, variability and contingency in different circumstances of practice. Often described as responding to a compulsion or imperative to create (Ticia, Laura, Katherine) or to make a statement of personal import (Susan, Jane O’Brien), artists are brought to their practice by a force greater than or beyond themselves, akin to Lingis’s imperative (Lingis, 1998). The practices to which these artists are brought involve a mutually interrogative relationship between the artist and their subject matter, both of which take form through the evolving practice. In an attempt to become familiar with the subject matter in order to render it artistically, the artist poses questions of the subject matter in order to gain an understanding and appreciation of it (Quoniam, 1988; Sullivan, 2008), and the subject matter poses questions of the artist in challenging their ability to render it artistically (Coole, 2005; Zahavi, 1999). Through an iterative process of responding and rendering, artist and subject emerge during, through and within the artwork that emerges. The subject matter responds to the interrogative attention of the artist, in response to which the artist must respond in order to render artistically that which the subject matter has rendered to them in response to the artist’s interrogation.

Supplementing these two core practices are different approaches adopted by artists, either individually or in combination, in order to modulate the transparency of these emergent subjectivities and spatialities and vary the interaction between themselves and potential viewers of their work in the constitution of subjectivity and spatiality on the part of the viewer. Through the employment of different forms of iconography that vary in their intelligibility to other parties, and by the construction or obstruction of narrative in the artistic rendering of the emergent subjectivity and spatiality, artists either relatively impose their own emergent subjectivity and spatiality on the viewer or entice the viewer to render their own subjectivity and spatiality in response to the work. Whether through iconographic or narrative means, the artist poses questions of the viewer as to their ability to render a response to the work, which itself entails the viewer posing questions of the artist and the work in their attempt either to take on board the subjectivity and spatiality imposed or construct their own in response to the artist's invitation.

Consequently, spatiality and subjectivity in these artists' practices were co-constituted through two principal pairs of practices: mutual responding and rendering in a reciprocal relation of interrogation with the subject matter, and the relative insertion of iconography and invitation to narrative in a reciprocal relation of interrogation with the viewer.

The specificity, contingency and instantaneity of these spatialities and subjectivities, in combination with the changeability in the circumstances of their practice, for example in relation to the location or subject matter or the artist's medium of choice or developing skill-set, generate a repetitive process of subjectification and spatialization in their sustained practice. While there are insufficient grounds here to propose any specific relationship between this changeability-driven repetitiveness and the artists'

reported compulsion or imperative to create, their combined effect serves to fuel a virtuous cycle of repeated practice, through which multiple situated and contingent spatialities and subjectivities are generated.

#### **4.2.2 How are these spatialities and subjectivities negotiated materially?**

Two particular means by which spatialities and subjectivities are negotiated materially in artistic practice were identified. The first – the negotiation of discipline and discordance through experimentation – formed the focus of *Discipline and Discordance*, while the second – the negotiation of heterotechnic and heterochronic effects in the period of chimerical instability – formed the focus of *Faltering Flow*.

*Discipline and Discordance* focused on artistic experimentation as allowing practitioners to alter the conditions of the context for their action and to respond non-traditionally to positively regarded as well as negatively regarded events through speculative rather than outcome-focused material manipulations (Mace, 1997; Mace and Ward, 2002; Montuori, 2003). This experimental negotiation of discipline and discordance generated a very specific effect in these artists' practices: a two-fold law (Foucault, 1966) of intensifying the core of an artist's practice through familiarity and safety and extending the outer limit of an artist's practice through the adoption of new techniques and materials that work for them. The two-fold law serves to enhance both an artist's adventurousness in their experimentation subsequent to successful experiments, and their stickiness to their habitual medium and techniques subsequent to unsuccessful experiments. This was shown to lead to increasing individualization of practice over time in which creativity is not restricted to the expert or elite, and proto-practices are not restricted to the uninitiated. Rather, practitioners at any level of expertise can ignore, conform to, explore or transform the practice norms of their field,

generating a plethora of parasitic or fugitive practices (Foucault, 1966; 2002; Legg, 2007) that combine both the accepted/acceptable and the unconventional or unacceptable.

This first means of material negotiation simultaneously mediates between the artist as an individual practitioner and the field in which they situate their ongoing practice, and between the artist and the subject matter, and the artist and the viewer, in the specific material engagements of a particular circumstance of artistic practice. Given the variability possible within the practices of individual artists through their experimentation, and within the field or milieu through the combined effects of multiple artists' experimentation on that field, the circumstances of each artist's practice is constantly shifting at both an individual and social level. Consequently, a technique that might have been unacceptable at one point in an artist's career might become more acceptable at a later stage. This changeability, as well as the instability inherent in their own experimental practices, serves to stimulate repeated material experimentation through their ongoing practice, reinforcing the increasing individualization of practice over time.

The second means by which spatiality and subjectivity are negotiated materially in these artists' practices was identified in *Faltering Flow*. Here, a critical juncture in the evolution of artistic practice was associated with the golden ratio between skills and challenge necessary for the experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002) in artistic practice, in which the artist's skills are stretched beyond known limits (Banfield and Burgess, 2013; Lipscombe, 1999; Walker and Burgess, 2011). While in this period of chimerical instability and zone of indiscernibility in the ontological evolution of the artwork, artists endeavour to identify how to bring the work to completion and how to recognize once completion is achieved. The term 'zone of indiscernibility' was

favoured over 'zone of discernibility' for two reasons. Firstly, in recognition of the difficulties encountered in discerning the pivotal point, to the extent that it is highly uncertain that it will be achieved. Secondly, in acknowledgement of the use of 'indiscernibility' in art theory with regard to the exploration of the relations between aesthetic and non-aesthetic properties (Danto, 1981; 1999; Hopkins, 2005; Lamarque, 2010; Margolis, 1998, 2000; Wreen, 1990). In the period of chimerical instability artists negotiate non-aesthetic properties in order to generate the optimal aesthetic outcome, thereby exemplifying indiscernibility in art theoretical terms. Consequently, 'indiscernibility' is the more appropriate term.

At the heart of this period of chimerical instability and zone of indiscernibility are the material affects of the artist's medium and the techniques that they employ, notably their heterotechnic and heterochronic characteristics. In such multiplicitous interaction, the agency of the artist in relation to their materials and the emerging artwork is contingent on the specific circumstances of particular artistic practices. This has implications for the artist's willingness to undertake further experimentation in their ongoing practice, as their success or otherwise in stopping at the pivotal point might affect the evaluation of the experimental efforts undertaken in the course of the emergence of that particular artwork. Individual practices in relation to a single artwork thereby interact with an artist's ongoing artistic practices. The practices and associated subjectivities of these artists are both, in part at least, constituted by and constitutive of the artists' individual and ongoing material engagements during their practice.

The inherent unpredictability of the resolution of the chimerical instability means that with each artwork undertaken, the artist is limited in the degree to which they can rely on past experience with previous works in guiding their efforts to resolve the

chimerical instability with each new artwork. The heterochronic and heterotechnic nature of artistic practice, combined with the inherent changeability in the circumstances of artistic practice (in terms of artist skills and changes in subject matter), means that even the successful resolution of the instability in one work does not guarantee its successful resolution in another. This is further complicated by the interaction of the material experimentation employed by artists as discordance with the heterotechnic and heterochronic nature of material processuality within artistic practice, which injects experimental uncertainty into an already unpredictable material practice. Together, these two means of material negotiation sustain the imbalance between skills and challenge over prolonged practice and stimulate further experimentation in an effort to address that imbalance in tackling the chimerical instability anew each time.

These means of material negotiation commit artists both to repeated engagement with their artistic practice and the experience of that practice as frustrating, by changing the conditions of possibility for that practice. This relation between the material and affective aspects of artistic practice generates a self-perpetuating cycle that is simultaneously both virtuous and vicious, stimulating repeated engagement with an activity that generates flow experiences, while also condemning artists to an unavoidable encounter with uncertainty and frustration as a necessary precursor to that experience. It is only through the function of the vicious that the virtuous can emerge, as the conditions of possibility for the experience and resolution of chimerical instability also constitute the conditions of possibility for the experience of flow.

Chimerical instability and the zone of indiscernibility, arising by virtue of the heterotechnic and heterochronic nature of artistic practice effectively commit the artists to repeated encounters with the period of struggle that they identified in their

practices. Subsequently, the heterotechnic and heterotropic nature of artistic practice serves to sustain the skills-challenge imbalance proposed here as necessary to experience flow within artistic practice, stimulating further experimentation in repeated efforts to resolve the chimerical instability in perpetually changing circumstances of practice.

I suggest here that it is the possibility that the chimerical instability can yet be resolved that is crucial to flow, not the simple continuance of practice or the successful resolution of chimerical instability. If practice simply continued, the work would be irretrievably ruined, and the recognition of this would halt flow, being replaced by disappointment at the outcome. If practice ceases at the pivotal point at which the chimerical instability is resolved and the work is ontologically complete, the experience of flow also halts, to be replaced by satisfaction at the outcome. The experience of flow will come to an end irrespective of whether the chimerical instability is ultimately resolved, because the conditions of its own possibility are also the conditions of its own demise. It is the possibility for the resolution of the chimerical instability that, I suggest, is crucial to the artistic experience of flow, generating anticipation at the outcome and continued efforts to achieve it.

The affective power of flow experiences is worth considering here in relation to the discussion of artistic practice as mythological thinking without explicit mythic content. In *Spatialization and Subjectification*, I noted that while contemporary artistic practice retains its function as a form of mythological thinking it lacks mythic content in either its representational or affective aspects. Whereas in ancient mythic cultures both the form of the image and practices that might accompany their performance, such as ritual rubbing of rocks or processional walking of lines, held explicit mythic significance, these mythic connotations are lacking in the practices of participating

artists. However, the parallel between the heightened affective state generated by material aspects of mythic artistic practices and the experience of flow generated by material aspects of contemporary artistic practices is notable. This raises questions as to whether flow can productively be thought of as the contemporary equivalent to affectively charged material practices that accompanied mythic artistic performances. Both conceptually and methodologically, thinking about *Faltering Flow* in relation to the discussion of mythology in *Spatialization and Subjectification* suggests that in relation to affect as much as in relation to thinking, artistic practice is mythological in function yet lacks explicit mythic content.

#### **4.2.3 How does thinking with the implicit inform our understanding of artistic spatialities and subjectivities?**

In *Geography meets Gendlin* we saw that not only can thinking with the implicit aid our understanding of artistic practice, but also that thinking with artistic practice can aid our understanding of the implicit. With regard to the benefit to our understanding of artistic practice from thinking with the implicit, it was notable that in spite of different articulations as to the degree to which these artists considered that they engaged cognitive relative to non-cognitive processes within their artistic practices, each artist intimated that there was something qualitatively different about their thinking processes during their artistic practice compared to during their day to day non-artistic activities. This suggests consistency across participants in distinctiveness but individuality in the specific nature of the distinction of thinking style during artistic practice. Within these artists' practices it was evident that the implicit featured in two main ways, described as attempting to capture the ineffable in their artistic medium of choice, whether that be the –ness of everything (Laura), the patina or atmosphere of a particular site (Katherine) or dance (Kassandra); and the expression or

conveyance of this ineffable, both between art forms and between individuals, through practitioner attunement with their materials (Manning, 2009) and with each other (Carter, 2009; Han, 2010; Kossak, 2009).

With regard to the benefit for our understanding of the implicit through thinking with artistic practice, the application and exploration of methods of focusing and thinking-at-the-edge (Gendlin, 2009a; 2006, 2009b) indicated that artistic practice can function both as an alternative to the linguistic explication of implicit ways of knowing and being, and as a mediator in the linguistic explication of this implicit understanding. Although the evidence for the latter was not comprehensive, Jane Mollison's use of words such as "wump" and "scruffle" suggests that artistic practice holds the potential, even if it is not always realized, to serve as a bridge between implicit awareness and linguistic conveyance.

Jane Mollison's and Laura's accounts also point towards areas for further investigation. In Jane's account, she asserted that in order to generate linguistic improvisation, she would need to be doing her artistic practice at the time, even though during periods when she had been engaged in her practice in the production sessions Jane had not generated any such linguistic improvisation despite her spontaneous verbalization in relation to her practice on several occasions during these sessions. In contrast, her linguistic improvisation occurred during review of the video recording of her practice. Taken together with Clare's comments regarding the differences in perception and conception of the effectiveness of dance-art sessions in real time compared to retrospective viewing of video recordings, Jane's account raises questions as to the relative accessibility of implicit awareness in different research environments, and the potential influence of video recording and recording equipment on this accessibility. In Laura's account, her dominant hand was conspicuous by its absence

from her explication of her implicit awareness. While this raises interesting psychological questions concerning the role of handedness and cerebral laterality in the accessibility of the implicit and its availability for explication, the exploration of such issues is beyond the scope of the current work. However, it is also notable that these perplexing features in Laura's and Jane's accounts, and echoed in Clare's account of evaluating the dance-art sessions, find further support in the variable relations of Philippa, Marnie and Yoko to the rules and practice norms of their chosen medium.

Philippa, Marnie and Yoko all spoke in their preliminary interviews about adhering to the norms of their practice, commenting repeatedly about how things should be done in their medium, but in the production sessions provided substantial evidence of breaking the rules that they had previously indicated governed their practices. In their review interview, which they undertook as a group, this picture became murkier still as they all claimed that they did not pay any regard to what is or is not considered appropriate in their field of practice, despite previous evidence to the contrary. As these participants discussed the norms of their practice and their respective adherence or otherwise to them during their practice in the production sessions, it cannot be that these norms operate only on an implicit basis during practice. Instead, and in seeming support of Jane Mollison's assertion about the need to be doing her practice in order to vocalize those aspects of her practice, it seems that Philippa's, Marnie's and Yoko's explicit awareness of their tacit understanding of their own practices is greater during practice than when reviewing that practice retrospectively. However, this again raises the complicating fact that Jane, despite asserting that she could vocalize implicit aspects of her practice only during that practice, did not vocalize those aspects of her practice during the production sessions.

Consequently, thinking with the implicit can aid our understanding of artistic practice by highlighting individuality in terms of cognitive-non-cognitive relations in artistic practice, and its centrality to attempts to capture, instantiate and transmit the ineffable, which suggests and presupposes interpersonal and inter-medium attunement.

Meanwhile, thinking with artistic practice can aid our understanding of the implicit by suggesting that artistic practice can function both as direct explication of the implicit in its own register and as a mediator in the explication of the implicit into linguistic form. However, thinking with the implicit in artistic practice also complicates our understanding of both the implicit and artistic practice, and the relation between them, as evidenced by Jane Mollison's apparent contradiction between her expressed ability to explicate the implicit during practice and the lack of any such expression during the production sessions.

By way of summary, then, we are now in a position to answer the primary research question: 'how are spatialities and subjectivities co-constituted in artistic practice?' Artistic spatialities and subjectivities are co-constituted through twinned artistic practices of mutual responsiveness and rendering in the evolution of the artwork and the relative insertion of iconography and imposition of narrative in the development of the artwork. The former of these characterizes a reciprocal relation of interrogation between artist and subject matter, while the latter characterizes a similar reciprocal relation of interrogation between the artist and the viewer. These artistic practices are negotiated materially through two primary means: through experimentation as mediation between discipline and discordance, and through the struggle to resolve the chimerical instability in the zone of indiscernibility. Experimentation results in both intensification and extension of an artist's practice over time, leading to its increasing individualization, while the struggle to resolve the chimerical instability is generative

of flow and might or might not be successful in bringing the artwork to completion. The interaction of material experimentation and the heterotechnic and heterochronic nature of material processuality within artistic practice commits artists both to repeated engagement with their artistic practice and the experience of that practice as frustrating, by sustaining the imbalance between skills and challenge and stimulating further experimentation. Furthermore, these materially negotiated practices of spatialization and subjectification draw on implicit understanding, both capturing and conveying inter-sensory experiences through synaesthetic gesture, supporting the explication of such implicit understanding into both artistic and linguistic terms.

Although the presentation of these answers to the research questions suggests an approaching conclusion, this research is a stepping stone rather than a destination. As such it stimulates as many if not more avenues for future consideration and investigation than it explored itself. The four papers presented in Part 3 also raise other implications for geographical thinking and practice, which I address over the course of the next few sections. Firstly, I consider implications arising from this work for disciplinary thematics of diagram, experimentation and landscape. Subsequently I address the disciplinary concerns drawn out from the quotations with which I began this thesis regarding how geographers can most effectively engage with art. Finally, I outline the contributions made to geography by this research.

### **4.3 Disciplinary Thematics: Diagrams, Experimentation, Landscape**

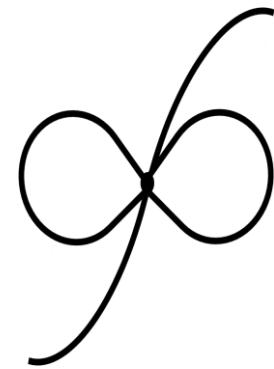
Here I dwell on three particular thematics that featured in this research, in order to consider how this work can inform disciplinary engagement with those thematics: geographical concerns with abstraction, especially diagrams; disciplinary engagements with different notions of experimentation; and developing understandings of landscape.

#### **4.3.1 Diagrams**

As a particular example of abstraction, and a key abstraction within human geography, diagrams have been defended against criticism for being reductive, detached and unable to capture the dynamism and complexity of experiential space and lived experience (McCormack, 2012; 2008a). The mythological worlds crafted into being in the practices of participating artists supports this affirmative understanding of abstraction, as the juxtaposition of spatialities, temporalities and subjectivities challenges any assumed opposition between the lived and the abstract (Cresswell, 2006; Daniels, 1985; McCormack, 2008b). However, my attention here is directed towards the relation of iconography or diagram and narrative in mythological thinking, and how this can inform geographical understandings of abstraction. Given that the papers presented in Part 3 address varied aspects of artistic practice, and that the geographies of practice and performance can be apprehended through the concept of the diagram (McCormack, 2005), I have reworked the narrative content of the four papers presented in Part 3 in artistic format, so that the text and image function as narrative and symbolism in the manner of mythological thinking. These diagrammatic renderings are best considered as glyphs, simple figures of lines, blobs, points etc., as

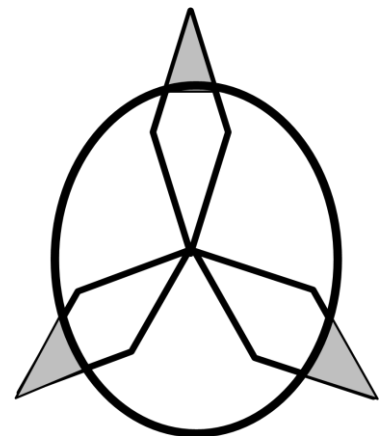
distinct from icons, which work on the basis of resemblance, indices, which connote qualities, and symbols, which rely on conventions. By contrast, glyphs derive meaning from their gestalt properties and context, expressing concepts not easily conveyed by likeness, and encouraging generalization through their abstract nature (Tversky, 2011).

In *Spatialization and Subjectification*, artistic subjectivity and spatiality emerged through two reciprocal relations of interrogation: between the artist and the subject, and between the artist and the viewer. These are the loops to left and right. The mythological space of this paper tells the story of an artist embarking on their artistic practice (at either the top or bottom of the ‘S’) as constituted by previous experiences, but re-constituted differently through their practice as they move along the ‘S’. On the way, the artist might alternate to varying degrees between the reciprocal relations of interrogation, might favour one over the other, or might loiter at the junction between the two.



*Figure 2. Artistic practice as mythological thinking*

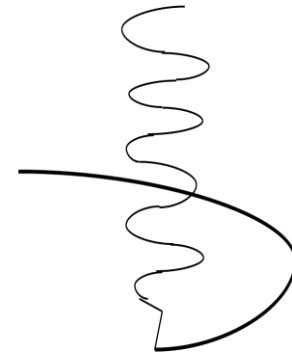
In *Discipline and Discordance*, we learned about the simultaneous intensification of an artist’s practice at its core (where the three diamonds meet) and extension of an artist’s practice at its edges (the areas beyond the circle). Through their experimental mediation of discipline and discordance, an artist’s practice progresses along avenues of extension (the diamonds) and expansively affirms its core (the circle). Combining



*Figure 3. Artistic practice as parasitic practice*

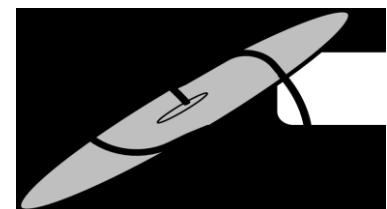
both conventional and proto-practices in a process of negotiating presenting and absenting, this experimentation has implications for both the practitioner and the field in which they operate.

In *Geography meets Gendlin*, we explored the role of the implicit in artistic practice, and considered artistic mark-making as a form of gesture, bringing the implicit to non-representational apprehensibility with potential for the transmission of implicit understanding between both individuals and mediums. Although the direction, amplitude and frequency varies according to whether the narrative in the icon is considered as relating to a dance (a gesture of ) movement, music (a sonographic trace) or art (mark-making), it is the same essential feature. The essence of implicit understanding is transmissible between mediums.



**Figure 4. Artistic practice as synaesthetic gesture**

In *Faltering Flow* we explored the passage through the zone of indiscernibility in the attempt to resolve the chimerical instability and bring the artwork to a successful conclusion in its ontological existence as an artwork. While reaching the pivotal point is essential for the emergence of the work as a work, it is hard to identify and might not occur, potentially leaving the artist perpetually embroiled in the indiscernibility or resulting in the despoiling of the potential artwork.



**Figure 5. Artistic practice as chimerical instability**

Although superficially these diagrams or glyphs are static, generalized and simplified, they do not isolate, extract or freeze movement. Instead they invite movement: traversing, circulating, reverberating and oscillating respectively. They conjure movement even though they do not themselves move. This invitation to mobility lies at the heart of at least three inter-related ways in which these glyphs challenge notions of the abstract as reductive, universal and repressive. Firstly, these diagrams do not work against an understanding of lived experience (McCormack, 2008a) but invite the revisiting and retelling of that lived experience. Secondly, they are generative, helping us to think again about the experience that they narrate (McCormack, 2012; 2004). Thirdly, as they are never present in position but only in passing (Massumi, 2002) – in their retelling – they are ontogenetic.

Depicting both the narrative of the paper to which it relates and the thought processes of the author in producing it, and reminiscent of Ingold's (2007) lines as traces of wayfaring, each glyph functions as two types of abstraction (McCormack, 2012; 2008b). Each diagram is undeniably a set of lines on a page, but each also pertains to the movement of thought in relation to the topic or content to which it speaks. While I would not deny that the first type of abstraction can inhibit the second (McCormack, 2008b), I would additionally argue that the second can inhibit the first. Just as pausing in one's thoughts to jot ideas down on paper in either discursive or figural form can interrupt ongoing movements of thought, so too can ongoing movements of thought interfere with the jotting down of ideas on paper, as additional associations and developments that occur before the preceding ideas have been recorded can cause the preceding ideas to become lost, confused or diluted.

I would also argue that the first type of abstraction can both instantiate and modify the second, as in the case of these diagrams. Here again I draw on Gendlin, for whom

imagery is a special kind of bodily living rather than a representation (Gendlin, 1981). As bodily change is involved in the making of the image from the movement of thought, we can ask two questions that illustrate the inherent connection between the two types of abstraction. Firstly, we can ask what bodily changes the movement of thought brought about in producing the diagram or image. Secondly, we can ask what changed bodily living is now implied consequent to the production of the image (Gendlin, 1981), where bodily living includes its movement of thought. The movement of thought implies the production or occurring of a diagram or image, but the occurring of the image might change the implying. The movement of thought occurs into the drawing of an image as bodily living, which is changed by the occurring and which subsequently changes the movement of thought that initially implied the drawing.

With these two types of abstraction so tightly bound in the implying-occurring-  
implying functional cycle, the necessity for and utility of such a distinction is brought into question, at least in relation to diagrammatic abstractions. This distinction (McCormack, 2012) seems to suggest that abstractions can be of one type (lines on a page) or the other type (the movement of thought) but not both at the same time, in the manner that I argue is the case here. Where abstraction as the movement of thought pertains to, for example, dance, this type of abstraction can indeed exist without any need for or connection with a paginated linear abstraction in the form of a diagram. However, the reverse does not hold for diagrammatic abstractions. By contrast, where abstraction is diagrammatic, a Gendlinian perspective suggests that the former type of abstraction (lines on a page) not only can instantiate the latter type of abstraction (movement of thought) but that it must instantiate the latter.

Although in both dance and diagram abstraction is implied which changes the movement of thought as originally implied, the nature of the abstraction implied in each instance might differ, as might its relation to the other type of abstraction. This comparative consideration of the applicability of a differentiated conception of abstraction between dance and diagram is fully consistent with Gendlin's ideas concerning the relation between implicit and explicit understanding, in which the explicit is yoked to the implicit but not vice versa. This is not to say that we can think of the former type of abstraction (lines on a page) as explicit, and the latter type of abstraction (movement of thought) as implicit, as an image might be based entirely on implicit rather than explicit understanding, and dance might draw on concepts as well as affects. It is simply to say that abstraction as the movement of thought does not necessarily entail the drawing of lines on a page (although this is not precluded), but that abstraction as image or diagram does necessarily entail the movement of thought. Where diagrammatic abstractions are concerned, for practical or analytical reasons we might choose to disregard the inherent mutual constitution between the two types of abstraction, but that is an academic distinction that is not supported by the Process Model (Gendlin, 1981, 2001), at least on my reading of it.

These glyphs are also generative, taking on a life of their own in helping to move our thoughts on, functioning as sketches that clarify and develop thought by encouraging a multitude of re/interpretations (Tversky, 2011). Presenting the narrative content of the papers in other-than-narrative form provides a different means of engaging with that narrative. In essence, we come to think with abstraction rather than merely thinking about abstraction (McCormack, 2012). In this light, the abstraction itself becomes a thinking-space (McCormack, 2008b), shifting from retrospective awareness of an abstract form to a concurrent awareness of abstractive potentiality. In the occurring of

the diagram, we become aware of the potential of its implyings. The foundations of diagrams lie in actions in space. Historically spatial practices that organized social relations, such as the spatial division of different activities, produced a visible embodiment in the environment of the abstract concepts underlying those spatial practices, establishing the rudiments of abstract thought (e.g. categories, relationships) and making them available for generalization (Tversky, 2011). Functioning in a Whiteheadian manner as a lure to draw attention to something that matters (Stengers, 2008), diagrams serve as prompts to help us think through the necessary excess of lived experience (McCormack, 2012). By way of example, consider the glyph for *Spatialization and Subjectification*, which draws attention to notions of repetition, transformation, circulation, stasis, progression and alternation. These ideas are not explicitly drawn out in the paper itself, although some do feature implicitly, but neither are they absent from the narrative. These qualities of lived experience in artistic spatializing and subjectifying practices are more readily fore-grounded in the glyph than in the narrative. By contrast, the specific details of interrogative processes and spatializing catalysts are fore-grounded in the narrative but not in the glyph.

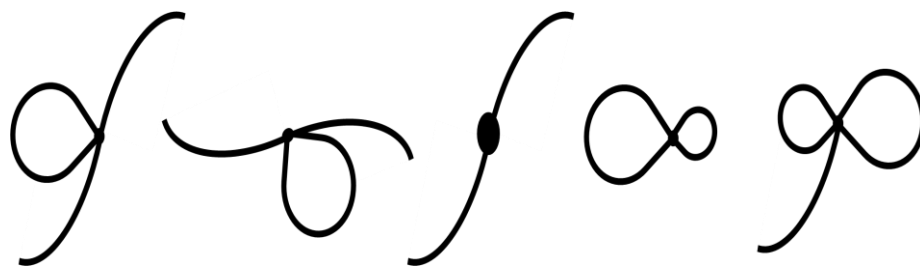
Interestingly, despite these differences, the glyph and the narrative mirror each other in that each challenges commonly assumed oppositions. In the paper, dualisms such as real-ideal, narrative-iconographic and individual-social were dissolved, while in the glyph repetition sits alongside progression, and transformation partners with stasis. Whether in narrative or iconographic form, and irrespective of the differences in the detail presented in each, mythological thinking encourages us to attend to coherence, interpreting conjointly what would usually be described in mutually contradictory terms (Stengers, 2008). Reflecting the value of visual communication in conveying the invisible (Tversky, 2011), the practices narrated in the papers can be apprehended

through the concept of the diagram, holding together the abstract but real organization of forces without capturing them in specific subject-object form (McCormack, 2005). In thinking with diagrammatic abstraction in this way, we are encouraged to reconsider and retell the narrative to which it relates with the diagrammatic emphasis on coherence in mind. Diagrammatic abstractions are productive, adding to the world (Gerlach, 2013) as an operative force (Toscano, 2008) in our understanding of it, implicitly interaffecting our ongoing movement of thought in a facilitative rather than deterministic fashion (McCormack, 2005).

This brings us to abstractions and diagrams as potentiality. In making complex materials available for manipulation, abstractions constitute an ontological transformation within rather than a removal from the world (McCormack, 2012). As indicated above, the diagram enables us to revisit the narrative afresh, whether in textual or visual form, and transform our reading and telling of it as a poet would reinvent the myth each time it was narrated. With the potential for constant recomposition, the diagram enables us to grasp the dynamic arrangement of immanent forces (McCormack, 2012), functioning as a relational model not an exact copy (Rees, 1973) of the paper's narrative.

Although abstractions, in distilling out essence, have been criticized for being reductive (Rose, 1993) and for becoming an 'ideal' (Cresswell, 2006), this is not the case here. The diagram is generative of a space of enactment that admits and is animated by the excessive power of the non-representational (McCormack, 2005). The diagram in effect occupies its field of relational potential (Massumi, 2002), in which the explicit lines of the diagram imply other and different occurrences. In mythological thinking, abstraction in diagrammatic or iconographic form is very much a necessary element of the understanding of lived worlds in the making, enabling us to make more

not less of the experiential and material complexity of lived space-times (McCormack, 2012), reminding us that everything could always be other than it is. The mappings of meanings from that which is represented to the representing glyph are partial and variable (Tversky, 2011), allowing for both generalization and variability. Any individual telling of the narrative of the paper, and any individual experience of the artistic practices described therein, constitutes a position or re-drawing within that implied potentiality. Each may have any or all of the elements of the narrative encapsulated in the potential of the diagram, but the specifics of each instantiation are particular to their individual telling. Figure 34 (below) presents this in diagrammatic form for *Spatialization and Subjectification*, indicating a range of potential alternative tellings or space-times.



*Figure 6. Selected alternative tellings for Spatialization and Subjectification*

The abstraction here has no ontological security, only appearing ontologically secure because it is reaffirmed in its repeated performance (Kitchin et al., 2013) in a co-constitutive production between the inscription, the individual and the world (Kitchin and Dodge, 2007). In mythological thinking this inscription takes two forms: the narrative and the iconographic, but in its co-constitution it too modulates how the world is understood (Kitchin and Dodge, 2007), and in its productivity modulates

how the world is. Reminiscent of the productivity of myth in generating social belonging that was highlighted in *Spatialization and Subjectification*, the abstraction – narrative or diagrammatic – captures something of the world while simultaneously doing work in the world; preceding and producing the territory that it purportedly represents (Kitchin et al., 2013). Abstraction here is ontogenetic, not ontological, unleashing its potential (Massumi, 2002) to be other than it is. This has particular productive potential for geographical conceptions of space as it highlights the capacity not only of each mythological narrative but also of each instantiation of its telling – narrative or diagrammatic – to carve out its own spatiality.

In its productive force, the diagram is generative of a space of enactment (McCormack, 2005) or a manifold of potential upon which the diagram maps out interaffective forces (Jones III et al., 2007). The key point here is that that which goes into the constitution of the space or manifold is determinant with respect to its diagrammatic (Jones III et al., 2007), such that the diagram and the spatiality are mutually constitutive. The site does not precede but emerges from the interactive processes that assemble it (Collinge, 2006; Escobar, 2007), and that are enacted in diagrammatic practices.

Such perspectives represent a growing attempt to look at social theory differently by developing ‘flat ontologies’ (Escobar, 2007; Jones III et al., 2007; Marston et al., 2005). Such ontologies seek to avoid imposing *a priori* transcendental forms or typological analytics that preordain solutions to critical inquiries (Jones III et al., 2007), such as vertical or horizontal spatial schematics (Marston et al., 2005).

Whereas it has been argued that in order to overcome the predetermining power of normativized imaginaries we need to expurgate terms such as scale from the geographical vocabulary and invent new spatial concepts (Marston et al., 2005), this

discussion of mythological thinking and diagramming suggests that such radical expurgation is not necessary. Both mythological and diagrammatic practices potentially and productively avoid association of any particular spatial imaginary, while also not precluding the employment of such imaginaries if appropriate. While Gendlin-inspired explicatory processes provide the potential for generating new spatial concepts as advocated by Marston and colleagues (2005), these same explicatory processes also allow for a reworking of existing concepts, enabling us to free the concepts of their associations rather than jettisoning concepts which retain validity. This is more in keeping with Collinge's (2006) argument that rather than eliminating terms such as scale from the discipline's lexicon, geographers should work their metaphysical terminology back against itself to reinscribe it into the context from which it came.

These conceptual debates notwithstanding, however, mythological thinking allows us to understand and work with geographical concerns in terms that avoid prescribing particular visual, topological or scalar connotations. It enables us to work without recourse to metaphors such as the container, grid co-ordinates, the network, the assemblage or the fold, all of which have certain visual elements inherent within them. Mythological thinking provides for multiplicity, complexity, diversity and transitivity of spatialities without constraining those spatialities to any pre-established visual or topological assumptions. Mythological thinking both allows and demands the carving of its own spatiality.

Importantly, neither the narrative nor the iconography need be elaborate or sophisticated. While the narratives of the papers and the lived experiences of the artists described therein might seem complex, the diagrams certainly are not. This introduces a seeming discrepancy between the notion that symbolism in myth is

complex and dynamic (Kirk, 1970), and the suggestion that myth prefers to work with poor, incomplete images (Barthes, 2000). However, the connectivity between the imagery and the narrative in mythology is crucial to dissolving this discrepancy. The imagery or narrative can be simple or incomplete while relating to complexity and dynamism in its counterpart. Equally, the simplicity and incompleteness of either the narrative or the imagery can contribute to a myth's complexity and dynamism in its totality through the partiality of the mapping of meaning between that which is represented and that in which it is represented (Tversky, 2011), providing scope and flexibility for alternative imaginings (see Figure 34 above). Each of the mythological imaginings of the four papers presented in Part 3 could have been symbolized differently, and any number of attempts to reconstruct the narrative on the basis of its associated image might generate a different narrative. The partiality, contingency and multiplicity of these mythological image-narrative imaginings further illustrate the synergies between mythological thinking and artistic practice, emphasize the vitality of diagrams, and highlight the generative potential to geography of thinking about spatial concerns in mythological terms.

#### **4.3.2 Experimentation**

Within geography, discourse around experimentation is growing (Dwyer and Davies, 2010; Last, 2012), particularly around non-representational geographies which explicitly advocate experimental methods (McCormack, 2008b; Morris, 2011; Thrift, 2000) to the extent that its use in disciplinary vocabulary has never been more common (Powell and Vasudevan, 2007). However, as what constitutes experimentation and what the criteria might be for its success both remain contested (Last, 2012), the consideration of the micro-dynamics of how experimentation takes place in artistic practice undertaken in this research has potential to contribute to

these debates. On the one hand experimental methods are contrasted with cognitive methods (Thrift, 2000) and geographers are encouraged to undertake experiments that place matter in question (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004) or that involve deviant practices (Hawkins, 2010). On the other hand abstraction is proposed as a fruitful source of experimentation (McCormack, 2012), and actual experiment, imaginary experiment and prediction are all associated with process knowledge (Day, 2010). Definitions of experimentation are also numerous, ranging from formalized testing of theories to venturing into the unknown (Last, 2012), with experimentation sometimes being associated with adaptability and openness to the unknown (Foster and Lorimer, 2007; Kullman, 2012) but at other times being associated with more active shaping or transformation of methods and practices (Dwyer and Davies, 2010; Kullman, 2012).

One aspect of experimentation around which there does seem to be some consensus is the view that experimentation should push the limits of current conventions (Last, 2012), and this, as a starting point, is a characteristic of experimentation clearly fulfilled by the varied artistic practices presented here. Examples include pushing the boundaries of conventional absolute conceptions of space and essentialist conceptions of subjectivity in *Spatialization and Subjectification*; stretching the limits of habitual practice or the constraints imposed by the normalizing forces of the field of practice in *Discipline and Discordance*; refusing the convenient but stultifying reliance on conceptual and perceptual conventions in *Geography meets Gendlin*; and testing both normative registers of being and the zone of indiscernibility in *Faltering Flow*. In each and every case, these artistic practices push the limits of conventions (Last, 2012), normative and artistic, and at the level of both individual and society or field.

Moreover, by virtue of the experimentation that featured so strongly in mediating between discipline and discordance, resulting in increasing individualization of practices, the conditions of possibility for the artists' practices are constantly shifting. This commits these artists to perpetual experimentation in their repeated efforts at subjectification and spatialization and to perpetual encounter with chimerical instability in their material engagements at the heart of such efforts. This inherent experimentalism in processes of subjectification and spatialization unifies the notions of 'to experiment' and 'to experience' in the sense that there is no separation between the experimenter and that on or with which they are experimenting (Stengers, 2008): an experiment initially intended towards material affects and effects is equally an experiment enacted on the experimenter.

Here, we can conceive of experimentation in these artists' practices under a stricter definition than openness to letting things happen and adaptability to the unexpected, accidental or serendipitous. Experimentation in these artists' practices involves changing the conditions of their practice and thereby changing the conditions of possibility for the becoming of subjectivity and spatiality through that practice. It is worth pausing here to recall Gendlin's non-representational philosophy of the subject (Gendlin, 2001), in which the body-environment process enacts its own implying. While this affords a degree of agency, the possibility that the occurring can function to change the implying means that the original implying is not guaranteed: agency is neither futile nor absolute. In their experimental practices, these artists vary the conditions of their practice, with implications for subjectification and spatialization through their practice, affording them a degree of agency. However, the material affects of their practice inject uncertainty into the outcome; the materials' occurrences

change the artist's implying. The experimental practices of these artists, then, exemplify Gendlin's implying-occurring-implying cycle.

Parallels can be drawn here between the micro-dynamics of experimentation in the practices of participating artists, and my own experimental approach to my research. Indeed, such intentional modification of the conditions of possibility for artistic practice without foreknowledge of the likely outcomes lay at the heart of my experimental approach to this research. Through co-experimentation in discordant situations, whereby the site of production, the materials of production or both were varied, the conditions of practice were changed for both co-experimenters. The emergent spatialities and subjectivities contingent upon these conditions of practice also changed, engendering for my part a sense of agency in the setting up of experimental conditions but a sense of vulnerability in the face of uncertainty as to their outcome. The function of experimentation to apply to the experimenter as much as the subject of the experiment (Stengers, 2008) also finds parallels between the experiences of participating artists in their artistic practice and my own experiences of my research practice, as evident in the collection of auto-ethnographic artworks. Considered in sequence, these works become progressively less representational in their pictorial content, from reasonably detailed and recognizable buildings in *Material and Immaterial*, through ideas of pattern and ambiguity in *Producing Moments* to a lack of discernible, delimitable or identifiable form in *Ecstasy of Spaces*. Working experimentally in my conjunction of conceptual, analytical and reflexive material through auto-ethnographic artistic practice, both my artistic practice and my academic practice became increasingly non-representational. While my own artistic practice was not the focus of the research, but was employed instead as a method or means by which to elicit greater detail from participating artists about

their respective practices, and as an alternative means of engaging with conceptual material, my experimental research methods enacted themselves upon me just as much as on participating artists. As a researcher I enacted an implying by setting up the experimental conditions, but the material affects generated by the occurring of those experimental conditions changed the implying.

Through the deliberate experimentation of these artists considered in *Discipline and Discordance*, both the materials of their practice and their future enactment of that practice through their enhanced knowledge and skill-set are transformed. This varies the conditions of their future practice even if they elect to work with and through the same subject matter with which they have previously engaged, requiring further experimentation and transforming the resultant spatiality and subjectivity outlined in *Spatialization and Subjectification*. This variation in material and technical capacities also implies and ensures that the conditions of possibility for connecting with, capturing and conveying the implicit are also constantly shifting, varying the nature, style and tempo of the synaesthetic gesture and requiring inter-personal and inter-medium attunement to be experimentally established anew each time.

Similarly, and relatedly, the variation in material and technical capacities further implies and ensures that the conditions of possibility for the resolution of the chimerical instability in *Faltering Flow* and escape from the zone of indiscernibility also constantly shift. The heterochronic (Kozbelt, 2009) and heterotechnic (Reynolds, 1994) framework potentially generates considerable variations in possibility from seemingly minor modifications in material or technical capacities. This heterochrony has further iterative implications for the successful outcome of artistic practice in terms of subjectivity and spatiality and also in terms of capturing and conveying the implicit, as it is only by negotiating and resolving the chimerical

instability that the artistic practice is deemed successful. While these changing material and technical capacities might affect artistic practice as mythological thinking and as explicating the implicit to a relatively minor degree, the heterochronic character of the heterotechnic artistic framework has the potential to magnify these effects hugely.

Experimentation, then, needs to be considered in conjunction with chimerical instability in these artists' practices. Chimerical instability fulfils a seemingly pivotal role in providing the conditions of possibility for the resolution of the ontological indeterminacy in the evolution of the artwork, but at the same time vastly complicates the possibility of its resolution. This complicating tendency is magnified by the experimental character of these artists' practices. Although each instantiation of artistic practice is experimental in and of itself by virtue of the different subject matters and environmental conditions in which they take place, this experimentalism is greatly enhanced through the experimentation proposed as the means by which artists mediate between discipline and discordance in their practices. By muddying their material waters these artists commit themselves to constantly shifting conditions of possibility for every aspect of their artistic practices that has been considered in this research.

Consequently, these artists' practices provide a clear example of experimentation that places matter in question (Anderson and Tolia-Kelly, 2004) and that pushes the limits of current conventions (Last, 2012) – both individual and social, both normative and artistic – by destabilizing their experimental arrangement (Kullman, 2012) and pro-actively changing the conditions of their artistic practice. Both this pro-active changing of the conditions of possibility for their practice, and the equivalent pro-active modification of conditions of practice in my own research

design, support disciplinary understandings of experimentation in a stronger sense than passive openness to possibilities, akin to undirected intentionality or setting things in motion.

### **4.3.3 Landscape**

Landscape is a key and enduring geographical idea (Christopher, 1982; Cosgrove, 1984; Jackson, 2008; Kirk, 1963; Oakes and Price, 2008; Quoniam, 1988). Reflecting historic changes in disciplinary focus, three key geographical understandings of landscape were highlighted in Part 1 that also applied to geographical understandings of art: as a material record, as a way of seeing, and as dwelling (Wylie, 2011). The increasing emphasis on matters of practice and on senses beyond the visual in geographical understandings of landscape (and art) is symptomatic of the discipline's performative turn.

Human and landscape were brought together with the acknowledgement of the active production of landscape (Mitchell, 2004), constitutive of a man-land complex (Christopher, 1982) or dynamic relations between society and environment (Collinge, 2006), in which material practices were considered as well as aesthetic forms (Zukin, 1991). This led to a more active understanding of landscaping as a man-made or altered infrastructure for collective action that underscored identity (Jackson, 2008). With this mutual configuration of self and landscape in practice (Wylie, 2005) we see the emergence of post-phenomenological and non-representational understandings in which landscape is neither subject nor object but event (Wylie, 2006), with humans dwelling in rather than acting on the landscape (Wylie, 2007) and the emergence of gaze on landscape both distributing and performing selves and landscapes (Wylie, 2006). Taking notions of landscape beyond the separation of the visual and the

material, landscape has recently been conceived as a multiplicity of materialities and sensibilities with which and according to which we perceive (McCormack, 2004; Wylie, 2006). With this continuous transformation of landscape, landscape itself has been allowed to landscape (Harrison, 2009): to shift from noun to verb, thing to process.

Importantly here, the confluence of geographical understandings of art and landscape suggests the productivity of dropping the prefix –land and thinking in more general terms about –scape. However, my concern is not with specific applications of –scape, such as Jackson’s waterscape of pipes and drains in which scape is a collection of similar entities (Jackson, 2008), as this would reinstate a representational emphasis. Rather, my interest lies in the ability of –scape to challenge the disciplinary dominance of both visual and morphological associations that beset landscape. Thinking in animated terms about scaping enables us to move beyond ideas of relating a particular form, depiction or distribution to ideas of practices and processes of forming. By dropping the land as well as the visual connotations that bedevil the landscape idea, the parallel generativity of subjectivity, spatiality and materiality between understandings and practices of art and landscape comes productively to the fore.

Similarly, I suggest an equivalent manoeuvre could be productive in taking us beyond the visual in relation to another geographical term: scope. Traditionally burdened with similar ocular and formal associations to those that beset (land)scape, standard definitions of scope (Chambers, 2011) concern visual practices such as catching sight of or examining with a viewing instrument, or material forms such as the viewing instrument itself (e.g. telescope, microscope, endoscope).

In the papers presented in Part 3, we can discern several vision-oriented definitions of scope as, for example, both artistic practice and the finished artwork can be considered viewing instruments. However, just as with scape, we can challenge the visual dominance of geographical concepts without having to jettison the concepts themselves, by considering and permitting other definitions and applications of scope that are more-than-visual. I will return to the potential for going beyond the visual later in Part 4 when I discuss contemporary disciplinary concerns in terms of practicality, but here I want to consider broader notions of scope in relation to these research data. Specifically, I consider scope to include field or opportunity for action, spaciousness, potential or ability, and instrument for examining (Chambers, 2011). While all of these can be granted a visual flavour, they need not be, and it is this broader potential (or scope) within the term scope, that I exploit here.

Taking scope as a range, field or opportunity for activity in the first instance, I am employing the notion of scope as spaciousness. In this light, we have considered artistic practice as constituting thinking space (McCormack, 2008b), an environment for doing things differently in *Discipline and Discordance*; and artistic practice as an opportunity to initiate a process of mythological world-making, as well as the finished artistic product as depicting and instantiating this mythological subjectivity and spatiality in *Spatialization and Subjectification*. We have also seen that artistic practice is an opportunity to increase the range of registers of being with which artists engage in *Geography meets Gendlin*, from relying on the conventions of the explicit to capturing and conveying the implicit; and the zone of indiscernibility as an indefinable artistic spatiality in which particular material agencies and affects come to form with constitutive implications for the resolution of the ontological indeterminacy in *Faltering Flow?*

As potential or ability, we considered scope as establishing, testing and extending the potential, ability or capacity of artistic materials and equipment and the artists themselves, through their experimental mediation between *Discipline and Discordance*, and we saw the same testing of capacities and abilities within the heterotechnic framework of artistic practice in *Faltering Flow*. We also saw artistic practice as a mythological testing and stretching of individual and social values, understanding and conduct in *Spatialization and Subjectification*, and as constituting a testing and stretching of artists' abilities to engage with, capture and convey the implicit in *Geography meets Gendlin*, establishing inter-personal and inter-medium attunement through the artistic instantiation of gesture.

Finally, we can conceptualize both artistic practice and the implicit as instruments for examining. Specifically, in addition to the traditional employment of the notion of scope in considering artistic practice to be an instrument for the visual examination of the subject matter as outlined in *Spatialization and Subjectification*, we can also see artistic practice and the implicit as instruments for examining each other. In *Geography meets Gendlin*, artistic practice was presented as a means of accessing and explicating the implicit, as in Jane Mollison's "scruffle" and "wump", necessarily involving an examination of the implicit. However, the implicit also functioned as an examination of artistic practice, as in the dance-art sessions in which practitioners examined both their own medium and those of the other practitioners through their attempts to establish attunement and transmittability of their own implicit ways of being and knowing.

The notion of scope has been criticized for artificially imposing a spatial hierarchy and necessarily producing a small-large imaginary (Marston et al., 2005). However, such critique employs scope in a presumptively spatial manner, and the ideas of scope

entertained in the preceding paragraphs suggest that this need not be the case. As spaciousness, scope is as much about quality as dimension: a thinking space need not be large in order to be generative. It is also unclear how the mythological spatiality of the relationscape could effectively or quantitatively be 'scaled'. Moreover, by considering scope beyond the spatial and scalar, we considered increasing scope as potential or ability, and as an instrument for examining, testing and furthering technical and implicit capacities and capabilities, which do not readily fit description as small or large. On this basis, I would argue that scope only imposes a spatial hierarchy if we allow it to do so, and that such a spatial hierarchy is imposed not by virtue of the concept itself but by virtue of the presuppositions of those employing the concept. We do not need to purge the discipline of troublesome concepts, which are troublesome only by virtue of our own complicity in burdening those concepts with associations that have overpowered the initial concept. As concepts, like maps (Kitchin and Dodge, 2007) and visual communications (Tversky, 2011), are reaffirmed but also refined or revised through their repeated use, to consider any concept to be so immutable that the only way to escape its clutches is to banish it from use serves to essentialize or reify the concept. Instead, we need only apply the processual thought deemed to be afforded by flat ontologies (Marston et al., 2005) to the concepts that these authors find problematic in order to free these concepts from the overpowering force of the associations with which we have burdened them.

Scoping then, like scaping, has broader potential for application in geography than narrowly construed visual, morphological or spatial definitions. Scaping was associated with shaping or forming (which need not be material), and scoping has been associated with ranging, in the sense of scoping the extent of something (which need

not be spatial). Scoping and scaping are themselves practices, and as both operate in multiple ways, should be considered in the plural rather than the singular.

Scaping in these artistic practices mostly takes place through material means, and scoping as ranging is largely characterized by implicit registers and functions. It might be tempting therefore to consider scoping and scaping as two distinct streams of activity in artistic practice, giving rise to the sensibilities and materialities of (land)scape respectively (McCormack, 2004; Wylie, 2006). However, to do so would be to overlook their mutuality, and in so doing would introduce a discrepancy between the ideas of scaping and scoping presented here and the suggestion that the pre-personal field of a practice can be considered the 'scape' of the practice (Harrison, 2009). For, if scaping is associated with forming and is largely conducted through material aspects of these artists' practices, how can the scape of such a practice be constituted by the pre-personal field of that practice?

This apparent contradiction is dissolved, however, if we bear in mind that materialities and sensibilities are not pre-existing registers or categories but that each functions through the other. Prior to their emergence the two are indistinguishable: the pre-personal is perhaps productively considered a concretion of materiality and sensibility. Scoping and scaping can thus be conceived as processes of progressive 'becoming sensible' and 'becoming material' that operate through multiple practices, in this case artistic. These processes draw on both the emergent sensibilities and materialities in their own progressive becoming. Both scoping and scaping are more-than-visual and multifaceted, and they are interpenetrative rather than exclusive. For example, the effectiveness or success of artistic practice as thinking space is determined through the evaluation of the material artistic output from artistic experimentation, much of which evaluation is implicit or affective. Similarly, the progress through, and success or

otherwise of the attempt to resolve the chimerical instability, is evaluated in the emerging and resulting material art product, much of which evaluation is implicit or affective.

The implicit is examined, captured and conveyed through the material, and materials are explored and tested through these engagements with implicit registers of being, as each becomes increasingly differentiated. The association of scaping with materiality and scoping with sensibility or the implicit is retrospective, and is a function of the linguistic explication of these processes of 'becoming material' and 'becoming sensible', which have their roots in a pre-personal and unseparated implicit many.

While we can understand landscape as the multiplicitous materialities and sensibilities according to which we perceive (McCormack, 2004; Wylie, 2006), we potentially gain greater non-representational purchase on longstanding geographical ideas if we allow those ideas to revive and replenish themselves. If we relinquish the prefix –land, overcome the dominance of visual, morphological and spatial associations, and stay true to the processual emphasis of non-representational geography, we can approach an understanding of the becoming of materialities and sensibilities through practice-specific processes of scoping and scaping.

## **4.4 Disciplinary Concerns: on Practicalities and Proficiency**

At the outset of this thesis I indicated a number of contemporary disciplinary concerns regarding how geographers can think about and work with art, whether art provides unique or privileged access to the world, and how geographers can engage with different ways of understanding the world that avoid ocular perspectives. In this section I consider these issues in more detail, in order to contribute to these disciplinary debates.

### **4.4.1 How geographers can think about and work with art**

As detailed in *Spatialization and Subjectification*, I suggest here that geographers can productively think about artistic practice as a form of mythological thinking. This does not mean that we should associate individual artworks, artists or artistic practices with individual myths, because that would return our attention to the content of the work rather than the characteristics of the practice of doing the work, which would take us away from the non-representational orientation adopted here. Rather, to consider artistic practice as a form of mythological thinking is to adopt a non-representational focus on practice in the consideration of a particular representational form of thinking (mythology) as a way of thinking about both the representational and non-representational aspects of a different form of thinking (artistic practice). By bearing in mind the characteristics of the thinking style encapsulated in many and varied myths across different cultures, we identified a number of synergies between the thinking style employed in mythological construction and that employed in artistic practice. Whether in relation to the coincidence of the real and ideal, the conjunction of the individual and the social, or the inter-folding of narrative and iconography, both artistic practice and mythological thinking can be considered to be coherent (Stengers,

2008). Belonging to neither one nor the other camp in paired categories that are usually considered distinct and mutually exclusive, artistic practice and/as mythological thinking provide for varied, multiple and dynamic subjectivities, spatialities and temporalities, as well as for their inter-penetration, co-existence, merging and juxtaposition.

Mythological thinking is proposed here as a productive way of thinking about artistic practice, spatiality and subjectivity, but the first disciplinary concern also raises issues regarding how geographers might work with as well as think about art. It is to this issue to which I now turn.

This research employed practice-based methods to explore artistic practices from within, and adopted a co-experimental framework in order to juxtapose different practices and make those differences between practices productive of understanding about the respective practices. I also injected discordance into those practices in order to raise artists' awareness of implicit aspects of their practice and to provide a comparative element within participants' own practices. Similarly, by changing the conditions of emergence of artistic subjectivity and spatiality, we can discern that which remains consistent despite the changes and that which differs according to those changes. Given the wealth and richness of data generated by this research, and the findings and implications that arise from their analysis, I argue that unsettling conventional or habitual practice in co-experimental research provides a productive means by which geographers can engage with artistic practice to attend to both traditional matters of concern for geography (spatiality) and those more tailored to geography of a non-representational persuasion (the implicit).

Such an approach to research brings with it certain considerations regarding the contemporary debate as to whether it is appropriate for geographers to engage with artistic practice if they are not themselves proficient or trained in art (Lafrenière and Cox, 2013; Marston and de Leeuw, 2013). In Part 2, I provided justification for my own use of artistic practice as a method despite my lack of formal art education, and I reaffirm that view here. Had my research taken as its focus issues related to the quality of artistic output or adherence of artistic style to particular art schools or traditions, it would have been problematic for me to employ my own artistic practice as a method, as I have no expertise or experience in assessing the quality of artistic output or the skilful application of particular styles and techniques. However, as my focus has been on the practice of art as a way of knowing or thinking, the quality and stylistic rigour of the works generated through the research are not of great concern. This also provides justification for working with participants who do not claim to be professional artists but hobbyists. Just as people legitimately and effectively use and produce maps as a way of knowing and communicating something of the world without having professional cartographic training, so people legitimately and effectively use artistic practice and produce drawings as a way of knowing and communicating something of the world without having professional art training. Regardless of their level of tuition or professional practice, everyone using artistic practice is thinking through the practice of their art. Those with less tuition might draw more on proto- practices than those who have been professionally trained, and their work might be valued less highly and criticized more stringently by those in a position to do so, but they are still thinking through their artistic practice.

Three further aspects of my research question the supposed need for artistic proficiency in geographers working with art and artists: the introduction of

discordance, the maintenance of proto- practices despite increasing proficiency, and the simplicity with which artistic practice as mythological thinking can be construed. Through the introduction of discordance, artists were pushed outside the comfort zone of their conventional or habitual practice, working in places with which they were unfamiliar and might normally be considered unsuitable for the practice of art, such as on a moving bus, and working with unfamiliar materials and equipment, which they might previously have rejected as not being suitable for their work. With all artists working equally at odds with their conventional or habitual practice, any advantages or elevations in work quality that might normally be assumed to accrue from education or expertise are greatly reduced, so distinctions in terms of proficiency or professionalism upon which basis we might normally categorize artists are rendered highly suspect.

In addition, despite the high level of education and expertise evident within the participant group, *Discipline and Discordance* identified high levels of self-generated discordance in the practices of all participating artists. If proficiency and professionalism come with time and training, then any introduction by any artist of a new element to their practice troubles their characterization as proficient or professional because this new element has not been developed through time and training. Similarly, the maintenance of proto- practices alongside conventional or trained practices even among the professional practising artists disrupts assumptions that professional practising artists only use professional or professionally endorsed techniques. That being the case, it seems somewhat artificial to discount the practices of hobbyists on the grounds that they use proto- rather than professional practices, when professional practitioners do the same themselves.

Thirdly, in the previous section, we considered artistic practice as a form of mythological thinking and applied such notions to the artistic rendering of the narratives in the four papers presented in Part 3. The simplicity of the four diagrams produced indicates that no particular drawing skill is necessary for the rendering of mythological thinking in artistic (pictorial) form. Each of these considerations reinforces the view that when geographers are working with artistic practice as a research method, there are several grounds on which it is reasonable and highly appropriate, if not preferable, to do so despite a lack of training and proficiency in art on the part of the geographer.

#### **4.4.2 Whether art provides unique or privileged access to the world**

The second disciplinary concern raised in the opening paragraphs of this thesis relates to whether art provides unique or privileged access to the world. On the basis of the foregoing research I would argue here that art provides unique access to the world on two grounds, but that this access is not privileged, and that just because this access is unique does not mean that it is necessarily incommunicable. On the basis that the immersion in the world from which subjectivity arises is unique to that emergent subjectivity, the circumstances of artistic practice as the conditions of emergence for that subjectivity provide for unique access to the world. The artistic practice and product of no two people will be the same irrespective of their physical proximity, the similarity in their subject matter or the equivalence of their training. While art as an activity is not unique on these grounds, the access that artistic practice provides is unique by virtue of both the uniqueness of artistic practice as a particular form of mythological thinking, and the uniqueness of that person's artistic style developed through the co-existence of discipline and discordance evidenced in *Discipline and Discordance*.

Secondly, as we saw in *Geography meets Gendlin*, artistic practice also provides a unique means of access to the artist's implicit understanding. It is not the only means of access to the implicit, but it is unique to artistic practice. However, the uniqueness of this means of access to the implicit within artistic practice does not mean that the implicit is incommunicable as *Geography meets Gendlin* also considered the transmissibility of implicit knowing not only between individuals but also between practitioners in different artistic or cultural mediums. Art, dance and music all provide their own unique access to the implicit, but this uniqueness does not preclude communicability of the implicit.

Finally in relation to this disciplinary concern, and relating to the issue of proficiency discussed earlier, the universality of artistic practice as a way of knowing and communicating something of the world, and as a form of mythological thinking which does not rely on education or training, proficiency or professionalism, means that the unique access to the world afforded by artistic practice is not in any way privileged.

#### **4.4.3 Ways of understanding that avoid ocular perspectives**

The third and final disciplinary concern relates to how geographers can engage with different ways of understanding the world that avoid ocular perspectives. Already in *Spatialization and Subjectification* and earlier in Part 4, we have considered artistic practice as a form of mythological thinking, which although incorporating symbolism, does not rely on visuality to do so, given the interlacing of narrative and imagery. In *Geography meets Gendlin*, we also considered artistic practice as gestural, which similarly, can involve visuality but does not need to do so. Contradicting the view that painting reduces the range of sensations employed to that of sight (Rees, 1973), *Geography meets Gendlin* highlighted the synaesthetic quality of artistic practice.

Both artistic practice and myth, through its association with metaphor, thus provide their own means of accessing and conveying the implicit beyond the ocular.

Furthermore, we saw in the discussion of landscape that despite the endurance of visual connotations to geographical terms of scape and scope, such connotations do not need to be restrictive or constraining, but through critical consideration can be broadened to the more-than-visual, extending rather than changing their definition and applicability.

In considering these two papers together, we also come to an appreciation of the potential for methods designed to take us beyond the conventions of language also to take us beyond the bounds of the visual, and for practices commonly associated with visuality to take us beyond the visual. To see how this is so, I highlight and explore an apparent contradiction that emerges if we consider what each of these papers has to say about the relation between implicit understanding and conceptual means of communicating that understanding, and the connectivity between mythological and rational thinking.

The presumed move from mythological to rational thought identified and challenged in *Spatialization and Subjectification* has been attributed to the rise of critical or ‘sharp’ questions concerning truth and falsity (MacIntyre, 1967), while in *Geography meets Gendlin* I drew on Gendlin’s notion of ‘sharp’ concepts (Gendlin, 2006) as a means of forging stronger links between explicit and implicit understanding. How can we reconcile the notion of sharpness as at once moving us away from and also moving us closer to implicit understanding? There is, in fact, nothing to reconcile if we recall that Gendlin’s concerns are with the connections between the implicit and the explicit; intuition and concepts. Gendlin’s notion of sharpness is specifically the vehicle through which the degree of fit between concepts and the implicit basis from which

they originated is itself conceptualized. Sharpness, in Gendlin's sense, then, applies just as much to questions of truth and falsity as they do to the content or phenomenon to which such questions pertain, and to this extent, truth and falsity themselves are beholden to implicit understanding. In this light, truth and falsity are metaphors for the implicit understanding to which they are beholden. This is consistent with suggestions that metaphorical thinking links mythological and rational forms of thought (Kirk, 1970), whereby metaphor and myth are respectively condensed and extended versions of each other, and the models used in modern 'rational' science are systematized metaphors (Harrison and Livingstone, 1982). While the conceptual metaphors of scientific models have been granted a systematicity not known as such to implicit understanding, they are no less beholden in terms of their sharpness to implicit understanding for that systematicity.

It is on the basis of the centrality of metaphorical thinking at the heart of geography that Harrison and Livingstone (1982) argue for language as the organ for the creation and transmission of such meaning to be the focal point for geographic research. However, this overlooks these authors' own recognition of the relation between metaphorical thinking and implicit understanding or affect. If we begin with metaphorical thinking and focus on its linguistic explication, we leave ourselves ill-equipped to evaluate the effectiveness of that metaphorical understanding because we deny ourselves any recourse to the implicit meaning to which and from which such metaphors speak. As condensed mythology, metaphor is already reductive, selective and opaque, so by focusing solely on language we lose any means of attesting to the sharpness of linguistic and conceptual understanding. Consequently the centrality of metaphorical thinking at the heart of geography calls for the direction of geographic attention toward implicit understanding as much as to its linguistic explication. It is

precisely this dual aspect of Gendlin's methods that lend themselves to contemporary non-representational geography's concern with apprehending the implicit, and which affords them such potential to move us not just beyond the conventions of language but also beyond the visual connotations of geographical terminology. Thinking from the implicit enables us to generate entirely new terminology solely on the basis of implicit understanding, while thinking from the explicit enables us to draw away from overly visualized associations through broader connectivity with the implicit. For example, by using geographical terms – including those laden with visual or morphological associations – as points of entry to implicit understanding, in a similar manner to Laura's exploration of the cloudiness of clouds, we can enhance our appreciation of the more-than-visual implicit aspects of such terms.

Additionally, the primacy granted to language suggests (Harrison and Livingstone, 1982) that there are no means other than language for the creation and transmission of meaning, or for accessing and explicating implicit understanding. However, as we saw in *Geography meets Gendlin*, this is not the case. Artistic practice not only facilitated the explication of implicit understanding into linguistic expression but also constituted a means of focusing and of explicating implicit understanding in its own terms. We also saw that this implicit understanding, despite its rendering in visual artistic form, incorporated sonorous, textural and motoric understanding, and that this implicit understanding was shared and communicated both between individuals and between mediums. Artistic practice is far more than visual. With this in mind, I have less sympathy with Harrison and Livingstone's (1982) advocacy of focusing on language in geographic research than I have for their earlier recommendation that recapturing intuitive imagination is singularly relevant to the contemporary reconstruction of a

geographical epistemology (Livingstone and Harrison, 1981), as here they do not specify the capture of intuitive imagination solely by linguistic means.

In keeping with historic recognition of the varied forms of imagination at work in geography, I advocate here greater engagement with both intuitive and aesthetic imaginings (Wright, 1966), those that draw on our own implicit understanding, and those that employ artistic and poetic impulses in all their variety and synaesthetic cross-activation, particularly as the latter provide their own means of access to the former. Methods originally intended to help us move beyond the limitations of linguistic convention, such as Gendlin's explicatory techniques, can also help us to move beyond the ocular in geographical discourse by providing new linguistic terms free from visual associations, while in the application of such techniques we find that practices commonly associated with visuality, such as artistic practice, are in fact richly inter-sensory. With a growing trend toward geographers engaging in their own creative pursuits it seems that the deep-seated distrust of artistic and poetic impulses in geography that Wright (1966) identified is dissipating, at least in some quarters, and this research has illustrated the specific value of combining artistic practice and explicatory techniques to release the shackles of both the visual and the linguistic in geographic inquiry.

#### **4.5 Disciplinary Contributions: Philosophical, Methodological, Conceptual**

Collectively the four papers provide a number of novel ways in which we can think about and work with artistic practice, contributing to the discipline philosophically, methodologically and conceptually, and raising a series of questions and lines of inquiry for future consideration.

Philosophically, I have introduced a new stream of non-representational thinking to geography in the work of Eugene Gendlin. Not only does the Process Model (Gendlin, 2001) address the issue of humanism and subjectivity currently vexing non-representational geography (Rose, 2010; Thrift, 2008; Wylie, 2010), but also interjects alternative workings and conceptions of particular phenomena into non-representational debates, such as his recognition of an object by its inclusion in rather than exclusion from a process (Gendlin, 2001). In addition, this philosophical basis connects with and gives rise to specific methodological approaches that address issues of practical concern to non-representational geography, such as how we can apprehend the implicit or affective (Nash, 2000; Paterson, 2009).

Methodologically, I have formally operationalized my production of Thrift's (2010) moments to encourage artists (including myself) to think differently about their practices. My use of co-experimental methods in discordant situations, whereby the material and spatial conditions of an artist's practice were varied, generated understanding of our practices in a between-space at the boundary between our respective practices. Of particular value here were the sessions held on the move, on a sightseeing tour bus and on a river boat, as the unusual speed at which practice had to be conducted brought into sharp relief aspects of that practice that had to be adapted to

cater for the speed of travel, such as Laura's composite image and Katherine having to accept just a 'swish' for a bridge. Similarly, sessions held as groups were particularly insightful, as these revealed not only consistencies and discrepancies between group members but also changes in the practices and accounts of group members over time and between different circumstances of practice. Examples here include the intricate patterns of presenting and absenting by Philippa, Yoko and Marnie of their tutor Norman, and the distinctions drawn out by Clare, Susan and Kassandra in their experiences when working under and off camera. Group-based, mobile and multiple research sessions all proved especially informative.

Incorporating the specifics of Gendlin's methods of focusing and thinking-at-the-edge (Gendlin, 2009a; 2006) with Stelter's (2010) body-anchored and Drew's (2006) re-enactment interviewing techniques culminated in a streamlined version of Gendlin's methods that avoided the need for lengthy training on the part of participants yet still provided enhanced access to participants' implicit understanding of their own practices. While these methods might have been more effective with a degree of training or preparation, the straightforward use of techniques to expand and condense repeatedly the material conveyed by participants, combined with stimulated recall and/or re-enactment and encouragement in vocalizing or scribing (in images or in words) whatever is sensed in this research indicates that such methods potentially have much to offer non-representational geography with further application, development and refinement.

Probably the most significant questions raised by this research are methodological in nature, and some of these have already been outlined, such as the manner in which, and extent to which, a video camera facilitates or hinders access to the implicit, and the conditions that are most conducive for generating linguistic improvisation. Here, I

focus on a suite of methodological issues relating to my application of Gendlin's work. For example, there is much to be done to establish the potential to develop geographically inflected techniques of focusing, thinking-at-the-edge, crossing and dipping, but if successful, revision of established geographical ideas from a more implicitly-refined base could reinvigorate conceptual understanding across the discipline. Similarly, there is a programme of work to be done in order to formalize methods for spatial practices to be productively combined with Gendlin's explicatory methods to inform our understanding of spatial awareness, abilities and relations. This methodological potential becomes more complex if the degree of applicability of co-experimentation in discordant situations as a research method beyond artistic practice is thrown into the mix. Considerable work is needed if the insights of this particular research are to be developed into a fuller programme of research practice or innovative educational practices across geography and the wider social sciences.

While my strong presence in the research environment contradicted standard protocols for descriptive phenomenological analysis (DPA) (Giorgi, 2010), the impact of this presence was substantially mitigated by the employment of that presence for the elicitation of information from participating artists rather than to incorporate my own data in the body of data analysed as part of the research. The experience of discordance on the part of both researcher and participant also served, at least in part, to distance both parties from their preconceptions of their practice as well their habitual execution of that practice, in a practice-based equivalent to the procedure of bracketing. Seen in this light, my methodology contributes to the development of DPA to accommodate post-phenomenological interest in the conditions of emergence of phenomena and experiences without sacrificing faithfulness to participant testimony. The establishment of a degree of consistency between the treatment of verbal and

visual data in the research also indicates broader applicability of post-phenomenologically inspired analytical methods to other-than-verbal forms of data.

While neither auto-ethnographic approaches nor artistic approaches to research are novel in themselves, my use of practice-based means of engaging with formal philosophical and conceptual material as a way of informing the unfolding research analytically is I think unusual, particularly at the initial stage of scoping the research project. As a consequence, Part 1 of this thesis is more than a literature review, as it incorporates the outcomes of my practice-based engagement with theoretical literatures and conceptual issues through material processes both artistic and otherwise. In particular, my sense of the effectiveness of this auto-ethnographic element to my research is evidenced in my continued engagement with these methods, supporting through artistic practice the analysis of data and return to theoretical content beyond fieldwork, culminating in my use of this auto-ethnographic approach across the full spectrum of research activities.

Conceptually, this research has broadened our understanding of several material aspects of artistic practice and directly addresses the need identified in Part 1 for methods, concepts and techniques to realize in the field the capacity to grapple with the multiplicity and transitivity of materiality. Specifically, I have expanded the notion of the 'material excess' within artistic practices, drawing attention to a suite of material off-cuts and supporting features that are crucial to the emergent artwork but are not currently recognized in either Derrida's (1987) *parerga* and *subjectile* or Seeley's (2011) *biograffiti*.

I have also argued for a disciplinary understanding of experimentation as more proactive than letting things happen. In *Discipline and Discordance* both the centrality

and diversity of experimental aspects of artistic practices were highlighted, through which artists change the conditions of their own practice, respond creatively to positive as well as negative practice events, employ speculative as much as outcome-oriented experimental actions, and introduce aspects to their practice from beyond their field of practice. This also cast Foucault's notion of practitioner-field relations in a more positive light than is often acknowledged, with greater symmetry in power between practitioner and field and greater contingency upon factors external to the field than is usually considered. This further led both to a reframing of classifications of expertise and proficiency in terms of styles of experimentation rather than quality or skill, and a reconceptualization of artistic practices as parasitic (Foucault, 1966) or fugitive, characterized by multiple and mutable articulations between multiple fields of practice (Foucault, 2002), including proto- practices.

*In Faltering Flow* I considered again the idea of chimerical instability in processes of material transformation, relating a notion first identified in the preparation of game birds for cooking, to a period of difficulty within artistic practice during which artists struggle to identify the point at which, if they ceased working on an artwork that work would be complete. Bringing notions of heterotechnicity (Reynolds, 1994) and heterochrony (Kozbelt, 2009) into conversation with Deleuze's (1979) notion of vagabond materials and Gendlin's (2001) idea of interaffecting in relation to specific practices of art, brings a degree of conceptual refinement to non-representational geography's interest in material vitality. The applicability of the notion of a period of chimerical instability to two very different processes of material transformation (meat processing and artistic practice) raises the possibility that the concept might apply in other instances of material processuality, thus suggesting a focus on particular episodes in processes of material transformation that could prove particularly

informative. Allied to this, and further bolstering appreciation of inexpert practices, is the possibility that the heightened affective power of chimerical instability on novice practitioners might indicate particular value in such novice practitioners and their experiences in developing further our non-representational understandings of material processuality. Finally, the interaction of material processes at the level of individual and ongoing artistic practices in sustaining both artistic practice and the encounter with the period of chimerical instability and zone of indiscernibility through the maintenance of a skills-challenge imbalance, emphasizes both the centrality of material affects and experimentation to artistic practice, and the importance of imbalance rather than balance between skills and challenge in the psychological phenomenon of flow.

In terms of stimulating questions for further research, these conceptual developments suggest several potential new avenues or emphases for investigation. Some of these speak directly to geographical interests, such as the extent and function of the generative power of chimerical instability in material processuality, and the under-represented role of practices in consideration of Foucault's *dispositif*. Others, specifically questions of cognitive processes, are perhaps better suited to psychological inquiry, such as those relating to the conditions under which the affective power of chimerical instability is most acute or profound, the implications of handedness or cerebral laterality for accessing the implicit, and how an artist's stickiness to their medium develops and the conditions under which it is broken.

*Spatialization and Subjectification* raised the possibility of thinking about artistic practice as a form of mythological thinking without its explicit mythic content, and argued that geography too is strongly mythological both in its interests and in its practices, to the extent that a re-evaluation of disciplinary epistemology might be in

order to reflect more honestly the ongoing role of mythological thinking in contemporary geographic practices.

Finally, *Geography meets Gendlin* developed a specific operationalization of Gendlin's notion of sharp concepts (Gendlin, 2006), in relation to multi-sensory sensitivity that enables both synaesthetic expression of implicit understanding in an artist's own practice and the conveyance of that implicit understanding between individuals and between artistic mediums or forms. Under this account, linguistic explication is not the only means by which implicit understanding can be given form, but artistic explication can both stand on its own terms and aid linguistic explication. As discussed earlier, the application of Gendlin's methods in this research both illustrates the potential for and highlights certain implications and questions concerning the methodological development of non-representational geography's engagement with the implicit.

## 4.6 Conclusion to Part 4

The auto-ethnographic artwork selected for Part 4 (reproduced as a thumbnail below) is *Producing Moments*. This work seeks to convey both the material and the implicit aspects of the research process, as well as some of the means by which I sought to vary the conditions of practice for participating artists in my attempt to produce moments (Thrift et al., 2010) in which they might, by virtue of performing their practice differently, think differently (Thrift, 2004) about their practice.

This work, both artistic and academic, has also produced moments of my own, effectively turning my research methods back on my own practice and causing me to think and practice both my artistic and academic work differently. The production of each of these auto-ethnographic works has injected some form of stimulus into the ongoing research that has caused me to reconsider aspects of my work from a different angle, sometimes conceptually and sometimes reflexively. Reciprocally, the unfolding research, particularly the fieldwork associated with it, has influenced the development of my own artistic practice, widening the range of media and materials that I use and introducing a less figurative element to much of my work.

This latter point is illustrated if we consider each of the four works used as frontispieces progressively as with each one my work becomes less strictly representational and incorporates greater ambiguity. This development can be seen as progressing further still if we compare these four works with the three presented in part 2 (*Ecstasy of Spaces*, *Curious Vampirism* and *Rhythmic Mutant Impetus*), which were produced after the completion of fieldwork, and all of which resist – to a greater or lesser degree – representational understandings.

*Producing Moments*, then, illustrates both the methodological flavour of my research and the effect of that research not only on the participating artists but also on the researching hobbyist. Through the evolution of this work, both research and researcher became increasingly non-representational.



## Conclusion

This thesis both responds and contributes to an enduring and growing but highly diverse geographical interest and involvement in art. Specifically, this research addressed a persistent disciplinary under-appreciation of the multiplicity and mutability of artistic spatialities, the contingency of artistic subjectivities and the vitality and excessiveness of artistic materialities. The aim of this research was to explore the conditions of possibility for the emergence of such subjectivities and spatialities in order to generate a non-representational geography of artistic practice.

In particular, I drew on the work of Eugene Gendlin because both his philosophical and methodological work address contemporary concerns for non-representational geography – non-representational subjectivity and apprehending the implicit – and his explicatory techniques provided methodological bedrock on which I could ground my own methodological developments. I also took seriously the experimental emphasis and generous sensibility to the possible that characterize non-representational geography (Darling, 2010; Kullman, 2012; McCormack, 2010), in particular Thrift's advocacy to produce moments in which people think differently about things (Thrift et al., 2010). Such moments were produced for participants through our co-experimental artistic practice in discordant situations and were produced additionally for myself through auto-ethnographic research in practices both artistic and otherwise. Through this auto-ethnographic activity I worked through conceptual and substantive material in a practical manner, which subsequently informed my academic analytical engagement with that material. Bringing conceptual and practical understandings of

the same material into productive connection, these auto-ethnographic works are both reflective and constitutive of the unfolding research.

The substantive findings were presented in four papers, which collectively provide answers to the questions guiding the research. Spatiality and subjectivity in these artists' practices are co-constituted through two principal pairs of interrogative practices: that between the emerging artist and subject matter in a mutual process of responding and rendering, and that between emergent artist and viewer in the relative insertion of iconography and invitation to narrative. These artistic practices are negotiated materially through two primary means: through experimentation as mediation between discipline and discordance, and through the struggle to resolve the chimerical instability in the zone of indiscernibility. By changing the conditions of their practice through experimentation, the artist exacerbates the heterotechnic and heterochronic affects of the material vitality that characterizes their practice. The interaction of material experimentation and the heterotechnic and heterochronic nature of material processuality within artistic practice commits artists both to repeated engagement with their artistic practice and the experience of that practice as frustrating, by sustaining the imbalance between skills and challenge and stimulating further experimentation. These materially negotiated practices of spatialization and subjectification draw on implicit understanding in two main ways: capturing the ineffable in their medium of choice, and expressing or conveying this ineffable. Both of these were conceptualized as synaesthetic gesture by virtue of the capacity to transpose sensibility in one sensory modality or artistic medium to expression in another, allowing non-linguistic communication. Artistic practice was found to provide both its own means of explication of implicit understanding, and an intermediary step in the explication of implicit understanding into linguistic form.

The substantive outcomes of this research bring implications for disciplinary understandings and practices in a number of ways. Firstly, disciplinary thematics of diagram, experimentation and landscape have been informed through the discussion of particular relations identified in the practices of participating artists. Detailed consideration of the relation between narrative and iconography in mythological thinking contributes to the understanding of diagrams and other abstractions as productive, while the interaction between experimentation and material affects in the artistic experience of flow argued for a pro-active understanding of experimentation. The challenge laid down to the dominance of visual and morphological associations in geographical concepts of scape and scope encouraged us to push beyond ideas of landscape as sensibility and materiality to the progressive differentiation and coming-into-being of those materialities and sensibilities through processes of scaping and scoping in varied practices of explication.

Subsequently, disciplinary concerns were addressed regarding how geographers might and should think about and work with art. This discussion argued that it is not only appropriate but potentially desirable for geographers employing arts-based research not to be proficient in art, and in which reducing participant proficiency is academically justifiable. The case was also made to consider art as providing unique but not privileged access to the world, which has potential for greater exploitation in geographical practice. Reinforcing the earlier discussion of landscape, it was also highlighted that we do not necessarily need to jettison pre-existing disciplinary ideas just because they have become associated with visibility, but can revise those ideas to think more-than-visually. It was further argued that artistically-applied Gendlinian techniques to help us move beyond the linguistic or conceptual can also help us

somewhat counter-intuitively to move beyond the visual, courtesy of the synaesthetic nature of artistic practice.

Finally, disciplinary contributions were identified, which spanned the philosophical, methodological and conceptual. These signposted the potential both for more formalized operationalization of Gendlinian explicatory techniques in combination with geographical concepts and practices, and for more targeted means of addressing the methodological issues surrounding affect or the implicit in general and material processuality in particular.

To conclude, this research illustrates that varied and interpenetrative material and implicit aspects of artistic practice can be discerned through co-experimental and discordant practices. Research concerned with creative and analytic methods that support both access to and explication from the implicit can help us to move beyond the sensible and material to their emergence or differentiation as explicated in specific practices. Such research can also help us to move beyond the visual, linguistic and morphological baggage that burdens many disciplinary ideas and practices, even from within those ideas and practices that are so burdened. This research both responds to and helps to address specific difficulties and concerns identified in non-representational geography concerning philosophical debates around subjectivity, and methodological debates around material processuality and apprehending affect. With its conclusion, we are better placed to develop non-representational understandings of artistic practice and beyond.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Evidence of Paper Submission

### Submission Confirmation

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*.

Manuscript ID: TIBG-RP-Feb-2014-0020
Title: Spatialization and subjectification in artistic practice as mythological thinking
Authors: Banfield, Janet
Date Submitted: 22-Feb-2014
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### Submission Confirmation

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to *Environment and Planning A*.

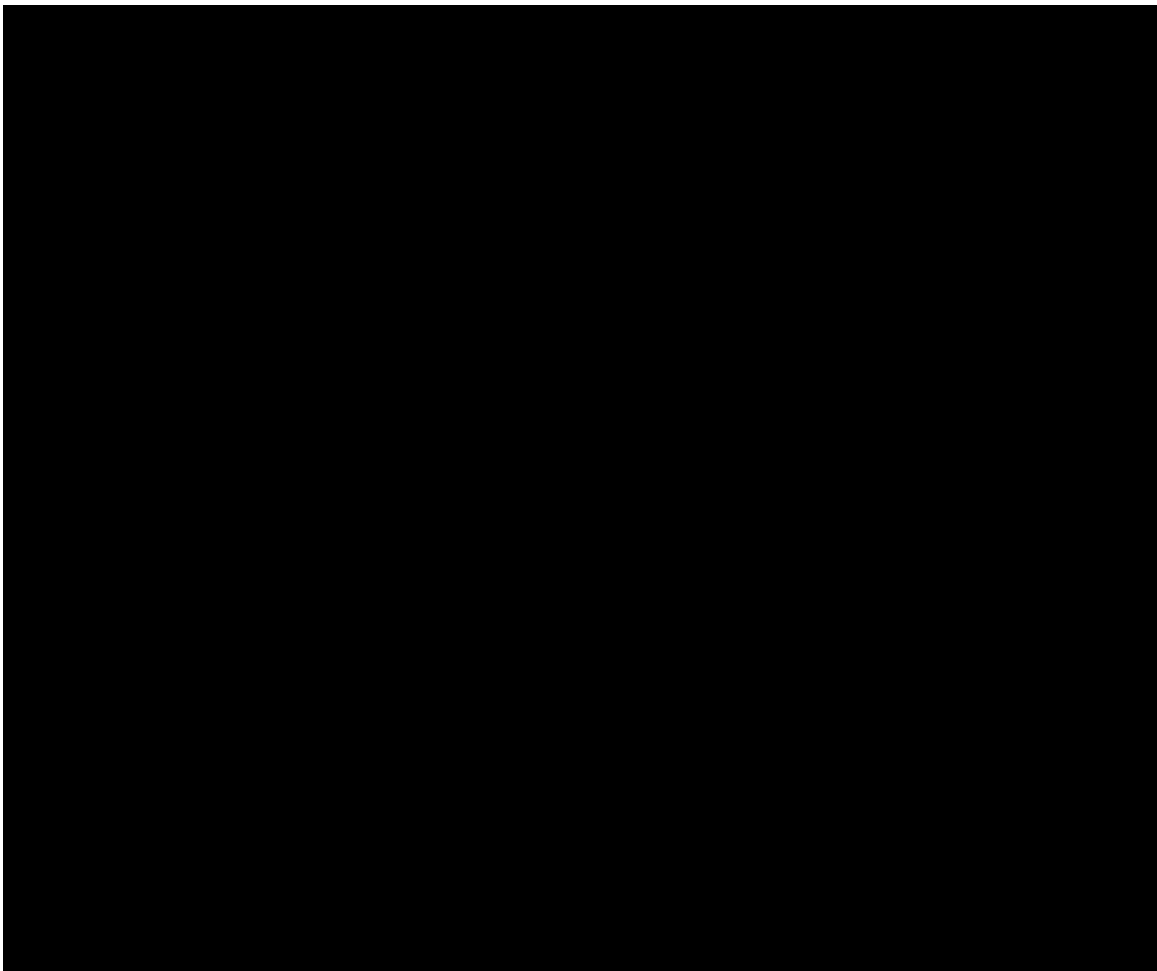
Manuscript ID: EPA-2014-0094
Title: Geography meets Gendlin: Apprehending affect through synaesthetic gesture
Authors: Banfield, Janet
Date Submitted: 19-Feb-2014
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## Submission Confirmation

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*.

Manuscript ID: EPD-2014-0055
Title: Discipline and discordance in artistic dispositifs: putting Foucault into practice
Authors: Banfield, Janet
Date Submitted: 01-Mar-2014

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## **Appendix B: Preliminary Interview Schedule**

1. Could you please tell me a little bit about your artistic practice, e.g. training, organizations/membership, and exhibition experience?
2. If somebody was to ask you to describe your body of work, say for an exhibition, in just a couple of sentences, what would you say?
3. If they were then to ask you to describe your artistic process, how you set about creating an artwork, what would you say?
4. How would you describe your most recent artwork?
  - How does this reflect you as an artist and your artistic practice?
5. Tell me about the place/places where you usually do your artwork.
  - How do your experiences of them compare?
6. What materials and equipment do you use, and how?
  - Are there any that particularly suit different production environments?
7. If you could order on demand your ideal artistic experience (how you would like it to go), what would it be like?
  - How do your usual experiences compare with that?
8. Has anything else occurred to you while we've been talking, that you'd like to add?

## **Appendix C: Example of Closing Interview Schedule**

### **Research Review**

1. How have you found the research process overall?
2. How much use, if any, have you made of the sketch-notebook?
3. How did the two production sessions compare?
4. How did the work that you did in those production sessions compare?
5. How did your experience of your artwork in those production sessions compare to that of usual artistic practice?

### **Transcript follow-up**

1. In our session at Headington Hill Hall you spoke about needing to decide whether you still had the spirit of the thing. What do you mean by the spirit of the thing and how do you assess whether you still have it?
  - How, if at all, does the spirit of the thing relate to doing justice to the buildings and making sure that things come to life?
2. After our session on the boat you commented on similarities between working with the ipad and working with your usual materials. What more can you tell me about the similarities and differences between ipad work and more traditional media?
3. Thinking back again now to our first session you talked about the angst of drawing in comparison to the enjoyment of painting. Could you please elaborate on that for me?
  - How does this contrast between angst and enjoyment relate to working in pen?
  - And what about working on your ipad?

### **Footage follow-up**

We are going to look at three clips from our session on the boat, and we'll watch each clip twice.

On the first viewing I'd like you to try and put yourself back there if you can, try to reconnect with that experience.

On the second viewing I'll ask you to put words to the ways in which you are engaging with your materials, and equipment, the marks you are making, the effects you are seeking, and the sensations you're experiencing.

#### ***clip 2***

1. first viewing: try to reconnect with this experience
2. second viewing: if you had to put words to the following what would they be:
  - the ways in which you are engaging with your materials and equipment
  - the marks you are making
  - the effects you are seeking
  - the sensations you are experiencing.

#### ***clip 3***

1. first viewing: try to reconnect with this experience
2. second viewing: if you had to put words to the following what would they be:
  - the ways in which you are engaging with your materials and equipment
  - the marks you are making
  - the effects you are seeking
  - the sensations you are experiencing

*clip 5*

1. first viewing: try to reconnect with this experience
2. second viewing: if you had to put words to the following what would they be:
  - the ways in which you are engaging with your materials and equipment
  - the marks you are making
  - the effects you are seeking
  - the sensations you are experiencing



25 they were both all based at university so it was like you  
26 had sixth form in university and then you went on to  
27 the degree programme so I did the equivalent of sixth  
28 form and then came to do a gap year in between and I  
29 went to Goldsmiths I I walked around the streets of  
30 London knocking on art colleges over the summer and  
31 those were the days when you could do that sort of  
32 thing when actually you know you didn't have to fill in  
33 all those forms I got hold of some guy at Goldsmiths  
34 who said umm you know I could a umm year for  
35 overseas students starting in September so I did that  
36 and that was a very good course in that it was it was  
37 like a it was I was free to use any equipment to do  
38 anything it wasn't restricted to painting or sculpture or  
39 anything so I did a lot of photography I did a lot of life  
40 drawing I did a lot of painting umm I did some printing  
41 so I basically used it to sort of test the waters of what  
42 was what and then I had a choice of going back to  
43 Canada to finish my degree in I was doing English  
44 umm or to stay here and continue doing the art and  
45 what I ended up doing was staying here and I went and  
46 did a degree in English and Theatre at Warwick  
47 because I was very interested in theatre design as well  
48 and umm and then I graduated and I ended up working  
49 in film for about umm ten years maybe I worked as a

31. gap year in London asking around at art schools

37. a very good course; free to use any equip and do anything

42. used the course to test the waters of what was what

47. UK degree in English and theatre

49. worked in film then research and writing

50 film editor just doing television and you know no big  
51 films but just government films and industrial  
52 documentaries and thing like then and when the  
53 children were small I moved from that into more sort of  
54 research and writing so I ended up doing some just  
55 general magazine writing and I worked for *Which?* for  
56 a bit doing research and writing for them and I we it  
57 just happened that one evening I was sitting around  
58 with some friends and my husband and we were after  
59 several bottles of wine saying you know if you could do  
60 anything what would you really like to do and I said  
61 well I think I would love to have a go at working a you  
62 know working as an artist again because you know it's  
63 there in somewhere deep down and I just would like to  
64 have a go and my husband had just been offered a job  
65 up here which was going to be paying him a bit more so  
66 he just said well have let's give you two years and have  
67 a go so I did that and umm I before we came up to  
68 Oxford I worked I did sort of a couple of full days at  
69 umm really nice days at Islington Institute where there  
70 was a very good profe teacher and umm he tried to  
71 encourage me to go to St Martin's but we were moving  
72 up here so I ended up looking for something similar in  
73 Oxford where there were you know there was a sort of  
74 a bulk of artists somewhere where it was not just

58. chance conversation with friends about what would really like to do

62. love to have a go working as an artist bcs it's in there somewhere deep down

66. husband said let's give you two years and have a go

72. moving to Oxford looked for something where there was a bulk of artists not just practice

75 practice you know I didn't want to do drawing classes  
76 or evening classes I wanted to and in London it had  
77 been very much there were professional artists who  
78 were trying to get back into it or err you know it was  
79 very serious it was not just playing around so and the  
80 nearest I could find was Oxford Printmakers which  
81 seemed to be a sort of professional umm atelier sort of  
82 thing you know you could go there were people who  
83 were exhibiting people who were working and learning  
84 there were technicians providing you with information  
85 so it was a cross between a practising and training  
86 ground and umm and this teacher in London had said  
87 you know if you have an option to to train in  
88 lithography I think your work would translate really  
89 well into that so if you have a chance and Oxford  
90 Printmakers did have a lithography press and somebody  
91 who knew how to work you know how to do it so that  
92 was my starting point

75. didn't want to do classes;  
wanted something serious not  
just playing around

80. found Oxford Printmakers;  
a cross b/w practice and  
training ground

87. teacher in London had said  
her work would translate well  
into lithography

90. OP had the right press and  
someone who knew how to do  
it

## Appendix E: Summary of Content Tags for Emergent Theme

### The Implicit in the coming of concept

#### Compulsion

P9TL.S1.	207	Very impulsive; want to get on and do it; not lots and lots of sketches
P9TL.S1.	212	Wake up in the night excited; can't wait to get up and carry on
P9TL.S1.	215	Compulsive at time; withdrawal symptoms; miss it

P4PR.S1.	194	Drawn to painting people
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P2LD.S1.	277	In order to do what I feel I must do I must be on the path; in the painting process I'm on that path
P2LD.S4.	295	When a painting's not there I keep going back and looking at it; it just draws me back
P2LD.S4.	301	Sometimes the answer comes in just a casual little spasm of thought
P2LD.S4.	304	Give that a go that works oh wow where does that step take me now

P7PW.S1.	333	When things going right have to keep going back and looking and playing
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P3SM.S1.	128	Had a burn to talk about what I felt about the war in Iraq
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P6CB.S1.	267	Feel compelled to just add another mark and in the end you disappear up your own backside; you've made a big mess and you've lost what was nice
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#### Capturing

P8MW.S1.	201	Trying to catch the colours and the essence of the Chilterns
P8MW.S1.	206	Nice achievement to capture essence
P8MW.S2.	550	I think it has captured the feel of it; got a bit more energy
P8MW.S2.	560	the going away which is most difficult; I think it's got that
P8MW.S4.	286	Copying as opposed to looking and getting a feel of landscape
P8MW.S4.	292	I think it lost the feeling of the landscape although some of the colours I preferred

P4PR.S1.	238	Watercolour more spontaneous and I enjoy capturing a moment
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P12KS.S2.	170	Not worried about getting the clouds exactly as long as you get the mood of the sky
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P12KS.S2.	34	Depends how far you've got whether you've still got the spirit of the thing
P12KS.S4.	81	Being done at great speed means you experience the setting very differently because catching flavours not observing in detail
P12KS.S4.	94	Spirit of the thing is whether you've captured the atmosphere of the place
P12KS.S4.	97	Simple grace or the slight nuttiness of architecture
P12KS.S4.	103	Sense of people having used them inhabited them has added a sort of patina
P12KS.S4.	104	If I don't catch the patina I feel I've failed; not consciously trying to catch it
P12KS.S4.	110	Whether looking at it instantly takes me back to being there
P12KS.S4.	113	Versus superimposing on that place a film of another image
P12KS.S4.	117	Sometimes that is very sad
P12KS.S4.	127	Without the spirit doing justice and bringing it to life you haven't achieved your aim; pure illustration doesn't begin to touch on art
P12KS.S4.	338	Quite exciting very very different
P12KS.S4.	345	It's light coming through at you
P12KS.S4.	347	They were capturing something of what I saw
P12KS.S4.	472	With landscape just capturing the scene and the liveliness
P12KS.S4.	475	Whether abstract might come alive in a different way if my subconscious was switched on

P2LD.S3.	27	Pleased with that one bcs it's loose but also has detail in it and captures something of the atmosphere
P2LD.S3.	66	It's not being precious about coming up with a recognizable street but more of an atmosphere which I'm really interested in

P11KI. S1.	177	Trying to get the sense of the dance in both drawing and painting with equal immediacy
P11KI. S1.	233	Much more of a narrative about the other one; use of the paint much more subjective
P11KI. S1.	235	More of a standard painting; illustrates dancers moving rather than the dance itself
P11KI. S1.	237	The only bit about the dance itself is the contrast b/w movement and stillness

P6CB.S1.	139	A chance to draw some dance would be a way to capture interesting new shapes and movements
P6CB.S1.	154	I wanted to just capture the movement that's my interest
P6CB.S1.	378	For me you catch that moment; don't know what happened before or after; like the lithographs
P6CB.S1.	554	End up with a terrible mess bcs can't hold it; it's gone
P6CB.S1.	884	Only benefit of using oils elsewhere is if trying to simply capture what you're looking at
P6CB.S1.	946	Possibly what I'm trying to do in moving from those little squiggles to reproducing the drama of the effect on the screen
P6CB.S1.	950	What's on the screen is affected by colours lighting and the way the ink moves; can't reproduce that in any other way so how close can you get

P6CB.S1.	957	How close to capturing the moment; going back and seeing it after the event
P6CB.S4.	364	If drawing directly from dance am trying to capture movements shapes forms expression relationships
P6CB.S4.	437	Not capturing a shape but making a feeling
P6CB.S4.	564	What makes me stop is if it looks quite nice in its own right
P6CB.S4.	575	Not just a recording of dancers' movements but a sense of the overall piece; scale perspective rhythms

## Appendix F: Example of Visual Analysis

### Production session 1

#### *Summary of motor descriptions*

- quick outlines
- squiggle
- heavy line
- sweeping outline
- dabbing (with brush)
- detail
- brush backwards
- mixing ink
- delicate point
- dabbing off (excess with towel)
- lines
- infill
- precision lines
- brush and waggle
- rhythm
- moving/feeling paper
- marking out with hand
- brush measuring
- rounds
- pointing
- fanning
- dark detail
- brush reversed
- darkening down

#### *Video clips*

Chapter	Approx timing of clip (mins)	Content
1	8.48 - 9.35	Sky wash using whole brush
2	19.50 – 21.25	Dark lines with tip, reverse brush dabbing and wash
3*	29.00 – 30.50	Rapid marking, gentle horizontals, squiggles using point
4	69.08 – 70.53	Dark detail and heavy lines
5	76.58 – 78.06	Delicate lines
6*	78.18 – 81.58	Marking out with hands, fanning including with reverse hold

\* Chapter used in closing interview

#### *Observations*

1. Standing up. Much time spent pausing and poising
2. 3 extraneous events:
  - unknown thing in ink
  - shed door blows open

- phone call interruption
3. Work is spatially patchy rather than concentrated, focused, linear, blocky or banded
  4. Versatile brush positions and ways of using: hold, direction, pressure etc
  5. No one mode of application continued for very long: many rapid changes. Often only 3-4 brush-fills before changing mode of application
  6. Hands:
    - variable contact between right hand and paper: none, little finger only, hand resting
    - left hand kept outside the painting area / off the paper
  7. Rhythm of brush work disrupted by need to restock brush and dab off excess moisture, yet these have their own rhythm/routine. Interlocking micro-rhythms
  8. Much feeling of the paper and occasional movement of paper to re-align with felt below

## **Production session 2**

### *Summary of motor descriptions*

- |                   |                         |                       |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| • measuring       | • soaking brush         | • blotting excess     |
| • sketching out   | • reverse hand position | • wash                |
| • rubbing out     | • standard brush hold   | • dappling            |
| • stand and view  | • sweeping              | • precision           |
| • squeezing paint | • pencil again          | • darker layering     |
| • mixing paint    | • filling in            | • delicate, fine work |

### *Video clips*

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	23.00 – 24.25	Sketching, assessing composition, sketching and measuring
<b>2</b>	41.40 – 43.20	Mixing paint, sweeping lines, banded working
<b>3*</b>	47.20 – 48.10	Infill
<b>4</b>	50.25 – 51.50	Vertical wash, dabbing off excess
<b>5</b>	54.05 – 55.05	Dabbing, marking outline
<b>6*</b>	59.00 – 60.35	Dark detail, fine point work

\* Chapter used in closing interview

### *Observations*

1. Sitting down
2. Extraneous events:
  - Magpie flies in
  - Wind blows trays around
  - Noises from nearby construction
  - Changing light conditions: clouds
3. Hands:
  - Left hand within painting area, holding paper
  - Right hand always in contact with paper
4. Much rubbing out
5. Pencil used periodically
6. Brush tip only
7. Work spatially patchy but at times work done in bands
8. Unexpectedly needs tissue to dab off excess moisture, and uses fingers to squeeze excess from brush (only once)

### *Comparison / Summary*

1. Postures: standing (S2) vs sitting (S3) reflect different scale of work: larger in S2.
2. Work spatially patchy with both but more banded in S3, particularly early paint stages.

3. No pencil used in S2 but used much in S3, which also featured a lot of rubbing out.  
Suggests greater scope for rectifying errors with water colour than Chinese brush and ink.
4. Hand position/hold with watercolour more uniform and conventional than with Chinese brush and ink, with the exception of “reverse hand position” at the very start of S3.
5. Use of brush more varied in S2 (whole brush used) but only the tip with watercolour.

## Appendix G: Video Clips Extracted

Chapter numbers indicated with an asterisk (\*) were used in the closing interview.

### Jane Mollison

#### *Production session 1*

Chapter	Approx timing of clip (mins)	Content
1	8.48 - 9.35	Sky wash using whole brush
2	19.50 – 21.25	Dark lines with tip, reverse brush dabbing and wash
3*	29.00 – 30.50	Rapid marking, gentle horizontals, squiggles using point
4	69.08 – 70.53	Dark detail and heavy lines
5	76.58 – 78.06	Delicate lines
6*	78.18 – 81.58	Marking out with hands, fanning including with reverse hold

#### *Production session 2*

Chapter	Approx timing of clip (mins)	Content
1	23.00 – 24.25	Sketching, assessing composition, sketching and measuring
2	41.40 – 43.20	Mixing paint, sweeping lines, banded working
3*	47.20 – 48.10	Infill
4	50.25 – 51.50	Vertical wash, dabbing off excess
5	54.05 – 55.05	Dabbing, marking outline
6*	59.00 – 60.35	Dark detail, fine point work

**Laura Degenhardt**

*Production session 1*

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	40.20 – 41.30	Pen fill, pastel rub, brush over rub, pen push
<b>2*</b>	49.28 – 52.00	Brush fill gentle, varied holds, pressured fill, forceful, whole brush
<b>3*</b>	53.25 – 54.30	Pastel rub and brush rework, forceful smudging, two tools together
<b>4</b>	59.00 – 1.01.30	Multi brush reworking, switches between works
<b>5</b>	78.45 – 81.29	Pastel detail, brush smudging, overworking
<b>6*</b>	84.00 – 85.40	Thin brush detail, delicate dabbing, tentative lines

*Production session 2*

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	46.50 – 48.08	Sketching, zigzag, clear lines, external referencing (sketch)
<b>2</b>	49.40 – 53.20	Hash marks rhythmic shading, over wash, changes page (both)
<b>3*</b>	94.14 – 96.49	Mini sweep, longer sweep, delicate paint, change in scale (both)
<b>4</b>	97.34 – 100.19	Rapid small brush strokes, sweep (paint)
<b>5</b>	125.12 – 127.37	Dibs and dabs, head nodding, detail (paint)
<b>6</b>	127.52 – 129.10	Long strokes external referencing (both)

## **Katherine Shock**

### *Production session 1*

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	06.00-06.45	Multiple hand positions (drawing)
<b>2</b>	15.15-16.00	Long sweeps, hand to side (drawing)
<b>3</b>	64.00-64.20	Repeat rapid strokes (drawing)
<b>4</b>	80.30-81.00	Side-hold brush dabbing (painting)
<b>5</b>	82.45-83.20	Multistroke (painting)

### *Production session 2*

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	07.00-07.45	Dabs and spatters, erratic dabbing and patting
<b>2</b>	13.40-14.30	Scribbly marks, changes to different brush
<b>3*</b>	24.00-24.30	Quick scribbles and diagonals with pen over watercolour
<b>4*</b>	36.10-37.20	Mixes, whole brush marks, gentle point work
<b>5*</b>	43.00-45.00	Work in pen: gentle lines, thick rapid sweeps, heavy, almost text-like, plus use of brush over top
<b>6*</b>	52.00-53.00	Much blending and smearing with water-filled brush
<b>7</b>	56.40-57.45	Ipad: tap, rub, stroke, press, push
<b>8</b>	60.50-62.00	Comparison of ipad and paper-based actions

## **Polly Woolstone**

### ***Production session 1***

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	5.00-6.00	Crayon, rubbing, holding, pressing
<b>2</b>	11.00-12.30	Firm press, rubbing, changes crayon mid-stroke
<b>3</b>	22.00-23.00	Pencil and brush, dabbing, patting, precision, delicate
<b>4</b>	28.00-30.00	Indication of sewing motion
<b>5</b>	53.00-55.00	Marking, smudging, looking beneath
<b>6</b>	84.00-88.30	Working into the blotting, very detailed, accurate, precise work. close reference to source material

### ***Production session 2***

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1*</b>	07.45-09.45	Cutting up, checking, testing, leafing through sketchbooks
<b>2*</b>	26.00-27.15	Hold, pull/feed, gentle and steady, both hands one side of needle
<b>3*</b>	29.35-30.15	Attaching chord, keeping taut, hands either side of needle
<b>4</b>	37.15-39.15	Cutting, placing, two-handed guiding, rapid steady rhythm
<b>5*</b>	45.00-47.00	Wrap around mount, places new materials, moves and views
<b>6</b>	61.15-63.20	Draw out and cut frame
<b>7</b>	106.35-108.30	Final check in frame, wraps round and fix onto mount

**Philippa Redman, Marnie Watson and Yoko Jones**

***Production session 1***

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	11.45-13.30	MW and YJ both drawing
<b>2</b>	13.45-15.00	PR applying wash
<b>3</b>	18.30-20.00	MW cleaning and selecting pastels
<b>4*</b>	27.00-29.00	All Ps: what name for different motions
<b>5</b>	40.40-41.40	MW putty rubbing
<b>6</b>	46.45-48.25	MW range of actions
<b>7*</b>	84.50-87.00	All Ps: how are these motions different
<b>8</b>	90.30-92.10	YJ pen only; PR careful painting
<b>9</b>	94.25-96.25	YJ both pencil and pen
<b>10</b>	100.30-101.50	YJ pen only

***Production session 2***

Due to the working style and positioning of materials by participants insufficient detailed visual data were collected for this session to allow comprehensive analysis for group members either individually or collectively.

## Clare Bassett

### *Production session 1: activity 1*

Chapter	Approx timing of clip (mins)	Content
1	9.50-11.05	Bold colour circles
2	12.10-13.20	Tentative light gentle lines
3	15.00-16.20	Rolled dragging vertical and horizontal
4	17.45-18.15	Bold circular smears

### *Activity 2*

Chapter	Approx timing of clip (mins)	Content
1*	0.55-1.35	Geometric lines, follows body of dancer
2*	2.30-3.15	Bold smear
3*	5.15-5.50	Smearing out

## Susan Moxley

### *Production session 1: activity 1*

Chapter	Approx timing of clip (mins)	Content
1	0.20-1.05	Pivot, spin, wander, pause, drag, whole brush
2	2.00-3.00	Pivot, massage, little focus on paper
3	3.50-4.35	Detail, fine, pen, squiggle, wave

### *Activity 2*

Chapter	Approx timing of clip (mins)	Content
1*	0.30-1.45	Slow, deliberate, thick brush
2*	2.00-3.10	Rapid, erratic, fine, ink
3	6.10-7.25	Bold, dark, variety of strokes

**Kassandra Isaacson**

*Production session 1: activity 1*

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	3.10-3.45	Distant, tentative, rolling paper
<b>2</b>	4.30-5.30	Bold black marks, little eye contact
<b>3</b>	6.45-8.45	Manipulation of paper

*Activity 2*

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Approx timing of clip (mins)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1</b>	1.00-2.00	Zoom effects
<b>2*</b>	2.40-3.30	Paper eclipse of painted dot
<b>3*</b>	5.00-6.45	Very fine paper movements and zoom effects combined

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