

How can painting operate as a hermeneutic practice in secondary level art and design education?

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Abstract

This research asks how painting might operate as a hermeneutic practice in secondary level art and design education.

It could be argued that the significance accorded to painting in literature pertinent to this field is not often made explicit. In arguing for a re-evaluation of practices of painting in this context, I foreground the material affordances of paint for interpretive and imaginative making, and attend to notions of skill and expression as they relate to painting more widely.

‘Painting’ is proposed here as a hermeneutic practice which comprehends notions of interpretive making and ‘responsive openness’ - a disposition of openness on the part of the person painting to the potential of materials, tools, techniques and images. In seeking to construct a demonstrable link between theories of art production and reception, I employ Davey’s characterization (2006a) of Gadamer’s adopted term for participation, *theoria*, and commentary on Pareyson’s aesthetic theory of formativity (1988). I bring the educational scope of the concept of ‘Bildung’, an evolving process of self-formation, into correspondence with a view of painting-as-making.

In researching the potential of painting as a hermeneutic activity I conducted two painting projects with Year 9 and 10 students at the Saatchi Gallery, London. The first emphasized the material properties of paint and application processes. The second offered students the opportunity to follow personal concerns in making paintings by suggesting a self-directed experimental approach to working with paint and application tools. In analysing the resulting paintings, I bring a theoretical understanding of painting activity into constructive correspondence with examples of practical work.

I suggest that the exploratory character of the projects, conducted beyond the curricular context, could inform an approach to painting in schools, and that the hermeneutic account of painting presented here may offer an orientation to enquiry for educators attending to other visual art practices in education.

Declaration and Word Count

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Introduction

This thesis establishes how painting can operate as a hermeneutic practice in – and examines the implications for, secondary level art and design education¹. The central theoretical and practical concern of the research presented here is that of comprehending painting as an interpretive and transformative practice in this context.

I identify painting as an interpretive practice which involves dialogic negotiation of culturally determined materials, forms and ideas, and suggest that the role of painting in secondary education requires fresh appraisal. While the value of painting is established in literature relating to primary education (Gentle, 1988, 1993; Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987; Matthews, 2003; Smith, 1993), its specific value has not often been articulated in literature relating to secondary education².

I assert that an emphasis on the material affordances of paint for embodied and interpretive making in secondary level art and design education - an emphasis away, that is, from purely representational understandings of painting (the ‘popular representational claim’ of ‘mimetic objectivity’, as Addison [2003] puts it), may contribute to such an appraisal.

¹ By ‘secondary art and design education’ I refer to key stages 3 and 4 of the UK National Curriculum. Key stage 3 refers to student year groups 7 - 9 (ages 11 – 14), while key stage 4 refers to year groups 10 – 11 (ages 14 – 16). The painting projects to which I refer extensively in this thesis were designed for and conducted with Year 9 and 10 students, aged 13 – 14 and 14 – 15 respectively.

² ‘The Importance of Painting in Pedagogic Practice’ by Jarvis (2004) represents a notable exception to this assertion.

In responding to the research question that serves as the title of this thesis, I address the issue of the interpretation of works of art from the perspective of philosophical hermeneutics as proposed by Gadamer (1977, 2004) and Davey (2006a, 2006b, 2013), to which I parallel aspects of painting-as-making. I also employ the concept of Bildung from a hermeneutic perspective to describe a particular disposition to painting activity, that of a self-forming orientation to making.

Mindful of Atkinson's assertion that the related discourses of self-expression and technical skill '*constitute the discursive framing of art practice, art object and artist in much school art education*' (author's emphasis) (2011: 50), I interrogate notions of skill and expression in their historical and theoretical relation to traditions of western painting and art and design education, with a view to re-formulating their significance with specific regard to practices of painting in secondary education.

I suggest that while skill in painting can be seen as a matter of technical proficiency in the service of representational or expressive ends, it can also be understood with respect to improvisatory or interpretive making as this occurs in an immersive engagement with materials. Similarly, I suggest that the notion of expression as it relates to discussions of art and aesthetics in a broad sense, and to painting in education specifically, requires re-evaluation. In looking beyond the association of the terms 'expression' and 'self-expression' with progressive approaches to art education, I recruit particular theorizations of the notion of 'affect' in order to accommodate the expressive dimension of painting-as-making.

In the following sections of this introduction I identify the questions to which my research is addressed, describe the background to and context of the research, and present a synoptic description of the form and function of the constituent parts of the thesis. In closing, I clarify my use of specific terms that appear throughout the thesis ‘hermeneutics’, ‘painting’, and ‘medium’.

0.1. Research questions and intentions

This research project responds to a question that was motivated in part by my experience of teaching painting as a teacher of art and design in a secondary school, over a number of years. It responds to this question – ‘How can painting operate as a hermeneutic practice in secondary level art and design education?’, by attempting to navigate a correspondence between a particular theoretical discourse concerned with the interpretation of art and wider questions of understanding, and a view of practice concerned with painting-as-making. As I show in my discussion of the methodological character of the research in Part Two, one its aims has been the development of my understanding of processes and forms of making and learning.

The central questions to which this research project responds are as follows: How can I re-cast painting in secondary level art and design education as something more vital and more meaningful than a reproductive practice predicated on a narrow conception of representation? How might a theory of interpretation illuminate aspects of practical activity, and thus the potential of painting activity in secondary level art and design education?

A significant proportion of this thesis is aimed at describing and interpreting the painting activity of and work made by two groups of Year 9 and 10 students who participated in two painting projects, 'Painting Encounters' (2012) and 'Painting Events' (2013), that were conducted in the education room of the Saatchi Gallery, London. These were undertaken with a view to promoting the possibilities of painting activity for students through interpretive and exploratory activity in a learning environment beyond that of their schools. The project sessions were designed to emphasize the material characteristics and potential of paint for self-directed making.

A key intention in conducting the painting projects as a form of research was to gain a detailed understanding of the work of the participating students, both as visual productions and, by use of interview, through their own stated ambitions for and understandings of their work. The interpretation I offer of the second painting project in Part Six is intended to bring the theoretical understanding of painting as a hermeneutic activity that I describe in other parts of this thesis, into direct correspondence with examples of students' practical work.

0.2. Background to and context of research

In addition to my experience of teaching painting in a secondary school, this research is informed by the work I undertook for my dissertation and visual presentation on the MA Art & Design in Education course at the Institute of Education (Hayiannis, 2008). The form of the visual presentation referred to aspects of my own working practices in

painting, which I was required to reconsider in the course of the project, and to some of my pedagogical concerns in teaching painting, as I show in Part Four.

My MA research question sought to identify how the artist/painter/educator might contribute to the key stage 3 curriculum. A related issue was the relationship of contemporary fine art painting practice to painting practice in secondary schools. In attempting to answer this question I made reference to particular research on and criticism of the forms painting frequently takes in secondary schools (Downing and Watson, 2004; Allen, 1996).

Working theoretically and through studio practice, I attempted to show how a skills-based approach to teaching painting in particular need not be yoked to particular modes of self-expression or representation. Indeed, my studio-based practical work was predicated on an investigation of the material properties of paint rather than its expressive or metaphorical meaning-making capacities.

While my art college training in a fine art painting department and subsequent experience as a painter (for several years beyond college I continued to paint and exhibit my work) informed my assumptions and my work as an art and design educator for a long time, I had cause to reflect on and re-evaluate the latter when I began work on the MA course in Art & Design in Education. I would suggest that this process has in some degree motivated the present research and discuss it at greater length in Part One.

Before attending to the design of the present research project, I consider it important to signal its context with respect to the field of secondary art and design education, and to secondary education in the UK understood more broadly. The educational landscape in the UK has changed considerably since I commenced work on this project in 2008.

The stalled introduction of the so-called English Baccalaureate, the secondary examination initially proposed to replace the GCSE in the UK, in which art and design was omitted as a core subject, might be considered indicative of the educational priorities of the Conservative-led coalition government (2010-2015). The omission of the subject met justifiably strong criticism from commentators on art and design education on the grounds of ‘philistinism’ (Adams, 2013; Steers, 2013). While now a non-compulsory performance measure for secondary schools rather than an examination, teachers have identified its negative effects on the provision of secondary art and design education (NSEAD, 2014).

Respondents to the National Society for Education in Art and Design ‘Art, Craft and Design Heads of Department and Educator Surveys’ conducted and reported by the NSEAD in 2014³, commented that as a measure of performance, the EBacc has reduced student choice; that ‘Higher ability students are discouraged from practical subjects’ and that ‘students are deterred from taking more than one arts subject’ (p.3). The report also identifies a range of issues that affect the provision and quality of art and design education at key stages 3 and 4. Among these are a significant reduction in ‘learning opportunities for pupils in art, craft and design at key stages 3 and 4 in many

³ 172 members and supporters of the NSEAD participated in the surveys.

state schools’ and a reduction in ‘opportunities for pupils to work with creative practitioners or to engage with original works of art, craft and design in galleries and museums’ (ibid.:2).

At the time of writing, further changes to the form of secondary education in the UK are to be implemented: a consultation has recently concluded regarding reforms to the content and assessment of GCSE subjects, including Art and Design, for September 2016 (Department for Education, 2015).

This research project, while conducted during a period of uncertainty regarding the future form of secondary art and design education in the UK, is informed by a concern for the educational significance of art and design as ‘an investigative and critical, as well as creative practice’, as Addison and Burgess put it (2013: 2). The intended readership of this thesis is artist-educators and teachers working in secondary art and design educational contexts who wish to embrace practices of painting in their teaching. My aim in conducting and presenting this research is not to prescribe what painting should be or what purposes it should serve in such contexts, but rather to offer a set of theoretical and practical dispositions to painting-as-making that can be interrogated, appropriated or interpreted critically by others with respect to their own pedagogical objectives.

0.3. Research design

The research approach that I have adopted in responding to the question that forms the title of this thesis is qualitative in the sense identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2003) in their definition of qualitative research, an activity consisting of ‘a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible’ (p. 4). I have combined structured theoretical enquiry with the study and collection of ‘empirical materials’, a term Denzin and Lincoln employ to comprehend, among other approaches and objects, ‘case study’, ‘interview’, and ‘artifacts’ (ibid.: 5).

The aims and methods I followed in designing, presenting and collecting data from the two practical research projects that I discuss in detail in Part Six, share characteristics of forms of action research practice as defined by Kemmis and McTaggart (2003), May (1997) and McNiff (2002), and case study research as identified by Cresswell (2013) and Yin (2014). As I show in Part Two, the methodological design of the present research can be understood as ‘multimethod’, following the typology of research designs identified by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003).

The theoretical dimension of my research is informed by my engagement with literature pertinent to the fields of the history and theory of art and design education in the UK and the US, the history and theory of visual arts practice in Europe and the US - with particular regard to modernism and painting, and the wider domain of educational theory, particularly in its relation to philosophical hermeneutic discourse. I

would stress here that my engagement with theory and philosophy was occasioned by some of the questions regarding representation and painting identified above.

0.4. Structure of thesis

Below I offer a synopsis of the structure and purpose of the component parts of the thesis, from which I move to discuss the methodological character of the research and to define significant terms that are employed across the thesis in support of its central argument.

Part One: Positions – painting and teaching

In the first part of this thesis I present my positions with regard to painting and teaching, with reference both to the evolution of my interest and investment in painting outside secondary school and beyond, and the ways in which these subsequently informed my work as a teacher of art and design. This part of the thesis is also concerned to signal in advance some of the salient concerns of later parts: notions of skill as they relate to painting-as-making; the importance of the material affordances of painting for meaning-making; the need, as I see it, for a reconsideration of the notion of ‘school art’ with respect to the scope of young peoples’ engagement in art practices in schools; the resilience and fluidity of traditions of painting and how these may inform a similarly dynamic sense of painting in educational settings.

Part Two: Methodology

In the second I discuss the methodological approach of the research with regard both to its philosophical and epistemological character and to the combination of qualitative

research methods employed in collecting data across both painting projects. I suggest that the latter correspond with those often adopted in action research and case study research practice (interview; collecting and analyzing students' work; note-taking) and that, in the combination of methods followed, the design of the research can be considered 'multimethod'.

In discussing the hermeneutic scope of the research, I cite Atkinson's identification of 'hermeneutics' as a means of enquiry in the field of art education (2002), though I do not understand or propose the term as a 'method' of enquiry⁴. With reference to Langewand's account of hermeneutic research in education (2001), I comment on the epistemological significance of hermeneutic 'pre-understanding': I suggest that my own bias of understanding towards the object of my research has in large part determined my selection of research methods.

In presenting and discussing these methods, I show how my application of the interview method changed in light of the interview data obtained from the first project. Though I refer to the means by which I analysed and interpreted data from both projects in Part Six, I also describe the concomitant shift away from analysis of the interview data through coding to an engagement with students' work that developed – and subsequently informed, the hermeneutic account of painting delineated in Part Four.

⁴ I qualify my own use of the term 'hermeneutics' later in this introduction, and that of Atkinson in his 'Art in Education: Identity and Practice' (2002) in Part Two.

Part Three: For and against Painting

In this part of the thesis I present particular historical and theoretical commentaries and statements concerning the function and status of painting as a cultural practice, and lend attention to the role and value of painting in secondary art and design education by contrasting particular arguments against the perceived centrality of painting in schools, with a case for its continued relevance and significance in this context.

In the former I attend to the question of painting in modernist discourse: to the work of its chief theoretical proponent, Clement Greenberg (1982, 2000) and to particular criticisms of the latter as they relate to his emphasis on ‘medium’, opticality and flatness. I suggest that my own interest in the material dimensions of painting for embodied and imaginative making cannot be considered ‘modernist’ in the manner proposed by Greenberg.

In the latter I address the perceived predominance of painting in secondary art and design education, its representational function and its association with the culturally reproductive conservatism and insularity of so-called ‘school art’. Alongside these concerns I construct an argument for painting at this educational level which refers to some of the claims made for its pedagogical significance in literature relating to primary education. These include arguments for the value of painting in its connection with cognitive development (Matthews, 2003) and self-formation (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). In as far as the value of painting is often unstated in literature relating

to secondary education, I suggest that a key rationale for its retention in schools can be seen in the distinctive material affordances of practical engagement with paint.

Part Four: Painting as a hermeneutic practice

In the fourth part of the thesis I adopt a theoretical approach, informed by aspects of philosophical hermeneutics, to suggest ways in which painting might operate as a hermeneutic practice in secondary level art and design education. I begin by presenting an example of practice – an exploratory painting by a secondary school student with whom I worked, in order to foreground the sense of interpretive making to which this component of the thesis is addressed.

I discuss first the significance of philosophical hermeneutics with regard to the interpretation of works of art, with specific reference to the work of Gadamer (1977; 1986; 2004) and Davey (2006a; 2006b), to which I parallel aspects of painting-as-making by employing the hermeneutic concepts of *theoria* and ‘formativity’.

Second, in acknowledging certain risks in adopting Gadamer’s philosophical positions in the context of educational research, I identify those objections to his philosophical hermeneutics that are concerned with issues of tradition and otherness. Third, I take up the concept of *Bildung* from a hermeneutic perspective to describe a disposition to painting-as-making: a dynamic, formative, ongoing process of interpretation, characterised by openness in an individual towards cultural practices rather than a form

of bourgeois cultural conditioning or indoctrination. I address historical criticisms of the concept and refer to its place in contemporary educational debate.

Part Five: Painting – skill and expression

In this part of the thesis I address the terms ‘skill’ and ‘expression’ in connection with practices of painting in educational contexts and more broadly. In proposing painting-as-making as an interpretive practice in the context of art and design education at secondary level, I suggest that both terms require re-appraisal, particularly in light of those educational commentaries, dating from the mid-twentieth century, that associate the development of skill with that of greater expression in young people (Eisner, 1972; Field, 1970; Read, 1958; Richardson, 1948; Witkin, 1974).

While I argue in Part One that skill in painting should be understood beyond the terms of ‘realistic’ representation, I identify it here with regard to practically acquired productive knowledge; to the development of a responsiveness towards both the capacities of physical materials and tools, and the potential of images and ideas for making. I also refer to skill with regard to procedures that painters may impose on their activity in order to transcend habitual working practices, and to the hermeneutic account of painting presented in Part Four in which I emphasise the role of improvisation and interpretation in making.

I address the notion of ‘expression’ as it appears in early romantic literature and twentieth century aesthetic, educational and cognitive accounts, and show how

expression is often associated with the externalization of emotion or inner states in some of the latter. I identify criticisms of progressive approaches to art and design education in the UK levelled by post-war commentators (specifically those of Abbs [1987; 1989b]), on the grounds of an excessive emphasis on ‘self-expression’. I suggest that the term ‘affect’ can be employed as an alternative means of attending to the scope of expressive making in art and design educational contexts.

I supplement this part of the thesis with a discussion of notions of ‘imagination’ as they relate to painting-as-making by attending to specific philosophical determinations of the term in conjunction with examples of imaginative making drawn from the paintings of some of the students who participated in the first painting project.

Part Six: Painting projects

In the sixth part, ‘Painting projects’, I offer detailed accounts of the practical research conducted for the present project. This took the form of two separate painting projects conducted with secondary school students in the education space of the Saatchi Gallery, a major public gallery in London, in 2012 and 2013: ‘Painting Encounters’ and ‘Painting Events’.

In separate sections I describe the development, aims, design and teaching of each project. In presenting the manner in which the projects were planned, I signal the degree to which my concern for the material characteristics of paint informed their practical content and the selection of visual resources that were employed. I follow this description with analysis and interpretation of the respective data collected. In both

cases this took the form of interviews and photographs of the work of participating students, though my analysis of the first project refers primarily to the interview data. I employ a set of coding categories to analyse the interview data from the first project which refer to students' experiences of painting in their respective schools and of their work in the project sessions. The interpretive account I offer of the second project is predicated on – and reciprocally informs, the theoretical appraisal of painting as a hermeneutic practice presented in Part Four, and is illustrated with several examples of the work that resulted from the sessions.

The common emphasis of both projects was the potential of the material characteristics of paint for interpretive making. The more considered - and arguably more successful of the two projects, 'Painting Events', designed in collaboration with artist Hannah Brown, had as its focus the imaginative scope of exploratory making with painting materials and tools, and images.

Part Seven: Conclusion

The final part of the thesis is comprised of a review of the research presented in preceding parts and refers to its scope and possible significance. In concluding, I remark that the distinctive character of the research can be seen in its particular use of hermeneutic theory – particularly that of Gadamer, to attend to the formative and interpretive dimensions of 'painting-as-making'. I suggest that the hermeneutic account of painting that I offer in this thesis could potentially be adopted or interrogated by educators researching other visual art practices in education.

My conclusion refers also to the experimental dimension of the painting projects, which were conducted beyond the curricular demands that obtain in schools. I suggest that in the license the projects afforded students for experimentation with materials, tools and images, their design and scope may inform an approach to painting-as-making in schools. I end by reflecting on the ways in which I believe I have benefited and learned from the experience of conducting the research, and return to the proposed hermeneutic character of my enquiry by attending to a particular instance of miscomprehension that occurred in the second painting project.

0.5. Defining terms

Before proceeding, I wish to clarify my use - and qualify the scope, of particular terms that I have privileged in the construction of this thesis and that frequently appear in it. I consider it crucial at this juncture that my intentions in recruiting them are made clear as far as possible.

Hermeneutics; philosophical hermeneutics

In referring to ‘hermeneutics’ in this thesis I primarily refer to philosophical hermeneutics, a philosophical attitude that I adopt in order to address the scope of practices of painting in art and design education at secondary level. In doing so, I draw upon the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) with particular regard to philosophical hermeneutics and the interpretation of art, and to questions of tradition and self-formation as expressed in ‘Truth and Method’ (2004), ‘Philosophical Hermeneutics’ (1977) and ‘The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays’ (1986).

I identify the epistemological orientation of the research I present as ‘hermeneutic’: I qualify this identification in detail in Part Two, in which I discuss the methodological approach I adopt with respect to the questions of ‘method’ and ‘understanding’. While it would not be possible in the context of this introduction to adequately indicate the scope, history and applications of hermeneutic theory, I would refer to ‘hermeneutics’ here as it is represented by Lawn and Keane (2011) and Gallagher (1992).

Lawn and Keane point to the origin of hermeneutics in the interpretation of sacred texts, and suggest that the notion of hermeneutics ‘as developed in contemporary philosophy’,

embraces not only the problems concerning the interpretation of texts – literary, philosophical or religious – but also the careful consideration of both the cultural and historical conditions that form the horizon of the text, ...
(2011: 72)

In his ‘Hermeneutics and Education’, Gallagher acknowledges the familiarity of *hermeneutics* in ‘philosophical, theological, legal, literary, and social scientific contexts’ (1992: 5), and cites one of the tasks of hermeneutics as the identification of ‘the different factors, including the epistemological, sociological, cultural, and linguistic factors, that condition the process of interpretation’ (ibid.).

Philosophical hermeneutics, as distinct from ‘hermeneutics’, is understood here as a philosophical attitude or approach, an identification that I develop in the account of painting as a hermeneutic practice presented in Part Four. This account draws upon Davey’s critical engagement with Gadamer’s thought and philosophical hermeneutics

in ‘Unquiet Understanding: Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics’ (2006b) and ‘Unfinished Worlds: Hermeneutics, Aesthetics and Gadamer’ (2013). In the latter, Davey suggests that the term ‘may be understood as an enquiry into the conditions of meaning and its experience, of which the address of art is presented as the paradigmatic case’ (2013: 21).

Painting

I understand ‘painting’ to comprehend embodied and transformative practices characterized by metaphorical, expressive and symbolic affordances. In a very broad sense, I identify painting as ‘an art of the sign’, as Bryson puts it (1983: xiii), and as an activity that holds the phenomenological potential to illuminate ‘the structure of our perceptual relation to the world’ (Crowther, 1993: 113).

‘Painting’ cannot of course be reduced to an activity that involves an agent, a support, materials and application tools. The term can be used to refer to a constellation of related cultural practices and forms. As Jacques Rancière observes in his essay, ‘Aesthetics and Its Discontents’ (2009a), ‘‘painting’ is not merely the name of an art. It is the name of a system of presentation of a form of art’s visibility’ (p.23). In this sense, ‘painting’ arguably accounts both for the fifth century BC wall paintings of Paestum, in southern Italy, and the site-specific interventions of conceptual artist Daniel Buren (b. 1938), formed of painted vertical stripes. It is worth referring too to some of the possible designations of the term signalled by Griselda Pollock (2001) in her definition of painting as, ‘... simultaneously a medium, an expressive resource, an

institutional practice, a critical category, a form of economic investment, a curatorial term and a symbolic system' (n.47, p.109).

In my consideration of painting in secondary level art and design education and beyond, I attempt as far as possible, to refer to '*practices of painting*', and thus forego the hegemonic cast of '*the practice of painting*'. In doing so, I invoke culturally and historically specific determinations of such practices⁵. In some instances, I use the term 'painting practice' to refer to *practices*, and on occasion employ the term 'painting' as a form of short-hand, the sense of which I hope will be evident from the context.

I frequently employ the term 'painting-as-making' in this thesis to refer to embodied, imaginative, interpretive and transformative engagement and activity with tools, materials, ideas and images. On occasion, and with reference to students' painting activity, I use the term 'interpretive making' to indicate a receptivity towards and awareness of the physical properties and capacities of tools and materials.

Medium

While the term 'medium' is referenced frequently throughout this thesis – on some occasions with respect to theories or assessments of painting (Greenberg, 1982; Pollock, 2001; Rottman, 2012; Staff, 2013), on others, in connection with writing

⁵ I should state at this juncture that my own bias of interest is towards traditions of painting in Europe and the United States that extend from the thirteenth century to the present, and is evident in the examples of practice and theory that I employ throughout this thesis.

specific to art education (Eisner, 2002; Witkin, 1974), I wish to clarify here my own understanding of the term in its specific relation to practices of painting. I do not understand painting *as* a medium, and consider it misleading to make claims about what painting is, or can make possible, with reference to notions of ‘medium’ or ‘medium specificity’. I suggest that it is more useful to address painting in terms of the characteristics and potential of the particular tools, materials and making contexts that one is attending to in any given instance.

Accordingly, I would argue that Staff’s ‘After Modernist Painting’ (2013), which the author presents as ‘a critical perspective upon painting during approximately the last ‘half-century’ (p. 2), lacks a significant level of critical insight in its refusal to uncouple the terms ‘medium’ and ‘painting’. Indeed, the assumption that painting *is* a medium is embedded in the question he asks of it with regard to digital technologies:

In an era when any image can be radically manipulated, infinitely reproduced and instantaneously disseminated to the four corners of the earth, how does a medium that remains for the most part analogue in scope and import position itself?

(ibid.: 5-6)

I would suggest also that the determinations of ‘medium’ offered by Foster (2011), Krauss (1999), and Rancière (2009c; 2013) are useful in comprehending the fluidity of practices in contemporary visual art, and in moving beyond an understanding of the term that is predicated on a fixed association of particular materials and tools with particular practices (in the case of painting, paint/pigment; application tool[s]; support).

Mediums, Foster (2011) suggests, are defined ‘within works of art’, and that the debate over the question of medium – on the one side the ‘modernist ideal of “specificity”’, and on the other ‘a postmodernist strategy of “hybridity”’, is characterised by the assumption that mediums have ‘fixed natures’ (p. xi). Mediums, Foster argues, are ‘social conventions-cum-contracts with technical substrates’:

... they are defined and redefined, within works of art, in a differential process of both analogy with other mediums and distinctions from them – a process that occurs in a cultural field that, vectored by economic and political forces, is also subject to continual redefinition.

(ibid.)

Similarly, Krauss, in her essay on the work of Marcel Broodthaers, subtitled ‘Art in the age of the post-medium condition’ (1999), identifies the notion of medium with respect to ‘conventions’, asserting that ‘the specificity of mediums, even modernist ones’, should be comprehended as ‘a layering of conventions never simply collapsed into the physicality of their support’ (p.53).

The question of medium as it relates to visual art is interrogated by Rancière in several of his texts (2009c; 2011; 2013). In his discussion of painting and writing about painting (2009c), he insists that a medium is not ‘a ‘proper’ means or material’, but ‘a conceptual space of articulation’ between ‘the different arts’ ways of making’ and ‘forms of visibility and intelligibility determining the way in which they can be viewed and conceived’ (pgs. 75-76). In his essay on the ‘medium’ of cinematic art in ‘Aisthesis’ (2013) he puts the matter in a less prolix manner: ‘A medium is neither a basis, nor an instrument, nor a specific material. It is the perceptible milieu of their co-existence’ (p. 193).

0.6. Collaboration and participation

Before proceeding to Part One, in which I offer some autobiographical observations in identifying my positions with regard to painting and teaching, I would like to emphasize that the research presented in this thesis has not been a lone undertaking. I wish to acknowledge the degree to which others have assisted, collaborated and participated in the project. The painting projects conducted at the Saatchi Gallery in 2012 and 2013 could not have taken place without the valuable contributions and assistance of my supervisors, a fellow researcher who agreed to conduct the interviews for the first project, and an artist, who generously gave of her time in discussing, resourcing, planning, and teaching on the second project. Equally significant was the participation of the thirty students who enthusiastically responded to the opportunity of painting over their Easter vacations.

Part One: Positions – painting and teaching

1.1. Introduction

In this part of the thesis I identify my positions with regard to painting and teaching. In the first section, ‘Positions with regard to painting’, I delineate the development of my own interests in painting through experiences in and beyond formal educational settings, while in the second, ‘teaching’, I offer my perception of the ways in which these interests and experiences have informed my work as a educator.

In the second section I refer to issues to which I will return in greater detail in subsequent parts of this thesis: the question of skill as it relates to painting; the significance of the material affordances of painting; the notion of ‘school art’ – a notion that I suggest is unhelpful in appraising and understanding the painting that is produced in schools now. I end with a section entitled ‘Painting and tradition’, which is intended to introduce the question of interpretation, which assumes a greater significance in Part Four of the present study.

1.2. Positions with regard to painting

An autobiographical sketch

I offer here a sketch of my early experiences as an art student and my subsequent development as a painter with a view to identifying the attitudes, interests and prejudices – I refer to these in terms of ‘investment’, that inform my position as an educator.

By the time I elected to study Art and Design at GCSE level, I already knew that I wanted to pursue ‘art’ beyond school and the sixth form. A potential stumbling block in this direction was identified for me by the teacher of art and design at the Church of England comprehensive secondary school that I attended. Approximately halfway through the course, he very straightforwardly informed me that, despite my proficiency in drawing, I could not paint and that it would be in my best interest, over the course of the following summer, to learn how to do so. He offered no advice with regard to the means by which this might take place. I spent much of my summer as a fifteen-year-old therefore patiently experimenting with watercolours in the hope that I would learn to paint with them on my own. When I returned to school the following year, I recall being awarded 100% by the same teacher for a landscape painting in a timed mock examination.

The teenage encounters with art that the artist Tom Phillips describes in his ‘Works.Texts.To 1974’ (1983), chimed strongly with my own, when I read them in my early twenties. His initiation into a world of art and artists, particularly one of painters, seems to have been an independent undertaking, the result of solitary reading and making:

By the time I was sixteen I had read all the books about artists in the local library and had a dozen vicarious careers as various as those of Rubens and Van Gogh.

(p.14)

... I worked at home most evenings (on pastiches of Salvador Dali and later Henry Moore and Paul Nash). I went regularly to the public and private galleries and read every book or catalogue that I could find.

(ibid.: 15)

My own solitary early efforts in drawing and painting and my attempt to educate myself with respect to painting in particular, were conducted in a similar way. The knowledge and understanding of painting and drawing - both technical and historical, was acquired at that stage almost entirely outside the formal context of the secondary school art and design classroom.

With the notable exception of the year-long foundation art and design course that I attended, my experience of further and higher education in art and design was characterised by a lack of practical tuition with respect to my chosen area of interest, that of painting. My experience of A'Level Art and Design was entirely negative, marked as it was by almost total indifference on the part of my teachers: no practical guidance or contextual or historical tuition was ever offered in the classroom. While I was permitted to paint or draw anything that I pleased for the duration of the course, I received very little advice with respect to coursework or preparation for examination, and consequently achieved a very low grade at examination.

Over the duration of the A' Level course, however, I made my own discoveries with regard to materials, application tools, painters, and histories of painting. At the age of seventeen I discovered a book entitled 'Techniques of Modern Art' (Anfam et al, 1983), a densely illustrated volume that contained detailed technical analysis of paintings by, among others, Hockney, Matisse and Kandinsky. It occurred to me that with this book as a guide, given application, time and resources, I too could make paintings as impressive as Hockney's 'A Bigger Splash' (1967) (indeed, when I

eventually started drawing and painting at foundation level, more than one tutor asked me to stop trying to paint like Hockney).

Despite my miserable A' Level grade I was offered a place on a Foundation course in Art and Design, which presented me with my very first opportunity to draw from life, an activity that I found both rewarding and frustrating, but was keen to pursue. Life drawing classes were discontinued however across Camberwell College of Arts after my first term as a student there on a joint art and design degree course (Joint Honours B.A.: History and Theory of Art & Design/ Fine Art – Painting) between 1991 and 1994. They were not re-introduced for the duration of my studies. While the historical and theoretical element of the joint course was highly rewarding, the studio-based fine art painting course was less so. My fine art tutors were predominantly conceptual artists, and though I benefited from their knowledge and range of interests, they offered little assistance to me as an aspiring figurative painter. By the end of my second year I was advised by more than one tutor to abandon painting and embrace photography, video or film as potential tools in image-making.

The narrative of my encounter with 'fine art painting' at under-graduate level, was one of painting 'against the odds': against the advice of my tutors, and against the most visible forms of practice in the college – photography and installation. My early studio-based painting in college was influenced by my lone investigations of modernist and then-contemporary painting and my interest in art history and contemporary critical theory (see Figure 1 below).



Figure 1: Yiannis Hayiannis - Untitled (1992). Acrylic on canvas.

In the years after college, and until 2010, I continued to paint and exhibit my work.

While it became more difficult to maintain my practice alongside my commitments as a secondary art and design teacher, I dedicated every summer vacation for several years to painting projects.

By the time I completed work on my MA in Art & Design in Education in 2008, however, I had not only become rather frustrated with the limits within which I found myself painting, but, by virtue of the practical work that I had undertaken on the course, had sensed that other, more critical directions were potentially available to me

as a painter. By this time my work had become restricted to highly worked and, for me, ultimately sterile paintings, some of which recycled pictorial motifs I had developed many years earlier (see Figures 2 and 3 below).



(l) Figure 2: Yiannis Hayiannis - *The Inheritance* (1997). Acrylic on paper.

(r) Figure 3: Yiannis Hayiannis - *The Inheritance II* (2007). Acrylic on wood.

Engagement with educational and sociological theory over the course of the MA Art and Design in Education degree equipped me with a keener sense of the construction of my identity as an artist and, I would venture, permitted me to move some way in deconstructing it. When I came across it, Bourdieu's analysis of the artist's quest for autonomy as, 'a refusal to recognize any necessity other than that inscribed in the specific tradition of the artistic discipline in question' (1984: 3), resonated with me when I began to consider the attitudes and ambitions I had held with regard to making prior to the MA degree.

My experience of the MA degree course was rewarding in the sense that I was enabled to investigate, to some degree, the ways in which my making was constructed and

situated. The practical component of my MA dissertation project took the form of an investigation of the material properties of paint rather than an exploration of its expressive or meaning-making potential. For this project I collected and made painted copies of the discarded palettes that I recovered from the classroom in which I taught drawing and painting to high school students. In doing so I sought to address questions of authenticity in painting and replication in painting practice in schools, and to align some of the concerns that informed my own painting at that time with my work as an educator.

Investment

I have included the preceding autobiographical section in order to refer to what might be termed my ‘investment’ in painting. I would suggest that this stems from the moment in time when I was told that I should learn to paint; from the summer of my watercolour experiments, during which I decided that I was going to learn to paint ‘on my own’. My investment comprehends a period of over twenty-five years during which I expended long hours drawing, painting and reading, both at home and in art college studios and libraries, and preparing and staging exhibitions of my own work at home and abroad. It comprehends too a range of other activities related to my interest in painting; visits to hundreds of exhibitions and attendance of seminars and conferences.

My investment might also be understood as a sense of pride: pride in having educated myself with regard to painting ‘on my own’; pride in hard-won knowledge, experience and understanding, the result of my own application and stubborn investigation of

material resources. Of course, this narrative is one-sided – I learned much about a variety of visual art practices at college, though hardly as much as I would have liked about painting.

Since my early experiments in painting – hours and days of trial and error, I have been attempting to learn to paint (to learn about paint as substance and to learn about painting as a cultural practice), and so ‘become’ a painter. The work I have undertaken in painting can be seen as an investment in the accumulation of ‘symbolic capital’, to borrow from Bourdieu’s terminology – ‘a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature)’ (1993: 75).

Most significantly, however, I would assert that this investment has profoundly affected my approach to teaching, having worked as an art and design teacher in schools for a period of eight years. I acknowledge that my investment in painting, as I have termed it, and the degree to which it has affected my work as a teacher, could be construed in terms of ‘a passionate attachment’ in the sense that Atkinson deploys it⁶ in his analysis of learning and teaching in school art education (2006b). Atkinson uses the term to describe ‘the specific discourses and practices’ through which teachers ‘*identify* art practice, themselves as teachers and their students as learners’ (p.19). For these teachers, he contends, art education ‘*is* drawing and painting’ (ibid.).

In closing, I want to state that I do not view my development or learning with respect to painting in particular as something unique, still less as something praiseworthy;

⁶ The term is borrowed in this context from Butler (1997).

further, that it would be disingenuous on my part to describe my learning as autonomous or entirely self-directed. What I do wish to signal is that the difficulties and resistance I encountered in pursuing painting as a younger person – real or perceived, and my efforts to overcome these, have helped form my present positions and prejudices.

1.3. Positions with regard to teaching

Between 2002 and 2010 I worked as a teacher of art and design at an independent international secondary school in London, the Greek Gymnasium- Lyceum⁷. The curriculum was that of the Greek state, which included a drawing course for sixteen- to eighteen-year-old Lyceum students, which I taught for the duration of my employment at the school. This highly prescriptive course of study, best translated as ‘Free-Hand Drawing’, might be characterised as a form of outmoded European academicism. The Teacher’s Handbook (Karistinos and Stefos, 1998) that accompanies the course recommends the use of a needle for ascertaining the measurements of objects to be drawn in the very first lesson. My experience of teaching this course was frustrating. While I wanted to introduce contemporary painters and paintings to the students – paintings, it should be added, that could be seen in London galleries a short journey away, I was obliged to take them, in a plodding fashion, through measurement, modelling and aspects of colour theory. Occasionally I was able to sneak a reference to contemporary art into the lessons in an almost illicit manner.

⁷ The Gymnasio (Γυμνάσιο) is the middle/secondary school in Greece for pupils of 12-15, while the Lyceum (Λύκειο) is the high school for the 16-18 age range.

When I started teaching in 2002 one of my aims was to devise strategies to pass on to students aspects of what I deemed to be – rightly or wrongly, the ‘hard-won knowledge’ about painting that I referred to earlier. It was not until my exposure several years later to Atkinson’s article, ‘School Art Education: Mourning the Past and Opening a Future’ (2006b), that I came to question both my practice as a teacher of art and design and my perception of myself as such. Atkinson argues that learning and teaching in art and design education, ‘is largely constituted through a transmission of specific knowledge and skills, which provide a stable and secure curriculum and reinforce a subordination of learning to teaching’ (2006b: 20).

Skill, material affordances, ‘school art’

My own work in painting and as an educator has been informed by a conception of skill that comprises the knowledge-based selection and manipulation of materials and the conceptual abilities that underpin the use of formal elements, strategies of appropriation and juxtaposition, and that permit the construction of meaning.

The present research is concerned, among other issues, to explore ways in which the notion of skill might be re-formulated and re-evaluated to contribute towards a hermeneutic approach to painting in educational settings. I would argue that in its relation to painting-as-making, skill should be considered beyond the demands of ‘realistic’ representation (I am thinking particularly of the forms of photographic realism that I encountered in secondary schools both as a student and a teacher).

In the third part of this thesis I present a case for painting in art and design education in secondary schools with reference to a variety of educational concerns. My intention here is to briefly introduce the significance of the material affordances of painting activity. The description of painting that I want to articulate across this thesis hinges on an engaged understanding and sensitivity to the material nature of paint and its meaning-making capacities. Jarvis (2004) emphasizes the scope of the physical dimension of painting activity:

...the key aspect of painting, which enables it to persist with undiminished vigour, lies in its physical and material qualities. Any artist will be conscious of the need to continually reinvent oneself through one's work, but it is in painting where this 'reinvention' is also manifest in the literal construction of an image with physical materials.

(p. 317)

Of crucial importance to painting, in its distinctive composition as a material practice, is the embodied engagement that it permits the practitioner and the communicability of this experience to the observer. As Crowther observes in his discussion of Merleau-Ponty's theorizations of perception and painting: 'Painting illuminates the structure of our perceptual relation to the world' (1993: 113). Painting can thus be understood as a powerful model for knowledge with regard to phenomena in the world.

I would emphasize the dynamic sense of painting invoked in Jarvis' description in thinking through the potential of practices of painting in secondary schools particularly. If, as Addison (2003) suggests, the 'two popular representational claims' of painting are those of 'mimetic objectivity' and 'expressive subjectivity' (p.131-132), I wish to ask how painting might operate in secondary level art and design

education beyond these strictly representational concerns. As an art and design educator with a particular concern for painting, I am interested in the potential of what is negatively characterized as ‘school art’ (Allen, 1996; Hughes, 1998).

The research of Downing and Watson (2004), designed to identify the content of the art curriculum at key stages 3 and 4, and conducted across randomly identified schools, indicated ‘certain prevalent characteristics’, one of which was, ‘...the use of painting and drawing as the medium in which pupils work...’ (p. viii).

While ‘school art’ may perpetuate conservative forms of practice in its reliance on what Addison and Burgess refer to as ‘mimetic or expressive exemplars’ (2003: 160), and be understood with respect to the dependence of the field of cultural or ‘restricted’ production on ‘the educational system’ for its ‘reproduction and growth’ as described by Bourdieu (1993: 123), I do not employ the term in this thesis as a synonym for ‘cultural reproduction’ nor to refer to what might be termed ‘culturally reproductive practices’ in education.

I want to ask how painting might be reclaimed as a vital practice in secondary educational settings, given its identification with school art, which Addison and Burgess (2003) discuss in terms of ‘insularity’ and ‘fixity’. Hughes identifies school art with ‘conceptually unambitious’ art and design activity beyond schools, such as that of ‘skilful amateur or semi-professional artists’ (Hughes, 1998: 42). Hughes argues that if it is to remain credible, ‘school art will need to come off the cultural

fence, shed its 'other-worldly attitude' and treat with political, social and psychological issues' (ibid.: 47), but does not suggest how this might be achieved.

In as far as painting can be understood, as Clark (1999b) defines it, as 'a craft tradition, which looks back unabashed to exemplary cases' (p. xxi), I recognize the potential hazard of presenting canonical exemplars of painting in educational practice. The failure to acknowledge canonical art and artists as such in the classroom can, in Gretton's words, reproduce the canon 'as something natural and inevitable, not as an institution in which social structures, relations of cultural power, are reproduced and legitimized' (Gretton, 2003: 181).

I would argue however that school art is often informed and energized by forces beyond the scope of the canonical field that I mention above. I would suggest that the pejorative use of this term is unhelpful in understanding the 'art' that is produced in schools, particularly painting. The range of painting from primary and secondary schools around the world currently on display on the Saatchi online gallery (<http://www.saatchigallery.com/portfolio/>) demonstrates not only considerable sophistication on the part of its makers but attests to a very broad spectrum of visual influences. In the same way that the influence of a range of visual traditions, of the mass media or digital technologies is absorbed and reflected in the practices of contemporary painters, these also find ways into the art made in schools.

It is worth referring in this regard to Sturgis' assertion, in his catalogue essay to the exhibition 'The Indiscipline of Painting' held at Tate St Ives in 2011, that contemporary painting 'finds vitality in the languages painting shares with the competing visual cultures that surround us' (2011: 12). He concludes that: 'It is perhaps painting's agility in absorbing such outside influence, and reconciling it with its past, that seems today its most unique quality' (ibid.).

1.4. Conclusion: painting and tradition

I wish to end this part of the thesis by attending to the significance of the resilience and flexibility of traditions of painting. Practices of painting are not unchanging and can thus be considered dialectically, in that they make possible both reproductive and transformative practices. I want to suggest that in as far as traditions of practice in painting can be seen to be fluid, painting in secondary level art and design education need not be considered static and beholden to unchanging exemplars or modes of practice.

Several commentators refer to the changing conditions and forms of practices of painting. Elkins (2001) cites the repeated 'loss' of the tradition of oil painting in Europe: 'The practices that are now called painting and drawing are entirely different than what they were in past centuries' (pgs. 72-73). The painter Bridget Riley (2009) points to the resilience of painting, an art form able to, 'totally revise and re-invent the very structure of its own making – not once but many times over' (p.302). Wentworth (2004) suggests that 'there is in fact no single practice of fine art painting, but only distinct kinds of activities that have existed at different times and places, detached

from one another' (p.20). He rightly observes that the assertion that there is 'a single practice of painting, the same over time', involves a denial of the 'historical reality of the activity that is painting at each moment' (p.21).

In Part Four of this thesis, 'Painting as a hermeneutic practice', I want to suggest that as a materially and culturally determined - yet always evolving, range of practices, painting can offer students the opportunity to engage with and interpret a dynamic tradition. My account in Part Four is informed by Atkinson's reading of Gadamer's hermeneutic conception of tradition as 'dynamic and dialectical' (2002: 36). In adopting a hermeneutic approach to and understanding of art practice in education, Atkinson characterizes young people's making as an engagement with and extension of 'valued and accepted skills and techniques', rather than their reproduction (ibid.).

Approaching art and design education from this perspective can potentially permit the renegotiation of tradition – or 'valued traditions of practice', as Atkinson outlines:

In contrast to the idea of cultural reproduction, Gadamer's hermeneutics implies a creative dimension to interpretation whereby the individual participates in the production of meaning according to his or her historical situation. The relevance of this hermeneutic strategy for art in education is that although the idea of tradition persists there is always a possibility for creative expansion, for tradition to be reinterpreted in order to establish new horizons, new possibilities for and understanding of practice.

(ibid: 35)

The research presented in this thesis is addressed to the development of specific strategies that may in some degree act to circumvent stagnant and reproductive practices in art and design education and make such 'creative expansion' feasible.

In this part I have signalled some of the concerns that inform my position as an educator, specifically those that relate to painting. In subsequent parts I will map the theoretical ground for a hermeneutic account of painting-as-making, and attend to the questions of skill, expression and imagination as they relate to this.

Part Two: Methodology

2.1. Introduction

In the following part of this thesis I identify the methodological approach that I have adopted in conducting my research. In asking how painting can operate as a hermeneutic practice in secondary level art and design education, I have employed in combination a specific theoretical framework, which I discuss in detail in Part Four, educational practice⁸, and empirical, qualitative research methods.

In his discussion of the role of ‘methodology’ in social science research, Hammersley (2011) observes that when used with reference to an area of study, the term now includes ‘not just discussion of methods but also discussion of the philosophical and political issues that differentiate the many approaches to social research that now exist’ (p.32). In presenting the methodological character of this research, I identify both its epistemological orientation, and the methods employed in collecting data from the two painting projects referred to earlier. I describe the methods I employed in analysing and interpreting the data in Part Six.

I show that the qualitative research methods I have combined in collecting data from the projects are those associated with action research and case study research approaches. I identify the design of the research as ‘multimethod’ as defined by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003).

⁸ I refer here to the educational dimension of the present research: specifically, planning, resourcing and teaching painting projects for and with young people in a particular educational setting.

2.2. A hermeneutic orientation to research

I would identify the epistemological orientation of the research presented in this thesis as hermeneutic. This identification requires explanation and qualification. The impetus for this approach was provided by the possibilities for the application of hermeneutic theory to art education identified by Atkinson in his 'Art in Education: Identity and Practice' (2002).

Here Atkinson argues that 'hermeneutics'⁹ provides 'a variety of theoretical tools and interpretational strategies that we can employ to interrogate the epistemological grounds of understanding and practice in the field of art in education' (p.46). Atkinson continues by asserting that hermeneutics permits art educators to approach questions of representation and assessment in the art practice of young people and to critically interrogate their own practice as teachers: 'In doing this hermeneutics exposes the limitations and constraints of our understanding and invites the possibility of expanded frameworks of comprehension and meaning' (ibid.).

As I observed in my introduction, 'hermeneutics' is not presented here as a 'method'. In his discussion of a hermeneutic approach to the subject of children's rights in education, Langewand (2001) observes that 'hermeneutics', which he identifies as a 'philosophical discipline' (p.144), cannot be seen as 'a theory of method' or 'a methodology' (ibid.: 146). He emphasizes notions of understanding and pre-

⁹ Atkinson deploys 'hermeneutics' in this context with reference to 'contemporary hermeneutics', citing the work of Gadamer, Habermas, Heidegger and Ricoeur, 'contemporary hermeneutic enquiry' which 'considers the factors that allow interpretation and meaning to take place and how meaning is made possible' (2002: 28), and 'hermeneutic strategies': 'different approaches to hermeneutic enquiry' which 'might offer a productive engagement with art in education' (ibid.: 32).

understanding as ‘*conditions* for the application of methods’ (ibid.). ‘Factual understanding’, Langewand asserts, ‘is bound up with a pre-understanding which has already opened up the matter in hand in advance of all subsequent investigations’ (ibid.). Hermeneutics, he concludes, ‘draws attention to the fact that no strict separation is possible between interpreters, ‘methods’, the situation of application and the matter to be understood’ (ibid). The issue of understanding in interpretive research is similarly stressed by Smith (1999), who argues that:

the mark of good interpretative research is not in the degree to which it follows a specified methodological agenda, but in the degree to which it can show understanding of what it is that is being investigated.

(p.41)

In identifying the significance of hermeneutics for qualitative analysis, Packer (2011) observes ‘that interpretation is always grounded in understanding’ (p.112); understanding that ‘needs to be developed, corrected and improved, articulated, and shared’ (ibid.).

While such observations might lead one to suspect that a hermeneutic approach to educational research lacks methodological rigour, they might equally be employed to make a case for the significance of the situated and interested stance of the researcher, grounded as it is in ‘pre-understanding’.

The painting projects that I present in Part Six were initially conceived with the aim of allowing me to engage with and move towards an understanding of the work of the participating students, both as visual productions (in a hermeneutic engagement with their paintings) and with reference to their intentions as expressed in interview. My

own ‘pre-understanding’ of ‘the situation of application and the matter to be understood’ – identified both in the introduction and in Part One, can be seen to have determined the approach I have taken to the research and my choice and application of research methods.

2.3. Combining methods

The approach I took to designing and conducting, and collecting data from, the two painting projects, does not correspond to a single ‘method’. As I show below, the methods I employed are those associated with action research and case study research approaches. A further correspondence of my research to the former can be seen in its motivation: that of developing my own practice as an educator. In combining aspects of distinct approaches to qualitative research, my research can be considered with reference to ‘multimethod’ research design as identified by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003).

In delineating their typology of research designs, Tashakkori and Teddlie observe that in the past ‘multimethod’ design has been confused with ‘mixed method’ design (2003: 10). While the latter ‘use qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques in either parallel or sequential phases’, the authors state that:

In multimethod research studies, the research questions are answered by using two data collection procedures (e.g., participant observation and oral histories) or two research methods (e.g., ethnography and case study), each of which is from the same QUAL or QUAN tradition.

(ibid.: 11)

At an early stage of this research my intention was to run a series of extra-curricular painting projects in the secondary school where I worked, one of my considerations being to see how I might present painting-as-making in a context beyond that of the school curriculum, and through exploratory activity that would be engaging for students. I was concerned to improve, extend and better understand my own practice as an educator with respect to teaching painting. As I make clear in Part Six, I was unable to run the painting projects in this school due to the loss of my teaching position there in 2010. The present study, which draws upon data from two short educational painting projects conducted with students who were not known to me, in the setting of a public gallery education space, thus has a rather different character and scope to that originally proposed.

Several commentators identify the improvement of practice as an aim of forms of action research. McNiff (2002) characterizes action research as:

...a way of researching one's own practice and generating personal theories of practice which show the process of self-monitoring, evaluation of practice, and purposeful action to improve the practice for social benefit. (p.20)

In its emphasis on 'improvement' of practice, McNiff's characterization accords with the description of classroom action research offered by Kemmis and McTaggart:

Classroom action research typically involves the use of qualitative, interpretive modes of inquiry and data collection by teachers (often with the help of academics) with a view to teachers' making judgments about how to improve their own practices.

(Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003: 339)

These writers stress both the hermeneutical engagement of teachers and students involved in this form of research and its practical potential:

Primacy is given to teachers' self understandings and judgments. The emphasis is "practical" – that is, on the interpretations teachers and students are making and acting on in the situation. That is, classroom action research is practical not just idealistically, in a utopian way, or just about how interpretations might be different "in theory", but practical in Aristotle's sense of practical reasoning about how to act rightly and properly in a situation with which one is confronted.

(ibid: 340)

In her discussion of 'teachers-as-researchers' and action research in the field of art education, May (1997) identifies the 'qualitative and interpretive' genre of research methods 'most often used in action research' (p.228). I have found these identifications helpful in better understanding, and indeed in reflecting on, the character of and some of the approaches and ambitions pertinent to the practical component of this research. May observes that action research,

... is always field-based, in situ, lending itself to ethnographic methods such as keeping fieldnotes or journals, participant observation, interviewing, engaging in dialogue, audiotaping, and collecting and analyzing documents and students' work.

(p.229)

May refers to the ways in which action researchers go about achieving their 'primary interest', that of gaining 'a better understanding of their beliefs/practice and how these came to be':

... they try to attend to the nuances they often miss in the blur of routine practice, try to become more conscious of what they are thinking and feeling as they plan for and engage in practice, and pay closer attention to what students say and do in class in an effort to understand what sense students are making of their learning.

(ibid.)

While I would not, in the event, be working with students who were known to me or in the familiar setting of my former school, the aim for the projects with respect to my research was to better comprehend my pedagogic reasoning and practice in designing a sequence of painting sessions for secondary level students, and, as far as possible, to gain insights, in May's words, of the sense students might be making of their learning. Designing and preparing the content, sequence and scope of the project sessions would, however, necessitate considerable thought and practical engagement on my part.

In my use of particular methods of data collection, and in as far as I offer detailed descriptions of two educational projects conducted in a specific location over limited periods of time and with small groups of participants, an argument could be made that the approach I have followed resembles that of case study research. In his discussion of qualitative research design, Cresswell (2013) identifies case study research as a qualitative approach in which:

the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a *case*), or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a *case description* and *case themes* (author's emphases).

(p.97)

The author identifies '*in-depth understanding* of the case' (author's emphasis) as 'a hallmark of a good qualitative case study', which is accomplished by the collection of 'many forms of qualitative data' (ibid.: 98).

The aim in collecting data from both painting projects through interview, photographic documentation and note-taking was to gain an understanding both of the processes and decision-making that the participating students adopted and followed in their painting activity, and of how they understood their own making and learning. The projects were approached not only as an opportunity to ‘shed empirical light about some theoretical concepts or principles’, the manner in which Yin (2014: 40) encourages the case study researcher to think about their enterprise, but as a chance to apply and extend these concepts, as I show in my interpretation of students’ paintings from the second painting project in Part Six.

2.4. Collecting data

At an early stage of the planning of my practical research, when I had not yet discounted the idea of painting in collaboration with potential participants of the proposed painting projects, I did not consider the use of audio or video recording in documenting the activity of the sessions, thinking it too obtrusive. My aim was to proceed with written observation only: to write a self-reflective dimension into the structure of my research which would take the form of a detailed journal written before, during and after the sessions.

In discussing the question of data collection with respect to the first project with my supervisor, several possibilities were addressed and the potential of conducting and recording interviews with students about their activity in the sessions, as well as their experience of painting in their respective schools, re-appraised. The possibility of

requesting the help of another researcher in collecting and recording data was also discussed.

For the first painting project, I eventually decided upon the format of semi-structured interview. I thus undertook to collect data in the form of audio recordings, which I proposed to later transcribe and analyse. While I had wanted to document the work resulting from the project photographically from an early stage, I decided also upon the limited use of video recording should the opportunity to record in this way arise.

As I show in Part Six, I collected data for the first painting project by means of semi-structured interviews with some of the participating students, conducted on my behalf by a colleague, photographic documentation of all the paintings produced during the sessions, and limited photographic and video documentation of students' activity (the latter did not identify individual participants). I supplemented these methods by making detailed notes at the end of each session that took the form of a progress report on individual and collective practical activity, and self-critical reflection on my role as educator and facilitator.

In analysing all the data collected, I placed greater emphasis on that obtained through the interviews. I did so with a view to understanding: the form of, and importance accorded to painting practices in students' schools; students' knowledge and opinions relating to painting; the degree to which their experiences of the project sessions differed to or converged with those of the painting activities they had followed in

school and elsewhere. The aim of identifying ‘pupils’ understanding, knowledge, experiences and views of painting’ was written into the information sheet provided to students and their guardians at the outset of the project.

For the second painting project, I employed the same methods of data collection, though both in planning and conducting the project I accorded less significance to the interviews, which I conducted with the students myself in a freer, more conversational manner. This shift in emphasis was occasioned by a sense that the students’ own voices were somehow absent from the interviews conducted for the first project; that rather than opening certain subjects for discussion, and permitting distinctive responses to emerge, the sequence of questions I had designed had the effect of shutting down dialogue. In my discussion of the first painting project in Part Six, I address shortcomings of the design and conduct of the interviews, and refer to epistemological criticism of the coding of qualitative research interviews (Packer, 2011).

In analysing and interpreting all the data collected from the second project, I was therefore less concerned with the interview data and more interested in interpreting participants’ paintings, which I approached from a particular theoretical perspective, which I present in detail in Part Four.

The significance of the notes that I made at the end of each project session across both projects should not be discounted with respect to the interpretive accounts I offer of

the projects in Part Six, particularly with regard to the detailed descriptions of the activity and work undertaken by the students, and my own interactions with them. In combination with the photographic evidence collected in the sessions, the notes were particularly useful for me in reconstructing and understanding some of the ways in which students used techniques or images in their making.

2.5. Summary

In the foregoing discussion of the methodological approach of this research project, I have identified its epistemological orientation as hermeneutic with reference to the issue of understanding and to the situated position of the researcher. I have identified certain correspondences of my research approach with action research and case study research approaches, and in presenting the specific methods employed in the collection of data, have alluded to the shift of emphasis in their application that occurred between the two painting projects.

In Part Six of this thesis, I offer detailed descriptions of the development of the design, and of the conduct of the projects. I also present the routes taken in analysing and interpreting the data collected: in the case of the first project, coding of the interview transcripts, and in the case of the second, detailed interpretive engagement with students' paintings that refers to their practical engagement with visual and material resources.

If the latter approach can be understood as a ‘method’, it was not predetermined. It emerged from an attentive engagement with students’ work that was informed by the theoretical framework that I developed with regard to painting-as-making, presented in Part Four. The sense of method proposed by Law (2004) seems particularly apposite in describing the manner in which this interpretive account was constructed:

Method, in the reincarnation that I am proposing, will often be slow and uncertain. A risky and troubling process, it will take time and effort to make realities and hold them steady for a moment against a background of flux and indeterminacy.

(p.10)

In the following part of this thesis I move to consider a range of issues that relate to its central concern: that of approaching painting as an interpretive practice in secondary level art and design education. I present arguments against the centrality of painting in schools, which I counter by positing a case for painting in art and design education.

Part Three: For and against Painting

3.1. General introduction

This part of the thesis addresses a range of issues and claims, many of which are central to the primary pedagogical concern of this thesis, the possibility of comprehending painting as an interpretive and transformative practice in secondary level art and design education: arguments against the centrality of painting in schools; a case for painting in art and design education that emphasizes, among other concerns, its relation to affective and cognitive development; the risks of cultural reproduction and the potential of a renewed approach to the question of tradition as it relates to art and design educational practice.

In conjunction with these, I address a number of other issues which inform and question the broader cultural and historical relevance of painting: the status, function, persistence and relevance of practices of painting in the present; historical and theoretical ‘cases against’ painting; appraisals of the relationship of painting to modernism. The last of these holds a particular significance with regard to the rationale and design of the practical painting projects that were undertaken with students as part of the present research, and which I discuss in detail in Part Six.

I begin by attending to a specific set of historical ‘cases against’ easel painting in particular and refer to a recent theorisation of ‘the end of representation’ in its connection with painting. Before moving to examine a range of arguments against the retention or perceived centrality of painting in schools, I conclude this section with a

discussion of some of the complexities that characterize the relationship of painting to modernism, and refer to the notion of ‘a return to painting’, in which I address the persistence of ‘painting’ as a constellation of cultural practices.

The case against painting in schools that I present relates specifically to questions of the function of painting with regard to representation and to the culturally reproductive conservatism of so-called ‘school art’. Following these arguments ‘against’, I build a case ‘for’ painting in art and design education in secondary schools, by addressing the issues of expression and cognitive development, and with reference to the connection between the development of greater technical competence in painting and the pleasure or satisfaction that this can afford. I address too the scope of the material affordances of painting activity and borrow the term ‘modality’ from the social semiotic vocabulary of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) to consider the signifying scope of colour in painting.

3.2. A case against painting

Introduction

In seeking to describe the historical momentum and course of a case against painting, I should identify here the sort of painting against which I am presenting evidence – easel painting (I make no distinction in this categorization between representational and abstract painting), and to then observe that there is no single case against it, only competing cases that have evolved in different ways and for different reasons.

Attempting to show how and when either the practice or the cultural status of painting changed, or came to be seen as obsolete or negligible, is very difficult indeed. I lend attention here to some of the differing interpretations of, and ambitions for painting expressed in the statements of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) and the Russian Constructivists, and to the theoretical positions of conceptual and minimalist artists from the 1960s.

The beginning of the end of painting: photography and abstraction

The pre-mid-nineteenth century ‘original proclamation of the demise of painting’, ‘occasioned by the invention of photography’, made by the French painter Paul Delaroche (1797-1856) was, for Harrison (2001), ‘a century premature’¹⁰. Harrison regards the notion that the camera usurped the ‘descriptive or iconic functions’ of painting rendering it redundant (p.174) as a ‘truism’.

A relatively early criticism of the descriptive function of photography was made by Rodin (1840-1917), as Virilio (1994) observes. Speaking of sculpture rather than painting, Rodin stated, ‘It is art that tells the truth and photography that lies’ (Rodin in Virilio, 1994: 2):

People in photographs suddenly seem frozen in mid-air, despite being caught in full swing: this is because every part of their body is reproduced at exactly the same twentieth or fortieth of a second, so there is no gradual unfolding of a gesture, as there is in art.

(ibid.)

¹⁰ Bell (1999) dates Delaroche’s ‘famous cry’, ‘From today painting is dead!’ to 1839 (p.59). Gaiger (2008) observes that though these words ‘are frequently cited, there is no identifiable source for the attribution’ (n. 89, p.163). It is worth noting, however, that only two years prior to this date, Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre (1787- 1851) ‘was able to fix images on a copper plate’, as Gaiger et al affirm (1998: 255).

If one lends credibility to Hockney's view (2001) that the practice of European painters was optically assisted or mediated, 'as early as the end of the fifteenth century' (p.64), chemical photography can be seen to represent not a definitive rupture with traditions of western painting but a moment in a larger lens-based tradition of visual practice: 'The period of chemical photography is over – the camera is returning to the hand (where it started) with the aid of the computer' (ibid.: 228).

Some commentators attribute the shift in the status and function of painting to industrial and technological advances. Bois (1993) identifies the challenge to the status of painting both in photography and mass production. In his discussion of the painting of Jacques Monory (b. 1934), Lyotard (1998) argues that 'the ancient professional secret' of the painter, premised on her or his physical relation to, and 'slowly acquired complicity' with their material, is displaced by the photographic apparatus (pgs 131-132). In his essay 'Representation, Presentation, Unpresentable' (1991), Lyotard argues that the 'impossibility' of the craft of painting, 'comes from the techno-scientific world of industrial and post-industrial capitalism' (p.119). In the face of photography, he continues, 'the industrial *ready-made* wins out' and painting becomes a 'philosophical activity' as those who persist in the craft are obliged to seek out the 'rules of formation of pictural images' (ibid.: 121).

de Duve (1996), however, identifies a significant change in the role of painting not with the birth of photography but in the practice of early abstract painters, 'late in 1912

or early in 1913', when the turn to abstract painting, 'comprised the crucial step in the recognition of painting's demise as a craft and its instant rebirth as idea' (p.149).

Painting as readymade

It is too uncomplicated an approach to charge Marcel Duchamp with the responsibility for initiating the process of the demise or death of painting. In describing his early intentions with regard to painting, Duchamp, writing in 1946, does not explicitly condemn the practice:

I wanted to get away from the physical aspect of painting. I was much more interested in recreating ideas in painting.

I was interested in ideas – not merely in visual products. I wanted to put painting once again at the service of the mind.

(Duchamp in Chipp, 1968: 393-394)

Later in his career and with the benefit of hindsight, however, in a series of interviews with Pierre Cabanne, Duchamp positively stated that easel painting was dead (Cabanne, 1971: 93). Responding to Cabanne's statement that, 'You're the first in art history to have rejected the idea of painting', Duchamp replied:

I find that it's a very good solution for a period like ours, when one cannot continue to do oil painting, which, after four or five hundred years of existence, has no reason to go on eternally. Consequently, if you can find other methods for self-expression, you have to profit from them.

(ibid.)

In his account of de Duve's analysis of Duchamp in 'Kant after Duchamp' (1996), Roberts (2007) observes that de Duve is, '...dismissive of those who remove the dialectical penetration of painting into the readymade in order to read Duchamp against the history of modernism' (p.58):

If Duchamp had given up every artistic ambition associated with painting when he gave up painting ‘no one would speak of him today’, de Duve says. In this respect the readymade ‘ought to be reinterpreted today in connection with painting’; and Duchamp should be seen as an artist who found a way of ‘painting’ after painting.

(ibid.)

In his chapter ‘The Readymade and the Tube of Paint’, which appears in ‘Kant after Duchamp’, de Duve argues that, ‘...the whole tradition of painting now amounts to one large readymade’ (1996: 163). Here de Duve cites a statement made by Duchamp in 1961 at the Symposium on the Art of Assemblage, regarding the industrial fabrication of the paint used by painters which concludes that, ‘...all paintings in the world are “readymades aided” and also works of assemblage’ (Duchamp in de Duve, 1996: 163). de Duve’s argument proceeds in seeking to locate the practices of those artists who work with ‘readymades’ and of those who engage in the industrially mediated practice of painting on the same continuum:

Just as the prerequisite of the painter’s work is a manufactured product, so “all paintings in the world” now partake of an industrial culture. An artist who has stopped painting but now chooses a readymade thus belongs to the same tradition as the painter, because the fact that colors are produced industrially both annihilates this tradition and sets up its new conditions.

(ibid.)

In light of de Duve’s assessment, aspects of Duchamp’s oeuvre can be seen as attempts to reformulate and extend by ‘other methods’ some of the concerns of painting in an industrial context.

Art into production: Russian Constructivism

Unlike Duchamp’s stated ambitions for painting, the statements regarding painting made by Nikolai Tarabukin (1889-1956), author of ‘From the Easel to the Machine’

(Tarabukin in Frascina and Harrison, 1982), and Osip Brik (1888-1945) in revolutionary Russia in the 1920s, formed part of a larger ideological discourse. As Lodder (1983) describes it, Tarabukin and Brik were among the prominent theorists who sought to, ‘establish a general but solid theoretical basis for the form and concept of production art’ (p.103). Lodder outlines the two strands of their approach, which bluntly rejects the tradition of easel painting:

The first consisted of analysing art’s development in terms of its formal elements, to prove the inevitability of the emergence of production art. The second consisted of analysing the development of art in terms of sociology, to arrive at the same conclusion. The first theoretical approach argued that the end of painting was a logical product of art’s previous development. The second set out to prove the uselessness of fine art in the new social conditions.

(ibid.)

As Harrison and Wood (2003) observe, Brik, ‘condemned easel art as archaic and moreover irrevocably marked by bourgeois individualism’ (p.348). Brik, they continue, ‘advocated photography, photomontage, and the use of reproducible screen printing’ (ibid: 349) in the place of painting. According to Brik, ‘...the distinguishing feature of our cultural consciousness’ is seen in that, ‘we are practitioners’:

The easel-art picture can find no place in such a consciousness. For its strength and significance lie in its non-utilitarianism, in the fact that it serves no other purpose than that of pleasing, of ‘delighting the eye’.

(Brik in Harrison and Wood, 2003: 349)

Boris Arvatov (1896-1940), another significant theoretician of production art, writing in 1924, echoes Brik’s assessment, as a painting, ‘...inculcates a passive pleasure in illusion, and leads away from life, is not able to become a fighting instrument in the hands of the proletariat’ (Arvatov in Lodder, 1983: 105). Aleksandr Rodchenko (1891-

1956), co-founder of the First Working Group of Constructivists in March 1921, renounced easel painting in the same year, as Meecham and Sheldon observe, to, ‘concentrate upon the relatively mechanised processes of photography, photomontage and graphic design’ (2005: 1948).

Significantly, it was to Rodchenko and Tatlin that Robert Morris (b.1931) referred in arguing his case for the autonomy of sculpture in his ‘Notes on Sculpture, Part 1’, published in 1966 (Morris in Harrison and Wood, 2003). As Meyer notes in his overview of minimalism (2001), Morris’s reference ‘elucidated an artistic debt’ to the Russians, though he himself did not share their ideological and practical motivations:

Proposing a resumption of the legacy of Tatlin and Rodchenko forty years after the fact announced a transition from the optical model of sculpture of Greenberg and Fried to a literalist art and an embodied perception.

(p.56)

‘Neither painting nor sculpture’: conceptual art and minimalism

Crimp, explicitly citing the work of minimalists, holds the view that the death blow to painting seemed to have been delivered in the 1960s:

...during the 1960s, painting’s terminal condition finally seemed impossible to ignore. The symptoms were everywhere: in the work of painters themselves, all of whom seemed to be reiterating Ad Reinhardt’s claim that he was “just making the last paintings anyone could make” or allowing their paintings to be contaminated with such alien elements as photographic images; in minimal sculpture, which provided a definitive rupture with painting’s unavoidable ties to a centuries-old idealism; in all those other mediums to which artists turned as, one after another, they abandoned painting.

(Crimp, 1993: 92-93)

In a footnote to painting's demise, while refraining from pronouncing death, Crimp observes of contemporary painting that, '...only a miracle can prevent it from coming to an end' (ibid: 102).

In order to better comprehend their positions regarding painting, it is worth considering statements made by exponents of conceptual and minimalist art from the 1960s and 1970s.

For Joseph Kosuth (b.1945), 'the language of painting' collapsed in the early 1960s, alongside, '...our ability to believe in the social, cultural, economic and political order of which it had been part' (Kosuth, 1991: 90). He concedes, however, that, 'painting's rich tradition will continue to be powerful for some time to come', this, he hints, by virtue of the, 'art market's need for stability in the form of quality commodities' (ibid.: 90). Painting can no longer be 'avant-garde', he asserts, as its practitioners do not seek to question the nature of art:

Painting has become a 'naïve' art form because it can no longer include 'self-consciousness' (theoretically as well as that of historical location) in its program. Such a self-consciousness necessitates that the prevailing 'language of art', like any language, must be transparent to be believed.

(ibid.: 91)

Victor Burgin (b. 1941) sees what he refers to as the decline of painting as part of a historical process of technological displacement – in painting's particular case, displacement by photography¹¹, an argument addressed briefly above. He compares the

¹¹ Harris (2003) has identified Burgin's argument that photography, 'could, or should, *supplant* the tradition of painting narrowly *or* broadly defined', as 'reactionary' and self-interested, given his work as a 'photo-text' artist (p.238).

decline of painting with the decline of the use of stained glass (a Stained Glass Department still existed at the RCA when Burgin studied there in the early 1960s), a technology that became, ‘displaced by other technologies more adapted to the changing forms of society’ (Burgin, 1986: 36). Burgin concludes:

It seems clear to me that, apart from Cubism’s moment of brilliance, like a star that burns most brightly in the moment it extinguishes itself, painting has been in steady semiotic decline since the rise of the photographic technologies.

(ibid.)

Donald Judd (1928-1994), one of the ‘deserters of the ranks of painters’ (Crimp, 1993: 99), famously expressed his dissatisfaction with what he perceived as the formal limitations of painting in his 1965 report on the state of contemporary art, ‘Specific Objects’. The essay begins with the unambiguous statement that: ‘Half or more of the best new work in the last few years has been neither painting nor sculpture’ (Judd in Harrison and Wood, 2003: 824).

The main thing wrong with painting is that it is a rectangular plane placed flat against the wall. A rectangle is a shape itself; it is obviously the whole shape; it determines and limits the arrangement of whatever is on or inside of it.

(ibid.: 825)

‘Specific Objects’, Meyer observes, not only, ‘asserted Judd’s view that the new three-dimensional work rendered painting obsolete’ (Meyer, 2001: 135), but, ‘discarded Greenberg’s dictum of integrity of the medium with breathtaking ease’ (ibid.: 134):

Declaring that three dimensions were “real space”, Judd insisted that real space was “more powerful and specific than paint on a flat surface”. This implied that Stella’s or anyone else’s attempt to create a non-illusionistic painting was a doomed venture: only objects would do.

(ibid.: 135)

In a 1959 lecture, Frank Stella (b.1936) described how his frustration with ‘painterly problems’ prompted him to dispense with questions of the spatial organization of paintings:

The solution I arrived at ... forces illusionistic space out of the painting at a constant rate using a regulated pattern. The remaining problem was simply to find a method of paint application which followed and complemented the design solution. This was done by using the house painter’s technique and tools.

(Stella in Harrison and Wood, 2003: 821)

Writing in the 1980s, however, Stella argues that by 1970, ‘abstract painting had lost its ability to create space’ (1986: 42), and now faces the significant problem of sustaining its ‘pictorial energy’ (ibid.: 164). Stella’s own experiments in abstraction have arguably led him into the very cul-de-sac which he identifies, from which his later work has not permitted him retreat.

The death of representation, painting after ‘the event’

If certain contemporary theorists are to be given credence – and if one adheres to the view that painting and representation are synonymous, painting is no longer possible because representation is no longer possible. Virilio asserts that due to the instantaneity of presentation brought about by the media, ‘the end of representation’ has occurred, ‘...and it’s going to happen in art’ (authors’ emphasis) (Lotringer and Virilio, 2005: 26).

Like Hockney, I do not see that lens-based representation has rendered painting obsolete (though it has obviously removed its privileged status), nor do I see that the instantaneity of its relay negates its representational function.

In concluding, I should like to return to the truism identified by Harrison with regard to photography's conquest of painting, in light of which:

...the ensuing development of painting as a modernist practice might be viewed as a long trajectory in pursuit of another medium rather than another role, a medium in which expression or allegorization or nomination or critical theorization might occupy the position of priority previously accorded to description.

(Harrison, 2001: 174)

Reports of painting's death have, it would appear, been exaggerated. Easel painting can be seen to have survived the ideological and theoretical assaults of disparate movements and figures, and can still be practised in light of these, should one choose to do so.

The question of choice can arguably be understood as a question of fidelity to an event, as articulated by Badiou (2001). An 'event', he states, 'compels us to decide a *new way of being*' (2001: 41). Taking Schoenberg's invention of the twelve-tone scale as an event, Badiou shows that, '...Berg and Webern, faithful to the musical event known by the name of Schoenberg, cannot continue with *fin-de-siecle* neo-Romanticism as if nothing had happened' (ibid.: 42). To which event, if any, might the painter, in pursuing her or his practice, therefore show fidelity - to the invention of the readymade, or to the event known as Cubism? Or, perhaps, to Clement Greenberg's

essay 'Modernist Painting', first published in 1960, to which I refer in the following section?

Painting and modernism

In this section I discuss aspects of the theoretical dynamic that can be seen to obtain between painting and modernism in the visual arts. Certain risks should be acknowledged in doing so, given the reciprocal complexity of this dynamic – does the theoretical apparatus of modernism 'produce' painting, or is it the other way around¹²? In as far as the specific concern of the present study is that of painting in secondary level art and design education, my intentions here are to acknowledge the privileged location of painting in modernist discourse and to refer to its key theoretical articulation in the criticism of Clement Greenberg. I want to propose too a view of painting which, while it foregrounds the significance of the materiality of paint, should not be understood as strictly modernist in the sense proposed by Greenberg.

I begin, therefore, by attending to the place afforded to painting in theorisations of modernism. Writing with regard to contemporary painting in 2003, Green asserts that painting is 'something that we are still more likely to think about within the precepts of modernist art' (2003: 81). Painting is to be thought of, he continues, 'in terms of singularity, specificity, and autonomy' (ibid.). He identifies 'paint, colour, mark, texture, surface' as the specific set of terms which 'have been mobilised within the critical and theoretical discourses that ultimately produce what painting is' (ibid.: 83).

¹² Harrison (1997) argues that, 'Modernist theories of art are largely predicated in the development of painting' (p.68).

Pollock (2001) identifies the significance of painting in modernist discourse in ‘its combination of gesture and trace, which secure by metonymy the presence of the artist’ (p.77).

No discussion of painting and modernism can ignore the work of Clement Greenberg (1909 -1994), particularly his essay ‘Modernist Painting’ (1982) which, as Harrison and Wood (2003) put it, more than any other text in English, ‘has come to typify the Modernist critical position on the visual arts’ (p. 773). The teleological view of modernist painting expressed in this text is premised on painting’s orientation to flatness, ‘the only condition painting shared with no other art’ (Greenberg, 1982: 6), the logical conclusion of the modernist injunction that, ‘Each art had to determine, through operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar and exclusive to itself’ (ibid.: 5).

Critics of Greenberg’s modernism are numerous and varied. Particular criticisms, as Elkins (2005) shows, relate to Greenberg’s formalism and his emphasis on opticality. In presenting ‘a medium-unspecific notion of painting’, Graw (2012) argues that the ‘modernist idea of an art that is defined by the “essence of its medium” has clearly lost its relevance’ (pgs 47-48): ‘Once the medium can no longer be delimited, then no qualities can be inherent to it. Its character, rather, depends on how the artist will proceed with it’ (ibid.: 48). In rejection of Greenberg’s claims for the exclusivity of the medium of painting, Green (2003) insists that painting is informed and defined by factors beyond its purview; beyond, that is, Greenberg’s ‘unattainable ideal’ of

painting's purity (p.83). Jay (1993) refers to those critics of Greenberg, including Rosalind Krauss, who have sought to stress the importance of the body in visual art practice, over the "modernist fetishization of sight"¹³ (p.161).

The view of painting which informs the design of the practical painting projects that I discuss in Part Six - and indeed my own orientation to teaching painting more generally, emphasizes a long-acknowledged tension in paintings as visual artefacts: that of the push-pull between the materiality of paint and surface and the aims of depiction, expression or symbolisation. This tension can arguably be seen in terms of the dual status of a painting as both object and sign¹⁴, and in Elkins' definition of 'perfect painting': 'Not merely a wooden panel coated with cracked and abraded paint, nor entirely a Madonna and child' (Elkins, 2000: 187). Elkins' definition is echoed in Pollock and Rowley's appraisal of painting (2003), which also invokes this dual status: 'Painting has the potential to oscillate between its materiality and its capacity to evoke an illusion of something in the world or in the imagination' (p.44).

The tension between the materiality of paint and its recruitment as a means of depiction arguably characterizes the work of painters separated both by time and location. While the work of Velázquez (1599-1660) and Manet (1832-1883) can be seen to belong to the same continuum of European painting, it is worth citing in this regard. Svetlana Alpers, in her 'The Vexations of Art: Velázquez and Others' (2005), convincingly draws out particular affinities and parallels between the work of these

¹³ Jay borrows this phrase from Krauss (1986).

¹⁴ I refer here to Bryson's definition of 'painting as sign' (1991), in which the sign is dependent on 'socially generated codes of recognition', rather than the conditions of perception.

painters. She explicitly likens Velázquez's 'abbreviation in his realization of painted things' to Manet's approach to painting: 'In effect, both painters depict the world seen, but also the world obviously, even wilfully, painted' (p.227). Alpers reads these parallels against the teleology of art historical discourse:

... the resemblance of an early artist to a later one goes against the forward thrust normal to art history. We think of artists following one another making up the history of art.

(p.219)

Alpers suggests that artists do not necessarily think in this way, that they are 'more at ease making connections between art of different times and places', and asks if this resemblance between painters has to do with, 'the nature of painting itself' (ibid.). I would ask whether this tension is a concern that we read retrospectively into painting from the past from our present perspectives, informed as they are by - or against, dominant theoretical discourses and practices in the visual arts, or in fact a condition of the possibility of painting itself? I acknowledge the dangers in ascribing trans-historical values or characteristics to particular forms of painting practice.

My emphasis here, however, is on the significance of chains of continuity that can be seen to attend painting as a 'craft tradition', as Clark defines it (Clark, 1999b: xxi); a tradition that is determined materially and physically. My interest in and emphasis on material processes with regard to painting is not predicated on a Greenbergian concern for flatness or on an interest in restoring the identity of painting to an emphasis on 'the opacity of the medium' as Greenberg puts it in his essay 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', written in 1940 (Greenberg, 2000: 66). I would argue that both my theoretical position

towards painting and the practical content of the second Saatchi painting project that I outline in Part Six, are predicated on a concern for embodied practice, an area of concern that Greenberg's optical account neglects.

Another return to painting

In concluding this section I make use of the notion of a 'return' to painting to refer to some of the assertions made since the early 1990s about the changing scope and function of painting. The notion of a 'return' is perhaps misleading, implying as it does that practices of painting either died away or ceased to be visible at some historical juncture. The commentaries I cite below suggest that, for various reasons, this did not happen. A counter-argument to these assessments, however, might be identified in McEvilley's book, 'The Exile's Return: Toward a Redefinition of Painting for the Post-Modern Era' (1993), the title of which betrays its basic thesis, that painting went into exile 'from the mid-1960s to the late 1970s' (p.6), only to return in various guises throughout the following decade. It could be argued that this putative 'exile' had more to do with painting's cultural visibility than with any far-reaching cessation of its practice.

In contradistinction to Greenberg's ambitions for the 'purity' of painting, it could be said that it has survived as a relevant cultural practice through repeated reconstitutions of its forms and functions, as Batchelor describes:

...painting has been continued by constantly being tested against that which stands outside painting-as-art: the photograph, the written word, decoration, literalness or objecthood. In other words, painting has been continued by being continuously corrupted: by being made impure rather than pure; by being made

ambiguous, uncertain and unstable; and by not limiting itself to its own competences.

(2000: 100-101)

According to Harris (2003), the term ‘painting’ has become generalised into a set of practices and ideas that *combine* systems of production (pgs 238-9). ‘Painting’, he asserts:

... cannot be, has not been, easily limited to either certain materials, certain techniques of construction, or certain conventions of display. ‘Painting’, since at least the 1970s, has become the name for an exploration and extension of these implicated conceptual and physical resources.

(Harris, 2003: 238)

It could be argued that painting recalibrates its terms as a semiotic mode and profitably co-exists with a wide array of often technologically novel practices in the visual arts.

In his ‘Remarks on Contemporary Painting’s Perseverance’ (2012), Rottman observes that the ‘medium’ of painting has ‘become bereft of its former substance’, and ‘tends to emphasize the apparatus of its appearance and the conduits of its circulation’ (p.10).

While he offers no specific evidence of this transformation, he asserts that,

... it could be concluded that painting is moving beyond the limitations of its once-traditional material support, without abolishing its ancestral discursive and institutional scaffolding altogether. The paradigms that once provided the very basis of painterly articulations have not been annihilated, but are disseminated across an expanded array of practices, materials, media, and sites.

(ibid.: 10-11)

The work of artists Francis Alÿs (b. 1959), Martin Kippenberger (1953-1997), and Sarah Morris (b.1967) exemplifies some of the ways in which painting is put to highly specific use in conjunction with, or alongside, a variety of other visual art practices.

In the work of Francis Alÿs painting serves a variety of functions and assumes a variety of forms: his performance, 'The Leak' (first executed in 1995), took the form of a walk in which the artist carried a leaking tin of paint through an urban environment; his animation 'The Last Clown' (1995-2000) was partly generated by a series of his paintings, which effectively functioned as a storyboard; his exhibition 'Fabiola' at the National Portrait Gallery (2009) can be understood as a work of curatorship, formed as it was of 300 mostly painted – and largely anonymous, portraits of the fourth century Christian saint, Fabiola.

In her discussion of the work of Kippenberger, Morgan (2006) identifies the 'systemic nature' of the artist's practice, which extended to the production of books, installations, paintings and photographs: work, she suggests, that 'remains only partially legible when seen as individually isolated objects' (p.12). Over his career, in playful fashion, Kippenberger not only commissioned others to execute paintings for him from pre-selected images¹⁵, but in some cases destroyed the resulting paintings, subsequently exhibiting only their photographic record.

Sarah Morris makes abstract geometric paintings with household paint and films, which, on her own account, play with the 'documentary form' (Morris in Rabinowitz, 2008). The artist frequently exhibits these together¹⁶, describing herself as an 'artist

¹⁵ In 1981 Kippenberger hired a sign-writer to paint a series of paintings for him entitled 'Lieber Maler, male mir' ('Dear Painter, Paint for Me').

¹⁶ For her 2008 'Lesser Panda' exhibition at the White Cube Gallery in London, Morris exhibited a series of abstract paintings alongside a film about the 1972 Munich Olympics, '1972'.

who uses multiple mediums’, ‘something specific to my generation of artists, going cross-media and also cross-disciplines’ (ibid).

3.3. A case against painting in schools

Introduction

I move now to present a view of recent critiques directed at the practice of painting in art and design education, some of which seek to dislodge it from its perceived position of privilege in the art and design curriculum. In articulating this view I acknowledge that some of the critical momentum against painting in contemporary literature relating to art and design education is implicit, or apparent only in terms of its absence.

The practical and cultural primacy accorded to painting in art and design education has been explicitly critiqued in a variety of ways and from different perspectives. I shall begin by identifying two lines of criticism directed at the practice, the first of which relates to questions of representation, the second to the notion of ‘school art’, or unadventurous forms of art and design practice in schools that perpetuate cultural reproduction.

Painting, representation and ‘school art’

Atkinson’s critique of the relationship of painting to representation (2006a) does not aim at the exclusion of the practice from art and design education, but seeks to problematize its role with regard to assumptions concerning the universality and replicability of vision in an effort to, ‘dehegemonise traditional attitudes to practice and representation’ (p.145). Such assumptions, he asserts, are implicit in the discourse

of the National Curriculum for Art, and inform the, 'normative frameworks within which practices such as drawing and painting can be assessed' (ibid.: 141-2). In 'Art in Education: Identity and Practice', Atkinson (2002) seeks to move away from discussions of representation with regard to the 'visual productions' of children and older students, to questions of signification, 'where the emphasis is placed upon the production of a reality' (p.9).

In his discussion of the interpretation of images, Addison (2003) identifies 'the paramount position' of painting with regard to representation, which can be seen, he argues, in its 'two popular representational claims' – those of 'mimetic objectivity' and 'expressive subjectivity' (pgs 131-132). Such modernist criteria, he continues, are especially unhelpful in addressing contemporary art, 'where these very criteria may be undergoing critique' (ibid.: 132).

It is worth keeping in sight the value of introducing students, particularly at secondary level, to the variety of representational idioms embedded in disparate traditions of painting. This can be achieved not only, as Addison proposes, in helping students to 'understand that systems of representation are culturally and historically conditioned' (2003: 132), but at the level of practical engagement in the classroom, by fostering openness to the transformative potential of painting and to the scope of the technical possibilities that exploration of paint can afford.

Germane to the relationship of painting to representation is the illustrative dimension of so-called school art. Over recent decades, a number of criticisms of art and design education have been directed at school art, in which painting is seen to play a significant part. Hughes (1998) describes school art as 'self contained', tending towards, 'the illustrative and stylistically neutral':

If it has a location outside of the school, it is in what is now uncontentious art, or craft activity (rarely design), of at least several decades ago. An appropriate parallel is perhaps the conceptually unambitious work of skilful amateur or semi-professional artists who exhibit with local art societies or with groups who dedicate themselves to a particular medium such as pastels, acrylics or watercolour.

(Hughes, 1998: 42)

Addison and Burgess (2003), in their discussion of PGCE Art & Design students as potential 'agents of change', discuss the phenomenon of school art with reference to the experiences of student teachers following the Art & Design PGCE course at the Institute of Education, University of London. For some, these experiences were characterised by 'the rehearsal of long-tried 'experiments' and stultifying exercises': 'the former exploring teenage identity and angst the latter based on reflections in bottles and negative spaces between upended stools', both of which were 'given credibility by reference to the work of exemplary artists' (p.159). For Addison and Burgess the 'proto-modernist profile of much school art' is characterised by its recruitment of 'mimetic or expressive exemplars' (ibid.: 160). They refer to the use of this disparaging term by art educators (Efland 1976; Taylor 1986) with regard to the perceived 'insularity', 'conservatism and populism' of school practice (p.158).

It is worth remarking here on the apparent persistence of ‘imitative’ practices in painting activity in secondary schools to the degree that they are evident in students’ responses to the interview questions put to them during the painting projects, discussed in further detail in Part Six.

When asked to identify the sorts of painting that they had undertaken in school, several students who participated in the ‘Painting Encounters’ project - from three London schools, alluded to the common experience of being asked to copy, imitate or work ‘in the style of’ a particular painter (‘Painting Encounters’ interview transcripts, Appendix 2: Students Two, Fifteen and Sixteen in Interview One; Student Fourteen in Interview Two; Student Four in Interview Ten). In commenting on the aims of painting projects run at her school, one Year 9 student (Student Four) explained that she had ‘never really’ been asked to paint from objects; that ‘... we just, always look at a different artist, like Picasso, Frida Kahlo’ and ‘usually try to imitate it (*the work of the artist*) and try to do it in our art books and stuff’ (Interview Ten, p.394).

Similarly, in the subsequent ‘Painting Events’ project, when asked if she had enjoyed the first mark-making session of the project, Student Eleven responded by saying that, ‘it was interesting, cos like different to like what we do in school [inaudible] we do like copying art from like mainly what other people have done’ (Interview Five, ‘Painting Events’ interview transcripts, Appendix 5: p.419).

Dislodging painting's centrality

Other commentators have critiqued the traditional emphasis on painting in the art and design curriculum from the perspective of its perceived purposelessness (Hughes, 1998), in an effort to accommodate alternative art and design practices in the curriculum (Allen, 1996), and with a view to balancing practical activity in the classroom with a concern for the cultural context of works of art (Taylor, 1986).

The question of painting's centrality to the art and design curriculum is addressed by Hughes (1998), who refers to its pedagogic purposelessness in this context. Referring to Reid's description (1980) of art activities in schools, Hughes comments nearly twenty years later:

Art activities (in Reid's terms), in school, will still usually include some form of printmaking, perhaps some simple fabric or textiles, and frequently claywork. Painting will be a central activity, largely or wholly figurative, frequently decorative and in response to the imperative to impart 'knowledge and understanding' there will be many images which loosely owe their style and content to that of established, famous, (almost invariably Western, male) artists.

(Hughes, 1998: 45)

These activities, dominated by painting, exist, he argues, '...as self contained and self referential elements in schools, with no contemporary rationale for their inclusion in the art curriculum and no centrally articulated purpose' (ibid.: 45).

A notable critique of the emphasis on painting in schools which explicitly refers to school art, and is now almost two decades old, is that of Allen (1996), for whom the

relationship between art and art education in the United Kingdom is, ‘highly selective culturally and pedagogically’ (p.88).

Allen singles out for criticism what was at the time of his writing, ‘possibly the best-selling art book among contemporary art teachers’ (p.85), Clement’s ‘The Art Teacher’s Handbook’ (first published in 1986). Clement’s handbook, he argues, fails to acknowledge the work of pupils in, ‘photography, video, computer design, installation, ‘live art’, environmental art, etc.’ (ibid.), while its illustrations are dominated by reproductions of pupils’ observational work (ibid.: 84) (presumably he refers here to painting and drawing work). Allen draws attention too to the limited range of work in art and design to which Clement refers with regard to the teaching of critical studies: ‘All are from the tradition of post-Renaissance/modern western painting’ (p.85).

Allen invokes school art and what he perceives as the perpetuation of its practice in Clement’s handbook, in a bid to dislodge the centrality of painting in art and design education:

In the late 1990s, we must reconceive image-making culturally and pedagogically and acknowledge that drawing and painting in particular now constitute only one aspect of the visual arts and that, however desirable or impressive they may be, neither drawing nor painting are in any sense essential or necessary to the production and understanding of visual imagery, they are merely one aspect of it. (p.88)

The present relevance of Allen’s observations is a moot point. If one of the ‘aims’ of the ‘Art and design programmes of study: key stage 3’ of the National curriculum in

England (Department for Education, 2013) is to ensure that all pupils ‘become proficient’ in painting, as well as in drawing, sculpture and ‘other art, craft and design techniques’ (it is not clear if painting is actually understood in this context as a ‘technique’), it could be argued that its purpose and value in secondary schools in the UK - largely unstated in recent literature relating to secondary education, needs to be addressed. It is hoped that the present project, in its emphasis on the material dimensions of painting and interpretive making, may serve as a contribution in this regard.

Allen further posits an ‘alternative’ approach to the limitations he sees in the frame of cultural reference proper to much art education that, ‘does not necessarily exclude painting and sculpture’, but seeks to, ‘extend our limited view of modernism’ (p.89) (he refers here explicitly to the ‘kind of modern painting’ supported by Greenberg and Fried). The alternative tradition he specifies encompasses practices such as collage, photography, environmental and video art.

In ‘Educating for Art’ (1986), a publication stemming from research related to the Critical Studies in Art Education (CSAE) Project conducted in the early 1980s, Taylor presses for the introduction of critical studies approaches to art and design in schools. The CSAE Project developed partly in response to the concern that practical activity in art and design in schools had come to outweigh ‘the contemplative aspects’ of the subject (p.xi).

Art departments, Taylor states, are ‘practical places’, but adds that, ‘the enmeshing of the practical work with the study of art objects is an essential aid, and in no way a deterrent to the development of the student’s work’ (p.90). It is at this juncture in Taylor’s argument that the spectre of school art appears. Citing Rose’s 1981 article on school art, Taylor addresses the phenomenon of art ‘taught in a vacuum’, insisting that both ‘the art of the past and of the present’ be gauged to ‘the practical needs’ of children (p.91). Unlike Rose, however, he fails to endorse ‘copying masters and making pastiches’ (Rose in Taylor, 1986: 91).

In Addison’s assessment (2010) art and design works ‘within or in relation to traditions’, some of which are, ‘technically demanding, requiring diligence, determination, immersion and an acculturation to and within valued conventions’ (p.45). While painting practice in secondary schools may be understood with reference to cultural and historical traditions, I would suggest that such understanding needs to be negotiated imaginatively at the level of practical engagement with paint.

Conclusion

In concluding, it is worth observing that while there is little evidence in recent art and design educational literature of a systematic, or even explicit, campaign to oust the practice of painting from secondary school curricula, forceful arguments against its perceived pre-eminence in art and design education are apparent. Some of the latter are motivated by a concern for painting’s implication in the perpetuation of narrowly

conceived representational, and ultimately reproductive, art and design practices in schools.

In maintaining a place for painting both in primary and secondary education it seems necessary to return attention to the distinctive characteristics of practical engagement with paint, not only to its potential for representation or signification, but to the particular material and sensuous qualities of the material that make the latter possible.

3.4. A case for painting in art and design education

Introduction

In presenting a case for painting in art and design education, with specific regard to secondary education, I draw here on evidence in support of the practice in recent literature relating to both primary and secondary education.

While many of the texts mention painting, particularly in terms of notions of expression, few offer a specific pedagogical rationale for its adoption or retention in schools. It could be argued that the significance accorded to painting in literature pertinent to art and design education is not often made explicit, and that while the fundamental status of painting is established in literature relating to primary education (Gentle, 1988; 1993; Matthews, 2003; Smith, 1993), its specific value in secondary education is often unstated.

In constructing a case for painting in art and design education in secondary schools, I will refer to a set of varying claims as to its pedagogical importance. Pertinent to this survey are questions of expression and cognitive development, and the relation of pleasure or fulfilment to the development of technical competence in painting. I shall also consider the significance of the material affordances of paint, and what might be understood, in borrowing from Kress and Van Leeuwen's social semiotic vocabulary (1996), as a 'modality' of painting - the experience of colour.

Expression, affective development

The term 'expression' is found very widely in literature relating to art and design education and frequently with specific regard to the practice of painting. While I will essay the notion of expression with regard to painting in Part Five, I refer here to some instances of its use in this connection by a variety of commentators: Alschuler and Hattwick (1966), Barrett (1979), D'Amico (1966), Eisner (1972, 2002), Gentle (1993), Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987), Matthews (2003), Read (1958), Richardson (1948) and Smith (1993).

The rationale for painting in education offered by Gentle (1993) compares the expressive potential of paint to that of words:

Learning to paint can be paralleled with learning to read and write: there is a language of marks, shapes and patterns to be acquired in order to develop the powers of expression. Children have to learn how to handle paint as much as they learn how to handle words.

(p.2)

The potential of painting for the expression of emotion is described by Smith (1993), who asserts that the ‘visual-graphic elements’ of painting, as she characterizes them (p.10), afford ‘expressive qualities’.

While Field (1970) acknowledges the role of expression in art education in a broad sense, it is in his discussion of the ‘pictures’ of young children that he ascribes a notion of the development of self to art activities. The ability of children to distinguish between the ‘real and fantasy material’ that informs their pictures, he asserts, is, ‘part of the apparent function of art activities’ (p.24). The latter, he argues, are, ‘one way by which the child embarks upon the development and refinement of his view of the world’ (ibid.). The activity of the young child is serious, despite outward appearances, he asserts, for through it ‘his understanding of himself and his world grows’ (ibid.).

The connection between painting and a concept of self-formation in children is made explicit by Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987). For them, creative expression is ‘the expression of the self’ (p.16) and the opportunity for young children to ‘draw or paint provides a basis for developing a self-concept’ (ibid.: 17):

A child will draw and paint from what he is. These feelings, desires, thoughts, and explorations with paint and subject matter will all appear in the painting. Particularly a young child, but to some degree everyone, paints in a direct manner with no thought of hiding or concealing true feelings.

(ibid.: 30)

Interestingly, it is also to a notion of truth that Richardson addresses her remarks on the role of the art teacher in ‘Art and the Child’ (1948), a text in which painting

features as the predominant art educational practice: ‘When a teacher frees the artist’s vision within a child, he inspires him to find a completely truthful expression for it’ (p.60).

In their analysis of the paintings of pre-school children, ‘Easel Painting as an Index of Personality in Preschool Children’, originally published in 1943, Alschuler and Hattwick state that children express their feelings in their ‘abstract use of colour, space, line, and form’ (1966: 118). Pre-school children, they assert, ‘do not paint to express ideas, but rather to express *what* they feel and *how* they feel’ (ibid.: 117). The instrumental sense of Alschuler and Hattwick’s survey is conveyed in their statement that a pre-school child’s ‘painting products’ can be seen ‘as a possible clue to understanding the child’s personality and his emotional flow’ (ibid.: 130).

The expressive scope of painting practice in education can therefore be seen in terms of psychological ends: painting characterized as an index of personality, a channel for truth and a tool in the formation of self.

Cognitive development, painting as a learning process

A persuasive case for painting in early years is presented by Matthews (2003) who identifies its role in cognitive development. Children learn, he asserts, ‘perhaps especially with drawing and painting media, ...how to form representations, symbols and signs’ (p.1). Matthews makes analogies between the creative processes of

language and drawing development and describes the ‘conversational structure’ (ibid.: 20) of children’s painting activity.

In a continuous conversation with the unfolding event of the painting process, the child seizes opportunities in many different modes and at many different levels. The child is not so much making random actions as purposely randomising action, in order that a wealth of possibilities emerge.

(ibid.: 31)

Painting, Matthews argues, allows children not only to gain motor control and mastery of painting materials, but to also develop their ideas (ibid: 32). In supporting children’s painting, he observes, ‘we are empowering them, because by helping them form hypothetical and analogue realities in their representation we are giving them some way of controlling their lives’ (ibid.).

The view of painting offered by Lowenfeld and Brittain is that of ‘a creative learning process, in which each youngster develops unique methods of organization, elaborates on his own theme, and derives satisfaction in the process’ (1987: 85). They argue that for both the preschool child and the high school student, ‘the excitement of painting is in the subjective reaction to the world, in displaying on the painting surface the thoughts and sensitivities that are part of creative and intellectual growth’ (ibid.: 31).

The appraisal of children’s painting processes presented by Eisner bears some comparison with Wollheim’s notion of ‘thematization’ in painting practice (the process whereby the painter, ‘abstracts some hitherto unconsidered, hence

unintentional, aspect of what he is working on, and makes the thought of this feature contribute to guiding his future activity' [Wollheim, 1987: 20])¹⁷:

When children have substantial experience with paint and brush, even when they are under four, they develop a refined sense of control over it. They not only can control the brush in an impressive way; they often experiment with its limits. This experimentation leads to the appropriation of new schemata, that is, images they did not previously have but that they can use in the course of their painting. In a word, they learn. They create the conditions that promote their own learning by acting upon their work in novel ways.

(Eisner, 2002: 117)

In 'The Necessity of Art Education', Fuller (1983) privileges the place of painting and sculpture in post-school art education. Fuller identifies the value of painting in the manner in which it permits the interlacing of a variety of human faculties:

... in it, the intuitive and imaginative faculties do not stand in opposition to the rational, analytical and methodical: rather, they can be combined together in ways which most work in our anaesthetic society disallows.

(ibid.: 32)

In their discussion of visual semiotics, Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) lend considerable attention to the question of children's representational strategies and use the example of a ten-year-old girl's painting to illustrate their assertion that in the production of meaning, 'the cognitive and the affective are not antithetical' (p.265):

...the child not only brings together choices from all the available resources of visual sign-making in a piece of intricate and complex visual thinking, but also fuses her thinking, her cognitive work, with her affects in an active process of working through some of the problems connected with her identity and subjectivity.

(ibid.: 267)

¹⁷ Wentworth (2004) argues that, 'the process Wollheim intellectualizes, and thereby misrepresents, as 'thematization', is a 'lived-phenomenon', and suggests that, 'the actual activity of painting occurs pre-reflectively, as a form of habitual action' (p.64).

Pleasure, play and fulfilment

While some writers identify a disjuncture between the expressive ambitions of children and the technical means available to them, others have pursued the connection between the development of greater competence in children working with paint and the sense of satisfaction that this affords them. The painting of young children can also be addressed in terms of play, which, according to Matthews (2003), 'is implicated in the development of all forms of representation' (p.27).

Gentle (1993) seeks to establish a case for the 'satisfaction' and 'pleasure' afforded by children's experience of handling paint (p.1). Smith (1993) utilizes precisely the same vocabulary in discussing the reaction of children to their increasing competence with paint (p.30). The pleasure in increased competence with paint, she observes, contributes to, 'one of the profoundest rewards of young children's work with paint': 'their developing sense of themselves as active and competent agents, able to interact and be effective in the world' (ibid.: 31).

The significance of play in the painting practices of young children is addressed by Matthews (2003) with reference both to Piaget's notions of accommodation and assimilation and Vygotsky's analysis of action and meaning in play. As Matthews describes them, the terms Piaget employs in 'Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood' (1951) characterize children's efforts to 'attain action and object-mastery' in a given situation (accommodation), and their attempts to free themselves from 'the restrictions imposed upon them by the demands of the situation' (assimilation) (p.27).

These efforts of accommodation and assimilation on the part of the child, Matthews suggests, may ‘flow into each other’ in ‘real situations’: ‘Investigation, exploration, object-mastery and representation may follow each other in rapid-fire succession’ (ibid.).

The relation of play to painting is further pursued by Matthews with reference to Vygotsky’s analysis of play and its relation to psychological development, a lecture originally delivered in 1933 (Vygotsky, 1978). For Vygotsky play at the preschool age permits a ‘divergence between the fields of meaning and vision’ to first take place:

In play thought is separated from objects and action arises from ideas rather than from things: a piece of wood begins to be a doll and a stick becomes a horse.

(p.97)

Matthews acknowledges the possibilities in play for cognitive development and representation in stating that:

The concept of play is implicated in the child’s understandings and use of symbols, signs and representations. Children need opportunities to temporally uncouple means from ends in tasks, allowing them the opportunity to investigate processes as entities of interest in themselves and worthy of repetition.

(2003: 27)

‘Spiritual freedom’ is identified by Richardson (1948) as a prerequisite for children’s painting practice. She invokes a notion of fulfilment in her delineation of the ‘child artist’ - a child, ‘disinterested, serene, and fulfilled’ (p.85). Pertinent perhaps to a broader consideration of practices of painting is Pope’s identification of ‘full-fulfillment’ as an aspect of creativity (2005). In countering ‘narrow characterisations of creativity’,

Pope appeals to, ‘broadly ‘Eastern’ models of creative fulfilment through ‘being’ or ‘becoming’ rather than ‘doing’ or ‘making’” (p.60). He cites Western vitalist and phenomenological traditions with respect to notions of ‘becoming’ and ‘being’ (ibid.: 62). These notions can arguably be understood in relation to painting activity in schools in terms both of the formation of self and the phenomenological potential of practices of painting.

Material affordances, the haptic

The particular material affordances of practices of painting (in distinction, it should be stressed, from those of drawing) in the specific context of education, while acknowledged by some writers (Gentle, 1988; Jarvis, 2004; Matthews, 2003), could arguably be further addressed. A primary claim for the retention of painting in schools can be identified in the transformative possibilities afforded by engagement with *paint as material*.

Reflecting on practices of painting returns one to the question of the ‘dialogue with materials’ that Addison (2010) maintains is, ‘the primary ground out of which all making practices emerge’ (p.53). Practices of painting, of working with or against the very physical matter of paint, as much as for children as for adults, can be seen as paradigmatic of this sense of dialogue, which unites, ‘historical practices with the phenomenological event (the maker’s actions) to inform future uses – utilitarian, discursive, symbolic’ (ibid.). Jarvis identifies painting as a ‘necessary, pivotal experience for all pupils’ at ‘successive stages in the educational process’ (2004: 317).

Commenting on painting in a more general sense, Eisner (2002) considers the transformation that he insists must take place if, ‘a material is to be used as a medium’:

What you are able to achieve will depend on what you are able to do with the material. This doing represents a transformation of a material into a medium. Materials *become* media when they mediate. What do they mediate? They mediate the aims and choices the individual makes. In this sense, to convert a material into a medium is an achievement. A material becomes a medium when it conveys what the artist or student intended or discovered and chose to leave.

(p.80)

The kinaesthetic dimension of painting activity is identified both by D’Amico (1966) and Matthews (2003). D’Amico, writing in 1942, foregrounds the child’s use of the brush in the process of painting: ‘...in his use of the brush the child is relaxed and free; his movements are poised and rhythmic, he is drawing with his arm and body’ (1966: 233). Matthews, drawing on evidence of video recordings of young children painting, lends significance to the cognitive and representational potential of children’s embodied activity:

...when young children use paint, their movements are far from merely mechanical in the muscles and joints; they look at what they do, and can vary what they do intentionally. They show and use knowledge; knowledge about the body and its potential in terms of action within specific contexts. Early childhood painting is a stunning example of a process of fluid adaptation to unique circumstances which co-ordinates and combines object mastery with the exploitation of body actions for expressive or representational messages.

(2003: 22)

The visual and the haptic are identified by Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) as two creative types visible in children from the age of twelve. While the visual type, they contend, engages with their surroundings ‘primarily through the eyes’ (p.357) and is able to exercise keen visual analysis, the haptic type:

...utilizes muscular sensations, kinesthetic experiences, impressions of touch, taste, smells, weights, temperatures, and all the experiences of the self to establish relationships to the outside world. The haptic person enjoys textures and feels objects pleurably with the hands. Because art of the haptic is more subjective, there is no attempt at trying to translate these textures into a visual image. The artist becomes a part of the picture, and subjective values determine the color, sizes, and form of objects.

(ibid: 362)

While an argument might be made for the material scope of paint for the haptic type in particular, as characterized above, a more compelling argument can be made in this regard for both types. Merleau-Ponty's texts on painting ('Cezanne's Doubt' [1945], 'Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence' [1952] and 'Eye and Mind' [1960] – collected in Johnson [1993]) trace a phenomenological and ontological engagement with the nature of practices of painting and show that it comprehends far more than the sense of sight alone.

It is to the painting of Cezanne that Merleau-Ponty, in 'Cezanne's Doubt', attributes the evocation of what Crowther (1993) describes as the 'inseparability of the visual and tactile in pre-reflective perception' (p.107):

Cezanne does not try to use color to *suggest* the tactile sensations which would give shape and depth. These distinctions between touch and sight are unknown in primordial perception. It is only as a result of a science of the human body that we finally learn to distinguish between our senses. The lived object is not rediscovered or constructed on the basis of the contributions of the senses; rather, it presents itself to us from the start as the center from which these contributions radiate.

(Merleau-Ponty in Johnson, 1993: 65)

Colour as a modality of painting

Here I consider colour as a significant semiotic resource in painting activity, or, to draw upon the social semiotic vocabulary of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), a crucial *modality* of painting; a ‘signifier’ ‘used to realize meanings’ (p.5). While as a formal characteristic it is ‘ideologically neutral’, as Gage (1999) observes, colour, ‘can be seen to have served a very wide range of aesthetic and symbolic purposes’ (p.34). Kress and Van Leeuwen argue that while the ‘literature on the emotive meanings of colour is quite inconsistent’... ‘colour (and colour contrast) is used to realize affect in the sensory coding orientations that inform, for instance, certain types of art and art appreciation’ (ibid).

In his historical survey of art education Carline (1968) identifies two significant proponents of the use of colour in the education of children – Rousseau (1712-1778), in ‘Emile, or On Education’ (1991) published in 1762, with regard to ‘self-expression’, and Ruskin (1819-1900), in terms of the formal significance of colour.

As Carline observes, ‘Rousseau was turning over entirely fresh soil when proclaiming the child’s need for colour as an outlet for his self-expression’ (1968: 62). ‘Never before’, he argues, ‘had paint or brushes been considered essential to a child’ (ibid.). Ruskin’s insistence upon the use of colour can be seen in ‘The Elements of Drawing’, first published in 1857, in which, as Carline puts it, ‘the author suggested that differences in colour are observed by children earlier than shape’ (ibid.: 98). Ruskin,

Carline observes, ‘rightly regarded colour and form as inseparable, pointing out that one cannot visualize a formless colour, nor a colour-less form’ (ibid.).

What Ruskin actually states with regard to children and colour perception, in a footnote to a preliminary drawing exercise in ‘The Elements of Drawing’ (1971), is that the perception of ‘solid Form’ is ‘entirely a matter of experience’, that:

We *see* nothing but flat colours... The whole technical power of painting depends on our recovery of what may be called the *innocence of the eye*; that is to say, of a sort of childish perception of these flat stains of colour, merely as such, without consciousness of what they signify, ...

(p.27)

A ‘highly accomplished artist’, he continues, ‘has always reduced himself as nearly as possible to this condition of infantine sight’ (ibid.: 28). One might compare Ruskin’s assertion in this regard with Merleau-Ponty’s appraisal of the painting of Cezanne, a painter who ‘wanted to depict matter as it takes on form’ (Merleau-Ponty in Johnson, 1993: 63), to paint objects ‘emerging from the color’ (ibid.: 66).

Subsequent writing on art and education attests to the significance of colour. Read (1958) echoes Ruskin’s observation (‘form cannot be perceived except as colour’ [p. 22]), but does not elaborate on the means by which painting might foster an engagement with colour (he foregoes discussion of such ‘technical niceties’ [ibid.: 23]). Clement (1993), writing primarily on secondary education, insists on the importance of colour in the art and design curriculum and suggests a variety of painting activities for its introduction, while Gentle (1988) characterizes painting’s significance in education in terms of the experience of colour that it can afford:

...the most accessible and powerful agent for experiencing colour in all its range and subtlety is surely paint. The fluidity, texture, transparency, vibrancy and impasto characteristics of paint make it an essential experience in the art curriculum.

(p.41)

3.5. Conclusion

In concluding it is worth restating some of the central claims made for painting in literature relating both to primary and secondary education. Particularly at the level of primary education these claims concern the significance of painting in its connection with cognitive and affective development. The expressive potential of painting is accorded importance with regard to notions of self-formation.

Importance is accorded also to the interrelated material, transformative and bodily dimensions of painting, especially for young children. Painting permits children to engage in relatively free, pleasurable and playful activity, as well as in transformative processes with materials for particular ends, such as representation or symbolization.

Evidence of specific rationales for or direct appraisals of the value of painting is sparser in the literature relating to secondary education. While some of the claims for the relevance of painting in primary education carry an undiminished relevance in secondary education (those regarding its expressive and transformative potential), one might extend a case for painting at this level in affirming the importance of the material affordances of painting in the context of representational aims.

This latter consideration requires not only a pedagogical context in which students are permitted to explore these affordances, so that a variety of technical possibilities may open up, but one that allows students to engage with a variety of representational idioms.

Part Four: Painting as a hermeneutic practice

4.1. Introduction

I wish here to identify the foundations of a theoretical approach to a research question that asks how painting might operate as a hermeneutic practice in secondary level art and design education. Central to this account are the notions of interpretive making or ‘formativity’, which I adopt with specific regard to painting-as-making, and Bildung, a contested philosophical and educational concept which I locate historically and present in terms of the formation of a hermeneutic orientation to tradition and practice in an individual.

As stated in my introduction, ‘painting practice’ is understood here to comprehend embodied and transformative practices that are characterized by metaphorical, expressive and symbolic affordances. I outline below the sequence of the component parts of my argument, before proceeding to a prefatory example of practice which is designed to ground and contextualize the theoretical considerations that follow.

First, I introduce philosophical hermeneutics as both a philosophical disposition and practice with reference to the work of Davey (2006b). I identify the epistemological orientation of my research as hermeneutic in nature.

Second, I represent my theoretical position with regard to philosophical hermeneutics in discussing its potential for the interpretation of art works, its significance with a view to a theory of engaged spectatorship and its potential for comprehending painting

practice at the level of process. In seeking to construct a demonstrable link between theories of art production and reception, I shall refer also to Davey's characterization (2006a) of Gadamer's adopted term, *theoria*, and to commentary on Pareyson's aesthetic theory of formativity (originally published in Italian in 1954).

Third, I identify objections to Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, in particular those that relate to questions of tradition and otherness, with a view to acknowledging the potential hazards of adopting Gadamer's perspectives in educational research. While I draw explicitly from Gadamer's work on the interpretation of art as it appears in 'Truth and Method' (2004), 'Philosophical Hermeneutics' (1977) and 'The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays' (1986), my argument does not wholeheartedly embrace Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic project¹⁸.

Fourth, I discuss the educational reach of philosophical hermeneutics with reference to the concept of *Bildung*. I frame a hermeneutic notion of *Bildung* that can be used to comprehend an orientation to practice, specifically that of painting-as-making: a process of evolving self-formation and an orientation or disposition to practice of receptivity and openness to physical materials, forms and ideas. I take up this historically loaded concept by situating it in the light of historical criticisms, specifically those of Nietzsche (1909, 1997) and Adorno (2003), and in the context of contemporary educational debate.

¹⁸ The present project looks beyond philosophical hermeneutics to address, for example, aspects of painting with reference to Deleuze (2003), and aesthetics and modernism with reference to Rancière (2004), figures whose thought is arguably inimical to that of Gadamer.

Finally, I identify Bildung in a hermeneutic sense against the terms ‘habitus’ and ‘enculturation’ in an attempt to free it from its critical identification as an instrument of ‘bourgeois domination’ (Weinsheimer and Marshall in Gadamer, 2004: xii).

4.2. Beginning to interpret practice

In offering an approach to painting practice that can broadly be understood as ‘interpretive’, I am concerned to show how an understanding of practical engagement can be informed by philosophical hermeneutics in its scope with regard to the interpretation of art works. How, in fact, does a view of practice or making, correspond to, or how might it be informed by, a theory of reception, and why might an art educator wish to pursue any such correspondence? I hope to address both questions in the present section.

The present research project developed from a set of questions about painting in schools, and the possible role of an educator in supporting painting, that I identified in my work as a specialist art and design teacher across two independent schools in London between 2002 and 2010 (linked primary and secondary Greek state schools following the Greek curriculum). What sorts of decisions do young people make in their painting activity? How might these decisions, which appear to be informed both by intention and accident, be understood? In my capacity as an educator, how can I re-think painting at secondary level as something more vital and more meaningful than a culturally reproductive practice predicated on a narrow conception of representation? My own engagement with theory grew from and was motivated by questions of

practice. The questions that I posed to myself as an educator were: can theory help me better understand the potential of painting activity for secondary level art and design education? Can theory account for particular aspects of practical activity in a valuable way?

Given these considerations, I open this section with an example of practice, by attending to a small painting which, though it might be considered a throwaway sketch, contributed significantly to the development of the present research. I reproduce the painting below, a rapidly executed work made by a second year Lyceum student who attended the classes that I taught in observational drawing and painting, as prescribed by the Greek state curriculum (Figure 4 below).



Figure 4: Painting by second year Lyceum student, acrylic on paper.

At the time she made this painting the student in question had only recently joined the school. She explained to me that she had painted very little in art and design classes in

her previous secondary school. In a session roughly midway through the academic year, and at the beginning of a still life painting project, I presented a new selection of brushes to the group in which she was a student. Until this moment the group had been working with the relatively cheap hog bristle brushes provided by the school. I made some of my own brushes available to students in this selection, which included a range of fine synthetic brushes and a variety of larger, broader brushes, including a flat-headed sable brush with a tip width of 250mm.

Before commencing work on the still life, I encouraged the students to experiment with the brushes as they were preparing to paint, by testing them out with different consistencies of paint on scraps of cartridge paper. Once she had prepared her paint for the first session, the student I refer to here tentatively experimented with the flat-headed brush. She soon complained that she couldn't control it. She persevered however and made a series of different marks with the brush on several scraps of paper. With a little practice she realised that the soft brush permitted her to make fluid, supple marks that the larger, round-headed, scratchier, hog bristle brushes did not.

On a sheet of A3 cartridge paper positioned horizontally on her work table in 'landscape' orientation, the student made two overlapping rows of brush strokes with a watery consistency of blue paint, moving the brush for each stroke to her palette, back to the paper, and, in making the mark, towards herself with a measured action of her wrist. 'They look like gravestones', she observed, when she came to a stop. At the base of each mark one can see a little shell- or fan-like formation of paint, the result of the

student's pressure on the brush as she caused it to disengage with the surface of the paper.

The student then proceeded to suggest a landscape around the marks, using the same flat-headed brush to apply a wash of green. She subsequently pencilled in the outlines of trees, which she then filled with the same green but with a smaller, round-headed brush. Apart from a few additional flourishes (the suggestion of shadow on the right flank of one of the trees), the finishing touches the student made to the sketch were produced with a thin synthetic brush, used to add squiggles of paint to the blue marks to suggest inscriptions on her 'gravestones', and with a larger brush to suggest a blue sky and, in black, what appears to be a phantom or ghoul.

I dwell on this student's painting because it seems to me to be the result of interpretive making. In a very short time, and through brisk activity, the student was able to overcome her lack of familiarity and confidence with a tool to make a picture in an entirely unpremeditated fashion. She very quickly harnessed and realised the formal scope of her brushstrokes for a representational purpose: she interpreted her marks imaginatively. At a much later date, in the course of my reading, I came across a reference to a persuasive hermeneutic account of making in Vattimo's text, 'Art's Claim to Truth' (2010). This account chimed with my recollection of the student's production of the sketch described above. In the section 'Pareyson and 'formativity'' below, I consider this account in detail and suggest that it can be productively employed to comprehend the formative and interpretive aspects of painting-as-making.

I begin, however, with a more general introduction to philosophical hermeneutics as a philosophical disposition and practice.

4.3. Painting as a hermeneutic practice

In Part Two I identified the epistemological orientation of the present research as ‘hermeneutic’. In describing this orientation I should like to invoke Davey’s description of philosophical hermeneutics in ‘Unquiet Understanding: Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics’ (2006b), as a ‘philosophical dis-position’ (p.xvi).

Davey sees philosophical hermeneutics as, ‘oriented toward a form of philosophical *practice* rather than to philosophical theory’ (ibid: 17), ‘more a constellation of philosophical outlooks than a specific philosophical system or method’ (ibid: 3).

Davey’s argument follows that as a practice of ‘encounter and engagement’ (ibid: 31) and as a ‘disciplined practice of speculative sensibility’ (ibid: 26), philosophical hermeneutics is irreducible to characterizations of either theory or method.

While some may seek to colour such philosophical practices as overly subjective and methodologically vague, it could be argued, as Davey does, that it is the philosophical openness of hermeneutic practices that keeps questions of understanding and interpretation in a productive state of play. In reply to accusations of subjectivism,

Davey makes a highly significant epistemological distinction:

Philosophical hermeneutics is not indicative of a subjectivism but of a philosophy of subjectivity which strives to discern phenomenological and ontological objectivities that manifest themselves within subjective experience.
(ibid: 34)

I submit that the present project can be considered hermeneutic in its scope, comprehending as it does, two practical research projects conducted with young people that were partly designed to allow me to engage with the work of the participants in an interpretive sense.

4.4. Hermeneutics and the experience of art

Before moving to suggest how processes of making can be considered hermeneutically, I want to unpack the significance of Gadamer's hermeneutic appraisal of works of art with respect to the intentions of the present project, which is concerned in part with the interpretation of young people's making in a specific context, and to consider the sorts of interpretive encounters it can generate.

In doing so I begin by attending to Gadamer's hermeneutic vocabulary as it refers to art works and the experience of art, and move to the questions that he raises with respect to aesthetic consciousness and self-understanding. I also address Davey's remarks regarding the dialogical status of art works as they appear in his 'Unquiet Understanding: Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics' (2006b), an essay which attempts both to critique and extend aspects of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics.

In discussing 'the lack of immediate understandability of texts handed down to us historically', Gadamer suggests that hermeneutics focuses attention on what is, 'met in all human orientation to the world as the *atopon* (the strange), that which does not "fit" into the customary order of our expectation based on experience' (1977: 25).

Another characterization of the task of hermeneutics given by Gadamer likewise invokes the alien and the distant. In his overview of definitions of hermeneutics, Gallagher quotes from Gadamer's 'Practical Philosophy as a Model of the Human Sciences' (1979):

...the best definition for hermeneutics is: to let what is alienated by the character of the written word or by the character of being distanced by cultural or historical distances speak again. This is hermeneutics: to let what seems to be far and alienated speak again.

(Gadamer in Gallagher, 1992: 4)

In surveying the traditional textual domain of hermeneutic enquiry, Gadamer employs the idea of 'the fusion of horizons' to address the hermeneutic projection of 'a historical horizon that is different from the horizon of the present' (Gadamer, 2004: 305).

It is to a horizon that Gadamer again refers with regard to the special properties of works of art (Gadamer deals with 'art' in a broad sense, i.e. does not restrict his discussions to visual art, in all three of his texts that I cite here) and the way in which we meet them in treating of the aesthetic consciousness and the experience of art in his 1965 essay, 'Aesthetics and Hermeneutics':

...an absolute contemporaneousness exists between the work and its present beholder that persists unhampered despite every intensification of the historical consciousness. The reality of the work of art and its expressive power cannot be restricted to its original historical horizon, in which the beholder was actually the contemporary of the creator. It seems instead to belong to the experience of art that the work of art always has its own present.

(Gadamer, 1977: 95)

For Gadamer the experience of art necessitates ‘a standpoint in relation to art and the beautiful’ that ‘corresponds to the historical nature of the human condition’ (2004: 83-84). The experience of art therefore requires self-understanding in terms of the historical continuity of experience:

Our experience of the aesthetic too is a mode of self-understanding. Self-understanding always occurs through understanding something other than the self, and includes the unity and integrity of the other. Since we meet the art work in the world and encounter a world in the individual artwork, the work of art is not some alien universe into which we are magically transported for a time. Rather, we learn to understand ourselves in and through it, and this means that we sublimate (*aufheben*) the discontinuity and atomism of isolated experiences in the continuity of our own existence.

(*ibid*: 83)

Gadamer suggests here that it is the encounter with the *atopon*, the very otherness of the work of art that can foster self-understanding. Gadamer’s assertion that aesthetic consciousness is a mode of self-understanding can be seen further in his formulation that ‘art is knowledge and experiencing an artwork means sharing in that knowledge’ (*ibid*: 84). As I shall later show, however, the process of sublation to which Gadamer refers in the excerpt from ‘Truth and Method’ above, has been the subject of forceful criticism.

Davey (2006a) gauges the significance of philosophical hermeneutics, and the particular contribution of Gadamer, to art theory and practice with reference to ‘networks of meaningfulness’:

Meanings for Gadamer are subject-fields, spaces in which things are related. By entering one subject field we gain access to others. The implicit networks of meaningfulness which connect the subject-fields of art underwrite art’s ability to take us beyond ourselves, out of the initial horizons of our present historical

circumstance into others. The recovery of other logically possible ways of thinking allows us to look at and, hence, to feel differently about an issue. (p.23)

Lawn and Keane's characterisation of Gadamer's treatment of 'aesthetic objects' or works of art usefully articulates the experience of otherness that we may experience when encountering or attempting to engage with a work that is new to us:

A genuine work of art takes hold of the observer and becomes an 'event' with which we engage. It appropriates, surprises and disrupts the world of the observer by the presentation of an alternative world or an alternative aspect of the present world.

(Lawn and Keane, 2011: 9)

Indeed, this description renders very well my own experience of disorientation on first seeing Damien Hirst's 'The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living' (1991), a work composed of a tiger shark suspended in a vitrine in formaldehyde. I encountered this piece in 1992, at the age of twenty, when it was first exhibited at the Saatchi Gallery, long before it became internationally known and was succeeded by further Hirst works featuring dead animals in similar display units.

The experience was unsettling and certainly one of 'otherness' for me, for which I had no frame of reference beyond my memories of museums of natural history and my few gallery encounters with European and American conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s. I wanted to know whether this work could actually be considered 'art', and if so, what kind. To turn Gadamer's lens on this experience, one might say that it afforded me a level of self-understanding: I was challenged by what I saw and struggled - both in the gallery and later, to see how it fitted into the categories which I

had hitherto understood as those that pertained to ‘art’. I became aware of the expectations and prejudices with which I approached and engaged with visual art, and arguably came to learn more about myself through the encounter.

In considering questions of experience, interpretation, self-understanding and otherness as they relate to encounters with works of art or other objects, it is important to acknowledge at this juncture the relevance of philosophical hermeneutics for theory and practice in museum education. Several commentators in this field draw upon Gadamer’s hermeneutic theory in addressing questions of interpretation as they relate to visitor and curator alike (as Whitehead suggests in his study of interpretive practices in museums and galleries, ‘interpretation’ in such contexts can be understood as ‘co-construction’: as a term that refers both to the ‘curators’ production, and visitors’ consumption of knowledge’ [2012: xv])¹⁹.

The hermeneutic and dialogical potential of an art work can be seen in the way in which it addresses a particular subject matter and how that address affects its observer. In ‘Unquiet Understanding: Gadamer’s Philosophical Hermeneutics’ (2006b), Davey refers to hermeneutical understanding with respect to what he fashions as ‘the

¹⁹ Hooper-Greenhill refers to aspects of Gadamer’s hermeneutics in delineating a theory of interpretation in support of her proposal for a critical pedagogy in museums (1999), and employs Gadamer’s notion of ‘prejudice’, or foreknowledge, to consider the character of encounters with museum displays and objects (2000). Meszaros (2008) foregrounds Gadamer’s approach to questions of prejudice and authority as they are presented in ‘Truth and Method’ (2004) in her discussion of interpretive planning in museums, while Golding refers to Gadamer’s hermeneutics in proposing a discursive forum for early years learning in the museum context - a ‘Museum Clearing’ (2005), and in attending to the sorts of dialogical exchange – between visitor and object, that can occur in museums (2009).

generative space of the in-between' (p.15). This 'differential' space, he asserts, 'discloses the contrast between our perspective and that of the other' (ibid.). He further characterizes this space as the gap between meaning and utterance, a move that permits him to make a set of claims regarding the interpretive and dialogical character of works of art and their significance as such for the spectator (pgs 63-64). The work of art is 'interpretative', he argues, in the specificity of its address to a subject matter:

Such a work *works* the space between meaning and utterance. Insofar as a work discloses a subject matter, it points to something that is larger than is shown, namely, that dimension of a subject matter which has yet to be seen or shown. By bringing to mind what is in effect a transcendent "totality of meaning", the artwork reveals, by contrast, the particularity of its rendition of its subject matter and reveals accordingly that its response is one of many other possible responses.

(Davey, 2006b: 63)

It is the dialogical status of works of art, Davey continues, that permits the spectator, as a 'dialogical agent', to recognize the space of the 'in-between' in her or himself: 'If I understand what it is for an artwork to address a subject matter, I also understand what it is to address that subject matter myself' (ibid: 64). Davey furthers this observation in stating that:

The value of art lies not just in the fact that it can be interpreted as a response to a given subject matter. It is, much rather, that as such a response it can question the adequacy of our thinking about such a subject matter.

(ibid: 64)

I will refer later to Davey's dialogical characterization of works of art in discussing the relation of Bildung to tradition.

In 'The Relevance of the Beautiful', Gadamer (1986) refers also to a notion of space in his hermeneutic address to the experience of literature. Creative language, he asserts, gives the reader an 'open space'(p.27) which he or she then fills out, 'by following what the writer evokes':

And similarly in the visual arts. A synthetic act is required in which we must unite and bring together many different aspects. We "read" a picture, as we say, like a text. We start to "decipher" a picture like a text.

(ibid.)

Reading, he asserts, means, '...performing a constant hermeneutic movement guided by the anticipation of the whole, and finally fulfilled by the individual in the realization of the total sense' (p.28). 'We have only to think what it is like when someone reads aloud a text that he has not understood', Gadamer continues in illustrating his point: 'No one else can really understand what is being read either' (ibid.). In our concern with art, he observes, 'there is always some reflective and intellectual accomplishment involved' (ibid.).

4.5. Theoria

It is to a notion of hermeneutic accomplishment on the part of the spectator that Davey addresses his remarks on Gadamer and *theoria* in 'Art and *theoria*' (2006a). In 'Truth and Method' (2004), Gadamer engages the Greek concepts of *theoros* and *theoria*, the former, 'someone who takes part in a delegation to a festival' (p.122) – a spectator, and the latter, 'a true participation, ...being totally involved in and carried away by what one sees' (ibid.). Davey employs the term *theoria* in the hope of 'rearticulating

theory as a mode of participation in practice' (p.20), foregrounding Gadamer's notion of skilled participation:

(for Gadamer) contemplation and craft are both modes of activity and, as such, *theoria* is not a method or set of *regulae* but a skill of participatory involvement. It is a way of being thoughtfully open to art. It is not a philosophy of art. In 'The Idea of the University', Gadamer connects *theoria* and skill. *Theoria* for the Greeks was a 'possible accomplishment', never fully realisable but always capable of being extended by an ever deepening immersion in the practice itself. *Theoria* is not opposed to practice but embodies a highly accomplished practice.

(ibid: 29)

I should like to draw a parallel between the notion of the spectator involving her or himself in the work of art in a hermeneutic sense - a mode of participation acquired by 'skilful practice' (ibid: 26), and the notion of the painter, giving her or himself up to 'the unfolding event of the painting process' (Matthews, 2003: 31). Practices of painting can arguably be understood hermeneutically in their potential for both self-understanding and intellectual and reflective accomplishment, and with reference to *theoria* - a 'skilful practice' and an 'engaged and engaging activity' (Davey, 2006a: 32). It is to practical activity, specifically that of painting-as-making, that my argument now turns.

4.6. Pareyson and 'formativity'

I return here to the question of the interpretive character of making to which I referred earlier in this part of the thesis in connection with a painting made by an upper secondary school student.

The aesthetic theory of Luigi Pareyson (1918-1991), to which I will refer in detail in this section, appears in a footnote to the second chapter of Gadamer's 'Truth and Method', 'The Ontology of the Work of Art and Its Hermeneutic Significance'. Here Gadamer asserts that the work of art itself is, 'experienced in its aesthetic quality through the process of its concretization and creation' (2004: n. 28, p.164). In this, he expresses his agreement with 'Luigi Pareyson's aesthetics of "formativita"' (ibid.).

The aesthetic theory of formativity proposed by Pareyson in his 'Estetica. Teoria della formativita'(1988), originally published in 1954, which has regrettably not yet seen English translation²⁰, can be employed to address the question of the interpretive dimension of the formative processes of works of art (in this case, the processes of painting).

Vattimo's discussion of Pareyson's aesthetics (2010) holds that, 'among the theorists of hermeneutics (excluding Heidegger)', Pareyson is, 'perhaps the one who has given the most complete and accurate analysis of the interpretative act' (p.79). Vattimo shows that for Pareyson the formative process of a work of art is one of interpretation:

The formation of the work of art is an act not of creation but of interpretation: of a cue, of the materials (which, of course, are not only given but chosen), of the spirituality of an artist bent on the act of forming.

(ibid: 83)

²⁰ Pareyson's work has started to enjoy a wider readership in recent years with the publication in English of his 'Truth and Interpretation' (2014), originally published in 1971, and an anthology of essays (2009).

Eco's discussion of Pareyson's aesthetics (1989) dwells at greater length on the notion of 'the cue' or 'the germ'²¹ (p.162). The latter, exemplified as a brush stroke or a musical phrase, 'are all germs of forms which, by the mere fact that they are and exist as the premises of future configurations, presuppose the coherence of organic growth' (ibid.). Eco delineates the dialogic activity of the artist in Pareyson's theory of formativity in terms of 'physicality', 'resistance' and 'obstacle' (1989: 160):

According to the aesthetics of formativity, the artist, in forming, effectively invents totally new laws and rhythms, but this novelty does not come out of nothing. It consists of a set of suggestions that both a cultural tradition and the physical world have offered to the artist in the initial form of resistance and coded passivity.

(1989: 161)

It is with a view to this description of artistic formativity that one might parallel Gadamer's understanding of the beholder's experience of the work of art, which, while grounded in historical continuity, as has been seen, rests on 'an absolute contemporaneousness' (1977: 95) between work and beholder, a physical encounter in the present.

For Vattimo (2010), Pareyson's theory follows that the 'intimate law of the productive process', that of the 'forming form' which comprehends the materials and cues of the artist:

²¹ In his study of Francis Bacon, Deleuze (2003) employs the terms 'germ' and 'chaos-germ' in delineating the notion of 'the diagram', a term he develops from Bacon's reference to a 'graph' (in French 'diagramme') in his account of his own painting practice (Bacon in Sylvester, 1993: 56). In Deleuze's account of painting – Bacon's in particular, the diagram is 'the operative set of asignifying and nonrepresentative lines and zones, line-strokes and color-patches' (p.101) from which 'something must *emerge*', in Bacon's case, 'the Figure' (ibid.: 156). To the extent that Deleuze's description of the function of the diagram appears to privilege the operations of the hand over those of the eye, as an 'unbridled manual power' that 'dismantles the optical world' (p.138), it is not assimilable to the theoretical approach to painting that I offer here.

...must already somehow exist in the course of the process in which the 'formed form' constituting the work is revealed; otherwise it would not be a process of inquiry in which one considered errors, corrections, adaptations, and remaking.

(p.83)

Pareyson's aesthetics of formativity hinges upon the relationship between 'forming form', the law of production, and 'formed form', 'the work as it actually is' (Eco, 1989: 163), a relationship that is significant not only for the author but also for the interpreter of the work of art, as Vattimo outlines:

The interpreter forms an image of the work expressing his spirituality and at the same time grasping the work's form; it somehow retraces, albeit not chronologically, the entire process by which the work was formed. Interpretation succeeds when the image, reconstructed by the interpreter under the guidance of the forming form that speaks to him through the work, coincides with the effective physical nature of the work set before him.

(2010: 83)

In Pareyson's 'Estetica', as Eco shows, aesthetic contemplation is the 'active consideration that retraces the process which gave life to form': 'The comprehension and interpretation of a form can be achieved only by retracing its formative process, by repossessing the form in movement and not in static contemplation' (Eco, 1989: 163). To interpret, Eco asserts, 'means to assume the point of view of the producer, to retrace his work in all its trials and interrogations of matter, ...' (ibid.).

In addressing painting as a hermeneutic practice at the level of process or production, Pareyson's theory of formativity is perhaps most persuasive in its identification of 'cues'. The question of the artist's interpretive engagement with, 'a set of suggestions that both a cultural tradition and the physical world have offered' her or him (Eco, 1989: 161) corresponds in some degree to Wollheim's notion of thematization in

painting activity in 'Painting as an Art'(1987) (the process whereby the painter 'abstracts some hitherto unconsidered, hence unintentional, aspect of what he is working on, and makes the thought of this feature contribute to guiding his future activity' [Wollheim, 1987: 20]).

Pareyson's theory seems less convincing (and unfortunately at present his non-Italian readership must make do with commentaries on his work) with respect to the notion of 'retracing' artistic process. In the sense that the formative process might be recoverable in the interpreter's experience of the work - in 're-apprehending' the work 'as it was meant to be', on Eco's account of Pareyson (1989:163), one is reminded of Wollheim once more in his 'psychological account' of pictorial meaning where:

...what a painting means rests upon the experience induced in an adequately sensitive, adequately informed, spectator by looking at the surface of the painting as the intentions of the artist led him to mark it. The marked surface must be the conduit along which the mental state of the artist makes itself felt within the mind of the spectator if the result is to be that the spectator grasps the meaning of the picture.

(1987: 23)

Both accounts, in their reference to intended, prior or given meanings, would seem to foreclose interpretation of the art work, rather than permit a genuine hermeneutic encounter with it. Before moving to a discussion of the dialogical importance of a concept of Bildung for a hermeneutic approach to art and design education, and the way in which it might relate to an account of painting-as-making, I wish to return to the work of Gadamer.

4.7. Objections to Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics

I identify here particular critiques of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutic approach that relate to the interconnected questions of tradition and otherness. Arguable omissions and potential dangers in Gadamer's work need to be acknowledged in adopting certain of his insights in discussing aesthetic experience, education and understanding.

Gadamer's concern for tradition is interrogated by Caputo in 'Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction, and the Hermeneutic Project' (1987), in which he contends that Gadamer fails to question tradition in terms of power relations: 'His 'tradition' is innocent of Nietzsche's suspicious eye, of Foucauldian genealogy' (p.112). Eagleton (1983) similarly argues that Gadamer fails to see history and tradition 'as oppressive as well as liberating forces, areas rent by conflict and domination' (ibid: 73).

In Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics the issue of otherness as it appears, or fails to appear, is intimately bound to questions of tradition, domination, understanding and dialogue. Vasterling (2003) argues that the 'orientation toward agreement or fusion' that characterizes Gadamer's delineation of the process of understanding, 'suggests that recognition of alterity and plurality is merely a transitory phase to be sublated in fusion or agreement' (ibid: 160). She asks if there is not an alternative to such sublation, 'namely an understanding that preserves and recognizes the otherness of the other?' (ibid: 162). Indeed, in a late account of his philosophical development, Gadamer (1997) himself intimates that in 'Truth and Method' he had failed to show

‘that the otherness of the Other is not overcome in understanding, but rather preserved’
(p.41).

The issue of the containment of otherness in Gadamer’s hermeneutics can be interrogated from the perspective of Derrida’s famous response to Gadamer’s opening presentation at their meeting in Paris in 1981. Derrida famously questioned the ‘unconditional axiom’ of the ‘appeal to good will’ for ‘consensus in understanding’ that Gadamer had raised (1989: 52): ‘Does not this way of speaking, in its very necessity, belong to a particular epoch, namely, that of a metaphysics of the will?’ (ibid: 53). Grondin (1994) suggests that Derrida’s charge is plausible, ‘to the extent that in the process of understanding occurs an appropriation of the other that could be construed as an absolute assimilation of otherness’ (p.136).

Gadamer’s treatment of the anticipation of the completeness of a text or of an art work in the process of interpretation, referred to above in ‘Hermeneutics and the experience of art’, has been taken as evidence of his conservatism. Warnke (1987) asserts that his notion of the ‘anticipation of completeness’ represents a conservative submission to authority, which, as it is discussed in ‘Truth and Method’:

...usually appears as a condition of the possibility of our modifying or overcoming our prejudices about a text, work of art or the tradition as a whole and involves a provisional acceptance of the truth or authority of a work.
(p.136)

I would argue that to constructively engage with aspects of Gadamer’s hermeneutics, it is necessary to ask what his arguably elitist, backward-looking and, as Caputo (1987)

describes it, ‘metaphysical’ thought makes available for those wishing to negotiate questions of interpretation and understanding. It is in this spirit that I reflect through Gadamerian concepts on painting as an interpretive act and as a possible vehicle through which to attain Bildung. The latter is a significant concern for Gadamer with regard to questions of history and knowledge. It is a concept to which I now wish to turn.

4.8. Bildung

Here I suggest that the originally German concept of Bildung holds a particular dialogical significance for a hermeneutic approach to aspects of art and design education, and describe an orientation to painting-as-making that is informed by a hermeneutic understanding of the concept. I arrive at this description by attending to etymological, philosophical and educational perspectives of Bildung. I address Gadamer’s understanding of the concept in its debt to, and departure from Hegel, and with reference to notions of appropriation, transcendence and tradition.

In offering an understanding of Bildung that could prove useful in approaching educational practice, I wish to dissociate the idea from its identification as a tool of bourgeois cultural conditioning or ideological domination, and view it instead in the light of Davey’s hermeneutic characterization (2006b). With these ends in view I present a selection of critical readings of Bildung, including the critiques of Nietzsche (1997) and Adorno (2003), and more recent assessments of the idea (Biesta, 2002; Klafki, 2000; Løvlie and Standish, 2002; Masschelein and Ricken, 2003; Smith, 1988).

I frame a hermeneutic understanding of Bildung against the terms ‘habitus’ and ‘enculturation’ with the same purpose in view.

Defining Bildung

Attempting to define Bildung as an idea is a risky enterprise given that, as Davey warns, ‘the constellation of ideas that constitute Bildung is complex’ (2006b: 38).

While Bildung is defined with reference to its various historical articulations in terms of cultivation (Biesta, 2002; Davey, 2006b; Readings, 1996), development (Gadamer, 2004; Grondin, 2003; Readings, 1996; Smith, 1988), edification (Rorty, 1980), education (Davey, 2006a; Smith, 1988) and formation (Davey, 2006b; Grondin, 2003; Heidegger, 1998), a useful point of departure in charting the historical and conceptual course of the idea is to address its etymology.

Nordenbo (2002) shows that the word Bildung is related to the verbal noun *Bild*, or image. Bildung, Nordenbo observes, refers either to ‘an act, a process or an occurrence, by which somebody or something becomes an image’ or to ‘the image that emerges at the end of, or as the result of, an act, a process or an occurrence’ (p.341).

The term, he continues, refers to ‘an image – a model – *of which* somebody or something is to become an image or model’ (ibid.).

Gadamer (2004) too signals the significance of ‘Bild’ with regard to discussion of Bildung, identifying the ambiguity of the former in its comprehension of both ‘Nachbild (image, copy) and Vorbild (model)’ (p.10). In an educational sense,

Nordenbo remarks that Bildung ‘refers to an ideal ambition or *telos*’, the ‘model image’ in accordance with which the student is to be formed (2002: 343). This teleological understanding of the concept is particularly significant with regard to Hegel’s determination of Bildung, as I shall show. In ‘Plato’s Doctrine of Truth’, Heidegger (1998), in seeking to re-establish what he identifies as the ‘original power’ of the word, outlines its twin meaning as ‘formation’:

On the one hand formation means forming someone in the sense of impressing on him a character that unfolds. But at the same time this ‘forming’ of someone ‘forms’ (or impresses a character on) someone by antecedently taking measure in terms of some paradigmatic image, which for that reason is called the prototype [*Vorbild*].

(p.166)

Nordenbo observes that in the ‘standard German understanding of the concept as an educational idea’, a person can be said to have acquired Bildung ‘only if he or she has assisted actively in its formation or development’ (ibid: 341). In this respect he suggests, the concept ‘contains a reference to an active core in the person who is *gebildet*’²² (ibid.).

Warnke (1987) presents Gadamer’s conception of Bildung as a process that can lead to ‘an increase in sensitivity and selectivity’ in the individual, and defines the *gebildet* person as:

one who has learned not only in the sense of knowing certain facts but in the sense of being better able to distinguish between the important and unimportant, the beautiful and the ugly and so on.

(p.160)

²² The primary English definition of the German adjective *gebildet* is ‘educated’ (Collins German-English English-German Dictionary, 1991).

For Davey, the term *gebildet* has a particular hermeneutic significance beyond the notion of the acquisition of education. For philosophical hermeneutics he asserts, ‘a qualitative mark of having become *gebildet*’ can be seen in ‘being open to the risks and challenges posed by the transformative powers of “understanding” and, what is more, knowing how to navigate that openness’ (2006b: 40). Becoming *gebildet*, he further states, is ‘the venture of living within, hazarding, and responding to the cross currents of ideas (subject matters) that flow across linguistic and cultural borders’ (ibid: 49).

Davey’s delineation of the ‘Bildungsprozess’, that of becoming *gebildet* or the process of ‘acquiring experience by acquaintance’ (ibid: 37), is not that of enculturation, a form of cultural conditioning, but rather that of the cultivation of openness in the situated understanding of the individual. This process of formation is pertinent to the hermeneutic view of painting that I propose in the sense that the orientation or disposition to practice that it requires of the practitioner is one of openness to the contingencies and demands of a range of historically and culturally defined materials, tools, practices, forms and images.

Biesta (2002) refers to the significance of the historical moment when ‘the activity of the acquisition of the contents of *Bildung* became itself recognised as a constitutive aspect of the process of *Bildung*’ (p.378) by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835): ‘Since then *Bildung* has always also been self-*Bildung*’ (ibid.). This latter sense of

Bildung, Biesta observes, is significant in the ‘modern conception’ of Bildung where ‘the focus is on notions like self-determination, freedom, emancipation, autonomy, rationality and independence’ (ibid: 379). It is worth noting at this juncture, as Hermeling (2003) observes, that the possibility of Bildung, as ‘the philosophically oriented education of Humboldt’s university’, extended only to ‘the materially privileged’ (pgs 176-177).

Referring to the concept of Bildung as it was considered by German writers between 1770 and 1830, Klafki (2000) asserts that as ‘a qualification for autonomy, for freedom for individual thought, and for individual moral decisions’, ‘creative self-activity is the central form in which the process of Bildung is carried out’ (p.87).

Smith (1988) considers Herder ‘the greatest influence’ in the development of the modern understanding of Bildung (p. 48). The development of the idea can be traced through Herder’s writings from 1769 to 1791, Smith shows, to encompass:

(1) the development of an individual thing’s form; (2) education, especially that of advanced nations; (3) the process and product of the formation of human cultures; (4) the historical unfolding of “humanity” (*Humanität*); and (5) the scientific view that all of nature is unified by a principle (force, *Kraft*) according to which each being strives for its ideal organic form.

(ibid.)

It is to an idea of humanity that Klafki (2000) addresses his comments with regard to a second group of concepts associated with late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century notions of Bildung. Bildung is theorized as a possibility only in terms of ‘historical objectifications of humanity, of humaneness and its conditions, with an orientation to

the possibilities of, and obligation of, humanitarian progress' (p.92). Klafki further identifies the highly significant dimension of the aesthetic in classical 'Bildungstheorie' (ibid: 98). The central terms associated with 'reflections on aesthetic Bildung' were:

the cultivation of "sensitivity" (*Empfindsamkeit*), the refinement of the ability to feel in the face of natural phenomena and human expression; the development of imagination and fantasy, of taste, of the capacity to enjoy, and the faculty of aesthetic judgment; and the capacity to play, and for sociability (*Geselligkeit*).

(ibid.)

In 'Truth and Method' Gadamer shows that 'Bildung is intimately associated with the idea of culture and designates primarily the properly human way of developing one's natural talents and capacities' (2004: 9). Apparently paradoxically, however, Gadamer opposes Bildung to what he terms the 'naturalness' of the subject:

Every single individual who raises himself out of his natural being to the spiritual finds in the language, customs, and institutions of his people a pre-given body of material which, as in learning to speak, he has to make his own. Thus every individual is always engaged in the process of Bildung and in getting beyond his naturalness, inasmuch as the world into which he is growing is one that is humanly constituted through language and custom.

(ibid: 13)

Gadamer's presentation of Bildung as a process of cultural appropriation on the part of the individual relates to Hegel's understanding of the concept as set out in 'The Philosophical Propaedeutic' (1986). This text was written by Hegel in his capacity as Rector at the Nuremberg Gymnasium, between 1808 and 1811. As George and Vincent show in their introduction to the text, the Propaedeutic was designed as the foundation of philosophical instruction for fourteen- to twenty-year-olds, 'to introduce

the child in an active way to the acquisition of the previously accumulated totality of human knowledge, what Hegel terms ‘Spirit’ (George and Vincent in Hegel, 1986: xv-xvi).

George and Vincent identify Hegel’s understanding of Bildung in terms of the ‘intellectual and moral development of the child through the school curriculum’:

The pupil is forced to sacrifice his immediate interests or idiosyncracies to the experience of the systematic demands of thought, as embodied in the curriculum. Each subject or science, each form of consciousness, must be thought through, assimilated and ultimately transcended as something external and made something *for me* as *this* educated and socialized individual. For Hegel this is the process of the gradual development of freedom within each man, within his society and state and finally within his history.

(ibid: xx)

Gadamer adopts aspects of Hegel’s conception of Bildung in stating that it ‘requires sacrificing particularity for the sake of the universal’ (2004: 11): a process of ‘getting beyond’ one’s ‘naturalness’ (ibid: 13). The idea can thus be identified in the movement that comprehends the individual’s appropriation of her or his pre-given body of cultural material and the individual’s transcendence of self (a ‘dialectical movement of transcendence and appropriation’ [Gallagher, 1992: 50]). Gadamer, however, does not fully endorse Hegel’s teleological conception of Bildung in ‘Truth and Method’, as Cleary and Hogan (2001) observe:

...Gadamer parts company decisively with Hegel’s historicist and metaphysical assumptions, which would draw *Bildung* into the service of absolute knowledge. He is also unhappy with the Hegelian idea of *Bildung* as ‘cultivation’, as it suggests that it is something that can be made perfect or brought to completion.

(p.526)

Gadamer's departure from Hegel with respect to Bildung can be considered in terms of the question of the cultivation of openness. According to Gadamer, Bildung cannot be brought to completion in 'the absolute knowledge of philosophy' (2004: 13). Davey (2013) shows that for Gadamer, Bildung, or as he renders it, 'education to and through art is a formative experience, forever open and on-going' (p.21). Gadamer identifies the 'general characteristic' of Bildung in 'keeping oneself open to what is other – to other, more universal points of view' (ibid: 15).

It is to a sense of Bildung as a dynamic process of appropriation and transcendence that the present argument is aligned: a formative and continuous process of interpretation, participation, and engagement with, and openness towards, cultural practices rather than inculcation or indoctrination. Equally, I would identify this approach to Bildung against the *telos* or ultimate end, to which Nordenbo (2002) refers – 'a model image, in agreement with which the student is to be developed' (p.343).

In pursuing the relation between notions of tradition and Bildung, Davey (2006b) draws attention to the interpretive dimension of reception. While conservative evaluations of Bildung link it to the 'inculcation of (so-called) traditional values', Davey suggests that:

That which is "given over" (*tradere*) in the form of practices or outlooks is not merely received as an unmediated given but assessed and assimilated according to the contemporary concerns of the world into which it is received.

(p.50)

For Davey, the challenge of tradition sets in motion a process of sensitization to ‘open but fundamental questions’ (ibid: 64). In the same way that works of art can be considered dialogically, as Davey proposes, that which tradition and the process of becoming gebildet make available to the individual, ‘is the interrogative space of the in-between and the different ways of keeping that uncertain space open’ (ibid.).

Historical and contemporary assessments of Bildung

Before concluding this section, I present a group of critical readings of the concept of Bildung, notably those of Nietzsche (1909, 1997) and Adorno (2003), while keeping in mind a hermeneutic understanding of the idea that foregrounds its potential for educational practice. I also acknowledge two contemporary evaluations of the concept, one of which traces aspects of its evolution in educational theory since its late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century formulations. I contrast a hermeneutic understanding of the idea with the terms ‘habitus’ and ‘enculturation’ so as to locate it, as far as possible, beyond narrowly ideological characterizations.

In their preface to ‘Truth and Method’, Weinsheimer and Marshall observe that Gadamer himself acknowledges that negative assessments of the concept of Bildung should not be dismissed, ‘particularly the suspicion that “culture” and “cultivation” are simply instruments of bourgeois domination’ (Weinsheimer and Marshall in Gadamer, 2004: xii). Davey (2006b) indicates that Bildung is associated with a ‘*specific* bourgeois educational ideal’, an association, he continues, that must be severed if its meaning as ‘an unending educative (experiential) process’ is to be recovered (p.40).

Smith (1988) argues that Bildung has ‘now become largely devalued as a mere product of the Enlightenment and the educated bourgeoisie, the *Bildungsbürger*, as the ideological superstructure of capitalism and its mythology of the individual’ (p.51).

The concept of Bildung is criticized by Nietzsche, both in his 1872 lecture ‘On the Future of Our Educational Institutions’ (1909) and in his essay of 1874, ‘Schopenhauer as Educator’ in ‘Untimely Meditations’ (1997). In the former, Nietzsche identifies the corruption of the idea of Bildung as the result of its instrumentalization by economic forces. Thompson’s account of Nietzsche’s argument (2005) refers to the suppression of Bildung ‘by an economy that integrates the individual into existing social and economic relations’:

Whenever adjustment and qualification play a determinative role in the process of *Bildung*, the individual self will no longer *expose* itself to the richness and challenges of philosophical thought but only attempt to *collect* it for its own advantage.

(p.521)

In ‘Schopenhauer as Educator’, Nietzsche (1997) explicitly attacks the idea of Bildung, where he states that ‘The cultured man has degenerated to the greatest enemy of culture’ (p.149). In this text Nietzsche criticizes Bildung, as Jurist (2000) puts it, as ‘a middlebrow aspiration that actually leads to sickness and to the degeneration of culture’ (p.60).

Thompson (2005) translates excerpts from Adorno’s critique of Bildung written in 1959, his ‘*Theorie der Halbbildung*’ (2003), and considers it alongside that of Nietzsche’s. Adorno’s theory of *Halbbildung*, which Thompson translates as ‘pseudo-

education' (p.531), bears some relation to Nietzsche's criticism of Bildung in that it 'claims that culture has been integrated into the logic of the abstract exchange of goods' (ibid: 521). Thompson describes Adorno's notion of *Halbbildung* as consisting of 'investment strategies that will enable us to compete successfully with other individuals for a better position within the social hierarchy' (ibid: 522).

In a more recent critique Masschelein and Ricken (2003) argue that Bildung 'functions as part of a specific power-apparatus' (p.139), what they describe as 'the strategic operation of simultaneous processes of individualisation and totalisation in which individuals are integrated in a totality (or sociality) through a specific kind of individuality' (ibid: 142). Their critique identifies Bildung as 'a social programme formulated in a specific historical and social context in which it becomes the key-term of bourgeois society' (ibid: 143).

In addressing the contemporary significance of theories of Bildung, Løvlie and Standish (2002) identify lines of continuity from the classical era of Bildungstheorie to the work of John Dewey (1859-1952). They suggest that Dewey both 'transformed Kant's liberalism and Hegel's communitarianism' in his education for democracy (p.321), and, through 'Art as Experience' (1958), gave 'social and democratic realisation' to the ideas of Schiller and von Humboldt regarding aesthetics. Dewey, they conclude, transformed:

... the classical idea of the self-education of an autonomous individual under the impress of the cultural world to practical and participatory activities within the 'biological and social matrix', as he later called it.

(ibid: 323)

Løvlie and Standish further trace the inheritance of the idea of Bildung in theories of liberal education relating to ideas of freedom and public forms of knowledge, particularly those of Robert Dearden (1934-2005), Paul Hirst (1947-2003) and Richard Stanley Peters (1919- 2011) (ibid: 324).

In concluding the present discussion, I offer a hermeneutic description of Bildung that I set against the terms ‘habitus’ and ‘enculturation’, as they are employed and defined by Bourdieu (1993) and Herskovits (1948) respectively. In his sociological analysis of what he terms ‘art perception’ in ‘The Field of Cultural Production’ (1993), Bourdieu deploys the term ‘habitus’ with reference to the acquisition of ‘art competence’ – the artificial acquisition of culture, by members of the ‘privileged classes’ (ibid: 234). For them, he argues, culture is realized in ‘*becoming natural*’ (author’s emphasis):

Culture is thus achieved only by negating itself as such, that is, as artificial and artificially acquired, so as to become second nature, a habitus, a possession turned into a being;...

(ibid.)

Education, in the form of schooling, he continues, seeks to ensure ‘the profitability of the cultural heritage’ while disguising this very process (ibid: 235).

In addressing the notion of ‘enculturation’ I refer here to the definition offered by M. J. Herskovits, author of ‘Man and His Works: The Science of Cultural Anthropology’ (1948) and to whom the Oxford English Dictionary (1991) first attributes its use. Herskovits takes enculturation to refer to ‘the aspects of the learning experience’ by means of which man ‘achieves competence in his culture’: ‘a process of conscious or

unconscious conditioning, exercised within the limits sanctioned by a given body of custom' (1948: 39).

It is against these understandings of the terms habitus and enculturation, as modes of cultural appropriation and conditioning, that one may identify the dialectical force that colours Gadamer's conception of Bildung. If, as Davey shows, Bildung is understood as a 'specific cultural tradition', it can be seen to constitute 'the historically formed but metaphysically contingent ground upon which the possibility of understanding rests' (2006b: 41). If understood as the dynamic formation in an individual of a hermeneutic orientation to tradition, the concept of Bildung can be seen to resist the notions of acquisition, possession, conditioning and inculcation that both habitus and enculturation suggest.

A significant point of divergence that may be identified in contrasting a hermeneutic conception of Bildung with Bourdieu's term habitus is that of 'naturalness'. For Gadamer, Bildung can only be achieved in overcoming one's naturalness for the sake of the universal, to participate, as it were, in tradition. In 'The Field of Cultural Production' (1993), Bourdieu asserts that the artificial acquisition of culture is realized in '*becoming natural*' (p.234), a process he characterizes as the development in an individual of the competence or aptitude to decipher cultural codes. Bourdieu's apparent hostility to interpretive practices in the visual arts²³ renders his sociological

²³ As Addison (2004) observes, interpretation for Bourdieu is 'merely a signal of legitimated relations within a hierarchised field (often class-based)' (p.151). In 'The Field of Cultural Production' (1993), Bourdieu disposes of 'art perception' as a 'deciphering operation' (p.215).

terminology inimical to the present discussion of a hermeneutic conception of Bildung and to philosophical hermeneutics more generally.

It is with regard to a hermeneutic sense of Bildung that a parallel understanding of painting activity might be proposed – as a continuous process of ‘keeping oneself open’ to what might be termed ‘the other’ in painting, to the historical legacy of forms and ideas that attend its practices and to the potential of the contingencies of physical matter. While I am not proposing a practice of painting as a hermeneutic *method*, I would wish to identify a disposition to painting activity with reference to Davey’s characterizations of philosophical hermeneutics - ‘a *practice* of encounter and engagement’ (2006b: 31), and a philosophical hermeneutic view of Bildung – ‘a process of becoming open to interaction and exchange’ (ibid: 45).

4.9. Conclusion

As I observed above, my address to philosophical hermeneutics is undertaken with a view to responding to a research question that asks how painting might operate as a hermeneutic practice in secondary level art and design education. I have employed aspects of hermeneutic theory here both to identify the epistemological orientation of my research and to address formative and interpretive aspects of painting-as-making.

In relating aspects of Gadamerian philosophical hermeneutics to art and design education, I have offered an account of Bildung as a continuous process of participation with and interpretation of cultural practices. It is to the notion of Bildung

that I wish to briefly return in concluding with reference to the notions of the alien and the distant as they are essayed variously by Gadamer. In ‘The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem’, an essay that appears in ‘Philosophical Hermeneutics’ (1977), Gadamer refers to the alienating experiences that he sees as pertinent to both aesthetic and historical consciousness – those experiences that pertain to our encounters with art and historical tradition. How, if at all, might alienating aesthetic experiences of this kind be addressed and understood by the engaged spectator/interpreter, be they educator or learner?

Gadamer’s answer to this question, however, reveals itself primarily through what he holds to be the participatory movement of *Bildung* – that of appropriation and transcendence. It is against negative descriptions of *Bildung* as an ideological tool that Gadamer’s hermeneutic identification of the *Bildungsprozess* should be seen - a process that permits continuous participation in tradition and one that develops the ‘talents and capacities’ (2004: 9) of the individual. It is in this sense that *Bildung* constitutes an evolving formative process rather than the final achievement of an end. As Davey puts it, becoming *gebildet* ‘involves the achievement of a qualitative level of hermeneutic engagement rather than the acquisition of formal knowledge per se’ (2006b: 62), rather than the achievement of goals that the teleology of both *habitus* and enculturation suggest, i.e. reaching a desired level of cultural conditioning or aptitude for deciphering cultural codes. It is arguably a critical and dialogical model of *Bildung* that needs to be distinguished from those criticisms of the concept that identify it in forms of social and economic ideological coercion.

In situating aspects of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics in my discussion of interpretation and making, I have identified criticisms of his approach to issues of tradition and otherness. A crucial question that stems from this criticism and relates not only to encounters with art and historical tradition but also to the possibility of dialogue with an other or others, asks whether or not the experience of the otherness of the other is actually diminished through sublation in the process of understanding. In negotiating Gadamer's thought in the context of educational practice, this is arguably a question that needs to be asked and re-asked. I would suggest that Gadamer needs to be read with a view to his omissions, inconsistencies and prejudices, so that critical engagement with his work, particularly 'Truth and Method', can generate productive consideration of questions of aesthetic experience and understanding and their educational significance.

Part Five: Painting - skill and expression

5.1 General introduction

The following fifth part of this thesis, formed of two sections, ‘skill’ and ‘expression’, approaches the research question identified in preceding parts by attending to some of the ways in which these terms relate to practices of painting in educational contexts and in a wider cultural and historical sense. As I will show, a number of commentaries on art and design education, spanning several decades from the middle of the twentieth century, link notions of ‘expression’ or ‘self-expression’ to the development of skilled practice. Atkinson, writing in 2006, specifically connects skill and expression in his assessment of secondary school art education, in which he suggests that:

... the discourse of self-expression allied to discourses of technical skill and their associated practices of representation constitute the discursive framing of art practice, art object and artist in much school art education.

(Atkinson, 2006b: 17-18)

In proposing painting as an interpretive and self-forming practice, I would suggest that the terms skill and expression need to be re-evaluated in their relation to art and design education. I understand skill in terms of the development of sensitivity and openness to the particular capacities of physical materials and the legacies of forms, images, ideas, tools and procedures that attend disparate traditions of painting. Here I discuss the question of skill from several perspectives and with reference to Part Four in which I proposed painting as an interpretive activity. I open the discussion of skill in relation to painting by identifying it as practically acquired productive knowledge and refer to the rehearsal of technical skills in developing competence in painting. I also make

reference to my own experience in painting to show how the exercise of skill can be seen to rely on practical knowledge gained through the experience of working with particular materials and tools.

I then move to offer a view of skill that comprehends not only refined methods of practice but also strategies of disruption that the painter may impose on her or his activity in order to shake off formal or material constraints which may in turn serve to reinvigorate or offer possibilities for their making. In this regard I identify historical moments in European and American painting at which painters have challenged representational and technical traditions of painting practice, and refer to the accounts of painters which illuminate aspects of their processes and aims²⁴.

I further identify a sense of skill with reference to a hermeneutic account of painting practice that accords significance to its potential as a form of embodied, interpretive and improvisatory practical engagement. I suggest that interpretive participation in such practices can enable the development of self-understanding.

In parallel with the question of skill I discuss the related questions of ‘expression’, or ‘self-expression’, with respect to visual art practices and art and design education. A variety of commentaries on art and design education appraise these terms with regard to the development of skilled practice. Most often, the development of skill is

²⁴ I refer here, with one exception, to twentieth century painters and to painters still living. While the tenor of much of my argument in this section could therefore be construed as modernist, I would refer the reader to my earlier discussion in ‘Painting and modernism’, in Part Three, in which I identify ‘chains of continuity’ in traditions of painting.

understood as a means to greater expression for the young person (Eisner, 1972; Field, 1970; Read, 1958; Richardson, 1948; Witkin, 1974).

While the view of painting practice proposed across preceding parts of this thesis as embodied and transformative refers to its expressive potential, it does not do so under the aegis of what Atkinson describes as a ‘modernist discourse of art practice and understanding’, in which the term ‘self-expression’, ‘is often employed in association with the terms uniqueness, originality and authenticity’ (2006b: 17)²⁵. In order to identify an alternative approach to the question of expression in the specific context of this thesis, I begin by tracing particular interpretations of the term as they appear in early German and English romantic literature and later, twentieth century aesthetic and educational accounts.

I conclude by approaching the notion of expression as it relates to visual art practice from the perspective of the transmission of affect. I suggest that this term can be used to address the expressive dimensions of young peoples’ making in educational contexts and arguably permits a productive disconnection from the notions of originality and authenticity that Atkinson (2011) associates with the notion of ‘self-expression’, which he links to ‘dubiously out of date curriculum models that are held in place to some extent by the power of caricatures of past practices’ in school art education (p.55).

²⁵ Addison and Burgess (2003) similarly link the notion of ‘self-expression’ to ‘modernist myths’ that ‘perpetuate the notion of art as something autonomous even transcendental, ...’ (p.159). Meecham and Sheldon (2005) identify the ‘three tropes’ of modernism as ‘authenticity, autonomy and originality’ (p.13)

I follow the discussion of expression by moving to address notions of ‘imagination’ as they relate to painting-as-making. I attend to particular philosophical definitions of the term and consider aspects of imaginative making that I suggest are evident in some of the paintings produced by the students who participated in the ‘Painting Encounters’ project at the Saatchi Gallery.

5.2. Painting and skill

Skill: practical knowledge and trained practice

The following discussion of ‘skill’ attends to particular terms, some of which appear in the sixth definition offered under ‘skill’ in The Oxford English Dictionary: ‘Capability of accomplishing something with precision and certainty; practical knowledge in combination with ability; cleverness, expertness. Also, an ability to perform a function, acquired or learnt with practice (usu. *pl*)’ (1991).

The suggestion of the ‘certainty’ of accomplishment offered in the definition does not lend itself to the hermeneutic description of painting-as-making identified in Part Four, with its emphasis on receptivity and openness to materials, forms and ideas. I wish instead to pursue here two connected terms given in the definition that are highly pertinent to the present argument: ‘practical knowledge’, which I discuss in the following section with respect to insights of Michael Polanyi (1891-1971) and ‘acquisition’, which I address in relation to my own practical work. I conclude this section by offering a working definition of skill as it relates to practices of painting.

Polanyi, in his 1961 essay 'Knowing and Being' and in his discussion of 'tacit knowing' in 'The Tacit Dimension', 'a way to know more than we can tell' (1966:18), points to the difficulty of specifying those motions or acts which, understood in their totality, permit the performance of a skill. In the latter Polanyi asserts that in performing a skill, human beings rely on their 'awareness of a combination of muscular acts' (1966: 10).

In 'Knowing and Being', Polanyi addresses the analysis of skill mastery (he refers here to sportsmen/women, musicians and painters) in terms of 'the elucidation of a comprehensive object' (1969: 125). He asserts that a skill cannot be developed by learning its 'constituent motions separately', indeed that the very identification of its constituent motions, 'tends to paralyse its performance'. He continues:

Only by turning our attention away from the particulars and towards their joint purpose, can we restore to the isolated motions the qualities required for achieving their purpose. (...). Imitation offers guidance to it, but in the last resort we must rely on discovering for ourselves the right feel of a skilful feat. We alone can catch the knack of it; no teacher can do this for us.

The structural kinship of the arts of knowing and doing is indeed such that they are rarely exercised in isolation: we usually meet a blend of the two.
(ibid: 126)

The blend of knowing and doing to which Polanyi refers can arguably be seen in the activity of painters who recruit or exploit highly developed experiential knowledge of materials and tools for particular ends in their making. The American painter Helen Frankenthaler (1928-2011), commenting on her painting activity in an interview with David Sylvester conducted in 1961, describes this productive kinship:

It might take years of laboured efforts and discards to produce a really beautiful motion that is synchronised with your head and heart, and therefore it can look as if it were suddenly born.

(Frankenthaler in Sylvester, 2001: 102)

If for Heidegger, referring to handicraft in ‘What is Called Thinking?’, the work of the hand is ‘rooted in thinking’ (1993b: 381) (‘Every motion of the hand in every one of its works carries itself through the element of thinking, every bearing of the hand bears itself in that element’ [ibid.]), for Polanyi one might say the work of the hand is rooted in knowing.

Skill is described as a ‘trained practice’ by Sennett (2008: 37) who emphasizes the importance of repetition with regard to skill acquisition. He refers to the organization of repetition in musical training. In music practice, he argues, the duration of practice sessions must be aligned to the capacities of the performer: ‘...the number of times one repeats a piece can be no more than the individual’s attention span at a given stage’ (ibid: 38). With the development of an individual’s skill, he continues, ‘the capacity to sustain repetition increases’, and, ‘the contents of what he or she repeats change’ (ibid.).

A parallel understanding of the significance of repetition with regard to painting activity in the classroom could be proposed. I would argue, from the perspective of my own experience as an art and design educator at both primary and secondary levels, that repeated engagement with tools and materials in the classroom over time, positively affects children’s and young people’s confidence in their handling and

permits greater sensitivity to their capacities. Even in the relatively short time-span of the first painting project conducted at the Saatchi Gallery in 2012, 'Painting Encounters', the participating students quickly understood the potential of certain application tools for mark-making. Some students repeatedly experimented with tools such as sponges or rollers in the first experimental mark-making session and went on to employ these for specific representational purposes in subsequent sessions²⁶.

Jarvis (2004) too stresses the aspect of repetition in the development of skill and asserts that the 'practice and rehearsal of technical skills' is, '... important to learning in its widest sense as well as to developing specific expertise in painting' (2004: 321). Jarvis identifies the significance of both the noun and the verb 'practice' in discussing the work of artists, '... in referring to one's 'practice' there is also the associated notion of 'practising', the idea of performing an activity or skill 'repeatedly in order to improve or maintain proficiency in it'' (ibid: 318). In his discussion of the significance of artists' works and statements for teaching art at primary level, Jarvis (2011) stresses the importance of 'children practising their visual skills in the classroom' in 'gaining a gradual mastery over the materials, tools and media used' (p.315).

My own experience and acquired knowledge of the properties of acrylic paint are such that I am arguably able to exercise a certain level of control over the tools and materials with which I choose to work. For many years I worked only with two industrially produced acrylic paint ranges (acrylic paints are polymers, pigment dispersions in acrylic emulsions) and their associated products (acrylic mediums and

²⁶ This project is described in detail in Part Six.

varnishes). I know, for example, that Liquitex High Viscosity Titanium White is far less opaque than its equivalent in the Winsor and Newton Finity range. I know for what sorts of work I will require one or the other. I know that on drying heavy-bodied acrylic medium will permit me to paint over it in a particular way or even incise it. I know what level of consistency (how many parts water) I will require of acrylic paint in order to spray it with a particular brush.

Before moving to address historical appraisals of skill as it relates to painting, I offer a working definition of skill in this regard. I would suggest that skill in relation to practices of painting has to do with the knowledge-based selection of materials and tools (for example, the choice of support, size, ground, pigments, glazes, mediums and brushes) and their physical manipulation on the part of the agent. The former comprehends both the sensitive selection of materials and tools for their particular properties or capacities, including a productive awareness of the volatility or instability of certain materials. The latter can refer both to highly evolved working procedures as well as to methods of purposeful disruption or constraint, some of which I address in the following section. Skill in painting can also refer more broadly to those aptitudes that permit the agent to construct meaning – to the conceptual abilities that foster the considered use of formal elements (spatial, tonal and colour relationships) and facilitate acts of appropriation or juxtaposition.

Painting and skill: commerce and academies

To attempt to investigate the role of skill in practices of fine art painting would necessitate very lengthy and detailed research beyond the scope of this thesis. In offering a selective and culturally specific frame for the present discussion of skill, I refer here to certain historical conditions of European painting as they relate to the development of traditions of skill in visual art practices. I refer too to the development of academies of art in Europe and what might arguably be characterised as the attendant valorisation of theory and knowledge. In doing so I make specific reference to the first public academy of art, the Florentine Academy of Design, and to academic discourse in seventeenth century France. I conclude by alluding to the place of skill in art education in more recent accounts of higher education in the US and with reference to conflicting appraisals of skill in visual arts practice in the UK media.

The commercial aspect of skill in fine art practices is addressed by both Bell (1999) and Baxandall (1988). Bell identifies the political and economic patterns by which traditions of skill have been conditioned:

Skill traditions arise and develop within particular economic tensions – the requirements of the ecclesiastical or secular landowners who once employed painters, for instance, or the diverse niches opened up by the growth of a capitalist market in tradable goods.

(Bell, 1999: 206)

Baxandall, in his assessment of social and commercial practices relating to painting in fifteenth century Italy, refers not only to the value buyers of pictures placed upon the use of fine materials, but to that placed upon the skill of the painter:

By the middle of the century the expensiveness of pictorial skill was very well known. When St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, discussed in his *Summa Theologica* the art of goldsmiths and their proper payment, he used the painters as an example of payment relative to individual skill: ‘The goldsmith who endows his works with better skill should be paid more. As is the case in the art of painting, where a great master will demand much more pay – two or three times more – than an unskilled man for making the same type of figure’.

(Baxandall, 1988: 23)

This assessment of the skill of the painter and her or his remuneration is echoed in Whistler’s celebrated statement that, ‘... his patrons paid for the lifetime of experience that went into the painting, not the half hour it took to paint it’ (Elkins, 2000: 176).

The survey of the development of art academies in Europe presented by Pevsner (1973), addresses the evolution of the training of painters from forms of medieval apprenticeship to a ‘system of education’ in which initially perspective, proportion and copying were the key components. Pevsner locates the origin of this shift in fifteenth-century Italy with Leonardo da Vinci its chief proponent, the theory of whom, ‘...laid the foundation for all future systems of academic instruction up to the nineteenth century’ (1973: 37). Leonardo insisted on the value of experience in establishing grounds for knowledge, the search for ‘causes’ and ‘proofs’ as Kemp describes it (2004: 3), and exhorted painters to observe and work from nature²⁷.

The shift from ‘the empirical, haphazard kind of learning that artists had faced in workshops’ to ‘theories’ is identified by Elkins in his description of the concerns of the Florentine Academy of Design, founded in 1563:

²⁷ ‘The painter will produce pictures of little excellence if he takes other painters as his authority, but if he learns from natural things he will bear good fruit’ [Leonardo in Kemp, 1989: 193].

Artists, it was thought, need a good eye and a good hand, but even before they develop those they need mental principles to guide them: so “measured judgment” and a “conceptual foundation” must come before manual dexterity. (Elkins, 2001: 10)

The theoretical framework that underpinned the development of the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, as Gaiger et al relate, was ‘intentionally distinct from those kinds of writing about art that were concerned principally with the transmission of practical knowledge and skills’ (2000: 14). By the seventeenth century, it is acquirable ‘Knowledge’ for which ‘Rules are laid down’ that is foregrounded by Andre Felibien (1619-1695) with reference to training in painting and sculpture, in his preface to the Conferences of the Academie Royal, of which he was honorary counsellor (Felibien in Gaiger et al, 2000: 111). The extension of academic principles can be seen in Henri Testelin’s ‘Table of Precepts’ (1680), as Gaiger et al show, which represented a ‘codification of academic doctrine’ that was, ‘intended to provide the teaching of the Academy with an enduring structure and to make it assimilable, in a finished and unalterable form, for successive generations of students’ (ibid: 138).

The emphasis on theoretical learning that Elkins ascribes to the Renaissance and Baroque academies persists, he asserts, in the academic orientation of recent ‘art instruction’²⁸, which ‘depends on the idea that art is a systematic, intellectual pursuit (2001: 45). He suggests that though contemporary art instruction would appear anything but ‘academic’, ‘a great deal of what is made in studio classes is made

²⁸ Elkins’ unstated reference in this text is to practice in the US.

possible by, and expressed in, the traditions of post-Renaissance Western Art' (ibid.: 44).

A positive outcome of the 'tired pingpong between 'skills' and 'theory'' that Ferguson (2011) attributes to debates about art education 'since mid last century', and referring specifically to the US 'art school', is its contribution to 'the formation of 'need-to-know' curricula in studio programmes':

This means that rather than a body of knowledge to be handed down by gatekeepers, in the conservative tradition of academia, advanced schools teach students in relation to the individual student's needs. These schools see art as a 'methodological field' rather than a 'body of knowledge'.

(Ferguson, 2011: 175)

I would suggest that certain sorts of contradictions attend the question of skill in the practice and teaching of the visual arts today. In teaching drawing and painting in a secondary school I found that the majority of students I encountered were primarily interested by, and motivated to emulate, painting that closely resembled the look of photographic source material. While it is not possible here to describe or account for wider public tastes in fine art painting or visual art more generally, I wish to conclude this section by contrasting separate assessments of the work of two contemporary artists which might almost be located at opposite ends of any evaluative framework of skilled practice in painting.

The work of Jack Vettriano (b. 1951), whose painting enjoys much popularity in the form of posters and greetings cards, lacks, in the assessment of Jonathan Jones, art critic for 'The Guardian', 'in almost all the qualities that make art worthwhile': the

artist, he concedes, ‘has a fair bit of skill’, but ‘no imagination and no heart’ (Jones, 2013). In Jones’s words, Vettriano’s paintings are ‘toneless, textureless, brainless slick corpses of paintings’ (Jones, 2005). The language Jones employs to discuss the work of German painter Gerhard Richter (b.1932), however, is entirely different, almost reverent: ‘sublime, profound, and authoritative’ (Jones, 2010). For Jones, Richter is capable both of holding up ‘a candle to the old masters’ (Jones, 2011) and combining ‘a Warholian openness with the powerful questioning gaze of a disciple of Cezanne’ (Jones, 2010).

These contrasting assessments appear to be premised on the perceived aims and critical function – or its lack, of the work of these painters; the distinction could further be characterised as that which obtains between the time-honoured binary of ‘high’ and ‘low’ art. While both painters are technically skilled (Richter, in my estimation, by far the more so) – able, that is, to draw upon the affordances of their chosen materials and tools with practised proficiency, they do not share the same ambitions for their painting. While Richter’s work is exhibited in major public galleries around the world and attended by a growing literature of critical monographs and exhibition catalogues (Buchloh, 2009; Moorhouse, 2009; Storr, 2002; 2010), the same cannot be said for the work of Vettriano. While 12 million reproductions of Vettriano’s painting ‘The Singing Butler’ (1992) had reportedly been sold by 2004²⁹, it was reported in the UK national press in 2010 that the National Galleries of Scotland had been accused of ‘snobbery’ for ‘snubbing’ the painter’s work (Rose, 2010).

²⁹ Source: *The Scotsman*, June 20, 2004.

Painting and skill: transgression and disruption

The view of skill that I wish to accommodate comprehends both highly evolved forms of practice as they relate to painting and approaches to painting that might be characterised as disruptive or even transgressive. In this section I signal some of the ways in which painters have contested traditions of painting practice that favour particular modes of representation and particular means to their achievement at certain historical moments. My intention is to suggest a broader view of skill in relation to painting that resonates with the hermeneutic description of painting activity identified in Part Four, and to which I will return in the following section, ‘A hermeneutic conception of skill in painting’.

I refer here to a number of writings by Georges Bataille (1897-1962) in discussing both a particular challenge to the French academic enterprise – that of Edouard Manet (1832-1883), and another highly significant moment in modernist painting – the development of the drip technique of Jackson Pollock (1912-1956). I refer also to painters’ accounts of their own making processes (Bacon in Sylvester, 1993; Tàpies in Peppiatt, 2012; Tuymans in Ruyffelaere, 2013) and, perhaps surprisingly in the context of a discussion of skill in painting, to the work of Donatello (c.1386-1466), in order to foreground specific ways in which strategies of disruption – or, as I will describe them, ‘delegation’, can inform and develop skilled practice.

As Gaiger et al suggest in their survey of the establishment of academic practice in France, the very rule-bound absolutism of the academy can be seen to have fed practices that ran counter to its teachings:

In France, the dominance of rationalism and classicism resulted in a significant counter-tendency which emphasized the importance of those features of the work of art which seemed to escape determination by rules: the *je ne sais quoi* and the quality of 'grace'. Ironically, it is these minority positions which most seem to prefigure later developments in the evolution of modern art. In some respects, the story of modernism is a story of the move of subjectivity and sensibility from the margin to the centre of the discourse of art.

(Gaiger et al, 2000: 16)

The definitive break with the values of the academy, indeed the inception of modernist painting, has often been credited to Manet (Drucker, 1994, Greenberg, 1982, Krauss in Bois and Krauss, 1997). Fried, writing in 1965, refers to Manet as 'probably the first painter whom one would term 'modernist''³⁰ (Fried in Harrison and Wood, 2003: n.1, p.791). Both Georges Bataille (1955, 1989) and T.J. Clark (1999b) have addressed the work of Manet in compelling ways. Bataille's 1955 monograph on Manet and later study of death and eroticism in visual art, first published in 1961, characterize his painting in terms of brutality and violation. For Bataille, Manet's painting is 'distinguished by oblique forays into the unknown and abrupt violations of accepted values' (1955: 102), his art:

...is an extension of that of his elders, but with him an exasperation enters into the act of painting, a fever comes over him that sets him groping for the fluke or the random effect that widens or overshoots the usual limits of the picture.
(ibid.)

³⁰ Elkins (2005) argues that it is Fried 'who has made the most elaborate defence of Manet as the inaugural modernist painter' (p. 60).

Manet's break with the principles of conventional painting, 'representing what he saw rather than what he was supposed to see', Bataille argues, 'led him in the direction of raw vision, a brutal vision that convention had not deformed' (Bataille, 1989: 157). Indeed, for Bataille, as Fer (1995) shows, modern art is 'characteristically sadistic', as evidenced in Manet's 'repudiation of meaning' and 'obliteration of the original text' in his paintings (p.157 -158), in the cancelling out of the meaning of their narratives.

Clark's appraisal of Manet's achievements hinges upon, '... a kind of scepticism, or at least unsureness, as to the nature of representation in art' (1999b:10). 'Something decisive', he writes, 'happened in the history of art around Manet which set painting and the other arts upon a new course' (ibid.). Manet and his friends, he asserts, in seeking guidance from their antecedents, those painters in the seventeenth century, '...who had failed to hide the gaps and perplexities inherent in their own procedures', such as Velasquez and Hals, were most impressed by:

...the evidence of palpable and frank inconsistency, and not the fact that the image was somehow preserved in the end from extinction. This shift of attention led, on the one hand, to their putting a stress on the material means by which illusions and likenesses were made (...); on the other, to a new set of proposals as to the form representation should take, insofar as it was still possible at all without bad faith.

(ibid.)

The notion of skill can be further pursued with reference to Manet's break with academicism. Stressing the 'material means by which illusions and likenesses were made', 'groping for the fluke or the random effect that widens or overshoots the usual limits of the picture' (Bataille, 1955: 102), or producing brushstrokes that appear free from 'the bonds of traditional labour and linked, rather, to the casual and

experimental', as Rubin alleges Manet's were (1994: 221), are not serious possibilities for anyone insensitive to or unfamiliar with the material characteristics of paint – indeed, such procedures require skill (see Figure 5, below).



Figure 5: Edouard Manet - *Antonin Proust* (1880). Oil on canvas [detail].

Clark's description of Pissarro's approach to painting would seem to confirm that the work of the Impressionists 'paved the way for twentieth-century modernism' (Meecham and Sheldon, 2005: 278) and that the change thus affected had to do with both forming, 'a new set of proposals as to the form representation might take' (Clark, 1999b: 10) and acknowledging 'the materiality of human perception' (Rubin, 1994: 224):

...it was as if a space had to be kept between painting and representing: the two procedures must never quite mesh, they were not to be seen as part and parcel of each other. That was because (the logic here was central to the modernist case) the normal habits of representation must not be given a chance to function; they must somehow or other be outlawed. The established equivalents

in paint – between that colour and that shadow or that kind of line and that kind of undergrowth – are always *false*. They are shortcuts for hand and eye and brain which tell us nothing we do not already know; and what we know already is not worth rehearsing in paint.

(ibid: 20-21)

A significant challenge to ‘the rudimentary elements of depiction’, as Clark puts it in ‘Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism’ (1999a: 330), can be identified in the abstract drip paintings of Jackson Pollock, executed between 1947 and 1950. I refer here both to Clark’s assessment of Pollock’s drip technique and to those of Bois and Krauss (1997) in which they employ Bataille’s terminology.

Clark characterizes Pollock’s technique of pouring or dripping paint, as ‘the de-skilled address to the surface from above’ (p.329).

Figure 6: Hans Namuth - Jackson Pollock (1950).
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)

The drip technique, Clark points out, ‘disqualified certain kinds of painterly habit and know-how, or made them difficult to mobilize: it put the painter literally out of reach of his skills, his “touch”’ (ibid: 322). It could be argued, however, that Pollock’s novel ‘address to the surface from above’ was not *de*-skilled but necessitated instead *re*-skilling. Working in this manner required of the painter the development of an entirely new set of skills calibrated to the contingencies both of gravity and various densities of paint. As Naifeh and Smith show in their detailed biography of Pollock (1989), the development of the drip technique was very much a learning process for the painter:

He learned about tools: a stiff brush held more paint than a stick, a full circuit or two, but it always threatened to flood the line. When he shook it, the stream

turned to rain. That, too, he could control by thinning the paint, loading less paint on the brush, or holding the brush higher above the canvas. A stick required more reloadings but produced a finer, more consistent line and, when the paint was especially thin, a dew-like wash. Each discovery was woven into the densening web.

(p.533)

While Bataille employs a vocabulary of violation and brutality to characterize Manet's transgressive painting, Bois and Krauss recruit Bataille's 'fundamentally unstable' terminology, as Stoekl puts it (Stoekl in Bataille, 1985: xiv), to describe Pollock's transgressive drip paintings in 'Formless: A User's Guide' (1997). I identify below the contexts from which Bois borrows terms from Bataille, and suggest that one of Bois's own characterisations of Pollock's approach is particularly significant with regard to the present discussion.

Bois identifies the formless as an 'operation of slippage' (1997: 15) and 'declassification' (ibid: 18) that displaces form and content, and puts it to work in discussing modernist works of visual art. For Bois and Krauss one of the operations of the formless is that of 'horizontalization' (ibid: 21). The nearest Bataille's own brief text 'Formless' comes to defining 'l'informe' or 'the formless' is in stating that it is 'a term that serves to bring things down in the world' (1985: 31)³¹.

Bois traces Bataille's concern with 'horizontalization', the strategy of 'lowering from the vertical to the horizontal' (ibid: 26), across a number of his texts and refers to the human/vertical – animal/horizontal opposition that appears in Bataille's 'The Pineal

³¹ The term paradoxically originally appeared as an entry in the 'Critical Dictionary' published in 'Documents 7' in December 1929.

Eye’, a posthumously published essay probably written in 1930 (Bataille, 1985). Bois asserts that it was ‘the rotation to which Pollock submitted verticality that shook art up in an irreversible way’ (1997: 28). He was, he continues, the first painter ‘to underscore the horizontality of the support as the essential element of his work process’, and, in ‘abandoning’ the paintbrush, ‘delegated a part of his process to matter itself’ (this requires qualification: in the drip paintings Pollock abandoned only the direct application of paint to the support by means of the paintbrush).

In the same volume Krauss invokes both horizontality and the formless in addressing Pollock’s drip paintings:

The power of Pollock’s mark as index meant that it continued to bear witness to the horizontal’s resistance to the vertical and that it was the *material* condition of this testimony – the oily, scabby, shiny, ropey qualities of the self-evidently horizontal mark – that would pit itself against the visual formation of the Gestalt, thus securing the condition of the work as *formless*.

(ibid: 97)

Although borrowing from Bataille’s porous terminology is a risky enterprise, both Bois and Krauss offer a useful means of essaying skill with regard to painting. In ‘delegating the painting process to matter’ the painter may be able to declassify or lift certain procedural or formal restrictions on her or his practice. Indeed, I would suggest that the notion of ‘delegation’ in this sense is a useful means of comprehending aspects of the ‘disruptive’ strategies that I have aligned to a notion of skill and to which I attend below.

Jarvis, in his discussion of the educational significance of painting (2004), indicates that his own progress as a painter has been marked by the desire to overcome or overturn practised procedures:

I sensed that in order to develop as a painter I had to ‘unlearn’ a lot of previously acquired ideas and technical approaches because these were impeding a freer and more spontaneous approach which could widen my painterly repertoire.

(2004: 322)

The stated ambition of Stephen Newton, at one stage in his career as a painter, was to free his ‘painterly style’ (2006: 30). One of the strategies he employed in doing so was to work with his painting supports turned upside down, his intention to ‘deflect and subvert any inclination to engage’ with the ‘painterly formal factors’ of ‘colour, composition, line, tonal relationships and so on’ (ibid.: 30-31).

These attitudes to making might be compared with Luc Tuymans’s statement regarding the source of his change of approach with regard to painting:

I started out as a virtuoso painter with a great deal of gesturality and colour. That came to a crisis because it became a flaccid way of working – I found out that when one tries to cultivate a style, one misses the point, and the necessities. So I tried to go to the other side, to be deliberately clumsy, to research what kind of immediacy there is to that.

(Tuymans in Ruyffelaere, 2013: 117)

Another account of painting activity, that of Antoni Tàpies (1923-2012), sheds light on the significance of an improvisatory approach to making, a matter to which I will return in the following section, and what might be understood as methods of restriction:

When I work on the paintings themselves, I never stay with the image I've drawn. I improvise, because I want to come up with things that surprise me, images I'd never dreamed of. Often I make things difficult for myself, simply to get out of certain intellectualized attitudes. Sometimes I mix marble dust into the paint, which means it dries very quickly – so I have to work fast, without thinking about the consequences.

(Tàpies in Peppiatt, 2012: 238)

Francis Bacon's response to David Sylvester's enquiry as to his use of 'other practices' in his handling of the brush (the throwing and scrubbing of paint in his work, both of which are evident in his 'Study for Head of George Dyer', Figure 7 below) is both telling of Bacon's conceptualization of his own work and apposite with regard to the notion of the denial of skilled practice: 'But I use those other practices just to disrupt it (*the handling of the brush*). I'm always trying to disrupt it. Half my painting activity is disrupting what I can do with ease' (Bacon in Sylvester, 1993: 91).

Figure 7: Francis Bacon - *Study for Head of George Dyer* (1967). Oil on canvas.
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)

Here, skill in painting needs to be considered in terms of the undoing of facility; in terms of the reversal or abandonment of practised skills. Strategies of disruption or restriction are deliberate attempts on the part of painters to productively problematize the technical means of their practice, or indeed to open up new possibilities for practice³².

³² Strategies of this kind can be considered with respect to Clark's description of '*practices of negation* in modernist art' - 'Deliberate displays of painterly awkwardness, ...'; 'Denial of full conscious control over the artefact' (2000: pgs 78-79), though I do not identify them with the modernism of Greenberg, as Clark does.

Another example of what may be considered a ‘delegation of process to matter’, and pre-dates the work of Pollock and Bacon by five hundred years, can be seen in the work of Donatello. The artist Robert Morris (b.1931) refers to Donatello’s bronze sculpture ‘Judith and Holofernes’ (executed 1460) in his essay ‘Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated’, originally published in 1970 (Morris: 1993), in which he discusses the ‘forms of behavior’ that he argues are evident in making activity and ‘automation’, a term he uses to refer to particular processes of making.

Donatello’s bronze, Morris suggests, is ‘an early example of a systematic, structurally different process of making being employed to replace taste and labor, and it shows up in the final work’ (p.86). Morris describes a specific process that Donatello employed, among others, in producing the bronze sculpture. While the sculptor could have employed modelling to represent parts of his figures’ costumes, he chose instead, as Morris shows, to make use of cloth dipped in wax for this purpose. On casting, however, ‘some of the cloth separated from the wax and the bronze replaced part of the cloth, revealing its texture’ (ibid). The sculptor did not subsequently attempt to correct this. Morris describes this making process as one of ‘automation’, and links Donatello’s approach to that of twentieth century artists:

What is particular to Donatello and shared by many twentieth-century artists is that some part of the systematic making process has been automated. The employment of gravity and a kind of “controlled chance” has been shared by many since Donatello in the materials/process interaction. However it is employed, the automation serves to remove taste and the personal touch by co-opting forces, images, and processes to replace a step formerly taken in a directing or deciding way by the artist.

(Morris, 1993: 86-87)

While Morris's account is coloured or possibly motivated by the concerns of the particular context in which he was writing, I would suggest that it is useful in further identifying the disposition to risk, openness and physical contingency that informs the work of often highly skilled visual artists.

The idea of skill that I seek to frame - skill understood in terms of practically acquired productive and explanatory knowledge, refers, as I have shown, not only to carefully developed methods of practice but also to the productive delegation of process to material and physical contingencies (a question of manipulating chance, to borrow from Deleuze's description of Bacon's painting practice [2003: 94]). I do not suggest that the 'disruptive' approach of Bacon for example could or should be taught at secondary level (it could very reasonably be argued that students at this level do not have adequate experience with materials and tools to be able to effect such 'disruption'). I would contend, however, that a consideration for improvisatory practice in painting activity – of 'delegating the painting process to matter', could inform practice in this educational context.

A hermeneutic conception of skill in painting

In identifying a hermeneutic conception of skill in painting I intend to pursue the assertion made in Part Four regarding the painter's orientation to practice. In the hermeneutic account of painting offered there, I suggested that the disposition to practice demanded of the painter was one of openness. I refer to openness in this context as an attitude of awareness and responsiveness that enables the painter to

negotiate the contingencies of painting as a material practice and to participate in painting as a historical practice.

I employ an understanding of skill here to characterize the form of interpretive engagement with physical materials that I assert is peculiar to painting, an ‘immersion in substances’, as Elkins puts it (2000: 193). In doing so, I refer briefly to Pareyson’s aesthetic theory of formativity (1988) as it is discussed by Eco (1989) and Vattimo (2010), and to the testimony of certain painters (Auerbach in Peppiatt, 2012; Bacon in Sylvester, 1993; Guston, 2011)³³. I also discuss the question of openness with reference to the hermeneutic identification of *Bildung* discussed in Part Four.

The question of the development of what might be termed ‘interpretive engagement’ with materials and tools is of crucial significance to the hermeneutic description of painting that is presented here. As both Eco (1989) and Vattimo (2010) show, and as indicated in the preceding part of this thesis, Luigi Pareyson proposes the view in his ‘*Estetica. Teoria della formativita*’ (1988) that the formative process of a work of art is an interpretive one. In Eco’s description, Pareyson’s theory of formativity asserts that the novelty of the artist’s inventions ‘consists of a set of suggestions that both a cultural tradition and the physical world have offered to the artist in the initial form of resistance and coded passivity’ (1989: 161). These suggestions, or ‘cues’, are ‘germs of forms’ that ‘exist as the premises of future configurations’ (ibid. 162). Pareyson’s

³³ The procedures of adult painters are not presented here as paradigms of skilled practice for adoption in secondary schools, but rather with a view to establishing a parallel between them and a particular aspect of the painting activity of children.

descriptions of artistic process could be dismissed as the theoretical flourishes of a non-artist, if they did not so persuasively correspond to the testimony of the experience of three significant painters.

Across a series of interviews conducted by David Sylvester between 1962 and 1986 (Sylvester, 1993), Francis Bacon (1909-1992) repeatedly draws attention to the role of accident in his work. Bacon's account of his manipulation of 'marks that have been made by chance' (Bacon in Sylvester, 1993: 53) bears comparison with Pareyson's identification of 'cues':

... by making these marks without knowing how they will behave, suddenly there comes something which your instinct seizes on as being for a moment the thing which you could begin to develop.

(ibid: 54)

Bacon's approach can be considered in relation to the strategies of disruption and restriction identified earlier, and to Bataille's characterization of the approach of Manet also cited above, a painter who, in the act of painting, gropes 'for the fluke or the random effect' (Bataille, 1955: 102).

According to Bacon, it is the painter's 'critical faculty' that enables her or him to select the mark 'that seems to be more real, truer to the image than another one' (ibid: 122). Philip Guston (1913-1980) describes a similar, deliberate suspension of control in the process of painting with reference to 'a process of 'interaction'' (2011: 152). In his account of an important transitional period in his work, Guston describes his painting activity:

I might explain it this way: working with paint, having the least preconceptions of what I was going to do when I started putting on the paint. I mean, treating the act of painting very much as a process of interaction between you and the paint and the surface in front of you. A give-and-take, I mean to say, between feeling an urge for gray, an urge for red, just a blind urge, and putting it on. And then not knowing whether it's right, or not even caring about whether it's right, and doing something else. And then it spoke to you, and then you reacted.

(ibid.)

It is to a sense of interaction that Wentworth, himself an artist, alludes in his phenomenological account of painting (2004). For Wentworth, the painter is engaged in 'a vital interaction' with her or his work:

...one that allows the state of the painting at any one time to affect the direction the work takes, such that the painter can be led to do things that he had no prior intention of doing.

(p.51)

The work of Frank Auerbach (b.1931) can be addressed with regard to the notion of interaction that Wentworth identifies. While the 'expressivity' of Auerbach's figurative painting has been both lauded and mocked³⁴, the account of the experience of the process of painting that the artist himself offers articulates very well the dynamic of suggestion that informs his work and is arguably consonant with Pareyson's account of 'cues' and 'germs of forms'. In interview with the writer and curator Michael Peppiatt, Auerbach describes his working process:

Well, as you paint, you're certainly waiting for something strange that will suggest an image to you, and you work backwards and forwards. This has been going on in oil painting, at least, for centuries – Leonardo talks about it. You attempt to record, then you get impatient with the recording and start making

³⁴ While Hughes (1990) and Rosenthal in Carlisle et al (2001) praise Auerbach as an expressionist painter, the painter Glenn Brown (b. 1966) mimics – and by flattening out, mocks the brushwork of Auerbach's work, in a series of paintings that Stallabrass (2006) describes as part of a 'specific attack on painterly touch as a vehicle of personal expression' (p.58).

irrational marks, and the irrational marks actually seem a better record than the literal ones. They suggest things, and suddenly in a corner of the picture you get a little bit of truth, which might actually expand into a whole truth. You don't know where it's going to come from, you see. What happens is that the painting begins to speak back to one. One has more energy when there's a bit of hope within the forms. The painting gets one out of one's chair, the painting makes one take the brushes in one's hand, the painting makes one go on working. In the end one has stored so many sensations in it that it begins to come alive.

(Auerbach in Peppiatt, 2012: 46)

Lampert, in her discussion of Auerbach's working practices in the Royal Academy catalogue of a retrospective exhibition of the painter's drawings and paintings in 2001, refers to the 'infinite workability' of paint, and describes how, during each painting session,

a fresh visual idea catapults itself into an image – unless it is judged wrong by the painter, perhaps only by a hair's breadth. If so the surface is scraped down, although as Auerbach admits, 'evidence accrues'.

(Lampert in Carlisle et al, 2001: 19)

While Auerbach's predominant concern in painting is the human form, an observational 'attempt to record', the dimension of openness in his painting activity can be seen in his responsiveness to marks that emerge from, as he puts it, a lack of patience, or a suspension of rational control.

The form of interpretive or interactive engagement that I identify here as a characteristic of a particular, historical determination of painting activity might further be understood as improvisatory engagement. In his discussion of improvisation, Peters (2009) makes reference to the physical and historical constraints of improvisatory practice. All improvisers, asserts Peters, 'must face the demand for a work from within the confines of a limited material universe' (2009: 11).

It is not a question of how much material the improviser has available but in what ways all material contains, sedimented within it, historical patterns of human engagement and creativity that impose limits on what can and cannot be done on the occasion of the material's subsequent reworking, whether improvised or not.

(ibid.)

What, it should be asked, do theorizations of formativity and improvisation and, indeed, the practice of adult painters, have to do with the painting activity of children? A factor common to the painting activity of both, it might be said, is the exploitation of paint as a 'continually open potentiality' (Wentworth, 2004: 38).

Matthews (2003) cites specific ways in which young children deliberately 'randomise' their action (p.31) in order to harness 'further possibilities of expressive action' (ibid: 59):

Painting episodes can be likened to a journey into an ever-changing landscape in which, at every twist and turn, new vistas of possibilities emerge. From moment to moment, the marks on the paper prompt representational possibilities which the child pursues, but which are later overtaken by other possibilities suggested by newly appearing shapes and colours.

(ibid: 117)

Similarly, Eisner (2002) states that when young children 'have substantial experience with paint and brush' they find themselves in a position to experiment and thus appropriate 'images they did not previously have but that they can use in the course of their painting' (p.117).

The level of engagement to which Eisner refers presupposes a rehearsed familiarity with painting materials and tools. Such 'immersive', productive engagement can

describe the painting activity of both children and adult painters and may be likened to the receptive engagement of the spectator who involves her or himself in a work of art, discussed in Part Four.

Opportunities for the development of skill might be fostered in painting for students in secondary education by promoting the attitude of openness towards the contingencies of paint-as-material referred to earlier. While the character of art practice (and in this case of painting) for older children and adolescents cannot but evolve in parallel with ‘radical changes to the mind and to the perception and understanding of the world’, as Matthews observes (1999: 142), a pedagogic emphasis on the material potential of paint at this level can continue to offer possibilities for the realization of symbolic or representational aims.

Skill in painting may further be considered hermeneutically with reference to the identification of *Bildung* discussed in Part Four. It is in this sense that Warnke’s characterization of Gadamer’s understanding of *Bildung* (1987) might be presented to mirror the notion of skill that may be developed through participation in painting as a continuous historical event:

Bildung, for Gadamer, is a ‘genuine historical idea’; that is, it reflects a process of historical preservation in which one both learns about facts and events but, more importantly, learns how these are to be appropriately integrated into one’s life and self-understanding.

(p.160)

If skill in painting is understood in terms of practically acquired knowledge, one might identify the productive exercise of such knowledge in every new interpretive encounter with paint.

To return to the sense of openness referred to above, one might align a view of skill in painting to the process of becoming 'gebildet', as delineated by Davey (2006b).

According to Davey, philosophical hermeneutics identifies the outcome of this process as an openness to 'the risks and challenges posed by the transformative powers of 'understanding' and, what is more, knowing how to navigate that openness' (p.40).

While I do not propose a view of skill in painting in such teleological terms, I do submit that it can be usefully described with respect to the development of openness to the risks and challenges of the transformative potential of paint.

Painting and skill: summary

In offering a view of skill with regard to painting as practically acquired productive knowledge, I have presented a concern for the rehearsal of technical skills in developing competence in painting. I have indicated further traditions of skilled painting practice and their evolution as they inform and challenge European academic discourse and practice in painting. I have signalled too the matter of the self-imposed disruption of practised skills by painters seeking to destabilize or overturn aspects of their practice for particular ends.

I have supplemented this account with a hermeneutic description of painting which determines skill, as practically acquired knowledge, as a set of resources that can be put to the service of the reinvention of paint, to borrow from Wentworth³⁵, that reveals itself as a possibility for the painter in her or his engagement with it.

Different forms of skilled practice can be understood further in terms of historically evolved cultural resources. Traditions of practice in painting are not unchanging (Elkins cites the repeated ‘loss’ of the tradition of oil painting in Europe [2001:72-73]) and can thus be considered dialectically, in that they make possible both reproductive and transformative practices.

Working with paint permits embodied, interpretive and transformative engagement with physical materials. This can be seen in the application of skilled technique (which may or may not be acquired in a prescriptive fashion) or strategies of disruption (which may necessitate the development of new skills).

5.3. Painting and expression

Introduction

In the following section I attend to a range of determinations of and approaches to the term ‘expression’ in order to establish the degree to which they inform the predominant concern of the present study, the transformative possibilities of painting as a interpretive, material practice. My discussion of ‘expression’ and ‘self-expression’

³⁵ For Wentworth the reinvention of paint is ‘the realization of the potentiality of paint by the painter’ (2004: 36).

gravitates primarily towards the activity and disposition of the maker or painter, rather than to qualities of particular works that might be described as ‘expressive’.

I acknowledge particular historical dimensions of the term ‘expression’ in its relation to early German and English romantic literature and in its treatment in twentieth century aesthetic³⁶ and educational accounts. I refer also to a number of commentators on art and design education who identify the development of skill with that of expression in art and design practice in schools (Eisner, 1972; Read, 1958; Richardson, 1948; Witkin, 1974), and often refer to painting as the means through which expression is realised.

I conclude by attending to a notable critique of ‘expressionism’ in the visual arts (Foster, 1985) and by identifying an alternative philosophical perspective on the question of expression. I employ the term ‘affect’, which enjoys a variety of determinations in philosophical discourse (I refer specifically to Deleuze [1997] and Deleuze and Guattari [1994]), to attend to the scope of making in art and design educational contexts.

Romanticism and ‘the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings’

In his ‘Aesthetics and Criticism’, Osborne (1955) traces the European cultural lineage of the term expression as it pertains to art:

³⁶ In the present context I wish to delimit my use of the term ‘aesthetic’ with reference to Rancière’s definition of ‘aesthetics’: ‘a particular historical regime of thinking about art and an idea of thought according to which things of art are things of thought’ (2009b: p.5).

The conception of art as a mode of expression, as ‘the language of feeling and emotion’, emerging with the new individualism of the Renaissance, was given a stronger impetus by Goethe, Schiller, Schleiermacher, Schopenhauer, and the poets and philosophers of the German Romantic movement in general, and has been prominent in aesthetic theory ever since.

(p.141)

The question of expression in its relation to poetry is explicitly addressed by a variety of European philosophers, critics and poets in the first half of the nineteenth century.

While Honour (1981) holds that ‘A Romantic work of art expresses the unique point of view of its creator’ (p.18), he signals also that early nineteenth century definitions of ‘Romanticism’, ‘are so contradictory that they cannot be reduced to a single coherent system’ (ibid: 14). In as far as the term expression carries particular significances with regard to notions of romantic poetry in early nineteenth century German literature (*romantische Poesie*, as Beiser shows, ‘designates not a form of literature or criticism but the romantics’ general aesthetic ideal’ [2003: 8]), it cannot be adopted in a consistent manner for discussion of European ‘Romanticism’.

Referring to the work of A. W. Schlegel (1767-1845) and F. W. J. Schelling (1775-1845), Beiser’s account of German Romanticism (2003) resists the view that early German romanticism, or *Frühromantik*, was ‘a simple doctrine of emotive expression’ (p.75):

While the romantics did hold that the artistic genius has the power to lay down the rules of his art, they never claimed that these rules have only a subjective significance, referring to nothing but the mind of the artist. What is indeed most striking about early romantic aesthetics is its *synthesis* of the doctrines of imitation and expression. It holds that in expressing his feelings and desires, in fathoming his own personal depths, the artist also reveals the creative powers of nature that work through him, for the creative activity of art is the highest organization and development of all the creative powers of nature.

(ibid: 75-76)

Abrams's study of romantic theory (1953) traces 'an approach to the expressive orientation' to Longinus (lived 1st or 3rd century A.D.) in his discussion of 'the sublime style as having its main sources in the thought and emotions of the speaker' (p.22). From Longinus, Abrams moves briskly to identify Wordsworth's 1800 Preface to 'Lyrical Ballads' (Wordsworth and Coleridge, 1991) as 'a convenient document, by which to signalize the displacement of the mimetic and pragmatic by the expressive view of art in English criticism' (ibid.) – a displacement, as Beiser shows, that does not occur in German romantic thought and literature.

For Wordsworth (1991), the Poet 'describes and imitates passions' (p.256) and 'all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' (ibid: 246). As Brett and Jones put it in their introduction to 'Lyrical Ballads' (Wordsworth, 1991), in invoking 'feeling' Wordsworth is 'concerned with states of mind in which strong emotion accompanies or is accompanied by some idea or ideas' (p.xlviii).

Abrams shows that 'romantic predications about poetry, or about art in general, turn on a metaphor, which, like, 'overflow', signifies the internal made external' (1953: 48) and assembles a series of identifications of poetry with expression from the first half of the nineteenth century by Byron (1788-1824), Coleridge (1772-1834), Hazlitt (1778-1830), Keble (1792-1866), Mill (1806-1873) and Shelley (1792-1822) (ibid: 48-49). It would be too onerous a task at this juncture to demonstrate the particular kinds of relationship that may or may not obtain between notions of expression and different forms of painting practice, though it is necessary here to acknowledge some of them in

order to proceed to twentieth century accounts of expression and the visual arts. As Bell (1999) puts it:

The idea that paintings express the painter – an idea developed from the Romantic era through the values of authenticity, spirituality, sublimity and, more recently, through appeals to the corporeal and sexual make-up of persons – has had incalculable effects on the development of painting in the last two centuries.

(p.168)

Expression: aesthetics and art and design education

In his discussion of pedagogies for art education in England, Atkinson (2002) states that in England in the 1970s and 1980s, ‘children’s and students’ art activities were described and conceived as acts of self-expression’ (p.138). The concern for the ‘expression of self’, he asserts, is central to ‘modernist conceptions of artistic practice and of the artist as a creative and imaginative individual’ (ibid.). Writing in 2011, Atkinson suggests that the notion of self-expression still informs ‘learning and teaching in art and design education’ in ‘many schools’, and is viewed ‘as a key justification for art education in association with notions of authenticity, originality, uniqueness’ (2011: 53).

If the sense of self expression still functions in the context that Atkinson identifies and in the way that he describes, I would suggest that it is worth asking how the term might be assessed or approached anew as it informs making in educational settings. I attend here to a range of appraisals and determinations of the term expression as it relates both to the practice of adult artists and in relation to art and design education. I do so in order to prize out some of the tensions that attend the term and are pertinent to

the view of painting that I offer, which places emphasis on the transformative and affective potential of engagement with materials.

In twentieth century aesthetic, art historical, educational and cognitive accounts, both expression and expressive art objects are often described or considered in terms of emotion (Bell, 1947; Collingwood, 1958; Langer, 1953; Osborne, 1955; Reid, 1969), externalization (Croce, 1992; Dewey, 1958; Field, 1970; Osborne, 1955; Read, 1958), individuality (Eisner, 1972; Richardson, 1948), imagination (Fry, 1998; Richardson, 1948), intuition (Croce, 1992) and inner states and inwardness (Parsons, 1987; Wollheim, 1973).

I address particular strands of interest in the notion of expression, as they appear in some of the accounts mentioned above. Some of these relate discussion of expression to notions of intuition and symbolization, while others emphasize the importance of the material or ‘medium’ to expressive activity, as I will show. I turn too to those commentaries on art and design education mentioned earlier in which the matter of expression is explicitly linked to the development of skill. I conclude this section with reference to Abbs’ criticisms of progressive approaches to art and design education in which he identifies an exaggerated emphasis on self expression.

The account of expression as ‘intuition’ outlined by Croce in ‘The Aesthetic as the Science of Expression and of the Linguistic in General’³⁷ (1992), the first part of his

³⁷ I cite Colin Lyas’s more recent translation of the first part of Croce’s ‘Estetica’ here, while in Part Four I refer to the Douglas Ainslie’s 1953 translation of the entire text.

‘Estetica’ originally published in Italian in 1902, seems to disconnect the matter of the practical engagement of the artist from that of artistic expression. For Croce, ‘expression cannot lack intuition, from which it is strictly speaking indivisible’ (p.9), the latter term comprehending ‘the perception of what is real, and the representation of what is simply possible’ (ibid: 4). Croce’s account cleaves the question of the artist’s practical and material engagement from the concept of artistic expression:

...expression taken in itself is an elementary theoretical activity; and, insofar as it is such, therefore precedes practical activity and the intellectual knowledge that illuminates it, and is thus independent of both of the former and of the latter.

(ibid: 125)

Artists, he states, do not create their expressions ‘in the act of painting and sketching, writing and composing’:

This would be a superficial way of understanding the procedure of artists, who, in fact, do not make strokes of the brush without first having seen by means of the imagination; and, if they have not yet seen, make brushstrokes, not to externalise their expressions (which do not then exist), but as if to try out and to have a simple point of support for their internal meditations and contemplations.

(ibid: 114)

While other theorists and commentators on art and design education pursue the notion of ‘trying out’ with respect to making, as I show in the following section, ‘Painting and imagination’, Croce does not develop his reference to what I understand as a highly significant dimension of making with materials. Reid (1969) argues that Croce’s use of the term ‘expression’, ‘scandalously underrated the actual manipulation and perception and imagination of the material medium, regarding it as merely instrumental, or even accidental and unnecessary’ (p.78). Reid declares his preference for the term

‘embodiment’ over expression in that it better ‘suggests that meaning is part of the medium-involved substance of the aesthetic’ (ibid.).

Another critic of Croce, Langer, states in ‘Feeling and Form’ (1953) that expression is ‘the presentation of an idea through an articulate symbol’ (p.67). Art expresses, she states, ‘*not* actual feeling, but ideas of feeling’ (ibid: 59). On her account, art is expressive because it is ‘a hundred per cent symbolic’: ‘It is not sensuously pleasing and *also* symbolic; the sensuous quality is in the service of its vital import’ (p.59). In her critique of both Croce and Collingwood (the latter for whom the expressive act ‘occurs only in the artist’s head’) she states:

So long as one tries to evade the symbolic form which mediates the “expression of the Idea”, one cannot study the process of that expression, nor point out precisely how it differs from other activities.

(ibid: 385)

Despite her emphasis here on the ‘process’ of expression, however, Langer does not offer a penetrating account of the artist’s expressive engagement with materials in her or his pursuit of ‘symbolic form’. One might compare Langer’s insistence on the symbolic status of art with Goodman’s account of expression in ‘Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols’ (1981), for whom expression is strictly a mode of symbolization and should be understood as a property of symbols employed by artists in their work.

Within the last seventy years a number of commentators writing with reference to art education in particular, have afforded attention to expression from the perspective of

skill or technical development. Their references to expression attend too to the related questions of material and medium.

Eisner (1972) asserts that expression is 'not simply a giving vent to feelings' (p.156). Skill, he continues, is a prerequisite for the 'transformation of feeling, image, or idea into some material' (ibid.). 'The ability to manage material so that it acts as a medium or agent for artistic expression is a necessary condition for such expression' (ibid: 81).

In describing art departments in schools in the United Kingdom in the 1970s, Witkin (1974), though not in specific reference to painting, cites the apparent disjuncture between 'free expression' and adequate 'control' of 'the medium' (p. 103). Pupils, he claims, need 'technical assistance' to free their expression (ibid.: 104). He acknowledges both the role of the material and that of 'impulse' ('the individual's feeling experienced as impulse' [ibid.: 108]) in describing the process of 'oscillation' that makes self-expression possible.

The question of expression is connected to that of technical skill with regard to painting by Read (1958). Skill, according to Read, is, 'the ability adequately to express a mental perception, or a feeling' (p.211). Skill in this sense, he continues, should be encouraged in as much as it contributes to 'the aesthetic value of the act of expression' (ibid.). Referring primarily to painting, Richardson (1948) emphasizes the necessity of teaching technique in helping children to close the gap between the development of their ideas and their means of expression:

...teachers will have realized that while it is impossible for any adult to teach a technique that matches childlike vision, children nevertheless need teaching if they are to feel their powers of expression keeping pace with the growth of their ideas, and so retain their interest in the subject.

(p.60)

It is worth remarking at this juncture that the question of 'self-expression' in education in the United Kingdom was the subject of criticism in the wake of the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967), as Fleming (2008) shows. According to Fleming, the report 'impacted on the teaching of visual art in primary schools' (p. 27), and has been criticised as both 'the key text which promoted excesses of child-centred, progressive education' and 'unbridled self-expression' (ibid: 26).

A persistent argument that emerges from Peter Abbs' criticism of progressive attitudes to art and design education across a number of his essays and books on aesthetic education (1987, 1989a, 1989b, 2003) is directed at an exclusive and excluding emphasis on expression on the part of educators. Progressive education, Abbs argues, 'came to be more about the singular self-regarding self than about the self-in-the-world and the self-in-a-cultural continuum', and neglected 'mastery of technique' (Abbs, 1987: 43). Works of art, he asserts, require, 'not only self-expression but also self-discipline and self-constraint in the prolonged engagement with the medium through which the art finally emerges, ...' (ibid: 44).

In 'The Pattern of Art-Making' (1989b), Abbs seeks to set a concern for notions of cultural inheritance and discipline alongside a concern for self-expression:

The notion of 'self-expression' as an absolute aim derives from an indulgent and insupportable view of human nature. To create we have invariably, to imitate. Poesis requires mimesis. We need to know what others have done and how they have done it.

(p.205)

Art has much to do with 'self' and with 'expression', but it also has much to do with discipline, form, structure, objectivity, community and cultural inheritance.

(p.202)

The concern for 'discipline' stressed by Abbs is echoed in Best's comments on expression in 'Feeling and Reason in the Arts' (1985). If particular disciplines, Best asserts, 'are not acquired, whether of language, the arts, or any other subject, students are not allowed but *deprived of* certain possibilities for freedom of expression and individuality' (p.66).

The strong influence of the views of Peter Fuller (1947-1990), an astute if conservative critic of modern visual art, is evident in Abbs' criticisms. Indeed, Abbs and his co-authors took the title for their anthology 'The Symbolic Order: A Contemporary Reader on the Arts Debate' (1989b) from Fuller's 1983 essay 'Art in Education' (1985). In the latter, Fuller reviews his own art education and describes the emphasis on what he sees as 'culture-free' self-expression in modern art education. He states:

Originality, health and growth in aesthetic life appear to depend on something more than talent; they also require contact with a living tradition, rooted in a society's shared symbolic order – a tradition which provides meaningful iconography and patterns, and specific techniques with which to work and develop them. Indeed, far from being opposed to tradition and convention, individual aesthetic development cannot progress beyond the infantile without them.

(Fuller, 1985: 197)

While Fuller's reference to 'society's shared symbolic order' is questionable both in its lack of definition and applicability, his commentary here should not be seen as an endorsement of a culturally reproductive model of art education, concerned only with the transmission of skills. A sympathetic reading of Fuller's view might account for tradition as he presents it in terms of a set of cultural resources – historically determined practices that are available for expressive transformation.

The positioning of a notion of 'self' with regard to prevailing cultural conditions and the need for a reconsideration of the notion of self-expression in art education are among the themes addressed in Freedman's 'Artmaking/Troublemaking: Creativity, Policy, and Leadership in Art Education' (2007). In this critique of US educational policy, Freedman refers to the production of school age art, suggesting that 'creative production may need to be thought of less as therapeutic self-expression and more as the development of cultural and personal identity' (p.211). This shift in emphasis would allow, she argues, for students' creativity to be considered as 'an imaginative illustration of their responses to external conditions', rather than 'merely emoting what is inside of them' (ibid.). The 'personal and cultural growth' of students, Freedman asserts, depends both on 'the rich and complex construction of knowledge' and 'learning through application based on students' interests, capabilities, and goals' (ibid.).

In closing this section of the discussion, it is worth comparing the assessments of Abbs (1989b) and Best (1985) with regard to 'self-expression' with that of the writers of the

‘All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education’ report (1999). While the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education observe in their report to the government that, ‘It is essential for education to provide opportunities for young people to express their own ideas, values and feelings’ (1999: 36), they temper their discussion of self-expression with reference to the processes of making:

... there is a difference between giving direct vent to feelings – as in a cry of pain or a jump for joy – and the creative processes of the arts. Composing and playing music, writing poetry, making a dance may all be driven by powerful emotional impulses; but the process is not simply one of discharging feelings – though it may involve that – but of giving them form and meaning.

(ibid.)

Expression: affect and transmission

I refer here to a particular critique of the notion of expression as it pertains to visual art - a critique of the ‘language’ of ‘expressionism’, and to an alternative perspective from which expression can be comprehended. In his critique of expression and expressionism in ‘The Expressive Fallacy’, Foster (1985) seeks to deconstruct expressionism as a representational code of communication and the notion of an anterior inner self that ‘expresses’. Drawing upon Louis Marin’s description of the representational orientation of classical painting (1980), Foster asserts that expressionist painting conforms to a code:

Both types of representation are codes: the classical painter suppresses nonnaturalistic marks and colors so as to simulate (a staged) reality; the expressionist “frees” such marks and colors of naturalism so as to simulate direct expression.

(1985: 60-61)

Expressionism, he further contends, holds a contradictory relation to the order on which it rests, that of the ‘metaphysics of presence’, or ‘the opposition of inside versus

outside' (ibid.: 61). Despite insisting on 'the primary, originary, interior self', Foster argues, expressionism,

reveals that this self is never anterior to its traces, its gestures, its "body". Whether unconscious drives or social signs, these mediated expressions "precede" the artist: they speak him rather more than he expresses them.

(ibid.: 62)

While Massumi's concern is not that of 'expressionism' in the visual arts, his argument follows that the assumptions common to communicational models of expression, such as 'the interiority of individual life' and its potential for transmissibility, 'have been severely tested by structuralist, poststructuralist, postmodern and postpostmodern thought' (Massumi, 2002: xiii).

Rather than according expressive agency to a person's inner states, or to understand expression as the externalisation of individuality, as Lowenfeld and Brittain appear to do in their statement that, 'A child will draw and paint from what he is' (1987: 30), such agency might be understood in terms of the ways in which an individual can appropriate, modify and combine particular cultural resources. In 'A Thousand Plateaus', Deleuze and Guattari (2004) suggest that expressive qualities are 'appropriative' and 'constitute a having more profound than being':

Not in the sense that these qualities belong to a subject, but in the sense that they delineate a territory that will belong to the subject that carries or produces them.

(pgs 348-349)

At this juncture I deploy the notion of affect to suggest another means of addressing what might be termed 'expressive making' in educational contexts and beyond, and to

sever as far as possible the association of such making with the notions of originality and authenticity that some ascribe to modernist discourse (Addison and Burgess, 2003; Atkinson, 2006b).

The significance of affect in the context of making in educational settings is addressed by Addison and Burgess (2015), for whom the manipulation of materials is an affective process, ‘in which the maker constructs a dialogue between intention and material by deploying physical and semiotic tools, ...’ (p.47). The affective dimension of painting in particular is addressed by Addison (2011), who shows how certain ‘felicities’ of colour interaction on the surface of a painting result from affective responses on the part of the maker to ‘the material affordances of colour/paint’ (p.369).

The term ‘affect’ holds a special significance for Deleuze and Guattari in their definitions of the work of art and the work of the artist in ‘What is Philosophy’ (1994). For them, the work of art is ‘*a bloc of sensations, that is to say, a compound of percepts and affects*’ (p.164), and artists are ‘presenters of affects, the inventors and creators of affects’: ‘They not only create them in their work, they give them to us and make us become with them, they draw us in to the compound’ (ibid: 175). This latter remark would seem to suggest a level of expressive transmission on the part of the artist.

While Deleuze and Guattari do not offer a formal definition of affect in ‘What is Philosophy’, Deleuze asserts in his discussion of Spinoza’s Ethics, ‘Spinoza and the

Three “Ethics” (1997), that affects should not be considered as ‘a form of expression’ (p.143). Signs or affects, he contends, constitute an experience rather than a knowledge, ‘a material and affective language, one that resembles cries rather than the discourse of the concept’ (ibid: 144).

The interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari’s use of ‘affect’ in ‘A Thousand Plateaus’ offered by Massumi in his translator’s notes to the 1987 edition (reprinted 2004) draws on Spinoza’s definition³⁸ and may be useful in considering expression in visual art in terms of transmissibility:

L’affect (Spinoza’s *affectus*) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act.

(Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: xvii)

In considering practices in the visual arts it could be productive to conceptualize expression in terms of the transmission of affect; to understand expression, that is, in terms of the varying intensities of experiential states which presuppose culturally conditioned expressive activity, and to accommodate for the ways in which the ‘expressive’ power of works of visual art affects us as viewers.

³⁸ In his ‘Ethics’ Spinoza (1996) gives the following definition of affect:

By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body’s power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time, the ideas of these affections (p.70).

Expression: summary

In concluding this discussion of expression as it relates to painting, I refer again to Reid's emphasis on the significance 'the material medium' (1969: 78) and Abb's concern for 'prolonged engagement with the medium' (1987: 44). Though I would part company with Abbs on his insistence on 'discipline', my own concern is to approach the question of expression in this context with regard to interpretive and transformative practice.

I have described expression as it relates to visual art practice in terms of the circulation of affects. Such a description accounts for expression in terms of the intersubjective experiential states that underpin the making of works of art, rather than approaching such making as if it were simply a process of granting outward form to inner feelings.

The question of the transformative potential of painting in educational settings or elsewhere, addressed above in terms of expression, is central to the hermeneutic appraisal of painting activity that I propose. Painting practice (I refer here to my earlier qualification of my use of these terms) on the part of the individual agent can be seen as an interpretive negotiation (or in every instance, *re-negotiation*) of the scope of a variety of historically and culturally determined materials, tools and procedures.

It is Croce's unconsidered notion of the painter 'trying out' with brushstrokes her or his 'internal meditations and contemplations' (1992: 114) that Pareyson's aesthetic theory of formativity properly develops with reference to the significance of 'the cue'

or ‘the germ’ in the process of artistic formation (Eco, 1989: 162). It is with a view to the process of formation, or expressive action (of transformative engagement with materials rather than prior mental representation), that painting can be understood as a hermeneutic activity.

5.4. Painting and imagination

In pursuing the hermeneutic description of painting activity signalled above, and departing to some degree from the foregoing discussion of expression, I consider here particular understandings of the term ‘imagination’³⁹ as they may apply to or inform painting-as-making. I shall limit the scope of my presentation with reference to only some of the philosophical definitions and questions that attend the term in its various facets of meaning. I illustrate my account with reproductions of some of the works produced by the students who participated in the ‘Painting Encounters’ project at the Saatchi Gallery. These examples relate to the imaginative work of synthesis and the pursuit of formal cues that can be identified in painting activity.

The distinction that Mary Warnock identifies in her ‘Imagination’ (1976), seems apposite in prefacing my remarks here, namely, that ‘...the sense of ‘imagination’ in which philosophers are interested when they are analysing perception or the understanding of general terms is entirely different from the sense of the word in which critics and aestheticians are interested’ (p.35). While I do not claim to fall into the camps of either of the latter, I identify imagination here with regard to painting in

³⁹ I refer here both to ‘imagination’ and ‘the imagination’ and do not discriminate in their usage.

the formative, interpretive and experimental dimensions of practice, and with respect to the question of mental representation. I acknowledge here also the notion of ‘creative imagination’ with reference to painting-as-making.

I wish to address the question of imagination with respect to its significance for a hermeneutic appraisal of painting activity. This approach to painting-as-making suggests that the disposition to practice demanded of the painter is one of openness – an attitude of responsiveness that permits the painter to engage in painting as a material practice and to participate in painting as a historically and culturally determined activity of meaning-making.

I first briefly consider some definitions of imagination that refer to its creative dimension and second, attend to the issue of imagination as mental representation. Third, I discuss imagination in relation to the correspondence between aspects of making paintings and the activity of viewing paintings. I refer in this regard to what Wentworth (2004) nominates the ‘intentionalist’ view⁴⁰ of painting held by Wollheim (1987). Finally, I address imagination with respect to a notion of ‘trying out’ – of experimentation with material and visual possibilities in the activity of painting.

⁴⁰ This view, as Wentworth characterizes it, comprehends the painter’s intentions as thoughts ‘that cause his action and form its content’ (2004: 4).

The creative imagination

The notion of the creative imagination, or the creative dimension of imagination, has occupied the attention of aestheticians, poets, philosophers, educational theorists and art historians. I refer briefly here to only some of their commentaries.

Croce (1953) refers to certain passages in the ‘Life of Apollonius of Tyana’, by the Greek sophist Philostratus (c.170 – c.245 AD), which ‘several historians’ consider to be ‘the first affirmation in history of the conception of *imaginative creation*’ (p.171).

Croce describes the function of imagination with reference to Philostratus’ account of the Greek artists Phidias and Praxiteles in the following way:

...imagination, which is a wiser agent than simple imitation (φαντασία ... σοφωτέρα μιμήσεως δημιουργός), (...) gives form, like the other, not only to what has been seen, but also to what has never been seen, imagining it on the basis of existing things and in that way creating Jupiters and Minervas.

(ibid.)

This description is echoed in Efland’s more recent definition of imagination as it appears in his discussion of art and cognition in education (2002), and which may be understood as a ‘creative’ one:

Imagination is the act or power of forming mental images of what is not actually present to the senses or what has not actually been experienced. It is also the act or power of creating new ideas or images through the combination and reorganization of previous experiences.

(p.133)

Pope’s discussion of creativity (2005) refers to the significance of Kearney’s ‘revaluation’ of the creative imagination (1998), in which the currency of Philostratus’ description is still evident:

... Kearney sites his version – and sights his highly metaphorical vision – of a specifically ‘creative imagination’ in a succession of moments stretching from antiquity to postmodernity: from ‘the imaginative powers of making’ of the ancient Greeks (*poiesis* as ‘making’ and *technê demiurgikê* as ‘primal craft’) to the variously ‘ludic’ (playful, game-like) and ‘performative’ (enacted, self-realising) models of contemporary poststructuralism and phenomenology. What these processes have in common, Kearney insists, is ‘the human power to convert absence into presence, actuality into possibility, “what-is” into “something-other-than-it-is”’ (p.4).

(Pope, 2005: pgs 14-15)

Osborne’s presentation (1968) of ‘the strands and clusters of ideas which contributed most prominently to the Romantic concept of creative imagination’, identifies imagination as ‘the source of inventiveness and originality’ by ‘its power to change and recombine the stored impressions of experience’ (p.152).

Coleridge’s account of the ‘secondary imagination’ would seem to accord with this view, and is pertinent to the present discussion, though I refer to it here only glancingly⁴¹. This Coleridge describes in Chapter XIII of his ‘Biographia Literaria’ (1975), as that which ‘dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create’ and ‘struggles to idealize and unify’: it is an ‘echo’ of the ‘primary imagination’, ‘the living power and prime agent of all human perception’ (p.167). Warnock (1976) describes the ‘essential activity’ of Coleridge’s ‘secondary imagination’ as the ‘re-creation of something out of the materials which we have first acquired from perception’ (p.92). Coleridge further defines the term in Chapter XIV, with reference to the activity of the poet, which by virtue of the imagination, ‘that synthetic and

⁴¹ I will not refer here, as several commentators do, including Warnock (1976), to its debt both to Kant and Schelling.

magical power’, among other functions, ‘blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial’ (Coleridge, 1975: 174).

Following Warnock, it might be useful at this juncture to consider imagination as a *re-creative* faculty as a means of indicating the ways in which ‘the stored impressions of experience’ can be deployed in novel configurations (in both visual arts practice and educational contexts). This is not to suggest that painting in particular is a matter of transcribing or externalizing prior mental representations. As Wentworth (2004) puts it, ‘the idea that a painter has a fully formed mental image of a finished painting’ is ‘utterly implausible’ (p.7). It is to the question of imagination as mental representation that I now turn.

Imagination as mental representation

While the literature relating to imagination as mental representation is too voluminous to discuss adequately within the terms of the present discussion⁴², I wish here to acknowledge the key significance of the Aristotelian and Kantian accounts of the imagination, as essayed respectively by Kearney (1994) and Johnson (1987), and to dwell briefly on the educational significance of the function of mental imagery or representations.

Kearney traces the significance of the Aristotelian account of ‘*phantasia*’, or ‘the image as an internal activity of the mind’ (p.107). This ‘realist’ account, he observes,

⁴² The question has been variously addressed philosophically and phenomenologically (significantly in the twentieth century by Sartre [1972]).

in contrast to the Platonic or ‘idealist’ account, emphasizes ‘the role of the image as a mental intermediary between sensation and reason rather than as an idolatrous imitation of a divine demiurge’ (ibid.: 106). The ‘mediational rapport’ of the imagination seen as a picturing activity, Kearney continues, with ‘our sensible experience is one which may result in the apprehension of truth rather than leading us into an illusory world of imitations’ (ibid.: 109). ‘Reason simply cannot function without the mediation of the mental image (*phantasma noētikon*)’, Kearney concludes (ibid.).

Johnson (1987) teases out two salient features of Kant’s treatment of the imagination as it is elaborated in his ‘Critique of Judgement’ (2007), originally published in 1790. These regard both the ‘the temporal unity of our consciousness’ (Johnson, 1987: 157) and what might be described as the impulse to creative action, and are characterized thus by Johnson:

Kant understood imagination as a capacity for organizing mental representations (especially images and percepts) into meaningful unities that we can comprehend. *Imagination generates much of the connecting structure by which we have coherent, significant experience, cognition, and language.*

(ibid.: 165)

Kant saw that the mind does not go about only with a fixed stock of concepts under which it organizes what it receives through its senses. It also engages in the creative act of reflecting on representations in search of novel orderings of them, which thereby generates new meaning.

(ibid.: 157)

While the limitations of these descriptions with regard to the full complexity of Kant’s treatment of the imagination should be acknowledged, it would otherwise be seriously

negligent to omit mention of the ‘Critique of Judgement’ within the terms of this discussion.

The question of recruiting sense impressions in creative activity can be found in Vygotsky’s essay of 1930, ‘Imagination and Creativity in Childhood’ (2004). Here Vygotsky identifies play as the ‘preparatory stage’ for a child’s artistic creation (p.67) and states that, ‘A child’s play is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, but a creative reworking of the impressions he has acquired’ (ibid.: 11). Vygotsky argues for the provision of a range of sensory experiences for children with a view to strengthening their creativity (ibid.: 15).

The ability to draw upon and deploy mental representations or images in making appears crucial to the pedagogic arguments for the imagination developed by Addison in ‘Developing Creative Potential: Learning Through Embodied Practices’ (2010). Here Addison insists that ‘learning and other forms of creative action require imagination’, which he takes to include:

visualisation (thinking and ‘shaping’ through images); ingenuity, invention and the world of possibility; ordering or synthesising and syncretising (seeing as totalities), as well as acknowledging difference and thinking other, a process that leads to empathy.

(p. 49)

One of the students (Student 15) who participated in the Saatchi Gallery ‘Painting Encounters’ project sessions imaginatively synthesized a number of application techniques (techniques with which she had earlier experimented using both a roller sponge and a comb, and permitting her paint to run) to make a startling, highly

personal painting (see Figure 8 below.) In the subsequent interview conducted with the student (Interview Four), she refers to the development of the painting:

Oh, cos, um in the beginning we were supposed to use wet surfaces like I liked the feeling of using the (p) white rolling thing and then putting wet on there and then rolling it out on paint to see the textures and then I just went from there and the dripping paint thing, I liked doing that. So I put them together (Interview Four, Appendix 2, p. 381).



Figure 8: Painting by Student 15, Painting Encounters project 2012. Acrylic on paper.

The student thus combined a number of technical procedures in producing this painting. She began by fashioning a partial red ground over her A3 cartridge paper both by dripping paint and rolling it. She subsequently painted the silhouette of a figure, which in turn she used a comb to partially obscure with a further screen of denser red. Her inventive approach arguably yields a highly affecting image: the student's decisions and choices with respect to mark-making, colour, paint densities, scale and depth, combine to form a richly suggestive image.

For Efland (2002) imagination ‘refers to the cognitive processes that enable individuals to organize or reorganize images, to combine or recombine symbols, as in the creation of metaphors or narrative productions’ (p.134). Read (1958) defines creative activity in terms of ‘*the principle of origination*’, itself a function of imagination (p.33). He further defines imagination as the capacity to relate remembered images ‘one to another – to make combinations of such images either in the process of thinking, or in the process of feeling’ (ibid.: 38).

It is worth considering the pedagogic approach of Marion Richardson with regard to the question of mental imagery. In ‘Art and the Child’ (1948) Richardson claims that the concern of the ‘true artist’ is ‘always with matching something inward, never with imitating a physical or objective reality’ (p.61). In relating her experiences of teaching art she describes the way in which she provided her pupils with a ‘word picture’ from which she asked them to paint: ‘I knew that the children did their best work when painting from a mental image’ (ibid: 14). Swift (1992) characterizes Richardson’s aims as an attempt to:

... reject the traditional drawing emphasis on externally agreed, skill-based replication and copying, and replace it with an experience that involved the learner in taking responsibility for the quality of work produced through working from visual memory and visualisation.

(p.126)

The hermeneutic account of painting activity that I propose, however, does not conceive of painting-as-making as a means of realizing mental imagery or representations. Instead, it comprehends making as a process of transformative and embodied engagement with materials. The function of imagination in this process is

vital both with respect to the notion of ‘artistic formation’ (or ‘formativity’ according to the aesthetics of Pareyson [1988]) – in choosing from and acting on ‘cues’ in the unfolding context of making, and to the recruitment of perceptual experiences for symbolic or expressive purposes (there is arguably strong interplay between the two). A useful example of such imaginative engagement in painting activity is evident in a painting by a Year 9 student who attended the ‘Painting Encounters’ project at the Saatchi Gallery, in which she makes stunning use of formal cues for representational purposes (see Figures 9 and 10 below).

Having initially asked the group to experiment with washes of complementary colours and the force of gravity (to tip or hold their chosen support at an angle to test the play of the consistency of the paint), I subsequently asked students if they wished to return to their experiments to see how they might be worked with. My directions were deliberately vague – I asked students to see if there was anything that could be changed or added to in their experiments. Student 13 saw that some of the staining evident on one of her experimental paintings resembled smoke, so followed this cue in developing an industrial landscape, replete with bulging chimneys.



Figure 9: Painting by Student 13 (stage one), Painting Encounters project 2012. Acrylic and pencil on paper.



Figure 10: Painting by Student 13 (stage two), Painting Encounters project 2012. Acrylic and pencil on paper.

Student 3 saw representational scope in the gravitational run of two thin consistencies of acrylic paint while engaged on the same experiment and later transformed the running lines into spindly trees (see Figure 11 below).



Figure 11: Painting by Student 3 (stage two), Painting Encounters project 2012. Acrylic on paper.

It is vital to acknowledge further that the role of the body is of central importance to the activity of painting, as Wentworth (2004) describes it against the ‘intentionalist account’:

Painting is not an activity fundamentally carried out by the mind, directing the mechanical body to perform actions in accordance with its mental representations. Rather it is a bodily activity, one that is an expression of the lived-body’s way of being in the world.

(p.15)

The direction and form of the marks made during the experimental exercises with sponges, combs, rollers and sticks by the students who attended the ‘Painting Encounters’ project sessions provide direct evidence of their bodily orientation to their application tool and support (see Figures 12, 13, and 14 below).



Figure 12: Painting by Student 11, Painting Encounters project 2012. Acrylic on paper.



Figure 13: Painting by Student 14, Painting Encounters project 2012. Acrylic on paper.



Figure 14: Painting by Student 1, Painting Encounters project 2012. Acrylic on paper.

Imagination and recognition

I wish to briefly address the role of imagination with reference to the question of recognition⁴³ as it pertains to painting. I do so with a view to signalling the correspondence between the activities of making and viewing paintings, both of which necessitate imaginative work – for the painter in pursuing pictorial opportunities or choosing between pictorial possibilities, and for the viewer in recognizing the content of a given painting by drawing upon her or his reserve of visual experiences, both of other paintings and the wider world. I proceed, however, with caution, given that the account of painting I wish to present, as indicated above with reference to Wentworth’s ‘intentionalist’ objections (2004), is that of an interpretive and embodied practice.

⁴³ I use ‘recognition’ here with regard to the activity of viewing paintings, though ‘perception’ might also be used in this way.

Wollheim holds the experience of ‘seeing-in’ outlined in his ‘Painting as an Art’ (1987) - that of ‘seeing the marked surface, and of seeing something in the surface’ (p.21), as common both to the painter and to the viewer of paintings. In the case of the painter it is this sense of ‘twofoldness’ that ‘comes to guide the way he marks the surface’ (ibid.). For Wollheim, ‘seeing-in’ is one of the ‘fundamental perceptual capacities that the artist relies upon the spectator to have and to use’ (ibid: 45)⁴⁴. Curiously, Wollheim’s phenomenology of ‘seeing-in’ refers very little to the imagination, though the operation of the latter can arguably be seen as one of the ways in which both the painter and the viewer are enabled to ‘see-in’.

Indeed, for Wollheim, in the special case of paintings that contain a spectator, the workings of the imagination complicate the viewer’s ‘twofold’ experience. Wollheim contends that the viewer’s identification with the depicted spectator causes her or him to ‘lose sight of the marked surface’ - it is, he continues, ‘the task of the artist’ to return the spectator ‘from imagination to perception: twofoldness must be reactivated’ (ibid: 166). Podro’s account of depiction (1998) holds that the exercise of the imagination assists in, and sustains, the process of recognition. One of the two main conditions of depiction, he asserts, is ‘the intention to use the object that is materially present – the painting or drawing – to imagine what we recognize within it’ (p.5).

⁴⁴ Wentworth’s objection to ‘seeing-in’ (2004) is clearly stated in his argument that the theory ‘accounts for the perception of paintings that fail to work, but not for that of paintings which do’ (p.224). It is only in the former case, he asserts, ‘that we are aware of the paint qua paint’ (ibid.).

Wollheim's notion of 'seeing-in' enjoys some similarity to Gombrich's 'principle of guided projection' (2002) which he employs to refer to impressionist painting:

It is the point of impressionist painting that the direction of the brushstroke is no longer an aid to the reading of forms. It is without any support from structure that the beholder must mobilize his memory of the visible world and project it into the mosaic of strokes and dabs on the canvas before him.

(p.169)

Gombrich describes the ways in which the faculty of projection came to serve as a method for painters and as a condition of viewing paintings, a process in which we watch 'our imagination come into play, transforming the medley of colour into a finished image' (ibid: 167).

While the question of the degree of intentionality that Wollheim claims for the painter is worthy of lengthier discussion, the experience of 'seeing the marked surface, and of seeing something in the surface' that he describes (1987: 21) is pertinent to the present appraisal of the imagination. It could be argued that the exercise of the imagination enables the painter to select from and follow the perceptual and material cues that present themselves in the process of formation: to harness, for example, the mark afforded by a particular application tool or to exploit the flaws in a wooden support in pursuit of expressive or representational aims. During the 'Painting Encounters' project, having experimented with a variety of application tools, Student 13 made imaginative use of a fan brush to render the tail feathers of a bird (see Figure 15 below).



Figure 15: Painting by Student 13, Painting Encounters project 2012. Acrylic on paper.

The value of Leonardo's famous advice to painters, predicated on the exercise of the imagination, is arguably undiminished:

Do not despise my opinion, when I remind you that it should not be hard for you to stop sometimes and look into the stains of walls, or ashes of a fire, or clouds, or mud or like places, in which, if you consider them well, you may find really marvellous ideas. The mind of the painter is stimulated to new discoveries, the compositions of battles of animals and men, various compositions of landscapes and monstrous things, such as devils and similar things, which may bring you honour, because by indistinct things the mind is stimulated to new inventions.

(Leonardo da Vinci, 2008: 173-4)

'Trying out'

Before concluding the present discussion, I wish to turn attention to the question of forms of experimentation or imaginative 'trying out', which can be seen to apply both to painting and other visual arts practices. A crucial function of the imagination can be identified in what Addison (2010) terms 'visualisation': 'thinking and 'shaping'

through images' (p.49). In terms of painting-as-making, this might comprehend the combinatorial or synthesizing processes through which juxtapositions or conjunctions of visual elements can be achieved. Gaut's interrogation of creativity and imagination (2003) refers precisely to this dimension of imaginative making:

...imagination is peculiarly suited – suited of its nature – to be the vehicle for active creativity, since one can try out different views and approaches by imagining them, without being committed either to the truth of the claims or to acting on one's imaginings. Imagination allows one to be playful, to play with different hypotheses, and to play with different ways of making objects.

(p.161)

This view is shared by Eisner (2002) who emphasizes the imaginative dimension of experimentation:

Imagination, that form of thinking that engenders images of the possible, also has a critically important cognitive function to perform aside from the creation of possible worlds. Imagination also enables us to try things out – again in the mind's eye – without the consequences we might encounter if we had to act upon them empirically. It provides a safety net for experiment and rehearsal.

(p.5)

Skills may arguably be developed in the course of 'trying out'. I do not refer here to the possible acquisition of skills through rehearsal or practice, but to their development through immersive engagement with materials and imaginative interpretation of their particular qualities.

As has been indicated earlier, both Eisner (2002) and Matthews (2003) refer to the way in which young children experiment when painting. Matthews adopts the term 'randomisation' to indicate the way in which young children generate opportunities for

making ‘in the unfolding event of the painting process’ (2003: 31). In his ‘The Arts and the Creation of Mind’ (2002), Eisner describes the way in which young children ‘develop a refined sense of control’ over paint and brush which permits them to experiment and thus appropriate ‘images they did not previously have but that they can use in the course of their painting’ (p.117). In the same text, however, Eisner raises the question of skill in relation to the imagination. Eisner sees that the latter may be stymied by the student’s lack of ‘technical skills’: ‘Even an imaginative construction held clearly in the mind’s eye has no empirical life unless the student has the technical means for expressing it’ (ibid.: 99).

5.5. Conclusion

In this part of the thesis I have attended to the terms ‘skill’ and ‘expression’ as they can be seen to relate to practices of painting in educational contexts and more broadly. As I have shown, these terms are often discussed in tandem, particularly where the development of skill is seen as a means to increased powers of expression for young people.

In offering a set of views of skill with regard to painting I have identified it in terms of practically acquired productive knowledge, but also with reference to what I have termed ‘strategies of disruption’ – procedures or approaches that the painter employs to move beyond her or his practised working habits. I have suggested that sustained engagement with material resources specific to activities of painting can encourage and promote confidence in students’ making. I have also employed theoretical

accounts of making - and artists' own accounts of their practices, and a related set of terms – improvisation, interaction, interpretation, 'formativity' and openness, to refer to skill in painting from the hermeneutic perspective that informs and motivates the present research. At the level of secondary art and design education, skill might be understood as the development of an awareness and responsiveness to materials, tools, images and ideas; as the ability to draw upon knowledge of these acquired through practice and experience.

I have sought to establish a conceptual ground for the identification of the term 'expression' with reference to early romantic literature and twentieth century aesthetic and educational discourse. With respect to the latter I have identified particular criticisms of notions of expression or self-expression in post-war writing on arts and art education in the United Kingdom, which have to do with concerns for discipline, skill and process.

I have alluded to the affective scope of practices of visual art and suggested the notion of affect as an alternative means of attending to young peoples' making in educational contexts.

In bringing this part to a close, and anticipating one of the significant concerns of the second painting project, 'Painting Events', that I discuss in the following section, I attend to the issue of the imagination as it relates to painting. Efland (2002) locates the

significance of the imagination in meaning-making, and beyond the strictures of cognitive operations per se:

Imagination is not any one specific cognitive operation in its own right but is the result of cognitive acts that enable individuals to construct meanings that are generally less dependent on conventional, rule-governed, or propositional forms of thinking and communication.

(p.134)

It is with a view to meaning-making as a process of transformative – and imaginative, engagement with materials, that I propose painting as a hermeneutic activity. It is arguably in the interplay of the painter's bodily orientation to tools, materials and support - and the possibilities for making thereby afforded, and her or his recruitment and interpretation of aspects of their prior visual experience, that painting-as-making can be productively comprehended. The operation of the imagination is not therefore limited to the realization of visual schemata or mental representations, but is integral to the bodily, mental and perceptual resources upon which the painter draws in her or his activity.

Part Six: Painting projects

6.1. General introduction

In the following part of this thesis I present the background and development of two painting projects, ‘Painting Encounters’ and ‘Painting Events’, that were conducted in the education space of the Saatchi Gallery, a major public gallery in London, in 2012 and 2013 as part of the present research. I offer accounts of the objectives, design and teaching of both projects, and select and interpret data collected during both, which took the form of interviews and photographic records of the activity and visual productions of participating students. The more significant interpretation offered here – and certainly the most detailed, is that of the second project. This account is directly informed by – and through close attention to examples of practical work extends, the theoretical themes developed in Parts Four and Five.

As I will show, both projects were designed to foreground the potential of the material affordances of paint for secondary level learners, through exploratory and interpretive making. While ‘Painting Encounters’, conducted in April 2012, served as a pilot project, the second project, ‘Painting Events’, which I perceive as a richer educational experience for its participants than its predecessor, was designed to allow for what I describe as ‘painting events’: activity in and reflection on making events that were determined by participating students through their experimentation with material and visual resources.

In order to identify the concerns and scope of the painting projects that form the central components of my practical research, I preface their discussion with reference to two practical painting-based projects that I undertook between 2009 and 2010 as part of the present research. The first of these took the form of a series of paintings that I exhibited in 2009 alongside the cohort of MA Art & Design in Education students at the Institute of Education. This work was produced at an early stage of my research, when I had not yet finally decided against pursuing practice-led or practice-based research⁴⁵, and can be seen as an attempt to further the approach of the MA visual presentation described in Part Four - that of interrogating the potential of painting-based work made in a studio context for educational research. The second project, conducted in the autumn term of 2010, involved a set of painting experiments that I designed to test the capacities of a range of paint consistencies, supports and application tools. Not having methodically investigated painting materials and tools in this way before, I was able to feed my findings directly into the planning of the practical sessions that eventually took form as the pilot painting project, 'Painting Encounters'.

I then move to describe both the evolution of the aims, design and context of what became the 'Painting Encounters' project. While I have threaded an illustrated account of the activity and work of some of the students who attended the sessions through the discussion of imagination as it relates to painting in the latter section of Part Five, my emphasis here is on the analysis of a series of interviews conducted with some of the

⁴⁵ I cite the term 'practice-led research' here as it is used by Dean and Smith (2010) to refer 'both to the work of art as a form of research and to the creation of the work as generating research insights which might then be documented, theorised and generalised, ...' (p.7).

participating students. I discuss the development of the interview formats that were employed across the sessions, the manner in which the interviews were conducted and the approach taken in transcribing the interview recordings. I also present the coding categories which I employ to analyse the interview data. These relate to students' experiences of painting both in school and during the sessions, to the range of artists cited by the students in their answers and comments, and to broader questions of 'choice', 'expression' and 'interpretation' as they relate to painting. I supplement the interview data with reference to students' work and my own contemporaneous notes.

In discussing the design of the second painting project conducted at the Saatchi Gallery in April 2013, 'Painting Events', I identify its aim and show how its design grew from a productive collaboration with an artist, Hannah Brown. I present the criterion for the selection of paintings employed as visual resources in both projects which hinges upon the view of painting and modernism presented in Part Three, 'Painting and modernism'. I offer a description of the activity and progress of the four project sessions and move to a detailed interpretation of examples of students' practical work by introducing aspects of the theoretical appraisal of painting as a hermeneutic activity proposed in Part Four. In contrast to my emphasis on the analysis of interview data from the earlier project, I offer a series of interpretive encounters with students' paintings which hinge on a related set of terms and ideas, those of 'formativity', openness, improvisation and imagination. In doing so I reproduce several paintings at various stages of completion, often in conjunction with the visual

references from which students borrowed imagery or which they modified and combined.

I conclude by emphasizing the interpretive character of the ways in which some of the students who participated in the project worked: in borrowing and synthesizing from – in remaking, available visual resources. I refer also to the productive scope of the experimentation with materials that was encouraged in the sessions which permitted students to incorporate their technical discoveries in their work in imaginative ways. I close with reference to the significance of the range of visual images that Hannah and I selected for use in the project.

6.2. Studio-based research: studio detritus and painting experiments

The primarily theoretical research that I had undertaken over my first academic year of research required me to examine my assumptions and working habits as a painter, informed as they were by a reliance on practised (in this sense, potentially acquirable) skills and knowledge pertaining to paint and its manipulation. I saw that this self-critical process might also provide the opportunity for me to make work that could progress or consolidate the approach of my MA presentation, that of harnessing the practical and theoretical potential of work produced in the studio in researching and developing a pedagogical approach to painting-as-making.

While I have not subsequently followed such a practice-based path in the realisation of the present project, I acknowledge here the degree to which my thinking with regard to

painting and teaching painting has been informed by the work that I made over my first year of research, and which formed the visual presentation that I exhibited at the Institute of Education. I would suggest that the presentation stood in a similar relation to my emerging research as did my preceding MA thesis to its visual counterpart – in this case, as a visual parallel to the developing theoretical – and textual, commentary on the question of skill in its relation to practices of painting in education.

The six pieces I presented in September 2009 constituted some of the remnants or traces of the production of figurative paintings. The series of acetate sheets that served as palettes for colour mixing ('Palette I', Figure 16) I displayed in white mounts and frames, alongside an envelope ('Mask', Figure 17) that I used as a rudimentary mask which permitted me to isolate and work upon a certain area of a painting.



Figure 16: Yiannis Hayiannis - Palette I (2009). Acrylic on acetate.

In choosing to present these items in particular ways – the palettes framed and the envelope mask freestanding, I sought to focus attention on what might ordinarily only be understood as waste or by-products of the painting process: studio tools and accretions of unused and/or discarded paint. My intentions for this project were to refer to notions of waste (art seen in Bataille’s terms as ‘unproductive expenditure’ [1985]) and ritual (How might the rituals and processes of studio practice be made visible?), and to the idea of the negation of skill with regard to painting (How might it be possible to withhold the ‘proper’ objects of my painting activity? How might I present that which falls outside the frame that ordinarily discloses ‘the work’?).

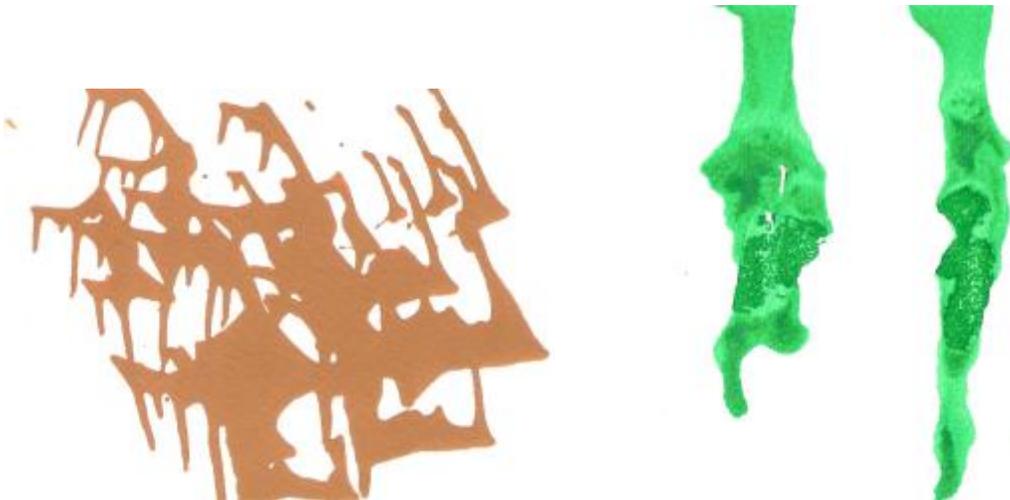


Figure 17: Yiannis Hayiannis - Mask (2009). Acrylic on card.

This strategy was pursued with a view to the potential recalibration of my own work as a painter and in the hope of negotiating a more open-ended pedagogical approach to

making informed by skill in my work as an educator. By abandoning the usual formulae by which I made and exhibited ‘paintings’, I was performing a catharsis of sorts, which, I would suggest, subsequently freed me to approach painting in a much broader sense, both as somebody who paints and as an educator.

In the autumn term of my second year I conducted a series of painting experiments with a view to the possibility of incorporating them in a series of painting projects aimed at secondary school students. The experiments were designed to test the limits and characteristics of a particular set of materials and supports through a range of exercises relating to absorption, consistency, gravity and resistance. With minimal use of application tools, I tested a range of paint consistencies on a variety of supports (paper, canvas, canvas applied to wood), with and without a prior coat of water or paint, in order to gauge their respective absorbencies (see Figures 18 and 19 below).



Figures 18 and 19: Yiannis Hayiannis - Absorbency tests (2010). Acrylic on paper.

Other experiments were designed to identify the coverage capacities of different consistencies of paint. These tests were conducted either entirely without the use of an application tool or without brushes (card or rags were recruited in their place). In cases where I did not permit myself an application tool it became necessary to manipulate the support against gravity so as to gain the maximum possible coverage of the surface area (see Figure 20 below). Similar tests involved layering different consistencies of paint to test for their properties of adherence and coverage.



Figure 20: Yiannis Hayiannis - Painting experiment (2010). Acrylic on canvas.

The project that eventually served as a pilot and which I discuss at length below, grew both from my painting experiments and from the initial proposal for a series of painting projects presented as part of my upgrade submission in the summer term of 2010.

6.3. Designing and teaching the pilot painting workshop: ‘Painting Encounters’, Saatchi Gallery, April 2012

In presenting an account of the first project conducted at the Education Department of the Saatchi Gallery in April 2012, I first show how the aims, design and context of the project developed and changed from my initial thinking with regard to practical research in 2010. Second, I attend to the development of the design of the pilot project and describe the process through which I made contact with, and proposed the project to the Saatchi Gallery. Third, I refer to the ethical considerations of the project and fourth, present the content and sequence of the project sessions. Fifth, I identify both the range of materials and tools employed in the sessions and my decision-making with regard to the use of visual resources in the project. I conclude with accounts of the teaching of the sessions.

Initial planning for painting projects

I had originally intended to conduct the practical research projects which were later conducted along different lines at the Saatchi Gallery, at the independent secondary school run by the Greek state in which I was working when I commenced work on my doctoral research in 2008. This intention was complicated by the fact that I lost my position at the school in 2010 as a result of the public spending cuts that had by then been introduced by the Greek government⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ As Helena Smith reported in *The Guardian* at the time, by February 2010 the Greek government was poised to make ‘painful but necessary’ fiscal reforms in an effort to address a budget deficit that stood at 12.7% of the country’s GDP in 2009. As a result of these reforms my position, together with those of other similarly locally engaged teaching staff in schools administered and financed by the Greek state in other European countries, was abolished.

The small-scale painting projects that I initially envisaged were intended to provide a context for dialogical encounters between myself, working as a painter and an educator, and students, similarly engaged in painting. I wanted to set in motion a series of workshop⁴⁷ sessions that would allow me to paint in tandem with students, with both parties following the same project and, by feeding back views and understandings of their activity, offer each other reciprocal individual and collective support. With the painting experiments in mind, I conceived of the projects in terms of painting exercises that would be determined by written instructions (addressed either by me to all participants, including myself, or indeed, by participants to me), which would require participants to paint with specific application tools, not all of which might ordinarily be associated with painting (some of these might be domestic items such as rolling pins, sponges and spoons).

The broad aim of the projects was to promote sensitivity to the material characteristics of paint and their potential for meaning-making through interpretive, exploratory and, hopefully, self-directed activity. My own approach as facilitator, educator and researcher I saw as interpretive – to engage with students in their activity, and later with respect to their productions, in a hermeneutic sense. I also wanted to converse with students about their activity, intentions and discoveries in the sessions and so be able to compare their commentary with the practical outcomes of the project. The

⁴⁷ In his discussion of the pedagogical potential of the ‘workshop’, McMillan (2015) refers to the use of the noun to ‘describe a group of people engaged in some intensive discussion or activity’, ‘beyond a place where things are made or repaired’ (p.79). I adopt the term to identify the character of concentrated activity that the painting projects were intended to foster.

method I chose to structure and record these conversations was semi-structured interview.

Planning for four or five workshop project sessions of one-and-a-half or two hours duration, necessitated careful consideration of the objectives, content and pacing of each session. The importance of the structure and content of the very first session was impressed upon me in discussion with my supervisor. What would I need to achieve in the initial session that would capture the interest of the students who had signed up for the project? How could I make the first session exciting enough for students to return for subsequent sessions? The painting experiments I had conducted on my own were rather arid exercises. How might I integrate aspects of these experiments in the sessions and make their purpose and scope for making evident to the students? How might the experimentation be fun, or enjoyable?

Development of pilot project design

Given the unwelcome development of the loss of my teaching position at the beginning of the autumn term of 2010, I discussed alternative contexts for conducting the painting projects with both of my supervisors. One option that I began to consider seriously was that of running the projects in the context of a gallery education department. While I would be unacquainted with potential participants, presenting the sessions in a more informal educational context outside that of the secondary school, might allow for paintings to be made that did not conform to the expectations of work made in school.

The initial idea for approaching the Saatchi Gallery with regard to conducting a series of practical painting workshop sessions was developed in the spring term of 2011. As I was already aware of the range of school projects and events accommodated by the gallery, and its ongoing online exhibition of art works from schools across the UK, it occurred to me that the gallery might be interested in hosting the painting projects I had in mind.

After an initial conversation with a member of the education staff at the gallery in April 2011, in which I explained my background, research aims and the likely content of the painting projects, the possibility of running a series of workshop sessions at the education department was discussed. I was advised that the sessions could take the form of an after-school art club and that there might be an opportunity to run them before the end of the summer term. The gallery could send through details of the proposed workshop sessions to interested London schools on my behalf.

While I was unable to run the sessions over the following summer due to time constraints, I was offered the opportunity to do so in the next academic year by the Head of Education at the Saatchi Gallery, with whom I had entered an encouraging e-mail exchange in September 2011. It was eventually agreed that there was scope for running the sessions over the Easter holiday break in 2012. In January 2012 I submitted a description of the content of the workshop sessions to the gallery which indicated the age group for which they were intended and which the gallery agreed to disseminate to London-based schools whose students might be interested in attending.

In discussion with my supervisor and with reference to the ethics guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (2011), I considered the ethical dimensions of the research project. In completing the 'Ethics Approval Form for a Student Research Project' and later preparing a consent form and an information sheet for participants which outlined the nature of the research and requested their voluntary informed consent, I attended to questions of anonymity with respect both to any photographic or video recording of students' activity and works and to their interview responses. The information sheet and participant consent form were sent to participating schools through the gallery in advance of the project sessions in March 2012 (these documents are reproduced in Appendix 3), together with detailed lesson plans for each project session (these are presented as Appendix 1).

The five sessions that I ran at the Saatchi Gallery were directly informed by the concerns of the painting experiments I conducted in 2010 and were designed to complement each other in a sequential fashion. The sessions were themed as follows: 'Marks/Accidents', 'Gravity and absorption', 'Consistencies', 'Grounds' and 'Juxtaposition'. The initial activity in the 'Gravity and absorption' session, for example, asked students to explore the possibilities of testing paint against gravity by dripping or pouring it onto their chosen support. Once students had started to experiment in this way, they were encouraged to see if these processes could be harnessed in constructing paintings.

I specifically asked students not to discard any of their experimental painting scraps or offcuts, suggesting that these could be used at a later stage in the project. In the final session students would be encouraged to make a painting or collage that employed any of the techniques or processes that they had experimented with in the preceding sessions (or indeed paintings or parts of paintings from previous sessions).

Each session of the painting project was designed to last for an hour and a half. In determining the use of time for each session, I planned for one hour of practical activity that would be prefaced with a practical and/or visual introduction of about fifteen minutes, and concluded with another fifteen minutes for clearing up and a brief group appraisal. The first half hour of practical activity would be given over to a specific exercise that students would be asked to follow, while in the second half hour, they would be encouraged to extend or employ the approach or process suggested in their own way.

Prior to the running of the project sessions, two changes to their form and structure were made. The first of these was necessitated by closer attention to time constraints. On further reflection, given both my necessary presence in the sessions as an educator and my lack of familiarity with the students, it seemed too ambitious to try to work alongside students in the manner I had hoped in the time available. The second change had to do with the use of written instructions. While I had indicated this as a feature of the project in my proposal to the gallery, at a late stage prior to the sessions, and in

discussion with my supervisors, I rejected this approach as too rigid (and indeed, perhaps too conceptual).

The supports that I made available included card, tissue and watercolour paper, stretched and unstretched primed canvas and pre-prepared canvas board. While the brushes that I selected for use included artist's brushes, they also comprised decorating brushes, nailbrushes and toothbrushes. In addition to brushes, I provided cardboard strips, combs, cotton wool, plastic spoons, sponges, rollers and rags as application tools. I presented acrylic and poster paint for use in the sessions, though for specific exercises I prepared specific consistencies of each or limited the choice of colours (for the 'gravity and absorption' exercise in the second session in which I asked students to saturate their chosen surface with one colour and then apply a second different colour, I provided thinned solutions of pairs of complementary poster and acrylic colours).



Figure 21: Education Room, Saatchi Gallery, Painting Encounters project 2012.

Initial discussion with my supervisor proved productive in drawing my attention to ways in which I might select and use visual resources. One very timely suggestion concerned the use of reproductions of particular details of paintings, rather than

reproductions of entire works. Another idea was to hand out laminate copies of particular sections of paintings directly related to the theme of the particular project session. Many of the visual resources employed in the pilot painting project were used in the subsequent second project. I discuss the rationale for my selection of visual resources for both projects at greater length in ‘Visual resources: modernist painting and beyond’ in this part of the thesis.

Teaching the workshop sessions

I ran the first two one-and-a half-hour painting workshop sessions at the Saatchi Gallery on April the 3rd and 4th, and the following three on April 10th, 11th and 13th 2012. My decision not to try to paint alongside the participating students proved wise. Once the sessions were underway much of my time was taken up in assisting students with advice on technical matters; in helping them to select, and providing them with, paper, paint, and application tools; in cutting canvas to desired sizes; in cleaning spillages; in monitoring progress with a steady eye on time. Without the assistance of a fellow doctoral research candidate and secondary school teacher (referred to henceforward as ‘the interviewer’), the student interviews would not have taken place (she conducted all the project interviews with students on two separate occasions).

In view of the time constraints, my introductions to the sessions were necessarily brief, and the subsequent activity highly focused. By the end of most sessions, once clearing up had been attended to, there was little time for sustained group appraisal of the resulting practical work (I did my best to minimize the disruption of clearing up by

staying at the gallery long after each session had ended to properly clean working surfaces, brushes and application tools).

While the sessions were not collaborative in the sense that I had originally intended, my involvement in them might best be described as that of a facilitator. My impression was that most of the students who participated felt confident in asking for my assistance or advice during practical activity. I think it a fair assessment, however, to say that the activities and outcomes of the sessions were directed by the students themselves to a significant degree.

In Session Three, after giving a brief practical demonstration to students and showing an excerpt of 'Le Mystere Picasso', a documentary that captures Picasso painting, directed by Henri-Georges Clouzot in 1956, I asked them if they wished to pursue their work from the previous session or start a new project. Most students were keen to develop the single paintings they had commenced in the preceding session and as a consequence I modified the planned structure of the session. Indeed, it was only at the close of the session that I sought to direct attention to a set of visual resources that were selected to suggest the possibilities for making of a variety of paint consistencies.

Session Four was similarly open. The session had been designed to introduce students to the uses of grounds in painting, but in the event I decided to make a brief visit with the students to the ground floor gallery and introduce them to the work of Andre Butzer (see Figure 22 below) which seemed highly pertinent to the discussion of

consistencies from the previous session. The license to move from the site of practical activity, in this case the education room of the gallery, to that of the display of art objects in this manner, simply by ascending a flight of stairs, was a central advantage of running the 'Painting Encounters' project at the Saatchi Gallery.

On our return to the studio, I found myself explaining aspects of colour theory in response to some students' questions relating to the absence of black and white from the selection of tubes and pots of paint I had provided for their use. While I did refer to the use of grounds and layering in particular paintings (works by Hodgkin and Seurat), I again gave students the license to take up their work from the previous session, to which they agreed without question.

*Figure 22: Andre Butzer - Untitled (2008). Oil on canvas.
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

The data collected over the course of the project, not all of which I address in the following section, takes the form of photographic records of 98 paintings, some at various stages in their production; a series of seventeen short videos (ranging in duration from ten seconds to just over one minute); fifty still photographs of students at work; eleven interview sound files (ranging in duration from just under three minutes to over eleven minutes) and related transcripts.

6.4. Data analysis: ‘Painting Encounters’ project, Saatchi Gallery,

April 2012

Analysis of interview data

I present here an analysis of some of the data collected during the ‘Painting Encounters’ workshop sessions in April 2012. While the data as a whole comprises interview sound files, related interview transcripts, notes, video footage and still photographic images, my emphasis here is on the analysis of the interview data gathered. In analysing the latter I employ a set of coding categories based on what I consider to be the salient themes arising from the interviews. I move from this discussion to identify particular shortcomings in the interview data, which have to do with the ways in which the questions were designed and posed, and the extent to which participants’ responses were not fully developed through further structured discussion. I conclude by suggesting further scope for analysing the interview data against the range of other data collected.

Research setting

The analysis that follows pertains to the transcribed questions and responses from the set of eleven student interviews that were conducted and recorded at the Saatchi Gallery in April 2012. The interviews were designed as semi-structured, following Kvale (1996), and were conducted by the interviewer on my behalf, following two prepared sets of questions and related instructions.

All interviews were conducted with prior informed consent with all fifteen students who agreed to participate in the painting workshop sessions (Year Nine and Ten students from London-based schools). The first interview was conducted on the day of the first workshop session – and before practical work had commenced, with four students disposed in a circle of chairs around the interviewer, in a corner of the Education Room of the Saatchi Gallery (see Figure 23 below).



Figure 23: Education Room, Saatchi Gallery, Painting Encounters project 2012.

The second sequence of interviews was conducted in the same location over the course of the final session of the project, with the interviewer speaking to students as they worked, sitting beside them at large, circular tables which they shared with groups of between three to four other participating students.

Interview techniques

In designing the interview questions for the workshop sessions, I sought to follow certain of Kvale's descriptions of and recommendations for semi-structured interviews (1996). The suggested initial questions in both sets of interviews were included as 'Introducing Questions' with a view to permitting spontaneous responses from participants, from which further 'Direct Questions', that directly introduce topics, could be put. It was suggested to the interviewer that, if time were available, she follow up the Introducing Questions with Direct Questions (in the interview notes the latter were indicated thus: '.....'). I further suggested to the interviewer that, depending upon the students' initial responses, it might be useful to move into a structured discussion with them rather than follow a straightforward question and answer format.

I asked the interviewer in the interview guidance that I prepared for the initial group interview, to try to interview students in small groups of about four, and to keep the interviews to about 10-12 minutes in duration due to the limited time of the workshop sessions. I further suggested that it might be useful to briefly introduce the interview to those students who had consented to participate before commencing with recording. Introducing the interview in this way gives an indication to participants of the nature of the questions to be asked (here, these concerned students' experiences of and views on painting in school and their own knowledge of and attitudes to painting generally, and are detailed below). A further advantage afforded by introducing the interview is

the opportunity for participants to ask the interviewer any questions that they may have before the interview begins.

Opening questions

The first four questions put to participating students were intended to establish information about the variety, scope and significance of painting practices in their schools.

- 1) *Can you tell me about any painting that you do in school?*
- 2) *Could you say something about the sorts of subjects or things you have painted in school? ... Did you enjoy these projects?*
- 3) *Could you say what tools/materials/surfaces you have used in painting in school?*
- 4) *Do you think painting is important in your school? ... Why? ... Do you do a lot of painting in school? ... Are your paintings displayed in school?*

Two further questions were asked of the students with regard to their knowledge, views and preferences with regard to painting:

- 5) *Can you name a particular painter that interests you? ... What is it about their work that interests you? ... Can you say something about the way they work or the materials they use?*
- 6) *Can you tell me if there are certain kinds of painting you prefer or like more than others? ... Do you think that paintings should look realistic or like photographs? ... Why?*

The final question was designed to assess students' expectations of the workshop sessions.

7) What are you hoping to do or learn in the workshop sessions?

Closing questions

In the guidance I prepared for the second set of interviews, I suggested to the interviewer that she move from table to table and ask to interview students individually as they worked, rather than ask them to move to a separate interview table or space.

The second set of questions was designed to elicit information from the participants about the nature of their activity during the preceding workshop sessions and to compare it to the sorts of painting activities they had undertaken in school.

1) Can you say something about the painting that you did in the workshop sessions?

2) Did you enjoy the workshop sessions? ...What did you enjoy the most?

3) Are you pleased with any of the work that you made during the sessions? ...Why?

4) Were there any differences between the painting you did in the sessions and the painting you do in school? ...Can you say what they were?

5) Were any of the techniques or artists mentioned during the sessions new to you?

6) Do you think you might use any of the painting techniques you have experimented with during the sessions in painting you do in the future (at home or at school)?

Coding categories

In coding the transcribed responses of the participating students to the two sets of interview questions, my intention is to identify and engage with what I perceive to be

the dominant themes that emerged from them. I have employed six categories to code the interview data and present them in the following account: *Painting in school*, *Painting during Saatchi sessions*, *Choice*, *Expression (freedom/constraint)*, *Interpretation* and *Artists referenced*. While considerable interpenetration is apparent between the categories *Choice*, *Expression (freedom/constraint)* and *Interpretation*, when they are applied to the interview data, I have maintained these categories to permit greater discrimination in addressing the ideas and views raised in the interviews. Though the final category, *Interpretation*, comprehends only one unprompted reference to ‘interpretation’ by one of the participating students, I have included this coding category as I hold it to be significant with regard to the pedagogical scope of the sessions and the theoretical orientation of my research.

It is worth acknowledging at this juncture the epistemological objections to the analysis through coding of qualitative research interviews raised by Packer (2011), who questions the putative objectivity of this approach. Packer argues that coding of this kind, which is dependent on ‘practices of abstraction and generalization’ (p.379), fails to acknowledge – indeed, fails to develop as a resource for research, the subjectivity of the researcher.

I have not employed coding in the following analysis with a view to drawing ‘objective’ conclusions about students’ experiences of painting in or beyond school, or in the project sessions. In organising the information offered by the students in interview through coding, I am constructing a particular interpretation of what is in

itself an interpretation: a transcript of the recorded responses of students to questions about a particular set of related issues in a particular context. In this sense coding can be considered a creative process: a means of producing a reality, to borrow from Law's definition of method (2004), rather than 'a more or less successful set of procedures for reporting on a given reality' (p.143).

In transcribing the interview sound files I have incorporated aspects of the transcription system recommended by King and Horrocks (2010: 145-6). Very short pauses are therefore indicated thus: (p); longer pauses, thus: (pause); and pauses over two seconds in duration, thus: (long pause). [Inaudible] indicates speech that is not audible, while capital letters indicate words or sentences that are emphasized by the speaker. Where participants directly quote another person the section is indicated by 'speech marks'. Interruptions are indicated by hyphens at the point at which they occur. Overlapping comments are also indicated by a hyphen and preceded with: (overlap). Transcripts for every interview conducted with the participants of the 'Painting Encounters' project can be consulted in Appendix 2.

Painting in school

In the initial interview conducted at the start of the sessions (Interview One), students were asked about the sorts of painting they had undertaken in school and whether or not they enjoyed it. Due to time restrictions only one group interview was conducted.

In response to the question ‘What are you doing in school?’ the first of two pairs of students from two schools (Pair A: Students Nine and Sixteen), replied that they were painting portraits of their teachers based on the style and technique of Lucian Freud’s paintings, while the second pair (Pair B: Students Two and Fifteen) replied that they were painting portraits of the Queen using the styles of different artists given by their teachers (Interview One, p. 372). One of the respondents from Pair B (Student Two) said that he enjoyed this particular project because he was given the licence to choose from a wide range of artists (ibid.: 372).

Students were hesitant in offering information about the sorts of materials and tools they had worked with in school (ibid.: 373). Students were asked about the significance of painting in their school, how much painting they did at school and whether their work was displayed in their school. When asked if they considered painting to be important in their school, the respondents from Pair B replied that many paintings were displayed around their school and surmised that painting was considered significant in the school (ibid.). The responses of Pair B to the question ‘Is painting important in your school?’ suggest that painting is not particularly privileged in their school (ibid.: 374), but is afforded parity with a variety of other media. One of the respondents from this pair (Student Two) stated that, ‘It (painting) kind of influences our art class but not as much as like other materials like oil pastels and things like that’ (ibid.).

When asked if they could name a particular painter that interested them, neither pair of students responded and the discussion returned to the artists they had been introduced to at school (ibid.: 375). When subsequently asked if they would enjoy trying to paint realistic paintings, two students from the interview group responded by stating that painting realistically was hard and difficult (ibid.: 376-377).

The interviewer either didn't have enough time, or forgot to put the final question to the group, namely, 'What are you hoping to do or learn in the workshop sessions?' It would have been useful to have gained some indication of student expectations prior to the sessions.

In the subsequent interviews (Interviews Two – Eleven, pages 377-396) which were conducted on the last session, a range of responses to the nature and demands of painting projects and activities in respondents' schools is evident. In describing the content of school art and design projects more generally one student expressed her frustration in the following manner:

It's like (p) yea you have to kind of (p) design this or draw that and then our teacher she's always like kind of (p) 'er, it's not, you need to change this or you need to change that' and sometimes it helps but like most of the time it's kind of like you just wanna do your own thing really (Student Fourteen, Interview Two, p.377).

Other students similarly identified a sense of constraint with reference to painting in school in particular:

In school they give you what you have to do and if you don't do it in a specific way, yea, cos it's school. And then, um, here you can get, you don't have to do, like, they give you like a concept like draw something funny or sad or draw,

imitate this painter's work or something (Student Fifteen, Interview Four, p. 382).

... cos like normally when you have art they tell you what to paint but here we actually got to pick what you want to do, instead of being forced to doing something you don't want to (unidentified respondent, Interview Eight, p.388).

One respondent mentioned the limited range of application tools that were available to students in their painting activity at school: '... cos at school you just generally use a paintbrush and that's kind of all you use' (Student Nine, Interview Five, p.383).

Evident too in students' responses is the issue of imitating the work of established or well-known painters in school painting projects (Interviews One, Two, Four, Six and Ten). When asked if she had been asked to copy the work of other painters, Student Four confirmed that she had been asked to do so from postcards (Interview Ten, p. 394).

Painting during Saatchi sessions

Students' responses to the questions aimed at obtaining information relating to their experience of the workshop sessions and the work that they produced in them, and with regard to whether and how the sessions differed to their painting activity in school, reveal an enthusiasm for new materials and tools and the technical possibilities that they afford. Over the course of the sessions students confirmed that they had encountered techniques that were new to them (Interviews Two, Four, Seven, Nine, Eleven). Some students described the significance of these encounters to the interviewer:

... last year we had a um we had to kind of like like draw, paint something in the style of like someone and like he used kind of like transparent colours but

at that time I wasn't really sure like how to like achieve that but now like I know like if you wet the paper first then it makes it easier, so.

(Student Fourteen, Interview Two, p.378)

I found out about this whole not using water just dry on dry and I like that now and I never knew about it before so it's really good.

(Student Eleven, Interview Eleven, p.396)

Some students referred directly to their experiences of particular materials, application tools and techniques:

I never actually thought like using wet paint would make a different like, make the painting look different. And making the paint drip doesn't like make it messy and stuff.

(Student Fifteen, Interview Four, p.382)

I really liked the fan brush. I thought it was really cool you can do loads of stuff you can make like some people used them to make tail feathers um for peacocks and stuff. And I used it to make swirls and stuff and it was really nice because you could put different colours onto it and see what happened.

(unidentified respondent, Interview Seven, p.387)

... we just used like combs and rollers and stuff to make different marks on paper and it was interesting to see how much, how many different marks you make and stuff, yea.

(Student Nine, Interview Five, p.383)



Figure 24: Painting by Student 7, Painting Encounters project 2012.

... it's interesting that you can paint with loads of different effects so, I liked that.

(ibid.)

Another student (unidentified respondent, Interview Seven) expressed surprise and excitement at the range of tools that had been provided and described how she had put them to use:

... we were given lots of different paintbrushes and some of them I hadn't even seen before like as in or I hadn't thought of using them like we were given toothbrushes to try out and stuff I've NEVER used that before to like use to paint so it was really fun just like thinking about different ways that you could use everything.

(p.386)

Because I never thought of using like a sponge for the background but I did cos it's a good effect and it's also really quick and easy to do.

(p.387)

She continued by showing that she had learnt the difference between the qualities of particular supports:

(Canvas is) more absorbent than normal watercolour paper would be and like if you use watercolour paper it would drip more whereas canvas wouldn't, obviously so.

(ibid.)

When asked about the differences between the sorts of projects they had worked on at school and the projects that they had engaged with during the sessions, one student specifically identified the exploratory dimension of the latter against her experience of painting in school:

... well I think school it's not as free, like you're given a particular artist to study and then a project based on that artist's style. Whereas here it's more about experimenting with what the paint can do and how you can manipulate the paint, as opposed to how making paint do what you want it to.

(unidentified respondent Interview Six, p.385)

A number of students expressed positive assessments of their experience of the workshop sessions, referring to the use of new tools, the exercise of choice in determining their own subjects for painting, and the opportunity to work with and learn from others:

... before I actually came here I didn't actually enjoy painting that much cos I just think it's messy but (laughs) yea. Now I kinda like it and like I've never actually used a sponge before, cos yea, but yea. I just use it and I like it (laughs)...

(unidentified respondent, Interview Eight, p. 389)

I've enjoyed how we're not given an actual subject just go on and do what you want to do yea but you still learn a lot as well, yea.

(Student Eight, Interview Nine, p.391)

I don't really paint a lot at home either so it's my chance to improve or try new things and yea I'm really enjoying it.

(Student Eleven, Interview Eleven, p. 396)

And comparing (your work) with others what they've done. And then seeing common art as what they've done and then taking that on yourself. It's sort of a good opportunity. I'm glad my school told me about this.

(ibid.)

Choice

The issue of choice, of 'doing what you want to do', figures frequently in the interview data (Interviews Two, Four, Five, Seven, Nine, Eleven). Without prompting, this phrase, or variations of it, is repeatedly employed by students with reference to the freedom to determine their own subjects in their painting activity, as distinct from the subjects that are determined for them by their teachers at school. This being able to 'do what you want to do' was perceived by students as one of the more positive aspects of the workshop sessions and identified with experimentation (Student Nine, Interview Five), free will (unidentified respondent, Interview Eight), fun (unidentified

respondent, Interview Seven), independence (Student Eleven, Interview Eleven) and interpretation (Student Fourteen, Interview Two).

In summing up the differences between the painting projects she had worked on at school and the work undertaken in the workshop sessions, one student (Student Fifteen, Interview Four) considered that what was being asked of students in the workshop sessions was to employ the techniques they had been shown in developing work that was driven by their own interests and ideas:

... there wasn't any specific, you have to, you can do what you want but you have to do (p) you have to use the stuff that we've been shown to do in the painting we do so it makes sense but you the concept is your like, you can do what you wanna do.

(Interview Four, p.381)

Interpretation

When asked *what* she had enjoyed about the workshop sessions (the interviewer did not first ask whether she *had* enjoyed anything about them), one student (Student Fourteen, Interview Two) responded by describing the openness of the sessions with regard to subject matter:

I enjoyed like sometimes think when you wanna paint something you don't know what to paint and then you just kind of sit there with a blank piece of paper but like, like in like these sessions it's about, you get a topic but it's not kind of a really focussed topic it's like a wide topic and you can just kind of do your own thing and it's like you can (p) like, you can just interpret your own way, I mean just like do your own stuff.

(Interview Two, p.379)

In addressing the notion of painting as a hermeneutic activity, the workshop sessions were specifically designed to present students with the opportunity to explore or

discover for themselves a range of techniques that they might subsequently recruit for independent work. By referring to ‘a wide topic’ – mark-making, for example, and the chance to ‘interpret your own way’ – harnessing certain marks for particular expressive purposes perhaps, this student has neatly summarized a central intention of the ‘Painting Encounters’ project.

Expression (freedom/constraint)

The question of expression as it appears, and indeed, does not appear, in the interview responses can arguably be related to the issue of personal choice, or freedom, in making, as distinct from the perceived constraints of school art and design projects. While the term ‘expression’ is not explicitly employed with any frequency in the responses of students which refer to their work, it is arguably implicit in their comments regarding the autonomy afforded them in the workshop sessions (implicit perhaps in the statements regarding free will [unidentified respondent, Interview Eight], independence [Student Eleven, Interview Eleven] and interpretation [Student Fourteen, Interview Two]).

One striking statement by a student (unidentified respondent, Interview Seven) shows a preference for the use of the imagination over the more predetermined projects encountered in school:

... in school its like I like it because we are given what we need to do so there’s like a route that we need to go down but um this way it’s more imaginative like you can use your own brain, you can use your own style as well (Interview Seven, p.386).

Expression is explicitly mentioned by students at two points in the second sequence of interviews, in one instance with reference to the work of Picasso ('... he shows how it's not really about drawing or painting like every detail you see, he shows how it's more to do with expression' [Student Eight, Interview Nine, p. 392]) and elsewhere in a direct assessment of the workshop sessions (Student Four, Interview Ten). In response to the question 'What did you do during these workshops?' the same student replies:

I think it's just really expressing yourself through your paintings, like your emotions and everything else. Like how you feel and everything else.
(Interview Ten, p.393)

Artists referenced

In the interviews conducted on the final session students were asked if any of the techniques or artists mentioned during the sessions were new to them. A range of responses followed, from students who expressed interest in the work of painters that were new to them, to those who stated that their exposure to the techniques of particular artists directly influenced their work.

Two students (Interviews Three and Eight) referred to the work of Andre Butzer in the interviews, whose paintings, then on display in the Saatchi Gallery as part of the 'Gesamtkunstwerk: New Art from Germany' exhibition, I had introduced to them during a gallery visit on Session Four. Both students actually incorporated one of Butzer's favoured motifs, a screaming skull, into their subsequent work (see Figures 25 and 26 below).



Figure 25: Painting by Student 1, Painting Encounters project 2012.



Figure 26: Painting by Student 2, Painting Encounters project 2012.

Others were interested by the work of Picasso (in Session Three I showed students a brief excerpt of Henri-Georges Clouzot's 'Le Mystere Picasso' [1956] in which the artist improvises a painting before the cameras) and Seurat, a selection of whose work I showed to students with regard to aspects of colour theory, in Session Four

(Interviews Two, Four, Five). One student (unidentified) explained that her painting was directly inspired by Turner's watercolours, a selection of which I had shown to students during Session Two, on which occasion I also demonstrated a wet-on-wet painting technique:

Um, yea there was an artist who used um water and he sort of created a really subtle but like colourful sky using the water and the absorption of the water and the paint. And um that sort of inspired this background as well cos it's a lot more subtle like compared to some of the other artists we've seen who like paint really boldly using really thick paint (Interview Six, p.386).

Only once did a student make explicit reference to the work of an artist not mentioned to the group during the sessions, that of Banksy: 'I like the combination in artists where they have the weird and the normal (...) it's kind of interesting interpretations of things, and people get mixed messages, so I like that' (Student Four, Interview Ten, p.395).

Interview data: shortcomings and omissions

I would identify a significant shortcoming of the design and conduct of the interviews in the fact that students were often not afforded the opportunity to fully respond to questions when they did not answer them immediately. I recognize that this failing may have to do both with the design of the questions and with time restrictions. The interviewer did not always encourage students to develop their responses by asking further questions (for example, a tantalising reference made by Student Sixteen in Interview One to the use of 'the bottom of the paintbrush' [p.373] was not investigated).

In addressing the outcome of the workshop sessions for the students, the interviewer made reference in four separate interviews (Interviews Two [p.378], Six [p.386], Seven [p.387], Five [p.384]) to a 'toolbox' or 'toolkit' of techniques. She herself refers to the term that she has previously suggested to other respondents when addressing a student in Interview Six, where she seeks to describe the process whereby students have experimented with painting techniques: 'like what a few people have said it's like you're developing a toolkit' (p.386). While I acknowledge the utility of the term in the context in which the interviewer has used it, it seems possible that students themselves might have had greater license to describe their experiences and views of the sessions if it had not been suggested to them.

As I was unable to conduct the interviews myself and mostly not physically present while they took place, I asked the interviewer to take notes during or subsequent to the interviews that might serve to contextualize them. As the interviewer did not take notes, non-verbal or paralinguistic information which is not evident from the recordings, such as facial expression and gestures, is absent from the interview data.

On some occasions the interviewer put questions to respondents that she seems subsequently to have answered herself with the response, 'Good' (from the sound files it is not clear if the respondent expressed agreement non-verbally):

Do you think you're learning about his painting (Freud's) by using the similar tools as he would use? So actually doing it, actually making the painting?
Good.

(Interview One, p.376)

In asking one respondent about the techniques he developed and employed during the workshop sessions, the interviewer assumes that the techniques that the student elected to employ in his work have directly influenced his design ('How have these techniques influenced your design?' [Interview Three, p.379]), and proceeds by describing for him the making process by which he achieved his results ('So you kind of like thought, 'Ah, you know, that tool there makes a particular effect and I can use it for a you know a particular object or motif?' [Interview Three, p.380). Again, it is not clear from the interviewer's 'Good' that follows that the respondent has assented to her description.

I suspect that students would have spoken at greater length if they had been encouraged to contribute to and participate in a more open, discursive forum. Given that the project took place outside the school environment and its concomitant pressures, it would have been more useful to engage the participants in a freer, less rigid discussion of their work. Rather than asking students if they could 'say something' about the painting that they did during the sessions and then seeking to tease out fuller responses, or asking them if they enjoyed the sessions, in retrospect I believe it would have been more pertinent to have posed more purposeful questions about what they felt they had learnt or discovered; to have asked them directly whether they thought they had learnt anything new. As I will show in the next section, while I used the method of interview in collecting data for the second project, I did so myself in a much less formal manner.

Conclusion

While a genuine enthusiasm on the part of several students for their encounters with new techniques, materials and tools is evident from the interview data, I had hoped that the interviews would yield something more of the students' own voices; further indications perhaps of what 'doing what you want to do' actually meant for them in the context of painting activity in school or elsewhere.

In the wake of my experience of what finally represented a pilot project, and with reference to the interviews, I came to see the significance of questions of choice and agency as they pertained to students wishing to develop paintings related to their own interests. While doing so might not always be feasible in the context of school, it could certainly be facilitated and supported through the less formal, painter/teacher-led painting project of the kind I was interested in promoting and researching.

In designing and teaching a second project that might achieve the aim of presenting students with a variety of choices with regard to interpretive making through painting, while premised again on the scope of exploratory activity with materials and tools, I would need to consider ways of extending the concerns of the pilot. In collecting data by means of interview from a further project, I would need to be far more mindful of the purpose, scope and design of the interviews and the conditions of their conduct. In the following section I identify notable absences in the design of the pilot project and account for the ways in which I addressed these in the collaborative design of the second.

6.5. Designing and teaching the second painting workshop: ‘Painting Events’, Saatchi Gallery, April 2013

Introduction: Aims and development of project design

In presenting both the design and delivery of the second painting project that I conducted at the Saatchi Gallery in April 2013, ‘Painting Events’, I begin by outlining both the aim of the project as an extension of the preceding pilot project, ‘Painting Encounters’, and the development of its design in collaboration with Hannah Brown. With respect to the latter, I present the criterion for the selection of paintings employed as visual resources in both projects which hinges upon the view of painting and modernism presented in Part Three, ‘Painting and modernism’. I then move to describe the conduct and teaching of the four two-hour sessions that made up the project. I will describe and discuss the activity and resulting work of participating students at greater length in the following section, ‘Interpreting data from the ‘Painting Events’ project, Saatchi Gallery, April 2013’.

The second painting project, ‘Painting Events’, like its predecessor, was intended to introduce Year 9 and 10 students⁴⁸ to considered experimentation with paint using a variety of application tools. The aim of the pilot project was to emphasize the material properties of paint for students in an investigative context, rather than to fix strictly upon the scope of painting activity for meaning-making. In other words, to create as

⁴⁸ It is important to signal here that the second painting project was conducted with a different group of students: while I was keen to run a second project with the students who had attended the pilot, this was not possible in practice.

far as possible a pedagogic environment that would enable students to interpret and harness the technical possibilities of paint through their own experimentation.

As with the pilot project, the question of theme or subject was to be left open, or at least the desired outcome of the project was that structured investigation of paint with different tools would offer students the scope and confidence to address their own concerns and interests in making paintings. In short, my intention for the second project was to offer students choices in their painting activity – choices to make in ways that would be significant for them and informed by their own experimentation in the sessions.

On further reflection, it became evident to me that a significant dimension of such encounters with paint and painting that had not been written into the design of the pilot project - and had hitherto been only implicit in my theoretical approach to painting in education, was that of the imagination. A new question would need to be considered in any new painting project: how might structured experimentation with materials, tools and techniques foster imaginative work in painting? As I will show, a crucial fourth term, ‘images’, came to be added to those of ‘materials, tools and techniques’, when the project took a new direction in collaboration with Hannah. Further questions related to the issue of imagination required consideration in working through ideas and approaches for the project. What might the exercise of the imagination have to do with promoting students’ agency in making paintings? How might I enable students to engage imaginatively in painting activity? How might students be encouraged to ‘think into their work’, and develop it accordingly?

Shortly after the conclusion of the pilot project I began thinking through possibilities for a second painting project. The central purpose of the new project was to extend the concerns and approaches of the pilot, by encouraging large-scale painting and possibly collaborative painting activity. I sought to run the project over two consecutive days in three hour sessions, in the hope that doing so would grant students more time not only to develop individual pieces of work, but to extend their ideas by making cycles or series of paintings, should they care to do so.

I named the project ‘Painting Events’ with reference to its intended purpose – to enable students to move beyond their initial ‘encounters’ with paint, surfaces and application tools, and towards ‘events’ that they themselves could determine and exploit imaginatively, and that would be significant to their individual or collective ideas and ambitions for painting. An event of this kind can take the form of a self-directed painting experiment where the outcome is uncertain until the last moment, or represent the point at which an idea for a painting coalesces around a chance technical discovery⁴⁹.

The issue of physical space and its impact on the conditions for making larger work (thinking and making spatially and gesturally on the part of the person painting) emerged as an important concern of the mooted project. While a significant advantage of working with students at the Saatchi Gallery had been the availability of the gallery

⁴⁹ I employ the term ‘event’ in this particular context to comprehend making or practical activity. I do not offer a specifically philosophical account of the term here, though acknowledge that of Richardson and Walker (2011), for whom the event of making, or ‘*process-event*’, is rhythmic and non-chronological, i.e. does not refer to ‘particular moments in the artmaking process’ (p.10).

exhibits as an educational resource, the Education Room in which the sessions were actually conducted was relatively small, and in its pristine whiteness, discouraged working on the walls.

One of the possibilities I considered with regard to a second painting project was that of working collaboratively with an artist or artist-educator in conducting future sessions. A potential benefit of working with students in an environment outside that of their school, might be in enabling them to make work in less restrictive ways. Working outside their school might also permit students to reflect on their experience of painting in school and to consider how it differed to their experience of the project. The presence and help of another artist or artist-educator could enrich the content and scope of the taught sessions and free me to interact with, and observe the activity and work of students at greater length. Given the positive feedback of the participants who attended the pilot project and the goodwill of the Head of Education at the Saatchi Gallery towards my research, I applied to run a second project at the Saatchi Gallery in January 2013 and was offered four slots to do so over the following Easter vacation.

Working with Hannah Brown

I consider myself fortunate in having had the opportunity to work on the 'Painting Events' project with a practising artist, Hannah Brown. Responding to my speculative invitation to participate in the project, Hannah kindly agreed to co-teach two of the four sessions with me, and to contribute to the design of the project. After a productive first meeting with Hannah, I was pleased to discover that she shared some of my

interests in the recent history and theory of painting, and was struck by the resemblance of some of the strategies she had been using in her teaching as a painting tutor at Foundation Level with some of my own initial ideas for the pilot project sessions. In the latter I had intended to issue students with instructions for painting exercises in which access to particular consistencies of paint and application tools was restricted. The purpose I had in mind was to encourage students to investigate and test the characteristics and limitations of the tools and materials that they did have to hand, and, where possible, to overcome these in inventive ways in completing the exercise. Hannah explained how on one occasion she had asked students to work with three brushes that were too large for the surfaces that they had selected to work on.

Hannah is highly informed with regard to the practices of a wide range of contemporary painters and actively puts this awareness to work in her teaching. Her work as a painter, as I shall show below, is driven by a photographic engagement with landscape. While Hannah initially studied Fine Art sculpture to Masters Degree level (sculpture still plays a significant role in her work), it is as a painter that her profile is now steadily rising (Hannah was selected for the Threadneedle Prize in 2011 and the John Moores Painting Prize in 2012). Shortly after our first meeting I attended the opening of a group exhibition in which Hannah was exhibiting several paintings ('On the Edge', at Angus Hughes, London, 2013).

My first unmediated encounter with Hannah's paintings (prior to my visit I had only seen reproductions of her work on her website) elicited astonishment at their level of

technical achievement. The visual congruity of Hannah's paintings with what one must assume are their photographic models is stunning; the labour intensive depiction of foliage and grass, the specificity of rendered shadows, and the scrupulous transcription of the spatial depth of the photograph (the foreshortening of the landscape by the lens). On seeing Hannah's paintings, I wanted to understand how she had achieved her effects. What sorts of brushes, glazes, and mediums had she employed? How had she prepared her oak and plywood supports? Had she used a digital projector in order to work from the photographs?

Despite their resemblance to photographs, the force of Hannah's paintings can arguably be identified in precisely that which separates them from forms of painting that trade solely on their visual correspondence to photographic data. There is a conceptual gambit at work in Hannah's paintings, a calculated dissonance between the registers of the photographic and the painted. Hannah's work might thus be situated within the broad category of 'post-conceptual painting' that Osborne identifies in his 1991 essay 'Modernism, Abstraction and the Return to Painting'. Osborne defines post-conceptual painting against what he describes as the 'traditional notion of artwork as an autonomously meaningful object' (Osborne, 1991: 70):

What is peculiar about post-conceptual painting is that it must treat *all* forms of painterly representation 'knowingly', as themselves the object of a variety of second-order (non-painterly) representational strategies, if it is to avoid regression to a traditional concept of the aesthetic object. The difficulty is to register this difference without negating the significance of the painterly elements; to exploit the significance of paint without reinstating a false immediacy.

(ibid.: 72)

It is Hannah's exploitation of the significance of paint that permits her to essay the look of the photograph in her paintings, to subvert the viewer's familiarity with lens-mediated imagery through the exercise of painterly strategies. The qualities of 'stillness' and 'timelessness' that Hannah, by her own admission⁵⁰, aims for in her work are arguably achieved in the process of 'editing out'; in constructing her paintings Hannah subtracts evidence of human intervention (and human beings) from her photographed landscapes, and manipulates both light and atmospheric conditions as they appear in them.

Photographs do not therefore serve the function of an aide-memoire in Hannah's practice, but instead enable her to produce images that simultaneously refer to and undercut their photographic provenance. Up close, Hannah's images betray themselves as paintings by their patient accretions of fine brushwork and precisely judged glazing. Hannah's paintings are paintings because she intends them as such; they are not photographs, nor digitally manipulated photographs, they are – emphatically, paintings.

Hannah's contribution to the 'Painting Events' project was crucial in that it introduced collaging strategies and techniques (the integration, in other words, of disparate visual material) into the proposed painting activities. Some of the ideas that were discussed in our two meetings prior to the taught sessions related to Hannah's 'Altered Spaces' project, conducted with Foundation Level art and design students in her work as a

⁵⁰ See the following section in which I refer to Hannah's presentation of her work that formed part of the 'Painting Events' project.

painting tutor. The stated aim of Hannah's painting project was for students to construct paintings by drawing upon 'found images' (which they were asked to supply themselves). Hannah and I agreed that it could be productive to adapt aspects of the 'Altered Spaces' project for the Saatchi Gallery project by introducing students to the potential of collaging strategies for making paintings. This approach was intended to complement the emphasis on experimental mark-making that was a central concern of the pilot project.

I would argue that the introduction of collaging techniques, and methods for appropriating and modifying visual material for painting, extends the interpretive making that my research project seeks to identify, and, through the painting projects, promote. Working with Hannah on the project permitted me to expand the number of proposed making and painting actions that had already been written into the project (*applying, arranging, blending, blotting, brushing, collaging, comparing, composing, covering, cutting, dabbing, diluting, dragging, dripping, dry/wet brushing, marking, masking, mixing, pouring, printing, rolling, spreading, squeezing, staining, sticking, tearing, transferring*), by incorporating a new set, those of copying, cropping, editing, enlarging, inverting, multiplying, reducing, repeating, selecting and tracing.

An important consideration in developing the project was the provision of 'found' images that could potentially be recruited by students in their making. I was cautious not to introduce images into the project sessions that would too far dictate particular thematic directions for students. In discussion with Hannah I suggested that a journal

like *The Architectural Review* might serve as a useful source of images, photographic or digital, that students could appropriate, build upon, populate or transform according to their interests. Such images could serve as backdrops for superimposed imagery or mark-making, stand as components in any number of modified landscapes or imagined spaces, or suggest possibilities for abstract work (see Figure 27 below). I also decided to bring in two Sotheby's auction catalogues that I had located, one of which illustrated a sale of 'Impressionist and Modern Art' from 2011.

*Figure 27: Photograph of pavilion designed by Studio Weave, London, from The Architectural Review (2010).
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

Among the images that Hannah selected for inclusion in the project were group photographs of politicians and sportsmen and women from the last century, and photographs of natural phenomena such as electric storms and volcanoes (see Figures 28 - 31 below). Hannah also made black and white photocopies of colour reproductions of the work of contemporary painters available for possible practical use by students (I refer in detail to our selection of these reproductions below). Significantly, we agreed that students should be invited to bring in images of their own from which to develop work.



Figures 28 – 31: Photographic reproductions used in the Painting Events project, 2013.

(nb: Images 30 and 31 redacted for copyright reasons.)

Visual resources: modernist painting and beyond

I refer here to the criterion for the selection of the work of artists that I made in preparing for the second project and their relationship to the presentation of painting and modernism developed in the section of Part Three entitled ‘Painting and modernism’. I also address what I identify as particular lines of continuity that can be discerned between the works that I selected and those of the contemporary painters that Hannah introduced to the project. In selecting paintings that could be introduced to students in the ‘Painting Events’ project sessions as points of reference with regard to technical and conceptual approaches and attitudes to painting, Hannah and I identified the need to update and expand the set of reproductions that I had already prepared for the project and which, with some additions, I had employed in teaching the pilot project. We decided to select work from the PowerPoint presentation that Hannah had designed for her ‘Altered Spaces’ project for use as a set of visual resources for the Saatchi Gallery sessions.

It is worth signalling at this juncture that my selection of paintings was not made on the basis of their perceived status as model works. My decision-making with respect to this selection was however characterised by a certain conflict: that of wishing to avoid reference to exemplary works that might be perceived as worthy of emulation (and thus culturally reproductive in their educational use), while seeking to identify paintings that could serve to further the stated practical aims of the project by drawing upon my own engagement with painters and painting (a necessarily interested engagement that corresponds with Clark's view of painting as a 'craft tradition', 'which looks back unabashed to exemplary cases' [Clark, 1999b: xxi]).

While I admit that my choices were largely informed by my own interests in painting (and indeed by the limits of my awareness of practices that can be considered under the rubric 'painting'), I would suggest that the most significant criterion for the selection of paintings was their relevance to the practical concerns of each session in the pilot project: experimenting with mark-making and exploiting accidents, testing paint against gravity and for absorption, working with a variety of paint consistencies, developing grounds on which to work, and using strategies of juxtaposition to create paintings. These approaches to practice should not be considered hermetic categories given that they can be seen to mutually inform each other (mark-making is obviously causally affected by gravity, as it is too by absorption). Indeed, individual paintings may be considered with respect to more than one of these practical concerns. Max Ernst's 'Extraordinary Landscape' (Figure 32 below), for example, may be approached with regard both to paint consistency, mark-making and grounds.

Figure 32: Max Ernst - *Extraordinary Landscape* (1947). Watercolour on paper.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)

Before proceeding in detail to the correspondences that I identify between the practical concerns of both the pilot and the second project, and the specific paintings selected, it is worth signalling the relationship of both to the discussion of painting and modernism offered in Part Three. The view of painting I propose there arguably falls short of the terms of modernist painting described by Pollock and Rowley (2003), the ‘central and generative concern’ of which was ‘working its material and procedural determinants as its structural conditions, with less and less regard for its capacity to say something about the world in terms of mimesis or metaphor’ (p.44). I am not suggesting either in theory or in practice that concern for the material affordances and processes of paint and painting should become the subject of students’ painting activity in educational contexts, but rather that an emphasis on the material characteristics and means of painting, presented within the scope of practical activity, could help to promote self-directed, imaginative and adventurous making through painting.

As has been seen, the painting projects were designed to foreground the material properties of paint for students through experimentation. I connect the paintings identified below, which range in date from the sixteenth century to the early twenty-first, with reference both to the material means (the paint, application tools and support) and the physical processes (those of application and manipulation of paint on a surface) of a particular understanding of painting.

From my selection of paintings related to mark-making I present here the following three: ‘Two Birds’ (17th century) by Chu Ta (1626-1705) (Figure 33 below), a detail from ‘Philip IV of Spain in Brown and Silver’ (prob. 1632) by Diego Velazquez (1599-1660) (Figure 34 below) and ‘Window in Naples’ (1782) by Thomas Jones (1742-1803) (Figure 35 below). These particular works may be viewed with regard to the representational and expressive scope of the particular sorts of markings that they bear – blots, brush-marks, dabs and stains.

*Figure 33: Chu Ta – Two Birds (17th century). Ink on paper.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*



Figure 34: Diego Velázquez - Philip IV of Spain in Brown and Silver (probably 1632). Oil on canvas [detail].

*Figure 35: Thomas Jones - Window in Naples (1782). Oil on paper laid down on board.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

In presenting the use of a variety of paint consistencies I chose, among other works, to present the paintings reproduced below: ‘JYM Seated II’ (1980) by Frank Auerbach (b. 1931) (Figure 36 below), ‘S.D.I’ (1986) by Gerhard Richter (b. 1932) (Figure 37 below) and ‘Pushed, Pulled, Depleted & Duplicated #14’ (2003) by Karin Davie (b. 1966) (Figure 38 below). My interest in linking these paintings concerns the way in which paint has been prepared and applied in their production and the range of technical possibilities that they propose.

*Figure 36: Frank Auerbach - JYM Seated II (1980). Oil on canvas.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

*Figure 37: Gerhard Richter – S.D.I. (1986). Oil on canvas.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

*Figure 38: Karin Davie - Pushed, Pulled, Depleted & Duplicated #14 (2003). Oil on linen.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

In identifying paintings that could be recruited to discuss figure/ground relationships, I selected a series of works that included: ‘Madonna and Child with St John’ (1497) by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) (see Figure 39 below) and ‘L’Echo’ (1953-6) by Georges Braque (1882-1963) (see Figure 40 below). The chief concerns in introducing these works were formal and technical; in the case of the Michelangelo painting to refer, as it were, to its means of construction (as the painting is unfinished it is possible for the viewer to comprehend the technical, sequential development of its figural elements), and in that of the Braque, to suggest ways in which painted surfaces and motifs can be layered or juxtaposed to achieve planar effects or meet compositional ends.

*Figure 39: Michelangelo Buonarroti - Madonna and Child with St John (1497). Tempera on wood.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

*Figure 40: Georges Braque – L'Echo (1953-6).
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

In essaying collage and strategies of juxtaposition, I presented a range of paintings that suggest ways in which heterogeneous visual imagery, or various technical approaches or effects, can be selected, synthesized and arranged, and that included: ‘Town and Country’ (1979) by Patrick Caulfield (1936-2005) (see Figure 41 below), ‘Hendrix’s Last Basement’ (2001) by Dexter Dalwood (b. 1960) (see Figure 42 below), and ‘Untitled (T1000)’ (1996) by Fiona Rae (b. 1963) (see Figure 43 below).

*Figure 41: Patrick Caulfield – Town and Country (1979). Acrylic on canvas.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

*Figure 42: Dexter Dalwood – Hendrix’s Last Basement (2001). Oil on canvas.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

*Figure 43: Fiona Rae - Untitled (T1000) (1996). Oil paint and acrylic paint on canvas.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

I would assert that certain continuities can be traced in the work of the painters initially selected by myself and subsequently expanded by Hannah’s selection of the work of a number of contemporary painters. The majority of work selected by Hannah was that of painters born in the 1960s and 1970s, and is both figurative and abstract. Some of the paintings appeared to have been constructed by use of collaging strategies similar to those that Hannah was advocating in her project (paintings by Dexter Dalwood [b. 1960], Ged Quinn [b.1963], Neo Rauch [b. 1960], Danny Rolph [b. 1967] and Tony

Swain [b. 1967]). While I was familiar with the paintings by Peter Doig (b. 1959), Michael Raedecker (b. 1963) and Luc Tuymans (b. 1958) that Hannah had selected for use in the project, her other selections served to expand and update my range of reference with regard to contemporary developments in painting.

I would suggest that formal similarities and correspondences can be identified in the work of Tuymans and Velázquez, separated as they are by the centuries and, to use Rancière's words, the 'historically constituted systems of possibilities that determine forms of visibility or criteria of evaluation' (Rancière, 2004: 50). Dexter (Dexter in Dexter and Heynan, 2004) refers to Tuymans' familiarity with his 'painterly antecedents' (n.12, p. 27) and cites his debt to 'the short and energetically disruptive brushstrokes of Velázquez' (ibid.). I present works by both painters for comparison below (Figures 44 and 45). Both painters employ a sort of mark-making shorthand in rendering the visual appearance of particular textured surfaces: Tuymans presumably in working from a photograph, and Velázquez in working from direct observation.

Figure 44: Diego Velázquez - Philip IV of Spain in Brown and Silver (probably 1632). Oil on canvas [detail].
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)

Figure 45: Luc Tuymans - Leopard (2000). Oil on canvas.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)

Other, more explicit connections can be drawn between twentieth century painting and the work of Peter Doig and Dexter Dalwood. Doig refers explicitly to formal aspects of modernist painting in his work, as Schiff shows in his exhibition catalogue essay on the painter (2008), which he illustrates with specific examples of Doig's formal

appropriations from paintings by Cezanne and Matisse. Schiff argues that in his recruitment of ‘any number of technical conceits’ from his ‘modernist predecessors’, the painter reinvigorates and extends their potential ‘within a contemporary representational practice’ (Schiff, 2008: 29).

A striking characteristic of Dalwood’s painting is his use of quotation, enlisting as he does visual motifs from paintings by a wide range of painters, including Patrick Caulfield, Richard Hamilton, Roy Lichtenstein, Morris Louis and Rene Magritte. Writing in the exhibition catalogue that accompanied a retrospective of Dalwood’s work at Tate St Ives in 2010, Myers points to the motifs by Henri Matisse and Francis Bacon that Dalwood has spliced within a single composition, ‘The Assassin’ (2008), and singles out a more obscure reference to an abstract painting by Gerhard Richter at the base of Dalwood’s ‘The Poll Tax Riots’ (2005) (see Figures 46 and 47 below).

Figure 46: Dexter Dalwood - *The Assassin* (2008). Oil on canvas.
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)

Figure 47: Dexter Dalwood - *The Poll Tax Riots* (2005). Oil on canvas [detail].
(nb: image redacted for copyright reasons.)

While one might be hard pushed to identify formal or conceptual similarities across the work of all the painters recruited for use in the project, I would argue that the selections that Hannah and I made enabled us to make a number of instructive connections between paintings and painters which were highly pertinent to the aims of the workshop sessions.

Teaching the workshop sessions

In the following section I outline the course of the taught project sessions by briefly describing each of their constituent parts (presentation, practical work and appraisal).

While I refer here to students' painting activity with regard to the theoretical and practical scope of the project, I interpret their resulting paintings in greater detail in the section below, 'Interpreting data from the 'Painting Events' project, Saatchi Gallery, April 2013'. I do so with illustrations of individual students' paintings and reference both to their practical activity and, in certain instances, to their statements regarding their work as expressed in the brief interviews that I conducted with them.

The first session was entitled 'Mark-making and selecting images' and was designed to introduce students to the project's emphasis on materials, experimentation and imagination. As observed earlier, Hannah and I decided that the first session would be quite compact – we divided it into a first half in which we encouraged students to experiment with paint and application tools, and a second half in which we introduced a variety of collage techniques and invited students to construct paintings by drawing upon both their mark-making work and a selection of images provided by us. Hannah and I shared responsibility for leading the first two sessions. I think it fair to say that my contribution related more to mark-making techniques and Hannah's to collaging techniques.

The second session, 'Imaginative Painting Strategies', was predominantly lead by Hannah. I believe that her presentation on the use of collaging techniques in painting

was the most significant taught component of this session, and would suggest that it served as the key for what I deem to be the success of the project as a whole. Hannah's presentation served to energize and inspire the students, offering as it did what I would describe as interpretive strategies for making through painting.

The second session was intended to foreground the possibilities for imaginative development of the images and ideas that were produced in the first session. Students were asked to view their experimental painting as a resource that could be tapped into with a view to making new work. Hannah's presentation more clearly communicated the uses of collage that we both had in mind in planning the project, than I had been able to in the previous session. Hannah's presentation of aspects of her own work and that of Dexter Dalwood preceded the practical activity of the session, and significantly affected the decisions and choices students made in their painting activity both in the same session and the two subsequent sessions.

Hannah had prepared a PowerPoint presentation of aspects of her work which included, at my request, photographic material that related to the construction of her paintings. These photographs are the product of an intense visual engagement with particular landscapes and the source material from which Hannah works in fashioning her landscape paintings in oil. As we were unfortunately unable, due to technical difficulties, to run the presentation, Hannah resorted to showing the students a series of digital images of her finished paintings on a laptop.

In the presentation Hannah explained that her practice as a painter relies on photographic sources and is not conducted in situ. The gathering of source imagery is therefore a crucial preparatory activity in the construction of each painting. As I understand it, this lengthy process consists in sifting and selecting through, and editing from, photographs (Hannah explained that she may take up to 600 photographs in an afternoon when on site).

I made detailed notes of the observations and questions that Hannah put to the students - and their responses, in the course of the presentation, some of which I quote from below. Hannah showed six images of her paintings, two of which I reproduce here (see Figures 48 and 49 below).



Figure 48: Hannah Brown - *A Notion of a Notion* (2012). Oil on plywood and oak.
Courtesy of the artist. Copyright © Hannah Brown 2012.



Figure 49: Hannah Brown: *Uton 8*. Oil on plywood and oak.
Courtesy of the artist. Copyright © Hannah Brown 2012.

Hannah's opening question to the students concerned the differences they thought there might be between the photographs and the paintings. Given that the students had not seen the related photographs, they were required to do some imaginative work in identifying visual information concerning the depicted landscapes that the paintings did *not* present to the viewer. Students identified both the lighting and colouring of the landscapes as possible elements of divergence, to which Hannah replied that in her paintings she 'edited out' both grey skies and clouds from the photographs. Further absent features of the landscapes that she asked students to identify were people and wildlife. Hannah concluded her presentation of her own work by referring to 'a stillness and a timelessness' that can be achieved by removing wildlife, people and man-made elements (such as pylons) from her chosen landscapes. 'You can change the way someone reads your painting,' she continued. 'You can control this. You can

make up a story. Why do we still paint? With painting you can create a new world – the logic isn't the same as the real world'.

Departing from her own work, Hannah moved on to present the use of collage in contemporary painting practice. In doing so she focussed particularly on two oil paintings by Dexter Dalwood, 'Kurt Cobain's Greenhouse' and 'Sunny von Bulow'. In the first of these Dalwood retains evidence of the painting's genesis as a collage in his depiction of the shapes cut out around its diverse components (see detail Figure 50), while in the second the artist quotes directly from, and appears to achieve a more seamless integration of heterogeneous elements (see detail, Figure 51).

Hannah initiated discussion of 'Kurt Cobain's Greenhouse' by asking whether the scene depicted 'looked like real life'. Two students responded, the first by observing that the painting 'Looks like a greenhouse but there's a city inside it', the second by commenting that, 'He's mixed real pictures with his own pictures'.

*(l) Figure 50: Dexter Dalwood - Kurt Cobain's Greenhouse (2000). Oil on canvas [detail].
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

*(r) Figure 51: Dexter Dalwood - Sunny von Bulow (2003). Oil on canvas [detail].
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

Hannah continued by referring to the playfulness of Dalwood's approach, pointing to his deployment of the figure of Ophelia from John Everett Millais's eponymous painting (1851-52) in what appears to be a room in a private clinic. Hannah referred further to the work of Neo Rauch and Tony Swain in order to show how images might

be inserted into paintings and subsequently undergo any number of modifications:

‘You can change the image any way you want. Enlarging, reducing, repeating, blurring, disguising’. She asked students how else an image might be changed.

Students suggested that the image could be rotated or its colour or mood changed.

Hannah pointed to the significance of changing the context of the image.

At the close of the second part of her presentation Hannah asked for students’ thoughts and opinions on the work that they had been shown and on the use of collaging

techniques in painting and their possibilities. One student observed that ‘You can do different pictures out of one picture’, while another expressed interest in ‘creating our own little world and developing it’.

In the paintings that they subsequently made, I would assert that students responded enthusiastically to Hannah’s observations on the possibility of constructing new worlds through painting, of following a logic that does not correspond to that of the ‘real world’. I would suggest that this logic is interpretive in nature and that it can be seen in the continuous negotiation of competing ideas and visual elements on the part of the person painting. Equally it may be comprehended in terms of the combinatorial or synthesizing processes that I delineated in the section on painting and the imagination in Part Five.

In the practical activity that followed the presentation a number of students were clearly keen to pursue some of the collage approaches that Hannah illustrated. Rather than insisting on a particular set of strategies for making, Hannah’s presentation made a number of approaches available for students to try out in their painting activity and, I would venture, helped to foster an atmosphere of openness or receptivity towards

visual resources and their productive potential. Students were therefore free to experiment both with images - either their own or those provided both by Hannah and myself, and with paint and application tools. Running the second session with Hannah permitted me to interview students for the first time, once practical work was underway, and I was able to interview all thirteen students, the interviews ranging in duration from under two minutes to just over five.

The emphasis of the third session was on different consistencies of paint and their expressive and representational potential for painting. Rather than preface the practical activity with the brief presentation that I had prepared on this subject however, I encouraged students to continue working on the paintings that the majority had started independently in the previous session. The students seemed to be content to do so and quickly resumed work on their paintings-in-progress, with little direction from myself. Three students spent the entire session working on single pieces of work. Halfway through the session I interrupted the students' activity to show them a set of colour reproductions of paintings that related to the use of various consistencies of paint (among them paintings by Frank Auerbach, Karen Davie and Howard Hodgkin).

I also demonstrated the use of a simple stenciling technique, by cutting a pattern into a sheet of card, positioning it over a sheet of watercolour paper and rolling a thick consistency of paint over the cut-out with a sponge roller. I identified this technique as another means of transposing or superimposing images or effects. As part of my presentation I also spoke briefly about the use of canvas. I had made some un-stretched

rectangles of canvas (slightly larger than A3 size) available for use from the first session, but noticed that students had been reluctant to use it. I therefore mentioned its absorbency and described how it is ordinarily primed and stretched for use. My intention was to encourage students to investigate for themselves the potential for making offered by particular materials, in this case a support.

As they had been with Hannah, the students were a little reticent, perhaps shy, and only a few ventured responses to my questions or opinions about the reproductions of paintings that I had displayed. I noticed however that after my presentation three students opted to paint on canvas, while five students created single or multiple stencil designs that they subsequently employed in paintings, some of which they had started in the previous session (perhaps with different intentions or outcomes in mind) and some of which were entirely new. Despite Hannah's absence, given the quiet atmosphere of application, I was able to conduct brief interviews with four students during this session once practical work had commenced.

I would assert that some of the work that was produced in the third session can be comprehended in terms of improvisatory practice. Some students showed no hesitation in improvising paintings 'on the spot', incorporating techniques that were new to them and developing their work accordingly. One student experimented by painting through and layering three abstract stenciled motifs one on top of the other, a painting she was to continue in the following session by adding a third, figurative stenciled component.

Another student who had painted a series of what I assumed to be grounds on A3 watercolour paper on the previous two sessions, began applying varying blends of blue and white poster paint to an A2 sheet of watercolour paper, using sponge rollers, rubber rollers, flat brushes and a squeegee. She continued doing so for a considerable time, seemingly unsatisfied either with the colours she was able to obtain or the consistency of the applied paint, variously applying it from mixes she had made on her palette, or by squeezing it directly on to the paper. She subsequently worked in an interesting fashion by tearing off horizontal strips from one of her earlier 'ground' paintings and reassembling them by gluing them to a fresh sheet of paper. In that the student did not further develop these 'grounds', I took them to be unfinished paintings – an issue I address further in my conclusion.

I opened the final and fourth session of the project with a ten-minute presentation to students which employed two groupings of reproductions. The first grouping of images was intended to address figure and ground relations in painting and referred to works by Juan Miro, Georges Braque, J.M.W. Turner, Michelangelo and Pablo Picasso. The second thematic grouping returned to collage and referred to works by Dexter Dalwood and Patrick Caulfield. The presentation was based upon the connections I sought to make in designing the second project, those between considerations of practical engagement with paint and the work of particular painters, outlined in the preceding section. The presentation was adapted however to comprehend the work of Dalwood in particular, in light of Hannah's presentation on

collage and painting. In the event I was able to draw out formal parallels between paintings from both groupings.

I allotted just under an hour and a half for the practical component of the session, allowing both for a short break and time for setting up. Some students were keen to complete their paintings-in-progress before the end of the final session, while others were equally eager to make new work and experiment further with tools and paint (I observed use of stenciling, masking and wet-on-wet techniques). For the first time in the project I found myself unable to keep up with the pace of the work, suddenly encountering paintings that I hadn't had the opportunity to see develop, drying on the table at the back of the room that had been reserved for this purpose.

As I will show in the following section, some students were able to imaginatively develop forms or concepts in their work that were suggested to them either by technical experimentation or the novelty of working with particular tools or materials. One student applied tracing paper to a landscape painting that she had made in order to soften the colours and suggest a level of visual depth. She continued by experimenting with the same approach, masking and layering a series of small abstract 'drip' paintings that she produced in short order. Another student created an entire painting with a single brush, varying its handling to create both a smoothly blended ground of two or three colours and a set of patterns that she subsequently laid over it. I was able to conduct a further four interviews during the practical work, one of which served as a follow-up to an interesting talk I had had with a student in the previous session.

In concluding the session and the project, I conducted a ten-minute appraisal with students in which I asked them to move around the room and take a look at each other's work. I asked students to identify some of the processes with which they had experimented and made paintings. I then asked them about the sorts of work they ordinarily did at school. A Year 10 student responded by saying that she and her classmates were asked to copy other artists' work, so as to 'learn their style'. She continued by saying that usually, 'You have to do experimentation in your own time'. While the student did not elaborate on this comment, I took it to mean, from its particular context in our discussion, that experimental work with paint was not encouraged in the art and design practice supported at her school. One student compared the painting project to a drawing project she had been involved in at school, in which she had been asked to 'take a line for a walk'. I suggested that the project might be compared to taking some paint for a walk.

Conclusion: observations

Before moving to interpret the work produced during the project, I offer here a few observations as a brief conclusion to the foregoing accounts of the design and conduct of the project. I feel that the second project benefited both from my experiences of working on the pilot project and from Hannah's contribution.

If I were to identify shortcomings with regard to the professed aims of the project, however, they would have to do with the restrictive working space of the Education Room at the gallery and the lack of enthusiasm among students for collaborative

painting. I had entertained hopes for both large-scale and collaborative painting in designing the project. Early in the planning stage I asked the Head of Education if it would be acceptable for students to work on the walls of the Education Room, as I hoped to enable them to produce large-scale work. While she agreed in principle, this was not possible in practice as the room had been reserved for a temporary exhibition of school children's painting for the duration of the project. This restriction determined in some degree the form of the work that students produced - paintings on various forms of A3 paper made either sitting or standing at tables.

6.6. Interpreting data from the 'Painting Events' project, Saatchi

Gallery, April 2013

Introduction

I present here an interpretation of some of the practical work that was made across the four workshop sessions that comprised the 'Painting Events' painting project for Year 9 and 10 students, conducted at the Saatchi Gallery in April 2013. As I emphasize in the preceding section, the 'Painting Events' project was intended to afford students the opportunity to pursue their own concerns in making paintings by suggesting a self-directed experimental approach to working with paint, application tools and images. My intention here is to bring the theoretical understanding of painting as a hermeneutic activity that I describe in earlier parts of this thesis, into correspondence with actual examples of students' practical work. Rather than employ a semiotic analytical model in an attempt to uncover the signifiatory scope of the students' paintings, I wish to follow, in a hermeneutic sense, the decision-making that informed their work; to

appraise the students' paintings from the perspective of their practical engagement with the visual and material resources that were made available to them.

I trace here the correspondences that I see between the practical and conceptual construction of specific paintings produced during the sessions, and a set of interrelated terms that I employ to characterise processes of, and attitudes and approaches to painting-as-making: the notions of 'formativity' and cues; the attitude of responsive openness on the part of the person painting; the notion of 'making it your own'; the improvisatory dimension of making, and the sense of 'immersive' engagement; the exercise of the imagination and the potential of 'trying out'.

The notion of 'formativity', or interpretive formation, by which I refer to Pareyson's concept (1988), is central both to the hermeneutic account of painting that I offer and to the design of the second project, particularly in its relation to that of a 'painting event'. I specifically employ the concept here to refer to the ways in which students were able to pursue and develop visual or material cues in the unfolding context of making.

I address the students' paintings with regard to the notion of openness. In Chapter Three above I identified a disposition to painting activity as an attitude of openness: a receptivity to the 'otherness', as it were, of a range of historically and culturally determined materials, tools and practices.

I employ the notion of 'making it your own' in my appraisal of particular paintings produced by students during the second painting project. Hannah's presentation on collage techniques in the second workshop session explicitly addressed painters'

borrowings from and transformations of a variety of images, including the work of other painters, and, I would argue, provided the impetus for students to appropriate, juxtapose and modify in their own making.

The imaginative dimension of painting-as-making that I discussed in Part Five can be seen in the license that some of the students exercised with regard to ‘cues’ or the potential of paint and application tools as their activity unfolded; the freedom, for example, to harness and transform the suggestions of a ‘mistake’ in an expressive way. I also employ the notion of ‘trying out’ to address students’ imaginative making, an approach I describe in the chapter on ‘Painting – skill and expression’, with reference to Addison’s notion of ‘visualisation’ (2010).

I also interpret students’ paintings in terms of the scope of improvisatory practice and ‘immersive’ engagement in making. I identify the openness, fluid decision-making and risk-taking with respect to visual and material resources in some of the students’ practices and productions.

While the discussion that follows draws upon the detailed notes that I took over the course of the project sessions (these were based on my observation of students’ painting decisions and activities), and refers in certain instances to students’ statements regarding their work as expressed in the brief interviews conducted with them (transcripts of these can be consulted in Appendix 5), its primary focus is on students’ visual productions. I illustrate students’ paintings in juxtaposition with some of the paintings of artists represented in the project, to which the former refer, or from which they borrow, or seek to transform or synthesize.

I conclude by remarking on what I see to be the key benefit of the project for students – the license it offered them to experiment with paint, images and application tools in a context beyond that of their schools; to make without a predetermined outcome, or to a specific brief, to make and enjoy ‘mistakes’.

Before moving to consider particular paintings with reference to the terms identified above, I wish to comment briefly on the initial mark-making session in which students developed their own repertoire of marks (see details from the experimental paintings from the first session reproduced in Figures 52 - 57 below) using the range of paint and application tools that were available (the latter included a wide variety of brushes, combs, rollers, sponge rollers, squeegees and sticks). The following actions broadly encompass the means students employed in their experimentation: blobbing, brushing, combing, criss-crossing, dragging, flicking, overlaying, printing, scraping, sponging, staining, swirling and wiping. Some of these actions were suggested by Hannah and myself, though many were discovered, developed and combined by the students themselves as their activity unfolded.

As I stated in the preceding section, the initial session was designed to foreground the project’s emphasis on materials, experimentation and imagination. I would argue, and hope to show, that the self-directed experimentation that we encouraged students to undertake significantly affected their decision-making in later painting activity and offered at an early stage in the project a sense of the risk and potential of working with paint and application tools (many of which were unfamiliar to students).



Figures 52-57: Details from students' mark-making experiments, Painting Events project 2013.

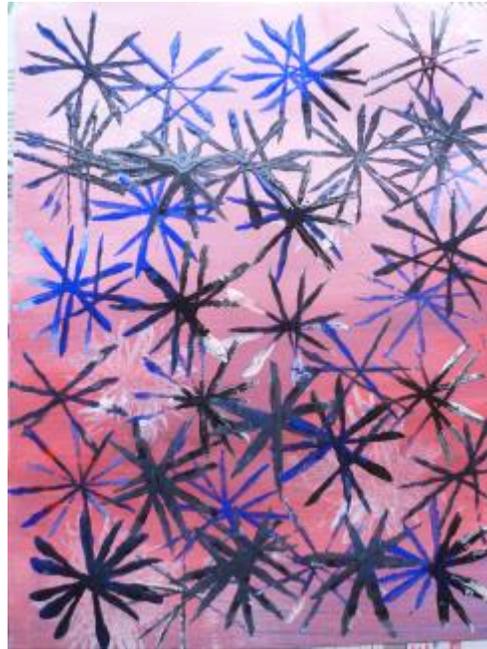
'Formativity' and cues

Some of the paintings produced by students in the workshop sessions resulted from processes of unfolding experimentation with materials and ideas: their work evolved in adopting and exploiting technical or conceptual discoveries, or what I characterise as 'cues' in the earlier chapter, 'Painting as a hermeneutic practice'. I interpret their work in terms of 'formativity', or what might be termed 'interpretive formation', discussed again in 'Painting as a hermeneutic practice' with reference both to Pareyson's theory of formativity (1988) and Wollheim's notion of thematization (1987). The notion of a making 'event', to which the title of the project alludes, can be understood in terms of formativity: the moment in which an experiment with paint or with an image (or both) opens up a new way of painting (and a new way of thinking about painting), or a new imaginary pictorial world, for the person painting. I refer to two paintings below that were produced or informed by experimentation, and in the case of the first without a predetermined outcome.

Example one

In the fourth session Student Seven made a painting using a single brush, alternating the way in which she handled it so as to produce a seamlessly blended ground of several colours, and a secondary layer of patterns (see Figures 58 and 59 below). I would argue that this student's exploitation of the affordances of a single flat brush in this painting constitutes the type of event to which I alluded in the preceding section, where an 'idea for a painting coalesces around a chance technical discovery'. When I spoke with the student she confirmed that she had not previously used a brush in this way and that this had 'happened by chance' [Interview Twenty, p. 451). I consider it

accurate to say that the student's painting was informed, if not directed, by her discovery – that the same brush, handled in different ways, could yield particular marks that could suggest a painting or a means of initiating a painting. Without the license to experiment with tools in this way I think it unlikely that the student's work could have evolved in the way that it did.



(l) Figure 58: Student Seven at work, Painting Events project 2013.

(r) Figure 59: Painting by Student Seven, Painting Events project 2013.

Example two

Student Nine made daring use of a technique that she had experimented with in the initial mark-making session. In depicting an erupting volcano (apparently from her imagination, as her painting does not correspond to the three or four photographic images of volcanoes that Hannah introduced to the project) the student worked with a loaded flat-edged brush, employing a 'blobbing' technique in her painting that appears

to have originated in her experimental work (see painting, Figure 60, and details, Figures 61 and 62 below).



Figure 60: Painting by Student Nine, Painting Events project 2013.

The student achieved the effect by gently touching her loaded brush to the surface of the paper, thus allowing random, dense configurations of paint to mark it. I think the technique effective, particularly in the contrast it affords between the density of the vivid red brush-marks that depict the shooting lava and both the blue wash employed to represent the sky and the energetic brown markings that represent the volcano (these appear to have been rapidly applied by use of a sponge roller).

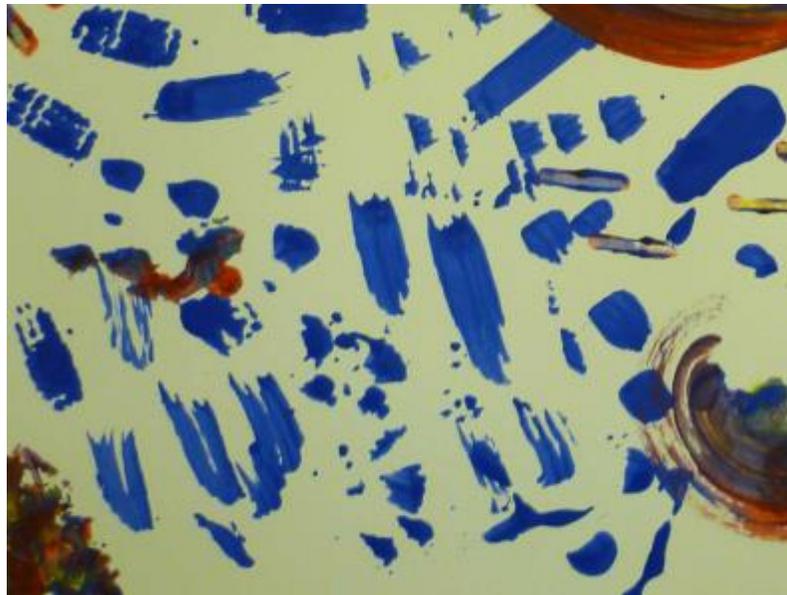


Figure 61: Experimental painting by Student Nine, Painting Events project 2013 [detail].



Figure 62: Painting by Student Nine, Painting Events project 2013 [detail].

It is possible that the student made a conscious decision to recruit this technique in her volcano painting, but equally possible that in the process of making – experimenting perhaps with different consistencies of paint, she saw how this manner of mark-making might be employed for an expressive purpose, namely, depicting a burst of hot lava.

The approach to making evident in the work of the students identified above can be compared to the description of the activity of adult painters offered by Fortnum (2009), in which, ‘The artist may ‘suspend’ their conscious deliberations, creating a sense for them that the medium has its own volition and that the work ‘talks back’ to them’ (see Bibliography for reference). In the course of her activity Student Seven saw that the flat brush could be used to form straight, dense lines, perhaps when expelling excess paint after dipping it in her palette, which permitted her to fashion a painting that she did not foresee. Equally these examples can be considered with respect to Kirk’s description of the ‘feedback’ process in making which she employs in her account of her own practice and research as a painter: ‘Making involves handling materials, responding constantly to tactile, visual and emotional feedback from the emerging form’ (2014: 120).

Openness

In the earlier chapter, ‘Painting as a hermeneutic practice’, I moved from a discussion of the hermeneutic terminology of aesthetic consciousness, self-understanding and Bildung, to offer an understanding of painting-as-making as a process of keeping oneself open to ‘the other’. In this very specific sense of ‘the other’ I refer to the cultural and historical continuum of ideas, materials and forms that attend or characterise practices of painting.

While hermeneutic theory may seem far removed from the practical activity that took place in the second painting project, I would argue that the project helped to foster an

atmosphere of openness or receptivity towards visual and material resources and their productive potential. In the first session that comprehended experimental mark-making I stressed to the students that it wouldn't be possible to make a mistake in the context of the project.

Example one

The inventive painting produced by Student Eight was intended to subvert a source image, a magazine photograph of Stonehenge that she herself brought to the second session. The student commenced work on her painting by inverting her tracing of the Stonehenge stones on her watercolour paper, subsequently depicting them hanging from the sky (she stated in interview that she thought that doing so would , 'maybe just be a bit more imaginative, more creative' [Interview Fifteen, p. 444]). She was also able to incorporate her use of the comb tool that she had experimented with in the initial mark-making session in the painting (see Figure 63 below) and make use of techniques and approaches that I introduced in the third and fourth sessions (working with a ground and with stencils).



Figure 63: Painting by Student Eight (first state), Painting Events project 2013 [detail].

I present the development of the painting in three stages in the photographs below (see Figures 64, 65 and 66).



Figure 64: Painting by Student Eight (first state), Painting Events project 2013.



Figure 65: Painting by Student Eight (second state), Painting Events project 2013.



Figure 66: *Painting by Student Eight (third state)*, Painting Events project 2013.

I consider that this student was particularly receptive to new ideas and approaches in her painting activity. As her work on the painting progressed, and as the students' practical work was interrupted by the presentations and demonstrations, she confidently made use of some of the techniques and approaches that were demonstrated. She did so in a playful manner, experimenting both conceptually in the wake of Hannah's presentation, by turning her subject on its head, and technically, by using a stencil to depict figures she might otherwise have painted by hand.

Example two

Student Four experimented 'on the spot', as it were, developing a painting by overlaying three abstract stenciled motifs (see Figure 67 below), a painting she was to continue in the following session by adding a third, figurative stenciled component (see Figure 68 below). When I asked the student whether she had an idea in her mind

of what the picture was about, she replied, ‘No. It’s just stuck together, yeah’ (Interview Eighteen, p. 448). I had the sense that this student was simply enjoying the activity of painting in this instance, without a particular outcome in mind, selecting colours, stenciling and layering her shapes as she went along.



Figure 67: Painting by Student Four (unfinished state), Painting Events project 2013.



Figure 68: Painting by Student Four (finished state), Painting Events project 2013.

The resulting painting is very different to the landscape that she produced earlier in the project in which she attempted to synthesize elements of different paintings (Figure 73, reproduced below). The student's approach in this case was far more responsive to the formal potential of her experimentation – she worked in a fluid, playful manner that permitted her to exploit the visual impact of the spaces and layers that her experimentation threw up.

Examples three and four

Similarly, Student Eleven, who had previously worked with great care on her Churchill-themed painting, produced a far looser painting (Figure 69 below) on the final session that appears to have taken account of some of the technical and formal possibilities demonstrated and suggested in my later presentations (the student has employed a stencil to paint shapes), as well as incorporating more adventurous mark-making in the form of thumb-prints. A painting by Student Nine (see Figure 70 below) also seems to have been informed by my emphasis on the use of different consistencies of paint within the same painting – her painting combines the striking use of cut-out abstract motifs and splattered threads of paint.



Figure 69: Painting by Student Eleven, Painting Events project 2013.



Figure 70: Painting by Student Nine, Painting Events project 2013.

These paintings can arguably be addressed in terms of the responsive openness of their makers and understood with regard to a sense of play. The students who produced them took risks with ideas and materials – their making was informed by the interplay

of the visual resources that Hannah presented and by the materials and processes that were demonstrated and that they themselves developed.

‘Making it your own’

The phrase ‘making it your own’ came to my attention when it was used by one of the students who participated in the pilot project conducted at the Saatchi Gallery in April 2012. The phrase was recorded by one of my supervisors who attended two of the workshop sessions at the gallery and spoke informally with most of the participating students. At the end of the final session he handed me his hand-written notes based on these conversations, one of which related to the work of a student (Student Sixteen) who stated that she and her friend (Student Seven) hadn’t ‘made anything like a proper picture – so we took something from the room and made it our own’. If I remember correctly, the resulting paintings were loosely based on a painting with an aquatic theme that was on display in the Education Room, which I unfortunately failed to document (see Figures 71 and 72 below).



(l) Figure 71: Painting by Student Seven, Painting Encounters project 2012.



(r) Figure 72: Painting by Student Sixteen, Painting Encounters project 2012.

Presumably searching for a starting point for their work, the students appropriated elements of this painting and followed their own paths in developing them.

‘Making it your own’ is a phrase that enjoys currency in Anglophone popular culture. I am thinking particularly of the so-called ‘reality TV’ singing talent competition, ‘The X Factor’ (first broadcast in the UK in 2004). In the language of the judges of the competition⁵¹, to make a song one’s own is an expression of approval for a contestant’s performance; to do so can be understood to mean to take ownership of a particular song from its original or best-known vocal interpreter/performer; to offer a new, alternative vocal interpretation of the song. The positive connotations of the phrase hold potential for use in other contexts of performance and/or making – in this case, that of painting as a form of interpretive engagement.

I refer here to the ways in which students developed specific paintings in imaginative ways through strategies of appropriation, juxtaposition and modification. I contend that certain similarities and resemblances can be traced in the construction of the group of paintings that I have chosen to examine. These have to do with the approaches students adopted in selecting from and synthesizing disparate images in their own compositions (students were able to draw upon images that they themselves had brought to the sessions, and to refer to or appropriate from the visual content of the architectural journals, auction catalogues, and black and white photographs that Hannah and I made available) and the means by which they edited or modified elements of found images or pictures of their own, for particular purposes (by ‘enlarging, reducing, repeating, blurring, disguising’, as Hannah put it).

⁵¹ Lauren Laverne (2014) cites the phrase with reference to ‘the common tongue’ of TV talent shows.

Some of the paintings I present below can be considered as responses both to Hannah's presentation and to the work of the painters and the photographic imagery that Hannah and I introduced. While some direct copying of the photographs and reproductions did occur, as I will show, the students who elected to work with these visual sources were more concerned to borrow from and re-fashion them, which in the case of the reproductions of paintings necessitated attending to their conceptual and technical construction; the process of 'making their own' more accurately describes the ways in which students freely appropriated, interpreted and, as it were, 're-worked' particular visual elements from the reproduced paintings. Hannah's presentation in the second workshop session, which preceded the practical work that was conducted, significantly affected the strategies for making that the students employed, not only in the same session, but in the two following sessions. I think it fair to say that students were very enthused by the references Hannah made both to her own painting and working practices, and to the work of contemporary painters, particularly that of Dexter Dalwood. Students were keen to try out for themselves the strategies of appropriation and juxtaposition that Hannah introduced in discussing painting and collage.

The paintings that resulted from the decision-making of those students who borrowed from and modified elements of the reproductions of paintings and photographic source material were idiosyncratic and imaginative in their construction, even those that were apparently left unfinished and only hinted at further possibilities for their realisation. I

offer examples of their work below and attempt, as far as possible, to piece together their approaches and intentions.

Example one

Subsequent to the mark-making work in the first session, the first significant painting produced by Student Four (see Figure 73 below) combined elements of two reproductions of paintings, one a colour reproduction of a painting by Henri Le Sidaner from the Sotheby's Impressionist and Modern Art catalogue, 'Le Pavillon, Gerberoy' (1909) (see Figure 74 below) and the other a black and white photocopied reproduction of a Peter Doig painting, 'Concrete Cabin' (1994) (see Figure 75 below). She sought to employ the pointillist technique employed by Le Sidaner to make her painting, with one notable exception, as I shall show ('I'm tryin' to do the whole thing, using the whole dot thing', as the student herself put it, Interview Twelve, p. 440).



Figure 73: Painting by Student Four, Painting Events project 2013.

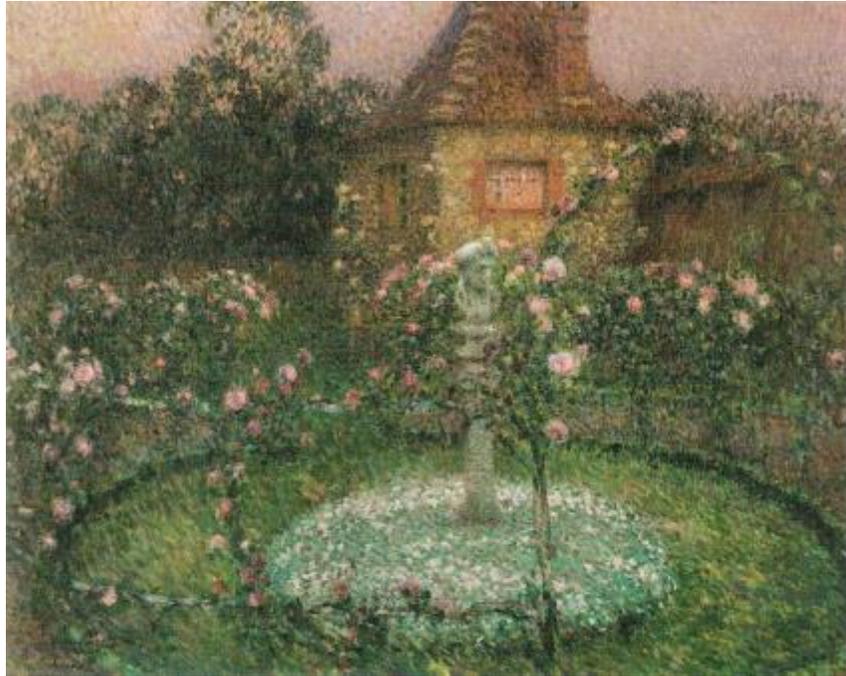


Figure 74: Henri Le Sidaner - *Le Pavillon, Gerberoy* (1909). Oil on canvas.

Figure 75: Peter Doig - *Concrete Cabin* (1994). Oil on canvas (b/w reproduction used in Painting Events project 2013).
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)

When I asked the student about her plans for the rest of her composite painting, which at the time of the interview she had only just commenced, she spoke confidently about the modifications, additions and substitutions she was proposing to effect with reference to her chosen source paintings (Interview Twelve, pages 439-440). She wished to substitute a bush for a fence, darken the 'lake' and add trees to her interpretation of Le Sidaner's painting. I consider this student's approach interesting both because she fearlessly takes matters into her own hands, as it were, selecting and juxtaposing the various elements of Doig's and Le Sidaner's paintings that she wishes to work with, and because her own interpretation of Le Sidaner's landscape (she sees a lake in the painting where in fact the painter has depicted a circular clump of flowers) leads her to depict a lake, or rather a small pond, by use of a technique that differs to

that she has employed over the rest of the painted area (in this instance the student achieves this by use of a comb tool). The resulting painting, though unfinished, should not be understood as a copy either of the Doig or the Le Sidaner reproductions. While the student seeks to approximate Le Sidaner's handling of paint in her painting, her intention seems to have been to recruit and bring together those visual elements of both paintings that she found attractive or appealing (in her own words: 'I'm mixing the book, the picture and the book, just a picture on the paper. Sort of mixing the whole picture together' [Interview Twelve, p. 439]).

Example two

Another student, Student Six, similarly sought to combine elements of two different paintings within a single painting. Working from colour reproductions of paintings by contemporary painters, 'Occluded' (1997) by Michael Raedecker (b.1963) (Figure 76 below) and 'Endeavor (Los Angeles)' (2005) by Sarah Morris (b.1967) (Figure 77 below), the student commenced work on her painting by copying the main features of Raedecker's composition, and in doing so, re-positioning the house or cottage that dominates it. She subsequently introduced elements of Morris' geometric abstraction to the composition, filling the space that corresponds to the sky in the depicted landscape and apparently left blank in Raedecker's original.

*Figure 76: Michael Raedecker - Occluded (1997). Acrylic and thread on linen.
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

*Figure 77: Sarah Morris - Endeavor (Los Angeles) (2005). Household gloss paint on canvas.
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

It would not have been evident to the student working from the reproduction that Raedecker has applied paint to his canvas in a variety of ways. The occluded or blank

area of the painting (which perhaps gives the painting its title), is, according to the description offered on the Saatchi Gallery website⁵², a ‘thick white puddle’, ‘the densest part of the painting’. The website description refers to a cottage sitting in a ‘poured environment’. In her interpretation or version of the painting the student dispenses with the greys Raedecker has employed to depict an apparently bleached-out landscape and instead employs a warm brown wash for this purpose.

Similarly the student has effected changes in her interpretation of the Morris painting – she has painted elements of the painting’s geometric patternation in a free manner, substituting orange for blue as the predominant colour and using red instead of dark blue to depict one of the superimposed hexagons (see detail, Figure 78 below).

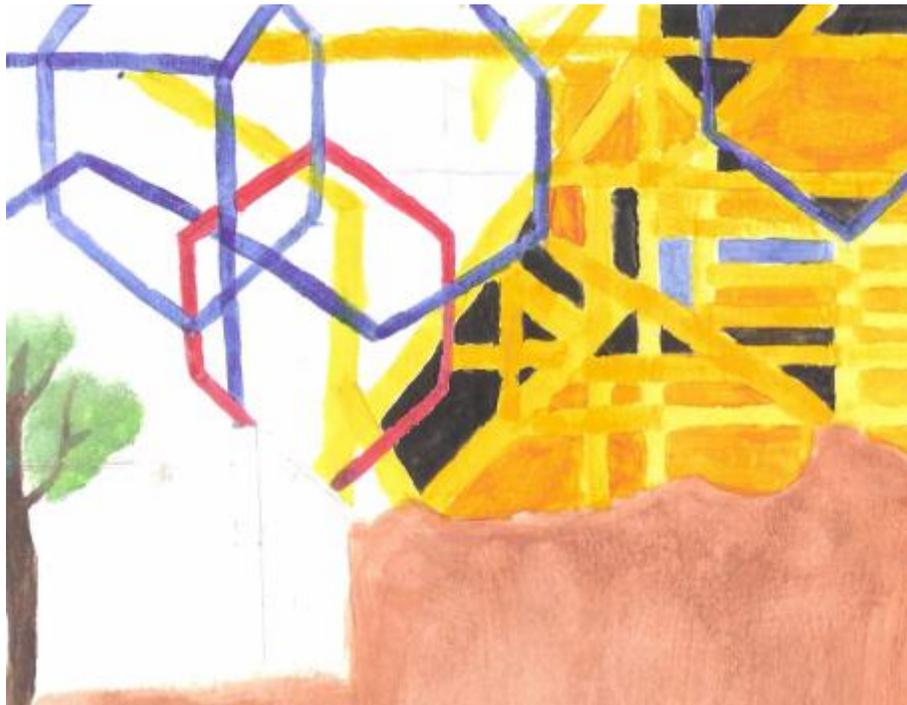


Figure 78: Painting by Student Six (unfinished state iii), Painting Events project 2013 [detail].

⁵² http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/michael_raedecker.htm

The ‘work-in-progress’ photographs (see Figures 79 and 80 below) reveal that the student has applied her colours to a skeletal, free-hand pencil drawing in a manner entirely at odds with Morris’s cool, seemingly machined forms. The resulting abstract sky or backdrop that she has fashioned owes little to Morris’s painting, save its geometric inspiration. While Hannah’s presentation made use of paintings by Dexter Dalwood to identify how a painter might juxtapose heterogeneous elements in her or his painting, this student did not attempt to synthesize the two paintings she chose to work with in the way Dalwood ‘mashes up’⁵³ disparate imagery in his paintings⁵⁴. Rather than homogenize, as it were, the appropriated snippets of paintings that he juxtaposes in his paintings in what might be described as a ‘signature’ style, or a manner of his own, Dalwood deliberately emulates the tropes, or mimics the look of Magritte, Bacon or Matisse paintings in his appropriations. The student could have painted directly onto the photocopied reproduction of the Morris painting or cut and applied the photocopied reproduction to her own painting-in-progress. Her ambition instead was to copy ‘freehand’ in paint from both reproductions, with no regard for straight lines or indeed the difficulty of the endeavour.

⁵³ Myers refers to Dalwood’s paintings as ‘fictional and historical mash-ups’ (Myers. T.R. in Clark, M., Derieux, F. and Juncosa, H. [2010], p.93). The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines ‘mash-up’ as ‘something created by combining elements from two or more sources’.

⁵⁴ Dalwood himself describes his painting in terms of ‘an amalgam of the stylistic history of painting’ (Dalwood in Clark, M., Derieux, F. and Juncosa, H. [2010], p.11)



Figure 79: Painting by Student Six (unfinished state i), Painting Events project 2013.



Figure 80: Painting by Student Six (unfinished state ii), Painting Events project 2013.

The Morris painting can be understood as a sort of visual stepping-stone for the student, a passport perhaps to an imagined world with which she herself, while engaged in the process of painting, is as yet not entirely acquainted. The student's intention seems not to have been to render copies of her chosen paintings, but rather to blend disparate visual elements from them so as to construct a landscape or location of her own design. In this she has only partly succeeded as she was either unable or disinclined to complete her painting. The point that the student did reach in her work is intriguing – one can only speculate how she might have further developed the strange proximity of the cottage (rendered only as absence) to the lurking forms of the geometric sky (see Figure 81 below).



Figure 81: Painting by Student Six (final state), Painting Events project 2013 [detail].

Pertinent to this painting and to my discussion of that by Student Four above, is the question of imaginative ‘trying out’. In the section on painting and the imagination in Part Five, I identified ‘trying out’ with respect both to imaginative combinatorial or

synthesizing processes in making and in relation to Addison's notion of 'visualisation' (2010), that of 'thinking and 'shaping' through images' (p.49). In the cases cited here the students concerned have developed their work through these processes; they began work by effecting particular visual combinations or juxtapositions, the logic of which they subsequently followed and/or parted with as they continued painting.

Example three

In following a particular concept, the painting produced by Student Eleven in the second and third sessions refers to, adapts and repeats the student's chosen visual source. Her painting is based upon one of the photographs that was selected and made available to students by Hannah - that of Sir Winston Churchill (Figure 82 below) seated among other politicians.

Figure 82: The Churchill Coalition Government 11 May 1940 - 23 May 1945 [detail].
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)

I asked the student about her intentions for the painting at an early stage in its progress, at which point she was carefully tracing and transferring the outlines of the image of Churchill to her paper (see Interview Five, pages 421-422). She explained that by repeating the image of Churchill she wanted it to become 'less detailed and less detailed', 'but more like shaded round the outside, so more like abstract ... so he becomes more of a normal person than like more of an authoritative figure'.

The student has interpreted the image of Churchill both by abstracting the figure and by adding to and subtracting from the photographic source. For the first of the repeated

Churchills (the figure on the far right) she adds colour; she dispenses with Churchill's joined hands and handkerchief; she changes his bow-tie to a tie; she omits his lower leg and feet and depicts his raised crossed leg with three simple lines, in effect obliterating any reference to his seated position. The result is a strangely indeterminate figure, apparently floating against or in a white space from the waist up. In her repetitions the figure progressively loses its original identity against ever darker backgrounds. The student also incorporates one of the formal strategies employed by Dexter Dalwood in his work, that of depicting the edges of cut and pasted visual material (this can be seen in the painting 'Kurt Cobain's Greenhouse', a detail of which is reproduced below as Figure 85). The student identified her intention to do so when asked about her painting in interview, referring to Hannah's presentation on Dalwood and explaining that she wished to emulate his approach: 'And, but like I'll leave like a gap, I think, like the guy who did it when he cuts stuff out' (see Interview Five, p. 422)

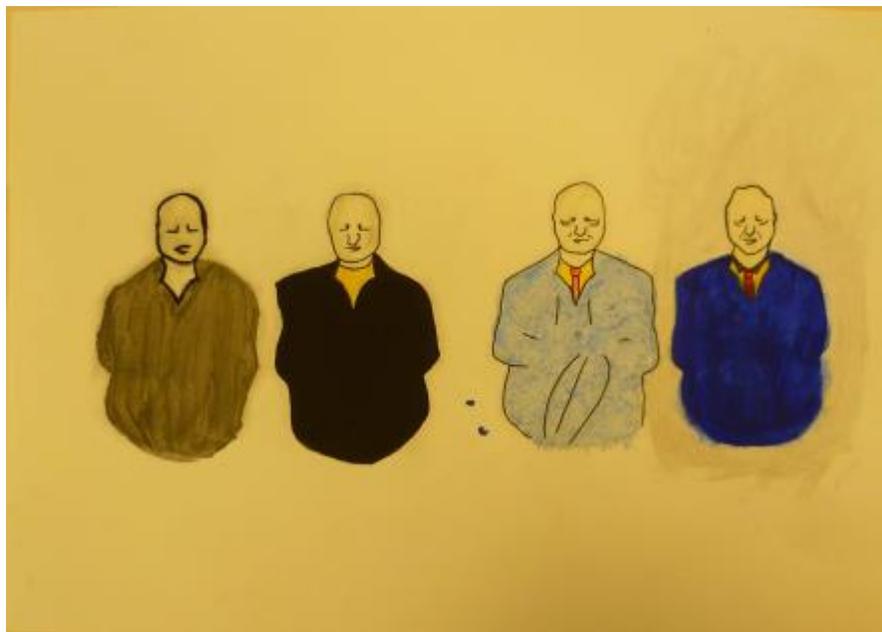


Figure 83: Painting by Student Eleven (unfinished state), Painting Events project 2013.



Figure 84: Painting by Student Eleven, Painting Events project 2013.

Figure 85: Dexter Dalwood - *Kurt Cobain's Greenhouse* (2000). Oil on canvas [detail].
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)

Calibrated though it was to a specific concept, this student's approach can be understood as interpretive. She has isolated, adapted and abstracted the image of Churchill with a view to recasting his identity – to humanise him, perhaps.

Improvisation and engagement

I move here to identify a painting that may be compared in its construction to those discussed above, but can also be considered in terms of improvisatory practice and 'immersive' practical engagement. I would argue that this painting reflects a responsive openness to the material and visual resources that were available on the part of the student who produced it. She showed a willingness to take risks in her making, to pursue the ideas, or cues, that were suggested by her experimentation with

materials, tools and images. The ‘immersive’ nature of the production of this painting can be considered with reference to the parallel between the participatory involvement of the spectator of the work of art and the productive engagement of the painter, giving her or himself up to, in Matthews’ words, ‘the unfolding event of the painting process’ (2003: 31), that I identify in Part Four, ‘Painting as a hermeneutic practice’.

Following her Doig-Le Sidaner landscape painting, the next painting made by Student Four was inspired by another reproduction from the Sotheby’s Impressionist and Modern Art catalogue, that of a Matisse crayon drawing, ‘Visage’ (1951). In its improvisatory nature and the rapidity of its execution, I initially understood this painting (Figure 86 below) as a throwaway production or an afterthought on the part of the student, particularly in comparison with her earlier, more methodical work. In producing this work it seemed as if the student was ‘letting off steam’ after the concentrated work involved in making her preceding painting.

In her painted and incised interpretation of the drawing she has used the end of a paintbrush to draw into a thick dark mix of paint that she has spread, possibly with a roller, over layers of blue, green and red paint.

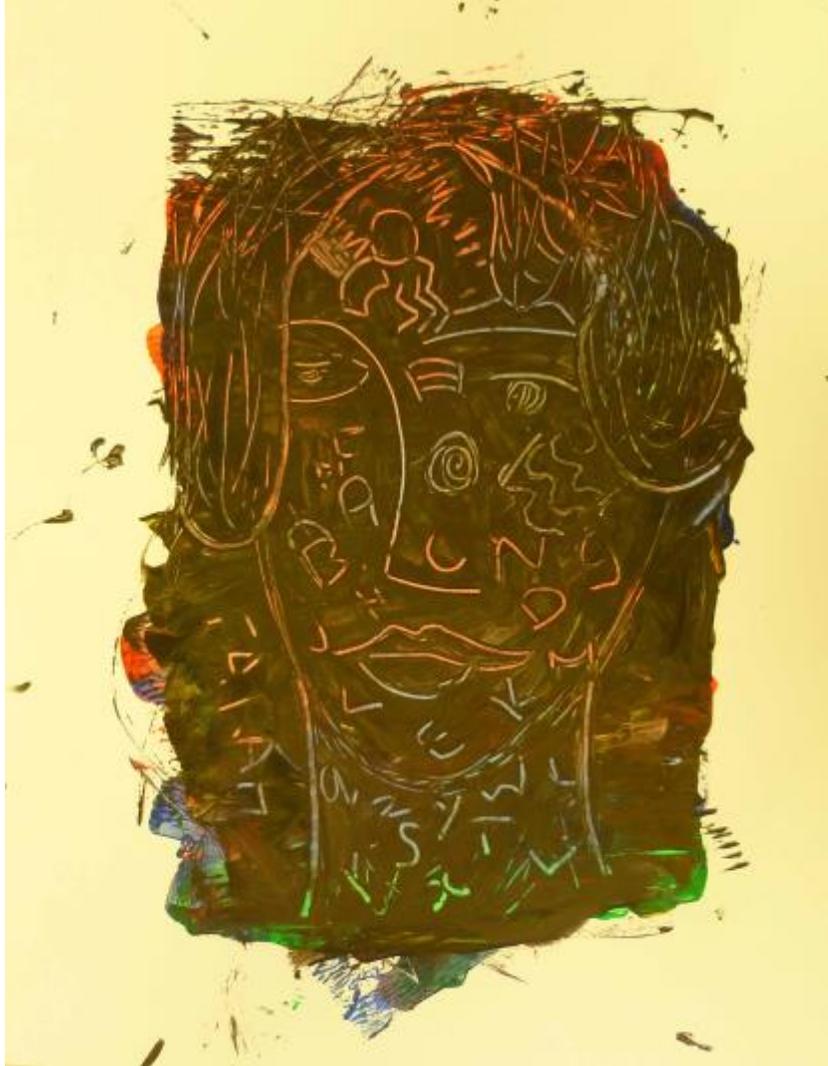


Figure 86: Painting by Student Four, Painting Events project 2013.

Employing a sgraffito technique that she had not used before (see Interview Eighteen, p. 448), and that she apparently discovered for herself in the course of her painting activity, the student effectively inverts Matisse's black-on-white drawing. Her resulting painting stands in strong contrast to the stark graphic quality of the chosen source image (Figure 87 below).

*Figure 87: Henri Matisse - Visage (1951). Black crayon on paper.
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

In tracing the possible development of the scraping technique that the student employed in her 'Matisse', I noticed that in the first mark-making session she had experimented by dragging the comb tool over overlaid layers of paint to produce attractive effects (see detail of experimental painting by Student Four, Figure 88 below).



Figure 88: Experimental painting by Student Four, Painting Events project 2013 [detail].

While the face she has depicted bears some resemblance to Matisse's, the student has personalized it by inscribing letters and drawing figures across it, the meanings of which are not apparent (though she has written her name into the paint to the left of the face – I have obscured this so as not to identify the participant). Matisse's 'Visage' operates as a cue for this student, as a means of navigating her way with the material and visual resources available towards an image that seems to hold personal significance for her.

I confess that I did not pay much attention to this painting as the student was making it, but in attempting to interpret it at a later stage saw that it could be considered with reference to more than one of the terms I employ in this interpretive account: it suggests both her openness to materials and ideas, and her freedom to make in a meaningful way: it appears to me a prime example of making something, in this case the reproduction of an artist's drawing, one's own.

While it is not possible to identify the scope of the student's exposure to visual art in particular, it is interesting to speculate on the context in which she might have come across the interlacing of image and text that informs her painting. Was the introduction of letters or words in her painting perhaps inspired or triggered by Matisse's signature that shares the picture plane with the few lines the artist has employed to depict the face? Her interpretation of the Matisse drawing strongly reminded me of the work of Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988), in which appropriated and re-worked imagery from popular culture and the realm of fine art are juxtaposed with repeated written words or phrases. The Basquiat painting, 'Mona Lisa', reproduced below (Figure 89), in which the artist mutilates and re-contextualizes the eponymous figure, might be considered in relation to the student's Matisse interpretation.

*Figure 89: Jean-Michel Basquiat - Mona Lisa (1983). Acrylic and oilstick on canvas.
(nb: Image redacted for copyright reasons.)*

Imagination and ‘trying out’

Here I discuss two paintings (in the case of the second, a set of paintings, strictly speaking) with regard to the imaginative involvement of the students who made them.

Example one

Student One constructed the painting illustrated below (Figure 90), her first finished work made after the mark-making session, by selecting and tracing from a number of photographic source images, which she combined to depict a fantastical architectural construction within an imaginary space. She later developed the picture using a series of washes and by use of stenciled shapes.



Figure 90: Painting by Student One (finished state), Painting Events project 2013.

While I have not been able to piece together every visual source that the student utilized in making her painting, I have been able, through careful scrutiny of all the visual material that Hannah and I made available for the project, to identify three photographs from a single 2011 edition of *The Architectural Review* that correspond

to elements of the structure that the student has depicted (one of which she was to reject at a later stage in the painting's development) (see Figures 91, 92 and 93 below).

- (l) *Figure 91*: Advert for Vitra products. In: *The Architectural Review*, March 2011.
(c) *Figure 92*: Advert for European Copper in Architecture Campaign. In: *The Architectural Review*, March 2011.
(r) *Figure 93*: Advert for the Natural Stone Show 2011. In: *The Architectural Review*, March 2011.
(nb: Images redacted for copyright reasons.)

From my observation of the student's working process, I recall that she began work on the painting by transferring pencil tracings of the architectural elements onto a blank A3 sheet of watercolour paper. As far as I can tell, it was only when she was satisfied with her arrangement of these elements that she began to make decisions about colour and the wider composition of her painting. The foundation of her painting is a complex pencil drawing formed by the juxtaposition of tracings of four disparate architectural features and the superimposition of a tracing of trees and a bridge suspended between a chasm. The drawing is partly evident in the photograph of the student's painting in an unfinished state reproduced here (see Figure 94 below).

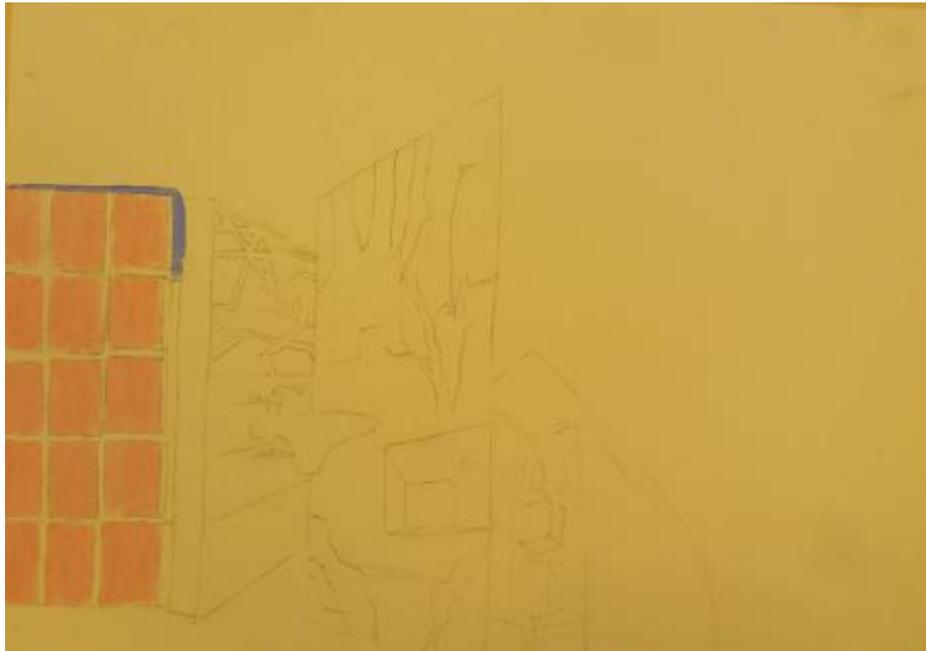


Figure 94: Painting by Student One (unfinished state), Painting Events project 2013.

The drawing betrays the fact that at a later stage in the painting's progress the student rejected her initial decision to include a further building in the grouping of structures that occupies the foreground of her picture. It is not clear why she decided against its inclusion – it is possible that she sacrificed this element for another idea that she had in mind for the composition to the right of the structure, or equally that she made what she regarded as a mistake with regard to the depiction of this building and subsequently sought to erase it. It is only through reference to the initial drawing that it is possible to piece together the student's decision-making and to identify her visual appropriations and complex juxtapositions, as fine detail of these are no longer recognizable in the finished painting: her source images have been subsumed in a new pictorial world.

This painting can be seen as one of the more ambitious responses to Hannah's presentation of collage techniques. The initial drawing stands as evidence of the degree to which the student has sought to integrate the heterogeneous visual elements she has chosen to work with. This student worked quietly, diligently and thoughtfully on this particular painting and became, I believe, progressively more absorbed by the pictorial world that she had generated and found herself developing. In doing so the student was able to draw not only on her imagination (to 'try out', to think and shape through images), but to respond in a receptive manner to the possibility of introducing a new technique with which to carry the same piece of work forward. After my brief presentation to the group on the use of stenciling in the third session, the student

quickly adopted the stencil technique I had demonstrated and used it to create the shapes that jostle in the space to the right of the architectural structure.

I would characterise her involvement with this work as ‘immersive’: her engagement with images and ideas was such that she could be said to have been exploring the imaginative scope of her newly assembled world as she constructed it (or, put another way, asking herself, consciously or not, how her construction might operate in its imagined reality or what time of day she might be depicting; speculating on the colour of the sky or whether or not the blue pathway between the planes of the buildings leads anywhere).

In reviewing this painting I am reminded of the pleasurable concentration I observed in the student who made it: a level of engagement that enabled her to develop a single painting at varying speeds, in small increments or in bold leaps, according both to the possibilities and constraints of material and visual resources, and, to borrow from the language Hannah employed in her presentation, the logic of the creation of new worlds. The words of the poet Mark Strand, quoted by Csikszentmihalyi in his study of creativity (1996), might be used to parallel this student’s involvement in her work on this particular painting:

... you’re right in the work, you lose your sense of time, you’re completely enraptured, you’re completely caught up in what you’re doing, and you’re sort of swayed by the possibilities you see in this work.

(p.121)

When I asked the student if she thought that the world she had constructed in her painting had ‘come out of her imagination’ or if it was something she may have remembered or seen before, she replied by saying that, ‘... no, mostly like ... you’ve entered into that world, and it’s like ... like become more realistic, you know’ (Interview Fourteen, p.443). While her painting shows that the student has employed some of the conceptual and technical approaches presented by Hannah and myself (and arguably bears traces of her exposure to the work of painters such as Dalwood and Caulfield), it is defiantly her own work – personal, imaginative and dynamic.

Example two

By contrast, the following painting by Student Fourteen (reproduced below at two stages in its development, Figures 95 and 96) can be seen as a re-imagining of an image that the student herself had already produced. This student took the unusual step of radically modifying the appearance of a painting on which she had expended considerable time and effort over two sessions, by applying a sheet of tracing paper over it. The student’s painting was based on a picture that she brought with her to the second session - that of a landscape over which hovers a hot air balloon. The student has depicted the balloon against a cloudy sky, painted thickly with a fan brush in an agitated manner.

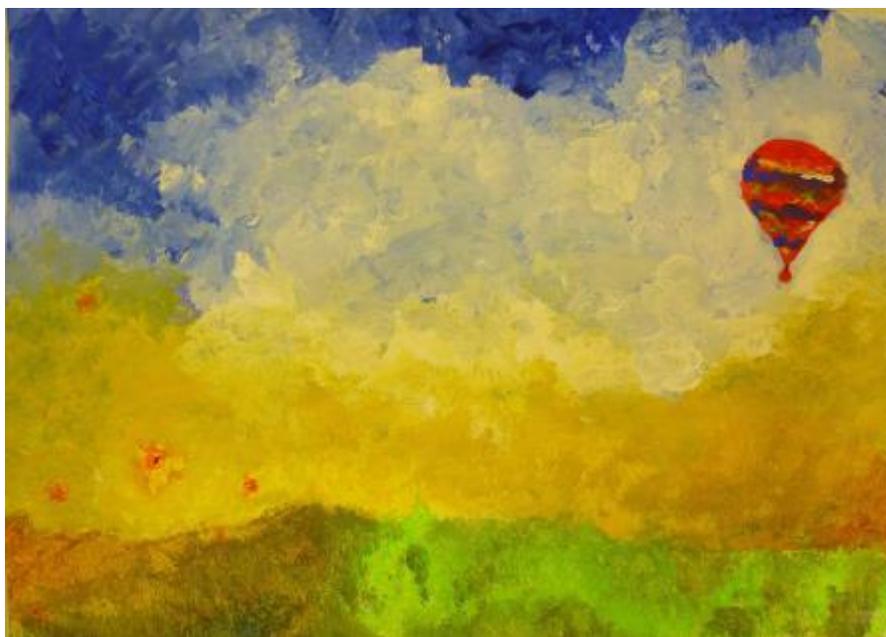


Figure 95: Painting by Student Fourteen (first state), Painting Events project 2013.

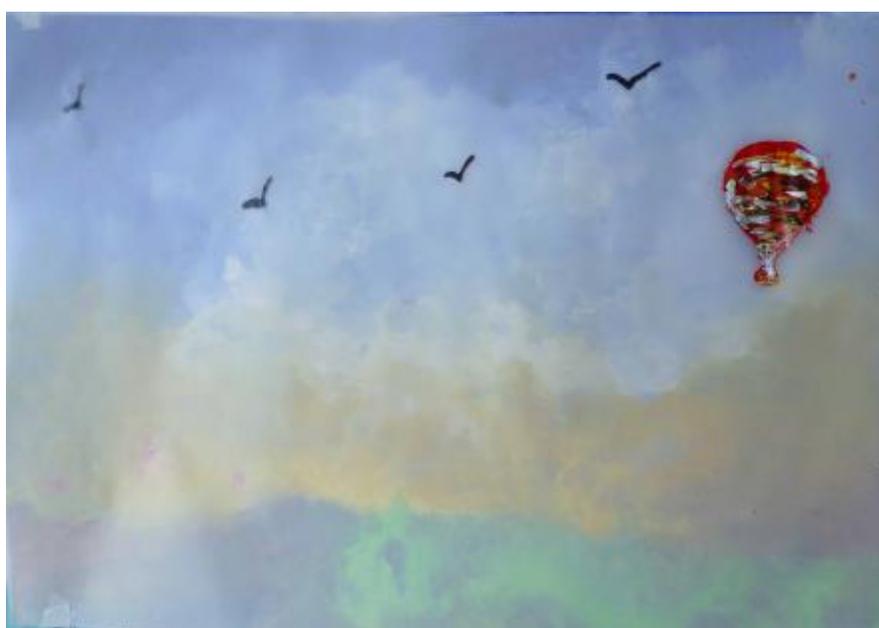


Figure 96: Painting by Student Fourteen (second state), Painting Events project 2013.

The student's application of tracing paper to her original painting definitively alters its appearance, effectively lightening the colours of sky and landscape and obscuring the handling of paint. In this new state it is no longer possible to discern any separation

between sky and land in the picture (a separation that was already somewhat obscure in the original painting in which what appears to be a bank of low yellow cloud might equally be understood as foliage). In light of her comments in interview it seems that the student did not apply the tracing paper to her painting by design. When I asked her how she had come up with the idea, she responded by saying, ‘... well I just saw someone taking a piece of tracing paper, and I thought, well, I might try it, so, just - ’ [Interview Twenty One, p.453]). In opting to use the paper yet not knowing what for, the student seems to have recognised its potential for layering effects by accident. I would argue that in recruiting this material in an improvisatory fashion, the student took a risk: she has responded to a cue and learned about the properties of a particular material and how they can be exploited in depiction. Furthermore, the student has found a technical solution to the problem she encountered in losing the visual definition of the hot air balloon: she re-paints it in its place, bringing it back into focus as it were. In subsequently developing the resulting picture by painting birds onto the new tracing paper sky the student has found a means of suggesting visual depth. In this particular painting the student’s approach may have been informed by Hannah’s presentation in which she showed how, in constructing her paintings, she removed grey skies and clouds from her source photographs.

Conclusion

In interpreting particular examples of students’ work from the project I have made particular connections between paintings and the theoretical account of painting identified at length in Part Four, ‘Painting as a hermeneutic practice’, key aspects of

which are the notions of interpretive formation and ‘responsive openness’ to material and visual resources on the part of the painter.

I would suggest that the distinction of the second painting project can be seen in the possibilities for making through experimentation that it proposed in a context that was emphatically not that of the students’ schools. As I mentioned in the previous section, the theme(s) or subject(s) of the painting project were left open, in the hope that the students’ exploration of paint and tools would afford them the confidence to make paintings that related to their own interests. At least two students confirmed that they had not undertaken the sort of experimental mark-making that took place in the first session in their art and design lessons in school (Interview Five with Student Eleven, p.419 and Interview Ten with Student Five, p.434).

I would assert that much of the making that took place across the sessions was interpretive in nature, particularly with regard to images: work was produced as students made an image or images their own. Paintings evolved as students identified, appropriated and remade the images that were made available to them or those that they themselves had located or previously painted. In following these interpretive processes, both practical and conceptual, students were able to develop visual ideas, as in the case of Student Eleven who sought to recast the identity of her chosen subject, Winston Churchill, by abstracting and reformulating his image, or to radically re-work existing images in ways that were meaningful to them, as did Student Four with her improvised interpretation of Matisse’s ‘Visage’ drawing. In some cases the visual

material that Hannah and I presented to students served as prompts or stepping-stones for making, providing the impetus for students to interpret, assemble, and arrange heterogeneous visual elements in the construction of their own imagined worlds.

The majority of students who participated in the project arguably succeeded in imaginatively incorporating techniques and ideas in their work that they themselves generated through experimentation. Some students appeared to be happy to follow certain painting processes with perhaps no specific representational or expressive purpose in mind, while in other instances students pursued ideas and approaches that were suggested by their engagement in making as they played out within the scope of a single painting (the development of Student One's fantastic architectural painting might be considered in this regard).

While I am unable to rule out the possibility that for some students the approaches to making that Hannah and I introduced may have appeared prescriptive, I would assert that the strategies of experimental mark-making, appropriation and juxtaposition that we presented were sufficiently open-ended for students to make their own informed decisions about making, to follow those technical or conceptual pathways that yielded new ideas, new imaginary worlds and new pictures for them. I would not claim that students made their paintings in direct response to the reproductions of specific paintings by other artists that served as visual resources for the project, but suggest that their exposure to these, either during or subsequent to the presentations that Hannah and I made (where it was possible Hannah and I displayed clusters of reproductions on

walls), increased their awareness of different approaches to painting and, in some cases, encouraged experimentation.

Part Seven: Conclusion

7.1. Introduction

It is hoped that rather than simply labeling a continuum of cultural practices - that of 'painting', with reference to theoretical discourse, this thesis has gone some way to identifying ways in which painting can operate as a hermeneutic practice on a practical level and with reference to concrete learning situations.

In bringing this thesis to a close, I begin by reviewing its salient claims and their possible implications with respect to educational research and secondary art and design education. I suggest that the distinctive character of this research project can be seen in the specific theoretical framework and vocabulary that has been employed in interpreting students' paintings from the painting projects. I remark that the hermeneutic framework that I bring to my discussion of the approaches and processes that were privileged in both painting projects may suggest possibilities or dispositions for enquiry for other educators and researchers interested in attending to the character and scope of making in art and design education. I refer to the significance of the experimental scope of the painting projects, conducted beyond the context of the secondary school, and suggest that this could inform an approach to painting-as-making *in* schools.

I close with a brief reflection on my experience of conducting the present research project and the advantages that this has afforded me as an educator and researcher. This final section also comprehends brief discussion of my mistaken 'hermeneutic'

reading of a particular student's work, manifested by the significant gap between my comprehension of the student's responses to a suggested painting activity and her own, unstated intentions for and understanding of her work.

7.2. Reviewing the research

Claims and implications

In this thesis I have suggested that painting can be seen as a dynamic and continuously evolving set of practices in secondary level art and design education. I have argued that the claims regarding the expressive and transformative potential of painting at the level of primary education carry a continued significance at secondary level: that a key argument for painting in education can be identified in the transformative possibilities afforded by engagement with *paint as material*. In Part Five I stressed the function of the imagination in this regard as it permits the painter to choose from the perceptual and material 'cues' that emerge or unfold through engagement in process.

I would submit that the research presented in this thesis can be considered distinctive in its adoption of elements of hermeneutic theory to characterise formative and interpretive aspects of what I have termed 'painting-as-making'. The account of painting that I have offered is informed by and refers directly to concepts drawn from hermeneutic discourse: those of 'formativity' and *theoria*, and to that of Bildung as it is understood specifically by Gadamer in 'Truth and Method' (2004).

The particularity of my research might thus be seen in its use of interpretation theory to understand aspects of making in the context of education. This is not to suggest, however, that beyond Atkinson's specific adoption of a hermeneutic framework in interpreting the drawings of secondary school students (2002), scholarship and research in art and design education has ignored the potential of philosophical hermeneutics - or hermeneutics understood more broadly, to address issues of aesthetic experience and interpretation.

A number of commentators on art and design education at various levels refer to, or take up aspects of Gadamer's work or hermeneutic theory in addressing their practical or theoretical concerns, although they do not recruit philosophical hermeneutic terminology or concepts in order to characterise an orientation to, or processes of making⁵⁵. Pertinent to the scope of the present research, however, is the work of Blumenfeld-Jones (2012) in its hermeneutic approach to the significance of processes of 'art-making' in educational contexts. While his particular interest is that of dance rather than art and design education, Blumenfeld-Jones' account of making in 'the arts' corresponds in some degree to the processes of formation or 'formativity' addressed in Part Four⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Costantino (2003) utilises Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics in offering a framework for teachers and students to interpret and discuss the meaning of works of art, while Esser-Hall (2000) refers to what she terms 'phenomenological hermeneutics' (she refers primarily to Gadamer) to discuss the contribution of historical and theoretical studies to the studio practice of students in tertiary art education in the US. Hisarligil (2012) employs Gadamer's notion of the fusion of horizons, as delineated in 'Truth and Method' (2004), in discussing the dialogic and iterative dimensions of an architectural design project undertaken with undergraduate architecture students.

⁵⁶ In his essay 'Aesthetic Experience, Hermeneutics, and Curriculum' (2012), Blumenfeld-Jones describes 'art-making' in terms of unfolding: 'As the art piece unfolds, I project a possible finished

In this thesis I have proposed an orientation to painting that is informed by Gadamer's hermeneutic identification of the concept of Bildung - a continuous, formative process of participation with and interpretation of cultural practices. Beyond the account of skill in painting in Part Five as 'practically acquired productive knowledge', which cannot be considered novel, I have further identified skill in this regard as the development of receptivity towards the physical character of materials, and openness towards the culturally evolved forms and ideas of traditions of painting, and an awareness of the potential of both for making.

The hermeneutic appraisal of painting that I have developed in this thesis may offer possibilities for educators and researchers interested in understanding the scope and potential of practices of making - not only those related to painting, in art and design education. The account of interpretive making, informed as it is by the notions of 'formativity', imaginative 'trying out' and 'making it your own', as I have presented it in Part Six, may provide a useful framework for attending to the activity and work of secondary level art and design students in learning and making situations where outcomes are not determined in advance, and where improvisation is encouraged.

License to experiment

In moving to address the significance of the painting projects with respect to the research considered as a whole, I would argue that the central advantage of conducting these beyond the school setting can be seen in the level of experimental activity thus

work that is constantly modified by the actual making process and the resultant and emerging form' (p.36).

permitted to the students who participated in them. The time to engage in exploratory activity of this kind would not ordinarily be countenanced in meeting curricular objectives. While I do not see the painting projects that I ran at the Saatchi Gallery as models for practice within the school curriculum, I do suggest that in the license they afforded pupils to pursue the ideas and technical discoveries that they were able to generate through experimentation, they can *inform* an approach to painting-as-making in secondary school art and design education.

In my interpretation of the work that was produced in the project sessions in Part Six, I identified the fluidity and imaginative character of the decisions that students made in their painting activity, and suggested that engagement with visual and material resources of this kind - and the work that resulted from it, was made possible by the project's emphasis on explorative and experimental making. It is worth re-stating the significance of such making here with regard to the possibilities it offers students to pursue ideas and concerns that are meaningful to them; to build on their technical discoveries in navigating personal interests in painting; to 'make up a story' or 'create a new world' through painting, as Hannah put it to the students during the second project.

The exploratory character of the painting projects might be viewed in relation to art and design educational projects and collaborations that operate beyond the context of formal schooling⁵⁷. An example of practice *in* schools that draws on the skills and

⁵⁷ While the NSEAD 'Art, Craft and Design Heads of Department and Educator Surveys' (2014), identified a reduction in schools of 'opportunities for pupils to work with creative practitioners or to

experience of artists, can be seen in the work generated by the Artist Teacher Scheme which organises visits to schools by artists and ‘creative partnerships’. In his discussion of the continued educational significance of Illich’s ‘Deschooling Society’ (2002), Hardy (2012) argues that the latter bring ‘unencumbered process to the classroom and a safe haven for ‘playfulness’: ‘Students become active rather than passive learners. Enquiry is in an atmosphere conducive to open-ended experimentation without guarantee of a safe outcome, ...’ (p. 160).

The significance of experiment in cultural education is identified by Adams (2014) with reference to Grayson Perry’s comments regarding higher education (Perry, 2013), who argues for the art student’s freedom ‘to get it wrong’:

According to Perry, students need plenty of time, from which they often produce mistaken ideas, some or all of which end up discarded; moreover Perry argues that this model should be championed as a worthy ideal.

(Adams, 2014: 3)

Perry’s comments are pertinent, continues Adams, in the context of ‘the increasing dominance of economic models of education across the world, and the corrosive effects that they can have on creative arts’ (ibid.). In light of Adams’ remarks, it would seem that the difficulty for schools in such a climate is in accommodating this sense of experiment.

engage with original works of art, craft and design in galleries and museums’ (p. 2), many UK galleries offer art educational workshops and projects to schools and artist-led CPD and teacher training courses to art and design subject teachers (to identify some: Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art; The Serpentine Gallery; The Saatchi Gallery; Tate; Turner Contemporary).

I would contend that the challenge that needs to be met in this context is that of bringing to the classroom the spirit of exploratory engagement with materials and tools to which Adams (2014) and Hardy (2012) arguably hint.

This challenge might be productively addressed in painting activity, which, as Wentworth puts it, can be understood as the ‘the realization of the potentiality of paint by the painter, with each painter reinventing the material paint for himself’ (2004: 36); activity, furthermore, that permits the combination of ‘the intuitive and imaginative faculties’ with the ‘rational, analytical and methodical’, as Fuller suggests (1983: 32).

7.3. Reflections

In closing, I want to reflect briefly on the route I have taken in conducting the present research project and to attend to a specific encounter with a student’s work that arose during one of the sessions of the second painting project in which I failed to comprehend her intentions.

I have gained greatly from the experience of conducting research in concrete educational situations for the first time: this has afforded me the opportunity to dwell at far greater length - and in finer detail, than my professional practice as a subject teacher has thus far permitted, on the planning, sequencing, resourcing and teaching of practical sessions for learning. In the process of refining, discarding and changing my approaches to data collection and analysis, I have achieved a heightened awareness of the shortcomings and possible benefits of qualitative research methods. I have also

benefited significantly over the course of the intellectual construction of this thesis from the opportunity to engage with literature relating to aesthetics, art education, painting and philosophy.

In reflecting on what I have identified as the hermeneutic scope of the educational enquiry I have undertaken, I refer below both to the self-formation of the researcher as it can be seen to occur in the process of research, and to the issue of conflicting interpretations - those of the student and those of the educator, as they relate to making in an educational context.

In his discussion of the possibilities for hermeneutic enquiry in the human sciences, Smith (1999) emphasizes the significance of the development of self that can be seen to occur for the researcher in the course of her or his research:

The conversational quality of hermeneutic truth points to the requirement that any study carried on in the name of hermeneutics should provide a report of the researcher's own transformations undergone in the process of the inquiry, a showing of the dialogical journey, we might call it. Underscored here is a profoundly ethical aspect to hermeneutic inquiry in a life-world sense, namely, a requirement that a researcher be prepared to deepen her or his own self-understanding in the course of the research.

(Smith, 1999: 38)

This stress on self-understanding might be compared with Davey's emphasis on the 'clear ethical dimension' of Bildung as 'a practice, the formation of a capacity, the ability to keep oneself open to what is other in order to gain a sense of oneself' (2006b: 42).

In considering my own ‘pre-understanding’ of the activity and situation to which I was attending in my research in the painting projects – a condition for the application of methods as Langewand (2001) puts it, I describe here a particular instance of miscomprehension or misrecognition on my part that occurred during the second painting project at the Saatchi Gallery. This concerned the work of Student Three, who, in the fourth project session concerning the construction of grounds and figure/ground relationships, produced a series of paintings that I understood as grounds.

Once her repeated applications of paint on three separate sheets of watercolour paper had finally dried, I noticed that the student did not return to work on them. When I suggested to her that the painted ‘grounds’ could be further worked upon, the student did not appear to be interested in doing so.

I believe that this particular student, who worked industriously throughout the project, derived greater satisfaction in her painting activity by simply following certain painting processes, rather than by working to reach a specific end. Alternatively, of course, for the student, the paintings thus produced may have represented ends in themselves. Her final painting was achieved by numerous applications of different consistencies of paint with a variety of application tools and took more than half an hour to make. It occurred to me to ask the student to stop and re-consider her painting once the sheet of A2 card on which she was working was saturated with paint, but I refrained from doing so.

Reflecting on this student's work, I was reminded of the hermeneutic problem presented by Atkinson (2002) in his attempt, early in his teaching career, to evaluate a student's drawing that he could not understand. In addressing this student's work once the project had come to an end, I was obliged to ask whether the student had misunderstood the aims of the project with respect to imaginative work grounded in experimentation, or whether I had misconstrued, or failed to comprehend, her ambitions for her work, and so ignored its possible significance for her. This question seems to fall squarely within the realm of what Atkinson describes as the 'conflicts of interpretation' that 'can arise between the significance of the art work for the student who makes it and its significance for the teacher who has to assess it' (Atkinson, 2002: 3). I would suggest that it needs to be accommodated too from the perspective suggested by Packer (2011), cited in Part Two, in his observation that understanding in qualitative research 'needs to be developed, corrected and improved, articulated, and shared' (p.112).

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Lesson plans for Painting Encounters Workshop, Saatchi Gallery: April 2012

Scope and aims of project

The proposed workshop sessions form part of a doctoral research project that seeks to identify ways in which painting can be productively thought of as a material, interpretive practice in secondary schools. Working with young people on practical painting projects is a vital part of this research. The workshops are aimed to foreground and promote the investigation of the material affordances of paint, its manipulation with a variety of tools and its possible relationships to surfaces. They feature practical exercises that require pupils to develop new, and hopefully unexpected ways of handling paint and tools, and are primarily designed for pupils in Year 9 (though they may also be of interest to those pupils who have started their GCSEs in Year 10).

All sessions will be prefaced with an introduction to processes, materials and tools which feature brief practical demonstrations and employ related visual resources (examples of the work of a range of painters as well as images relating to aspects of paint and painting from non-art contexts). All sessions will close with a brief group appraisal. The sessions are designed therefore to promote practical engagement within a critical and interpretative context.

Structure of individual practical sessions

The five workshop sessions are each structured as one and a half hour sessions. The practical and visual introductions should take fifteen minutes, leaving roughly one hour for supervised practical activity, and fifteen minutes at the end for clearing up and a brief group appraisal. In each session, the first half hour of practical activity is initiated with a specific exercise that takes the form of a set of written instructions that pupils are asked to follow under supervision. In the second half hour, pupils may engage in self-directed practical activity that refers to the particular concern of the session (i.e. mark-marking).

Research aims, ethical practice and consent

In conducting the proposed project I will be following the ethics guidelines as outlined by the British Educational Research Association (2011). In delivering the painting workshop sessions to pupils in the gallery, I will be collecting data in two forms – in documenting pupils' practical work and their responses to two sets of questions (before- and after- questionnaires designed to identify their understanding, knowledge and experiences of painting). The purpose of the practical work, the completion of the questionnaires, and the reproduction of pupils' work within the context of my research will be explained to pupils before their voluntary informed consent is requested for

their participation. Practical work resulting from the sessions will remain the property of participating pupils. Their right to identification (or indeed, non-identification) with any publication or exhibition of their original works for research purposes will be observed and their permissions sought.

Session One: Tuesday, April 3rd 2012

Marks/Accidents

Actions: Marking, brushing, blotting, staining, rolling, dragging, printing, transferring, squeezing.

Surface: Selection of papers (various sizes and thicknesses, to include: tissue paper, cartridge paper, watercolour paper), un/stretched primed canvas, canvas board, card.

Applicators/tools: Brushes (artist's brushes, toothbrushes, nailbrushes), sponges, combs, cardboard strips, plastic spoons, rollers, flat palettes, plastic water pots.

Paint: Black poster or acrylic paint (prepared medium thick consistency) in pots for initial exercise. Variety of poster/acrylic colours for independent work.

Exercise: **1) (a) Select an application tool (e.g. sponge) and an initial surface (e.g. tissue paper).**

(b) Make as many different kinds of mark as possible with your chosen implement on your first chosen surface. This can be achieved in any number of ways (e.g. blotting, staining, rolling). There is no 'right way'.

(c) Repeat this activity on a second and third surface, making a mental or, if you prefer, a written note of the way in which you achieved particular marks or effects on particular surfaces.

2) Create a single painting on a surface of your choice using one or more of the kinds of mark that you made earlier (you can work by repeating, enlarging or extending the marks that you prefer).

Make sure that you keep all of the resulting paintings that you make, even if they are just scraps, as we will be using them in future projects.

References:

- 1) **Diego Velazquez:** Las Meninas (1656) *oil on canvas*
- 2) **Rembrandt van Rijn:** Jan Six (1654) *oil on panel*
- 3) **Thomas Jones:** Window in Naples (1782) *oil on paper laid down on board*
- 4) **Edouard Vuillard:** The Vanity Table (1895) *oil on canvas*
- 5) **Samuel Palmer:** In a Shoreham Garden (c.1829) *indian ink with watercolour and gouache on prepared board*
- 6) **Hsu Wei** (1521-1593): Bamboo (16th century) *ink on paper*
- 7) **Alexander Cozens:** Blot landscapes (c.1785) *aquatint on paper*

Session Two: Wednesday, April 4th 2012

Gravity and absorption

- Actions:** Dripping, pouring, blending, staining, dragging, brushing
- Surface:** Selection of papers (various sizes and thicknesses, to include: tissue paper, cartridge paper, watercolour paper). Watercolour paper for initial exercise. Un/stretched primed canvas, canvas board, card.
- Applicators/tools:** Decorator's brushes, artist's brushes, sponges, strips of card, paper cups, masking tape, plastic water pots.
- Paint:** Prepared thinned solutions of pairs of complementary poster/acrylic colours (violet and yellow, red and green, blue and orange) for initial exercise. Variety of poster/acrylic colours for independent work.
- Exercise:**
- 1) (a) **Take an A2 sheet and lay it flat on a table-top.**
 - (b) **Use a wide brush to completely soak the sheet. Apply a brush width of paint across one length of the sheet and, as carefully as you can, tilt the sheet at an angle while the paint and water are still both wet. When the paint reaches the lower edge of the paper, lay it flat again and let it dry.**
 - (c) **Following the procedure in step (b), experiment by applying (you can make use of brushes, sponges, strips of card) various combinations of a pair of complementary colours to different surfaces (e.g. to canvas, card). Test the ways in which the paint and water react, run or spread at different angles.**

2) Develop a painting, or a series of paintings, that draw(s) upon the methods you have come up with in your 'gravitational' testing.

Make sure that you keep all of the resulting paintings that you make, even if they are just scraps, as we will be using them in future projects.

References:

- 1) **John Hoyland:** Roar (2005) *acrylic on canvas*
- 2) **Chu Ta** (1625-c.1705): Two Birds (17th century) *ink on paper*
- 3) **Jackson Pollock:** Autumn Rhythm (Number 30) (1950) *enamel on canvas*
- 4) **Morris Louis:** Beta Lambda (1960) *synthetic polymer paint on canvas*

Session Three: Tuesday, 10th April 2012

Consistencies

- Actions:** Rolling, spreading, staining, dripping, dabbing
- Surfaces:** Selection of papers (various sizes and thicknesses, to include: tissue paper, cartridge paper, watercolour paper), un/stretched primed canvas, canvas board, card. A3 watercolour paper for initial exercise.
- Applicators/tools:** Cotton wool, rags, rollers, plastic spoons, cardboard strips, sponges, combs, masking tape, flat palettes, plastic water pots. Decorator's and artist's brushes to be made available for the second part of the session.
- Paint:** A variety of prepared solutions of poster/acrylic paint (several colours) in pots for initial exercise. Variety of poster/acrylic paints for independent work.
- Exercise:**
- 1) (a) **Take an A3 sheet of watercolour paper.**
 - (b) **Try to cover the entire surface area of the paper with one of the different consistencies of paint provided (these range from very liquid to very thick) without a brush. This could involve dripping/tipping the paint directly onto the paper and tilting it in different directions to gain coverage. Alternatively, you may find that you can spread, dab or drag the paint with a particular tool (you can choose one or more from those provided) to cover the sheet.**

2) Make a painting, or a series of paintings, on a surface(s) of your choice, with one or more thicknesses of paint. You can achieve this by experimenting with the paint (e.g. using it straight from the pot or dissolving it to a watery consistency) and the different application tools, now including brushes, provided (e.g. with a roller, comb or rag). Be aware that the surface you choose to work on will affect the application of the paint.

Make sure that you keep all of the work that you make, even if they are just scraps, as we will be using them in future projects.

- References:**
- 1) **Constable:** A Rain Storm Over the Sea (1824-8) *oil on paper laid on canvas*
 - 2) **Gerhard Richter:** S.D.I (1986) *oil on canvas*
 - 3) **Howard Hodgkin:** In Paris With You (1995-6) *oil on wood*
 - 4) **J.M.W. Turner:** A Raft and Rowing-boat on a Lake by Moonlight (c.1840) *watercolour on paper*
 - 5) **J.M.W. Turner:** Coast Scene with Buildings (c.1840-45) *watercolour on paper*
 - 6) **J.M.W. Turner:** The Sun Setting over the Sea in Orange Mist (c.1825) *watercolour on paper*

Session Four: Wednesday, 11th April 2012

Grounds

Actions: Mixing, blending, diluting, staining, rolling, dry/wet brushing, masking.

Surfaces: Selection of papers (various sizes, thicknesses and colours, to include: cartridge paper, tissue paper, watercolour paper). A2 cartridge sheets for initial exercise. Un/stretched primed canvas, canvas board, card.

Applicators/tools: Decorator's brushes, artist's brushes, cotton wool, rollers, sponges, rags, masking tape, flat palette, plastic water pots.

Paint: Variety of green and blue, white acrylic /poster paints in variety of prepared consistencies in pots. Variety of poster/acrylic colours for independent work.

Exercise: **1) (a) Select either blue or green paint with which to work and take a pot of white. Also select a sheet of paper with which to work. If you choose a coloured sheet think about**

how it might relate to the colour you have chosen (i.e. would green work better with blue or red paper?)

(b) Select a tool with which to apply your chosen paint to your paper (e.g. a thick or flat brush, or a sponge).

(c) Create a 'ground', covering the entire surface of your sheet. A ground could serve as the background for other kinds of marks or as the surface from which an image emerges. Equally, it could serve as a finished painting in its own right.

(d) Cover the paper with the paint provided working from one edge to its opposite edge either from *light to dark* (e.g. you could mix white to your chosen colour and start off from one edge of the paper with a light mix of colour, finally reaching the opposite edge with a much darker one), or from *thin to thick* (e.g. you could start off from one edge of the paper with a thick consistency of paint and progressively thin it with water, reaching the other edge with a very watery consistency).

2) Make a series of grounds using different tools and paint on a variety of surfaces. You can develop these in any way you choose. Equally, you may wish to prepare one ground and develop this (think about how your initial ground might affect the way your painting develops: e.g. is it dark or light, or both?).

Make sure that you keep all of the resulting paintings that you make, even if they are just scraps, as we will be using them in future projects.

References:

- 1) **J. M. Whistler:** Nocturne in Blue and Silver: Cremorne Lights (c.1870) *oil on canvas*
- 2) **Max Ernst:** Extraordinary Landscape (1947) *watercolour on paper*
- 3) **Michelangelo Buonarroti:** Madonna and Child with St John (1497) *tempera on wood*
- 4) **J. M. W. Turner:** Chateau Gaillard from the South (Vignette) (c.1833) *watercolour on paper*

Session Five: Friday, 13th April 2012

Juxtaposition

- Actions:** Collaging, applying, covering, tearing, cutting, arranging, composing, masking, sticking, comparing.
- Surfaces:** Selection of papers (various sizes, thicknesses and colours, to include: tissue paper, cartridge paper, glossy paper, newspaper, magazines, wrapping paper, misc. paper), un/stretched canvas, canvas board, card.
- Applicators/tools:** Brushes (decorator's brushes, artist's brushes, toothbrushes, nailbrushes), sponges, combs, cardboard strips, plastic spoons, rollers, flat palettes, scissors, masking tape, glue, plastic water pots, paper cups.
- Paint:** Variety of acrylic/poster paints.
- Exercise:** **Make a painting(s) or a collage(s) that employ(s) ANY of the methods or techniques you have developed over the preceding four sessions (mark-making, using gravity and absorption, working with different consistencies of paint, making grounds). You can employ any of the tools you have previously used, incorporate any of the paintings or scraps of paintings from previous weeks and make use of any of the different papers/surfaces that have been provided.**
- References:**
- 1) **Georges Braque:** Guitar and Programme: 'Statue d'Epouvante' (1913) *charcoal, gouache and pasted paper on canvas*
 - 2) **Pablo Picasso:** Guitar, Sheet Music and Glass (1912) *pasted paper, gouache and charcoal on paper*
 - 3) **Kurt Schwitters:** Merz Picture 32A (The Cherry Picture) (1921) *cloth, wood, metal, fabric, cut-and-pasted papers, cork, gouache, oil, and ink on cardboard*
 - 4) **Fiona Rae:** Untitled (orange, green and black) (1991) *oil on canvas*

Appendix 2: Interview transcripts from Painting Encounters Workshop, Saatchi Gallery: April 2012

I am following the transcription system recommended by King and Horrocks (2010: 145-6).

Emphasis: CAPITAL LETTERS

Pauses: very short pauses (p), longer pauses (pause), pauses over two seconds (long pause)

Interruptions: - (at point of interruption)

Overlapping speech: Use a hyphen as for interruption, but precede the overlapping comments(s) with: (overlap). Where the overlapping section ends, note with: (end overlap).

Audibility: [inaudible]

Laughing, coughing: (laughter)

Tone of voice: (ironic tone)

Direct speech: If participant is directly quoting another person put section in 'speech marks'

King, N. and Horrocks, C. (2010) *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

April 3: Session 1

Interview One

Interviewer and four students (Respondent 1: Student 16, Respondent 2: Student 9, Respondent 3: Student 15, Respondent 4: Student 2). (Duration: 11mins, 16sec)

Q: So first of all, can you tell me about any painting that you do in school? What kinds of things do you do in school?

R1: Um, right now we're doing portraits (p) um of our teachers based on Lucian Freud's paintings. In his style and technique.

Q: Ah, so you're painting your teachers in the style of, that's very interesting. Are the teachers? You select the teacher?

R1: No, we are given the teacher.

Q: Oh right, I see. Do the teachers volunteer?

R1: Yea.

Q: (Laughs) Ok. Great, how about you two? (p) Um, what's my question? What kinds of painting do you do in school? What are doing at the moment?

R3: We're doing portraits as well. We doing, we have to do a portrait of the Queen.

Q: (Whispers) Right.

R3: Using different artists the teachers give us. Do it in their style.

R4: Like Andy Warhol -

R3: (overlap) George Condo.

R4: - George Condo.

Q: So you decide which artists that you like and then you paint a portrait of the Queen. Aha, interesting. It's fascinating, you're from different schools and you're both doing portraiture. Are you Year Ten or Year Nine?

R3, 4: (Together) Year Ten.

Q: Year Ten. So all part of your GCSE. Um, could you say something about the sorts of subjects or things you have painted in school? You've answered that question for you. Do you enjoy these projects? (longer pause) You can be honest (longer pause) What would you (p) are there other subjects you would like to paint?

(long pause)

R1: Well I think it's because our school have given us Lucian Freud to concentrate on and so if you're not really interested in the way Lucian Freud paints then I guess you won't really enjoy the art lessons. But...well, I do, so...

Q: How do you feel about Lucian Freud?

R2: He's a good artist I guess. He uses oil paints, mainly oil paints and different like textures and stuff. So, it's quite interesting what he did [inaudible] we have a lot less time than he did.

Q: That's very true. Is there another artist that you'd like to paint a portrait of one of your teachers, which other artist would you use? If you had a free choice? (long pause) How about any of the artists that these two are looking at?

(long pause)

Q: No?

R2: Andy Warhol is kinda cool.

Q: Yea (long pause) Ok, so. Um, so do you enjoy these projects? Like portraiture or the artists that you're working with?

R4: Yea, because we get like a wider range of artists that you can like copy the style of.

Q: Yea, so which artists have you two decided to look at in your portrait project?

R3: I chose George Condo.

R4: I chose Andy Warhol.

Q: Ah, great, right. Could you say what tools, materials, surfaces you have used in painting in school?

R1, R2: A paintbrush (laughter).

R2: On paper.

Q: Do you stretch the paper?

R2: No.

Q: No. So what size?

R4: A3

R1, R2: A2, A2.

Q: A2, so kind of (p) that size. Ok, so you're both A3. And what tools do you use? Anything other than a paintbrush?

R4: Pencil.

Q: Pencils.

R1: [inaudible]

Q: You use?

R1: The bottom of the paintbrush.

Q: Bottom of the paintbrush. Good. Well, it is a (p) I mean obviously the Lucian Freud camp here they're using the paintbrushes as Lucian Freud would do and yea, you're using the paintbrush the other end, so. I mean it could be a stick it could be (p) you know, all sorts of tools. Right. Um (p) do you think painting is important in your school? And why?

(long pause)

Everyone: (Laughter).

R2: It's fun. So I guess it's-

R1: (overlap) We've got a lot of -

R2: - important to have fun, so I guess.

R1: We've got a lot of pieces hung up around our school, so.

R2: From like yea [inaudible] and stuff, so yea [inaudible]. Like if they're good then they're around the school. So I guess if people see them they could look at them, so it's important to them, yea.

(longer pause)

Q: Good, yea. And would you say painting is important in your school?

R3: Art is important, not that paint [inaudible] but there's other like, oil pastels and stuff. Just drawing from [inaudible].

Q: Yea so the variety of materials, you know, alongside painting, it's important. How about you, do you think painting's important?

R4: It kind of influences our art class but not as much as like other materials like oil pastels and things like that.

Q: Mmm. So you've got variety. Have you got? Do you work with a variety of materials?

R1: Yea, certainly we've been working with clay as well and making vases based on Grayson Perry. And, I don't know if it counts but we do paint on it as well.

Q: You know, it's another surface isn't it, rather than painting on a canvas. Obviously this is (p) working two-dimensionally to explore you know much more, you know, kinda two-dimensional painting. Um, do you think painting is imp- Ooh, I've asked that one, ooh. Do you, do you do a lot of painting in school?

(long pause)

R2: I guess... it's like our project is that, like at least, so it kind of like is a lot.

R1: It's like two times a week and in lunchtimes, after school.

R2: So yea, kind of.

Q: Would you say painting's important? I mean (p) er. Do you do a lot of painting in school?

R3: Sometimes.

Q: So do you think that, um, like this year, how much painting have you done, do you think? Like more painting than any other media?

R3: Drawing.

Q: You've done a lot more drawing?

R3: Yea.

Q: Ok, yea. So it's just with this, you've done drawing, and now focussing on the portraits using painting and same here, very much, you know, the final work is the painted work. Is that right? The painting? Ok. Um, so you two kind of answered my next question: Are your paintings displayed in school?

[inaudible]

Q: And your paintings? (p) Where would they be displayed in school? Because you've said all round the school.

R2: Corridors (p) and on the staircase thing and then like [inaudible], yea.

R1: A lot on our main reception sort of corridor.

Q: So on very public spaces.

R2: And at the entrance as well.

Q: Yea, that's good. How about you, art classroom or?

R3: Yea, corridors and stuff [inaudible] mostly canteens.

(longer pause)

Q: Yea, good again, public spaces. Which is great isn't it, to see your work (longer pause) Well, I've, you've kind of answered my question, can you name a particular painting that interests you? We have Andy Warhol. Are there any other artists that really interest you that you perhaps don't look, you know, not a painting you might look at school you might, you know somebody else that (p) Perhaps in an art gallery or?

(long pause)

R1: I don't know many artists.

R2: Yea.

Q: So you're happy to learn in school so when the teacher gives you your painter, you know, you quite enjoy learning about that painter.

R2: Cos Lucian Freud is quite interesting, so.

Q: Yea, good. Yea, great.

R1: We've been to his exhibition as well.

Q: Brilliant. Is that at the National Portrait?

R1: Yea.

Q: Good. So would there be any other artists that you like or would be interested in that you're not looking at at the moment? (p) No? Again, learning about the artist at school,

the painter (p) Can you say something about the way they work with materials? So Lucian Freud, how does he work with his paint?

(longer pause)

R2: Thick. He uses oil paints and it's really thickly painted and loads of different (p) like tones and stuff, yea.

Q: Do you think you're learning about his painting by using the similar tools as he would use? So actually doing it, actually making the painting? Good. Rather than just looking at a painting in the National Portrait Gallery, you learn by doing. Good. How about you two, with your painters? Your, um.

(longer pause)

R3: Um ,well, George Condo painted normally but then he adds, he makes the picture like a bit strange. Cos like there's a picture of a queen and he painted her like really good and then he made her eye like huge so it looks like she's crazy a bit and that's why [inaudible] he paints with oil pastels as well.

Q: Mmm. So mixed media. Are you including the oil pastels in your work?

R3: Yea.

Q: So yea, so really getting under the skin aren't you, of the artist by, you know, making yourself, making your own art? How about you? Andy Warhol's a bit more tough isn't he?

R4: He um (p) he's kinda more photoshop cos the whole white of the face is like pale white and then you've got the face lines in blue and then the background's just one colour, with the different shapes.

Q: Did he paint that or did he screenprint that work?

R4: Screenprint I think.

Q: Yea, so you're not actually using the technique that, no, that's interesting isn't it? Mmm. So, you're learning much more about the forms and the shapes, aren't you? Um (p) Do you think paintings should look realistic or like a photograph? Would you enjoy trying to paint realistic paintings?

R2: It's a lot more difficult trying to make it look like the actual person but I guess it's like a challenge (p) It's interesting.

Q: It's a challenge isn't it? How about you?

R1: I prefer painting realistically. I prefer painting [inaudible] because it adds life to the painting.

Q: Mmm. How about you two?

R3: It's better to paint, but if you wanna make it realistic but the same way you're gonna make it a little bit harder to paint so it looks like [inaudible].

Q: **Interesting. Putting your own personality onto the painting in some way, so yea.**

R4: I wouldn't really mind.

Q: **You don't mind? What is it that um draws you to painting or to art?**

R4: Um, the colours and like how bold the like the flat, eye-catching stuff.

Q: **So real graphic work is your thing?**

R4: (Laughs)

Q: **Right brilliant. Well, I'll let you get back now.**

April 13: Session Five

Interview Two

Interviewer and Student 14 (Duration: 5mins, 48sec)

Q: **I can note yours down (laughter) Ok just so you were talking about (p) um your yea juxtaposition here, would you like to talk about that again?**

A: I'm gonna like draw a rose and that's kind of like got like black outline and like uses like block colours but then like the background is kinda like soft and like kind of not transparent but its like really (p) I don't know it's like the paint is like thinner and it's like soft and it's fading into each other and then the rose is just (p) hard lines and stuff.

Q: **So yea, so you enjoy. This is like something you've developed you've picked up during these sessions?**

A: Yea.

Q: **Ok, good. So, um, and I was always saying that you know you're talking a little bit about what you do at school. Would you like to explain that to me again?**

A: In school I do like African art and like African fashion and art. And it's kind of more structured. It's like (p) yea you have to kind of (p) design this or draw that and then our teacher she's always like kind of (p) 'er, it's not, you need to change this or you need to change that' and sometimes it helps but like most of the time it's kind of like you just wanna do your own thing really.

Q: **So this has been really positive thing about these workshops that you can, er, you know, as you were saying before, get into your little world -**

A: (overlap)Yea.

Q: - use your imagination, have freedom, your own expression, in work, good. Um, so what new techniques have you explored during these sessions?

A: Like diff-, like using water and like how it affects like the paint. Like, I didn't use a lot of water for like the rose, so the colours like just. It just looks different. Like if I add a load of water to like the paper and everything.

Q: So you've really begin (sic) to sort of explore the range of er ways, techniques to paint-

A: (overlap)Yea.

Q: - and it's not just about using the paintbrush, but you know, it's about exploring the (p) you know, how much water you put within the paint, whether a surface is wet, all the surfaces, so –

A: (overlap)Yea.

Q: - you now have what we'd say a whole toolbox of techniques.

A: Yea.

Q: Do you think you can take this toolbox into your classroom and use them within sort of the projects set by your teachers?

A: Um, yea, because like recently like last year we had a um homework and um like the paint we had to kind of like like draw, paint something in the style of like someone and like he used kind of like transparent colours but at that time I wasn't really sure like how to like achieve that but now like I know like if you wet the paper first then it makes it easier, so.

Q: So you feel that you developed a confidence as well, that you, you (p) now, know one, so you can experiment to achieve different effects (p) and also that you know what you can do to acheive effects. Good, that's excellent. Are there any um artists that you've um, that Yiannis has shown you during the workshops that you, um, you know, have found interesting, that would probably look at again?

A: I liked the French guy yesterday, cos like (p) he, like you can tell that he spent loads of time like doing the little dots and mixing the colours together and it looks really cool, it's like different from just mixing colours in a palette and then painting them.

Q: So how did he mix colours? How was colour, how did that artist, that French artist create the illusion I suppose of -

A: He just did loads of tiny little dots in like different colours and if you look at it like kind of from afar the colours merge, the dots merge together and it looks like (p) he made one colour but in actual fact it's like (p) don't know, blue and yellow but then it looks like it's green.

Q: Mmm. That's really interesting.

A: It looks really cool.

Q: Good. Um, what else can I ask you? What did you enjoy about these sessions?

A: I enjoyed like sometimes think when you wanna paint something you don't know what to paint and then you just kind of sit there with a blank piece of paper but like, like in like these sessions it's about, you get a topic but it's not kind of a really focussed topic it's like a wide topic and you can just kind of do your own thing and it's like you can (p) like, you can just interpret your own way, I mean just like do your own stuff.

Q: So do you think that the techniques that you've been exploring have influenced how you have developed your work?

A: Um...

Q: So given you ideas and cos this looks rather like a flower so or did you have an idea to begin with? With this piece?

A: I don't, I don't know, like (p) I just kind of, (p) I did a background and I didn't, like, I wasn't sure what to do, but then I just thought oh, I'll draw a rose.

Q: (Laughs) You know, the way that you've used the blue and the green it's, you know, it reminds you, makes you think about landscape doesn't it?

A: Yea.

Q: And then you think about you know other objects perhaps that might be in the landscape. Oh, right that's great. Now that I've turned it on I know what to do.

Interview Three

Interviewer and Student 2 (Duration: 3mins, 53sec)

Q: Ok right so um I'd like you first of all to tell me something about what you did during the sessions.

A: Um, I explored the way I did different patterns like I would draw patterns and then add patterns inside the patterns to make the patterns stand out a bit.

Q: So what different techniques have you explored? Painting techniques?

A: Um (p) using the comb thing to make different patterns, using the brush to make like rough patterns and using the other paintbrush with water and letting the paint slide down.

Q: So how have these techniques influenced your design?

A: Well, the background I've done using the paint thing and I've used the paintbrush here thing, that comb thing, and (p) yea, basically, yea.

Q: So you kind of like thought, ‘Ah, you know, that tool there makes a particular effect and I can use it for a you know a particular object or motif’. Ok, good. What have you enjoyed about the workshops?

A: Um. Going around looking in the galleries and (p) just basically drawing.

Q: So what artists did you like particularly in this gallery that Yiannis has shown you?

A: Um, I forgot his name but he was the one that drew the kind of face thing.

Q: I don’t know which one it is. If you describe it then Yiannis will know.

A: Um he drew the like blobby faces and then made them stand out with loads of thick paint.

Q: Ah, right. So (p) is that a technique that um you’ve explored at all in the workshops? That kind of impasto, that very thick paint. Have you had a go at that?

A: Yea, coloured faces yea.

Q: So which paint have you used to give that?

A: Acrylic.

Q: Acrylic, yeah good. Um do you think that you might take any of these techniques into your school, or has it encouraged you to look at art?

A: Yea, most of the techniques I used here I use at school anyway, so.

Q: So it’s just like reinforcing what you’ve already done, yea, good. I mean I think I remember you were talking about Andy Warhol before and you like graphic images and yea I can see that you’re working but it’s nice that unlike Warhol you’ve got this kind of very painterly at the back, watery effect at the back. Um, are there any differences between what you’ve done here and what you do at school?

A: No (p) in school we focus on like one topic and explore it but this one we’re focussing on a range of topics. Just like exploring.

Q: Would you like in school be given objects? How would start a project in school?

A: Um, we’ll get told what it is and then just basically start it straight there.

Q: From your imagination?

A: Um, or we do um (p) collages, still image paintings and things like that.

Q: Um, so you’ve already said yes that you do a lot of these techniques in school. What about the artists? Have you been exposed to artists that you would maybe not have looked at at school?

A: Yea like um Picasso and that.

Q: And what about um as you go into museums does it, would you say it's a different experience than looking in books?

A: Yea (laughs) cos it's more life-like. You can see it face-to-face.

Q: Yea, you -

A: Instead of like looking at a book cos then you can't really see the graphics and the (p) how the artist has actually painted it.

Q: Good yea. So, more art galleries.

A: Yea (laughs).

Q: Good.

Interview Four

Interviewer and Student 15 (Duration: 4mins, 29sec)

Q: Ok, right, so what did you do during the workshops?

A: Um, the first week we done textures, the second week was like um putting paint on wet surfaces to see how it turned out and then the third like this week putting work together and adding in and doing thick paint and stuff, yea.

Q: So what did you enjoy?

A: I enjoyed like um like if you don't, there wasn't any specific, you have to, you can do what you want but you have to do (p) you have to use the stuff that we've been shown to do in the painting we do so it makes sense but you the concept is your like, you can do what you wanna do.

Q: So (p) the techniques are influencing your work, what you make -

A: Yea.

Q: What you imagine in your mind -

A: Yea.

Q: And then do you see a, so with this work here, um, would you like to talk about it?

A: Oh, cos, um in the beginning we were supposed to use wet surfaces like I liked the feeling of using the (p) white rolling thing and then putting wet on there and then rolling it out on paint to see the textures and then I just went from there and the dripping paint thing, I liked doing that. So I put them together.

Q: Mmm, so would you say, did you have an idea about what you wanted to make before?

A: No.

Q: No (both laugh together). You just let, but what I can see here is each of your sessions are in this work which is great, you know. If you've got your sort of gravity, your, you know er (p) different (p) dry paint on sort of surface, so yea. And now you're developing into (p) an image -

A: (laughs)

Q: - it looks like a film still or something like that.

A: (laughs)

Q: Um, so, what's the difference between the way the sessions here, what you've been doing, and what you do in school?

A: In school they give you what you have to do and if you don't do it in a specific way, yea, cos it's school. And then, um, here you can get, you don't have to do, like, they give you like a concept like draw something funny or sad or draw, imitate this painter's work or something but here you can just do what you want but you have to still show that you're still using the techniques you're given and stuff-

Q: Mmm.

A: Yea.

Q: So it's very much about your expression.

A: Yea.

Q: Isn't it?

A: Yea.

Q: Having your little world and creating your world on the page. Um, would you use any of these techniques in school?

A: Yea, cos, I never actually thought like using wet paint would make a different like, make the painting look different. And making the paint drip doesn't like make it messy and stuff. Instead of like [inaudible] yea.

Q: So, when I look at your work I think about layers so would you at school explore painting as something that's layered with different techniques?

A: Yea, so it shows different like work.

Q: Good. Right, which um, I think Yiannis has taken you round to have a look at some artists. Have any artists influenced your work that you've done here or would influence work you might do at school?

A: Um, Yiannis, I think the one that used um dots. I don't know what his name is, but he used dots to show really really like really dotty work to show what he's doing. Like, the dots make up a picture instead of just doing like, yea, might do that at school.

Q: So why did you like that? What's different than if you compare it with your work here?

A: Cos it's um (p) cos its different. Cos if you look you look afar and then you think oh, dots can't really like show anything and he used different dots to show different shadows but just like small dots so he didn't use [inaudible] he did it over a period of time without thinking.

Q: Cos, yea, I think I know maybe the work you're talking about. Um, so he would have like red dots and yellow dots and blue dots next to each other.

A: And then, you look close and you see the different colours and then you look back and you realize they make a picture.

Q: Yea, brilliant. They mix, don't they? They mix in front of your eyes.

A: Yea.

Q: Brilliant that's great.

Interview Five

Interviewer and Student 9 (Duration: 3mins, 9sec)

Q: Right, ok, so what did you do during the sessions?

A: Er, well, just.

Q: You can pick one if you like that stands out in your mind.

A: [inaudible] we just used like combs and rollers and stuff to make different marks on paper and it was interesting to see how much, how many different marks you make and stuff, yea.

Q: Would you say that that's something that you enjoyed, or?

A: Yea, I liked doing that, yea.

Q: So what is it about (p) it that you did enjoy without seeing working with the marks and working with these tools, what was it that kind of?

A: Oh, it's different, cos at school you just generally use a paintbrush and that's kind of all you use but it's interesting that you can paint with loads of different effects so, I liked that.

Q: So how does that change the work that you've been doing this week compared to what you do in school?

A: In school it's mainly just you have a subject and you draw from that or you paint from that but in here you could do whatever you wanted and experiment more with the paints (p) yea.

Q: So in school, cos I think I remember you were saying before that you were working on portraiture and you worked from a photograph so what's inspiring your work here?

A: Oh, just trying things out and just doing things that I probably won't be able to just do. Just being able to do whatever I want it's kind of good so I don't know, I'm not really being inspired by anything I'm just sort of going with it, so, yea.

Q: Mmm. I haven't seen any of your other work but um (p) so example with this does it make you er think about particular objects or places or you know, anything? Or are you just exploring the pure sort of -

A: (overlap) Yea

Q: - way that it moves, paint moves?

A: Yea, I'm sort of trying it out and seeing what works best and like if I wanna do in future I know what to do and what I really shouldn't do, and like, yea.

Q: Good, so you're developing like a sort of toolkit of techniques

A: (overlap) Kind of, yea.

Q: - and er I can imagine you having a sketchbook full of these and then thinking then well if I want this to be for this painting that I have to do I would then, good. So there's something you can take from these workshops into your own work-

A: (overlap) Yea.

Q: - in school. Good. Um are there any artists that Yiannis has shown you during the workshops that have influenced this work or will influence work that you do in school?

A: Er can't remember any names

Q: Just describe it I'm sure Yiannis will know. For a little description.

(longer pause)

A: What about um I'm not sure the dots again was cool. I liked that I think I remember seeing that when I was a lot younger in primary school and I just really liked that. But yea it's not -

Q: Why do you like it?

A: Er it's just cos it's different and it looks like it takes a lot of time and it's a lot of work so, yea.

Q: So you kind of measure what you like by how much time and (laughter) -

A: Yea..

Q: - ok. Um I think that's it. Lovely, thank you very much.

Interview Six

Interviewer and unidentified respondent (Duration: 3mins, 42sec)

Q: Ok, is it ok that I ask you a few questions?

A: Yea.

Q: Ok, so what did you do during these sessions, or what stands out in your mind?

A: Well I think we sort of just like found out about different ways of using paint as opposed to just sort of a normal paintbrush and other ways of applying it to get different effects.

Q: So how have the workshops influenced or the different effects and techniques influenced what you're doing at the moment?

A: Um, well, for example the lesson about the gravity and using water that sort of inspired me to do the background because I liked the way the canvas absorbed the water and it gave it sort of like it reminded me a bit of water so it looks a bit like a wash. I used a paintbrush to sort of splatter, sorry, the toothbrush to like splatter paint on and its like, it's also sort of like water cos it's sort of like splashes (p) yea.

Q: It's wonderful the different techniques that you've used here. Um, wonderful effect. Very interesting. Right so, how does what you've been doing during this workshop compare with what you do in school?

A: Um, well I think school it's not as free, like you're given a particular artist to study and then a project based on that artist's style. Whereas here it's more about experimenting with what the paint can do and how you can manipulate the paint, as opposed to how making paint do what you want it to.

Q: So this element of chance and um (p) you know that sort of unknowing what might happen with materials.

A: Yes its just like experimenting with um the paints and the different tools.

Q: But how do you see that you could use this in school then? Is there a way that you could?

A: Um, well yea I think like the different ways that we've seen like how to apply paint like using more water to make it sort of lighter and more watery, we can use that when like painting so you can give different effects using the paint in the painting that we're doing.

Q: So again you know um like what a few people have said it's like you're developing a toolkit here of different or a you know something of techniques of different papers that you could use, so it gives you confidence doesn't it-

A: (overlap) Yea.

Q: - that you can try different things, you know what might happen. Great. Are there any artists that Yiannis has shown you that have influenced your work or you might take on board in your own work in school?

A: Um, yea there was an artist who used um water and he sort of created a really subtle but like colourful sky using the water and the absorption of the water and the paint. And um that sort of inspired this background as well cos it's a lot more subtle like compared to some of the other artists we've seen who like paint really boldly using really thick paint.

Q: Mmm.

A: So I tried to contrast like the watery paint in the background with the more bold paint in the foreground.

Q: Good, yea. Excellent. Um. So I mean you've kind of mentioned new techniques thinking much more about sort of the watery technique-

A: (overlap) Yea.

Q: - that you might not use in schools. Great, thank you.

A: Thank you.

Interview Seven

Interviewer and unidentified respondent (Duration: 3mins, 31sec)

Q: Um, so what did you do during the sessions?

A: Um, well we were given lots of different paintbrushes and some of them I hadn't even seen before like as in or I hadn't thought of using them like we were given toothbrushes to try out and stuff I've NEVER used that before to like use to paint so it was really fun just like thinking about different ways that you could use everything. Um, yea.

Q: So um how does this compare with what you do in school?

A: Um in school its like I like it because we are given what we need to do so there's like a route that we need to go down but um this way it's more imaginative like you can use your own brain, you can use your own style as well cos obviously when you get projects in school not everyone likes painting people or they don't like painting landscapes. And then this way when we were given whatever we'd like to do then it was more fun because obviously everyone was doing what they wanted to do, yea.

Q: So do you think that the painting techniques have GUIDED what you have done here in this painting?

A: (p) Um, yea. Because I never thought of using like a sponge for the background but I did cos it's a good effect and its also really quick and easy to do. And um also like we did thickness um we saw some painting that was really thick. And um in school we're doing Lucien Freud and he used to paint his portraits REALLY thickly. So like it helps me a lot because I can use, I can like learn how to use thick paint on different materials and in different ways as well.

Q: Mmm, so you've learnt that canvas is different ground -

A: Its more absorbent than normal watercolour paper would be and like if you use watercolour paper it would drip more whereas canvas wouldn't, obviously so.

Q: Good. So it sounds like I was saying to everybody like you've got this whole toolkit-

A: (overlap) Yea.

Q: - of different techniques and how you apply you know water to this to this paint, whatever, that you know, you can mix and match as much as you like. Um, you've already mentioned er artworks that you quite like, influence you, making connections with Lucien Freud in school. So you quite like that you know much more textural effect with paint.

A: Yea, definitely and also bright colours I love you know like bold colours that were just sticking out it's really nice.

Q: And that's something you're exploring here in this work here.

A: Yea, definitely. Contrasting colours that I would never use before that I would never put together and just try and get.

Q: So that's it, without the say the portraits which you, or a particular artist may have obviously Lucien Freud is a particular palette of colours so it's quite difficult isn't it for you to then express er your own identity [inaudible] through the colours that you like. Ok, um so you've already mentioned different techniques that you haven't used before or different tools like the sponge and that kind of thing. So what one thing did you particularly enjoy?

A: I really liked the fan brush. I thought it was really cool you can do loads of stuff you can make like some people used them to make tail feathers um for peacocks and stuff. And I used it to make swirls and stuff and it was really nice because you could put different colours onto it and see what happened. Um, Yea.

Q: Ok, good, lovely. Thanks very much.

A: Ok.

Interview Eight

Interviewer and unidentified respondent (Duration: 5mins, 8sec)

Q: Ok, so what did you do during these sessions?

(p) (respondent and another student laugh)

A: I painted (laughter). I don't know, well.

Q: Um, ok. Let's kinda try it in a different way. Um, how did you begin, like one of your paintings, say this painting?

A: Well, I have no I just don't know what I'm doing. So I just figure [inaudible] I just do it and I just go along.

Q: So what's influencing? I mean, obviously you've made a few decisions here. Ok, so with this technique here, what, how did you create that image that whatever it is?

A: Well, firstly I did it with a sponge but then like so that's how I got this thing and then I just went like down with a paintbrush to make it more stripey and then I just painted a frame over it.

Q: So this frame here is a very dark frame. That must have come from somewhere.

A: Um, I don't know, cos like I thought that would like make it stand out cos I wanted to make it seem bold and like (p) cos well normally people concentrate on the thing in the center but I just wanted to concentrate on the outside bit.

Q: Mmm. That's very interesting. So yea, so working, developing a, rather than a frame the painting being added on afterwards you're making a frame inside -

A: Yea

Q: - the painting. Good. And you're looking out into what (p)? What are you framing?

A: Um, I have no idea (laughter).

Q: Techniques there you go.

A: Yea! (laughter)

Q: There we go. Ok so what did you enjoy?

A: Um, well (p) I like cos like normally when you have art they tell you what to paint but here we actually got to pick what you want to do, instead of being forced to doing something you don't want to. So.

Q: So what are you doing in school at the moment that you're forced to do?

A: Well, we're doing papier mache. We're making our own vases I mean, vase (American pronunciation), vase (English pronunciation) either way, yea, I don't really enjoy that cos I find it just really boring.

Q: So what's boring? Working with papier mache, 3-D, portraits, or?

A: Well, I like 3D stuff but like (longer pause) well the thing is with me if you tell me to do something I'm gonna find it boring. If I do it out of my own free will I'll find it exciting. Does that make sense?

Q: Yea.

A: Yea

Q: Yea. I mean, it is (p) sometimes, you know not everything that um (p) a teacher says is something that all pupils are going to enjoy. Um, so will you be able to take any of what you have done during these sessions (p) back into school? (p) Do you think?

A: Probably, cos I don't actually like before I actually came here I didn't actually enjoy painting that much cos I just think it's messy but (laughs) yea. Now I kinda like it and like I've never actually used a sponge before, cos yea, but yea. I just use it and I like it (laughs).

Q: So yea, so the experimentation has been really positive. You've enjoyed that cos you clearly that's what inspires you about doing art anyway -

A: (overlaps)Yea.

Q: - rather than being given a theme, but also you started to enjoy not just having an image in your mind and think ah, I just want to do this, but experiment with different tools like the sponge and (p) the effects that water might make and allowing that to kinda dictate what you're doing.

A: Yea.

Q: Good. Well, are there any artists that Yiannis has shown you that have inspired your work or you might take with you?

A: (Laughter) There was one but I forgot his name!

Student sitting next to respondent: The one in the gallery you know with the blobs. Is that the one?

Q: Yea.

Student sitting next to respondent: Yea.

A: The one that's up by that Andre I'm just gonna give up.

Q: No, if you just describe it Yiannis will know which one. So it's describe it to him.

A: Er, it's like the one that's like upstairs on these big pieces of paper and like it's all abstract and like and there's loads of like these different faces. It looks like skulls kind of thing.

Q: So why did you like that work?

A: Cos, why did I like? Well when we came here first thing that was like one of the ones cos we came pretty early so we had a look around the gallery and that was like one of the few I liked and like, also I like to doodle a lot, so when I draw I draw that kind of stuff (p) so.

Q: Yea, I can see there's that doodle element

A: (Laughter)

Q: here, but you know so it's started it's growing and it looks very much like when you experiment with techniques it's like a doodle in some ways -

A: (overlaps) Yea.

Q: - you just kinda see where it's going to go without any sort of pre-plan before. Good, so um (p) so new techniques well you've said like the sponge um (p) I think you've answered all my questions.

A: Ok

Q: You did manage to talk about your work very well.

A: Thank you.

Interview Nine

Interviewer and Student 8 (Duration: 5mins, 9sec)

Q: Right now ok so what did you do during the workshops?

A: Sort of experimented really on different utensils that I've not used before.

Q: So what techniques haven't you used before?

A: With the comb I haven't actually scraped with paint before. I usually just use a paintbrush and stuff

Q: So yea in school it would be working with a paintbrush but here you have a range of tools

A: Yea

Q: Um, so what kind of tools have you used and liked particularly?

A: I like this I don't know what it's called.

Q: A wide brush a big brush (laughter).

A: Yea, yea.

Q: So why do you like that one?

A: Cos it covers so much surface you wouldn't have to obviously you wouldn't use a thin paintbrush to paint a background I've not used it before.

Q: But what in terms of sort of the technique what kind of or effects does this thick paintbrush because you're not working on a massive scale are you?

A: Yea.

Q: um so you could if you wanted use a small paintbrush but what is it that appeals to you the effect that's created?

A: Um.

Q: What you making there? Describe that.

A: It's a background of a landscape.

Q: So describe the marks to me.

A: Um they're just straight. It's

Q: Straight, good.

A: (Laughter)

Q: And, which direction?

A: It's horizontal yea cos of the landscape.

Q: Yea, cos it's a landscape, good.

A: (Laughter)

Q: So what have you enjoyed?

A: I've enjoyed how we're not given an actual subject just go on and do what you want to do yea but you still learn a lot as well, yea.

Q: So in school are you given a subject?

A: Yea, yea, you have to work on it. On a particular subject.

Q: What are you working on at the moment?

A: At the moment we were sculpting a shoe or a bag or a hat. I made a hat. It was an unusual one, yea.

Q: So you were making more like a design object?

A: Yea.

Q: And what materials are you using to sculpt?

A: We used papier mache, cardboard and newspaper, and we painted over, some of us used wire to bend, to shape our work.

Q: Have you um...do you do much painting in school?

A: We get two periods of art. Usually it's, I think it's more of drawing than painting yea.

Q: So has this workshop given you confidence to work with paint on your own or bring that into your art at school?

A: Yea, definitely, yea.

Q: Ok, um so what artists has Yiannis shown you that you um have liked, has influenced your work maybe or you might take into your own work at school?

A: Um, I like Picasso's work because it's abstract. I don't really do abstract um I tend to paint like, what is it? Realistically, yea.

Q: So that would be at home or at school?

A: At home, yea.

Q: What kind of things do you draw or paint realistically?

A: I paint natural things like flowers and trees, yea.

Q: Mmm. You're kinda picking up on that in your landscape work here. So in terms of Picasso's work, even though you don't necessarily work with abstract shapes, what was it that you liked about that work?

A: I like how he doesn't really think about what he's doing he just does it it's cos he shows how it's not really about drawing or painting like every detail you see, he shows how it's more to do with expression.

Q: Mmm.

A: Yea.

Q: It kinda makes me think about your work because um using that thick brush you can't paint every single little detail of the landscape can you but you're giving kind of the feeling and expression of landscape. It's good, right, brilliant. Thank you very much.

Interview Ten

Interviewer and Student 4 (Duration: 7mins, 3sec)

Q: Um, so, what did you do during these workshops?

A: I think it's just really expressing yourself through your paintings, like your emotions and everything else. Like how you feel and everything else.

Q: So how have the painting techniques helped you to express your feelings?

A: I think it's kind of helped by um, kind of emphasizes more compassion and dedication to it and stuff like that. That's what I think.

Q: So, with this painting here um would you like to describe the technique to me?

A: Um, I think the technique is blending, I love to blend a lot of colours, um, it's just one of my things that I like to do and just gives it nice kind of float with, let's say.

Q: And you're using a paintbrush and paint. So quite you know, is that a technique you would use in school?

A: Yea, quite a lot, I would use it.

Q: So how else, what other techniques have you used to generate blended effects?

A: Um, kind of with the watercolours like she done, like where you have the water and just stroke it with other colours and it should do the job. Personally, I think.

Q: So but...so you've done that, which did you prefer? Do you prefer, you know, this much more kind of controlled use of the brush here to blend your colours, or

A: Um

Q: or do you feel that it applies that it's dependent on what you want to create?

A: I think it's dependent I usually don't like kind of controlled areas because it doesn't really give me inspiration straight away. I get home, I think there's loads of things that can inspire me, like when I look outside my window, there's a garden and stuff, so I like and there's a beautiful Japanese cherry tree and stuff like that, so you know. I like the inspiration at home. But sometimes I can't think so inspiration doesn't always hit me, so

Q: So, when you're in school you're given a theme.

A: Yea, that I could work with, but you know.

Q: And are you given objects to paint?

A: We've never really done that, we just, always look at a different artist, like Picasso, Frida Kahlo, etc, etc.

Q: What would you do from say Frida Kahlo or Picasso? What work would you make?

A: We would usually try to imitate it and try to do it in our art books and stuff. Sometimes we wouldn't do a topic related with an artist, we'd just, you know, we were looking at Greek pottery and papier mache-ing our, you know, artwork.

Q: So say Frida Kahlo would you have your own flowers and then make that, make a painting in the style of, or do you actually copy Frida Kahlo a postcard or something?

A: I think we kind of copy.

Q: The postcard?

A: Yea

Q: Ok.

A: That's well explained I would say.

Q: (Laughter) Right, so with this work here you haven't got your fabulous cherry tree to be looking at

A: No.

Q: So is it very much in the painting technique your love of blending, that is dictating what you're doing here?

A: I really like, I'm kind of thinking of I like I pers I think it kind of shows a bit of my personality cos I'm not basically

Student sitting next to respondent: You're just random.

A: Yea, you could say I'm random.

Q: (Laughter)

A: I like to do different things. I don't want to follow the trends and stuff you know. Avoid being in to stand out in the crowd, you know, etc, etc.

Q: It kinda looks like you got two competing er areas of paint here. Are they going to come together at some point?

A: Perhaps. I'm not sure about that, I haven't decided yet.

Q: You're gonna just let the, I mean again it's rather like a doodle isn't it?

A: Kind of.

Q: It's got its own life er morphing as it goes along. Right, so, which artists that Yiannis has shown you have you quite liked? Um, maybe influenced your work here or might influence work that you do at school?

A: Um, I saw some sculptures that actually looked quite interesting though I'm not sure if you've seen it, like the doll, there's like a doll that's been spray-painted with a

Student sitting next to respondent: Gallery One.

A: Yea, that's Gallery One. It's spray-painted and it's hanging off like some pot or something. I think that's a bit unusual and it's kind of catches your eye, so you know. It's kind of, this sense of using strange objects with normal objects, and trying to bring it together to make a weird combination, that's what I think.

Q: Mmm. So what about paintings? As this is a painting workshop.

A: Yea.

Q: But I suppose that object, is it painted? Do you remember?

A: I'm not sure.

Q: So in terms of painting are there any paintings that maybe are quite different to what you've looked at school. Because you've used quite famous works, very you know

A: Common.

Q: Yea. So are there any others that would appeal to your kind of looking at something that's a little bit leftfield or out there?

A: I don't know, not really. No artist particularly. I kind of like I like the combination in artists where they have the weird and the normal like um I kinda like Banksy's work. It's kind of a bit unusual and stuff like you know you've got the two police officers and the child with the balloon. I like that it's kind of interesting interpretations of things, and people get mixed messages, so I like that.

Q: Good, well, I think it's probably quite interesting also that you know there's maybe working on different surfaces that he's not working on canvas, he's not working on paper, he's actually working in the city isn't he? On buildings and that kind of thing which is another surface that you can work on with paint. Right, thank you.

Interview Eleven

Interviewer and Student 11 (Duration: 2mins, 51sec)

Q: Ok, quick question. What did you do? What have you been doing during these workshops?

A: Um I've been painting different things with different um tools. And I've been sticking to the same paint because I don't really to, I like to play safe and usually, yea, that's it.

Q: So how does it compare with what you do in school?

A: It's in school we're doing illustration right now so it's not really painting. And I don't really paint a lot at home either so it's my chance to improve or try new things and yea I'm really enjoying it.

Q: So what are you enjoying about these sessions? Or is there one particular thing that you will take with you when you go back?

A: I guess it's the independence to draw whatever you want because you would never think of drawing a fireplace and I don't know and being in a gallery with people you don't know that well. And comparing with others what they've done. And then seeing common art as what they've done and then taking that on yourself. It's sort of a good opportunity. I'm glad my school told me about this.

Q: Good, right. So you'd say that you've developed a toolkit of different techniques.

A: Yea. I found out about this whole not using water just dry on dry and I like that now and I never knew about it before so it's really good.

Q: What do you like about that technique?

A: It's not entirely abstract because you can tell what it is but it's not like the real thing in observation but like the colours even though they're really different they still blur when you mix them up a bit and it causes like a shade and stuff like that.

Q: So you get a blending don't you and very soft effect. Good. Right is there an artist that Yiannis has shown you that has influenced your work or you've quite liked or you might look at a little bit more?

A: Well I can't remember their names but the Impressionists sound quite interesting and I might do more research on them. It sounded quite good.

Q: What inspired you about the Impressionists?

A: I'm not so sure it's just a different type and it just made me want to know more about it. It's usually you see in the art galleries all the classic and it's so life-like you can never do anything like that and it gives you something to try to work up to.

Q: Good yes, I can see where Impressionism might develop from the work that you're doing here. Good.

Appendix 3: ‘Information for Participants’ and Consent form for Painting Encounters Workshop, Saatchi Gallery: April 2012

‘Painting Encounters’ painting workshop sessions and research project at the Saatchi Gallery (April 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 2012)

Workshop leader: Mr Yiannis Hayiannis (B.A., P.G.C.E., M.A.)

Information for Participants

The series of workshop sessions, ‘Painting Encounters’, forms part of my doctoral research project. I am investigating painting as an interpretative activity. Working with secondary school pupils on this practical painting project is a vital part of my research, as it should permit me to see how pupils respond to and interpret tools, materials and ideas

Who will be leading the workshop sessions?

I studied as a painter at Camberwell College of Arts and subsequently trained as a secondary school art and design teacher. I worked for eight years as an art and design teacher at an international primary and secondary school in London, while continuing to paint and exhibit, and am presently working on doctoral research as an Art & Design in Education PhD candidate at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Contact number :

E-mail address:

What sorts of information is being asked of the participating pupils and how will it be collected and used?

In delivering the painting workshop sessions to pupils in the gallery, I wish to record their activity, views and resulting work.

I wish to do this by:

- photographing pupils’ art work with a view to its reproduction and presentation in an educational research project

- photographing and videoing pupils' painting activity in the workshop sessions (individual pupils will not be identified in these photographs and videos – camera shots will be restricted to hands and activities only)
- recording pupils' responses to two sets of short interview questions (questions at the start and at the end of the sequence of sessions that are designed to identify pupils' understanding, knowledge, experiences and views of painting).

The data to be collected from the workshop sessions will form part of my doctoral research. As such it will be presented at educational seminars and conferences and as part of my doctoral thesis.

I will be conducting the project by following the ethics guidelines as outlined by the British Educational Research Association (2011). In order to collect and use the data referred to above, I am requesting voluntary informed consent from all participating pupils.

- All participating pupils have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time and for any or no reason.
- Any practical work resulting from the sessions will remain the property of participating pupils and can be collected on the final session. Their right to identification (or indeed, non-identification) with any presentation of their original works for the purpose of my research will be observed.
- Photography and video recording of the activity of participating pupils, and audio recording of their interview responses, will be made strictly anonymous in the context of the presented research. The responses of individual pupils to the interview questions will be treated confidentially and will be kept completely anonymous in the presentation of the research.

‘Painting Encounters’ painting workshop sessions at the Saatchi Gallery
(April 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 2012)

Workshop leader: Mr Yiannis Hayiannis: PhD Art & Design candidate, Institute of Education, University of London

Participant Consent Form

I hereby give my permission for my practical work produced in the ‘Painting Encounters’ workshops to be photographed, reproduced and presented in an educational research project. I understand that I can exercise the right to be identified (or not) with my work and that it will remain my property at the end of the project. I also give my permission to be photographed and video recorded while participating in the workshop sessions, though I understand that I will not be identified in these photographs and video recordings.

I also consent to participating in interviews about my understanding, knowledge, experiences and views of painting that will be audio recorded. I understand that my responses to the interview questions will be treated confidentially and will be kept completely anonymous in the presentation of the research.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time and for any or no reason.

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Appendix 4: Lesson plans for Painting Events Workshop, Saatchi Gallery: April 2013

'Painting Events': Practical painting workshops at the Saatchi Gallery, April 2013



Hannah Brown: *Uton 8* (oil on plywood and oak) Courtesy of the artist.
Copyright © Hannah Brown 2012

Scope and aims of project

The workshop sessions form part of a doctoral research project lead by Yiannis Hayiannis (PhD candidate, Institute of Education) that seeks to identify ways in which painting can be productively thought of as a material, interpretative practice in secondary schools. The workshop sessions share, and seek to extend, some of the concerns of a pilot workshop course, 'Painting Encounters', conducted with Year 9 and 10 pupils from London-based schools at the Saatchi Gallery Education Department in April 2012.

In the same way that the 'Painting Encounters' workshop sessions featured practical exercises which required pupils to develop new ways of handling paint and tools, the present project seeks to involve Year 9 and 10 pupils in painting projects that stem from structured experimentation.

The 'Painting Events' project asks pupils to consider the meaning-making opportunities afforded by painting on a variety of scales and to recruit aspects of their experimentation with materials, images, tools and techniques in a sustained imaginative engagement with a single painting or cycle of paintings. The project also offers pupils the opportunity of working collaboratively on a painting (or paintings) and of negotiating responsibility for its (their) evolution. Yiannis is delighted to be co-teaching the sessions with Hannah Brown, an accomplished landscape painter and art and design teacher.

The sessions are intended to promote practical engagement within a critical and interpretative context. Each session introduces processes, materials and tools, as well as the work of painters. All sessions will close with a brief group appraisal.

Research aims, ethical practice and consent

In conducting the proposed project I will be following the ethics guidelines as outlined by the British Educational Research Association (2011). In delivering the painting workshop sessions to pupils in the gallery, I will be collecting data in two forms – in documenting pupils’ practical work and their responses to interview questions that ask about their understanding, knowledge and experiences of painting. The purpose of the practical work, the interviews and the reproduction of pupils’ work within the context of the research will be explained to pupils before their voluntary informed consent is requested for their participation. Practical work resulting from the sessions will remain the property of participating pupils. Their right to identification (or indeed, non-identification) with any publication or exhibition of their original works for research purposes will be observed and their permissions sought.

Yiannis Hayiannis: background

Yiannis studied as a painter at Camberwell College of Arts in the early 1990s and subsequently trained as a secondary school art and design teacher. Yiannis worked for eight years as an art and design teacher at an international primary and secondary school in London, while continuing to paint and exhibit, and is presently working on doctoral research as an Art & Design in Education PhD candidate at the Institute of Education, University of London.

Hannah Brown: background

Hannah is a graduate of the Royal College of Art and Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design. Solo exhibitions include *The Unseen Landscape*, PayneShurvell, London (2012), *Time Hangs Heavy*, The China Shop Gallery, Oxford (2012), and Gimpel Fils, London (2006). Hannah was selected for the *John Moores Painting Prize* (2012) and the *Threadneedle Prize* (2011) and the *APT Creekside Open* (2011). Hannah is a qualified teacher of art and design at secondary level.

Structure of individual practical sessions

Session One: Wednesday April 3rd 2013

Mark-making and selecting images

Session leader: Hannah

Actions: blending, blotting, brushing, collaging, covering, cropping, cutting, dabbing, diluting, dragging, dripping, editing, marking, mixing, pouring, rolling, spreading, squeezing, staining, tearing

Surfaces: Selection of papers (various sizes and thicknesses, to include: tissue paper, cartridge paper, watercolour paper), un/stretched primed canvas, canvas board, card

Applicators/tools: Brushes (artist's brushes, toothbrushes, nailbrushes), sponges, combs, cardboard strips, plastic spoons, rollers, flat palettes, plastic water pots, scissors, glue

Paint: Variety of poster/acrylic colours

Images: Variety of imagery drawn from magazines and books

Activities: Pupils are introduced to the overarching project themes of materials, experimentation and imagination. In the first half of the session pupils explore the possibilities of mark-making on a variety of scales. In the second half, pupils select from a variety of visual images (drawn from books, magazines, etc.) to create preliminary 'studies' or sketches for paintings, which incorporate the results of their mark-making activity.

References: Georges Braque, Dexter Dalwood, Max Ernst, Helen Frankenthaler, John Hoyland, Morris Louis, Henri Michaux, Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Fiona Rae, Kurt Schwitters, Chu Ta, Edouard Vuillard, Hsu Wei

Session Two: Thursday April 4th 2013

Imaginative painting strategies

Session leader: Hannah

- Actions:** applying, arranging, brushing, collaging, comparing, composing copying, cropping, cutting, editing, enlarging, inverting, marking, masking, multiplying, reducing, selecting, sticking, tearing, tracing, transferring
- Surface:** Selection of papers (various sizes and thicknesses, to include: tissue paper, cartridge paper, watercolour paper), un/stretched primed canvas, canvas board, card
- Applicators/tools:** Brushes (artist's brushes, toothbrushes, nailbrushes), sponges, combs, cardboard strips, plastic spoons, rollers, flat palettes, plastic water pots, scissors, glue
- Paint:** Variety of poster/acrylic colours.
- Activities:** This session begins with a group discussion in which pupils are asked to reflect on the processes they employed, and the work they produced, on the previous session. Strategies are suggested for taking paintings forward or starting new paintings: pupils are encouraged to use their work from the first session as a resource.
- References:** Georges Braque, Hannah Brown, John Cage, Dexter Dalwood, Max Ernst, Bernard Frize, Jasper Johns, Pablo Picasso, Fiona Rae, Robert Rauschenberg, Niki de Saint Phalle, Kurt Schwitters

Session Three: Tuesday April 9th 2013

Consistencies

Session leader: Yiannis

- Actions:** applying, blending, blotting, brushing, covering, dabbing, diluting, dragging, dripping, dry/wet brushing, marking, masking, mixing, pouring, rolling, spreading, squeezing, staining
- Surface:** Selection of papers (various sizes and thicknesses, to include: tissue paper, cartridge paper, watercolour paper), un/stretched primed canvas, canvas board, card
- Applicators/tools:** Brushes (artist's brushes, toothbrushes, nailbrushes), sponges, combs, cardboard strips, plastic spoons, rollers, flat palettes, plastic water pots
- Paint:** Variety of poster/acrylic colours.
- Activities:** In this session pupils are encouraged to experiment with different consistencies of paint and to create grounds in extending work on their paintings-in-progress. Pupils can experiment with different application techniques and develop their paintings in light of these.
- References:** Frank Auerbach, John Constable, Ian Davenport, Karen Davies, Howard Hodgkin, Edwina Leapman, Joan Miro, Gerhard Richter, Mark Rothko, J. M. W. Turner, James McNeill Whistler

Session Four: Thursday April 11th

Figure/ground

Session leader: Yiannis

- Actions:** applying, arranging, blending, blotting, brushing, collaging, comparing, composing, copying, covering, cropping, cutting, dabbing, diluting, dragging, dripping, dry/wet brushing, editing, enlarging, inverting, marking, masking, mixing, multiplying, pouring, printing, reducing, rolling, selecting, spreading, squeezing, staining, sticking, tearing, tracing, transferring
- Surface:** Selection of papers (various sizes and thicknesses, to include: tissue paper, cartridge paper, watercolour paper), un/stretched primed canvas, canvas board, card.
- Applicators/tools:** Brushes (artist's brushes, toothbrushes, nailbrushes), sponges, combs, cardboard strips, plastic spoons, rollers, flat palettes, plastic water pots.
- Paint:** Variety of poster/acrylic colours.
- Activities:** Pupils are introduced to figure/ground relationships in a variety of paintings (including their own to date) and referred back to the experience of their experimentation with mark-making, collaging and consistencies. The project concludes with a final group appraisal of work, techniques, and experiences.

Appendix 5: Interview transcripts from Painting Events Workshop, Saatchi Gallery: April 2013

I am following the transcription system recommended by King and Horrocks (2010: 145-6).

Emphasis: CAPITAL LETTERS

Pauses: very short pauses (p), longer pauses (pause), pauses over two seconds (long pause)

Interruptions: - (at point of interruption)

Overlapping speech: Use a hyphen as for interruption, but precede the overlapping comments(s) with: (overlap). Where the overlapping section ends, note with: (end overlap).

Audibility: [inaudible]

Laughing, coughing: (laughter)

Tone of voice: (ironic tone)

Direct speech: If participant is directly quoting another person put section in 'speech marks'

King, N. and Horrocks, C. (2010) *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Interviews 1-13: conducted April 4th 2013

Interview One

Interviewer and Student Three (Duration: 4 mins)

Q: So this was the work that you did from yesterday? Are these, are there only two?

A: No I did that one and -

Q: -because there's a stack actually on the table over there.

(Long pause while student looks for and collects paintings)

Q: Oh great you've found all of them (p) is that someone else's? Ok (long pause) is this yours?

A: Yeah.

Q: So I guess the question, how did you get all of these different effects? Cos (p) it looks like you've used a roller.

A: Yeah.

Q: And did you use a brush in the corner too?

A: Er a toothbrush, yeah..

Q: A toothbrush? And these bits at the top?

A: Er, the sponge.

Q: The sponge, ok (pause) ok, so do you think that um (p) do you think that you've learnt more about how paint -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - works on surfaces? Or do you, have you done this kind of stuff at school before, where you experiment with different kinds of materials?

A: Not that much -

Q: (Overlap) Do they do that at school? (Overlap ends)

A: No, not much.

Q: Not that much ok. So, do you, were you surprised about anything? Do you think you've kind of discovered anything new about how paint reacts when you work with it on a surface?

A: I didn't know like the colours would show through on some of the work.

Q: Ah, ok, cos you've used that quite thinly haven't you?

A: Yeah.

Q: And so you've, which, can you remember which colour you did first? Was it -

A: I think it was blue.

Q: The blue. And then, is it a yellow on top -

A: (Overlap)Yeah.

Q: - or a red on top?

A: Umm.

Q: Yellow here? (pause) Red there maybe?

A: Yeah, I think red was like third or something.

Q: Yeah (p) ok. Well I think that's a great abstract painting (p) but I don't know whether you want to be an abstract painter or not. This is very different isn't it?

A: Yeah.

Q: This is, um, I think I asked you about this just a while ago. You used a roller to get these effects?

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: And so how much –

A: - (Overlap) and then a sponge.

Q: And then a sponge. How much paint did you, did you put the paint on the roller first and then roll it or did you kind of spread the paint on the paper and then roll it?

A: That, yeah, I, there was already some paint on the roller, so -

Q: (Overlap) Ok.

A: - like I did that and then I put it on and then like added some water with a brush.

Q: Oh so, what, as you went along?

A: Yeah -

Q: (Overlap) Ok.

A: - and then I added some dark blue here.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then some red and yellow and -

Q: Ok. And then you've kind of blended the two kind of -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - it's not like there's a kind of harsh line between the two, if you've kind of blended them together. Great, ok, so I mean this is very different to the abstract painting isn't it?

A: Yeah.

Q: I mean this, when I, when I first saw this, to me it looked like a kind of seascape.

A: Yeah, that's what I was trying to get.

Q: Ahh, ok -

A: (Overlap)Yeah.

Q: - that's what you were trying to get. So potentially this is something you could actually work into later on?

A: Yeah.

Q: If you wanted to.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah? Great ok, and the other one?

A: Um, no. That one.

Q: Sorry, this one?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. And this (p) was done in a similar way to that one?

A: Umm yeah. I was trying to do a bit of like flowers kind of like Monet.

Q: Ah. Ok.

A: But like a bit more abstract.

Q: But you've kind of, how have you, kind of used tracing paper on top and then?

A: Yeah

Q: Ok, so was it that thing that I showed you when I said that you could use paper and then kind of take it off? (p) Yeah. Great and that isn't yours, is it? That's hers. Ok, sorry. And so today you're just starting out on something new?

A: Yeah (pause) yeah I need to add some water onto it and stuff.

Q: Ok. Do you need another pot of water here? Would that help?

A: Er yes please.

Q: Ok, we'll get that for you. Ok um (p) and so I think one last question, do you think that there are any techniques that you've kind of learnt or you've been experimenting with since you started which you could use to make other kinds of work?

A: Like using colours -

Q: (Overlap) Are they useful to you?

A: Yeah (pause) um like using colours to show through like the different effects you get when like blending them together.

Q: Right, ok, good. (p) Ok, any questions you have?

A: No.

Interview Two

Interviewer and Student Two (Duration: 4 mins, 37 sec)

Q: Sorry (long pause). I quite like this piece but I was wondering how you got certain effects cos that's really what I'm interested in.

A: Yeah.

Q: I'm interested in just how you use paint to get certain effects -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - and then turn the effects maybe into pictures or, or. So -

A: (Overlap) Well -

Q: - can you say something about how you got these effects?

A: Well I was like, for the one previous to that, like to the painting I was doing before -

Q: (Overlap) Yeah.

A: - I was just kind of like experimenting I was getting different kind of effects when I was putting (p) like um paint over different other paints, so I wanted to recreate that for here (p) and then I was tryin' to get kind of like reflection (p) through the water.

Q: Ok, so I (p) guess did this top part come first -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - and then you put the reflection afterwards?

A: (Overlap) Mmm.

Q: - ok.

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: Ok so you've got, and what implement were you using to make those marks there? Was that a brush? Or was that um a piece of card?

A: I think it was one of, yeah I think it was a piece of card, the ones that you drag -

Q: (Overlap) Yeah.

A: And then yeah.

Q: Ok.

A: And then the roller to get a kind of.

Q: This strikes me as being much more gentle somehow because you can't clearly see where the brush marks are, they kind of blend into one another.

A: Yeah.

Q: How did you get those effects?

A: Well, I did them first, so I made like this kind of like the blue and then put the paint, I just got a normal brush and then I put water on that thing and made it -

Q: (Overlap) Ok.

A: - into a kind of, yeah.

Q: Great (long pause) ok (long pause). And was there any other piece of work that belongs to you?

Another student: I'll go and get it.

A: Yeah there is one where I was just messing, or just like experimenting with different ways of putting paint on the page, I guess.

Q: Ok. And so the idea of, it says pollution at the bottom.

A: Yeah.

Q: I'm guessing this has to do with this fish that doesn't maybe look as healthy as it could. Is that - (Laughter)

A: (Laughter) Yeah.

Q: Right, ok. And that's a reflection.

A: Yeah.

Q: So is it (p) so did this just develop as you were painting or did you have an idea before you, before you started out?

A: Yeah.

Q: (To the student who has just delivered Student Two's work) Thank you very much.

A: Kinda.

Q: So it just kind of occurred to you as you were -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - as you were experimenting with materials? (p) Ok, great, thanks. So these were the first exercises I think -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - that was the first thing that we did.

A: Yeah, this was just.

Q: So was any of this new to you?

A: Yeah, yeah, loads, like the way, the different ways of like not just using a brush like all the other ones were completely new, I'd never seen like anything.

Q: You don't do this at school?

A: No

Q: Is it just like a brush and?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. And paint? So you're not using sponges or sticks or anything like that?

A: Not at all, so.

Q: Ok. So was that new for you or just, did you?

A: Yeah.

Q: I mean I suppose was it surprising or?

A: Yeah it was. I was just um (p) yeah, so I'd never used any of it so I was just tryin' to (p) see what, what each of them made -

Q: (Overlap) Sure.

A: - I guess.

Q: Sure, that's really interesting. I like some of the effects you've got here, because (p)

A: Yeah.

Q: Now how did you get those dots?

A: It was just my finger (laughter).

Q: Was it your finger?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ah right. Ok. And what about these bits at the top?

A: Um they were the toothbrush, that I just like -

Q: (Overlap) Ok.

A: - kind of like.

Q: Well, this looks like a kind of, people queuing up for something to me but maybe

A: Yeah, like a head

Q: Yea, maybe the other way around. (Long pause) And this was a roller, this effect?

A: Yeah that was like (p) the thing er yeah like that, which I brought.

Q: And this one you've kind of put, this paint is really thick.

A: Yeah it was um that thing that like to me looks like a garden tool (laughter) you know that thing?

Q: Ah yes it's not a trowel it's called a palette – ok, it's very small, it's a very kind of (p) kind of miniature version of a garden trowel. Yes well impressionists used that quite a lot when they were painting from nature.

A: Yes

Q: They'd go out into nature and sort of er paint, use quite thick, do you know Van Gogh's work at all?

A: Yeah

Q: I think he used one of those quite often. And I think one other thing he used to do as well was actually use the end of a paintbrush to kind of get effects as well. Great so you've used er the garden trowel, you've used a brush.

A: Yeah

Q: And, and were those, those -

A: The little kind of pack -

Q: The polysterene things, yeah. Great. Ok. Do you, I suppose the last question is, do you think that you could use any of these effects on what you're working on today?

A: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

Q: Yeah? Cos I think you've started out using pencil.

A: Yeah.

Q: Is it? Have you thought about -

A: (Overlap) It's an outline.

Q: - so you've got an idea in your mind –

A: Yeah.

Q: - and you're gonna just see which way the idea takes you or do you have?

A: I think I know (p) um what I'm gonna do and er most of the tools that I'm gonna use to do it but I'll probably need a [inaudible] or something.

Q: Well I'll let you get on, thank you so much for talking to me.

Interview Three

Interviewer and Student Twelve (Duration: 2 mins 48 sec and 1 min, 10 sec)

Q: So this was the first one you did?

A: Yeah.

Q: And this was the third, this was the second I guess, that was the third. Ok so how (p) this was, was this when we asked you not to use water?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was that when you were using like um just a dry paint? Yeah. And so you've got those interesting effects here with um (p) these kind of palm trees.

A: Yeah.

Q: The lion. So when, how, was this done with your finger?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, so the idea for this, did it come out of what you were, did you have an idea before you began?

A: Well, not really, just when you came over and showed us the pictures of like them with that thing they created like animals and different pictures, so I thought I'd try it.

Q: Ok, so that kind of developed kind by itself into –

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - trees?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok. Good and this, how did you get that effect?

A: Used the toothbrush.

Q: The toothbrush. Great. Ok (pause). And it looks like you've developed (p) was it, this was still without water, I think, wasn't it? Or were you using water on the roller? Cos it looks to me like you've made those marks with a roller.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. So these marks? Was it, how did you get those?

A: I used the toothbrush still to like -

Q: But you weren't using it (p) as you were there?

A: No I was like stroking it more.

Q: Stroking it outwards, yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, I think it looks like you've used a brush there, is that right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, do you feel that like you've kind of learnt anything more about how paint works?

A: Um yeah because in school we do just use paintbrushes -

Q: (Overlap) Yeah.

A: - using the other tools allowed you to be more like creative, to create different like effects than with just painting with a brush.

Q: Yeah, yeah (pause). Good, ok. Um so and then you moved on to something completely different. I think this must have been in the second half of the session, is that right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, could you say, I suppose my question would be: is this something that um was based on the pictures that were handed round?

A: Yeah.

Q: And it looks like, to me, it looks like a volcano erupting.

A: Yeah it is.

Q: Ok, and it looks like you've used the paint quite loosely

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that right? Um it's quite watery?

A: Yeah.

Q: Because it's made the paper buckle quite a bit. I mean, even though it's good quality paper it's still (p) it's still buckled quite a lot. And then, that looks really thick.

A: Yeah.

Q: How did you get that effect? Were you using a brush?

A: I used a brush and I used all the different tools altogether to see what it would do.

Q: Ok, and then this part at the top?

INTERRUPTION

Q: So we said that this was um (p) a brush, yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: So was this a roller at the top?

A: Yeah it was a roller. Well first I went over in like a grey with a brush, grey paint and then I mixed in blue and yellow, to -

Q: So it was grey to begin with and then over the top you overlaid yellow and blue?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, that's quite a nice effect. Ok so I suppose I ought to let you get on today, do you have, have you got an idea in your mind of what -

A: (Overlap) Umm.

Q: - you're going to do or?

A: I thought I'd do like a window, then looking out a scene, but then I don't know what scene to do (laughter).

Q: Ok. Do you think that you could use any of the, any of these techniques that you've developed?

A: Yeah

Q: Yeah. One of the things I find useful when I'm painting is I sometimes just doodle, but with, just experimenting with different techniques and once I've done something that I like the look of, then I use that. Do you remember Hannah's work? Hannah's is much more considered, she's obviously working from a photograph. So I think what's great about working like this, is that you can do anything you want. Ok, thanks very much.

Interview Four

Interviewer and Student Ten (Duration: 3 mins 39 sec)

Q: It's nothing too terrifying, it's just to ask you a little bit about what you did yesterday and what you're thinking of doing today. Can we have a look at your work from yesterday, very quickly? (Pause) Ok, so I think this was from the first half?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Can I just ask you, is this, do you do stuff like this at school?

A: No,

Q: Is it -

A: (Overlap) Mostly paintbrushes.

Q: Mostly brushes. Ok, so and it looks to me like you've used a whole variety here of different um mark-making tools. I can see you've used your finger, a roller. Were those the sponges? Yeah, and you've used brushes as well, haven't you? Ok, and you moved on to, was this the second one?

A: Yeah

Q: Yeah. I mean, this looks much more um to me much more developed cos you've really you've started using (p) um you've started making certain patterns and to me, I don't know about you, but to me it looks like a kind of landscape almost. I don't know if you see that, but I see a kind of meadow, and then sort of (p). That's just the way I see it. But I guess it's, it was just marks, was it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. And so could you just tell me a little bit about how you made these? Is this a brush?

A: Um with the I did it with the um with the [inaudible].

Q: Oh, ok and yeah (p). Yeah. Ok and then, I really like this effect. It looks to me as though you've started out with yellow and over the top you've dragged the blue, is that what you did? To get that effect?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Ok. I really like that. Um (p) so do you feel that you kind of learnt anything new about paint by doing this or was it -

A: I feel that I learnt how I can paint with more different types of mark.

Q: Sure.

A: Like not just with brushes.

Q: Sure. Sure. Yeah, well I think that that's good. I mean um was it surprising do you think? Or did you think, did you kind of look at something and say 'Well I had a fair idea of what kind of mark it was going to make', and then you used it in a particular way or did you just use it and then say, 'Ah, ok, I like the look of that'?

A: Well, I just used it how I thought it would be (p) and then I liked that.

Q: Yeah, yeah, ok.

A: Some surprised me, cos I wouldn't think that would make a particular mark.

Q: Sure, sure. Ok (longer pause). Um and so do you think that you, I mean you moved on to make this piece of work -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: And it looks to me as though you've used quite dry, um, you've used quite dry paint. Is that right? And you've used maybe quite a thin brush?

A: Yeah, I used um a different, I used a different brush as well to make some of the flowers and stuff. Then I tried to use the scraper for the blank part.

Q: Ok, ok yeah (pause). Ok. And so what you're doing today um do you think that that (p), is it something that's kind of come out of um the experiments that you did, or are you thinking about doing a different kind of painting?

A: Um, thinking maybe like planting different images to another painting to like create [inaudible].

Q: Oh, I see so, you're going to sort of maybe paint different things and then see how they, see if you can put them together in a different way. Ok (pause). Great, well, um, are you enjoying it, is it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, that's good. Thank you for talking to me, thanks very much.

Interview Five

Interviewer and Student Eleven (Duration: 5 mins 4 sec)

Q: Right, so um, how did you get on yesterday? Did you enjoy the mark-making?

A: Um, yeah, it was interesting, cos like different to like what we do in school [inaudible] we do like copying art from like mainly what other people have done.

Q: Right.

A: Like maybe like vary, varying it a bit, like creating different parts of it, but like this just like experimenting with like different types of mark. Like it was, like it was different I guess ...

Q: (Overlap) Yeah?

A: ... which was I enjoyed it.

Q: Oh good, I'm glad. I'm glad you enjoyed it because sometimes when I, when teachers talk about making marks, people aren't, students aren't always sure what they're talking about. But what I was, what we were trying to get across was the idea that you can use different tools in different ways to get different effects, and then build the effects into paintings. Um, so that's not something, you don't maybe experiment so much with different tools at school?

A: No, it's mostly just painting really.

Q: Ok, and do you feel that you've kind of learnt anything new about paint, paint, um by doing that?

A: Yeah. Yeah. You learn a lot about like the different effects that each like type of like (p) so like instrument you can like get a different effect for, so like I didn't know that you could make like say, say this effect -

Q: (Overlap) Ok.

A: - like it was like useful like if you did use it like maybe in some art at school.

Q: Sure, sure. And do you, I mean, how did you get that effect, by the way? Was it -

A: It was with the like little green thing.

Q: Oh, ok, ok.

A: And like you just, yeah. I dipped it in paint, because it's not like completely flat, it creates like random -

Q: (Overlap) Yes, it makes, absolutely I mean you can start seeing, I look at this and see, I start to see little sort of pictures and creatures in there, little marks. Um, ok. And so you've kind of, I see that you've kind of put different layers of paint on top of other layers.

A: That was quite cool as well.

Q: **That's amazing. How did you get that effect?**

A: I basically just chucked (p) it was that paintbrush that went out to the side.

Q: **Yeah, yeah.**

A: And I just, I like mixed paint before and I just put it in, because you had, I'd used it before on other things, then it had like built up in layers.

Q: **Mmm hmm.**

A: And then I just did it and it like it, the paint spread out.

Q: **Yeah, ok.**

A: It gave different colours.

Q: **Ok (pause). I think that's really interesting. I mean, I'm just wondering if that's something that you could maybe use in, you know, if you could maybe repeat that effect.**

A: Yeah.

Q: **If it's a, if you need to, if it's something that you know, that's, could be used in your work maybe. Um, so this was again, this was the experiments at the beginning?**

A: Yeah, that was like the same thing.

Q: **That was, ok. That's, I really like that.**

A: Yeah.

Q: **This looks really interesting. And again you've used, it looks to me like you've used a comb there (p) and you've sort of dragged them across.**

A: Yeah.

Q: **Dragged the marks across and then sort of built them up?**

A: Yeah, it was colours on top of each other. So I did like a layer of blue and then like I did yellow like in between the gaps of where it didn't.

Q: **Right ok.**

A: Where it was white.

Q: **I'm with you, yeah, yeah.**

A: Yeah, that was quite fun.

Q: Ok, there's a variety of techniques there, so (p), um, so now, you're moving, was this something that you sort of started work on -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - and stopped?

A: I don't really like that [laughter].

Q: Well I think the thing with that is, I mean even though you might not like it, it still might be useful, you could still, I always think it's useful to have bits of scraps of things lying around cos you can always use them for other ideas.

A: Yeah, mmm.

Q: Ok. So now you're onto something that looks very different to me.

A: Yeah.

Q: Could you say a little bit about that?

A: Well I've traced Churchill from this.

Q: Ok.

A: And then I'm doing it so it's more complicated, so it's more detailed, and then it gets less detailed and less detailed -

Q: Ok.

A: - but more like shaded round the outside, so more like abstract.

Q: Yeah.

A: So he becomes more of a normal person than like more of an authoritative figure.

Q: That's a very interesting idea. Ok, but I think that's going to need to do some quite detailed work I think on the figure on the far right -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - to try to get it to look like him. But then I suppose afterwards it will kind of morph into a more, a less recognizable figure.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So you've started out using pencil.

A: Yeah.

Q: Um (p) how do you, do you think you're going to use the paint in this way? Is, are you going to, is the paint going to become -

A: (Overlap) I'm doing like a backdrop -

Q: - is it going to change?

A: - using like some of this again.

Q: Ok.

A: And, but like I'll leave like a gap, I think, like (p) the guy (p) who did it when he cuts stuff out.

Q: Oh yes, Dexter Dalwood, yeah.

A: So there's like an obvious gap between them.

Q: So will you all on the same piece of paper, or will you cut it out and then?

A: Um, I might paint it and then cut some stuff out and collage it.

Q: Sure, ok. Well it looks to me like you've got a lot of work to do. One thing it might be worth considering is just to see how, if the figure is morphing into someone less recognizable, how you can maybe um use the paint to suggest that as well. Because if you're painting quite a precise figure to begin with and you're using maybe a fairly small brush -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - as the figure changes, maybe think about how you might, how you might use the paint and the paintbrush, or whatever tool you use, to suggest that the figure's blurring -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - that might be interesting. I suspect that's something you'll do anyway.

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: Thank you very much for talking to me.

Interview Six

Interviewer and Student One (Duration: 4 mins 5 sec)

Q: So, um, yeah, we did a lot of experimentation yesterday. Was that something you had done before, maybe, at school?

A: Um (pause) not really, just used to um (p) painting with brushes [inaudible].

Q: And so, let me look through. It looks to me like you've used um one of the combs.

A: Er yes.

Q: Yeah, you've used it again here. It looks, is that a sponge you've used to get those effects on that bit?

A: Um, I used this like um it's like this [inaudible] thing, it was quite rough.

Q: Oh, yeah. Ok, um, I quite liked this one because (p) what I wanted to ask you about it actually was, when you started out, did you have an idea of what it was going to end up like? Or was it something that just happened as you were working?

A: I think it happened while I was working but originally [inaudible] originally planned like what I wanted to look like, but the texture and the design I've kind of (p) um created that as I've continued.

Q: Right, ok. So that was something that you, that developed out of um. So I suppose you began with, was it just an abstract pattern or was it going to be, cos to me this looks like a face.

A: Um, yeah.

Q: Is that -

A: I wanted it to look like when the person looking at it would have to figure out what's happening.

Q: Right, ok.

A: In the beginning I drew out the outline so that I'd know what I'd be doing.

Q: Ok, ok, so. I suppose um (p) there were two, there were bits that you'd planned out. Were there bits that you didn't plan out?

A: Um ,yeah. There were bits I didn't plan out. I didn't plan out the comb.

Q: Sure.

A: Um, I just thought that maybe it'd be a good idea if I tried.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then, I got this.

Q: I quite like that. Ok, and so these were from the first part of the session where you were experimenting with different um tools, I think?

A: Yes.

Q: Ok, so it looks to me like you've got (p) a sponge, maybe here?

A: Um, yeah, that's a sponge.

Q: Obviously you've used um is that a brush, that you've used?

A: Yeah, the big brush.

Q: One of the big brushes, yeah. And to me it looks like you've kind of flicked -

A: Yeah, with the toothbrush.

Q: So, I suppose the question I'd like to ask you is, were these um ways of painting new to you? Had you not done these before? Or had you? Did you learn something more about how to use paint by working like that?

A: Well, um (pause) I did do some painting at home. Well I did get like, buy my own brushes, but I haven't started painting with the Styrofoam. I haven't done that before.

Q: Yeah.

A: Or the toothbrush.

Q: Sure.

A: So those are quite new to me.

Q: Yeah. Ok, that's good. Do you think that they're techniques that you might use on what you're working on now? Because, just walking by earlier it looked to me like this was something a little bit more detailed, quite different to this approach.

A: Um well, I was thinking for the background, I'd use the sponge effect.

Q: Oh right, ok. Ok.

A: And um.

Q: So, and you're working from the visual resources that Hannah and I gave to you yesterday.

A: Yes. And, I like that idea of editing.

Q: Sure.

A: So I haven't completely copied um the images that I have in front of me. I've like um kind of put them together.

Q: Yeah.

A: And, yeah.

Q: So I suppose in the end you might end up with a situation with the painting where you've got bits that are painted, I would imagine working as you are now, bits that are

quite detailed, and other bits that are maybe a bit, are less, are more to do with different kinds of paint, different ways of applying it. Ok. I look forward to seeing what it looks like. It looks like you have some work to do, so.

A: Ok.

Q: Thank you for talking to me.

Interview Seven

Interviewer and Student Nine (Duration: 4 mins 48 sec)

Q: I don't want to stop you cos you're in the middle of doing something. Can we have a quick look at what you did from yesterday's session? Um (pause) so do you think you're going to be using any of the techniques that we looked at yesterday?

A: Yeah, I'll be using like (p) because with the sponge and things, like, after experimenting yesterday -

Q: Yeah.

A: - that kind of gave me ideas of what I could use.

Q: Ok. Great. Was it kind of one of the first times you'd experimented like this?

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: ... or had you done stuff like this before?

A: Hadn't really done stuff like this.

Q: Ok.

A: It was quite fun to do this. Like you never really get a chance to just experiment. Just do what you want.

Q: And so, um (pause) oh you've done some, yeah, this is, some really interesting effects here, do you remember how you got that effect?

A: Um I used a (p) fan brush underneath.

Q: Ok.

A: And then afterwards I just kind, can't remember what I used on top, I think it was a toothbrush, and it was kind of -

Q: Sure. You've got a variety of effects there which I think are really, I mean they could be really useful um for making other images if you wanted to um (pause) and so I suppose one question I'd like to ask you - do you think you learnt anything new about paint by doing these little experiments?

A: Yeah I think I did because like you learnt about like the way paint acts when you use different techniques kind of thing.

Q: Sure.

A: And the way it works and how well it works with different techniques.

Q: That's interesting. Then moving to the other picture that you did, um I say picture because I don't know if you can call this a picture really -

A: (Overlap) No, yeah.

Q: - it's an abstract painting maybe (p) but it's done, I suppose it's a very different painting to this one, because this seems to me to have a particular theme. It looks to me as though you may have used some of the techniques that you experimented with here, (p) or at least it looks to me as though you didn't use a brush to get these effects.

A: No.

Q: What, can I ask what you used to get these effects?

A: I used the sponge.

Q: Ok.

A: Cos I went over and looked at other people's -

Q: (Overlap) Sure.

A: - and got the idea from that cos I didn't get the opportunity.

Q: So you used the sponge to sort of make the sides of the volcano, but I'm guessing that you used a brush just for the sky, is that right?

A: In, er yeah, for the sky.

Q: And you've got this quite thick red and I really love these little marks here that, to me it looks like lava sort of you know erupting. How did you get those effects?

A: Um I kind of used the straw.

Q: Oh right ok, so.

A: Yeah.

Q: I'm trying to work out how, dragging the paint or scraping it?

A: I used the straw and just kind of blew.

Q: Ah, you blew, right, I'm with you, I'm with you. Ok, I hadn't expected that technique. Great ok. So um (pause) but I guess with this you started out with an idea -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - for (p) you started out with the idea of the volcano from some of the visual resources -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - that were given out, but did you find that as you were working on it that other things sort of suggested themselves from, from the experiments, or?

A: Yeah. Like, I know, like kind of techniques to use on top like the straw and stuff -

Q: (Overlap) Yeah.

A: - I wouldn't have originally thought of that -

Q: (Overlap) Ok, ok.

A: - without the -

Q: (Overlap) Well that's good. So I suppose one of the good things that has come out of this is if you've sort of thought more about different ways of getting effects.

A: (Overlap) Yeah, it's a bit kind of more free -

Q: (Overlap) Sure, yeah.

A: - to do.

Q: Excellent. And so can I just ask you quickly, I'll let you get on, what you're working on now?

A: Um, well, I've got this.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I'm just kind of like doing different, I'm doing it, but like duplicating it.

Q: Oh, ok.

A: And using different colours.

Q: Ok, which is something -

A: (Overlap) I'm gonna -

Q: - that we, sorry to interrupt -

A: Yeah, and I'm gonna like put this on top after it's dried.

Q: Right, ok. So (p) and this was something I guess that came out of what Hannah was talking about, repeating images.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, that's really interesting.

A: And colours.

Q: Yeah, because I think that you know, using, to me, the red there kind of looks quite something quite threatening or something quite dangerous.

A: Yeah.

Q: Whereas the blue and the green looks much more restful.

A: Yeah, I wanted to use like quite vibrant colours.

Q: Sure. Great, ok. So do you think that in any, in any of what you're going to be doing on this painting that you're going to use any of the techniques that you used before, or?

A: Yeah, I think I might use this like just to expand, just to see that thing and maybe the toothbrush.

Q: Yeah.

A: I just want to try it out for the beginning and then I was gonna experiment a bit more.

Q: Ok, yeah, I think that looks very promising. I look forward to seeing how it turns out. Thank you.

Interview Eight

Interviewer and Student Fourteen (Duration: 5 mins 11 sec)

Q: Um ok can we just have a very quick look at what you did yesterday? Because (pause) these were the first few pieces, I think, weren't they? Yeah. So you're experimenting here I think with different, different um tools, to get different effects, (pause) yeah? And the same here. So this was a (p) looks like a sponge there.

A: Yeah, that was a sponge.

Q: And a comb.

A: Yeah.

Q: And a brush. Had you, have you worked like this before very much?

A: No.

Q: Is it something you'd do at school maybe?

A: No.

Q: No, so.

A: It's quite new to me.

Q: Ok, but did you enjoy it?

A: Yes, I liked the way like I could make different marks.

Q: Yeah.

A: Cos I hadn't ever really thought of painting like that before -

Q: (Overlap) Yeah.

A: - just used a brush.

Q: Well that's good, that's good. Do you think that um (p) do you think that you learnt anything new about paint by, by doing these experiments? Or.

A: It all seemed to have like very different texture and I liked mixing the colours together, like to create something like that.

Q: Yeah.

A: By using a roller, so.

Q: Yeah, so I suppose um if you hadn't done that before, I suppose it would be quite interesting to see what sort of effects you can get by using a, you know, by using a roller. If you hadn't used it in that way before. Ok (p) great, so. And then I noticed that you um this one was quite different, because you, I noticed that quite a few people picked up on the idea of a volcano, but they're all very different paintings. I mean um (p). And I really get a sense of the energy of a volcano here, from the way that you've painted. And it, I think you must have used, what sort of brush did you use to get that, to use that black?

A: I just used a big brush like this.

Q: Yeah.

A: To, to try and kind of get it as black as possible, but I haven't finished so if it's a bit.

Q: Oh you haven't finished this? Well I think there's a lot of energy to this and it looks to me like, when I look at it, I can see sort of, you know how when a volcano's erupting, how things sort of bubble up?

A: Yeah.

Q: And how the lava underneath the earth sort of makes the earth sort of pucker and then you know move in different ways. I really get a sense of that from looking at this. And then it looks to me as though you've kind of er (p) how did you get that effect with the red?

A: Oh, well I just kind of splattered it on like this.

Q: Yeah, ok.

A: Um, so yeah.

Q: Had you used that technique before?

A: Umm, not really

Q: Not really?

A: No

Q: No. Ok. And um I mean I think it achieves its effect because it looks to me like it's erupting, so I quite like that. What are you working on today?

A: Well, I bought in this picture from the internet and kind of trying to do a bit of an abstract version of that.

Q: Right.

A: So yeah, just working on it.

Q: Yeah, so I mean, did you, did you, um, what did you make of the um, of Hannah's presentation this morning? Did you enjoy, did you enjoy it, I mean looking at how she, what the changes that she'd made to the photographs?

A: I liked the way that she kind of eradicated the light source of the sky and just made it, and just made up her own light source to create the shadows from the trees.

Q: Yeah.

A: I thought it was interesting.

Q: Ok. Yeah, no, I thought that was very interesting. Um so, in, you're working from a picture today. What kinds of changes have you made or do you think that you'll make?

A: Well er it's not as clear I think, my painting isn't. It's a bit more kind of colours blending in (p) well different colours a bit and (p) um yes.

Q: Yeah. So you've -

A: (Overlap) So it's detailed.

Q: I suppose obviously it's still, you haven't finished it yet. It looks to me as though you're using the paint in a particular way. It's quite wet and you're blending certain parts into other parts.

A: Yeah, I'm trying to do that.

Q: Is that a technique you've used before?

A: Um, I haven't really done much painting in school really.

Q: Oh really, you haven't done much? And so the painting that you do at school have you, have you experimented much there, or?

A: I don't think we've really done any painting at school, we just did sort of sculptures with wood and just drawing with a pencil but I think we're doing oil painting next term, so.

Q: Right, ok, oil painting should be interesting, it's um, it takes a long time to um learn, but it's very rewarding. Ok, um I suppose the last question is um are you enjoying working with paint?

A: Yeah.

Q: If it's some of these things are new to you, are they, is it, do you find it enjoyable? Or is it?

A: I find it enjoyable, yeah. I like blending in the sort of paints together and seeing the effect.

Q: Yeah, good, ok, well thank you for talking to me, I'll let you get on.

Interview Nine

Interviewer and Student Six (Duration: 4 mins 6 sec)

Q: Ok, I just wanted to very quickly ask you about what you did yesterday, because I noticed that a few people were doing volcanoes. And um (p) before the volcanoes I'm also interested in the mark-making you did. I really like this (p) effect. I just wanted to ask you how you got that, if you can remember how you got that effect?

A: Paint roller.

Q: Paint roller, ok, and you're using quite a thick consistency of paint, when you, was it quite thick or had you diluted the paint very much to get that?

A: Er, yeah it was quite thick.

Q: So, I think the key question for me, whenever I see things that were done with a roller, I always want to know, was the paint, did you put the paint down on the paper first and then roll, or did you put the paint on the roller and then roll?

A: Er.

Q: Or can't you remember?

A: Do you mean, did I roll it before I?

Q: You know when you're rolling something you can maybe dip, dip the roller into paint (p) and then, and then just roll it on, or did you get another tool and just, like a brush, dab some on, and then roll it while it was on the paper?

A: Oh no, I, I rolled the roller with the paint on.

Q: Yeah, that's what I thought, yeah, ok. So I suppose the question I wanted to ask is, do you think, had you done sort of experiments like this before with paint? Is it something you've done at school perhaps?

A: No, not really.

Q: Ok. And do you think did you learn anything new about what paint can do by doing this?

A: Um, yeah.

Q: Yeah, ok. So, we've (p) was there only one piece that you did from yesterday, or was there another one?

A: Er there was another one.

Q: There might be another one, we'll see if we can track it down for you before the end of the sessions. Um, this I found was really interesting. I wanted to ask you how you got these effects, because to me it looks as though you used a wet-on-wet technique which is what we painters would probably use to describe, um, (p) well, I suppose it is what that sounds like. You've got a wet surface and then you put more wet paint on the top of it and you can blend or let one, let one layer of paint sit on top of another layer, and then maybe work into it. And to me it looks as though you had wet white paint and you maybe applied grey on top? And then you, somehow you used something to scrape down to suggest the lava coming out of the volcano, is that what you did? Yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, ok. Right and then you used a, to me it looks like you used a sponge to get this?

A: Er, yeah.

Q: And then um just quite a thick brush?

A: Yeah, a fan brush.

Q: A fan brush, ok. So was this something that, I mean, have you kind of worked like this before? In kind of a free way or?

A: Umm.

Q: No? Ok. Which leads me to ask you what you're doing today, cos it seems quite different to yesterday's piece. That looks more like you're experimenting a little bit with the materials. What are you working on today?

A: Well, I'm doing like a, this yellow and [inaudible].

Q: Alright, so are you (p) kind of taking bits of different images and then putting them together? Ok. Ok. Is that something that you've done before?

A: Um, no, not really.

Q: Ok. So what do you (p) will you paint something first and then kind of paint another layer on top? Or do you think you're going to paint a different painting and then maybe cut bits of that out and stick them on to what you started out with? Or the other way round?

A: (laughter) I don't know.

Q: You don't know? You're just going to paint first and then see what happens?

A: I mean -

Q: Right ok, so (pause) and you're just using (p) you're using brown. Was that a brown that you mixed, or was it a brown that we found for you?

A: That was mixed.

Q: That was mixed, ok, but that came out of a brown (p) paint pot. Ok, alright, thank you for talking to me. I hope that you enjoy the rest of the day.

Interview Ten

Interviewer and Student Five (Duration: 2 mins 52 sec)

Q: I don't want to interrupt you too much so I'll try and be quick (pause) ok. Is it ok if I record, is that alright? Whoops.

A: Yes.

Q: I'll move that for a moment to have a quick look at what you've done (long pause). Ok. So you started out doing some experiments?

A: Yeah that was the experiment.

Q: That was the first one, wasn't it? So were any of these techniques new to you? Had you experimented before like this?

A: Yeah, with the comb. How you made that like.

Q: Ok, so did you put the paint on first and then drag it with the comb?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok. So you used the brush and then you used the comb afterwards?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok. That's really interesting (pause) and then, so, um, did you discover anything new about -

A: (Overlap) Erm.

Q: - about paint or had you done -

A: (Overlap) Like.

Q: - stuff like this before?

A: Cos we always in school we used to use brushes we never used like combs, or like toothbrushes or the rollers.

Q: So some of the, some of the tools were new to you? And were you surprised at how any of the shapes and effects came out?

A: Um, yeah cos, um, before you were never like able to do like that sort of different thing.

Q: Yeah.

A: Cos you can't do it with a brush.

Q: Sure, sure. And then you moved on to this one, I think this was the second one, or was it?

A: Um yeah. No that one.

Q: You started that one, didn't you and then you stopped and then you went back to it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, so I mean this one, there's so many different techniques in this. Um, had you ever done a painting like this before?

A: Um (p) no, but the only thing I did do before was the dripping part.

Q: Right, ok.

A: But we used like felt tip pens and then we put water on it.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: To make it drip.

Q: Mmm hmm. So you started out with the brush and then with a comb?

A: Yeah.

Q: And then so, did you get the idea for the face as you were doing it?

A: No, it was supposed to be a face but then it got.

Q: Oh I see, it started out as a face. Ok. And then, so which bits came last? Cos I.

A: The dripping and the splash.

Q: The blue bits on the top, ok. So do you think that you would use, do you think that you'd be able to use any of these effects on work that you're doing today because -

A: (Overlap) Um.

Q: - it looks quite different, it looks much more, er detailed.

A: (Overlap) I used the roller for that bit.

Q: Ah right, ok, and how about the tree? Was that a roller or a sponge, or the roller again?

A: It was a -

Q: (Overlap) A sponge roller?

A: No, it was just splashing the brush.

Q: Ah, ok. Then you used quite a thin brush to get the effects on the, like the twigs and the, ok.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, and then this one, this I thought was quite an intriguing one because, you used um (p) you've used a straw, and stuck it on.

A: Yeah.

Q: Had you worked like that before? Had you stuck -

A: No.

Q: No? Ok, great, ok. Well thank you for talking to me.

A: It's ok.

Interview Eleven

Interviewer and Student Eight (Duration: 2 mins 4 sec)

Q: Would you mind if I record? Is it ok? (Long pause). Ok so you started out with the um these experiments.

A: Yeah.

Q: I mean, I really love these marks. I was trying to work out when I came in this morning and I was looking at the work, how you, how you, got these kind of swirling effects -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - can you remember how you did that?

A: Well, um, I think I used the fan brush and in a way I kind of like swirled it a bit like.

Q: Yep.

A: Like on the end of the brush. Just like that, in a way.

Q: Ah, I see ok.

A: Yeah.

Q: Cos I thought that was really interesting. Um, then obviously you used a comb -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: And other sizes of brush. So I mean was any of this new to you? Did you discover anything do you think about paint doing this or had you kind of worked like this before, have you worked like this before with paint?

A: Oh yeah, I like, I love art, so um, I have in my room little objects such as these, so I've already used these, so it was nothing really different.

Q: Ok, so you've got, it sounds like you've got some experience

A: (Overlap) Yeah

Q: - using different kinds of um materials and tools, for that matter.

A: Mmm.

Q: Tools really, rather than materials, because you're still using paint, but, ok, and then, um, just moving on to what you're doing today. Do you think that, do you think that you're going to use any of the methods that you came up with -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - in the experiments -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - in what you're doing?

A: So I'm from the picture that I took of Stonehenge, what I'm doing now is that I've flipped Stonehenge over.

Q: Ok.

A: What I'm gonna do is I'm gonna (p) with the sponge roller make a little circle to make make little people, like little dots.

Q: Oh right, ok.

A: And there's gonna be a little sign which will be made from the comb saying 'Look Up'.

Q: Fantastic – that's an interesting idea.

A: So it's gonna be like that, yeah.

Q: That's quite imaginative.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you're going to be combining some of the effects you've -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - been experimenting with? Ok that's great. Are you enjoying it?

A: Oh, I definitely am, yeah.

Q: Fantastic. Ok, thank you very much.

Interview Twelve

Interviewer and Student Four (Duration: 4 mins 14 sec)

Q: I just wanted to quickly talk about the um the work that you did yesterday. Um had you used, had you used paint like that before? Maybe in school -

A: (Overlap) Um.

Q: -at all?

A: Not really, just use brushes.

Q: Ok, er, we'll move that slightly just for a moment. Sorry, I know you're working on it. We'll just put this to the side. So, um, you hadn't, had you used combs before, or polystyrene like that?

A: No.

Q: No. And it looks to me like you've used, did you use a roller on this one? No. How did you get those effects, can you remember?

A: Um, that was a really big brush.

Q: Oh, the thick brush, yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok.

A: So I put the paint on the paper first, then I used to reach the brush. That, that was thick brush.

Q: Yeah.

A: Actually no that were thin brush. And then I went over it with a comb.

Q: Oh, so the paint was already on the paper, and then -

A: (Overlap)Yeah.

Q: - you worked on top of it? Ok, ok, that's interesting. And so you, I suppose the next one you did was that one?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, so you, it looks to me like you've used different effects here. That's amazing. How did you get those different colours?

A: Um, on the palette, just my colours, so I dipped part, like, so I dipped the comb into different colours -

Q: (Overlap) Right ok.

A: - without washing it first.

Q: Ah, I see and so you get this kind of rainbow effect.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, so did you find that, did you find that you learnt anything new from working with materials -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - in that way?

A: Like um just.

Q: And could you say what, were you surprised by anything? I mean, by seeing what effects you got?

A: Yeah, I really liked the comb.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was really nice, cos it's not, even if you mix into wrong colours and just leave it like that it was gonna make it block. So if you're tryin' to get like a mixed effect, like not just one block colour, it will be really different.

Q: That's really interesting.

A: And yeah.

Q: Ok. And so do you think that um you could use any of these techniques in other paintings? I mean, I don't know, just move on to the one that you're working on now (p). Have you, are you using any of these, any of the ways you did the experiments yesterday?

A: Um.

Q: Are you using any of those techniques today, or? It looks to me like you're using quite dry, is it quite dry, the paint you're using? Or are you mixing it with a bit of water?

A: Um, it's quite dry.

Q: Yeah, ok. And you're working, you're working from a?

A: From a book. And just photograph. So I'm mixing the book, the picture and the book, just a picture on the paper. Sort of mixing the whole picture together.

Q: Which photograph? This one?

A: This one, yeah. So it's like um so like the trees and they're all, the trees are like um (p) really just dark and stuff -

Q: (Overlap) Ok.

A: - so I'm putting them as a background.

Q: Oh I see, ok.

A: And the middle's gonna be really cheerful.

Q: You're combining the two, that's interesting.

A: Yeah.

Q: And so do you think that you're going to make changes from, because this painting looks like it's been made with lots of dots.

A: Yeah.

Q: Which is a particular technique -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - that some painters used, um, do you think you're going to try to kind of get it to look like that -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - or are you going to try and do it in your own way?

A: Yeah, and also this bit cos it's just like it's not done [inaudible] so I'm tryin' to do the whole thing, using the whole dot thing.

Q: Ok.

A: So yeah.

Q: Ok. So are you making any changes to the picture? Apart from the trees that you've put in, you're using the house obviously.

A: Yeah, like instead of the fence (pause) there's like a little.

Q: Yeah, there's a fence, yeah, yeah.

A: (Overlap) There's a little fence there -

Q: (Overlap) Mmm hmm.

A: - instead of putting the fence in I'm gonna put a little bush.

Q: Ok.

A: So it can just be like surrounding the whole thing. I'm gonna make the lake really dark.

Q: Mmm hmm.

A: Even though it's bright and everything (p) or I can make it really bright and have like dark flowers in there, I'm not sure yet.

Q: Ok.

A: And yeah (p) add more trees in as well.

Q: That's really interesting (pause) and this one it looks like you've used, you've copied something from one of the imag -, pictures that we gave out -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: But then you used, er, how did you get this effect?

A: Dripped it.

Q: Ok.

A: So I put the paint on top and then I carried on adding more paint on top, so it carried on dripping.

Q: That's really interesting. I quite like that, because the lines that you've got dripping down –

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - kind of correspond with the lines that you painted with the brush.

A: Yeah. And then that's just a splash.

Q: Yeah (p) great, fantastic. Ok well, I'll give these back to you and maybe if you were to hang on to them and if maybe if you leave them in a pile maybe at the end. That's great. Thank you very much. Thank you for talking to me.

Interview Thirteen

Interviewer and Student Seven (Duration: 1 min 46 sec)

Q: So um if we could have a look at what you did yesterday. I mean (p) lots of different um marks, lots of different techniques that you've used. Have you worked like this before? Is this something that you've done before perhaps?

A: No I haven't done it before, it's something new.

Q: It's something new. And did you feel that you sort of um discovered anything new about how paint, about what paint can do, when you sort of experiment with it?

A: I did when I used different tools to make different effects. That's what I learnt which was new.

Q: Good. That's good. Ok. I mean this looks more um (p) this looks more sort of chaotic but there's lots of different techniques going on. And here it seems like you've got, you've used a roller perhaps -

A: (Overlap) Mmm.

Q: - but on top you've sort of used a brush in a particular way. I mean I think that's really interesting. Could you say something about how you made that decision, why you, because it looks like you've started out with that and then you've, over the top you've

sort of, gone across with this white. Was that something you had in mind or something that just occurred to you as you went along?

A: It just occurred to me.

Q: Yeah. To me these look like they could be the beginning of blossoms or something on a tree (p) that's really interesting. And then this obviously was, it looks to me like you've dragged and scraped the paint and you've used the sponge roller again. Um, do you think that you're going to be using, I mean looking at what you're working on now (p) do you think that you're going to use any of the techniques that you've experimented with in the new, in the new painting?

A: Probably yes, I'll choose the comb and the roller as well to make kind of effects yeah.

Q: Ok. And what about, could you say something about the idea for the painting? Is it just something out of your imagination?

A: Um yeah.

Q: Ok. Thank you very much for talking to me. And I look forward to -

Interviews 14-17: conducted April 9th 2013

Interview Fourteen

Interviewer and Student One (Duration: 2 min 6 sec)

Q: Ok, I don't want to interrupt you too much, but I was just really intrigued about how you made some of your decisions in putting these different um bits together. Could you just say how (p) where you got each element from, if you can remember? Was it from your imagination?

A: Um well I got them from the magazines and I basically traced the um the outline and I edited some parts and um I kind of made like a collage cos I liked that idea that we talked about last (p) time.

Q: Last Thursday, yep.

A: Yes.

Q: Ok, and so um it looks to me like you've got, um I don't know, it looks like you've got an interior but it's sort of an exterior at the same time. Is that right?

A: Um yeah. Cos I have this interest in like, what I put my interest like architecture into it cos I find them interesting so I decided to put that (p) as like to inspire my work

Q: Ok that's interesting. So do you think that using the collaging technique that Hannah was talking about, um do you think that gives you the opportunity to be more imaginative?

A: I guess, cos it's like she said it's like entering your own world. And (p) yeah, so.

Q: So, do you feel that what you're working on, is it something, is it a world that kind of um comes out of your imagination or is it something that you may have sort of remembered or seen before?

A: Um, no, mostly like um you've entered into that world, and it's like (pause) like become more realistic, you know.

Q: Ah, ok, ok. So I suppose, do you find that as you're working, as you're going along, that more ideas are occurring to you, or did you have an idea from the beginning about which bits would fit together in which ways?

A: Yeah, I get more ideas like from other people like when I watch them do work and it just gives me an idea.

Q: Mmm hmm.

A: To add on to mine.

Q: Oh, I see, ok, so have you had a chance to have a look at what other people are doing?

A: Um, yes, I have.

Q: Yeah? Yeah ok, fantastic. Well, I won't keep you, thank you for talking to me.

Interview Fifteen

Interviewer and Student Eight (Duration: 2 min 27 sec)

Q: Ok, I don't want to hold you up too long, I just want to ask you about, about the different kind of techniques you've used here, cos I notice that you've used um as well as a paintbrush, you've used I think a sponge to get this effect.

A: Yeah, so for the red um I used a roller.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then for the green [inaudible] the fan brush and the comb.

Q: Ok.

A: Yeah, to create different kind of colours of the grass.

Q: Sure. Ok, so I mean it seems like a very imaginative ide -, um sort of scene -

A: (Overlap) Mmm.

Q: - cos obviously Stonehenge has been inverted and it's not really where it should be, so.

A: Yeah.

Q: What gave you the idea for that?

A: Um, I thought it was just like um rather than just drawing out like the picture I brought in, I thought maybe just be a bit more imaginative, more creative -

Q: (Overlap) Yeah.

A: - to make it more like Stonehenge, but more [inaudible] it's a bit weird upside down in the sky.

Q: Ok. And do you think that um, I mean I'm just guessing, I don't know what you think, but do you think, that Hannah's presentation about collaging techniques in painting has (p) sort of influenced you at all?

A: Yeah, it was sort of an influence to me to do this. Yes she really helped me out to create this.

Q: Good, ok.

A: Yeah.

Q: And the use of materials, I think you said that you'd already experimented with different sort of objects at home and you'd had some experience in using different materials, do you think that the way that we've been working um in the sessions has sort of influenced your piece?

A: Yeah, it has um like, yeah, um (p) at home I have a different way, but like here, like a different way of painting (p), this is like a sunset, all that, the sessions have been really helpful to, for me to understand more about the marks to use for paintings so, this is really, this whole thing has helped me to create this, like yeah.

Q: That's good. So I mean maybe it's a bit of a funny question, but do you think that you would have made something like this if you hadn't, if we hadn't discussed different ways of working?

A: Um, I don't think, if the information that you gave me, I don't, without it I don't think I'd be able to create this -

Q: (Overlap) Ok, ok.

A: - if that makes sense. So yeah this really helped me.

Q: Brilliant, ok, thanks for talking to me.

Interview Sixteen

Interviewer and Student Ten (Duration: 1 min 54 sec)

Q: So you're carrying on from um Thursday's session.

A: Yeah.

Q: And I can see you've used different techniques there, you've got, um you've used a brush for quite a few different areas, and you've used a -

A: Yeah, I used the comb for the sky.

Q: Do you think that um Hannah's presentation on collaging techniques has influenced what you've done?

A: Yeah, because in this painting I've kind of like put two different scenes like of city and er countryside. And I think it's influenced me to like put more different stuff together.

Q: Yeah, ok, and do you think that that approach would it um (p) how can I put it? Do you think that it gives you more of a chance to be imaginative, using the collage technique, or?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: Cos you can put anything together and it's much more [inaudible].

Q: Yeah, mmh hmm. And just to go back one more time to the mark-making, I mean, do you think that was useful, trying out different brushes and different application tools?

A: Yeah, that was really useful cos I used a number of different ways, like the toothbrush and then (p) I can't remember what it's called.

Q: So I suppose there are two things going on, you've got the collaging technique and you've also got the different, different sort of tools that you're using to create different effects.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok that's interesting. Do you know, do you know sort of what way, do you know how it's going to develop at all?

A: No, I kind of, I'm just kind of going along with it, whatever I see I'll just do. Cos I don't have like a plan for it really.

Q: Ok that's interesting. So do you find that's enjoyable?

A: Yeah.

Q: Not quite knowing how it's going to turn out?

A: Yeah, it's really enjoyable cos you don't know how it will turn out, so.

Q: Ok, thank you.

Interview Seventeen

Interviewer and Student Four (Duration: 1 min 48 sec)

Q: [inaudible] the most recent things that you've done, because you did the piece where you got all the different colours and you mixed them together and you used, was it the end of the paintbrush that you used -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - to scrape into it? Yeah, so that's a very different approach. Then you've moved on to doing something else. Um so was this influenced by the thing that I showed with the stencil?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok. So do you think that um this is something that you could – because this is an abstract painting, I suppose, do you think it's something you could then develop into something else?

A: Yeah.

(Another student interrupts to ask to borrow something from the student participating in the interview)

A: Yeah, sure. You can have it, it's not mine!

Q: Have you thought about um how you might do that? Because you've got some, you've still got some white spaces here, um.

A: So if I could have like a background like that

Q: Ok.

A: And say a white bit in the middle. Like a silhouette.

Q: Yep.

A: Of whatever it is that I want to paint or draw.

Q: Ok, so would you be painting on top of this, do you think you'd be painting recognizable things or would they still be sort of just shapes?

A: I think it would probably be recognizable things.

Q: Yeah

A: Just so they stand out cos the whole thing's abstract, so if you have one thing that's really recognizable it will just clash I think.

Q: Ok. Well I think it's quite exciting, cos you've got lots of -

(Student interrupts interviewer with inaudible request)

Q: (Responding to student) Yes you can, of course you can. (Returning to interviewee) It's, yeah, you've got lots of different colours. Ok well I look forward to seeing how this develops. So you are thinking of working into it, yeah? Of carrying on with it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, great. So you've used one, you used was it two stencils or more than one? Or more than two, sorry.

A: I used (p) four.

Q: Four? Great, I look forward to seeing how that develops. Thank you.

A: Thanks.

Interviews 18-21: conducted April 11th 2013

Interview Eighteen

Interviewer and Student Four (Duration: 3 min 16 sec)

Q: Ok I just wanted to ask you about the piece you're working on at the moment. Can we have a quick look? So that's actually, that's actually kind of mid-drip, isn't it? And so you've used those drips. Ok, so can you quickly explain to me how you got these effects?

A: Um, the ones, the colours in the background, I got from using a stencil. I used um yeah. For the background I used two which is like the triangle one.

Q: Yeah.

A: And this one.

Q: Right.

A: And then I used two different ones um but instead of painting in, I cut, I used the shapes which I cut out, instead of the paper that was left.

Q: Oh I see, ok.

A: And painted around it to get the shape.

Q: Mmm-hmm.

A: And see, like this.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then, I used another stencil (p) but made it really dark so it stands out and put it in the middle. And then dripped black paint.

Q: So, and the stencil in the middle was the shape of a figure?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. So is there, it looks to me like there's something going on here, that something's happening. Do you have an idea in your mind of what the picture's about or is it?

A: No. It's just stuck together, yeah.

Q: So how did you, what made you think to do the figure in the middle?

A: I don't really know, like I don't really know what to do, so I'll just like do a figure, it's easier.

Q: Yep.

A: I thought I'd do that.

Q: Ok. Do you think that using the stencil and using, layering up the images in the way that you've been doing, do you think that it has helped you to think about how to make paintings?

A: Yeah.

Q: Has it given you more ideas? Could you say why?

A: Just, um, just watching the changing colours, layering. So if you could have a, like say a ground and (p) paint something on top of it, it would [inaudible].

Q: Ok, so, I suppose it gives you ideas as you go along?

A: Yeah.

Q: I suppose the difficult bit is being patient enough for each layer to dry -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - before you start again? Do you think you're going to do anything more on this?

A: I think I'll just finish the middle bit. Um (p) and then yeah, that's it, I think.

Q: Yeah? Ok. And this one yesterday that you were working on I noticed that you -

A: (Overlap) I messed up a bit at the end (laughs).

Q: - this is really interesting, what, because you've used a paintbrush to kind of draw on top of it. So what gave you that idea? I think I asked you yesterday but I can't remember what you said. Had you done that before?

A: No.

Q: No. Cos I noticed that obviously you've got different colours running through it, so, where you've drawn on different parts you've got different colours showing through.

A: Yea, cos um. I used the roller (p) I used the roller on my palette. I put the roller onto all my colours.

Q: Ok

A: So when I um did it, it sort of some of it mixed and some of it just stayed there.

Q: Right right right, that's really interesting.

A: So it gave different colours and then I did it more and then all the colours started mixing together to make this like really ugly brown, I didn't like that.

Q: Mmm mmm.

A: So yeah.

Q: Yeah, ok. That's interesting. Ok. And do you know what you're going to do next? Cos you've got, we've got some more, a bit more time left this afternoon.

A: Just finish this off.

Q: Maybe, one thing that you could do, cos, if you want to, is maybe think about how you could use this technique on that if you wanted to.

A: Yeah.

Q: That could be quite interesting, you've already got a few layers on there, but this would be like a further dimension if it was something you wanted to try.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, thanks very much.

Interview Nineteen

Interviewer and Student Six (Duration: 3 min 4 sec)

Q: The reason I'm asking is that I noticed that you (p) it was really interesting to me when you started on this, because you had some specific ideas and then you stopped and then you started doing something else. And now you've come back to it. So I just wanted to ask you how you work, how the image, or how the ideas for the image came to you.

A: Um (pause) for this?

Q: Yes.

A: Er (pause) I don't know, I'm just like changing.

Q: Cos you're using Sarah Morris' um abstract piece, but you've combined it into a sort of landscape of your own, was that something -

A: (Overlap) Er.

Q: - you'd copied from somewhere?

A: That was from another picture, yeah.

Q: Ok, ok. So basically it seems like you're combining different elements together. And so the question I wanted to ask is, do you have an idea in your mind of what it's going to end up looking like?

A: Er, yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: Er (pause) the drawing will continue (p) across the top.

Q: The top, yeah. Any thoughts on how you're going to work on the other part?

A: Er, I might add more detail to the house.

Q: Yeah? Have you thought maybe about, you could if you wanted to, I'm not suggesting it, if you wanted to, you could use some of the other techniques that we've been working with, maybe stenciling or even cutting out of other pieces that have been done (pause) ok, and so, do you think that what we've been looking at in the last few days, would you say that it's helped you to paint, or has it confused things? What would you say?

A: Um, I think it's helped, yeah.

Q: So do you think it's kind of helped maybe in terms of being more imaginative, or ?

A: Yeah.

Q: Could you kind of say why, or?

A: (Laughter) Well, yeah, cos you can use like different, rather than just painting you can just like use, um, stenciling and.

Q: Sure, sure. So do you think that those are things (p) that other ideas could come out of, or, by trying them out? Or when you start a painting do you have a definite idea in your mind of what you want it to be like? Or a bit of both?

A: Er, sorry?

Q: When you start doing something, do you have a definite idea in your mind of how you'd like it to end up?

A: Um, I think yeah, but it might change.

Q: Ok, and do you think that using any of the techniques that we've been working with, do you think those are things that could help it to change, or would you only use splattering or rolling or stenciling if you actually needed to get a particular effect?

A: Um.

Q: I mean it's, the way I work is that I'm quite free when I begin, and then when, using different materials the ideas come to me as I work.

A: Yeah.

Q: I'm not someone who starts, usually, I'm not someone who starts out with a definite idea, I'm quite happy I just see how it goes.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, alright, I'll let you get on. Thank you for talking to me.

Interview Twenty

Interviewer and Student Seven (Duration: 2 min 14 sec)

Q: I was really interested when I saw you er using (p) using the paintbrush like that, because you'd obviously found that if you use the edge you can make certain effects. So have you, have you worked with the brush like that before? Is that something you've tried out before?

A: No, I haven't done something like that before.

Q: Ok, and so, um, was it something that just happened by chance as you were working, or?

A: Um it happened by chance.

Q: Yeah, so you didn't, I suppose you didn't, well, I should ask you really, did you give it much thought before you started doing it, or did it just happen and you thought, 'Ah, that's a good effect and I'll use it to make shapes'?

A: It just happened. I just thought it was nice. Two different colours and things to kind of give it effect.

Q: And I notice that you've kind of, you've layered it cos underneath you've got some sort of, they look to me like flower shapes, but they're much, they're much lighter, then over the top you've done some darker ones. Do you think, and I think underneath you've used um, you've used one of the, did you use the same brush to get the effect underneath?

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, so. I suppose my question is, do you think that working like this helps you to be more imaginative in the work that you do? Or does it suggest possibilities that you wouldn't have thought of otherwise?

A: I think it allows you to be more imaginative because you can use the same tool but in different ways, which gives you different effects.

Q: That's, yeah, that's interesting. And so is it something that, working like this, is it enjoyable? Do you find that ideas come to you as you go along?

A: Yes, I find it very enjoyable.

Q: Good, ok. And do you think that you're maybe going to use that technique on something else today? Or?

A: Hopefully, yeah.

Q: Yeah, ok. Um (p) what else did I want to ask? Yes, and so the work that you did yesterday, um I think, well not yesterday, on Tuesday, I think you were using a piece of canvas I think. Had you used canvas before?

A: No.

Q: No. How did you, what was it like? How did you find, how did you find it as a surface to work on?

A: I found it kind of quite a rough surface (p) like it could contain more paint than a different kind of paper.

Q: Great, ok, I'll let you get on. Thank you.

Interview Twenty One

Interviewer and Student Fourteen (Duration: 2 min 30 sec)

Q: So I was just really intrigued by how you got that effect. How did you do that?

A: Um, well I used this brush and I kind of just did this and then I lightly touched it down like that like parallel to the people -

Q: (Overlap) Ok.

A: - so I.

Q: So, it was, was the paint quite dry?

A: Um, no, I just used the, so I hadn't added any water to it.

Q: Ok. And I suppose the thing I'd like to ask you is, working, have you worked like this before?

A: Er no.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: Ok, so it's a new experience?

A: Yes.

Q: So do you think that that's something you could develop into something else? Does it suggest anything to you? Are you just enjoying the process?

A: Um, well I knew I had not very much time left so I decided to go for something abstract. But I suppose I could develop it into something else, um.

Q: Do you think that technique's particularly useful in painting certain kinds of things?

A: Um, yeah, maybe, like (p) sometimes suggest to me that this is a really abstract cloud, and sort of like rain, rain coming down here.

Q: Mmm hmm. Ok.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ok, and the work you did earlier on, with, where you've put tracing paper over the painting that you made um last week -

A: (Overlap) Yeah.

Q: - in the last session. What gave you that idea?

A: Um, well I thought I could have like, um, the one with birds?

Q: Yeah.

A: I thought I'd have like, kind of birds in the (p) say I would layer the tracing paper so I would have like sort of a perspective of birds in the distance because some would seem lighter cos of the tracing paper on top.

Q: Ok (p) ok, that's interesting. So what was it that gave you the idea for the tracing paper?

A: Um, well I just saw someone taking a piece of tracing paper, and I thought, well, I might try it, so, just -

Q: Yeah and are you pleased with the effect that you got? Do you think you've achieved the effect that you wanted to achieve?

A: Umm, yeah. I think, I think so, I couldn't really have done anything else.

Q: Good, ok. Is it something you would ever think about using again?

A: Yeah, perhaps, cos I used it on my other splattering piece, so I smudged the splatters to make a kind of merging of colours effect and then, like.

Q: That's interesting. So are you, with the splatter piece, are you thinking of putting one on top of the other? Is that the idea?

A: Yeah, I did that.

Q: Ok, I look forward to having a proper look at it. Ok, I think we're going to have to stop now, but thank you for talking to me.