



**Universitat de les  
Illes Balears**

# **CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE PAINTING**

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Doctorado en Historia del Arte



I, Natasha Elizabeth Alana Hall confirm  
that the work presented in this thesis is my own.  
Where information has been derived from other sources,  
I can confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Natasha Hall". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some overlapping letters.

Natasha Elizabeth Alana Hall 31.05.17



*Thank you:*

*To my supervisor Dr Catalina Cantarellas Camps who has kindly supported me  
with the completion of this thesis on the cusp of her retirement.*

*To the many artists and academics, whose investigations who have paved the  
way to this Phd, especially Leonardo, Ray, Kiefer, Richter, Hockney, Tyson,  
Benjamin, Kristeva, Friedrich, Lanyon et al.*

*To my children Kiran and Innes, who are my enduring inspiration, who have  
grounded me in the present whilst giving me a glimpse into the future.*

*To my many friends, old, new and recently rediscovered, who have shared  
the journey and encouraged me to reach for the seemingly impossible.*

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...*

*....but the best is yet to come.*



**Abstract:** *Contemporary Landscape is explored through a vast array of disciplines that playfully interact with a variety of nationally and internationally recognised artists to express the essential interconnectedness of the contemporary world. Academic research is presented from an interdisciplinary perspective spanning the Arts and Sciences to include a diversity of interpretations from geography, geology, climate change, landscape evolution, philosophy, history, art history etc.. Confronting the abject reality of history links the philosophies of Kristeva, Benjamin and Baudrillard to the work of Kiefer, Richter, Mason, Tapies, Ray, Tyson, Hockney and Mehretu to express Landscape painting as a palimpsest that evocatively whispers the ghostly confluence of multiple realities as a metaphor for the interlinked reality of the contemporary age. By embracing painting as a science, using the processes of nature to create the works and facilitate inventive interconnections, Landscapes can become truly contemporary in their expression.*

**Resum:** *El paisatge contemporani s'explora a través d'una àmplia gamma de disciplines que interactuen de manera lúdica amb una varietat d'artistes reconeguts a nivell nacional i internacional per expressar la interconnexió essencial del món contemporani. La investigació acadèmica es presenta des d'una perspectiva interdisciplinària que abasta les arts i les ciències per incloure una diversitat d'interpretacions de la geografia, la geologia, el canvi climàtic, l'evolució del paisatge, la filosofia, la història, la història de l'art, etc .. Davant la realitat absoluta de la història uneix les filosofies de Kristeva , Benjamí i Baudrillard a l'obra de Kiefer, Richter, Mason, Tàpies, Ray, Tyson, Hockney i Mehretu per expressar la pintura del paisatge com a palimpsest que xiuxiueja evocadorament la confluència fantasmal de múltiples realitats com una metàfora de la realitat interconnectada de l'edat contemporània. En abraçar la pintura com una ciència, l'ús dels processos de la natura per crear les obres i facilitar les interconnexions inventives, els paisatges poden arribar a ser veritablement contemporanis en la seva expressió.*

**Resumen:** *El paisaje contemporáneo se explora a través de una amplia gama de disciplinas que interactúan de manera lúdica con una variedad de artistas reconocidos al nivel nacional e internacional, para expresar la interconexión esencial del mundo contemporáneo. La investigación académica se presenta desde una perspectiva interdisciplinaria que abarca las artes y las ciencias que incluye una diversidad de interpretaciones de la geografía, la geología, el cambio climático, la evolución del paisaje, la filosofía, la historia, la historia del arte etc .. Confrontando la abyecta realidad de la history y uniendo las filosofías de Kristeva , Benjamin y Baudrillard a la obra de Kiefer, Richter, Mason, Tapies, Ray, Tyson, Hockney y Mehretu para expresar la pintura de paisaje como un palimpsesto que susurra evocadora la fantasmagórica confluencia de múltiples realidades como metáfora de la realidad interrelacionada de la época contemporánea . Al abrazar la pintura como ciencia, utilizando los procesos de la naturaleza para crear las obras y facilitar las interconexiones inventivas, los Paisajes pueden llegar a ser verdaderamente contemporáneos en su expresión.*



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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 The purpose

Landscape painting is often considered a traditional genre of painting that can be quite old fashioned, and this thesis endeavours to explore the great potential it has to be of considerable importance within Contemporary Art. There are numerous international artists presented in this thesis who explore contemporary Landscape painting within their creative process from a variety of perspectives. Through the act of collating contemporary Landscape paintings whilst researching interdisciplinary connections and conceptual threads of

significance within the works and the processes of their creation, the thesis seeks to express the importance of the Landscape genre as potentially the ultimate expression of the Contemporary.

## **1.2 A unique perspective**

This thesis has an extremely unique and multidisciplinary perspective on Contemporary Landscape Painting, as informed from the domains of both the Arts and Sciences, that can be described as an interdisciplinary appraisal of landscape exploring the liminal zone between a multitude of disciplines.

The geographers Downey, Kinane and Parker (2016) describe the interdisciplinary nature of liminality as crossing the multiple disciplines of human geography, literary studies, cultural studies, textual studies, film studies, cultural geography, migrant studies, memory studies, trauma studies, urban studies, religious studies and economics.’<sup>1</sup> This thesis extends the study of liminality into an analysis of Landscape from the perspective of a multitude of disciplines.

The spatial dimensions of liminality can refer to specific places, themes or events whilst exploring the contemporary reality of Landscape as a hybrid space of the virtually real and the actually real. The breaking of traditional distinctions of time and space in the analysis of Landscape facilitate exploration of the fluid nature of the fundamentally interconnected postmodern reality of simultaneous presence. That the contemporary artists and the artworks contemplated reflect the individual artists training, experiences, knowledge and fears, and the nature of the liminal world in which they reside. The study of

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<sup>1</sup> Downey, D. Kinane, I. & Parker, E. Eds. (2016), digital reference 29.3 of 613.

Climate Change has become one of the most important sciences in recent years, especially focusing on global warming resulting from observed or projected increases in global surface temperature resulting from anthropogenic emissions. Thomas (2016) describes how 'appreciating the variability inherent in our climate system is becoming increasingly critical to both understanding the growth and decline of past human civilisations and, indeed, other species on this planet, as well as the formulation of future public policing regarding all elements of human life'<sup>2</sup>

The Lisbon Earthquake in 1755 measured 8.5-9 on the Moment magnitude scale and was located 200km offshore at 36°N 11°W, causing a tsunami to arrive ashore 40 minutes later, destroying 85% of the buildings in Lisbon, with fires raging for five days where the waves of the tsunami did not reach. It caused up to 100,000 deaths and affected Spain and Morocco, in addition to Portugal. It was considered a genuine cataclysm which had lasting impacts on European philosophy and science. Thomassen (2016) described that 'as a natural event the Lisbon earthquake was a unique phenomenon, unprecedented and unrepeatable; as a large-scale liminal moment it had a widespread effect through the manifold reflections it provoked. In this cognitive and meaning-forming elaboration, it was transformed from a brutal fact to a complex cultural sign, redirecting material and mental processes in Europe and merging with the complex contemporary scientific and political developments that secured its long-term relevance.'<sup>3</sup> The philosopher Kant questioned how trust could be recuperated in science in the aftermath of such a cataclysm. Pivotal moments of crisis can be said to have inspired philosophical

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<sup>2</sup> Thomas, D. Ed. (2016), digital reference 508.9 of 2714.

<sup>3</sup> Thomassen, B. (2016), digital reference 333.5 of 796.

developments, and the political theorist 'Voegelin was particularly interested in human experiences during crisis periods, where the taken-for-granted order of the world ceased to exist. He therefore focused upon the ways in which individual thinkers lived through a certain period, attempting to make sense of their experiences, searching for ways out of the crisis. '4 Voegelin 'emphasised that most key figures in political thought had endured particularly stressful conditions of wars, civil wars, or invasions, arguing that 'symbols' are 'engendered by experiences''. As this can also be true for many of the thinkers that have inspired the painters within this thesis, the analysis of axial moments of collective trauma, such as the affect of disasters such as the Lisbon earthquake on the development of the philosophy of Kant, and its connection with the current, fundamentally pivotal moments of contemporary history, such as the 2WW and 9/11, which are within the timeframe of this thesis. This research builds on and can be said to contribute to Geographies of Memory by considering how memories of disasters, climate fluctuations and other traumatic events destabilise a sense of belonging. McKinnon *et al.* (2016) considers the intersection of space, identity and memory that draw on sites of memory<sup>5</sup>, and an intention of this thesis is to explore the creative response of Contemporary artists to collective trauma.

The study of Landscape could be said to have already been explored *ad nauseum*, a Latin term translated as something that has been discussed repeatedly to the point of nausea. From this brief introduction, and from the subsequent multitude of perspectives that will be presented in the following chapters, it is clear that there is an extensive literature review preceding this

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<sup>4</sup> Thomassen, B. (2016), digital reference 36.9 of 796.

<sup>5</sup> McKinnon, S. *et al.* (2016), p1120 -1139.



## 1.3 Chapter summaries

The influence of the cataclysmic Lisbon Earthquake on the philosophy of Kant, and the affect of other eruptions on the painters and philosophers of the last 1000 years included in this thesis are brought together in Figure 1 to express the timeframe of the thesis. The philosophers and artists are positioned relative to climatic fluctuations of the Medieval Warm Period (MWP) and the Little Ice Age (LIA), which is discussed further within the subsequent chapters, and in more depth in chapter 3. The timeframes covered by each chapter are shown on the left of the infographic, and can be seen to become more specifically focused on the realm of the contemporary as the reader progresses through the thesis. The methodology of chapter two presents the research questions proposed by the study, essentially emphasising the importance of a reflexive approach to the qualitative research process. By presenting the thought and consideration that has gone into the selection of the explored artists to the research process, it contradicts the traditionally authoritarian process typical of academic research, and offers an alternative approach to the exploration of interdisciplinary investigations. Chapters 3 and 4 have been structured to be historical in nature both through the choice of artists and the selected works of art. Chapter 3 can be described as fundamentally a literature review of traditional Landscape painting as differentiated with a postmodern realist perspective, that introduces themes, concepts and artists of importance such as Leonardo, Wright and Friedrich. Leonardo is presented as a multidisciplinary artist who was non-domain specific, in parallel to the contemporary artists selected for inclusion according to the criteria discussed in the methodology of Chapter 2. In addition, he is shown to respond to the climatic instability of the LIA shown in figure 1.

Whilst Chapter 4 initially investigates the development of abstracted Landscape through an exploration of the creative process of Mondrian, with a brief reference to Miró, and continues to question the quandary of containment and explore the inherent complexity of landscape. A sense of place is represented as the expression of geographical knowledge within the works of Lanyon, and the paintings and creative process of Hockney are contextualised as expressing the vastness of geological time back to a time before the creation of complex life on earth, as the perfect example of the importance of landscape painting in a contemporary context.

For the subsequent Chapters concerned primarily with contemporary artists and their works of art, yet within a contemporary timeframe, the choice of their location within the thesis follows concepts and threads of discussion rather than connection to a timeline of creation. The conceptual nature of contemporary landscape and the creative process of Mehretu is the focus of Chapter 5. Mehretu's *Grey Area* exhibition in 2010 at the Guggenheim in New York was an astounding example of the scale, complexity and profundity of her works and their connections to the genre of Landscape. The fundamentally interconnected and multidisciplinary nature of her works is discussed alongside the philosophy of Walter Benjamin and Kristeva, to contextualise their contemporary significance. Chapter 6 explores the nature of scientific Landscape as an extension of the unity between the arts and the sciences initiated by Leonardo, and continued into the contemporary present through the works of Tyson, including his exhibition in 2017.

The perception of Landscape as expressed by Kiefer is examined in Chapter 7 as the expression of pure physicality through fundamental layers of historical and scientific significance. The philosophical dimension to the artists creative process is apparent and by exploring the nature of the past in the present, issues of historic scars of conflict and cultural trauma are contextualised within his work.

The deconstruction of Landscape within the creative process of Ray is presented in Chapter 8, and can be considered as a retrospective appraisal of the artists response to his personal historical narrative. The importance of Tapies and a shared fear of war contextualises the artists early experiences as a child surviving the bombing of London during the Second World War, seeing his skeletal structure as a result of his military service on Christmas Island during nuclear testing, and experiencing the collective trauma of 9/11 and its resultant affect on his creative output. Richter's work is described as transcending Landscape within Chapter 9 through the context of the *blur*, his *overpaintings* and ultimately his *strip paintings*.

Chapter 10 is a concise chapter concerned with the paintings of Mason, which seem to be playful and enticing, but in-depth contemplation and investigation reveals a deeper darkness. Sweeping conclusions and interconnected threads of significance are examined within the conclusion of Chapter 11.

The details of the images are clearly shown in Chapter 12, and a clear bibliography in Chapter 13. The final Chapter consists of an Appendix of texts. Those in Appendix 1 were given to the author by Ray in 2012 and have direct

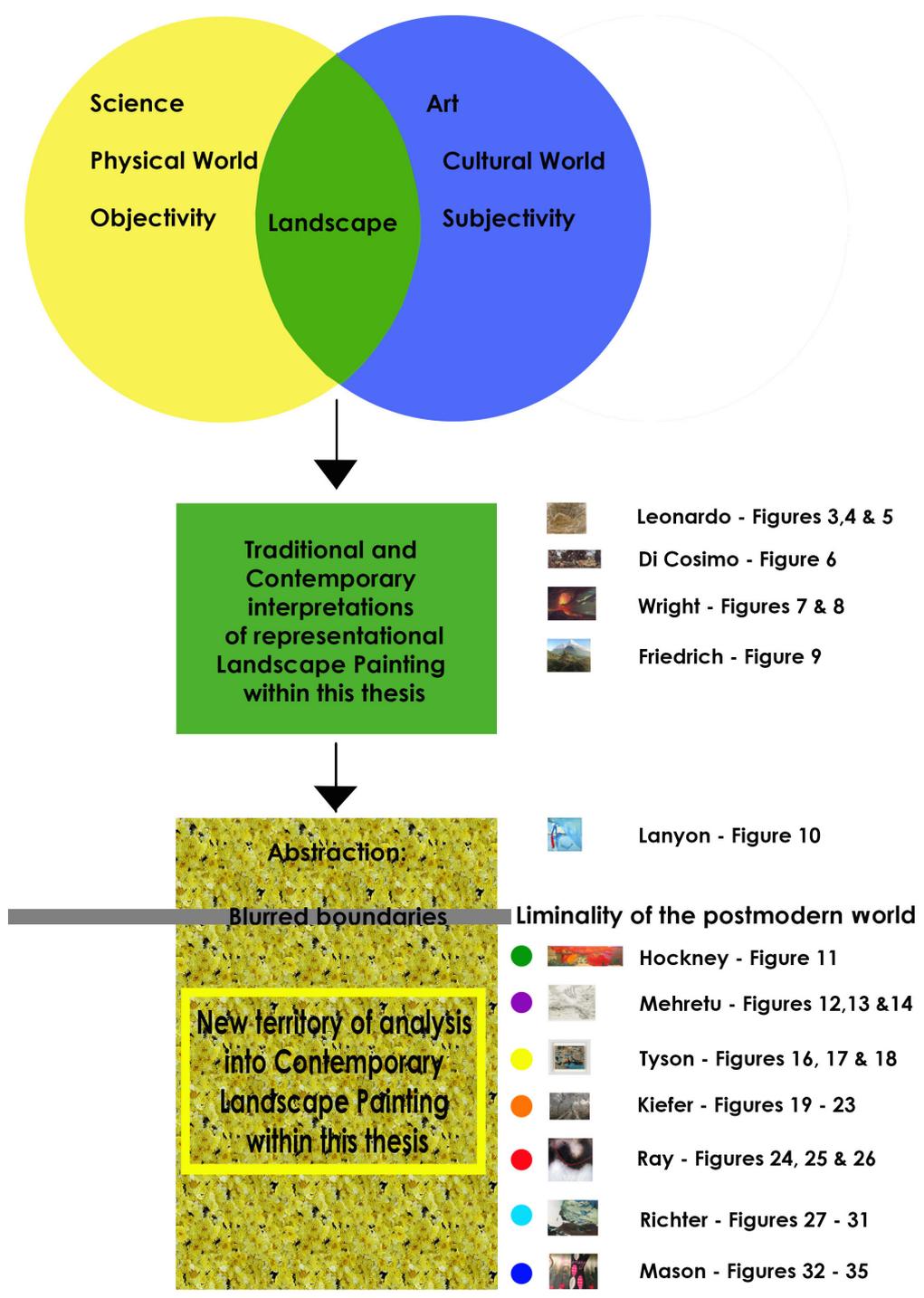
relevance to the themes discussed in chapter 8. Appendix 2 contains an appraisal by Nekane Aramburu, the director of the Es Baluard Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, who commissioned and curated a solo exhibition entitled *Logbook* (2014-5) which outlines her perspective of the creative process of the author as an Artist and Geographer. Appendix 3 contains press reviews and online links to a work of video art created by the author and entitled *Logbook*, which was inspired by the process of researching this thesis. The variety and diversity of the individual chapters of this thesis express the enormity of the Landscape genre whilst offering evidence for a new, multidisciplinary interpretation of Landscape painting.

# Methodology

## 2.1 In the beginning

This thesis can be described as a qualitative study concerned with investigating contemporary Landscape painting as informed by an analysis of the culture, history and inherent nature of the artists who created them. Academic research has traditionally had an impersonal, authoritarian perspective that has served to distance the researcher from the research. This thesis takes a more post-modern perspective of exploring interdisciplinary interconnections, which results in a more relaxed methodology which is more focused on a reflexive research style.

Figure two clearly positions the new territory of analysis into Contemporary Landscape Painting of this thesis, as evidently exceeding previous studies and markedly distinguishing it from other multidisciplinary investigations.



**Figure 2: Diagram illustrating the novelty of this thesis with reference to the artists and artworks included in the index of figures, with the selected artists colour coded as in figures 37, 38 and 39.**

The yellow circle of science represents direct interpretation of the physical world through objective, quantitative information, which overlaps with a blue circle symbolising an artistic, subjective, qualitative and culturally aesthetic interpretation of the world. The resultant green *vesica piscis*, a latin word describing the intersection of two disks with the same radius, intersecting so that the centre of each disk lies on the perimeter of the other, represents the domain of Landscape. Atik *et al.* (2017) describe how a landscape can be objectively evaluated through biophysical layers of information ascertained through using a Global Information System (GIS), whilst the subjective evaluation of a landscape can be informed by an appraisal of the interactions between humans and nature<sup>6</sup>. The perspective of direct representation has been historically explored within the interpretation of traditional Landscape Painting, and is explored further within Chapter 3. Abstraction, as explored within chapter 4 and beyond, can be interpreted as acknowledging the liminal nature of the postmodern world as blurring boundaries between the real, historical and virtual nature of the experience of Landscape. Subjectivity can be described as a 'continual process of negotiation with space, of attempting to locate and reassure one's self of one's limits and to confirm the place of reality'<sup>7</sup>, ever increasingly so within the increasingly mobile and fluid age whereby geographical distance is no longer an impediment to international communication and movement. It is hypothesised that the grey blurred boundary in Figure 2 symbolises the threshold into a new domain of Landscape, representing the liminality of the postmodern world. Therefore, it can be proposed that an exploration of multidimensional Landscape painting,

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<sup>6</sup> Atik, M. *et al.* (2017)

<sup>7</sup> Thomassen, B. (2016), p13

responding to the liminality of the postmodern world, markedly distinguishes this thesis from previous studies into Landscape Painting.

Downey (2016) describes the postmodern world as consisting of 'the simultaneous presence of everywhere in the place where you are standing.'<sup>8</sup> Where 'everything is, in other words, fundamentally interconnected, but in ways that are (as with the distinctions between space and place explored above) potentially as alienating and disorientating as they are liberating and euphoric - a 'both/and' state of affairs that is the essence of the liminal. '<sup>9</sup> Natural disasters, such as the Lisbon Earthquake discussed with relevance to Kant in the first chapter, and within Chapter 3 with reference to the effects of climate fluctuations on Leonardo, and volcanicity on the paintings of Wright, are claimed by Downey *et al.* Eds. (2016) to result in a state permanent liminality.<sup>10</sup>

The Prussian Geographer Humboldt (1769-1859) travelled the world extensively, documenting his observations using a modern scientific point of view within a multivolume treatise entitled *Cosmos*, in which he unified scientific knowledge with culture. The Swiss geologist Louis Agassiz, who was for the first to scientifically present evidence for multiple ice ages and the affect of glacial action on the development of landscapes, created a *Eulogy* for Humboldt in 1859, in which he recalled that "before Humboldt we had no graphic representation of complex natural phenomena which made them easily comprehensible."<sup>11</sup> Humboldt expressed a duality between the arts and the sciences within his geographical process to create mountain profiles and

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<sup>8</sup> Downey, D. *et al.* Eds. (2016), digital reference 45.8 of 613.

<sup>9</sup> Downey, D. *et al.* Eds. (2016), digital reference 48.6 of 613.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, digital reference 48.6 of 613.

<sup>11</sup> Clarke, R. & Lubrich, O. Eds. (2012), p13.

isothermal lines that shaped thematic cartography and create representational drawings of landscapes informed by a geographical analysis of Landscape. Clarke & Lubrich Eds. (2012) describe how Humboldt 'often discusses the impressions (the act of perception) and the reflections (the act of composition) that necessarily precede the ultimate form - words, images, or visualizations of information. While hardly ever labeled as such by Humboldt himself, these interests of his are reflected in his reception in aesthetics, genre formation, and art history. Within Humboldt's lifetime, academic writers and philosophers of aesthetics such as Friedrich Theodor Fischer *Aesthetic oder Wissenschaft des Schonene* (Aesthetics or The Science of Beauty, 1847) reviewed Humboldt's discussions on ways of experiencing landscape and creating art from nature in order to conceptualize the beautiful, the ugly, the sublime, or the disgusting, in art as well as in nature'.<sup>12</sup> The evolution of Humboldt's depictions of Landscapes exhibit a continuous process of reductionism and focus, in that 'the movement is one of progressive abstraction. The focus shifts increasingly from the traveller to the traveled places. The linearity of biography and itinerary is dissolved. The literary form changes from the diary and epistolary attachment to individual stations to the description of a coherent route and to views of larger landscapes, further to the representation of an entire country, a continent, the earth and the universe. The perspective expands from the biographical to the social to continental and finally to global and even universal perspectives.'<sup>13</sup> It is proposed that this shift in focus may be evident within the evolution of the Landscapes within this thesis.

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<sup>12</sup> Clarke, R. & Lubrich, O. Eds. (2012), p13.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p16.

Creativity research literature makes a distinction between *creative* and *critical* thinking, questioning the extent to which the skills that underly creativity vary by domains between generality (transferable skills) vs specificity (knowledge situational).<sup>14</sup> Baer (2012) believes that creativity is usually domain specific and that creativity is not a transferable skill. He states that that artists are psychologically distinct from scientists, but that in both groups their creativity is constantly restricted to the domain in which they work.

Fryer (2012) describes how 'making a distinction between so-called *creative* (generative or divergent) thinking and *critical* (analytical or convergent) thinking can give the misleading impression that creativity requires only idea generation and not analysis when in fact both are necessary in order to produce creative outcomes.'<sup>15</sup> Gould (2002) describes a duality in the creative process, in 'that a great landscape painter is the highest servant of both nature and the human mind.'<sup>16</sup> Therefore he is positioning landscape a result of the dual inspirations of science and the intellect, as the expression of an objective and a subjective appreciation of the world. When assessing artists for inclusion in the thesis, those who demonstrated not only creativity, but also critical thinking within their creative process were favoured over those who were purely subjective. Subsequently selecting artists who expressed duality and fluidity accompanied by an absence of domain specificity.

Friess and Jazeel (2017) state that for the discipline of geography 'Landscape has indeed long been one of the disciplines key concepts, one that resides at the heart of our subject but one that is also complex, multilayered and denies a

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<sup>14</sup> Baer, J. (2012), p16.

<sup>15</sup> Fryer, M. (2012), p23

<sup>16</sup> Gould, S. (2002), p99

single coherent definition.’<sup>17</sup> The potentially overwhelming complexity of information available to artists facilitates a fluidity and freedom to cross the virtual boundary between the arts and the sciences to *unlearn landscape* in order to facilitate the emergence of ‘other voices that can contribute to forming defining the landscape but might otherwise be excluded via the search for scientific accuracy’<sup>18</sup> By building on the process of radical intradisciplinarity across the human-physical divide proposed by Friess & Jazeel (2017), his thesis goes far beyond the traditional limitations and boundaries of the Landscape genre, to investigate a perspective of interdisciplinarity of landscape far beyond that explored within academic literature to date.

In defence of the reflexive interview technique utilised for the investigation for chapter 8, and discussed further in section 2.3 of this chapter, Etherington (2014) describes how reflexivity can be described as a skill which is developed by the researcher to consciously inform their actions and understandings of events within the process of the research. Acknowledgement and acceptance of the researchers personal presence, interests and ‘self’ can be seen to be an integral part of the direction of the research. This enabled a conscious awareness of the decisions made regarding the inclusion or exclusion of artists and themes, the selected works for discussion, the exploration of interconnections between the artists, and researching around the subjects to explore for the possibility of evidence of further interdisciplinary connections that could be discovered.

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<sup>17</sup> Friess, D. & Jazeel, T. (2017), p14.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p19.

To leave nothing to chance, but to make informed and objective choices at every twist and turn of the investigation. An open-mindedness and flexibility for allowing for research around the themes, was an essential element of the research process and combined with a conscious focus on the development of the research themes. The complex and inherently multi-layered nature of the research process has been complimented by a reflexive editing process, designed to emphasise the importance of what to exclude and the importance of the isolation of focus on the quality of interconnected themes running through the thesis as more important than pure volume of information. With the pure intensity of historical and contemporary information on the subject of Landscape Painting, the focus on Contemporary living artists can be seen to be the most important issue regarding the choice of artists to be included in the research. Whilst their creative process needs to be contextualised by historic artists such as Leonardo and Wright who have come before them, the bulk of the thesis can be seen to be firmly fixed in the contemporary present.

The containment of the research in the realm of a contemporary timeline can be considered the most important restriction on the research. The second significant restriction, could be described as the requirement of international recognition of the chosen artists. There is a degree to the nature of that recognition, but it was by researching published critiques and reviews of the more well known artists such as Kiefer, Richter and Hockney, that reflexive research could be conducted on the less well known or documented Ray. The final restriction of the research process, was that each contemporary painting included needed to be seen firsthand, within a gallery exhibition of each of the included artists.

To physically appraise the work of the artists, not from digital representations, but by actual interaction within the gallery space was an essential part of the research process. So much research is conducted from a distance, and it was very important of capturing the experience of being immersed in a direct appreciation of the artwork. Being able to meet Hockney and Tyson, and interview Ray as part of this research process provided an additional, direct dimension to the research process. The paper entitled *Presenting and representing others* by Pickering and Kara (2017) discusses the importance of researchers approaches towards research, the nature of engagement with the subject and the ethics of representation. It hypothesises that the research process is not just about gathering data, but in the case of the social sciences or the arts is also about the reflection and reflexivity of the researcher to consider the process of representing multiple layers of information in a clear, concise and conscious way.

Just when the thesis was almost complete, irresistible exhibitions of Hockney at the Tate Britain, London (09.02.17 - 29.05.17), Anselm Kiefer at the White Cube, London (23.11.16 - 12.02.17) and Keith Tyson at The Jerwood Space in Hastings (28.01.17 - 04.06.17) encouraged the emergence of new ideas within this thesis and facilitated the content to be brought very much up-to-date, emphasising the fundamental importance of the word *Contemporary*, in alignment with the first word in the title of the thesis.

## 2.2 Publishing research in the public domain

In the words of Gould (2009), the late American palaeontologist, evolutionary biologist and historian of science:

‘We have, as a society, lost our bearings in so many ways. Perhaps other things are more important in a world of poverty and pollution, but I rank our growing preference for automated sameness over a personal touch as one of the greatest ills of our age. But primates are social creatures, and (for all its tragedies) perhaps the one great legacy of our cultural history resides in our stated respect for individuality. This principle applies with special force to scholarship. With a misplaced definition of ‘objectivity’, many people think that books of nonfiction, particularly reference works like encyclopaedias, should be impersonal, and devoid of style or idiosyncrasy. No, and a thousand times no. The truly great books of reference have a personal stamp, as any work of passion worthy of our attention must.’<sup>19</sup>

The individuality of the author is demonstrated through the inclusion of documents in the Appendix, so as to express enduring passion, interest and experience, which does not dilute the importance of the investigation, but to the contrary, gives additional validity to the issues discussed. In addition, one of the strategies suggested to Phd Students is to publish research prior to the completion of their Phd. In 2013 a journal article entitled ‘Merging Science and Art: The Bigger Picture’ was accepted for the academic journal STEAM of Claremont University in the USA, which is described as integrating the domains

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<sup>19</sup> Gould, S. (2009), p2.

of the arts and the sciences<sup>20</sup>, and has had 1,282 downloads to date. Art reviews of the exhibitions featured in this thesis for the [ArtTop10.com](http://ArtTop10.com) received many hits, of which the one on Keith Tyson<sup>21</sup> has received over 57,000 views. An award from the University of the Balearic Islands was granted to present an academic paper and a poster entitled *Contemporary Landscape Painting* about the thesis-in-process at the *II Jornades Doctorals del G-9* in Extramadura, Spain 11-12.11.13. A postgraduate award to present two papers at the Royal Geographical Society annual conference 26-29.08.14 was received; one entitled *The Art of Landscape from a Geographical Perspective*, in the session Geoaesthetics and a second entitled *Landscape painting: A contemporary perspective* in a session entitled 'Co-production and Postgraduate research'. One of the main consequences resulting from the publishing of the research-in-process, was the realisation of the positioning of the investigations very much on the blurred interdisciplinary border between the arts and the sciences. Expressing an academic perspective from both disciplines, bridges the gaps between the arts and the sciences bridges the gap by utilising a universal language that enables artists to comfortably glimpse the science of Landscape, whilst inspiring scientists to do the reverse. The process of sharing the research-in-process, can be interpreted as being part of the research process, serving to strengthen the thesis through feedback and interaction, whilst encouraging a confidence to expand the themes of discussion within the text to the limits of the boundary between the arts and the sciences.

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<sup>20</sup> Hall, N. (2013), Online reference.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

## 2.3 Roy Ray

The research for Chapter 8 was the result of long-term contact with the artist Ray, who has been known to the author as a painting tutor since 1981 in his capacity as the Principle of the St Ives School of Painting. The choice to conduct numerous interviews from 1999 to 2015<sup>22</sup>, rather than rely on reviews or appraisals of the artists work, was made in order to discover more about the inner realm of the artist, to explore how the artist 'perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions' <sup>23</sup>. Through regularly interviewing the artist the author was able to open a continuous 'window on the past' <sup>24</sup>, and understand the artist and the art as one. An awareness of the *reflexive* interview technique cultivated an awareness of the multiple influences that the interviewers personal experiences and perspectives could have on the research process<sup>25</sup>, developing a sensitive acknowledgement of the perceptive nature of the artist <sup>26</sup>. Preparation for the interviews though reseaching reviews and research into the artist as stored by the St Ives Archive Centre, available online and in advance as provided through emails from the artist himself, fascinated the author to arrive to the interviews mentally prepared, like an actor for a performance on a stage. Overflowing with ideas, questions and directions for the interview to take focus, but an inherent and natural flexibility to respond to the interests and emphasis as directed by the artist.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview dates: September 1999, September 2000, September 2001, September 2002, September 2003, September 2004, August 2012, September 2015

<sup>23</sup> Weiss, R. S. (1994), e-book Location 123-4 of 4692.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, e-book Location 126 of 4692.

<sup>25</sup> Gilgun, J. F. (2010), e-book location 27 of 213.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*. e-book location 170 of 213.

By utilising a *qualitative* approach, the interview process could have been perceived as conversational in appearance<sup>27</sup>. However it facilitated an open mind to absorb and remember the thread of the discussions. It enabled the author to be alert, responsive and open to engage with the artist rather than rely on a prepared script. An attempt was made to epitomise the following advice on conducting an interview by Weiss, R. S. (1994): 'The interviewer's voice was mostly serious, respectful, interested. The respondent's voice was mostly relaxed, unhurried, reflective, and inward...But mostly the interviewer expressed a desire to understand whatever it was the respondent was saying'.<sup>28</sup> The resultant connection with the artist was genuine and not a pretence, and the author was able to reach a deeper level of interconnections between the themes in his work than if it had been a standard interview. This sense of connection and interconnection has been described as being quite intense, and Weiss (1994) describes how 'occasionally, an interview is engaging enough for me not only to feel in tune with the other person's rhythm of speaking and thought, but to see the world through the other person's eyes.'<sup>29</sup> This level of connection is quite extraordinary, and emotional to experience, and results in a more spiritual connection with the artist and the artwork.

By modifying the technique to avoid the 'intruder in the interview'<sup>30</sup> syndrome, through choosing to not record the interview so as not to make the artist feel copied or intimidated about the strength or subject of discussion, definitely encouraged the artist to feel more natural and open in the interview, and to

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<sup>27</sup> Weiss, R. S. (1994), e-book Location 257 of 4692.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, e-book Location 271-273 of 4692.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, e-book Location 2274-5 of 4692.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, e-book Location 1043-1051 of 4692.

approach it as an interchange of ideas rather than a recorded observation. By not recording the interview, there is a risk of forgetting specific details, but those details could always be requested at a later date. In addition, there was a palpable resistance to take notes, unless specific and relevant reference was made. Essentially, by reducing the risk of self-consciousness emerging in the character of the artist, the research style encouraged a complete and relaxed record of their creative process, facilitating their natural state as an artist to emerge.

This research approach is known to be exhausting, and Weiss (1994) describes how 'interviewing is, for me, usually tiring. I find that it takes energy to maintain an unswerving attention. It requires energy to get into sync with the respondent 's way of thinking while remaining alert to what isn't being said. It requires energy for me to monitor my own reactions, to judge whether the material is vivid enough, to keep in mind the issues about which I hope to learn.'<sup>31</sup> Therefore the research approach can be described as energy intensive, but immensely rewarding. The write up of the interviews took place immediately after the interview, directly onto the computer for hours at a time, with all of the memories of the interchange emerging like water from a waterfall, continuously joined with the additional, and ongoing research of second hand sources from reviews and publications. The energy was very positive and far more pleasant working from memory than from a recording.

Finally, after specific research about the artist and his artworks, unbounded research freely around the subject of 9/11 from the perspective of the disciplines

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<sup>31</sup> Weiss, R. S. (1994), e-book Location 2292 of 4692.

of history, philosophy, psychology, law and geography, enabled an interweaving of an academic and scientific perspective to the structure of the chapter, with the intention to contextualise the work of Ray.

## 2.4 A living thesis

The importance of including living individuals in the selection of artists combined with the decision to bring the research process very much up-to-date through the inclusion of exhibitions and research from 2017 introduced in section 2.1 emphasises the *living* nature of this thesis and the pivotal importance of the word *Contemporary* in the title of the thesis.

The style and choice of content for this thesis was very inspired by a quote from the British historian Sir Lewis B. Namier from 1934 :

I was faced with the need to make a decision: was I to draw on work finished by me some time ago, or try to put before you that on which I now am engaged? In other words, should I offer you the fruit of my past research as a still-life, carefully arranged and with a decorative - dead- piece of salmon on top; or should I invite you into my workshop - with its unavoidable untidiness - and put before you the very incomplete results of my current efforts? I have chosen the second course because to me the sense of lectures such as these is in their subject still being alive in the lecturer's mind, not set, not yet in its final form, still subject to revision. I am told that before a mineral can express itself as a crystal, the substance must be absolutely dead because the slightest vestige of life would interfere with the process of crystallization. To my feeling, historical research should not -

barring obvious exceptions - be put into print until it has crystallized. But once it has done so there it should remain, in the best shape its author was able to give it. And then its place is in the libraries, the universally accessible repositories of our past work and thoughts. In the lecture-room the unavoidable confusion of life seems to me preferable to the tidiness and decorum of the graveyard.<sup>32</sup>

The information presented in this thesis was researched over many years, in continuum from early research in the 90's to the present day, continuously updated from a contemporary perspective. It has grown from humble roots in the domains of the arts and the sciences, into an attempt to fuse the two within the genre of Landscape. The intention has always been to capture the moment with an acknowledgement of the past, but the incremental increase in the speed of the moment has markedly changed since the research process began. Many who read this may not remember a time before the ceaseless documentation of the moment in social media. When seeing news that was recording an actual, live event such as the 9/11 terrorist attack was a momentous moment. Previously, the news was historical in nature, presenting a delayed summary of the events of the day. The newspapers recorded yesterday's news as the news of the day. Even during the televised documentation of the Falklands War, it was highly edited to show warships but no casualties. This resulted in the population being fed a medicalised view of conflict and a historic representation of the moment were the past was portrayed as the present, yet the present was uneventful and silent until reported in the news. The author recalls narrowly avoiding the King's Cross fire in London, seeing the smoke emerging from the tunnels and the firemen turning up before the police. A decision was made to

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<sup>32</sup> Kammen, M. (1992), p12.

take the bus rather than the train, but the true extent of the tragedy didn't reach the news many hours later. How the depiction of time has changed! We now live in a realtime world of immediate comment. Yet the substance of a thesis is still very much historical in format. As an attempt to respond to the immediate reality of the contemporary world, the chosen research technique includes very recent examples of artists responding to this realtime world and utilising links to websites and blogs where they can be followed, presented in a writing style that is of the moment. By using terms and subjects that give the depiction of a live body of research an attempt has been made to continue to express the continuum of time and considered thought expected of a thesis, but at times layering information in a very actual and realtime manner, so as to bring the research into the moment.

## **2.5 Conclusions**

The methodology has shown that through the analysis of the structure of this thesis as the union of the arts and the sciences, the individual chapters of this thesis will document the collective crossing of the blurred liminal boundary into a completely new territory in the appreciation of Landscape Painting.

The research methodology used has been extensively researched prior to and in parallel to the process of investigation, analysis, contemplation and writing up. Pinnegar and Daynes (2007) describe the importance of paradigm shifts consisting of turns that naturally occur as part of the research process.

Three philosophical turns that can be interpreted from the evolution of the research approach:

- 1) The first turn is a change of the relationship between the person conducting the research and the participant, from observer to equal. From the interviewers respect for the artist, to their respect for the interviewers research and insight, which is specifically evident in the case of Ray. From interpreting the works from the perspective of others to making the observations included in the thesis. The research process evolves from passive to active interpretation.
  
- 2) From the general and universal to the local and specific. Starting with an overview of the evolution of landscape painting within the works of Leonardo and Wright, positioning them as responding to the age in which they were living. Focusing initially on the power of the particular, but using the insight gained in the first turn to be able to approach the work of artists whose career had not yet been documented by the established academic circles. By using the guidance of the investigation into the internationally recognised artists and well documented artists such as Kiefer, Richter and Mehretu, the exploration of the works of the less internationally known and explored artists Ray and Mason was made possible.
  
- 3) A growing acceptance of alternative ways of knowing or epistemologies. The emergence of a growing reflexivity within the appraisal of the paintings, positioning the assumptions and encouraging an interdisciplinary approach in response to the individual artists and the interpretation of their work, and the research to interconnect their work within the thesis.

The selection of the artists has been shown to have been justified as demonstrating an absence of domain specificity whilst accompanied by fluidity towards the representation of Landscape.

It can be surmised that the chosen methodology has been shown to ground the thesis firmly in the domain of the contemporary through focusing on living, internationally recognised Contemporary artists who have created paintings not exclusively, but significantly in the domain of Landscape fundamentally reflecting the liminality of the contemporary world.

# Into Landscape

## 3.1 The roots of the Landscape Genre

The creation of Landscape as a genre within Art History did not emerge until the end of the 16th Century, and before then it was generally considered a pleasing backdrop to a religious scene rather than the subject of an artwork. The Landscape genre is one of the best known and most appreciated forms of creative expression, as it allows the viewer to escape the confines of a gallery or a contained space, essentially inviting them to contemplate, visually explore and potentially lose themselves in an inspirational view. There are many words to describe Landscape: Landschap in Dutch, Landschaft in German and Paysage in French, Paisatge en Catalan and Paisaje in Spanish. The French,

Catalan and Spanish word has its roots in the latin verb *pango*, which can be translated to define a terrain. The act of transforming nature into a territory is an artificial construct, as it is a culturally constructed artificial piece of nature. Lemaire (1992) described how:

‘the landscape, that we would account to be nature par excellence, falls into the category of culture, that which is conceived and made by mankind. Landscape therefore is entirely at home in the domain of art. Even more: without art, landscape would not exist’.<sup>33</sup>

Therefore, as Landscape is considered a human construct, without humans it would not continue. Whether it is a small back garden, large gardens attached to a country estate or huge swathes of protected land, it is, in essence, a culturally contained area with limits and controls. It is imagined that Landscape is wild nature, but very few places, if any, depicted in works of Landscape in the past or present actually represent wild nature. Even by the constraint of the picture plane itself it is a contradiction to the representation of Nature itself. Before Landscape was appreciated as nature, it was art in the form of Landscape painting. There is even a question if Landscape and Nature, are in-fact mutually exclusive, that one can not refer to one whilst talking about the other. Nature is understood as being the *natural form* of the natural world and its processes independent of humans, and will continue until infinity and eventually return to its natural state once humans have departed. Whereas in contrast, Landscape is also interpreted as a *cultural construct*, created by, determined by and depicted by humans, which will cease to exist without humans. Landscape only exists in eye of beholder, and is limited as a record of the artists experience and expression with the time period and location of which it was created. Whilst

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<sup>33</sup> Lemaire, T. (1992), p3.

it can be said that Landscape first made its appearance in works of art, the authenticity of the depiction of Landscape within those works is questioned.

It can be proposed that there are three interpretations of Landscape. The first could be described as the Classical interpretation typical of the perspective of Lemaire's vision, which is inclined towards the realisation that our relationship and respect for nature is fundamentally disrupted, and that by facing the potential destruction of the natural world by reconnecting with Landscape, he defends the importance of Landscape. The second interpretation can be described as the Postmodernist Realist Perspective, which is diametrically opposed to the Classical view and acknowledges that:

'we must no longer cling to the ideal of a virgin nature (or indeed to nature at all), but must actively develop the qualities of a completely artificial human environment in order to survive.'<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, we must accept the reality of a destroyed world, and instead of seeking a return to a world prior to the act of destruction, develop a world centred around humans. Within the realm of Landscape, this would involve not just acknowledging, but also accepting the continued destruction of the planet. As a responsible academic, it would be preferable to position the research in-between the two extremes of returning to the past and accepting the reality of the present. Therefore, by electing to situate this thesis firmly in the domain of the moment, and by acknowledging the phases of the past that have brought us to the present, the reality of the future can be embraced. By recognising the journey the Landscape genre has taken until now, the layers of knowledge,

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<sup>34</sup> Lemaire, T. (1992), p4.

experience and expression that have brought us to the reality of the moment, can be acknowledge to truly represent the present reality of Landscape.

The third, and completely alternative interpretation of Landscape can be described as Human-centric. This perspective has been omitted from the thesis as it relies on a construction of the human imagination disconnected with nature, which fundamentally concerns image and its representation within society from an entirely human perspective and context. As an overly subjective expression of the physical world, it doesn't have validity in the context of an objective analysis of the world typical of the domain of the scientist. It cannot exist without a place within society and therefore is dependent on social context, as independent from a multidisciplinary view of the world. For my own personal area of interest, this interpretation of Landscape will not be explored further within this thesis, as it is regarded it to be too narrow and Human-centric, and if as academics we are to comment on the world situation, Landscape interpretation should be more inclusive and multidisciplinary in perspective without its inclusion in this thesis.

## **3.2 Leonardo**

Leonardo was a true visionary and an enduring inspiration for artists and scientists alike, that continues unabated to the present day. There are so many fascinating interpretations of his life's work that will be merely skimmed over in this subchapter, not doing him justice in the context of his greatness, but contextualising his investigations as a compliment to the concepts explored within the confines of this thesis.

Firstly, it is clear that as a scientist he was fascinated with understanding the processes of the natural world, and their representation within his artworks.



**Figure 3: Da Vinci *A rocky ravine* (c.1475-80)**

Leonardo was a master of Landscape drawings, and returned repeatedly to the plunging ravines and steep sided mountain ranges such as that depicted in figure 3, **which shows an aerial analysis of a landform within the Arno Valley region in Italy, created by the cutting down of the river into a sandstone rock, which is given scale by the presence of ducks in the stream.** He endeavoured to illustrate the effects of sequences of action from the past to the present, to express the imminent motion of landscape as the

result of dynamic processes. Leonardo's enduring fascination with water and its affect on landform creations, as depicted in figure three, has contemporary significance, as Aguzzi *et al* (2007) have completed a multidisciplinary study of the Arno coastal plane of late Quaternary deposits that provide evidence of repeated sealevel changes indicative of climatic fluctuations.<sup>35</sup> In addition, Smorosi *et al.* (2009) have found widespread evidence in deposits from the last 15,000 years in the Arno valley to be indicative of over six periods of rapid, millennial scale climatic fluctuations<sup>36</sup>.

In contrast to a traditional, static understanding of Landscape, Leonardo described the formation of mountains as:

'produced by the courses of the rivers that are born of rain, snow, hail and ice, melted by the solar rays in the summer. This melting produces the waters which join together in many small rivulets, running from various directions into larger streams, growing in magnitude as they acquire motion, until they converge on the great oceanic sea, always eroding one of the river banks and building up the other, as long as they go on seeking out the depth of their valleys. And they do not rest content with this, and consume the bases of the flanking mountains. The mountains, collapsing into the rivers, close the valleys, and, as if wishing to be avenged, prohibit the course of such a river and convert it into a lake in which the slow-moving water appears to be subdued'<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> Aguzzi, M. *et al.* (2007), p211.

<sup>36</sup> Smorosi, A. *et al.* (2009), p142.

<sup>37</sup> Zollner, F. (2007), p510.

The text is beautifully written, and puts the observer very much in awe of the affect of the seasons on the change in state from liquid water to solid ice, river formation and its role in valley evolution, reducing in altitude until reaching the sea. He comments on the collapse of the sides of rivers as a result of the ceaseless downward energy of their path to the sea as the cause of the creation of mountain lakes. His observational skills and scientific understanding of the physical processes of Landscape formation radiate from both his writings and his drawings.



**Figure 4: Da Vinci *An outcrop of stratified rock* c.1510**

Leonardo's study of an outcrop of stratified rock shown in figure 4 features a horizontally stratified sedimentary rock topped with a stunted tree and a few clumps of grass. The strata undulates and swirls as if it is in flux, and clearly depicts a rolling movement suggestive of its creation by waves and water itself, and therefore as it is visually referencing its own creation it could be described as an autological artwork.

Leonardo expressed in his drawings a profound awareness of geological process and within this work makes a direct connection between his personal observations and the past processes and future evolution of a mountainous landscape. Therefore he positions himself very much in the present, looking back over his shoulder to the past whilst firmly stepping into the future, predicting the future evolution of Landscape. In this quote he does not mention the role of glaciers or earthquakes in mountain formation, nor any human interaction but manages to transcend time and place to depict a landscape in continual flux and transformation.

Leonardo witnessed the beginning of the Little Ice Age (LIA), as included in figure 1, which is said to have lasted from around 1300 to around 1850 and consisted of a period of marked cooling after the Medieval Warm Period (MWP). The cause of the LIA is undetermined but it is suggested to be a combination of changes in orbital forcing, solar output, ocean circulation and volcanic activity. Miller *et al.* (2012) describes the abrupt onset of the climatic fluctuation as being triggered by a 50 year period marked by sulphur rich explosive eruptions, including one in 1257 of Mount Samalas in Indonesia<sup>38</sup>. The global sulphate loading in excess of 60 Tg would have transformed to sulphuric acid in the stratosphere and reflected the sun's rays, significantly reducing the amount of radiation reaching the Earth's surface and reducing global temperatures for up to two years. Subsequent eruptions in quick succession in 1268, 1275 and 1284 did not allow the climate to fully recover, and a second pulse of cooling was triggered by the eruption in 1452-3 of Kuwae in Vanuatu. In addition to the

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<sup>38</sup> Miller *et al.* (2012), p1.

heightened volcanic activity of the period, Broecker (2000) suggests that the introduction of a significant amount of freshwater into the North Atlantic as a result of the warmth of the MWP from 950 to 1250, may have shutdown the thermohaline circulation (THC)<sup>39</sup>. The THC is an ocean current that carries warm, salty water from the Gulf of Mexico into the cooler seas between Iceland, Norway and Greenland, where the waters become dense and sink as they cool into the deep ocean. From reconstructing past variations in the THC from ocean sediment cores, it has been shown that the nature of the conveyor can change abruptly in response to the pulses of meltwater from decaying ice sheets and that the switching on and off of the THC helps to explain rapid climatic change events<sup>40</sup>. This is of significant contemporary concern, as our present warm period could re-trigger the shutdown of the THC and suddenly plunge the world into a period of global cooling<sup>41</sup>. Garrard, R. & Carey, M. (1997) describe how the longest and largest glacier in the Alps, called the *Grosse Aletschgletscher*, has withdrawn 2.9km from its glacial maximum in 1850, and is recorded to be retreating at a rate of 24.5m per year, collectively losing 50% of its total ice volume from 1850 to 2013.

The most recent Assessment Report on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change states 'Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have become warmer, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, and sea level has risen. Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than

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<sup>39</sup> Broecker, W. (2000), p 1339–42.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas (2016), digital reference 2436,1 of 2714.

<sup>41</sup> Alda, A. (2005)

any preceding decade since 1850. The period from 1983 to 2012 was likely the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400 years in the Northern Hemisphere, where such assessment is possible (medium confidence). The globally averaged combined land and ocean surface temperature data as calculated by a linear trend show a warming of 0.85 [0.65 to 1.06] °C over the period 1880 to 2012<sup>42</sup>.

As Leonardo was witness to the LIA, it comes as no surprise that he would have been inspired to respond to the increased climate instability and resultant storminess, as there may have been concern at the time as to the implications in the changing weather. Over a hundred years before Leonardo was born, Europe's collective memory of being devastated by the affects of the Medieval Warm Period would have been reignited by the climatic instability. The extreme rains from 1315-17 heightened the famine resulting from the destruction of the food supply that killed around 10-25% of the population and weakened the health of the population so that the Black Death managed to kill even more. Leonardo's deluge drawings clearly represent catastrophes on a gigantic scale.

The deluge depicted in figure 5 graphically depicts a cataclysmic storm, a gigantic explosion featuring jets of water shooting out from the centre. The raw power of the flood topples square blocks of stone revealing a fascination with destruction.

'this remarkable series of drawings should have held such a fascination for the 20th century viewer in particular it is easy to see as representations of catastrophes of gigantic proportions, they

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<sup>42</sup> Garrard, R. & Carey, M. (1997), digital reference 269.8 of 520.



**Figure 5: Da Vinci, *A deluge* c.1517-18**

speak to the modern sense of pessimism about the future, as shaped by the historical events of the last hundred years. Indeed, in several of these studies Leonardo shows the annihilation of great trees and forests and even people and towns... The notable persistence with which Leonardo pursued this series suggests that his fascination for this unusual subject was fuelled not just by purely scientific interests, but also by aesthetic concerns. The notes - most of them coolly observational in style - which he wrote to accompany these drawings, however, suggest that he was aiming at an objective realism to a greater extent than is generally assumed... Perhaps it was precisely the contrast between cool scientific analysis and emotional emphasis that spurred Leonardo on to execute these drawings.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Nathan, J. '(2011), p501.

The energy and strength of movement in these pictures is truly abstract and through their expression can be described as the perfect blend of science and emotion. The destructive forces of nature are evident in the swirling, tempestuous mass of water depicted alone, in the absence of rocks or mountains. The artwork is in the Royal Collection, and they suggest on their website that it is quite likely that the deluge drawings were created during the ultimate years of Leonardo's life, whilst he was living at the court of Francis I in France. The reverse of each artwork blank and the visible framing lines suggest that they were envisaged as finished works of art.<sup>44</sup>

The artist was also a practicing scientist creating topographical and military maps, whilst working as a military engineer and architect. Beck (1979) describes how Leonardo's:

'drawings and notebooks cover material in the areas of philosophy, anatomy, physiology, natural history, medicine, optics, acoustics, astronomy, botany, geology, geography and topographical studies, flight, movement, weight, mathematics, the study of water and hydraulics, naval engineering, book collecting, and writing. All these pursuits lie outside the fine arts, yet the arts were the essence of his training and were at the core of his way of seeing and treating all the other categories. As a dedicated advocate of the importance of experience, Leonardo considered vision to be the most valuable sense; he regarded correct recording by means of painting and drawing as the highest achievement. Thus he was able to claim painting as superior to the other arts, poetry and music as well as

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<sup>44</sup> Information taken from the Royal Collection Trust website explanatory text about *The deluge* downloaded on the 13.03.17 from: <https://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/912380/a-deluge>

sculpture, and even superior to mathematics and geometry 'because they are not concerned with quality, the beauty of nature's creations, and the harmony of the world.'<sup>45</sup>

He was a truly multidisciplinary artist, who was educated to view art as the core and essential essence of the scientific disciplines, rather than separate from them.

An inspirational passage quoted from Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting* describes how the quality of light and time of day affected the darkness of shadows and increased the contrast and definition of edges:

'...if you portray (such) figures as being in the country, they are surrounded by a great quantity of light, when the sun is not covered. If the sun shines directly, their shadows will be very dark in comparison with the illuminated parts, and these will be shadows with definite edges, the original as well as the derivative ones. These shadows will be in little accord with the lights because the blue of the air illuminates one side, giving it a tinge of itself - that is quite manifested in white things - and that side which is illuminated by the sun takes on the colour of the sun. This you will observe very readily when the sun falls to the horizon among the redness of the clouds, for those clouds are tinged with the colour that illuminates them. The red of the clouds, together with the red of the sun, reddens that which is illuminated by them. The side of bodies which does not face this redness remains the colour of the air, and whoever sees such bodies judges them to be of two colours. You cannot avoid showing

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<sup>45</sup> Beck, J. (1979), p18.

the causes of such shadows and lights, and making the shadows and lights take on the colour of their causes. If you do not, your work is vain and false’<sup>46</sup>

The analysis of the affect of light on colour is inspirational and very futuristic, and can clearly be seen as a inspiration to the development of colour theory in the next chapter.

Jakob (1996) describes in his chapter entitled *Experiencing Landscape as Art* how:

‘the eerie visions of Piero de Cosimo, the nonconformist Florentine painter and eccentric, are probably the most impressive images of the original loss of nature at the moment when it was appropriated by culture, because they also emphasise the violence of such an act. His paintings seem to suggest that the powerful gaze of a human being taking possession of his tract of land has always made its mark upon nature, and that succession of such marks has always been inscribed upon landscape.’<sup>47</sup>

Figure 6 clearly depicts animals and birds fleeing a blaze within a woodland. The artist greatly admired Leonardo and the artwork is said to be inspired by the fifth book of the Roman poet Lucretius (c. 99 BC – c. 55 BC) of his *De Rerum Natura* (translated to mean *On the nature of things*) from the 1st Century BC. Ramsey (1867) describes how the book is concerned with tracing the origins of

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<sup>46</sup> Beck, J. (1979), p68, From: Da Vinci, L. (1956), *Treatise on Painting (Codex urbinas Latinus 1270)*, Princeton. No. 140, Translated by McMahon, P.

<sup>47</sup> Jakob, M. (1996), p.48.



**Figure 6: Di Cosimo *The forest fire* (1505)**

life on earth, exploring the scientific and social processes of the world and emphasising the role of fire as a catalyst for change.

Towards the end of the 16th century, the word Landscape evolved to become a genre of painting in its own right rather than as a pleasant backdrop to a portrait. Leonardo was instrumental in facilitating this transition by focusing on the significant details of Landscape processes, specifically Landscape creation and evolution. He has been shown to have inspired other artists such as Piero de Cosimo to see the validity of Landscape. It is interesting to observe that the moment that Landscape liberates itself to become the main theme of an artwork, is in parallel to the rise of the portrait. Landscape and portrait can both be described as an expression of the modern era. Lemaire (1992) states that:

‘In the one case, the autonomous, free individual is presented; in the other case the world is represented as an autonomous entity. The origin and development of both genres was supported by the bourgeois, precisely the class that approaches, describes and depicts the everyday world with sober eyes.’<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Lemaire, T. (1992), p10.

The focus on the city as a human construct and the country as essentially pure nature or wilderness was an inaccurate parallel as the country is also a cultural landscape, but the separation between the human and physical landscape had commenced.

### **3.3 Scientific, social and political dimensions in the Landscapes of Joseph Wright.**

The paintings of Joseph Wright are best known for their depiction of the theatricality of popular culture through the use of striking contrast coupled with concentration in his scenes of scientific discovery. They can be described as group portraits that express a fascination with the investigation of scientific phenomena such as an iconic artwork entitled *Experiment on a bird in the Air Pump*<sup>49</sup>. The depicted demonstration would have been a popular magic trick that was transformed by Wright into:

‘an image of high seriousness. To show the nature of a vacuum a bird has been placed in a sealed jar from which air has been expelled. The bird lies apparently lifeless, a horror-struck girl shielding her eyes from the spectacle of death. The lecturer’s hand is poised at the stopcock about to release air into the jar to dramatically revive the bird.’<sup>50</sup>

It clearly shows the power that the scientist has to control life and the emotions of the onlookers. The characters were collated from his personal acquaintances who were often from a local group called *The Lunar Society*, who consisted of

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<sup>49</sup> Wright, J. *Experiment on a bird in the Air Pump* (1768), Oil on Canvas, 183 x 244 cm, collection of The National Gallery, London.

<sup>50</sup> Daniels, S. (1993), p66.

scientists, intellectuals and industrialists of the time. By discussing the scientific developments of the time, disseminating scientific knowledge through sharing journals and hosting demonstrations and lectures, whilst encouraging working in collaboration, great leaps forward in knowledge and intellect could be made. Holmes (2008) questions whether Wright's:

'memorable paintings also ask whether Romantic paintings contained terror as well as wonder: if discovery and invention brought new dread as well as new hope into the world'<sup>51</sup>.

The role of the artist was to document this collaboration through depicting the focus, preoccupation's and excitements of the time. The artist was responding to the ambitions of the Industrial Revolution, to understand the world's processes with the intention to conquer and harness their possibilities for direct economic benefit.

The painterly approach utilised in the works of this time recalls the technique of Rembrandt, in that the participants are huddled in a darkened room, but there is a brilliance in the quality of light which parallel with the scientific developments of the time, that led to Wright being described as a master of light effects.

In parallel to his contemporaries, Wright was fascinated with geology and the discovery of the geological origins of Landscape. He was so fascinated with the natural phenomena that he completed around thirty pictures of Vesuvius over the subsequent twenty years. As Wright visited Italy from 1773-5, it is suggested that the artwork in Figure 7 entitled *Vesuvius Erupting*<sup>52</sup> expressively depicts an actual eruption of fire and heat from the centre of the Earth that so inspired the

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<sup>51</sup> Holmes, R. (2008), p19.

<sup>52</sup> Wright, J. *Vesuvius Erupting* (1774), Gouache on paper, Derby Art Gallery, 33.7 x 48.6 cm.

geologists of the time such as Whitehurst, due to the intensity of the colours, the contrast of the light and the general sense of immediacy in the brushstrokes of the gouache paint. Whilst his visit would have predated the more violent eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1779, which resulted in pyroclastic flows of ash, he would most certainly have witnessed persistent volcanic activity during his visit in October of 1774.<sup>53</sup>



**Figure 7: Wright, *Vesuvius in Eruption, with a View over the Islands in the Bay of Naples* (c.1776)**

According to the records of volcanic activity presented by Scandone, R. et al. (2008), the period beginning 4th August 1774, and ending 1st December 1774 consisted of 119 days of persistent Strombolian activity.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Detailed on page three of a catalogue of an exhibition entitled 'Wright in Italy : Joseph Wright of Derby's visit abroad, 1773-5 : an exhibition at Gainsborough's House, 8th August-20th September 1987. Consulted in The British Library on the 9.08.17, Produced by Gainsborough's House.

<sup>54</sup> Scandone, R. et al. (2008), Table A1, p 178.

On the 11th of November 1774 he wrote to his brother from Naples regarding a mutual friend called John Whitehurst, who was a fellow of the Royal Society, interested in the creation and origin of the Earth:

‘Remember me with respect to all my friends; when you see Whitehurst, tell him I wished for his company when on Mount Vesuvius, his thoughts would have center’d in the bowels of the mountain, mine skimmed over the surface only; there was a very considerable eruption at the time, of which I am going to make a picture. ‘Tis the most wonderful sight in nature’<sup>55</sup>.

Therefore, this letter in conjunction with the confirmed dates that Wright visited Italy and complimented by the research of Scandone (2008) refutes the generally accepted opinion that the volcanic eruptions painted by Wright were from imagination than through experience.<sup>56</sup>

The dramatic composition includes the islands of Procida and Ischia which would not be included from this perspective, and therefore have been included for dramatic effect, to emphasise the tranquility of the sea in contrast to the violent eruption of the volcano, clearly splitting the painting into two areas of interest. The reflection on the peaceful sea of the moon, as it emerges from the blue clouds, contrasts markedly with the angry red explosion and the drifting smoke emanating from the left of the picture. In the foreground two men can be observed carrying a seemingly lifeless body of a victim of the volcano, possibly

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<sup>55</sup> Fraser, D. (1988), p125.

<sup>56</sup> ‘He stayed in Naples from early October to early November 1774, too early to witness the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 1777, and yet during his lifetime he painted over thirty views of the exploding volcano.’ <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/wright-vesuvius-in-eruption-with-a-view-over-the-islands-in-the-bay-of-naples-t05846> viewed 20.08.17

in reference to the death of the elder Pliny in the great eruption of Vesuvius in AD79, the most famous Plinian eruption that caused the burial of the Roman towns of Pompeii, Herulaneum, and Stabiae, whose pyroclastic flows and subsequent floods resulted in an abrupt coastal advance of several hundred meters. Aucelli, P. *et al.* (2017) suggest that the interpretation of geological, geomorphological and archaeological data from the Gulf of Naples is fundamental to an interpretation of the relationship between human and coastal environments in the past, which can be used for studies on coastal trend predictions and the likely impacts of climate change for the future.’<sup>57</sup>

The body of Pliny had been discovered by Spanish engineer Rocque Joaquin de Alcubierre in his excavation of Pompeii 1748. The investigations were primarily done to retrieve works of art from the site, but the speed, force and heat of the pyroclastic flow that immortalised the bodies of the victims at the point of death, was a strong visual testimony to the immensity of the eruption. The relative insignificance of the figures in comparison to the power of the volcano in Wrights interpretation adds a human dimension to the composition and highlights man's essential insignificance when faced with grandeur of nature. It was suggested at the time of Wright that vulcanicity was the primary geological force that shaped Landscape, that was constantly creating new material in the centre of the earth, and that all rocks came from it initially and returned to it eventually. Geology was very important to the industrialists of the time, as it facilitated the determination of the exact location of copper, coal, lead etc. Therefore, accurate drawings of the strata of the rocks were essential to understanding the landscape prior to its exploitation. In 1782, Wright celebrated

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<sup>57</sup> Aucelli, P. *et al* (2017), p 307

the importance of Whitehurst<sup>58</sup> with a portrait in which Vesuvius is seen smoking through the window, which clearly made reference to the importance of igneous rocks to the origins of the Earth.



**Figure 8: Wright, *Arkwright's Cotton Mills by Night* (1782)**

Fraser (1988) describes how Whitehurst is at his desk with a geological drawing of his *Section of the Strata at Matlock High Tor* which 'shows the interleaving of toadstone with beds of limestone and the volcano refers to Whitehurst's discovery of the igneous origin of toadstone (which he deduced from comparing the texture and structure of Derbyshire toadstone with those of recent lava) as well as to his overall emphasis on vulcanicity as the primary geological force.'<sup>59</sup> The artwork most of interest to the expression of art and science within

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<sup>58</sup> Wright, J. *Portrait of John Whitehurst* (1782), Oil on Canvas, 71.7 x 92 cm.

<sup>59</sup> Fraser, D. (1988)', p127.

Landscape due to the complexity of its interpretation, is *Arkwright's Cotton Mills by Night*, shown in figure 8. It can be described as a constructed Landscape from multiple viewpoints combined into one, depicting an industrial Landscape and its social and political implications. In 1779 the mills were set ablaze by workers due to the machines being blamed for unemployment. The appeal of the Mayor of Derby for military assistance led to defence by a battery of canon and small arms. By the end of the 1780s over 800 people were employed in the mills and many of which had been housed in a new town. In the example of *Arkwright's Cotton Mills* the strength of the Industrial Revolution over the people provided an example of national renewal in the face of social development. Wright was a great believer of industrialisation and the importance of the factories to development. The Viscount Torrington remarked on the seven storey high buildings filled with workers as resembling a British battleship 'and when they are lighted up on a dark night, look most luminously beautiful'<sup>60</sup>.

The valley sides enclose the glowing mill, reminiscent of the colours of the exploding Vesuvius contained by the geology depicted in the *Section of the Strata at Matlock High Tor*. Whilst representing an area of concentrated energy the mill is shown devoid of workers in contrast to the singular man with his cart, to denote the mechanisation of its processes and the replacement of the individual with the collective. The illuminated and artificial glow of the manmade factory symbolically recognises the importance of the industrial revolution to human domination of the Landscape. By equating the creation of the factory with the igneous origins of the earth, was to make a connection between the importance of understanding of global geological processes and the domination

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<sup>60</sup> Daniels, S. (1993), p66.

of humans over the Landscape. Instead of being vulnerable to the power of the earth, humans are depicted as using their skills and knowledge about the earth's processes to transform and dominate the Landscape.

### 3.4 The Seductive Sublime



**Figure 9: Friedrich, *Der Watzmann* (1824-25)**

Caspar David Friedrich is known as a German Romanticist painter who typically expressed a 'state of oneness with Nature'<sup>61</sup>, whilst searching beyond the purely visual to 'know what lies beyond and how it all connects'<sup>62</sup>. The painting shown in figure 9 has an apparent fidelity to nature, but a deeper analysis of the

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<sup>61</sup> Schmied, W.. (1994), p28

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p35

painting reveals a fantastical element in its distorted scale and eclectic mix of different geological formations. Mitchell describes how:

‘even from the standpoint of topographical accuracy, almost every aspect of Friedrich’s *Der Watzmann* is wrong, from the shape of the mountain to the type of rock displayed in the foreground.’<sup>63</sup> ‘that the artist ‘attempted to portray the totality of Nature, its abundance or forms and details, by means of a crowded, densely compressed imagery.’<sup>64</sup>

The artist recorded a wider panorama in degrees than that which is depicted in the painting and compressed the information into the restricted picture plane.

The artwork has been described as expressing the sublime, an expression of the essential vulnerability of humans when confronted with the awe inspiring natural world. The theory of the sublime was introduced by Edmund Burke in his study entitled *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* published in 1757. The sublime was described as an artistic effect which produced the strongest emotion that the mind is capable of feeling, possibly of such intensity that it was beyond even the reach of human understanding. The sublime has been a source of inspiration for artists since the seventeenth century, especially the expression of grandeur inspiring wonder in response to a natural landscape. The origin of the word *sublime* comes from the conjunction of two Latin terms, the preposition *sub*, meaning below or up to and the noun *limen*, meaning limit, boundary or threshold. Therefore the expression of the sublime in art was the intention to depict that beyond the limits

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<sup>63</sup> Mitchell, T. (1984), p458.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p455.

of the almost unimaginable. The sublime according to Kant is in the response of the observer rather than the observed object.

The outcrop in the foreground is Der Erdbeerkeopt<sup>65</sup>, which is a recognisable granite formation from the Harz mountains depicted by Friedrich during a visit in 1811 and was incorporated into the painting of Der Watzmann as a direct reference to the theory of mountain formation by the German geologist Abraham Gottlob Werner (1749 - 1817) who believed that the earth could be divided into five formations. That firstly the primitive earth was formed by igneous rocks that emerged from the centre of the earth into the sea to create the first land. This was followed by transitional rocks which were deposited from the ocean, stratified (secondary) rocks from the action of erosion on the edges of the igneous rocks, alluvial (tertiary) rocks from the withdrawal of the oceans and finally younger volcanic lava flows.

Granite was viewed as a uniform mass extending from the highest mountains to the deepest of valleys, and in Goethe's essay entitled *Über den Granit* was informed by an excursion to the Harz in 1784, and referred to granite as being the foundation of the Earth, upon which the rest of the rocks are based. Through the theatrical construction of the geological details in the painting, Friedrich enriches the thematic complexity of the Der Watzmann and combines in one picture the total history of the Earth's formation.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has consisted of a fast moving overview of the art history of Landscape, with the express purpose of situating this thesis within the specific

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<sup>65</sup> Friedrich, C. *Klippe am Erdbeerkeopt* (1811), pencil and watercolour, 22.6 x 226.5 cm from Das Esamt Graphische Werk, Munich.

intersection of Art and Science, exploring the origins of landscape from the times of Leonardo until the Seductive Sublime. Essentially a literature review in substance, it has discussed the deeper meanings behind the landscape painting. From the roots in the origin of the word Landscape to the cultural creation of the genre as art. Discussing the importance of the definitions of Landscape to understanding its origins within the context of cultural development. The artwork of Leonardo to expressed Landscape as the artistic expression and an integral part and of equal importance to an ongoing scientific investigation. Joseph Wright extended the intersection of the Art and Science with an expansion in the collaboration and sharing of scientific concepts through the community. The importance of the sublime in the expression of Landscape was presented through the work of Casper David Friedrich.

# Experiencing Landscape

## 4.1 The development of Abstraction

In ancient Greece, mimesis was the act of realistically representing or mimicking the natural world in a work of art. Aristotle defined mimesis as the imitation of nature in search of perfection. In direct opposition to mimesis, abstraction developed to depict Landscape in its components, by deconstructing the essential elements of its composition. Instead of seeking to reproduce the perfection of nature in a work of art, it sought to distill the elements of its construction to reveal its essence. Therefore, it can be proposed that to abstract is to separate and that essential element of the creative process is nothing new, but can be traced back in time to:

'the ancient Egyptians, for instance, who drew the little 'stick men',...certainly did not realise they were abstracting, neither did the Greeks who made the geometric vase...In the Renaissance, however, artists began to abstract in a conscious and controlled way. They found that the shapes of nature were easier for the eye to grasp if they were analysed in terms of the simple and regular shapes of geometry'<sup>66</sup>.

Therefore, abstraction can be seen as an essential element of the creative process, which distils the essential structural elements of a landscape into its fundamental components. Colour can also be seen to have been part of the process of abstraction, in that the essence of the experience of colour could be explored. Matisse was intensely inspired by an after-effect involving the colour red:

'That effect of colour has real power... So much power that, in certain lights, it seems to become a substance. Once when I found myself in the chapel, I saw on the ground a red of such materiality that I had the feeling that the colour was not the effect of light falling through the window, but that it belonged to some substance.'<sup>67</sup>

The event occurred in Venice, as a direct response to a predominantly green, leafy stained glass image in the Chapel of the Rosary, completed between 1949 and 1950. The experience of an after-effect can be seen to have inspired the artist with the power of colour. That the essence of an experience could be distilled to perhaps one colour instead of a palette of colours, abstracting both by limiting and simplifying a palette of colours. Abstraction is the expression of the simplicity in capturing the essence of a landscape, in its form, substance

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<sup>66</sup> Janson, H & Jansen, D. (1926), p289.

<sup>67</sup> Gage, J. (1993), p212.

and colours, the the omission of superfluous information rather than complexity of information overload.

## 4.2 Abstracting the essence of nature

Mondrian would take a long walks in nature and then retreat to his studio without windows to focus his work on the expression of his memory of nature, rather that direct depiction of it. By reducing the complex forms of the visual world to their essential forms they were simplifying them down to a universal essence of form. Subsequently he developed the skill of reducing the complexity of a tree to a few lines, then linking those lines to the surrounding space. For example, in the artwork simply entitled *Tree*<sup>68</sup>, there is a natural curvature to the branches that intersect with the very angular surrounding space. The space itself seems to be sculpted in shades of grey and black paint, as if carved in concrete. The artist has been described as using a:

‘reductionist approach to preserve what he considered to be the essence of the mystical energy that governs nature and the universe.

In constructing his perception of the essence of an image and freeing it from content, he enables the viewer to construct his or her own perception of the image’<sup>69</sup>.

Distilling the lines to their most elemental forms until perspective was entirely eliminated and he developed essentially non-representational pictures devoid of the obviously natural, and composed of straight lines and bold squares of colour. By excluding oblique angles and focusing on only vertical and horizontal

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<sup>68</sup> Mondrian, P. *The trees* (1912), Oil on Canvas, 75 x 111.5 cm.

<sup>69</sup> Kandel, E. (2016), p80.

lines, it is suggested that the imagination and curiosity of the viewer can be focused on the omissions. In 1959, an important scientific discovery was made by David Hubel and Torsten Wiesel in the John Hopkins University (then Harvard) in the USA regarding the biological basis for Mondrian's reductionist language. They discovered that the nerve cells in the primary visual cortex of the brain responded directly to horizontal, vertical or oblique lines as the building blocks of contour and form. That these angles and edges were assembled into geometric shapes within the higher regions of the brain to become representative of more complex images. These physiological findings were revolutionary at the time, and were described in the context of the appreciation of the artworks of Mondrian:

'In a sense, our quest and conclusions are not unlike those of Mondrian and others. Mondrian thought that the universal form, the constituent of all other, more complex forms, is the straight line: physiologists think that cells that respond specifically to what some artists at least consider to be the universal form are the very ones that constitute the building blocks which allow the nervous system to represent more complex forms. I find it difficult to believe that the relationship between the physiology of the visual cortex and the creations of artists is entirely fortuitous'<sup>70</sup>.

It can be therefore said that by reducing the complexity of the visual world into the essential lines and simple representation the artist connected to the rules of the brain to prescribe form. That by omitting the oblique and natural curvature of line, the brain of the viewer was given the space and the opportunity to fill in the blanks with its own creativity. From the 1920's till Mondrian's death in 1944, he

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<sup>70</sup> Kandel, E. (2016), p80.

can be shown to have applied the same reductionism technique to colour. By focusing on the three primary colours, the essential simplicity of the choice of the artist could be said to facilitate the creativity of the viewer to transcend the oversimplification of the image.

The artwork of Mondrian spanned the end of the First World War, saw the start and the majority of the Second World War from a perspective of relative safety in the UK and then the States, but died before it concluded. He lived in a period that encompassed the loss of life on the battlefield and the horrors of the Holocaust, but was spared the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He must have questioned how art could still be of value and considered meaningful in the aftermath of such a tragic period in world history. Picasso's *Guernica* could be described as the ultimate expression of the human landscape of suffering, and issues of the expression of the horrors of war and the reality of continued world conflict, will be enduring and reoccurring themes throughout this thesis.

Miró has been described as walking through a landscape with a 'crown of eyes'<sup>71</sup>, absorbing subtleties through observation, touch and knowledge. The artist in the landscape can be described as being inspired by the spectrum of colours; naturally observing how the water vapour in the air changes from green in the foreground towards a pale blue hue at the horizon. It is possible to imagine the water vapour molecules as part of the global hydrologic cycle, itself being connected to a global climate system, which can describe how the climate was in the past, and how it may be in the future. How the Landscapes that have

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<sup>71</sup> Permanyer, K. (2003), p18.

inspired artists for generations will be transformed, and how artists will respond to this transformation within their artworks.

### 4.3 The Quandary of Containment

How is the artist to contain something as overflowing as landscape within the very particular confines of a painting? The challenge is of how to express the experience of something so multi-dimensional in only two dimensions. Landscapes are continually overflowing with information, vibrancy and movement that resists containment. Despite Christo's efforts to wrap enormous architecturally significant buildings such as the Reichstag in Berlin and the Pont Neuf in Paris 'he has not, and in principle cannot, wrap an entire landscape'<sup>72</sup>. The problem of representing landscape therefore be seen as a quandary of *containment*.

Heraclitus was the first to describe movement, the endless flux and change, as a philosophical principle. Hegel, who considered all of reality to be a process continuously in a state of motion and change by the beginning of the eighteenth century, the arts began to reflect the concept that movement was a primary characteristic of nature.<sup>73</sup> In 1940 Stuart Davis asserted that:

'an artist who has traveled on a steam train, driven an automobile, or flown in an airplane doesn't feel the same way about form and space as one who has not'.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Casey, E. S. (2002), p7.

<sup>73</sup> Janson, H & Jansen, D. (1926), p290.

<sup>74</sup> Kammen, M (1992), p117.

Essentially it can be proposed that movement facilitated the artist to view the world from new and multiple perspectives. Landscape had been constructed from multiple views in the artworks of Joseph Wright and Caspar David Friedrich, as explored in the first chapter, but the addition of speed and movement through a Landscape added a new dimension of complexity to the Landscape genre.

Beardsley (1998) writes about how:

‘it was clear that landscape was reappearing as one of the most consequential subjects in art - a position it had not enjoyed since the mid-nineteenth century. It was also evident that landscape was emerging in a different guise. While some artists continued to represent its image in painting and photography, others - starting especially in the late 1960s - chose to enter the landscape itself, to use its materials and work with its salient features. They were not depicting the landscape, but engaging it; their art was not simply of the landscape, but in it as well.’<sup>75</sup>

The physical presence of the artist in the Landscape distinguishes the artist from representing the landscape suggesting a deeper involvement and interaction with Landscape that links the resultant works inextricably to the sites of their inspiration. They evolved to become artworks with an ambition to explore a contemporary relationship to Landscape that was in harmony with the environment.

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<sup>75</sup> Beardsley, J. (1998), p.7.

Bunkse ( 2007) connects the Greek word for home (oikos) as being emotionally connected to the oikumene (known inhabited world) to signify an inner landscape. That the connection can be perceived through all of the senses, but ultimately the world that can be felt physically and emotionally is that which can be believed. In the search for essential harmony between the inner and outer landscapes he describes that Landscape is the expression of unity in the world.<sup>76</sup> That Landscape could be seen as the ultimate expression of:

‘a unity in one’s surroundings, perceived through all the senses...placing the individual human being in geographical space’<sup>77</sup>

Guelke (2003) writes about how Nietzsche describes the experience the world from different perspectives and in different ways. That the perspectivist point of view asserts a viewpoint inclusive of ideas informed by everything relating to the perceivers life experience, history, psychology and education. That every viewpoint is affected by the perspective of the perceiver. That the concept of universal truth is fallible and determined by an infinite number of individual differences in perspective, so that ‘many assume that Nietzsche has demonstrated that there are no facts and no truths, but “only interpretations,” or “different perspectives” on reality.’<sup>78</sup> That the artist has the freedom to interpret the world as they might see it, but that scientists must determine a criteria which explains their perspective on the world that they seek to explain. This suggests that the artists approach is less structured and significantly more subjective than the scientific approach, quite contrary to the perspective of Leonardo, that they

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<sup>76</sup> Bunkse, E. (2007), p 220.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, p 222.

<sup>78</sup> Guelke, L. (2003), p110.

were two expressions of the same phenomena and therefore worthy of equal validity.

## 4.4 The Expression of Experience

It has been stated that artists 'describe and understand the totality of the visible world'<sup>79</sup>, defining Art as the creative expression of knowledge about the visual world. But to what extent does that awareness extend into a scientific appreciation of the worlds geography and processes? It seems that 'the physical sciences have given new dimension to the arts' interest in the landscape. They invite artists to focus on that which is too small, too big or too fleeting to be seen.'<sup>80</sup> It is said that collaborations are quite the 'mood of the moment, for certain communities of geographical and artistic practitioners'<sup>81</sup> and therefore I propose that artists are more than capable of expanding their knowledge into the realm of the scientific. Hawkins, describes how the study of Art can contribute to the development of Geographical themes, and positioning Landscape as having a foundational role in the domain between Art and Geography.<sup>82</sup> Landscape can be defined as the expression of 'a unity in one's surroundings, perceived through all the senses...placing the individual human being in geographical space'<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup> Wallach & Bret (1997), p92.

<sup>80</sup> Wilson (2010), p86.

<sup>81</sup> Foster & Lorimer (2007), p425.

<sup>82</sup> Hawkins (2011), p 465.

<sup>83</sup> Bunkse (2007), p 222.



**Figure 10: Lanyon, *Soaring Flight* (1960)**

*Soaring flight* in Figure 10 describe a multidimensional experience of flight, glimpsing a coastal landscape through a moving focus framed through blurred layers of cloud. The abstraction of the gestural foreground leading the viewer on a spatial journey through geographical space. Casey explains how 'Landscape painting also provides the imagery of land and sea that geography all too often suppresses in its haste to grasp the literally geometrical\_and geological truth of the earth and its surface.'<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Casey (2002), p 267.

He describes how:

‘the landscape painter operates like a geographer while in the midst of nature and only fully assumes the role of painter in the sanctity of the studio.’<sup>85</sup>

An excellent paper by Crouch and Toogood (1999), explores the expression of geographical knowledge in the abstract paintings of Peter Lanyon, and can be seen as a great introduction to the realm of Geography and Art. The study very much focused on how Lanyon glided above, walked and even crawled through the land, to experience and then express a multidimensional depiction of Landscape. Lanyon said:

‘I paint the weather and high places where solids and fluids meet.

The junction of sea a cliff, wind and cliff, the human body and places

all contribute to this concern.’<sup>86</sup>

The layering of information resulted in a painting appearing abstract whilst being geographically linked to place.

## 4.5 A Sense of Place

Hockney is quoted as saying: ‘I’m trying to convey the experience of space’<sup>87</sup>, that light, wide-open space that so inspired him when moved to California<sup>88</sup>. The philosopher Heidegger (1962) describes how infinite space can be split into

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<sup>85</sup> Casey (2002), p 286, rephrasing a quote by Von Humbolt, .A. (1845) ‘Landscape painting in its influence on the study of Nature’, Cosmos, Vol 1. p94.

<sup>86</sup> Crouch and Toogood (1999), p 293.

<sup>87</sup> Barringer *et al* (2011), p46.

<sup>88</sup> Hockney (2006), p47.

infinitely more places<sup>89</sup>, and Casey (2009) illustrates how Landscape is constituted by places<sup>90</sup>, and those places continue till infinity with nothing containing or constraining them.<sup>91</sup>

This can be visually shown in an artwork that he created in 1982 entitled *Grand Canyon with Foot*<sup>92</sup>, in which the artist purposefully positions his foot in the forefront of the image, in the place itself. Subsequently the artist becomes the viewer, the observer and the observed rather than just a casual observer, thus raising his profile from representing a view, to actively participating in its representation. He doesn't disappear behind its view, but becomes part of it. As if the sublime nature of the view, the enormity of physical, geological and geographical history isn't overwhelming enough, the artist needs to position himself within that historical narrative as having been there. This seems a direct reference to the multitude of tourists flocking to the area to capture the photograph, or currently 'selfie' in a place, therefore remembering their experience of and presence within a the Landscape.

Essentially the boundaries between one place and another can be described as porous but geographically defined:

'The Grand Canyon is qualified by properties that are regional in a geological sense (e.g., the presence of arroyos, coloured sandstone rock layering, certain effects of seasonal weather), so the place of the Grand Canyon in my memory of it occupies a region of my

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<sup>89</sup> Casey (2009), p 350

<sup>90</sup> Casey (2002), p272.

<sup>91</sup> Casey (2009), p25.

<sup>92</sup> Hockney, D. *Grand Canyon with Foot* (1982), Arizona, October. Photographic Collage, collection of the Artist, 60.9 x 139.7 cm.

psyche...that place is not one kind of thing: it can be psychical as well as physical, and doubtless also cultural and historical and social.<sup>93</sup>

In the late 1800s Thomas Moran, depicted the Grand Canyon<sup>94</sup> by utilizing a 360-degree panorama to envelope the viewer in the vast Landscape. The geological strata of the Grand Canyon has been exposed as a result of constant erosion by the Colorado River over the last 5 million years. It represents a large part of total earth history and are one of the most complete geologic columns on the planet, arranged in a vertical column according to the geologic time intervals in which they formed. The exposed rocks range from the 230-million-year-old Kaibab Limestone on the Rim, down to the 2 billion-year-old Vishnu Schist at the base of the Inner Gorge from the Proterozoic, a geological eon representing the time just before the proliferation of complex life on Earth. The recent paintings of the Grand Canyon by Hockney, express an even bigger experience of Landscape. *A closer Grand Canyon* in figure 11 expresses the enormity of the 2 billion years of geological strata whilst offering the viewer a *closer* view of the vast landscape. It is a fantastic painting, a huge and extensive panorama consisting of 60 identically sized canvases, overflowing with visual details, geographical information and vibrant colour.



**Figure 11: Hockney, *A Closer Grand Canyon* (1998)**

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<sup>93</sup> Casey (2009), p333.

<sup>94</sup> Moran, T. (1893-1901), 'The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone', Oil on Canvas, 245 x 428 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC.

In the foreground are detailed studies of the endemic vegetation and cacti, which on the left are simply denoted by dashes of differing shades of green to represent their growth on each level in the stratified Yellowstone. Down in the valley a striking red predominates and is accentuated with the specific use of green and purple, enhancing the energy and vibrancy of the vista. One really feels as if one is looking down vertiginously, an effect which is enhanced by the hanging of the painting with eye height just above the centre. The artwork was based on Hockney's panoramic photomontages of the 1980s consisting of multiple photographs, individual place-scapes<sup>95</sup>, constructed into an artwork depicting the immense Landscape. Some photomontages were loyal to the interlinking of geographical features and the continuity of the horizon, at the expense of the photographs overlapping and forming an arc of around 150 degrees<sup>96</sup>. Whilst other photomontages stuck to the rigid grid format of the photograph, with a jumbled and disconnected horizon as the result<sup>97</sup>.

Instead of focusing on the distant horizon, as in a single photograph, they explore the concept of reversing perspective so the multiple images reposition the viewer as integral to a pulsating pictorial space. Like the ancient Chinese scrolls, and experience itself<sup>98</sup>, a moving focus is achieved<sup>99</sup>.

The painting manages to skilfully mix the two approaches, to remain loyal to the interlinking of geographical features and the horizon, whilst restrained within the

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<sup>95</sup> Casey (2009), p25.

<sup>96</sup> Hockney, D. *Grand Canyon Looking North* (1982), Sept. 1982, photocollage, 114.3 x 252.7 cm.

<sup>97</sup> Hockney, D. *Grand Canyon with ledge* (1982), Arizona, Oct. 1982, collage #2, made May 1968. Photocollage, 113 x 322.6cm.

<sup>98</sup> Tuchman and Baron (1998), p52.

<sup>99</sup> Hockney (2006), p 230.

self defined grid format of the canvas. By piecing together fragmented perspectives denoting individual places the Landscape is allowed to expand beyond the boundaries of each individual canvas, merging the infinite space surrounding each place-scape, encouraging a more complete experience of Landscape.

The exhibition continued into recent examples of Hockney exploring contemporary technologies within his painting process. I was struck by how recently the Yosemite series of ipad paintings were completed prior to the start of the show at the Royal Academy, the last of which was dated October 16th 2011<sup>100</sup>. Hockney himself is quoted as saying:

‘The ipad is becoming a fantastic tool for me...I have done about 65 already. What is really good about it is its speed. No other medium using colour is as fast. You can get things down very fast, meaning you can capture quick lightening effects like nothing else.’<sup>101</sup>

In Hockney’s retrospective exhibition in the Tate Britain (9th February - 29th May 2017) his iPad pictures were shown in process, from the first marks to the final artwork printed above screens showing a time-lapse of their creation. By exhibiting the artists process clearly shown in parallel to the final artwork it acknowledges a transparency of the artist to share his method of creation. He is obviously not at all fearful of having his method copied, as it is a standard method of creation that he utilises on a daily basis, and is using software and technology readily available to all. He is a true creative, open to expressing his

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<sup>100</sup> Hockney, D. *Yosemite II* (2011), October 16th 2011, iPad drawing mounted on six sheets of paper, mounted on six sheets of Diabond, 365.8 x 274.3cm.

<sup>101</sup> Barringer et al. (2011), p37.

creativity and contemporary integration with current culture. He firmly positions the created artworks in the moment, by sending the final works via email to friends and family depicted, thus removing the habitual distance between the creator and the distribution of artworks, and acknowledging the ability for the everyday person to become an artist with the possibilities of contemporary technology. As a result of the contemporary, realtime, immediacy of the process, I propose that Hockney is very much an artist of the moment, reflecting the information age in which we live.

It can be proposed that within the realms of Art and Physical Geography an overlap can be revealed between the two disciplines. Hockney, amongst other contemporary artists, has been described as being on the threshold of the future:

‘connected to something greater than themselves and art: the world, peace, the human spirit, democracy or the universe.’<sup>102</sup>

As the recent landscapes are devoid of humans, could they be described as referencing a time after the departure of the human species? One thing is for certain, his Landscapes enabling a viewer to travel through the vastness of geologic time, and potentially forward into a glimpse of the future.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

It can be concluded that Art and Science interact with reference to Landscape, on the historic and the contemporary timescale. The appreciation, analysis and expression of Landscape from multiple perspectives enhances their significance

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<sup>102</sup> Karlholm (2009), p728.

on a bigger scale. By referencing an exhibition from 2017, the thesis is firmly situated in the continuum of the present, and the work of Hockney can be presented as a perfect comment on the contemporary context and relevance of landscape painting. That by contemplating the trans-disciplinary connections of their creation, we can be reminded that Landscape is temporal, and in the recent work of Hockney, uniquely inspired by the moment of their creation.

# Contemporary Landscape

## 5.1 The dawn of the Contemporary

The history of human development traditionally followed the natural frontiers of the landscape, the oceans, rivers, mountains and finally the horizon that challenged expansion. A global world idealises the elimination of conflict and frontiers to allow for unimpeded international travel without borders, and witnesses the creation of non-places such as airports. The liminality of the worlds borders become blurred whilst the history of their presence are slowly erased from significance. This has been described by Auge (2008) as resulting in:

'the individual, finally, is de-centred in a sense from himself. He has instruments that place him in constant contact with the remotest parts of the outside world. Portable telephones are also cameras, able to capture still or moving images: they are also televisions and computers. The individual can thus live rather oddly in an intellectual, musical or visual environment that is wholly independent of his immediate physical surroundings.'<sup>103</sup>

The inhabitation of this non-place distances the individual from the exterior world, and attracts the intention towards an inner world, an abstracted anti-space. The emergence of the ultimate anti-place, where the event that originally created it has been buried or erased from contemporary memory.

Dillion (2011) claims that the destruction of place and the increased interiorisation of human consciousness has had the result that:

'we live now, though we might say that we have always lived, in a time of ruination. The first decade or so of the twenty-first century has seen what appears to be a distinct flourishing - in the realms of global events, popular culture and the work of visual artists - of images of catastrophe and decay. In the wake of the destruction of the World Trade Centre in 2001, and in the midst of the wars that followed in Afghanistan and Iraq (with their images of exploded Buddhas in Bamiyan and toppled statues of Saddam Hussein, respectively) we have been faced once more with the assault on urban and architectural materiality as a symbol of geopolitical strife.'<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Auge, M. (2008), p8.

<sup>104</sup> Dillion, Eds. (2011), p10.

The haunting of the ruin as a portal into the past and a prediction of the fate of the future, emphasises our own mortality in contrast to the virtual immortality of the online parallel world that many inhabit.

Death has been described by Auge (2008) as a threshold rather than a wall, 'that death is a frontier: one that can be crossed in either direction, maintaining a promise of communication from one side to another'.<sup>105</sup>

The ghostly ability for a photograph to capture a moment passed remembers a moment lost, and by the

'layered temporality they present: they viscerally refer to past and prior acts that are perceived in the present in such a way as to bring the past into the present, to metaphorically bring the dead back to life, and thus to suspend the viewer or audience between history and the immediate. It is because of this quality that photography, like performance, has been seen from its inception to have a kind of magical power, if not to transcend death then to constantly remind us, as a *memento mori*, of the inexorable passage of time.'<sup>106</sup>

Symbolic reminders of mortality such as *memento mori*, acknowledge the reality of our mortality. Yet in the face of contemporary social media, we have the potential to live forever in a parallel world of our own creation. The world of the virtual is so seductive and gives the illusion of being infinite and online Facebook profiles of the departed continue and centres of memorial are created for most places of local and global significance such as the World Trade Centre, Hiroshima etc. Therefore the contemporary documentation of events results in a

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<sup>105</sup> Auge, M. (2008), p14.

<sup>106</sup> Blessing, J. & Trotman, N. (2010), p11.

haunting of places where traumatic events have taken place and serves to positively insist on the importance of remembrance.

## 5.2 The Contemporary Sublime

A palimpsest is a page from a scroll or a book from which the text has been removed and the page reused for another document because as the materials were so expensive to produce, they were reused wherever possible. The artworks of Julie Mehretu have been described as 'suggesting the ghostly confluence of multiple realities'<sup>107</sup> and her creative process reminiscent of the creation of a palimpsest due to its:

'reworking an older, unresolved canvas by removing paint and pencil markings to create a spare, haunting image'<sup>108</sup>.

By delving into the domain of the departed, she is described as producing a 'psychogeographic landscape'<sup>109</sup> through extensively layered imagery that create the illusion of a unique, personal exploration of the past, present and potential future. Psychogeography is a playful domain of geography that studies the specific effect of the geographical environment on the behaviour and emotions of individuals, such as transposing maps of two different regions (consulting a map of central London whilst wandering through the Harz region of Germany).<sup>110</sup>

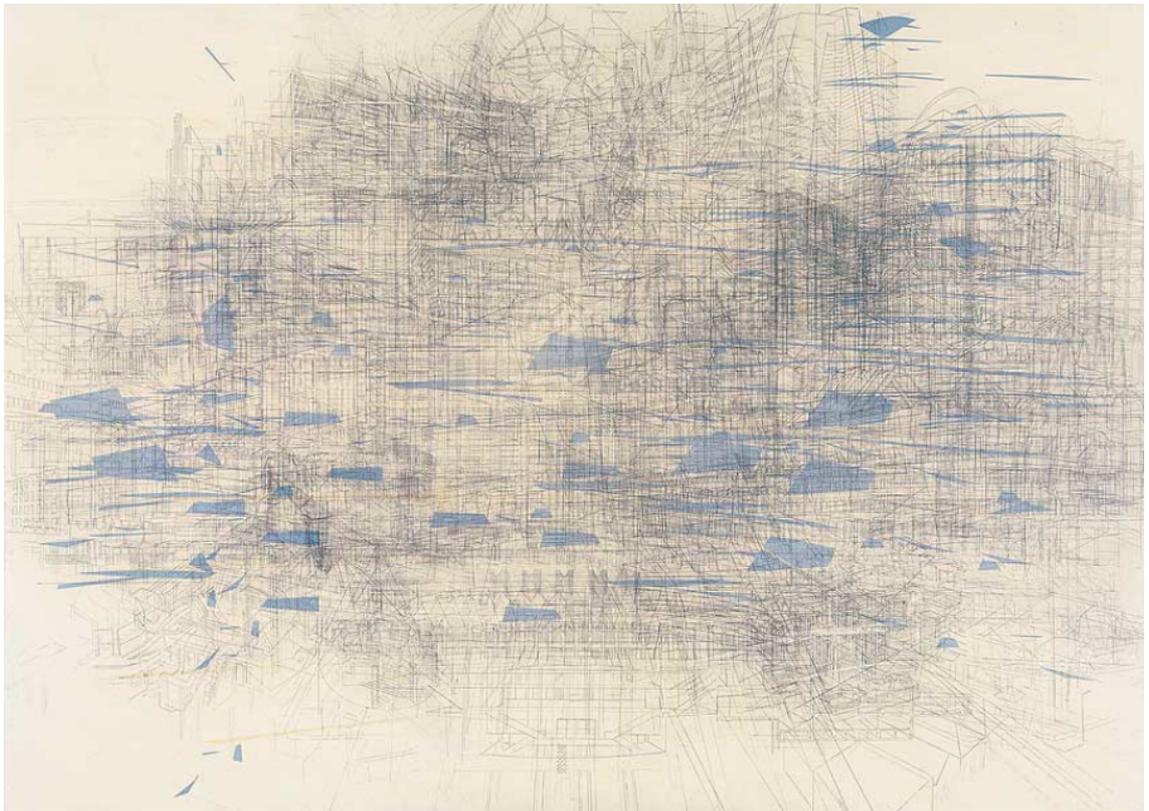
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<sup>107</sup> Young, J. (2010), p31.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, p30.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid*, p30.

<sup>110</sup> Debord, G. (1955)



**Figure 12: Mehretu, *Palimpsest* (2006)**

Mehretu's artwork in figure 12 is a signatory work of urban Landscape in ink and acrylic, that seems to explode from the confines of the picture frame. The surface is reminiscent of the off-white colour of manuscript, with the simplicity of the ink lines recalling architectural structures from throughout time. A city can be seen emerging from the imagination of a medieval scholar, recorded as a vision for the future on an ancient manuscript, layered over time and updated as a palimpsest. This artwork transmits the authenticity that it has emerged from the past and offers a glimpse into the future. Young (2006) describes how:

'a city is constantly in flux. Its boundaries mutate as it expands and contracts; buildings are demolished or decay and then are rebuilt or replaced. History lingers, with modern development abutting older neighbourhoods or the damage inflicted by natural and man-made disasters- earthquakes, hurricanes, war- remaining as evidence of

the past alongside fresh growth. An archaeologist might excavate the traces of bygone times, uncovering relics and customs of past communities in the strata of sediment that settle amid the new. City dwellers, on the other hand, must live in a landscape of temporal shifts, routinely manoeuvring through them as they go about their daily lives. In so doing, they create a unique, personal negotiation of past, present and future.<sup>111</sup>

The resultant artwork can be described as an expression of the contemporary sublime, with the layering and partial unveiling of information seductively inviting the viewer to connect with a representation of contemporary urban landscape. It is as if from the ruins of the recent past a sublime vision of the future emerges from the remains. The vision, energy and dedication of the artist is inspirational and I am in awe of the resultant painting, that metaphorically jumps off of the wall and demands the viewer to pay attention and to connect with the artwork.

Mehretu's paintings have been described as perfect metaphors for the increasingly intricate and interlinked reality of the contemporary age.<sup>112</sup> The multidisciplinary source materials for the paintings represent the interconnectedness and contemporary complexities of the globalised present. Visual reference is made of the importance of a variety of subject matter from the realms of the arts and the sciences to the creative process. The extreme diversity of source material results in the juxtaposition of imagery from all disciplines which could be said to result in the ultimate expression of searching for the universal in the limitless collective of source material. As a direct consequence:

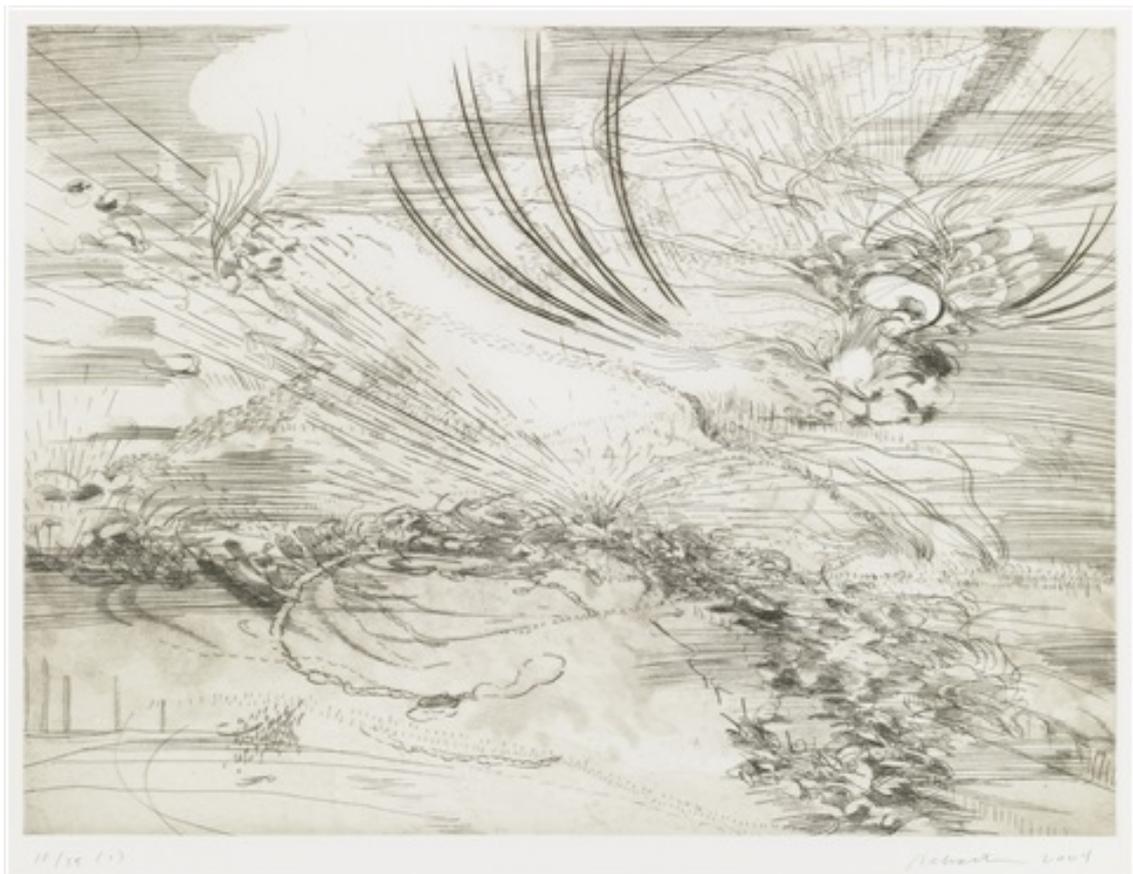
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<sup>111</sup> Young, J. (2010), p329.

<sup>112</sup> Eleey, P. (2006), online reference.

'the structure of Mehretu's work has called to mind swarms, crossroads, grids, nests, webs, whirlwinds, systems of motion, water currents, a tsunami, a gust of wind; the compositional energy of her work is described with a range of not-quite dialectical dynamic pairings such as ascent/descent, destruction/regeneration and deflation/conflation.'<sup>113</sup>

The central concept to this observation is that the energy is in the contradiction. The dynamic interplay between the harmoniously similar phenomena such as the movement of water and the development of weather patterns visually contradicts the presence of unified opposites such as explosions and implosions of military devices, or the building of modern structures with the



**Figure 13: Mehretu, *Landscape allegories* (2004)**

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<sup>113</sup> Eleeey, P. (2006), online reference.

destruction of ancient monuments, which ultimately serve to energise the artwork through a process of mutual negation.

Crossing the boundaries of imagery could be said to create a blur of chaos, but the artist skilfully manipulates the resultant artwork to create an overwhelming image of harmony within apparent discord. Mehretu's series of *Landscape allegories* of which figure 13 is an example, have clear links to the Landscape tradition, where layers of geographical information can be perceived, such as a mountain not dissimilar to the picture of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in figure 7 by Joseph Wright discussed in the first chapter. Liminal zones such as costal cities cutting diagonally from top left to bottom right can be detected, followed by agricultural images in the bottom left hand corner. Explosions, rays of light and ropes seem to be detonated from the centre, and are surrounded in cloud formations and swirling weather patterns reminiscent of Leonardo's catastrophic depictions of the deluge. Mehretu's dramatically swooping vectors and mark making resembling graphs and statistical analysis have a baroque complexity imagining the digital dynamics of the contemporary age. Recognisable marks of buildings, maps and coastlines playfully drift in and out of sight like ghosts in a haunted house, as if teasing the viewer. Whilst capturing a the moment of a global crisis, an explosion fills the frame and the moment of recognition is questioned amongst the debris and confusion.

Anthropological space has been described by Auge (2008) as being geometric points of intersection denoting the established routes between one place and another, tracing the paths of movement inscribed in time. The complexity of these trajectories follow continuity throughout time, and in the contemporary

domain embrace internal as well as external space. When walking in an ancient ruin, a visitor can connect on their mobile phone to the history of the site whilst sending realtime documentation of their visit around the world to their followers on social media. The individual is empowered with an instant multidimensional view of place, that could enhance the connection with place, but often has the result of encouraging superficial engagement by distancing and diluting the focus of the visitor, blurring and erasing the significance of the moment to become the expression of the everyday everywhere. The consumers of contemporary space result in the functional creation of a backdrop to the expression of the inner place of the individual, rather than an expression of the profundity of place.

Mehretu's marks hover like clouds of dust whilst commenting on aggressive acts of destruction interpreted through the media as military unbuilding of the city rather than destructive acts of individual and cultural loss. Dillon (2011) describes how borders and frontiers are interpreted as fragmented and elastic rather than stable and determined:

'Distinctions between the 'inside' and the 'outside' are undermined and unmarked, like the forgotten fallen soldiers on a battlefield. In the realm of 'contemporary urban warfare, 'the city is constantly redrawn and reimagined like one of Mehretu's energetically ramifying paintings.'<sup>114</sup>

The accretion of images and motifs is a process of erasure, stripping back to the essential forms and resulting in abstraction consisting in a grey indeterminacy remnant of a haunting melancholy remembering destruction and

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<sup>114</sup> Dillon, Eds. (2011), p210.

decay. The haunting and nondescript greyness of cobwebs, dust, ghosts and memories.

Mehretu is quoted as questioning:

‘How can abstraction really articulate something that is happening? When you make a picture of a condition, how can it make sense of that condition?’<sup>115</sup>

Therefore, despite first impressions to the contrary, the artist is stating that her paintings are not abstract, but firmly rooted in real information about actual events, places and phenomenas. There is nothing vague or subjective about her work, quite to the contrary! She carefully guides the viewer that her work can be interpreted as a:

‘picture that appears one way from a distance - almost like looking a cosmology, city, or universe from afar - but when you approach the work, the overall image shatters into numerous other pictures, stories and events’<sup>116</sup>.

She is firmly rooting her creative process and resultant artworks in the real, researched contemporary Landscape. Allen (2007) describes how her method of creation resembles the ghostly confluence of multiple realities whereby the construction:

‘is like a series of erasures, each eradicating the last. Seen in this way, however, history is still not entirely not rubbed out. Rather it is re-inscribed. Erasure operates not as a destructive but as a generative force’<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> Chua, L. (2005), p.24-31.

<sup>116</sup> Mehretu, J. (2003), p11.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid*, p51.

The animation of the creative process breathes life into the paintings to reveal a definite kinetic movement that transcends and resists containment within the picture frame.

### **5.3 Historical moments and abjection**

A personal fascination with the German Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin, took the author on a detour to to visit Portbou in Southern Spain at the beginning of 2017, driving in the direction of Paris, in reverse direction to his escape from Paris on foot from the Gestapo in June of 1940. He had a travel visa arranged to the US and had hoped to pass through Spain on route to Portugal, but when he arrived in Portbou was informed that he would be deported back to occupied France to certain death. He was reported to have suffered an anxiety attack requiring the visit of a doctor on the evening of the 25th September 1940, but then was reported to have killed himself overnight with morphine tablets. There is a curious conspiracy theory that he must have been killed as his suitcase that he had guarded close to his chest during the challenging walk over the Pyrenees containing his final, precious manuscript was lost and never recovered, and also he received a full catholic burial in consecrated land in the cemetery in which his name was changed, when this would never have been allowed had he actually committed suicide. To add additional suspicion, the rest of his party were were allowed to continue their journey on the 27th of September 1940, and safely reached Lisbon on 30 September 1940.

Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History* was written in early 1940 and is one of his best-known, and most controversial works. It is composed of

twenty numbered paragraphs and is the last work Benjamin completed before his death. Benjamin's critique of historicism is his rejection of the past as a continuum of progress. He uses the example of an artwork by Paul Klee entitled *Angelus Novus* (1920) to present an alternate vision of the past and "progress". Instead of focusing on a revolutionary future he encourages the importance of acknowledging and saving the past. The depiction of history as a constant and eternal continuum was considered erroneous, as the role of the historian should be to recognise the truth of the moments as they were experienced.



**Figure 14: Mehretu, *Looking Back to a Bright New Future* (2003)**

Mehretu paintings can be described as narrative maps without a specific place or location, as she terms her paintings, allow us to be nowhere and everywhere at the same time. She takes the position of Walter Benjamin's famous angel of history, looking at this world as an accumulating wreckage of events, its strata

piled up yet transparent, a chain of events both painterly and referential that are collapsed into a single catastrophe. In our despair she is our angel offering a view that, while utterly decontextualised, feels sympathetic.

Mehretu's large-scale gestural painting in figure 14 is built up with layers of acrylic paint overlaid with ink. Geographical features, political maps and changing continents can be seen to explode from the centre of this painting. To me the title is a direct and positive acknowledgement to Benjamin's Angel of History, as it depicts an actual event whilst incorporating looking back to the past whilst facing a bright new future.

Our generation was predicted by previous generations and the hopes left by the deceased such as Walter Benjamin to inspire the creation of a better world. By acknowledging, remembering and re-interpreting the past we breathe new life into its memories in an attempt to inhabit and make sense of the world. That by redeeming the past saves the past's future as well as our own. Benjamin's Angel of History is a melancholy view of history as an unceasing cycle of despair. But that the individual events that resulted in that despair need to be acknowledged in an effort to inform the present and the future, rather than be obliterated by the creation of the future.

In the book entitled *Powers of Horror* (1982), the contemporary philosopher Julia Kristeva describes abjection as a physiological revulsion which serves to maintain the boundaries between the self and the other. There is no inherent respect for boundaries as a direct result of those established borders, positions or rules being maintained through fear and control, and through the loss of

distinction between the self and the other, the extreme reaction plunges the subject deeply into the realm of horror. For Kristeva the sublime is an effort to cover the overexposure of the abject with a reassertion of boundaries, and the re-establishment of the illusion of safety and continuity. Rather than acknowledge the real horror of the human condition, the disgustingly fragile border between the subject and the object, we comfort ourselves with the illusion of the spectacular sublime.

With reference to history she questions:

'How does there emerge, through its practical experience, a negativity germane to the subject as well as to history, capable of clearing away ideologies and even 'natural' languages in order to formulate new signifying devices? How does it condense the shattering of the subject as well as that of society into a new apportionment of relationships between the symbolic and the real, the subjective and the objective?'<sup>118</sup>

In parallel to the writings of Benjamin, by facing up to the abject reality of history, the unpleasant accumulation of unacceptable truths and replacing them with the real memories of the reality, we are no longer running away from the fear of the unacceptable whilst risking repeating the mistakes of the past, but building on past mistakes and creating an empowered, new and informed future. Through facing the deepest and darkest fears of humanity rather than being masters of distraction, we serve future generations with the replacement of the instinctual revolutionary with the informed visionary.

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<sup>118</sup> Kristeva, J. (1980), p93.

'We talk regularly now of a world increasingly out of control, beyond comprehension; this is Mehretu's world. There are disasters, certainly - among them a proliferating information culture, sublime in the scale of its urgency and apparent omniscience, that reinforces a hysteric fear of being overwhelmed, overstimulated and utterly unable to maintain a grasp on our lives. Everything is happening everywhere but we're missing it because we can only be here. Her provision of the appearance of an overwhelming amount of data from a safe distance keeps the chaos from being threatening, even at the enormous scale at which she sometimes works. '

This text expresses how the paintings of Mehretu skilfully explore the limits of Landscape beyond the sublime, historical and abject realm, and delve confidently in the the dimension of the truly contemporary.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the challenges of the First and the Second World Wars shook the confidence of Europe and made people question the decline of civilisation<sup>119</sup>. After a period of relative stability there is definitely a feeling that the global energy is shifting and conflict feels just around the corner. Artists have a responsibility to be inspired by the visionary artwork of Mehretu, who follows in the footsteps of Leonardo with the interdisciplinary inspiration for her artworks. She brings the life and depth of meaning back into contemporary Landscapes and shows the complexity and interconnectedness of the human and physical Landscape as a series of significant events. The interaction of her

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<sup>119</sup> Lemaire, T. (1992), p9.

creative process with the philosophy of Benjamin and Kristeva serves to deepen the appreciation of her works into the realm of psychogeography and clearly shows that Contemporary Landscape is an important genre in the history of Ar

# Scientific Landscape

## 6.1 New perspectives

‘Art and Science, the twin engines of creativity in any dynamic culture, are commonly thought of as being as different as day and night. This is a critical error. The partitioning of curiosity, inquiry and knowledge into specialised compartments is a recipe for cultural stagnation’.<sup>120</sup>

Building on figure 2 and the exploration of the creativity of Leonardo in chapter three, to investigate the two distinct domains of art and science in harmony, it can be seen that focusing on the interactions rather than the differences, can allow the observations of one to inform the other, and visa versa.

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<sup>120</sup> Wilson, S. (2010), p6.

Artists describe and understand the totality of the visible world, defining art as the creative expression of knowledge about the visual world. It has been hypothesised that:

‘the physical sciences have given new dimension to the arts’ interest in the landscape. They invite artists to focus on that which is too small, too big or too fleeting to be seen. They challenge artists to use the information and processes of research to open doors onto such phenomena and to make the relevant philosophical questions part of artistic discourse.’<sup>121</sup>

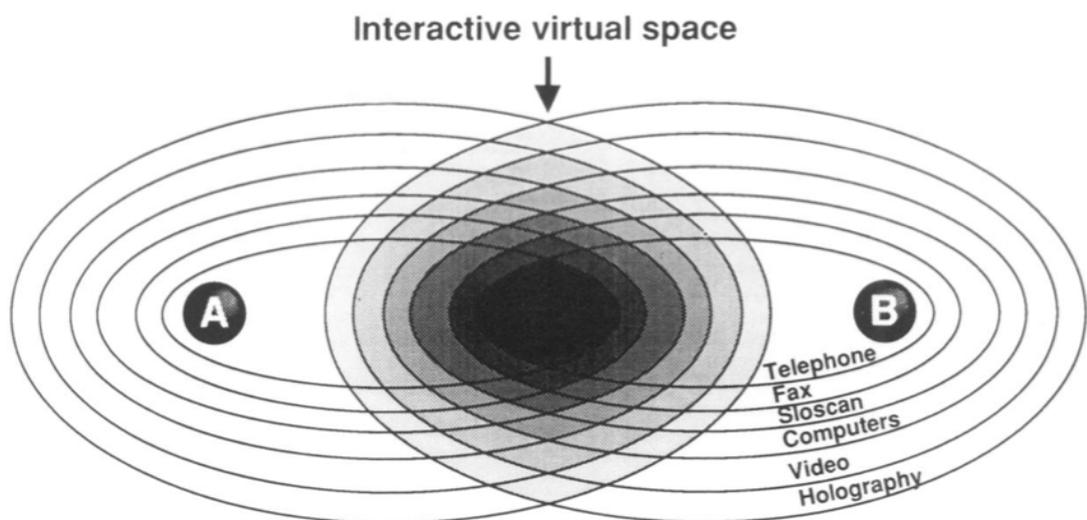
Science has given a contemporary dimension to Landscape. by inviting artists to focus on the macro, the micro and the virtually imperceptible. Trans-disciplinary collaborations are a natural consequence, with creative thinking beneficial to the development of Science, and artists more than capable of expanding their knowledge and creative expression into the realm of the scientific. Landscape can be described as having a foundational role in the domain between Art and Geography. Landscape can be defined as the expression of unity with geographical space as perceived by every one of the senses. Whilst the Landscape painter may respond to a landscape in the manner of a geographer, the process of Landscape painting transcends scientific, geological and geographical reality of the Earth’s surface. The scientific dimension of Landscape is apparent and will be discussed at depth throughout this chapter with particular reference to the contemporary British artist Keith Tyson, whose signatory interdisciplinary view of painting will be shown to bring a new burst of life into the Landscape genre, right up the present moment, as the ultimate expression of the contemporary.

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<sup>121</sup> Wilson, S. (2010), p86.

## 6.2 A different way of seeing

Many artists today are described as working in the same spirit as scientists with ideas to define new realities, incorporating the ideas of communication, interactivity and Foresta (1991) describes how the 'collective definition of reality. Art and Science are joining in defining a potential new paradigm of global dimensions. For perhaps 20 years now, artists have been experimenting with communications technology, trying to create new environments for interactive work, over coming long distances and cultural differences to see whether it is in fact possible to redefine creative reality'.<sup>122</sup>



**Fig. 2. The shared space of communication becomes increasingly enlarged through the application of emerging technologies. 'A' and 'B' will never be in the same physical space, but they will approach a virtual representation of it.**

**Figure 15: *Interactive virtual space***

Figure 15 illustrates an interactive virtual space<sup>123</sup> suggestive of the possibility that two people in differing locations can be linked in a virtual space, which poses questions on the definition of reality and perception of experience.

<sup>122</sup> Foresta, D. (1991), p141.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*, p143.

Foresta (1991) describes how 'electronic space already destroys geography through transmission, gravity and the horizon through the elimination of the proscenium stage, time through editing'. The *proscenium* is a metaphorical vertical plane of space in a theatre, which is observed by the audience observes from a more or less unified angle during a theatrical performance. It can be considered as a social construct which divides the actors and the world on the stage from the observers in the audience. By questioning the traditional view of the observer of reality, we are able to question and constantly redefine the definition of the real, Therefore, electronic space can be undefined is geographically undefined, historically independent and potentially able to exist outside of the usual linearity of time. Each individual perspective on reality can be seen to be connected to multiple additional realities, resulting in a multidimensional virtual experience:

'The manipulation of the real, through its passage into the virtual, is the surrealist's dream, and the recreation of space is one of the most important underlying psychological concepts of these new means of creation.'<sup>124</sup>

In the world of realtime reporting, it is often difficult to distinguish the truth (post-truth from a post-Trump perspective) from the conspiracy. A good personal example of this the enduring personal interest in the work of the philosopher Walter Benjamin (introduced in section 3.3). As an art student in the 90's at the Central St Martins Art School, where his essay entitled *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* was given equal importance to Contemporary Art as *The Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Instead of being from the early 70's in parallel to the work of John Berger, was actually from the mid 30's! And the

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<sup>124</sup> Foresta, D. (1991), p143.

writer had died during the Second World War in Portbou in Southern Spain, prior to the invention of photocopy machines, personal printers, digital photography, animation, video editing, three-dimensional printing etc that had dominated the interests of author and her contemporaries at art school in the 90 's. Benjamin wrote that:

‘even with the most perfect reproduction, one thing stands out: the here and now of the work of art - its unique existence in the place where it is now.’<sup>125</sup>

This has extreme contemporary relevance, that the artists of the moment are inextricably linked to the moment that is represented in their artwork. The best artists will also be revolutionary and visionary in their approach, connected to the future both of through their vision and concept, but also by their process and selection of materials. Tyson clearly closely bridges the past and the present within his artworks. Benjamin states that:

‘even if the circumstances into which the technological reproduction of the work of art may be introduced in no way impair the continued existence of the work otherwise...The genuineness of a thing is the quintessence of everything about it since its creation that can be handed down, from its material duration to the historical witness that it bears. ...Nothing else, admittedly; however, what starts to wobble thus is the authority of the thing. We can encapsulate what stands out here by using the term aura. We can say: what shrinks in an age where the work of art can be reproduced by technological means is its aura.’<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Benjamin, W. (1936), p231.

<sup>126</sup> Benjamin, W. (1936), p232-233.

An aura can be described as a distinctive atmosphere or quality that seems to surround a work of art or a place. Benjamin described how:

'Imperialistic war is a rebellion on the part of a technology that is collecting in terms of *human material* the claims that society has absented from its natural material. Rather than develop rives into canals, it diverts the human stream to flow into the bed of its trenches; rather than scatter seeds from its aeroplanes, it drops incendiary bombs on cities; and in gas warfare it has found a new way of eliminating aura.'<sup>127</sup>

This text expresses a predominately Post-modern Realist perspective by contrasting the vision and beauty of working with Nature to build Landscapes with the reality of human civilisations to continually destroy and remove the magical essence of the natural world. As a German Jewish philosopher who died during the Second World War at the hands of a fascist regime, who wrote these lines when faced with his own mortality and potentially that of his race, is a wake up call to artists to face the reality of our times. Not be complacent and focus on pretty Landscape paintings without depth of meaning, political comment or indeed significance. We need to be bold and face the uncomfortable truths of our time, embrace the vision for the future offered by science whilst honouring the historical realities of our intellectual ancestors.

Tyson explores some of the most fundamental preoccupations of our shared human experience in his work, taking the universe and our place in it as his subject. Gilmore and Howarth (2017) describe how his fascination with infinity, the nature of being and the origins of life serve to map the artists daily existence, to consider universal equations whilst reveal an at once acting as a

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<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, p258.

space to consider ubiquitous questions whilst simultaneously presenting a kind of emotional headline of the day.<sup>128</sup> Keith Tyson explains:

‘there are lots of abstract ideas that I read about, or think about in science, or physics, that are impossible to visualise. I love the idea of trying to visualise ten dimensions, or an infinite number plane. So in this one (October, 2006; ‘The shattered Integer Plane Repairs’) I imagine the whole number plane as a sheet of glass. So, between every number there is an infinite number of numbers, and if it was smashed and put back together and it didn’t quite fit, what would it be that was shining through? Working on that I end up with this form. The ‘Pop’ element, its formal nature, happens by default. It just intuitively had to be that way’.<sup>129</sup>

### **6.3 Responding to new technologies and information.**

His series of Nature paintings have a smooth surface resembling a distorted map, an aerial view gently undulating like the surface of the sea. The coastline distorted, obliterated and overpainted in bright but essentially flat colours. The artist describes how:

‘there are systems going on all the time – evolutions of technical design, evolutions of biology, hydrodynamic cycles such as clouds in this work – so each one of these clouds that you see on this painting appears to be just a nice, whimsical cloud, but in fact when you look more closely, they are all historically significant clouds. They are

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<sup>128</sup> Gilmore, E & Howarth, V. (2017), p3.

<sup>129</sup> Grant, S. and Ruf, B (2008), p25.

clouds from the background of a Dürer print, or maybe they are the clouds here from 9/11 that were above the Twin Towers, the title sequence from *Gone with the Wind*. The clouds are constantly going above, neutrally, not really thinking about the affairs of mankind that are going on below. And so these clouds become imbued with the kind of significance that we apply to them, even though they are just water molecules. You know, clouds don't just have to happen in the sky, they can happen in your coffee when you are contemplating a divorce, or going through some other turmoil. Or when you are having a neutral day, and there are clouds occur – they are a dynamic cycle which is the same kind of forces at play in these paintings, are in another body of my work, which are the nature paintings. So if we look at those, which are also in the *Parasol* unit show – the nature paintings are made by taking a sheet of aluminium and mixing certain chemicals together which have hydrophobic effects – they don't mix, like oil and water. But there is a catalyst in there that sets them, and the different pigments, temperatures, gravity, all the things that are at play, all the physical forces that are at play creating nature around us, are at play in making these paintings. Nature Painting have very little control over what happens. I know that if I put certain chemicals together, certain effects might occur. But often the results are very reminiscent of things in nature like cells, nebulae, planetary surfaces, clouds – and I'd say that these are not paintings of nature, but paintings by nature. Once upon a time, Da Vinci would not see the difference between being a scientist or an artist. They were the same thing, it was just about an

experience of the world and an expression and innate curiosity about things, and I think that that is something missing from today's compartmentalised society. <sup>130</sup>

Within this text Tyson skilfully incorporates the *everyday* into the explanations of his creative process whilst elevating more complex themes and interconnections to importance. By navigating from 9/11 dust clouds, to water molecules, to observations of coffee whilst contemplating divorce, he opens debate into the appreciation of his paintings. He breaks down the tractional barriers of an elite interpretation of his work and allows the humour and reality of the *everyday* to enter, ultimately becoming an artist of the people. This has the result of demystifying the artwork whilst simplifying scientific concepts through art for the general population. Parallel to the earlier discussed works of Wright in section 3.3, his work becomes a comment on the dissemination of scientific information.

Nature is portrayed as the environment, the countryside, the universe and the cosmos. Nature is the phenomena of the physical world and collectively constitutes the landscape, Landscape can be described as a view, the countryside, topography, a terrain, an outlook, a vista, a prospect, an aspect, a panorama, a perspective, a scenery. but most specifically all of the *visible* features of an area of land, most often considered in terms of their aesthetic appeal. Through his nature paintings and the artists exploration of the processes of nature as replicated in paint, he can be described as bringing the processes of nature into Landscape, as manifestations rather than mimicry of the process of nature. Tyson describes how his work resembles and replicates

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<sup>130</sup> In the Studio: Keith Tyson <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/studio-keith-tyson> downloaded on the 13.03.17

natural structures and processes related to the construction of mountains, trees and cell formations. Venables (2008) describes how the Nature paintings allow her to make interconnections between human life and landscape:

'I am reminded of one of those films in which all natural life appears to be encompassed, in which the camera pans rapidly outwards from a single cell, to microscopic life forms, to humans, to continents, until you are looking down on Earth from space.'<sup>131</sup>

Tyson is fortunate to be able to choose any scientific theme for investigation, and therefore has been described as a scientist exploring scientific process through art, without the constraints that typically restrain contemporary scientists, who normally have to dedicate their career on a very small area of specialisation.

The artworks can be seen to express an enduring fascination with complex physics that aims to express the idea that we are full of moments, the sheer mass of events over 20 years of very fragmented incidents, collated into a mosaic of different events. Rather than focusing on specific landscapes, his work could be said to explore the united force of Nature that connects the landscapes.

Resembling satellite images from space, natural landscapes depicted in two dimensions from above. The use of science and new technologies to offer a new perspective on landscape that Leonardo would have dreamt of as he designed his flying machines. They are fascinating because they depict the world as viewed from above, in all of its complexity. However, it is also devoid of

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<sup>131</sup> Venables, F. (2008), p4.

the human, as there are no structures, buildings or evidence of life. The human dimension is referenced in their absence, the reality of their creation, the human perspective, but their absence could also be seen to be prophetic, to comment that the processes of nature continue after the demise of the human race. That we are merely observers of nature, that are interacting at the moment in a catastrophic way with the processes of nature, but are finite in our timescale, in contrast with the infinite nature of the geological and cosmological scale. The colours are often extreme and reference pollution from industrial development, but as viewed from downstream.

## **6.4 The possibilities for the future**

Figure 16 is an oil painting, on a found painting by Keith Tyson. The original painting was a scene of a brown sailing boat by an unknown dutch artist around a hundred years ago and was found in a second hand shop, which the artist has painted over with a contemporary harbour scene. Tyson described how:

‘In that little *Panta Rhei* painting where I have painted boats over an old sailing scene, two artists and two events that occurred a century apart have been woven together into a single surface, like a wave interference pattern... I simply find that poetic’<sup>132</sup>.

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<sup>132</sup> Tyson, K (2013), p8.



**Figure 16: Tyson, *Panta Rei* (1898-2012)**

The idea of a world in perpetual motion is a fundamental concept within the work of Tyson, and *Panta Rei* can be interpreted to mean *everything flows* in reference to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus (c. 535 – c. 475 BC).

Heraclitus insisted that the fundamental essence of the Universe was omnipresent change, and that one can't step in the same river twice. The surface of the artwork is reminiscent of the flatness of the nature paintings, but with visible brushstrokes instead of the characteristically natural forms. From a practical perspective this results from the fundamentally differing materials, from the smoothness of the aluminium paintings contrasting with the layering of

painting on the found, and reused *Panta Rhei* painting. Almost a comment on materialising space in terms of historical and current land use, contrasting with abstracted and unfocused experience:

'*Panta Rhei* was his first painting that Tyson described as *stratified* and the artist described how he scraped over its surface with gesso and painted into the new white areas a modern scene of a harbour. He made an impossible connection between two artists who had never met and were separated by over a century by facilitating a kind of interference pattern on the canvas. By linking two distinct styles of painting through a continuum throughout the ages, that the artists were connected through the transformation of energy despite the linearity of time, like ocean waves continuing and rejoining *ad infinitum*. Tyson has described how this process of stratification has turned the painting into a multidimensional object, uniting perspectives, painting styles and time.'<sup>133</sup>

As a perfect homage to the poetic words of Benjamin, it perfectly unites the 'here and now of the work of art'<sup>134</sup> created originally over a hundred years ago with 'its unique existence in the place where it is now.'<sup>135</sup>. The artwork can be seen to transcend time and space, whilst the artist becomes a simultaneous observer and creator.

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<sup>133</sup> Tyson, K. (2014) *Somewhere across the sea...*, 27.09.14. Downloaded from <http://keithtyson.com/somewhere-across-sea/> 13.03.17

<sup>134</sup> Benjamin, W. (1936), p231.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p231.



**Figure 17: Tyson, *Rhapsody for Random Walks* (2010)**

Figure 17 is an earlier stratified painting which is heavily layered with information to the extent that it is difficult to perceive a beginning or an end to the the process of its creation. References to historical geographical mapmaking in the form of the *location roses*, and the *coastline edges* are apparent, in conjunction with contemporary American motorway Route 15. The painting seems to visually blend place and time to become ubiquitous in its essence. Within the confines of the painterly style and the confident handling of paint, the work transcends the moment and at places references faded and discoloured maps, abstract expressionist brushwork and signatory blobs of

paint and pop art outlining of marks, almost capturing a splash of water in motion. It is a painting in constant flux yet seemingly rooted in historic references, which it is constantly rewarding with its layering of information. By taking the time to experience its complexity, one is both acknowledging the past, focused in the present and anticipating the future of the moment. In the press release for the exhibition, Tyson explains that he strives to represent 'the field' which he describes as conceptual, emotional or physical networks and systems that constitute the present moment, and when combined form the substance of our interdependent world.

## 6.5 In realtime

*Turn Back Now* was the title of Tyson's most recent show at the Jerwood Space in Hastings (28.01.17 - 04.06.17), inspired by a signatory work in the show consisting of the message written in stars. The artist describes how:

'as a child in bed I used to have a game that I used to play, which was to try to think about the notion of infinity. I would imagine it went on, and on, and on, and I would get to a point where my brain would cut off and say enough, when I would have this, it never ends, it never ends. In this drawing it is represented as 'turn back now' in the stars, it is not about space but about the human mind and its limitations, and the way that it protects itself from the things it cannot understand.'<sup>136</sup>

There were 365 artworks in the show, an obvious reference to the number of a days in a year, clearly connecting to the importance of numbers, science and a

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<sup>136</sup> Keith Tyson at the Turner Prize Retrospective | TateShots <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OKq7oJmjvQ> downloaded on the 13.3.17.

connection to *the real*, continuously displayed in the artists work. The works have been described as *Studio Wall Drawings*, but most consist of paintings on paper as an integral part of the artist's process for the last 20 years. They started as a practical response to having a small studio at the time, and the artist would everyday would jot down ideas, his emotional state and world events, each marked with specific dates in order to locate the artworks in time and space. With a selection of artworks collated since 1987 something magical occurs that is more than the individual events themselves, a collective message that links issues, dates and a depth of understanding about the artists creative process. The collection becomes a record of the passing of time in a collection of moments, like the fluctuating climate record held in the analysis of ice cores, or the subtlety of scientific information held in the analysis of tree rings by dendrochronologists. The artist has described how he thinks of the artworks as big blocks of time, association, interesting things that connect to the subconscious, repeating patterns, occupying the free state between sketchbook, journal, a poem and painting. leading the viewer to confront the complexity and interconnections our modern lives as the mundane collides with the sublime. Things are linked in the world that affect everybody such as economics and politics yet the artists response is less to do with the actual details, the journalism, and much more to do with the emotional response, and the visual expression that comes out of it. The drawings themselves could be said to represent an antiquated creative process, that has been superseded by instagram posts, but the artist describes how they predated such social media updates, but are essentially one and the same. The artists evolution of mind over the last 20 years has stayed relatively stable, but society has changed dramatically over the same time period, as now everyone is on social media,

which allows them to create their own equivalents of the *Studio Wall Drawings*. The artist acknowledges that the artworks look rather old fashioned on paper, but to the artist the process of their creation is quite meditative. In a unique time in human history of information and image overload, rather than being distracted by all of the news items and images available on the internet, the artist focuses on what specifically emerges for creative exploration in the studio.

The *Studio Wall Drawings* were split into three different sections within the exhibition, firstly the human scale: all of the events, relationships, deaths and births related to the artist. The other two rooms are to do with those different scales, that as humans we are in the middle of. The microcosmic room; all atoms and electrons, elements, microchips, everything that is smaller than us. Then the final room is the cosmological, everything that is out there.

Figure 18 is a photograph of the final artwork in the show consisting of nine parts, every human event, all of history, all the events that have affected the artist and all of the marks that have been made, can all be surmised as a single dot on the huge scale of the image. As only one of a trillion galaxies. The entire image was painted with a toothbrush to get the impression of billions of stars. The actual work exceeds the domains of landscape, as it cuts its ties with the land and rises to the realm of the cosmos and is therefore more in the realm of the philosophical.



Figure 18 - Tyson, *Between and endless wait and and infinite sleep* (2017)

Constable is quoted as saying that:

‘painting is a science, and should be pursued as an enquiry into the laws of nature. Why, then, may not landscape be considered a branch of natural philosophy, of which pictures are but the experiments.’<sup>137</sup>

Therefore this artwork can be said to contextualise the contemporaneity of the artist to respond to realtime, which can be connected with his work concerned with Landscape. The artwork is dated 01.01.2017 and brings the exhibition very much into the recent past, on the cusp of the moment, and certainly in the domain of the contemporary.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

It is incredible that the artist was able to create the final work in the show, have it framed and include it into the catalogue of the show, when only produced a mere twenty seven days prior to the opening of the exhibition! An impressive feat of organisation, that demonstrates the organised and fundamentally scientific mind of the artist and the importance of concept to the creation of his artworks and their integral inclusion in the concept and final layout of exhibition. In conclusion it has been shown that Keith Tyson’s paintings to date can be described as the ultimate expression of the contemporary, whether they are Landscapes themselves, or whether they form part of the wider view on his output as a diverse and multitalented artist.

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<sup>137</sup> Thornes, J. (2000), p. 482.

# Perceiving Landscape

## 7.1 The Nature of the past in the present

Perception is a matter of perspective. Informed intelligence ideally needs to be combined with a discerningly sensitive intuition in order to facilitate the penetration of investigation into the profound reality of landscape. The very act of perception is dependent on an appreciation of perspective and the viewpoint with which one is viewing the landscape in question. Anselm Kiefer is considered to be one of the most significant living artists and a perfect example of a practitioner who openly acknowledges his personal perspective of landscape as informed by his personal experience as integral to the collective experience of his generation. Born just before the end of the Second World War, he grew up within the evident ruins of war. He developed a connection to objects as denoting important meaning and developed a tendency to hoard

important items to include in his artworks, a habit that has been incorporated into his creative process which continues to the present day.

Meier (2008) gives significant importance to:

'Theodor Lessing's famous dictum - the fundamental function of history: to give meaning to the meaningless. As a result, it was inevitable that by relating individual destinies to broad historiographic fields, the date of Kiefer's birth would acquire a special aura.

All too easily, the relationships arose unbidden, almost miraculously, given that the German artist was born in the year of the catastrophic apocalypse and national rebirth, a year that conferred its catharsis upon the Federal Republic of Germany. Correlations between Kiefer's work and the nation's prehistory were facilitated by the fact that the artist himself, since the beginning, openly makes reference in his pictures to this national trauma of birth. It populates his landscapes of apocalyptic myths and fallen gods and thousands of years represented and denoted in his paintings.'<sup>138</sup>

The inherent guilt and the historical scar of conflict, contrasting with the silence and wilful denial of the people radiates from his paintings as if empowered by the aura that encapsulating the collective trauma reflecting the age of his birth. Historically Kiefer's birth is inextricably linked to his creative process, a logical, predestined response the experience of his childhood.

Braveness and boldness has driven the artist to face the ghosts of his collective cultural past. The Nazi salute was banned in 1945, but the artist putting on his fathers coat and photographing himself doing the salute in various landscapes

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<sup>138</sup> Meier, C. (2008), p206.

was a protest against the ban and of forgetting the atrocities of the recent past, prodding incessantly at the open wound of German history. By delving into the horror of the past it was as if conventional paint was not enough, so he started to mix it with the debris of the world.

His creative process includes the doctrine that he never throws anything away as it can all be reused or transformed, which is very much a German postwar mentality. He describes his studio as a laboratory, therefore he connects with the artist as a scientist, and the interdisciplinary genius such as Leonardo, who is above to incorporate his investigations into his art. To me I interpret the artist's studio to resemble an artist's playground, a perfect hybrid between the mad scientist, inventor and futuristic artist.



**Figure 19 - Kiefer, *Gerhütete Landschaft* (2016)**

The title of figure 19 is translated to mean *Scorned Landscape*, expressing the belief that the Landscape itself is worthless or despicable. Kiefer's

landscapes typically represent a German landscape burdened with many centuries of national trauma:

‘he described how in the evenings he rides through his studio on his bicycle, hearing his paintings whisper. At such moments, thousands of years of cultural history are presented for him in abstract form... What Kiefer really demonstrated was that the concealment of the past had only brought about a silence that was like a thin layer of ice under which lurked menacing aspects of the past that needed to be unearthed and exposed. Kiefer sought to give voice to that which had been silenced without avoiding the barbs provoked by his direct approach to the subject matter.’<sup>139</sup>

Meier’s description of Kiefer listening to his *whispering paintings* is so evocative and suggests objects stratified with references to the continuum of time, with fragile layers that conceal the past as if with a transparent veil, interconnected and given a profound voice by the artist. The artist is portrayed as a clairvoyant to the messages from history, deciphering an insight from beyond the grave, beyond the rubble and ruin that inspired the artworks.

The indomitable rise of nationalism within Europe is real, the risk of repeating patterns that led to the first and the Second World War are a tangible threat to world peace. By embracing the work of Anselm Kiefer we encourage that by facing the truth and confronting historical reality we can step into a new and improved future, rather than risk repeating the patterns of the past. However, it has to be acknowledged that the future is potentially doomed and destined for the worst atrocities humanly imaginable. The wealth of historical comment within his creative process and resultant artworks makes:

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<sup>139</sup> Meier, C. (2008), p204.

'it is easy to interpret Kiefer's works as representations of conflict, to read them as images of battlefields and war zones, of a world overwhelmed with the heaviness of human history, shaped by the horrors of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the evils of Adolf Hitler and the Holocaust, the purges of Chairman Mao and Comrade Stalin.'<sup>140</sup>

The layered landscape is apparent in the close up of *Gerhütete Landschaft* in figure 20, a memory of a landscape splashed, weathered and degraded, as if in the trenches of war or the coast of Dunkirk during the fierce battles of the 2WW.



**Figure 20: A close up section photographed looking upwards of figure 21 exposing the naked physicality of the splashed lead obscuring a liminal landscape, curling backwards to reveal the sky bordering the coast, sand and sea.**

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<sup>140</sup> Davey, R (2014), p52.

The obvious references to destruction, horror and melancholy in his works overtly threatens the viewer with the possibility of a return to the past, that we may not escape the inevitability of a repeat of history:

‘the epic slaughters of the world, the incineration of the planet, apocalypse then, apocalypse often; the fragile endurance of the sacred amid the cauterised ruins of the Earth.’<sup>141</sup>

Overt history, presented in a clear and conspicuous fashion, undisguised and unconcealed with the express intention to inspire change and to attempt to resist the inevitable return of world conflict.

There is no noticeable evidence within the creative process or production of the artist that he embraces the *information age*. He seems to be frozen in a post-war world finding inspiration from objects and themes of the past in which the artist embraces *earthspace* rather than *cyberspace*. The physicality of his Landscapes is evident in figure 20, and signify a reenactment of their creation rather than a representation of it. They engage with the fragility of regeneration from the ruins of our tortured age and their seriousness are as weighty as the lead from which many of the works are made. Kiefer paintings can therefore be interpreted as landscapes for the brave. By exposing the artwork to the natural processes of nature and chemical exposure, he facilitates the infiltration of chance into the creative process:

‘Canvases are laid on the ground to have paint and diluted acid poured onto them, while works on lead are placed into electrolytic baths and left to stand and corrode.’<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Schama, S. (2007), online reference.

<sup>142</sup> Davey, R (2014), p50.

The artist demonstrates how he ruins his artwork in an inspired and intuitive way by hitting and plying off paint, in a video publicly available entitled *Remembering the Future*, referencing a metaphor for analysing the nature of time, the layering of geology and of human history. His process resembles that of an archeologist or palaeontologist, exposing hidden layers of importance and truth, from human graves to the dinosaurs. Within this documentary he describes how:

'I painted a long time on this painting, layers and layers and layers, and now I go back to the beginning... its like in the cosmos, its always construction, demolition, reconstruction, starts to die and others are born, its always like this...who is responsible for that? who started in the beginning? We don't know! We don't know why we are here. We don't know where we go. Its quite desperate, no? We have an intellect to try to find out, but we cannot' The challenges of the human condition, to live in the uncertain, the unknown truth of the past, present and future. Not knowing why, how or for what purpose. We only know the moment'<sup>143</sup>.

In this quote the philosophical dimension to his process is palpable, referencing the nature of the human condition to question existence and celebrating the metaphysical purpose in creating art. Back to the times when the world was created by God in seven days, he is an artist that questions the origins of the earth and our place in it, without obvious reference to religion, but acknowledging the physical reality of its creation.

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<sup>143</sup> Remembering the Future. 1/5 Anselm Kiefer: Remembering the Future <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUQuhoqTKtg> Feb 10, 2015 last viewed 01.02.17.

## 7.2 In the beginning is the end and in the end is the beginning

Davey (2014) describes how:

‘the state of nothingness, whether it is found in the formlessness of rubble, in the ‘Chaos’... moment of creation, or in what seems to be empty space, not only provides a counterbalance to the the state of physical being, but is an essential part of Kiefer’s world and of his art.’<sup>144</sup>

It is not merely empty space, the void, but of macroscopic importance. An ‘invisible atomic world that gives substance to empty space and structure to solid forms is vital to our understanding of Kiefer’s work. His awareness of atoms crossing boundaries, weaving individual forms into an interconnected whole, allows him to feel connected to everything around him: when he holds a piece of tarmac he is also aware of the people who have walked along the street it once formed.’<sup>145</sup> The artists understanding of being at one with the atomic level of the world extends beyond the restrictions of time and journeys into the past and the future simultaneously. The continuous recycling of atoms result in them never being lost but infinitely re-incorporated. Recycling is an enduring theme in his creative process, that is incorporated both conceptually and actually with almost exclusively using recycled materials. It is the *whispering* history of these objects as they talk about their previous lives that led to their inclusion in the artworks that is so intriguing.

It is suggested that:

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<sup>144</sup> Davey, R (2014), p49.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, p49.

'if, as he states 'no atom is ever lost', the astonishing implication is that any of the atoms in our bodies or in the objects around us might once have been part of the Gobi Desert or a dinosaur, of Shakespeare or Einstein: they might once have been in stars and were certainly at the birth of the universe.

The atoms that surround and make up Kiefer are thus minute palimpsests, containers of history that take him beyond the industrial estate on the outskirts of Paris where his studio is located to the forests of Gilgamest, to Noah's Ark...He begins to see the grain of sand rather than the desert, the individual drop of water rather than the sea.'<sup>146</sup>

This expands the domain of the artwork beyond the time frame in which it was created and reveals deeper levels of significance in every layer. This connects with the expression of aura in Landscape discussed with reference to Benjamin in section 4.2.

Kiefer is quoted as saying *In the beginning is the end and in the end is the beginning*<sup>147</sup>. The reality of growing up in a county emerging from the rubble of the Second World War is accepted as an inescapable part of his past and his present. He has subsequently be described as having the experience of the freedom of:

'living in a world that isn't fixed and solid but fluid, where matter can be reconfigured and new mindsets can emerge. He encountered the Chaos that existed before the creation of the world, rather than the chaos of devastation and destruction, and it was this chaos that he

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<sup>146</sup> Davey, R (2014), p50.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, p54.

was later to express in a visual poetry of rubble and dust that inspires us to wonder rather than despair.<sup>148</sup>

Infused with the creative possibility of possessing inherent power capable of regeneration and change.

Kiefer describes how:

‘to wait is philosophical. Today people don’t wait any more. You are always in contact with your friends with your wife you always have your handi with you and oh, now I am there, now I am here. It is no more waiting for someone<sup>149</sup>.

This directly references the importance of traditional creative processes to the creation of Kiefer’s artworks, as a direct contrast to the cyberspace of contemporary culture. How the simple quality of patience is integral to his artistic output, how distance from the realm of the *virtual* and the *real-time* are fundamental to his artistic nature. How the artworks and objects remain from the early 70s. They consist of memories and materials to return to, to re-explore, reassemble and incorporate into future works. The moment of coagulation where the individual and the distinctive final purpose of the objects and the vision of the artist are united in a finished work. Bringing order into chaos, the artist controlling the moment of creation. reflect the light within the gallery to create a postmodern glow. Artists are border dwellers who are experienced at transgressing boundaries as well as being specialists in drawing borders. The exploration of borders can be seen in figure 21, a seascape with a blue sky fading into the horizon and the liminal zone where the sea joins the shore is framed by thick layers of lead that

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<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, p54.

<sup>149</sup> 4/5 Anselm Kiefer: Remembering the Future Published on Feb 10, 2015, Downloaded from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Owl3xsKt84> on 03.01.17.



**Figure 21: A closeup section of figure 21, expressing the pure physicality of the painted surface covered with thickly dripped lead, bordered through clouds of memory to expose a scarred, traumatised and imperfect yet luminescent coastal landscape.**

Shifting, dripping, undefined and transitory borders are apparent in figures 19, 20, 21 and 22. When he was six, Kiefer's family moved from an urban location to a rural location near the Rhine:

'There he discovered a boundary that, while serving as a geographical frontier, was a constantly flowing, ever-changing space. Every spring, melting snow from the Alps would swell the river, causing it to break its banks and flood the surrounding countryside, including the cellar of Kiefer's family home.... this yearly inundation has helped to shape Kiefer's understanding of the transience of boundaries. Instead of seeing clear distinctions between inside and outside, water and earth, body and air, he sees world whose borders exist in a state of permanent evolution and flux.'<sup>150</sup>



**Figure 22: A close up section of figure 21, with drips of lead contrasting with curled back sections to reveal a track through the landscape.**

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<sup>150</sup>Davey, R (2014), p58.

Crossing the boundary between life and death, war and peace, disintegration and formation, destruction and creation. Lack of neat lines, acknowledgement of the shifting boundaries with an edge as much an illusion as the definition of the horizon. The reference to differing borders as distinguished by the marks made by the lead, define a shifting border of interpretation between the natural and the cultural landscape is apparent in figure 24.

The illusion of liminal zones, the exact point of interaction when the atoms of the air touch the sea and the sea touches the shore delves into the realm of the visually unseen are powerfully apparent in figure 22:

'Natural borders fascinate Kiefer. Again and again in the photographs and paintings he has attempted to freeze the moment when the wave breaks on the shore or the sea meets the sky. But he knows this is an impossible task. What he does capture is an instant of natural alchemy, when seawater rushes across a beach to permeate the empty spaces between the grain of sand. As the water reaches deep into the ground, it loosens the bonds that keep individual grains together so that they can float free into the sea. Likewise, the snow-covered landscapes that Kiefer paints and photographs do not depict the moment when the snow is settling but when it is thawing. This meltwater will seep through the semi-frozen ground to reach the river, before flooding the surrounding countryside and finally reaching the sea, where it will mingle with sand that has been washed from the beach.'<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Davey, R (2014), p60.

Capturing the moment is the essence of the creative process of Kiefer. He honours the pure physicality of nature whilst referencing the natural processes that construct Landscape in a skilful intertwining of observer and creator.

## **7.3 Conclusion**

Kiefer is an artist who consciously acknowledges the complex individual perspective that the artist has in its appreciation of Landscape. His paintings express the pure physicality and fundamental layers of scientific meaning and historical significance that typify a contemporary appreciation of Landscape. His message is poignant and brave, as through his creative process he endeavours to encourage contemplation and ultimately fundamental change.

# Infused with Evolution: Ray deconstructs Landscape

## 8.1 A Celebration of Place

Roy Ray is an accomplished abstract artist who was the principal of the St Ives School of Painting for 25 years. This paper is a culmination of research, interviews with the artist and thoughts about his work, over an extended period of time. His work has been described as a celebration of place that resulted from a journey into abstraction. Through discovering fundamental forms in his work, the concept the spirit of place will be explored. He can be considered a contemporary of Tapies, expressing the the fear of war and a discussion of the

inspiration for his works before and after 9/11 will attempt to explain why the local artist quite suddenly went global in discussion with the evolution of Evolution. Contemporary Artists who have responded to 9/11 within their work will be presented to contextualise the artwork of Ray. A philosophical context will discuss among many themes, Baudrillard's analysis of the event, and the demise of history. Eventually a discussion on perpetual pacification will introduce a narrative of hope.

### **8.1.1 Journey into Abstraction**

In 1974 Ray was drawn to live in Cornwall, and when he arrived in St Ives he was overwhelmed with a search for knowledge, to paint the world as he saw it and to record the landscape in a broadly representational style. The artist remembers how:

'this rugged, treeless peninsula with its ancient history, legends and superstitions, excited me more than any other landscape I had ever seen.'<sup>152</sup>

As a student at the St Ives School of Painting, he was also passionate about portraits and life-drawing, but one day his tutor Leonard Fuller, gave a harsh critic of his work. He said that his life-drawing, of which he was so proud, was a portrait with a body attached, and that he had not given due regard to the whole image, only the area of interest.

This event inspired the artist to search for new inspiration and explore new terrain, therefore he took a chance flight over the Penwith in a light aircraft. The artist Peter Lanyon had earlier expressed a geographical approach to

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<sup>152</sup> Roy, R (1999) interview with the author - September 1999.

abstracted landscape painting, expressing the experience of landscape from many different perspectives, ranging from aerial views, walking in the landscape and rolling in the grass.<sup>153</sup>

Ray describes the experience as:

‘a pivotal moment in my artistic journey. From a thousand feet I saw below me a landscape without space, rendered flat, no horizon, no top or bottom, just flat shapes of texture and colour.’<sup>154</sup>

As a result of this flight his artwork spontaneously and fundamentally changed to the extent that he realised:

‘this particular environment is the thing I want to celebrate most.’<sup>155</sup>

This memorable flight could be described as the artists *journey into abstraction*, as he soon found out that he was unable to express the multitude of aspects of the place that attracted him, such as the coastline, the geology, the archaeology, the weather, eroded textures and natural colours in a representational style.

As ‘Nature is an abstraction, a set of ideas for which many cultures have no one name’<sup>156</sup>, it is natural that the artist explored an abstract approach to painting Landscape. The abstraction of nature within the resultant paintings recognised the surface of the earth as being built up and eroded over time. The process of making his work three-dimensional with collage and papier-mache, enabled references to the multitude of information about the Landscape, including tactile surface information from the Earth’s surface. The created surface can be

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<sup>153</sup> Crouch, D. & Toogood, M. (1999), p72-89.

<sup>154</sup> Roy, R. (2000) interview with the author - September 2000.

<sup>155</sup> Roy, R. (2000) interview with the author - September 2000.

<sup>156</sup>Spirn, A. W. (1998), p248.

symbolically equated with the impermeable granite underlying the entire landscape of the Penwith Peninsula and emerging at the coastline to be battered by the sea. The hidden geological origins of the area as a fragment of a much larger whole. Therefore within his paintings the surface and the subject could be described as uniting at the meeting point of reality and abstraction, so that the painting as a whole becomes a microcosm, a mirror or 'reflectaphor'<sup>157</sup> of a particular place, but also of the construction of the whole universe.



**Figure 24: Ray, *April 5: Black, White, Arc* (2001)**

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<sup>157</sup> Briggs, J. (1992), p173-4.

Figure 23 is in a style typical for the artist before 9/11. It shows the signatory limited palette of colours, the sweeping red arc, the almost archeological and textural evidence of a town, perhaps a geological fault tearing through the surface, crossed by a dark brown coastline.

### **8.1.2 Fundamental Forms & Self-similarity**

The artist's process is to make lots of small doodles, and take plaster casts in the landscape and then go directly into painting. His process could be said to reveal fundamental forms of shape and colour in his paintings. By embarking on a journey looking for details in the landscape, could he be said to be uncovering fundamental forms in nature itself? Ray touches on the concept in the following quote:

'It seems to me whether you are looking at the Earth's surface, from your own physical height or from a plane, or from a satellite, or through a microscope, which ever scale you want to work on there is something there that magically links them altogether. I don't know what the common denominator is but that there is something that from my point of view links them all together, and so if I am making something like that, I am allowing the seeing of all these things in my lifetime to surface and to contribute towards whatever I am making'<sup>158</sup>

The scaling down of detail from aerial photographs, to a coastline, to an individual rock and a microscopical photograph retains aesthetic self-similarity. Whether one looks at a cauliflower from a metre away or a centimetre, the

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<sup>158</sup> Ray, R. (2000) interview with the author - September 2000.

visual impression is of very much the same repeated pattern. This repeated pattern can be described as 'self-similarity' and these images can be explained by holistic connections between the functioning of the world's processes. However, through the process of scaling down and 'fractalization', the distances and surface area become significantly increased, so that the coastline of England could be described as infinitely long<sup>159</sup>. As if one was to measure the tiny molecules marking the liminal line between the tide's edge and the rock, observe the continuous branching of fractal forms, contemplate the undiscovered possibilities of matter existing beyond our current limitations of vision, one would soon be confronted with the infinite nature of the exercise. Consequently there are as many infinite connections between the coast and the sea, as there are between ourselves and any object. Also there are many examples in nature that the functioning of the processes of the Earth are very much interconnected within a holistic system.

Recognition of the complexity of the interconnected nature of the world and its processes, is apparent within the paintings of Ray. His work acknowledges that the artist does not need to simplify in order to capture the essence of the experience, but that it is possible to record the experience of Landscape in all its complexity and layers of meaning.

### **8.1.3 Spirit of Place**

Cornwall has been described as a place distinctly in its own world, and saturated with an atmosphere and a spirit of the past.<sup>160</sup> The Spirituality of Cornwall is well described by Du Maurier in her novel *The Loving Spirit*, where

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<sup>159</sup> Briggs, J. (1992), p64.

<sup>160</sup> Baker, D.V. (1973).

in the violent energy of a storm different strands of time magically coalesce; an emotional middle aged son has a conversation with a beautiful young woman, who resembles his dead mother. The paintings of Ray offer the viewer a glimpse into a parallel world where different strands of time meet, whilst having a subtle rhythm and gentle pulse of Celtic Cornwall.

Ray had been interested in a particular shape and had referenced it repeatedly in his work. A few months later he was walking along a beach and noticed a fragment of rusty metal in the shape of an H, K or 8 that was the very same shape he had been recently incorporating into his paintings. On returning to the studio he was amazed to note that the similarity between the object and the painting matched in its shape, colour and texture. Another time, a local doctor was very interested in a painting, and was insistent that Roy Ray must have looked closely at the inside of local rock. As this was not so, the doctor took the artist to his workshop where he was amazed to see that in a slice of local stone the colours and shapes matched those occurring in the painting.<sup>161</sup> Whybrow<sup>162</sup> describes his paintings as having layers indicative of eroded and subsequently textured surfaces that take us on a journey back in time to the twilight of the Celtic era. One is confronted with the fragility of an iron age artifact, contrasting to the power that the object possesses to have transcended time and yet still be intact. It can be seen that the work strives to make a connection between the human occupation to Cornwall, and the people's respect for the land, as a 'reflectaphor' for the artist's own respect for the land.

The timeless nature of the artists work can be summarised in the following quote:

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<sup>161</sup> Ray, R. (2000) interview with the author - September 2000.

<sup>162</sup> Whybrow, M. (1984).

'His rich earthy colours, raised textures, the frequent suggestion of a bird's eye view, the musical echoes, the recurring Y shape that might be a torso, a flower or a geological feature, a broken circle with its unanswered questions - who broke it and why and where have they gone? - all add up to produce constructions built with elements of the past, present and future, and possessing much of the magnetism and mystery of the timeless land from which they are derived.'<sup>163</sup>

Therefore Roy Ray can be described as perceiving and expressing the Spirit of the Landscape within the structure and symbols within his artworks. Day (2002) eloquently writes about the 'Spirit of Places', how they evolve over time, are bound to the flow of time and unite the currents from the future with those from the past.<sup>164</sup>

John Clarke is a good friend of the artist, who eloquently wrote this appraisal of his work for an exhibition catalogue:

'The works of Roy Ray are a fusion of constructed visual elements which coalesce into objects which are part painting, part collage/ montage layered from remembered sources absorbed over three decades. He refers constantly to ideas and images explored in earlier works and the plethora of echoes, geographical and human, which have left their marks on the landscape, our psyches and memory. The smallest of fragments are enlarged and the traces they bear are magnified thus taking us on a journey into matter, its history speaking of time and the unfolding of ages. Striving to make definitive works

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<sup>163</sup> 3.6.11, Art Review, Times and Echo, St Ives - Sourced at the St Ives Archive Centre, Page number and Author details missing.

<sup>164</sup> Day, C. (2002), p238.

from the barest of visual language, he uses subtle graduations of tone and near monochromatic colour, together with techniques honed by constant experimentation, to create works that are both tactile and rich in association. In a recent conversation with the artist, I discussed the concept of 'the field' as a metaphor for an artist's life, vision and working process: and how the inner life of the personal and the collective is symbolically revealed to us by the moving 'plough of time', as it unearths layers lost to sight, revealing our journeys and those of others. He said:

'for me, each season's work always unearths references from the past to add on to the present. 'The shards, bones, half-rotted stumps, snail shells, skulls, stones and broken fragments of lives lived all tell us of past ideas, hopes and dreams for a better future - the one we are living now. Let us re-assemble our elements anew so that those who unearth them in the future will find a record of our efforts and our vision. Only time will tell if, in the soil of Creation's acre, we can reap a better harvest than those who have worked these fields before us'.<sup>165</sup>

The quote makes an interesting analogy between Ray's artworks and an artistic time capsule to contextualise the present for future generations. The contemporary nature of his artworks can be made clear with a definition of Contemporaneity as being:

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<sup>165</sup> Clarke, J. C. (2005).

'the sensation of being in a time together, is an ancient enigma of a feeling. It is the tug we feel when our time pulls at us. But sometimes one has the sense of a paradoxically asynchronous contemporaneity - the strange tug of more than one time and place - as if an accumulation or thickening of our attachments to different times and spaces were manifesting itself in the form of some unique geological oddity, a richly striated cross section, sometimes sharp, sometimes blurred, marked by the passage of epochs.' <sup>166</sup>

Therefore, by acknowledging the multiple and temporal information about the Landscape, the artist is rooting his artwork as truly contemporary.

### **8.1.4 Tapies and Ray**

Ray's paintings are a celebration of place; a specific place: the Penwith Peninsula. His studio was until recently located on a very exposed peninsula with uninterrupted sea views up and around the St Ives coastline. In his paintings, the coastline and the town can be almost glimpsed, as a partly obscured layer of information, as through cloud cover. This could be a reference to his awareness of the fragility of human life, as a result of his experiences of the Second World War, a conscript at Christmas Island and nine years as an active member of the Royal National Lifeboat Institute.

Ray recalls details of the Second World War, he remembers the muddy damp smell in the Anderson shelter as a child, and records with amusement that the war was essentially black and white due to the colourless nature of the films of the time. He remembers seeing the Pathé News at the cinema, the bombs

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<sup>166</sup> Aranda, J., Wood, B. & Vidokle, A. Eds. (2010), p44-45.

descending on to the Landscape to the enemy beneath. The dramatic explosions were often in cities and he recalls their distinct texture and shape. He spent five years in the Royal Air Force where he handled bombs in anticipation of a nuclear attack during the Cold War. He was part of the project that detonated the first and last megaton bomb to be exploded in the Earth's atmosphere, in 1957 on Christmas Island. Thirty years later, as an artist living in a Cornish fishing port, his military experience led him to work for the RNLI, launching the St Ives lifeboats crewed by local volunteers, prepared to go to sea at any time and deal with emergency situations. In his mid-sixties, childhood memories began to resurface with increasing clarity and began to acknowledge the impact of his first hand experience of war on the visual development of his work, in terms of ways of viewing the world and early input in terms of ways of seeing. But he insisted that:

'All my motivation is here... not like Tapiés, who is coming from the anger and despair of war, to me it's the celebration of an environment, in which I feel totally at one with'<sup>167</sup>

These artworks could be described as textural abstract depictions of the physical landscape of the Penwith Peninsula, as the expression of *external* landscape <sup>168</sup>.

Ray is a great admirer of the physicality of surface in the paintings of Tapiés, and Penrose<sup>169</sup> writes about Tapiés as the master of the emotional effect of surfaces. He describes the poetic significance of the surface weathered by nature, exposing a concealed geological fault cutting through a unified crust. He

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<sup>167</sup> Ray, R. (2000) interview with the author September 2000.

<sup>168</sup> Bankse, E (2007), p223.

<sup>169</sup> Penrose, R (1965).

emphasises the ubiquity of surfaces that surround us and constitute our world, and that by meditating on them within the work of Tapies, the viewer is able to rejoice on our place in the world. Tapies also referred to the human dimension of the Landscape by strongly defending his cultural heritage. He identified with Catalonia by constantly referencing Catalan as his native language, and utilizing words in Catalan within his paintings. Roy Ray the cultural heritage of the Landscape by referencing the Cornish Language and its similarity to French; with the sea being *Mer* in French, and *Meor* in Cornish. Whybrow made reference to collage of Cornish words in his paintings as recalling:

‘a language that is forgotten by disuse but lies in the subconscious memory of people with inherited sensitivity to time and place’<sup>170</sup>.

Therefore, by including Cornish text in his work he references the human dimension of Landscape from the present into the past, and could be described as conceptually culturally nostalgic.

Ray describes how he had been influenced to a degree by the purveyors of Art Povera, people such as Alberto Burri and Antoni Tapies, artists inspired by materials ravaged by time, he says:

‘Now that my journey had direction, arcs, broken lines, and arrows, became symbols of flights, as did circles, which could also mean orbit, earth, sun, moon, eternity: and a cross, for over two thousand years a symbol of Christianity, could have many meanings. For me, these symbols have become part of my vocabulary of marks and, like the fragments of words and writing I use, frequently have little

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<sup>170</sup> Whybrow, M. (1984) ‘Tranquil contrast at the Penwith’, St Ives Times and Echo, page and date not on archives from the St Ives Archive Centre.

meaning beyond the energies and emotions of a particular moment of painting. I often use irregular or broken shapes that can be seen as parts of a larger whole or in some cases, could refer to archaeology, particularly standing stones'<sup>171</sup>.

Therefore, the creative process of Tapies could be said to have enabled and inspired Roy Ray to use similar symbols in his own depictions of Landscape.

The artwork of Tapies has definitely been an enduring inspiration to Roy Ray, and there are various parallels between the life experiences of the two artists. Tapies was a child at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936, as was Roy Ray at the start of the Second World War 1939. It is claimed that this political event was of great importance to the work of Tapies, especially with regard to focusing on the wall as the principle theme. It was Brassai's photography of walls which led Tapies to see walls as a symbol of contemporary life. Using his impasto surfaces and everyday materials were a vehicle of expression:

'Tapies took the reality of Spain, or Catalunía, as the basis of his pictorial work: however he paints it without distance or perspective, it is a world which at the same time appears abstract, even surreal. He unveils an alternative, hidden reality beyond the external world of appearances, which is reduced to a set of schematic signs'.<sup>172</sup>

Consequently, if Ray and Tapies could be described as sharing the fear of war, the revealing deconstruction of cities, homes, and the substance of life itself, so that long after the experience, the memories of the scarred buildings and the

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<sup>171</sup> Ruhrmund, F. (2008) 'Roy Ray: Journey into Matter', Times and Echo, St Ives, 2.6.08.

<sup>172</sup> Cattoir, B. (1999), p32.

images of the destruction from the air, impacted on their painting. Then I propose that the work of Roy Ray, even before the event of 9/11, can also be said to have had a strong political context. However, it can be proposed that 9/11 helped to reawaken memories of war, overwhelming the artist with a strong desire to use his artistic voice to comment on the conflict and call for peace.

## 8.2 The Evolution of Evilution

**8 pm November 30, 1940**

A great flash of light!  
A deafening explosion!  
A direct hit on the hospital kills nurses.  
Sounds of screaming as all the lights go out.  
The roof of the children's ward collapses.  
More explosions and alarm bells.  
A white coated man pulls me from my bed.  
I'm tucked under his arm  
as he runs from the building.  
Waving searchlights  
chase the pulsing drone  
of bombers in the blackness above.  
One falls to earth in flames.  
More nights of relentless bombing and chaos  
will follow, though not understood  
by a fearful four year old.  
Nights that will leave more cities  
with their unnamed victims  
amidst the rubble and ashes -  
*Where their footsteps left no trace*

**9.20 am September 11, 2001**

I am watching with horror live TV images  
from 3000 miles away.

Terrorists have flown airliners  
filled with innocent passengers  
into the Twin Towers  
at the World Trade Centre.

Black smoke billows over New York City -  
a city in shock, disbelief and chaos.

Firefighters making brave but forlorn efforts  
to reach those trapped high in the towers.

The sickening sight of people plummeting to their deaths.

The heartbreaking last cellphone calls  
to and from trapped loved ones.

In unison, horrified gasps encircle the world as  
the South and North Towers each collapse.

A sight that will be forever etched  
in the minds and memories of a generation.

A day that will leave thousands dead.

Many more will grieve for loved ones lost  
at a place they will call Ground Zero.

Many victims will never be found  
among the rubble and ashes -

*Where their footsteps left no trace*

The terror and tragedy I am witnessing  
now echoes a subconscious world.

The world of my childhood during the London Blitz-  
a dark mixture of memories and fear.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Ray, R. (2011) given to the author 23.08.12. See Appendix 1 for more examples

**Figure 25:**

**Ray, 9/11 (2008)**

*“a chaotic mix of charred and broken concrete, computer parts, wiring and cellphones, particularly cellphones”*

**Ray (2011)**



Like many individuals around the world on 9/11, Ray watched the horror of the event evolve on television, and was inspired to write his thoughts on the commentary and descriptions of the images presented to him by the media. In addition responded to the event through an artwork, which he extended into a series of five panels entitled *Evolution: Where their footsteps left no trace*. The Project has been described by the artist himself to have its roots in the first ten years of his childhood, a decade that saw the rise of Fascism and the horrors of the Second World War. As a painter, he was not inclined to recreate graphic images of war, but naturally gravitated to writing his memories down in the form of short poems. He contemplated the innocent victims of war, and felt a strong urge to commemorate victims who individually meant something to someone.

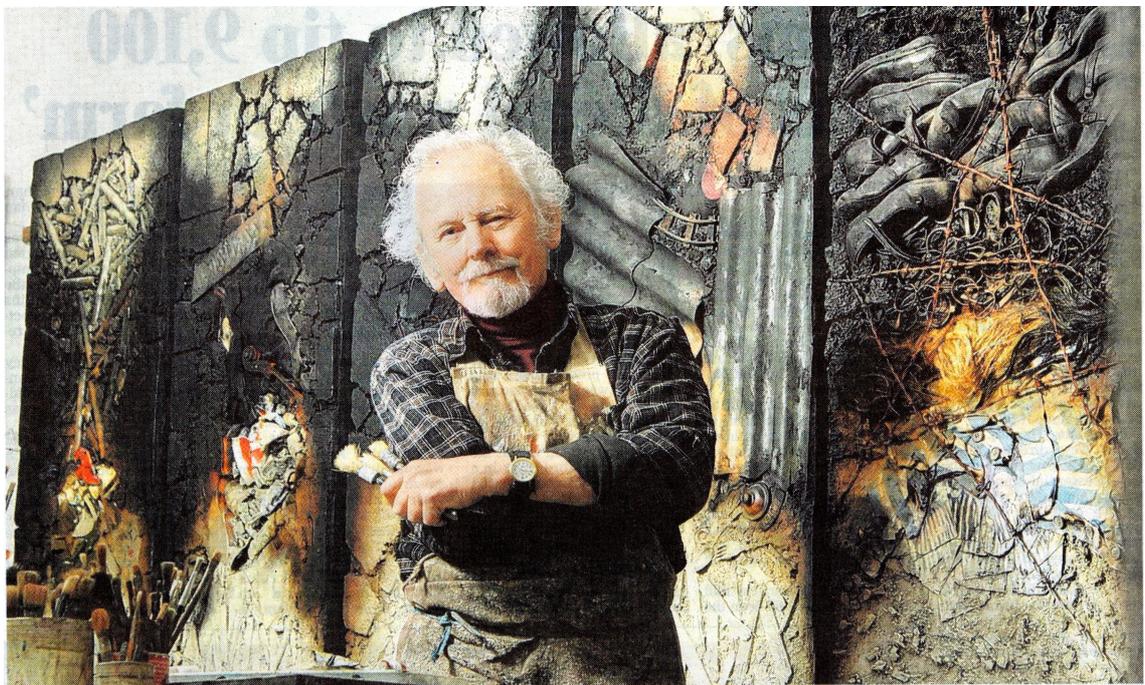
In the artists own words, he describes the importance of 9/11, which is the title of figure 25, created in 2008:

'Then 9/11,

An appalling event that changed our world for ever.

Almost as a reaction I made a large sculptural panel comprising a chaotic mix of charred and broken concrete, computer parts, wiring and cellphones, particularly cellphones. The resulting work was nothing like anything I had produced before. It was a spontaneous reaction to that dreadful day; a day that unlocked a lifetime of suppressed memories and emotions and became the beginning of a journey. Making four more panels in this manner, also gave me the means to also refer to man's ability to

turn the greatest discoveries and inventions into the means of killing, a phenomena I have called Evilution. In addition to 9/11, the panels refer to other events or places whose names are synonymous with the mass destruction of innocent lives by the corrupt us of science and technology: Coventry, Dresden, Hiroshima and Auschwitz. I have given them the title *Where their footsteps left no trace*<sup>174</sup>



Roy in his studio with the five 'Evilution' panels bound for New York: from left, Hiroshima, Dresden, 9-11, Coventry (Blitz) and Auschwitz

PICTURE: EMILY WHITFIELD-WICKS

**Figure 25: The Artist Ray in front of the 5 Panels entitled *Evilution* c.2008**

Figure 25 shows the artist in front of the Evilution panels to express the union between the artist and his artworks, that have been distributed for exhibition individually internationally, in memory of the events that inspired their creation.

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<sup>174</sup> Ray, R. (2011) given to the author 23.08.12, see Appendix 1 for more examples.

## 8.2.1 The interior dimension

The post-9/11 series of paintings could be described as an exploration of an *internal* Landscape,<sup>175</sup> specifically an informed human dimension to Landscape. Conceptually, the work explores new terrain; a collective experience of place connected with an event. Instead of responding directly to the visual Landscape, it extends into a collective experienced Landscape as a consequence of real-time reporting and the interconnected world. This series documents the memories of events connected to places, not directly experienced by the artist, but part of the collective experience and expression of place.

The enduring images of 9/11 united a collective and global audience with the trauma of the event. However:

‘the vivid, horrific images from 9/11 provide another reason why Ground Zero (and the surrounding area) is an extremely unique place: It captures an indelible image of time and place of tragedy.’<sup>176</sup>

Therefore, to return the ‘real’ to the collective experience it is important to connect with the space itself. The artist felt the desire to visit Ground Zero:

‘the late clinical psychologist, Thomas Conrari, argued that it is difficult to experience Ground Zero as a space without actually visiting it. Such a visit, he believed, represents a personal pilgrimage that intersects personal and public tragedy’.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Bankse, E (2007), p223-224.

<sup>176</sup> Miller, E. D. (2011), p113.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid*, p113.

There was a degree of synchronicity in an experience of the artist in the visitors centre at Ground Zero which certainly blurred the distinction between personal pilgrimage and public tragedy. He was inspired by all of the names carved into the memorial, and was rubbing with black wax crayon and paper, but was having trouble keeping the paper still to obtain a clear image. A lady standing nearby helped the artist take a rubbing, by holding the paper in place. The artist found out that the person had been rescued by the Cornish-born Rick Rescorla who, as Security Officer for a company in the South Tower, saved over 2700 lives on 9/11, before losing his own. The artist rolled up the rubbing and as he turned to thank his assistant was startled by her absence; she had disappeared, into the dusk, like a ghost of his memory. The trauma of place can be seen as an extension of the Spirit of Place in Roy Ray's work. It can be described as the interweaving of the spiritual dimension with the artist's role in the collection and reproduction of traumatic testimony.<sup>178</sup>

The artist was inspired by the experience to write this powerful and evocative poem:

### **At Ground Zero**

*Emptiness...*

Where once they stood

Manhattan's bold twin towers

Icons of the confidence

of a nation born of pioneers

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<sup>178</sup> Mahan, N. L. (2010), p51.

*Emptiness...*

Where thousands came daily  
on the subway, on the ferry.  
by cab and on foot  
to the financial heart of this land

*Emptiness...*

Where once ordinary people  
came from Brooklyn and the Bronx  
Staten Island and Hoboken  
to start just an ordinary day

*Emptiness...*

Save for the ghosts of those  
whose final ordinary day  
would forever change the world  
and the lives of you and me

*Emptiness...*

In the heart of a city  
the dust and debris gone  
and in the hearts of the grieving  
for those they never found

*Emptiness...*

With distant and fading echoes  
of ambulance and firetruck horns  
and frantic calls for help  
and tearful last words on the phone

*Emptiness...*

Already only a pause  
in the pulse at the heart of a city  
not willing to yield to terror  
or forget those who have gone

Thoughts at Ground Zero - December 2007<sup>179</sup>

This poem is a dramatic reproduction of collective and traumatic testimony. The reference to ghosts echoes the artists pre-9/11 artwork regarding the spirituality of place. The use of technology within the event is referenced within the poem through the phrase 'frantic calls for help and tearful last words on the phone'. It is the relevance of technology that led the artist to:

'use a chaotic mix of charred and broken concrete, computer parts, wiring and cellphones, particularly cellphones.'<sup>180</sup>

The recognisable forms emerge from the painting like contemporary fossils, full of meaning and reminiscent of time capsules for a future generation. The sculptural use of symbolic elements essential to the event, but imagined and

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<sup>179</sup> Ray, R. (2011) notes on a journey, given by the artist 23.08.12. See Appendix 1 for more examples.

<sup>180</sup> Ray, R. (2011) given to the author 23.08.12, see Appendix 1 for more information.

reconstructed from a distance, within the artists studio, connected through the Atlantic Ocean pounding the coastline.

The artwork could be considered a monument to the event:

'The question of what is it that calls forth monuments for some events (or places associated with death) and not for others is a difficult one to answer. One can argue that certain places, events, or experiences are largely perceived by a sizeable number of interested others to be worthy of a monument because the loss associated with that particular event or place was so profound.'<sup>181</sup>

In addition, the journey to create a public monument on the site has been a complex and emotionally charged challenge. This is due in part to the complex location of the the World Trade Centre area, surrounded by commercial, residential and public buildings, in contrast to the idyllic country setting of the battlefields of the American Civil War/World Wars, which has made the logistics of commemorating the site more profound.<sup>182</sup> Rudolph Giuliani, who was the mayor of New York, said that he was convinced that Ground Zero should be declared a memorial, and that the entire 16 acres should be dedicated to commemorating the heroism and horror of the event. By equating the site with sacred ground he described that:

'Ground [Z]ero is a cemetery. It is the last resting place for loved ones whose bodies were not recovered and whose remains are still within that hallowed ground. We must respect the role these events

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<sup>181</sup> Miller, E. D. (2011), p115.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, p117.

play in our history...—if we let some minor memorial be dwarfed by office space—people a hundred years from now will say this generation did not understand the significance of that world-altering day.<sup>183</sup>

The power of place is evident in the sacred space of Ground Zero, equated with a cemetery due to the huge number of people who collectively died there.

Subsequently, it is natural that this spirit of place has been expressed in the artwork of Ray. By linking the 9/11 panel to historic events he connects to other momentous events which had a global socio-political connection. By taking the panels into a global context he expands the significance of the 9/11 event, beyond the present and into the future.

Take a short moment to remember the words of the artist's poem:

‘Already only a pause in the pulse at the heart of a city not willing to yield to terror or forget those who have gone’.

Firstly, in the ‘realtime’ pace of modern living, the event was a pause in the continuous pulse of a city that never sleeps, and is virtually forgotten like a missed heart beat. Secondly, the media control of the event empowered the population to resist the fear of terror but to remember the trauma and loss of the event. By being pulled in the opposite directions of essentially strength and nostalgia, may risk the place and the event being swallowed up by the continuum of time. It is the artists vision that his work lives on to remind people of the event and the historic events which led up to it, in attempt to avoid the continual repetition of conflict.

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<sup>183</sup> Miller, E. D. (2011), p116.

## 8.2.2 Richter, Fischl & Wodiczko

Internationally recognised artists such as Gerhard Richter, Krzysztof Wodiczko and Eric Fischl have all explored 9/11 within their own practice and an appraisal of their work supports a contemporary context for the work of Ray.

Richter's artwork entitled *September*<sup>184</sup> resembles from a distance grey smudges, and is typical of his style over the last decade or so, which has been described as the *Blur*. It has the approximate dimensions of a television screen, which places it in the range of the multitude of media images people saw of the attack on television.<sup>185</sup> It is a contemporary contrast to the large historical paintings typically representing historical events such as Picasso's *Guernica*.

The artist:

'initially rendered the full explosive power of the hijacked plane's collision with the skyscraper in bold tones and colours. Richter felt defeated as an artist by the failure of his work to measure up to the vividness direct photographic documentation of that collision achieved.'<sup>186</sup>

However, the work has achieved international recognition and has been described as depicting:

'among the first dimensions of reality - and of documentary art's standard claims to truthfulness - that is erased by Richter's painterly methodology is time itself. Along with it goes the photographic fiction of 'the decisive moment that encapsulates the essence of the people

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<sup>184</sup> Richter, G. *September* (2005) Oil on canvas, 52 x 72 cm, museum of modern art NY.

<sup>185</sup> Storr, R. (2009), p47.

<sup>186</sup> Storr, R. (2009), p47.

and things arrested by the cameras shutter. Of...here is the moment when it happened...such images prove nothing. Moreover, with or without subscribing to conspiracy theories even, the most credulous person studying these pictures is aware that the truth of those events does not reside in their grainy details. Neither does the truth of 9/11/01 lie in any of the pictures taken that day: and much less is it distilled in any single picture. Richter's blur makes that flux and indeterminacy explicit.<sup>187</sup>

The birth of Wodiczko during the Second World War 'qualifies him to understand some of the psychological and physical scars that war and persecution leave behind.'<sup>188</sup> His public projections, such as the *Veteran's Project*<sup>189</sup>, attempt to counter the "vanquishing" of voices from history.<sup>190</sup> :

'Wodiczko constructed a narrative in the environment using the testimony of recent veterans and an Iraqi woman who had directly experienced the effects of war. The ten-minute loop began with relative silence. Only muffled conversations, sounds of children playing, and a barking dog could be heard through the otherwise ambient noise. Suddenly, bombs are heard and seen in the distance, soldiers yell, women and children scream, and the glass of the windows is shattered by incoming bullets. Discernible only from the dialogue, a boy is hurt, a grieving mother cries, and a fallen American

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, p54.

<sup>188</sup> Mahan, N. L. (2010), p3.

<sup>189</sup> Wodiczko, K. (2009) *The Veteran's Project*, exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, Massachusetts.

<sup>190</sup> Mahan, N. L. (2010), p44.

soldier is taken away by helicopter. The complex constructed environment placed the viewer at the site of tragedy. No longer does the viewer listen to recollections of traumatic experience. They find themselves in a recreation of the nightmare - a recreation that brought many of the viewers at the opening of the installation to tears.’<sup>191</sup>

His conceptual installations have been described as forcing the viewer to feel the full range of emotions of imagined experience.<sup>192</sup>

Doucet and Rovers (2010) describe psychological trauma as so overwhelming as to induce a sense of helplessness which extends long before the actually experienced traumatic event.<sup>193</sup> As war-related trauma, it can even be passed through generations from survivors to their children and grandchildren.<sup>194</sup> Post 9/11 civilian trauma has created a psychologized world in which trauma and terror are considered part of the contemporary world.<sup>195</sup>

Fischl’s *Tumbling Woman*<sup>196</sup> was created to commemorate the people who fell to their deaths on 9/11, in the form of a bronze sculpture of a naked female figure in free fall. It was displayed at the Rockefeller Centre, but it was draped and removed after only a few days, due to intense public outcry. It is an example of a censored effort to restore a modified image and memory of the

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<sup>191</sup> Mahan, N. L. (2010), p47-48.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, p8-9.

<sup>193</sup> Doucet and Rovers (2010), p94.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, p95.

<sup>195</sup> Mahan, N. L. (2010), p31.

<sup>196</sup> Fischl, E. *Tumbling Woman* (2002), Bronze, 94 x 188 x 127 cm.

event.<sup>197</sup> The artist commented on the shift from real to symbolic loss in the following quote:

‘Maybe it was because there were no bodies. With the exception of a few of the jumpers and some firemen who died on the ground, everything was pulverized. Because there was such a body count and yet there were no bodies, it became incomprehensible. Plus the idea of how people died was so terrifying, it became intolerable. So immediately everyone started to mourn the loss of the buildings, which totally shifted it to a symbolic loss rather than a real one. To me, that seemed wrong.’<sup>198</sup>

The attempt to modify the memory of the event to focus on the lost buildings rather than the death toll is an interesting idea, which the artist has attempted to counteract by creating sculptures of the falling bodies. The description of the event as shifting from a real event to being symbolic, is also an important aspect of the modification of the event.

### **8.3 Sublime Terrorism**

McCallam’s intriguing paper *The Terrorist Earth*, questions if there can be parallels made between large-scale geological phenomena such as earthquakes, and modern terrorism. Mc Callam (2012) mentions the use of an:

‘earthquake as terrorist device raises the intriguing question of whether the Earth, or rather its major geological phenomena, afford important archetypes of Western terrorist action. To what degree

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<sup>197</sup> Sherman, D. J. & Nardin, T. Eds. (2006), p60.

<sup>198</sup> [www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/11805/eric-fischl](http://www.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/11805/eric-fischl) 11.05.2007 Interview with the artist by Robert Ayers.

might the Earth itself be conceived of as 'terrorist'? To what extent does the terror of its quakes, landslides, eruptions and tsunamis inform conceptualisations and realisations of terrorism'.<sup>199</sup>

Terror is described as fundamentally fear manifested as trembling, which is semantically seismic.<sup>200</sup> The sublime of the eighteenth century is the aesthetic and moral appreciation of a *terrible otherness* when faced with overwhelming natural force. It is to be found in ideas and perception of the external world, rather than external objects themselves:

'In our confrontation with the incommensurable otherness of the vast expanse of the desert or a star-lit sky, or the unimaginable power of a volcanic eruption or an earthquake, the imagination is overwhelmed, causing a sensation of intensely alienating displeasure'.<sup>201</sup>

It is claimed that in the writings of Kant, that only when one is assured of physical safety, is terror experienced as sublime. In contrast to Kant, the sublime for Burke is described as fundamentally political and concerned with power, but:

'may well be natural forces - the cataract, the earthquake, the volcano - 'the power which arises from institution in kings and commanders has the same connection with terror'. In this sense, Burke's sublime is perhaps the more prescient for our present consideration of how natural disasters might serve as a model for terrorist action.'<sup>202</sup>

Mc Callam states that 9/11 could be described as the *eventuality of all events*:

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<sup>199</sup> Mc Callam, D. (2012), p216.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid*, p217.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, p218.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid*, p219

'The purity, singularity or exemplarity of these events seem to derive from their distilling, as much as is possible, the presence of death in the absence of reason. In earthquake, revolution and terror attack, death might then be defined as the *eventuality of all events*, their fundamental essence apprehended, however fleetingly, in each of these terrible acts.'<sup>203</sup>

Essentially, the seduction of the Sublime presented by the media could be described as transfixing the attention of the viewers in an eventual symbolic event. Langer (2013) describes the interesting parallel between development of technology and the prediction and control of the effect of natural disasters. By making the world temporarily more peaceful:

'these scientific achievements, which gave new meaning to our lives and acted as a buffer to protect us from death anxiety, were soon to betray us and become the very tools of mass destruction and death that would destroy man in violent spasms of technological efficiency. According to Bettelheim the development of the atomic bomb and the Nazi death camps became the indicators of the ineffectiveness of our civilization's defences against the reality of death. Progress not only failed to preserve life but it deprived millions of their lives more effectively than had been possible ever before.'<sup>204</sup>

This quote supports Ray's vision of the panels as expressing the development of technology with an exponential increase in the severity in acts of horror.

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<sup>203</sup> Langer, S. (2013), p219

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*, p6.

### 8.3.1 The Absolute Event

The French philosopher Baudrillard described 9/11 as the absolute event<sup>205</sup> which disrupted the linearity of history<sup>206</sup>. An event so large as to resist interpretation could be described as the ultimate evil, but Baudrillard proposes that as 'good and evil' advance together, it is the energy of constant exchange which results in a peak of violence. As long as there is a balance between Good and evil the equilibrium and tension of the moral Landscape will be under stress and risk reaching or exceeding the existing boundary of the ultimate event. However', the event of 9/11 was considered so unacceptable that it cannot be repeated with this dialectical relation, therefore it is wished that the peak of evil has been reached, and therefore the event is called the ultimate event. The event to end all events. He describes how a symbolic event is significantly worse than a real event:

'The terrorist violence here is not, then, a blowback of reality, any more than it is a blowback of history. It is not 'real'. In a sense, it is worse: it is symbolic. violence in itself may be perfectly banal and inoffensive. Only symbolic violence is generative of singularity. An in this singular event, in this Manhattan disaster movie, the twentieth century's two elements of mass fascination are combined: the white magic of the cinema and the black magic of terrorism; the white light of the image and the black light of terrorism.'<sup>207</sup>

Essentially a grey zone, between the extremes of the pure white good and the contaminated black evil is the only place where the exponential growth of the

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<sup>205</sup> Baudrillard, J. (2002), p3.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid*, p4.

<sup>207</sup>*Ibid*, p29.

advance of good and evil could be avoided. This parallels the format of Roy's panels, the contrast between the spotlight areas and the dark depths of the edges.

Baudrillard writes that:

'there is no remedy for this extreme situation, and war is certainly not a solution, since it merely offers a rehash of the past, with the same deluge of military forces, bogus information, senseless bombardment, emotive and deceitful language, technological deployment and brainwashing.'<sup>208</sup>

This directly relates to Roy's panels, as they do not proceed in historical time beyond the 9/11 event, and the artist has no intention of producing any work after this date, neither in response to the invasions of Iraq, Afghanistan, nor any future events. Therefore, he is constantly looking back before 9/11 rather than beyond it, referencing the circularity of history, the impenetrability beyond the absolute event of 9/11, and the ultimate demise of linear history.

The symbolic event focuses on the dramatic suicide of the towers as emphasising the fragility of global power:

'Seeing them collapse themselves, as if by implosion, one had the impression that they were committing suicide in response to the suicide of the suicide planes.'<sup>209</sup>

Baudrillard questions the implications of 9/11 if the event was staged, or if only one, or neither of the towers had collapsed. He proposes the loss of the 'real' in

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<sup>208</sup> Baudrillard, J. (2002), p34.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid*, p43.

the event is terroristic in itself as it is essentially the denial of reality<sup>210</sup>, even a constructed reality:

‘This would merely be a political conspiracy... September 11 will have raised with some violence the question of reality, of which the fanciful conspiracy theory is the imaginary by-product. Hence, perhaps, the vehemence with which this theory has been rejected on all sides. Is it because it may be seen as anti-American, and absolves the terrorists from blame?’<sup>211</sup>.

Therefore, political allegiance contrary to questioning the authenticity of the event is emphasised as the only solution, due to the demise of the *real event* resultant from the *absolute event*.

### 8.3.2 The Ghosts of a Vanished Universal

The virtual dimension of the network, the digital universe and dimensionless space-time has replaced the universal <sup>212</sup> with a symbolic screen. Linear history, representation of the real and memories wander like *ghosts of a vanished universal*.<sup>213</sup>

Baudrillard states that:

‘it is the excess of reality that makes us stop believing in it. The saturation of the world, the technical saturation of life, the excess of possibilities, of actualization of needs and desires.’<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Baudrillard, J. (2002), p80.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid*, p78-9

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid*, p92.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid*, p91.

<sup>214</sup> Baudrillard, J. (2005), p19

The information overload of the symbolic world has resulted in the demise of time:

'Time itself, lived time, no longer has time to take place. The historical time of events, the psychological time of affects and passion, the subjective time of judgement and will, are all simultaneously called into question by virtual time, which is called ,no doubt derisively, 'real time'. It is, in fact, no accident if space-time is called 'real'. Temps réel, Echtzeit: this is 'authentic' time, non-deferred time, the time of an instantaneous presence that is no longer even the present moment in relation to a past or a future, but a point of convergence, and at the same time of cancellation, of all the other dimensions. An Integral reality of time that is now concerned with nothing but its own operation: time-processing (like 'word-processing,' 'war-processing,' etc.).'<sup>215</sup>

The paradox of 'realtime' emphasises the artifice of information, and the continuous circularity of time results in the multitudinous dimensions of time contracting to a punctum. An immersion in the virtual has erased the representation of the real, the gaze no longer wanders over an imaginary exterior scene, but is absorbed in an immediate interior existence.<sup>216</sup>

The screen has become an empty domain of misrepresentation and the obliteration of boundaries:

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<sup>215</sup>Baudrillard, J. (2005), p30

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid*, p31.

'Videos, interactive screens, multi-media, the Internet, Virtual Reality: interactivity threatens us on all sides. What was once separated is everywhere merged. Distance is everywhere abolished: between the sexes, between opposite poles, between the stage and the auditorium, between the protagonists of the action, between the subject and the object, between the real and its double. And this confusion of terms, this collision of poles, means that nowhere is value judgement now possible anywhere any longer: either in art, or in morality or in politics. By the abolition of distance, of the 'pathos' of distance, everything becomes undecidable. When an event and the broadcasting of that event in real time are too close together, the event is rendered undecidable and virtual; it is stripped of its historical dimension and removed from memory. We are in a generalised feedback effect.<sup>217</sup>

An amalgamation of the antithetical can be seen to be fundamental to a comprehension of the virtual. The abolition of distance has the consequence of erasing memory and dismantling the historical context.

### **8.3.3 The Sphere of the Virtual**

The continuous information fails to educate, but bombards and overwhelms by hyper-visualizing the event.<sup>218</sup> In the sphere of the Virtual the aesthetic gaze is replaced by complete immersion, essentially constituting visual pollution.

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<sup>217</sup> Baudrillard, J. (2005), p75.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, p77.

People travel technologically from one place to another and traditional notions of distance are replaced by the speed of internet connections:

'We are passing into a realm where events no longer truly take place, by dint of their very production and dissemination in 'real time' - where they become lost in the void of news and information. The sphere of information is like a space where, after having emptied events of their substance, an artificial gravity is created and they are put back in orbit in 'real time' - where having shorn them of historical vitality, they are re-projected on to the transpolitical stage of information. The non-event is not when nothing happens. It is, rather, the realm of perpetual change, of a ceaseless updating, of an incessant succession in real time, which produces this general equivalence, this indifference, this banality that characterises the zero degree of the event. A perpetual escalation that is also the escalation of growth - or of fashion, which is pre-eminently the field of compulsive change and built-in obsolescence. The ascendancy of models gives rise to a culture of difference that puts an end to any historical continuity. Instead of unfolding as part of a history, things have begun to succeed each other in the void. A profusion of language and images before which we are defenceless, reduced to the same powerlessness, to the same paralysis as we might show on the approach of war.'<sup>219</sup>

The media illusion of events are a facade for the real event. The illusion of 'realtime' obliterates the past and any concept of a future.<sup>220</sup> Realtime

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<sup>219</sup> Baudrillard, J. (2005), p122.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid*, p132.

essentially questions the time of the event historically, psychologically, subjectively and objectively. It obliterates real information about time, distance and essentially the truth of the event.<sup>221</sup> In the media sphere, the presentation of the event always endeavours to be one step ahead of the unfolding drama. For example, the aerial 'realtime' footage of the 2011 Tsunami descending on the coast and sweeping up people, vehicles and houses in its midst. It was a real time dream for the media to be there with the event as it unfolded.<sup>222</sup> However, the real event is soon obliterated by the next news story unfolding on our screens, and the seduction of the next sublime 'realtime' event continues.

### 8.3.4 Perpetual Pacification and Hope

Rasch has written a paper about the concept of *Perpetual Pacification*, and describes how even though peace treaties are signed, all they signify is a truce, and that the only way to achieve true peace would be if 'war itself would disappear from the realm of human experience'<sup>223</sup>. Essentially 'peace as public security is a continuous war against war, a pacification of war, and not peace in the emphatic sense...Islands of peace exist in a sea of war'<sup>224</sup>. He describes how peace is generally thought of as an asymmetrical relation to war.<sup>225</sup> Therefore, it is symbolically the darkness of war, opposite the grey zone of peace, when really what society could strive to achieve would be the bright light of a world with a total lack of war.<sup>226</sup> It is this grey zone which parallels with the

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<sup>221</sup> Baudrillard, J. (2005), p133.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid*, p123.

<sup>223</sup> Rasch, W. (2008), p21.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, p29.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, p26.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid*, p28.

earlier discussions with regards to the painting responding to 9/11 by Gerhard Richter. It is this grey zone which we need to escape from in order to extinguish war. The paper ends with the statement that it would be best 'to continue to puzzle over the paradoxes of peace from the point of war'<sup>227</sup> rather than attempt to make changes to the geopolitical tapestry of the globe. However, the artwork of Roy Ray is more ambitious and designed to inspire fundamental changes to how we view events. By being aware of the continuous cycle of conflict over generations and countries, the futility of the endless conflict becomes more apparent.

Diamond's book entitled 'Collapse', blends a panoramic historical perspective with recent scientific advances, to comment of the demise of societies from both a geopolitical and an environmental perspective. He writes that:

'my remaining cause for hope is another consequence of the globalised modern world's interconnectedness. Past societies lacked archaeologists and television....thus we have the opportunity to learn from the mistakes of distant peoples and past peoples. That's an opportunity that not past society enjoyed to such a degree. My hope in writing this book has been that enough people will choose to profit from that opportunity to make a difference'.<sup>228</sup>

I am not alone in claiming that the artwork of Ray makes a difference, as it has been shown in the praise of critics, survivors and individuals worldwide. By focusing on the atrocities of the past, it will make world governments more conscious to make moral geopolitical decisions in the interests of a peaceful future.

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<sup>227</sup> Rasch, W. (2008), p34.

<sup>228</sup> Diamond, J (2006), p525.

### 8.3.5 Perception of the Panels

The panels were first shown in 2008 at Falmouth Art Gallery in Cornwall and in 2009 at Truro Cathedral. In 2010 they were exhibited at Coventry Cathedral to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the destruction of the city. They were well received in the media and the comments of the visitors offer an invaluable insight into how were they were perceived:

‘Such a powerful set of panels. I was left also thinking about the fact that only technology itself (ie. cellphones and computers) seemed to remain as remnants of the 9/11 victim’s lives... One of the most striking, thought provoking, tear-jerking art installations I have ever seen. Show it around the world to those who cast aside lives for a fight... Very moving. All the worlds ‘leaders’ would do well to study these...Such a powerful representation of the depth of human suffering - unwarranted and unnecessary. This work honours the lives of all those innocent victims and stand as a tribute to the decency of the human spirit that can prevail. Each piece stands alone - each segment cries out with their suffering and as a whole the five pieces are magnificent and should tour the world to remind us to keep peace in our hearts. A very evocative artwork. Cleverly constructed and gets to the heart of the futility of war.’<sup>229</sup>

The comments confirm the potential power of the panels to promote global peace, and the desire of the viewers that the panels should be shared with a global audience. Whilst in Coventry the panels were seen by Susan Rescorla,

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<sup>229</sup> Ray, R. (2011) see appendix 14.2.

the widow of Cornish-born Rick Rescorla. He had been the Security Officer in the South Tower who successfully evacuated over 2687 Morgan Stanley employees before losing his life in the buildings collapse. She was so deeply moved by the panels that she helped to facilitate the panels to be exhibited at St Peters Church, Ground Zero, for the 10th anniversary of 9/11.

Ray is quoted as saying that:

‘A number of people have commented that the panels seem to be on a spiritual journey of their own, touching the hearts and minds of so many people of all ages, many spending time with them in contemplation or prayer and leaving me with moving messages’.<sup>230</sup>

The artist believes that:

‘whether the work causes pause for thought or moves someone to tears, I feel that its success is in communicating the horror without being horrific in itself. I want people to stop and think, to remember those whose lives were lost, the heroes like Rick Rescorla but also the anonymous victims, the forgotten souls those whose footsteps left no trace.’<sup>231</sup>

The panels acknowledge the innocent victims of conflict and theoretically:

‘such efforts to document the initial public reaction to 9/11 may allow future generations to learn about the deep visceral sense of shock, fear, and grief that soon followed this tragedy.’<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Ray, R. (2011) given to the author 23.08.12, see Appendix 1 for more information.

<sup>231</sup> Published in the Western Morning News, Wednesday March 23 2011, p8.

<sup>232</sup> Miller, E. D. (2011) p126.

The panels creatively document so much more than a reaction to 9/11, they have transcended the event and have taken on a a unique spiritual journey of their own which is once again corroborated in the following quote:

‘Clearly, Roy has already touched hearts and minds in the city, as expressed in the words of Jan Seidler Mamirez, Chief Curator and Director of Collections, National September 11 Memorial Museum who, on accepting the panel into the growing collection, said ‘As we work to build an encyclopaedic Museum collection that engages with the September 11 terrorist attacks in their broadest cultural context, the recent donation of Roy Ray’s 9/11 sculpture seems custom ordered to this mission. As a piece of response art, it provokes haunting memories of the inconceivable destruction of two quarter-mile high skyscrapers, each pulverized into a mash of pewter-toned ash and rubble in less than 10-seconds as they collapsed...More importantly, the panel summons to mind the ineffable human loss of nearly 3,000 people whose traces in and around the Towers are tokened by the broken relics of computer keyboards and mute cell phones incorporated into the composition....For such an evocative series of works of art to have grown from Roy’s early reflections on the nature of evil is not so much protest art as a wiser reflection, art holding a darker glass to man’s propensity to find bad uses for good ideas; to nurture the wickedness in invention: the natural selection of *Evolution*’.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> ‘St Ives artist’s 9-11 commemoration panel to join permanent memorial collection’, 17.2.12, Times and Echo, p6.

The vision of the artist to conceive of the panels essentially as guardians of peace, is well expressed in this speech:

'I would now like to offer this 9/11 panel as a gift to the people of New York City with the hope that we may yet find peace in our troubled world...I'm still trying to come to terms with the fact that it will be part of the permanent collection, with the potential to touch the hearts and minds of the millions who visit there'<sup>234</sup>

Appendix 1 has more poems, descriptions, appraisals and celebrations of the work of Ray, which recognise the duality between the historical and contemporary significance of the panels. The artist openly refers to the necessity he had to create the panels as a comment on the inherent evil that he perceives in society, as an agent for change. His work can therefore be described as contemporary Landscape paintings created to inspire fundamental change.

## 8.4 Conclusion

This chapter has conclusively shown that Ray can be seen to have two distinct and interconnected themes in his artwork, pre- and post-9/11. Pre-9/11 the work was essentially the expression of *external* Landscape depicting his local environment, as inspired by Tapies and the spirit of the Landscape. His post-9/11 work delved deeper into his *internal* Landscape, consisting of memories of war, and commented on a continuous cycle of conflict. Building on

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<sup>234</sup> Ruhrmund, F. (2012) 'The evil that men do lives after', This is Cornwall ([www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/whatson](http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/whatson)), What's On, Thursday February 23, p38

the connections with the political and historical terrain admired in Tapies. It explains how he responded to the strong urge to remember the issues of war from his childhood and in the national service; essentially to remember his ancestors and ultimately leave a creative legacy for his descendants. His panels have contemporary significance alongside the artists Richter, Fischl and Wodiczko, and the philosophy of Baudrillard. They embody a spirit of hope for future generations, to inspire the search for a bright and peaceful future which resists the descent into a dark and destructive cycle of conflict.

# Transcending Landscape:

## 9.1 The blur of Landscape

Gerhard Richter is a German artist born in Dresden in 1932, whose artistic style can be summarised as painting from photographs. Gerhard Richter is a multifaceted artist whose artworks can be simply described as spanning the mediums of portraiture, Landscape and sculpture. His work was introduced in reference to 9/11 in section 8.2.2, and this chapter will continue to explore his depiction of Landscape, which has constantly fascinated Richter throughout his career. His “photo-paintings” are not photo-realistic, but to the contrary, they are manipulated so that the Landscape become “blurred”.

The creative process of Richter is to manually transfer the photographic image to the canvas and then work over the surface by guiding a dry brush over the

still moist paint in order to soften, mute and distort the sharp contours, effectively blurring the painted representation. Richter began experimenting with painting from photographs in the early 1960's.

Richter describes how the photograph can be described as the most perfect picture but that

'It does not change; it is absolute, and therefore autonomous, unconditional, devoid of style. . . Perhaps because I'm sorry for the photograph, because it has such a miserable existence even though it is such a perfect picture, I would like to make it *valid* (my emphasis), make it visible—just *make it* (even if what I make is then worse than the photograph).'<sup>235</sup>

He is putting his creative process to personalise the photographic image, to own it and to transform it into his own artwork. Using the photographic image as the source material, and transcending the photographic representation so that it becomes a work of art.

In the following quote from Richter in 1974, he starts by disputing that he blurs the image and contradicts the general consensus that this is neither a significant nor an identifying feature in his works.<sup>236</sup> He continues to then describe his process of destroying the representation depicted in the photograph through blurring. Therefore, he is saying that he does indeed blur the image, and continues to agree with that as an established element of his process. The argument becomes circular, and I wonder whether he is trying to confuse the viewer, or if he himself is confused as to the nature of his creative process:

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<sup>235</sup> Guillermet (2017), p 102.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid*, p 103.

'I don't create blurs. Blurring is not the most important thing; nor is it an identity tag for my pictures. When I dissolve demarcations and create transitions, this is not in order to destroy the representation, or to make it more artistic or less precise. The flowing transitions, the smooth equalizing surface, clarify the content and make the representation credible (an alla prima impasto would be too reminiscent of painting, and would destroy the illusion). I blur things to make everything equally important and equally unimportant. I blur things so that they do not look artistic or craftsmanlike, but technological, smooth and perfect. I blur things to make all the parts a closer fit. Perhaps I also blur out the excess of unimportant information.'<sup>237</sup>

The artist describes how the act of blurring brings equal importance to the elements of the work and unifies the artwork, whilst separating from its original inspiration from a photographic image. By blurring out the *excess of important information* the artist creates an artwork which is the antithesis of a photograph, not photorealist, nor artistic in an expressive sense of the word, but *technological, smooth and perfect*. He uses a technological interpretation of the world, a photographic image which in its two dimensional reality is a fairly smooth and perfect view of the world, and transcends that, and painting itself in its interpretation. By using the medium of photography to simplify the view, then

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<sup>237</sup> Guillermet (2017) p129.

to *blur out the excess of unimportant information* even further through his creative process, is a continual process of covering up the available information, so that the essential creative image as chosen by the artist emerges. Opposite to Michelangelo choosing a piece of stone from which his sculptures would emerge, Richter takes or chooses a photograph from which to create an artwork that simplifies the image to the essential elements that define it.

Koenig (2008) describes the enduring fascination of the Landscape genre for Richter, and describes how dramatic landscapes have been muted intentionally by shrouding them in a mist or by rendering them with thickened brushwork and plain Landscapes are painted with subtlety to capture the atmosphere of the scene.<sup>238</sup> Therefore, the artist brings a spectacular Landscape to the same level as a simple Landscape. It unites the dramatic and the mundane as equal in importance, therefore questioning the relevance of a sublime vs an insignificant Landscape. Guillermet (2017) describes how the idealised and contained Landscape make the viewer focus on the antithesis of real Landscape.<sup>239</sup> Therefore, the viewer is disconnected from the reality of Landscape, and by focusing on a warped and mundane depiction of Landscape questions raises questions about the identity of real Landscape. Through the artist's search for equality between the sublime and the mundane', it has been suggested that he is trying to capture the authenticity of Landscape, but the artist himself has described his interpretations as untruthful because they glorify Nature, which is actually brutal, aggressive and destructive in reality.

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<sup>238</sup> Koenig, W. (2004).

<sup>239</sup> Guillermet, A. (2017).

Richter describes how Nature:

'in all its forms is always against us, because it knows no meaning, no pity, no sympathy...the total antithesis of ourselves...indifferent to human life. It uses us simply as vehicles for bacteria, sweeps us away in disasters and random mass extinctions.'<sup>240</sup>.

His painting process can be described as mimicking natural processes, with thick and repeated layering of paint, and an underlying sense of nature as both threatening and the threatened. As a brute force indifferent to the struggles and aspirations of humans and is the converse of humanity. As the landscapes are devoid of humans, they could be described as referencing a time after the departure of the human species. Butin (1994) describes Richters expression for a yearning for the rediscovery of Nature, a 'nostalgic longing for a Nature intact and remote from civilization, and by a demand for the happiness of a private and undisturbed experience of Nature'.<sup>241</sup>

An essentially post-war view of nature as contrary to the romantic sublime. That nature is indifferent and destructive to human life, attacking us with natural disasters and seemingly random extinctions, using us as vessels for bacteria or terrifying us with our insignificance on a galactic scale. Enticing us to travel through the vastness of geologic time, and potentially forward into a glimpse of the future, connecting with the realm of physics and closer to our own extinction. Elger (2008) questions the nature of the blur as the corruption of an image and a metaphor for memories lost through the passage of time. The search for equality is to unite the important and the unimportant into the same

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<sup>240</sup> Stonard, JP. (2011), p 59-61, online access.

<sup>241</sup> Hartley, K. Hughes, H, Schuster, PK & Vaughan, W. Eds. (1994), p463.

domain, as for nature, the degradation and corrosion that blurs our memories and serves to unite them. <sup>242</sup>

## 9.2 Overpaintings

Gerhard Richter's *overpaintings* are aggressively reworked photographs degraded with enamel, oil paints and varnish. They are deconstructive manipulations in which the painting is marked with stains or blotches, pressed directly into paint, or has the paint dripped or sprinkled onto it.



**Figure 26 - Richter, *Fextal, Pix Lagrev* (1992)**

The chance element of the result liberates the consciousness of the artist and awakens the law of chance and connects to its essence as a natural processes, the essence of the natural world in contrast with the constructed human world.

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<sup>242</sup> Elger, D. (2008).

The utilisation of chance bringing new life into the photographic image and connects with the latent physicality of the landscape within the photographic image.

Within figure 26, the sprinkling of paint evokes snow, but the colour errors are reminiscent of a computer or printer error. That there is something wrong in the depiction, an essential human modification of the image, as if referencing the antithesis of Nature.



**Figure 27 - Richter, *Fextal, Piz Chaputschin* (1992)**

The thick paint applied to the mountainous view in figure 27 collides with the sky and evokes the representation of an avalanche or natural disaster brutally deconstructing the scene. The overpainting delves into the realm of the imagined and provides apparent depth whilst facilitating the illusion of a layered

composition obscuring a hidden meaning. This process of the use of gesture by the artist can be described as referencing art imitating the actual creativity of nature.



**Figure 28 - Richter, *Seascape (Sea-Sea)* (1970)**

Chance juxtapositions between the photographic representations with the overpainted realisations, create an oscillation between the real, the observed and the imagined that enliven and give energy to the image. Are Richter's empty Landscapes void of emotion, comment or obvious profundity of meaning,

or ideas transcending Landscape? Some of them can be described as purely surface, with no geology, or depth hidden below the fragile layer of gelatine reminiscent of a photograph. For example, the Seascape in figure 28 looks at first sight to be a simple sea view, but the sky looks stormier than I would expect, and was actually painted from a photographic source comprising of two views of the sea, juxtaposed against an imagined horizon line. It is not the representation of an reality, but a constructed landscape. *Seascape* conveys a familiar sense of the sublime, not only in the vastness of the depicted environment, but in the overwhelming dimensions of the canvas measuring almost 3 meters squared.



**Figure 29 - Richter, *Abstract painting* (1984)**

## 9.3 From Abstraction to the Strip Paintings

Paintings described in the title chosen by the artist as being abstract, actually on closer inspection demonstrate the superimposition over photo-realistically painted foliage such as figure 30 titled as an *Abstract painting* and dated 1984. Therefore, the source material for the so-called abstract painting is definitely a photograph of a landscape and therefore firmly has its roots in the depiction of nature. The roots in Landscape of these so-called 'abstract' paintings is important to the interpretation of his later 'Strip Paintings'.



**Figure 30 - Richter, *Strip 923.2* (2012)**

Richter began his series of *Strip Paintings* in 2010 although despite their name they have no actual paint on their surface. The *paintings*, such as that shown in figure 30, are actually digital prints are laminated onto aluminium behind a thin layer of Perspex. It is significant, however, that Richter refers to the Strip works as paintings, since this indicates a widening idea of what a painting might be in a digital age. To create the horizontal strips in this work, Richter took one of his favourite pieces, *Abstract Painting, 724-4* 1990, as a prompt. *Abstract Painting, 724-4* is a 'squeegee painting', unusual in intensity and colour. It was made by applying several layers of paint onto a small canvas with a brush. Richter then

passed a squeegee over the surface, removing layers and exposing hidden colours, repeating the process of applying and removing paint.

The British art critic Searle (2014) describes a Richter show that I had the good fortune to visit in London 2014:

‘In 60 years you can do a lot, Richter tells me, ‘And our times are so... unquiet,’ he says... an enormous variety of works moving between abstraction and portraiture, landscape and history painting... globalisation makes things fragment, but also brings them closer. Printed, digital works, the largest 10 meters across, consisting entirely of eye-rocking coloured stripes. Mathematically constructed works as a created from a single abstract painting from the 1990’s in which he ‘halved a fragment of the image vertically on a computer, He mirrored the image and repeated the process again and again. After a while patterns emerge from the mirrored, incidental skids of paint. ‘Rows of faces appeared, monsters, flowers, mandalas’s he tells me. As the image gets halved and squeezed again and again, ever smaller repetitive patterns are produced, reminiscent of Islamic decoration, until at a certain point these horizontal bands take over. Were he to continue, he explains, the bands themselves would disappear into a kind of optical white noise, and eventually visual silence. Richter chose sections from the these bands and recombined them for these larger works. They come at you like complex visual chords. Richter had no idea what would happen when he began this process. He touches one of the panels with his

knuckles. 'The memory of all the images that came and went is still here.'<sup>243</sup>

The last line is poignant, that the memory of images created and lost as part of the creative process are captured within the final artwork. Every artwork is a time capsule of memories of the artist, but the strip paintings are created out of a process of mathematical division applied to an earlier work by the artist. A process that has the result of creating a technologically contemporary painting which entirely lacks physical texture and paint, yet holds the immortality of the artist as if within its structure and the act of its creation.

The mathematic process utilised by the artist to create the Strip Paintings was to vertically bisect a digital photograph of the The Abstract Painting (724-4) from 1990 and join each half with its mirror image. Continuing this process innumerable times resulted in the vertical fissures becoming imperceptible, and the stripes of colour merging into strips until the images were distilled into their chromatic essence. When I saw the Strip paintings I was struck by the intense striations of contrasting vibrant colours interacting and at times seeming to tease each other with their intensity. The vast display of strips of colours on such a large and overpowering format had the result that the individuality of the colours were lost and essentially blurred in the proceed. As a metaphor for the individuality of humans on a global scale becoming blurred in the sameness of the collective community. Yet as I contemplated the paintings they took over a life of their own, with an energy created between advancing and retreating colours that delved beyond two dimensions and seemed to move before me.

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<sup>243</sup> Searle, A. (2014) Gerhard Richter: Our times are so unquiet, Guardian Newspaper 12.10.14, online access.

Diehl describes this reaction as the depiction of a 'vibrant colour that whizzes across the surface like the view from a Lamborghini at 200 miles per hour.'<sup>244</sup>

Schjedahl (2012) describes how the Strip Paintings invite the viewer to face the faltering state of painting when faced with the arrogance of visual technology. Describing how they invite us to contemplate the 'melancholy, long, withdrawing roar of perishing traditions'<sup>245</sup> such as painting. The Strip Paintings resulted from the artist having insufficient time to paint in preparation for an exhibition, and he utilised a computer program to deconstruct an existing painting into a new body of work, rather than use actual paint. Yet the insistence of the artist that the resultant work is *painting* is an interesting acknowledgement of the importance of process and concept over actual paint. That the works are technological paintings, rather than actually painted, extending the limits of the painting genre and giving a new dimension to the domain of Contemporary Painting.

## 9.4 Conclusion

Richter has pushed the boundaries of the depiction of Landscape to incorporate the advances of the technological age to transcend Landscape by creating Contemporary Paintings that are truly futuristic and devoid of paint. The absence of the actual painted surface is justified by the use of paint as part of the creative process, and therefore cleverly and playfully the artist refers to the

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<sup>244</sup> Diehl, C. (2012) Gerhard Richter, Art in America, 20.12.12, online access.

<sup>245</sup> Schjedahl, P. (2012) All Stripes: New work by Gerhard Richter, New Yorker, 17.09.12. Online access.

resultant work as a painting. The essence of the artists process can be described as presence by absence and transcendence of Landscape

# The Changing Landscape of Robin Mason

## 10.1 The human landscape

The work of Robin Mason can be described as inspiring imaginary landscapes consisting of interrelated paintings, sculptures and installations. The collection is designed to be viewed together as an installation, so that conceptual interconnections can be made. It would therefore be illogical to discuss his Landscape paintings without references to the video art installations or sculptures, as they are designed by the artist to be seen as part of a collective whole, as illustrated in figure 31.



**Figure 31: Mason, *Overview of The Deeper Darkness exhibition (2013)***

The complexity of the visual and conceptual interconnections, the bright colours in the works and the melodic sounds of pinball machines skilfully combine to create a seductively fun and entertaining space. The viewer could be described as initially seduced by the playtime ambiance of the energy radiating in the space. The landscapes are 'painted with a jouissance of ludicrous charm, it is hard not to be tickled by Mason's comic and clever helter-skelter configurations, his cheeky winks towards the sacred and the profane. Eyes on stalks, lips pinned to the trunk of a tree, the spilled guts of dates, badges and signs, arrows, buds and blossoms, reminds us of the polymorphous perverse erotic possibilities of everything. There is excitability here, a clowning around in the paddling pool of life's sweet disorder.<sup>246</sup> This encourages a sense of peace

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<sup>246</sup> Groves, T. (2013), p5.

and contemplation, which is in itself a huge achievement in the enclosed underground space of the *Block 336 Gallery*, totally devoid of natural light, in which the exhibition entitled *The Deepest Darkness* (2013) was exhibited. Alex Gough describes how “Robin’s work is about a journey, so the creation of the exhibition started at the building stage,”<sup>247</sup> as depicted in figure 32. Expressing the artist as curator, creating walls and specifically modifying the lighting to emphasise the darkness of the space.



**Figure 32: Section of: Mason, Search and Journey (2009-13)**

As the exhibition ‘unfolds around us, it becomes glaringly obvious that these melodies of teenage pastimes are but the soundtrack for a visual and emotional experience of funfair proportions. Prints, etchings, and a vast mind-boggling

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<sup>247</sup> Review by Lizzie Kay, <http://www.brixtonblog.com/new-exhibition-the-deepest-darkness-at-block-336/12014>

polyptych paintings jostle up against astroturf lawns, dazzling lights and curiously disorientating mini-museums.<sup>248</sup> The viewer is transported from an obviously industrial space, through the artworks which weave the viewers vision through and around the sculptures, incorporating the unusual and existing features of the exhibition space into a parallel, multiverse landscape.

## 10.2 Realised Landscape



**Figure 33: Mason, *The Deepest Darkness* (2013)**

The juxtaposition of the magical electronic dimension autobiographical seaside culture with images of trees, could be described as a comment on the

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<sup>248</sup> Press Release of the exhibition , *The Deepest Darkness* (2013) as produced by Block 336.

*naturalization of technology*<sup>249</sup>, serving to comment on the blurring of distinctions between creativity and computing which disconnects people from the natural world. The installation entitled *The Deepest Darkness*, is shown in figure 33 and consists of a projection of images of Nature under duress, lasting 9 minutes and 38 seconds in duration. Stills of dismembered trees and truncated branches are accompanied by the occasional sound of a bell tolling. It references the deeper conceptual meaning of this exhibition; the artists' obsession with Grunewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*.

Mason describes how:

'In Colmar. The Isenheim Altarpiece Speaks, Screams, Whispers, Yells, Rings, Shouts, Squeals. It tells the truth. And it lies. It shows the red. And the fantastic. It is poetic. And operatic. It meanders like a small stream. Then rushes like a torrent, it asks no questions. And asks all questions. It is full of light. It is full of dark. It stands proud. It lies calmly. It denies. it has the pain of the world. It has the pleasures of the world. It is life. It is death. It is evil. It is heavenly. It is faithless. It is faithful. It is me. It is you. It is us. It is them. It is then. It is now. It was, Is, Can, Can't, Should, Shouldn't, Will, Won't, Has, Hasn't, Did, Didn't. As the river meanders in the distant landscape, a death assured. As is ours. Its life, as leaves in a book, entangled in us, in Colmar.'<sup>250</sup>

The *Isenheim Altarpiece* was commissioned for a hospital dedicated to treatment of extreme suffering resulting from a disease that was ascribed to a *Claviceps purpurea* fungus, which infected Rye, poisoned its victims and

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<sup>249</sup> Crowther, P. & Wunsche, I. Eds. (2012), p222.

<sup>250</sup> Mason, R. (2013), p54-55.

developed into convulsions, skin eruptions and ultimately death.<sup>251</sup> This ultimate expression of suffering has been an enduring inspiration to many, and Walter Benjamin had a picture of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* on the wall of his study for many years and in 1913 made a special visit to Colmar to see the original paintings that led to the creation of his notion of the expressionless, those at the extreme end of suffering for whom violence has stolen expression, reducing them to silence.<sup>252</sup>

It has inspired pivotal and important paintings by artists such as Pablo Picasso<sup>253</sup> (which is said to have culminated in *Guernica*<sup>254</sup>), and Francis Bacon, for which the Crucifixion was not referenced as an actual event but as an environment of suffering.<sup>255</sup> The structure of the altarpiece can be seen in some of the paintings such as 'Between Here and There' in figure 34. The connection between all of these responses to the panels is that they are 'less about crucifixions as such but rather about figurations of suffering, about 'imaging' suffering. The central claims should hold true regardless of whether we are talking about medieval altarpieces or contemporary news photos of the abused inmates of Abu Ghraib<sup>256</sup>.

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<sup>251</sup> Minkkinen, P. (2008), p71.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid*, p82.

<sup>253</sup> Picasso, P. *Crucifixion* (1930), Oil on Wood, 52 x 66cm, Musée National Picasso, Paris., Picasso, P. *Crucifixion after Grunewald* (1932), Eight inkwashes and ink drawings, 34 x 51cm, Musée National Picasso.

<sup>254</sup> Serraller, F. C. & Giménez, C. Eds.(2006), p75.

<sup>255</sup> Minkkinen, P. (2008), p76.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid*, p70.



**Figure 34: Mason, *Between Here and There* (2013)**

Therefore, the deconstruction of the crucifixion motif from its narrative framework could be said to focus on 'the very nature of tragedy'<sup>257</sup> itself. By transcending religion but focusing on the *nature* of tragedy I am drawn to the use of trees within the artworks and created as sculptures by the artist, to specifically enhance the exhibition space. Jackson Pollock is described as rejecting art as representation through expressing himself as nature, By:

'using the metaphor of a tree Paul Klee likened the artist to a tree that absorbs energy from nature through 'the roots', transmits rising sap through 'the trunk' to form the branching 'crown', an abstract art....the abstract expression of inner natural forces informed by a larger awareness of nature and its rhythms.'<sup>258</sup>

<sup>257</sup> Minkinen, P. (2008), p80.

<sup>258</sup> Crowther, P. & Wunsche, I. Eds. (2012), p119.

Therefore, through the creative act bringing the inner dimensions of nature (as autobiographical and human experience) together with the outer reality of nature, the artist aspires to a oneness between man and nature. The harmony between inner and outer Landscapes, is the perfect antidote to a world saturated with images, this is a tale told with the intent to bring us back to our senses. The English expression to *bring back to our senses* refers to a wake up call, that returns us physically and emotionally back to what really matters in life and in the world. Questions of who we should be as individuals in the wider context of the bigger collective of the human race. In a world saturated with images, it attempts to return us to our destiny. It can refer to an individual, or to the collective, but in this quote I think its referring to activating an inner individual perception in order to harmonise with the outer, collective Landscape. To reconnect the multiple examples of senses of perception present within the exhibition as *eyes on stalks* and *lips on branches* can be seen as a metaphor for an awakening of the viewer to a deeper meaning within the works.

The artist describes an experience of the trace memory of artwork:

‘it was a slow release thing, as if the image of the *Island of the Dead* had been burnt or branded into my retina...yes...like the afterimage of a light bulb, refusing to fade away’. As the afterimage of a lightbulb is a black spot of temporary blindness, an exhibition who is inherently dark, would in theory have the subtle aftereffect of brightness. As a continuation of this theory, the title of the exhibition could be transformed into an ‘the brightest heights’ as an after-image of the exhibition. The process has been described as ‘healing in transcription, and although the Altarpiece comes forth from death, in

its transcribed form, it is 'not a death', but rather '*a birth, a new beginning*'...*a bold celebration of the possibility of this beginning, bravely reminding us that despite the anguish of our inevitable losses, life's many pleasures can become entirely possible again.*'<sup>259</sup>

The contemplation of the darkness results in the viewer receiving an antidote to the potential darkness of the human condition.

Contemplation of the darkness of the human condition is positively encouraged by the artist. He describes how 'to speak of the darkness is to speak of a lack of existence. Whilst to look into the darkness is to extract something of the life drive, embedded in the creative drive of the artist. I become involved in an entanglement with the past in the becoming of the present'.<sup>260</sup>

However, the colourful interconnections within the works contrast markedly with the inherent conceptual profundity of the works and contribute to a sense of peace and contemplation, in the potentially claustrophobic underground space devoid of natural light and reminiscent of a bunker. It is as if by facing the darkness, one has a trace memory and an after-image of the positive, the bright light of life. The viewer is virtually transported from an industrial space into a parallel imaginary landscape through the artworks weaving the viewers vision between the sculptures, incorporating the unusual and existing features in the exhibition space.

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<sup>259</sup> Groves, T. (2013), p8

<sup>260</sup> Mason, R. (2013), p70.

## 10.3 Conclusion

The artwork of Robin Mason has been demonstrated to be very playful at first glance, but that the sound of a bell tolling, and references to the *Isenheim Altarpiece* reveal a profound, potentially dark and complex inner core. But by bravely being encouraged to contemplate the darkness, one is rewarded by being given an antidote. By crossing into the darkside, one is gifted with the bright lightness of possibility. As the final chapter before the conclusion of the thesis, his works can be seen to be an example of a seemingly pleasant depiction of Contemporary Landscape.

# Conclusion

## 11.1 Sweeping conclusions

The process of abstraction has been shown to distil the real essence of Landscape by deconstructing the essential elements of its composition. The search for simplicity in fundamental forms conflicts with the overflow of information from a Landscape that escapes the quandary of containment. By embracing the concept of a constructed Landscape, with a moving focus extending beyond time and space, the artworks can transcend the limitations of the picture frame to embrace the cyberspace of the contemporary world. By embracing painting as a science, using the processes of Nature to create the works and facilitate interconnections throughout the Arts and the Sciences, Landscapes can become truly contemporary in their expression.



The word cloud in figure 35 highlights the frequency of words that appear in the thesis, plotting the words in a size proportional to their frequency within the text, giving a quick, visual impression of the main themes covered. The title, Contemporary Landscape Painting, are the three predominant words that emerge from the cloud, and other principle words are aptly nature, art, scientific, future, history, human, creative, moment and expression. Visually, it clearly collates and summarises the diversity of the main themes covered within the thesis.

Figure 36 is an infographic showing the birthdate of the contemporary artists, accompanied by the country and place of their birth and the location of their current studio/s, which visually depicts the balanced age distribution and the international spread of the selected artists. The oldest artist is Richter, and he can be grouped with Ray, Hockney and Kiefer in being born before, during, or at the end of the 2WW. The youngest artist is Mehretu, and she can be grouped with Tyson, who is just a year older, who are both therefore equidistant in being born 25 years after the end of the 2WW. Hockney and Kiefer have the most internationally located studios have moved the most in the career in contrast to Richter, who has moved the least. In terms of the distribution of nationalities, there is a predominance of British and German flags, and Mehretu was born in Ethiopia, but lives in NY.

## Birthdate distribution of the Contemporary Artists in relation to the 2WW

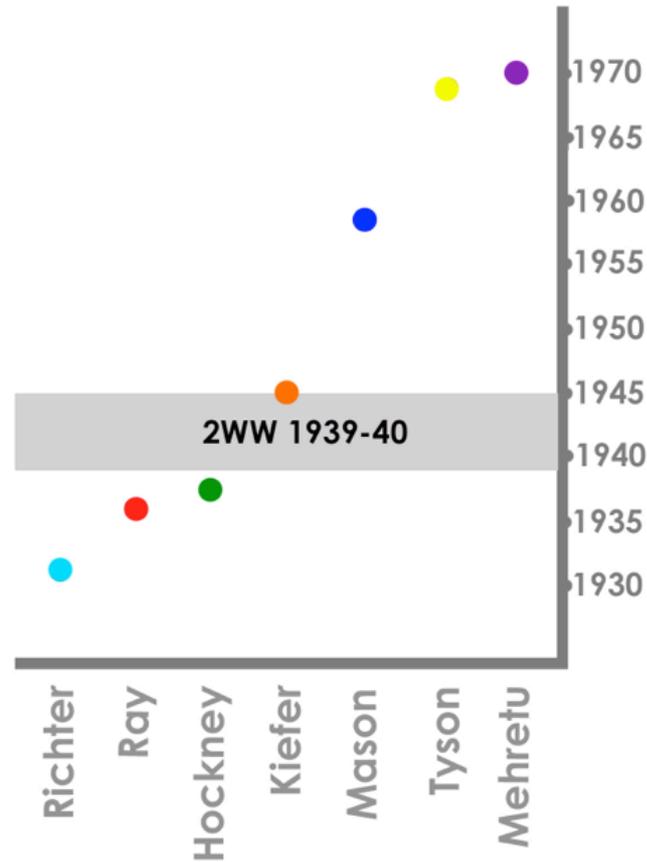


Figure 36: Birthdate distribution, country of origin and residency of the selected artists in relation to the 2WW, colour coded as in figures 2, 37 and 38.

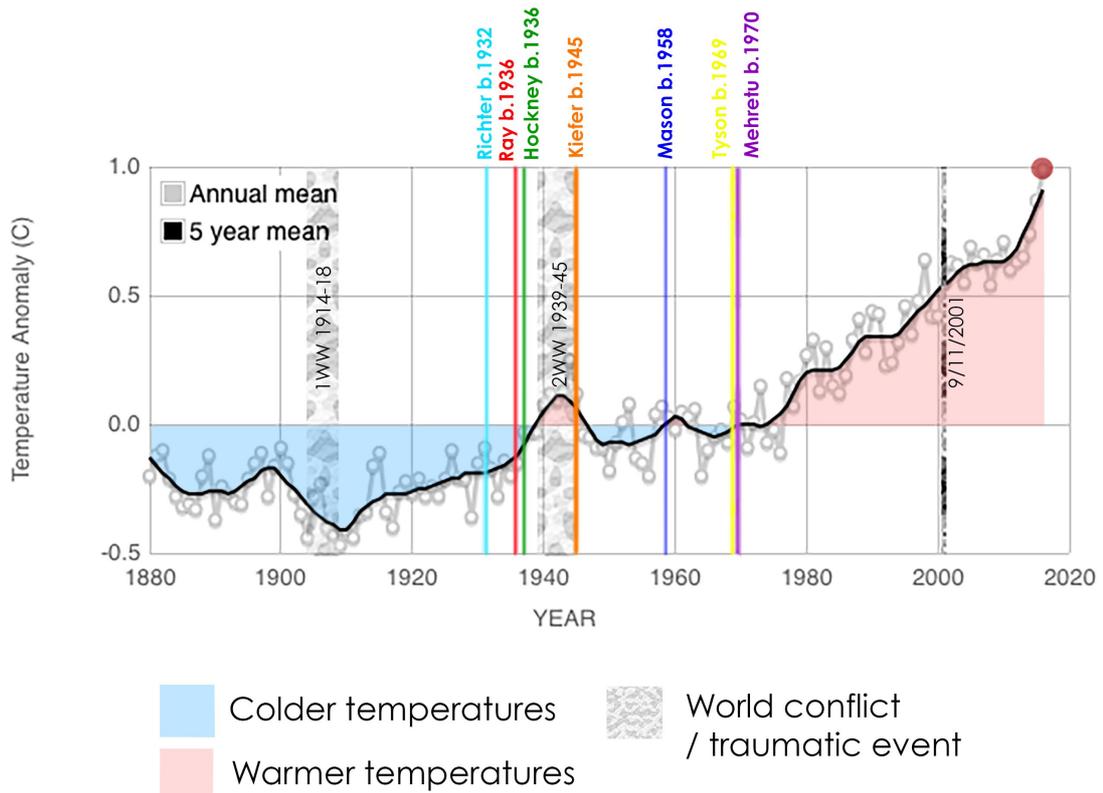
## 11.2 Threads and interconnections

The expression of an internal Landscape and the fear of war combine with the encapsulation of collective trauma, inherent guilt, the representation and historic scar of conflict to unite the work of Kiefer, Richter, Mason and Ray. Destruction, horror and melancholy link all of these artists with the work of Mehretu in expressing Landscape painting as a palimpsest that evocatively whispers the ghostly confluence of multiple realities as a metaphor for the interlinked reality of the contemporary age. Representing an interconnected world in which 'cyberspace and geographical space coexisting simultaneously as an interconnected dyadic cyber/space combining the virtually real and the actually real.'<sup>261</sup>

In memory of the duality of Humboldt's depictions of geographical process incorporating the arts and sciences, combined with the continuous process of reductionism and focus towards progressive abstraction, suggests that the artists growing up and creating during a globalised realtime world are developing a process of increased abstraction in direct response to the complexity, variety and diverse geographical distribution of the information about the 'real world' available to them. Landscapes with mutating boundaries and geographically undefined electronic borders explode from a grey, haunted and ruined world in a pulsating pictorial space to express the virtual immortality of the multidimensional virtual domain.

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<sup>261</sup> Madge, C. (2005), p83.



**Figure 37: The timeline of the selected artists in the context of climate change and conflict from the end of the LIA to present global warming epoch. The selected artists included in the thesis individually colour coded as in figures 2, 36 & figure 38.**

Figure 37 clearly positions Richter, Roy and Hockney as being born during the colder temperatures before, or at the beginning of the 2WW. Kiefer was born after the warm spike at the immediate end of the 2WW and Mason born 13 years later during another warm spike. Tyson and Mehretu were born within a year of each other at the beginning of the contemporary period of global warming. All of the artists would have noticed the marked warming and climatic instability of the contemporary period and discussions about global warming. The majority of the artists were born prior to, during or after the 2WW and all

were over 30 and mature enough to fully experience the collective global trauma of 9/11. Fluid conjectures that confront the multiple, heterogeneous historical causal chains of the event and configurations of interference result in the emergence of the postmodern blurring of information. A temporal dimension to liminality<sup>262</sup> can be determined, in which the sudden events in the moment, such as the Lisbon Earthquake, the explosion of Vesuvius and the attack of 9/11 blur into the periods of collective trauma of the 1WW and the 2WW.

The periods of climatic change evident in the differing scales between the recent Global Warming (lasting from decades to generations), the Little Ice Age (lasting centuries) and the Geological Strata of the Grand Canyon (spanning centuries to epochs). The individual trauma of an individual event such as a natural disaster or a terrorist attack, soon becomes a national trauma which evokes the sensation of living in a dangerous world that is disregarding of individual needs in which the boundaries between safety and harm become fragile.<sup>263</sup> This drives the individual event to merge into the uncharted territory of collective national trauma, in which 'symbolically, ordinary time has stopped: the sun does not shine, the birds do not sing, and the flowers do not bloom. The collective sadness of a national trauma grows out of the death symbolism that is involved either directly or indirectly.'<sup>264</sup> The postmodern Landscape is a place of interchange in which there is a collective drive towards fundamental change in order to be freed from traditional boundaries and constraints. Liminal moments can be determined by a change of state, of dissolution, in which there is a

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<sup>262</sup> Thomassen, B. (2016), Model 1: Types of liminal experiences: temporal dimensions' digital reference 305.9 / 796.

<sup>263</sup> Neal, A. (2005), p4.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid*, p5.

'concern with in-between-ness, as a concerted attempt to provide a language for the often imperceptible flow of history, from and through one state, epoch, or period and into another.'<sup>265</sup> Nora (1989) determines that 'modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image'<sup>266</sup>. The blurring of the present can be said to be the result of an incomplete historic memory in which 'the human predicament is that we are caught up in a contemporary setting that is necessarily fragmented from both the past and the future. The future is unknowable, and the past in all its many details and nuances is lost to us. Yet we attempt to reduce the uncertainty of past events by drawing upon historical fragments'<sup>267</sup>, which are dependent on incomplete information. Byatt (2012) positions 'the compression of the three temporal states (the before, during and after) into the instant of detonation, an instant which is infused with the whole history both past and future, works not just in the objective realm in which the gunshot occurs, but also in the subjective realm of the traumatic event - the moment, which is the essence of the narrative is, like the gunshot, a space which is infused with past, present and future'<sup>268</sup> The landscapes discussed in this thesis could be described as responding to this post-traumatic era of the present. Assman (2016) describes this as bringing a particular moment of the past into the present, both spatially and temporally'.<sup>269</sup> He describes how the 'Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim added another commandment to the 613 listed in the Hebrew Bible, the 614th, which is the commandment to remember

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<sup>265</sup> Downey, D. Kinane, I. & Parker, E. Eds. (2016), Reference 54.1/613.

<sup>266</sup> Nora, P. (1989), p13.

<sup>267</sup> Neal, A. (2005), p212.

<sup>268</sup> Byatt, J. (2012), p258.

<sup>269</sup> Assman, A. (2016), p185.

the Holocaust. And not only for the victims is there an imperative to remember this traumatic event - one that produced unimaginable forms of degradation, torture, and mass murder of human life from out of the technologically advanced civilisation of the Nazi state. Regardless of how broad the imperative to remember may be, the emphasis on the injunction to remember the atrocities inevitably comes up against the problem of the inability to imagine, or indeed to represent, those atrocities'.<sup>270</sup>

By facing up to the abject reality of history, Kristeva is in parallel to Benjamin in that we are no longer running away from the fear of unacceptable realities whilst risking repeating the mistakes of the past, but alternatively are building on past mistakes we are empowered to create a new and informed future.

### **11.3 Weaving a web**

Contemporary art means 'art of the moment', but as the Contemporary Art Society was founded in London in 1910, there is a missing definition for the actual art of today. Therefore, one of the difficulties in concluding this thesis is to do with assigning an *epoch* or *era* of which the art is an expression. However, this thesis has attempted to bring the content into the present as much as possible by weaving a web spanning from the origins of Landscape painting and contemporary artists exploring the theme, whilst offering a glimpse into into a vision of its future direction.

The dissemination of scientific knowledge is apparent in the works of Leonardo, Wright, Friedrich and Tyson. Interconnected geological strata cross continents

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<sup>270</sup> Assman, A. (2016), p202.

to unite the work of all of the artists discussed in this thesis. Personal observations have been combined with an awareness of Landscape creation to comment on the importance of time to landscape evolution. The stratified paintings of Tyson and the strip paintings of Richter are visually divergent but are united as two distinctly contemporary representations of Landscape. Stephen & Patrick (2017) observe that 'stratified history offers a major source for understanding processes change and that visual methods, including cartography as well as photography, offer a graphic method for comprehending them. In other words, we would maintain that landscape remains a complex, capacious model for geography, comprehending time and space, nature and culture.'<sup>271</sup> Tyson raises the impossible connection between two artists separated by a century as a homage to Benjamin in uniting the here and now of a work of art, he manages to transcend time and space whilst acknowledging omnipresent change. Richter transcends Landscape through concept rather than paint, using mathematics to capture within each painting the memory of its creation.

The key limitation of this thesis can be seen in the obvious gender bias of the selected artists is visualised in figure 39, which can be interpreted as a reflection on the expectation of creativity in females rather than scientific confidence, rather than a failure of the selection procedure. Rose (1993) argued that because geographical research has historically depended on observation, that there is an inherent masculinity in the construction of geographical knowledge.

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<sup>271</sup> Stephen; B. & Patrick J. (2017), p31.



Miller (2017) has written a paper from a geographical perspective on the creative processes of artists, in which she non-judgementally states that 'Fiona's knowledge and understanding of landscape is based in part on the geological features her husband points out to her'<sup>272</sup>, which clearly highlights an enduring and strongly gendered nature of an appreciation of Landscape in the creative geographies. Feminist geographers such as Rose (1993) argue that the inherent masculinity of the discipline of geography is the result of the discipline being more appealing to men rather than women because of its focus on objective observation, and is reinforced by an assumption held by many male geographers that women should not really be interested in geographical topics.<sup>273</sup> By extension, it was by chance, rather than informed selection that the majority of the chosen Contemporary artists are male, but it can be interpreted to reflect the essential gender bias of artists interested in geographical topics and attracted to the landscape genre.

It has been typically assumed that humans belong in two genders as defined by their genitalia, and expressed in their character, preferences and interests. A recent analysis of MRI's from 1,400 human brains by Joel et al (2015) found that human brains cannot be categorised into two distinct groups and refuted the traditional idea of gender defined by a structurally different brain between the sexes<sup>274</sup>. Therefore, this would suggest a fundamental shift in cultural exceptions to embrace a genderless future, where the boundaries between gender and assumed interests are obliterated.

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<sup>272</sup> Miller, A. (2017), p253.

<sup>273</sup> Rose, G. (1993), p2.

<sup>274</sup> Joel et al (2015), p 15472.

Geography has historically been dominated by men... the majority of the chosen artists represent masculine privilege in that they are predominantly white, male, heterosexual and educated beyond basic qualifications. Nunn (2017) describes 'the term masculine privilege (i.e. the particular rights, traditions and entitlement granted to those aligned with masculine subjectivities) ... how masculinities are heterogeneous, fluid and contingent'.<sup>275</sup> He writes about the importance of interconnection rather than distinction: 'In thinking through an emotional and relational theory of masculine knowledge, I am impelled by, and find utility in, celebrating their interconnection, rather than policing their distinction and resonate with the work that frames emotion and affect as neither indistinct nor as that which can be absolutely collapsed into the other'<sup>276</sup>

LGBT can be loosely defined as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, and of the selected artists Hockney is known to be gay, and Mehretu is lesbian. Just to be clear, they were not chosen for their sexuality but for the duality within their creative process. There are numerous studies into sexuality and gender diversity, and the analysis of transgender and genderqueer experiences in various spaces and places<sup>277</sup>. The general population in Europe is thought to have a 6% LGBT community<sup>278</sup> and the demographics of sexual orientation within the selection of Contemporary artists in the thesis can be interpreted as

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<sup>275</sup> Nunn, N. (2017), p357.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid*, p360.

<sup>277</sup> For example: Browne, Nash and Hines (2010), Doan, P. (2010) and Nash, C. (2010).

<sup>278</sup> <http://daliaresearch.com/counting-the-lgbt-population-6-of-europeans-identify-as-lgbt/> accessed on the 20.08.17

being considerably sexually diverse, as 28% are considered LGBT, which is 22% more than the general population.

## **11.4 Message in a Bottle**

The fundamental thread running through the thesis is the significance of Benjamin & Baudrillard, a spirit of hope to inspire future generations with the importance of acknowledging and saving the past, to resist the descent into a dark and destructive cycle of conflict. Response to encapsulation of collective trauma, to escape the inevitability of a repeat of history. Harnessing empowerment and embracing the possibility of fundamental change. Every artwork is considered a time capsule of memories of the artist.

Therefore, through contemplating the inherent darkness with the reality of historical Landscape in the works of Mason, Ray, and Kiefer, the viewer receives an antidote to the potential darkness of the human condition.

Should this dissertation ever wash up on a distant shore, as is metaphorically possible in our interconnected digital world, it would be hoped that it would serve as an inspiration for artists and critics to delve deep into the possibilities of representing Landscape. To take the inspiration from a variety of multidisciplinary sources to imagine a new creative process individual to themselves, taking in to account their personal and collective histories and possible traumas, and turning them into an inspiration to others who will follow in their footsteps.

It can be proposed that there are a variety of research themes that would be worthy of further investigation.

Firstly, as it can be proposed that 9/11 was an individual event which became a global trauma, in the same way that the Lisbon earthquake had a global impact on the painters and thinks of the time more investigation could be made to explore the liminal zone between collective national trauma and collective global trauma. Therefore the landscape of trauma focused on analysing geographical distance from the incident, would be fertile ground for further study.

Secondly, an area for future study could be whether gender and sexuality diversity in artists can be related to a duality in the subject matter that they explore within their creative process. In addition, as queer geographies encourage a multidimensional exploration of identity, which allows for a fluidity of sexuality that facilitates a rejection of the generalisations and boundaries that maintain the fundamental inequalities of culturally defined gender and sexuality. There is a difficulty in determining the sexual diversity of a population, but the 28% sexual diversity of the selected Contemporary artists in this study clearly exceeds that of the general population. An interesting area for future research could therefore be to explore evidence for sexual and gender fluidity between the artistic community.

Leonardo was a revolutionary multidisciplinary artist who was educated to view art as the core and essential essence of the scientific disciplines. Art was integral to rather than separate from science. Borrowing the expression of Holmes (2008), and just as he, we could draw this thesis to a close with the following quote:

‘The old, rigid debates and boundaries - science vs religion, science versus the arts, science versus traditional ethics - are no longer enough. We should be impatient with them. We need a wider, more

generous, more imaginative perspective. Above all, perhaps, we need the three things that a scientific culture can sustain: the sense of individual wonder, the power of hope, and the vivid but questing belief in a future for the globe. And that is how this book might end

<sup>279</sup>

It can be concluded that this thesis proposes that the time for interdisciplinary collaboration to be established between previously opposed or divided disciplines has been reached. The moment has returned to install the magic of a scientific appreciation of Landscape into Art and be inspired to create positively charged work that is altruistic and above all visionary.

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<sup>279</sup> Holmes, R. (2008), p469.

## Index of Figures

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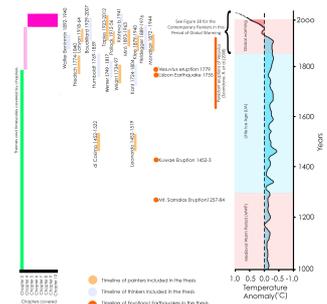
Timeline of climate change, painters, thinkers, volcanic / earthquake events discussed within the thesis, in conjunction with the issues covered within the chapters.

Amalgamation of data from the following sources:

Table of Northern Hemisphere temperature trends 1000-2000, p49

- Fagan, B. (2000) 'The Little Ice Age: How Climate made history, 1300-1850', Basic books, major historic and climatic events 1500 to the present, p100.

- Rohde, R. *2000 Year Temperature Comparison* (2005) 2000 Year Temperature Comparison.png The original version of this figure was prepared by Rohde, R. from publicly available data and is publicly available for download from





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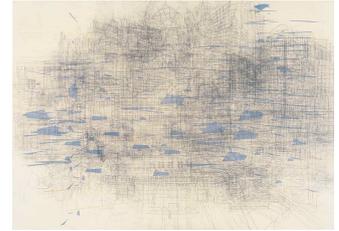
Hockney, D. *A closer Grand Canyon* (1998), Oil on sixty canvases 207 x 744.2 cm. Louisiana Museum of Modern art, Humlebaek, Denmark. Acquired with



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### 12.14 Figure 14 - Chapter Five p97

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### 12.15 Figure 15 - Chapter Six p104

#### Interactive virtual space

From: Foresta, D. (1991) *The many worlds of art, science and the new technologies*, Leonardo, Volume 24, Number 2, p143.

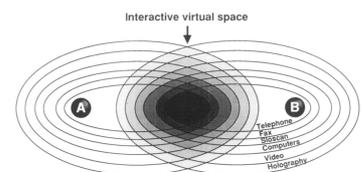


Fig. 2. The shared space of communication becomes increasingly enlarged through the application of emerging technologies. 'A' and 'B' will never be in the same physical space, but they will approach a virtual representation of it.

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Tyson, K. *Panta Rhei* (1898-2012), Oil on painting of Unknown Dutch Artist, 57 x 50 cm.



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Tyson, K. *Rhapsody for Random Walks* (2010), oil on Aluminium, 228.5 cm x 228.5 cm.

**Caption:**



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A closeup section of figure 21, expressing the pure physicality of the painted surface covered with thickly dripped lead, bordered through clouds of memory to expose a scarred, traumatised and imperfect yet luminescent coastal landscape.

Section of Kiefer, A. *Gerhütete Landschaft* (2016) *Gerhütete*



*Landschaft* (scorned landscape), Oil acrylic, emulsion, shellac and lead on canvas, 380 x 570 cm.

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**Caption:**



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Ray (2011)

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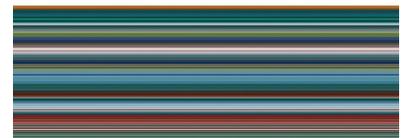
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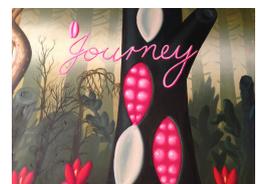
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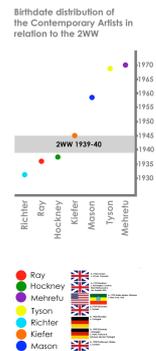
A word cloud highlighting the frequency of words that appear in the thesis, plotting the words in a size proportional to the frequency within the text, giving a quick, visual impression of the main themes. Created using the online link: [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)



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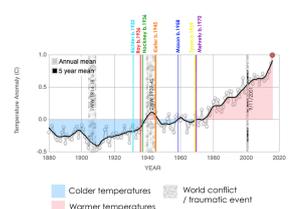
Birthdate distribution, country of origin and residency of the selected artists in relation to the 2WW, colour coded as in figures 2, 38 and 39.

Birthdate distribution of the Contemporary Artists discussed in the thesis in relation to the 2WW. Birthdate location, country of origin (and residency where different) and birthdate date given in the key of Contemporary artists included in the thesis individually colour coded as in figures 2, 37 & 38.



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The timeline of the selected artists in the context of climate change and conflict from the end of the LIA to present global warming epoch. The selected artists included in the thesis individually colour coded as in



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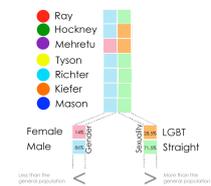
Amalgamation of data from the following sources:

- Fagan, B. (2000) 'The Little Ice Age: How Climate made history, 1300-1850', Basic books. Table of major historic and climatic events 1500 to the present, p100.

- Rohde, R. *2000 Year Temperature Comparison* (2005) 2000 Year Temperature Comparison.png The original version of this figure was prepared by Rohde, R. from publicly available data and is publicly available for download from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=466264> Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

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General population data as 6% for LGBT from <http://daliaresearch.com/counting-the-lgbt-population-6-of-europeans-identify-as-lgbt/>

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# Appendix 1

**(Given by Ray, R. to the author 23.08.12)**

## **14.1 Ray, R. *Notes on a journey*, (2012)**

The pages in this book are a collection of statements, photographs, poems and other items relating to the **Evilution Project** and the five panels which make up the installation '**Where Their Footsteps Left no Trace**'.

The Project has its roots in the first ten years of my childhood, a decade that saw the rise of Fascism and the horrors of World War 2; highlighting man's ability to harness awesome developments in science and technology into the means of killing people. Sixty years later long buried memories of the London

Blitz began to surface and although a painter, I was not inclined to recreate those images. Instead, I wrote the memories down in the form of short poems; and the more I wrote the more I remembered.

That all changed on September 11, 2001. Watching live TV coverage of the attack on the World Trade Centre, I was horrified at the sight of people plummeting to their deaths and later, deeply saddened on hearing last 'phone calls to and from loved ones trapped inside the towers.

My response to this horror was to make a large almost sculptural panel; a chaotic mix of broken concrete, wiring, computer parts and many mobile phones (cell phones). The result took me by surprise and realised I had now found a method with which I could create memorials for the millions of innocent men, women and children who, during my childhood, became victims at places like Dresden, Hiroshima, Coventry and Auschwitz.

It was during their making that they were seen by Prof. Alan Livingston, Rector of University College Falmouth, who brought them to the attention of Brian Stewart, Curator of the Falmouth Art Gallery. He exhibited them in the Spring of 2008 for a period of six weeks, later extended to sixteen weeks by public demand. I was then invited by Canon Philip Lambert to install them in Truro Cathedral for Lent 2009.

The Cathedral Choir's unaccompanied performance alongside the panels of the anthem "Civitas sancti tui" by William Byrd became a moving and pivotal moment of this project. As their voices echoed around the lofty Cathedral it

seemed that the panels had now taken on a spiritual life and journey of their own.

In September of that year the Rev. Margot Davies installed them in St Ives Parish Church for the town's two-week September Festival although they remained there for a further ten weeks. During this time Canon David Porter, Director of Reconciliation, invited me to install them for Lent 2010 in Coventry Cathedral , the 70th anniversary year of the Blitzing of that city; a terrible event that is the subject of one of the panels. This was a great honour indeed. They remained there for the anniversary of the destruction of the original Cathedral on November 14th. 1940.

During their time in Coventry they were seen by Susan Rescorla, widow of Cornish born Rick Rescorla who, as Security Officer for a company in the South Tower, saved over 2700 lives on 9/11, before losing his own. She was deeply moved by the panels and. following her return to the United States, I received an invitation from Father Madigan of St Peters Church at Ground Zero, New York, for the panels to be in his church on September 11, 2011 for the 10th anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center. This great honour I saw as yet another tribute to the spiritual journey of the panels and their ability to touch the hearts and minds of so many people.

At a reception in St Peter's Church on July 30th. 2011, the panels were blessed by Father Madigan. I then dedicated the 9/11 panel to Father Mychal Judge, Chaplain of the FDNY, Rick Rescorla, the 9/11 First Responders and the 343 firefighters who were killed. As a token of my respect and sympathy, I gifted the

9/11 panel to the people of NYC. Before and after the ceremony the Pipes and Drums of the FDNY Emerald Society played on the steps of the Church, at the foot of which stood the beautifully restored Fire Engine '343' dedicated to the lost firefighters of 9/11

In January 2012 the 9/11 panel became part of the permanent collection of the National September 11 Memorial Museum at the World Trade Centre, New York. When it opens the museum with its spectacular glass Entrance Pavillion will occupy a very large area beneath the two Memorial Pools, each an acre in size covering the footprints of the Twin Towers.

In a recent statement, Jan Siedler Ramirez Director and Senior Curator of the museum, welcomed the acquisition saying, "As we work to building an encyclopedic museum collection that engages with the September 11 terrorist attacks in the broadest cultural context, the recent donation of Roy Ray's 9/11 sculpture seems custom ordered to this vision. As a piece of response art, it provokes haunting memories of the inconceivable destruction of two quarter-mile high skyscrapers.....

Funds raised at this exhibition will be for repatriating the four remaining panels. Then a suitable home will be sought for the Holocaust (Auschwitz) panel and the Coventry, Dresden and Hiroshima panels will be renamed the 'Reconciliation Triptych'.

My own journey will continue as I move to Phase Two of the **Evolution Project** and focus on young men of my grandfather's generation who fought and died in

the trenches during the First World War. Some works are on show in this exhibition. Another large triptych is in progress and will be shown with other related works at the launch of Phase Two in this gallery on October 4th this year.

02.06.12 Roy Ray

## **14.2 Ray, R. *Some comments on the panels made by Cathedral visitors, (2009)***

My eyes began this journey, my heart soon took over

Great work, I saw this in Falmouth above the Library first. Had to see it again.

Powerful and timely

A very evocative artwork. Cleverly constructed and gets to the heart of the futility of war.

Stunning work and a poignant message it sends to all of us on the deepest level.

Inspirational. The more you look the more you learn.

I first looked and thought- what a wonderful piece of modern art.

- How wrong I was- not modern - but using all the old thought

- provoking pieces of horrible and sad days of war and destruction!! I was deeply moved.

Thank you Roy for using your wonderful gift. The Lord prompted me to come to the Cathedral on my day off to hear you speak. I feel inspired. Many blessings upon you.

Superb memories of an old man's vivid memories. May all victims have found perfect peace.

Scaringly powerful imagery that captures the heart of humanity at its worst and speaks to the heart of humanity at its best. Thought provoking at a distance and shocking close up as mind and spirit wrestle with the innocence of life and the inhumanity of mankind.

Very powerful - brought tears to my eyes.....a real lump in my throat.....could have gazed for hours....it still goes on. May God grant us the forgiveness we don't deserve.

Wow! What an emotional impact these panels make all together  
- moved to tears.

Such a powerful set of panels. I was left also thinking about the fact that only technology itself ( ie. cellphones and computers ) seemed to remain as remnants of the 9/11 victim's lives.

Stunning work so powerful and thought provoking

One of the most striking, thought provoking, tear-jerking art installations I have ever seen. Show it around the world to those who cast aside lives for a fight.

Very moving. All the worlds 'leaders' would do well to study these.

Man's inhumanity to man. And we never learn do we? This is an amazing piece of work.

Speaks volumes by just being here. No need for words or busy-ness.

Moving + thought-provoking + a little scary. A great advocate for peace

Such a powerful representation of the depth of human suffering - unwarranted and unnecessary. This work honours the lives of all those innocent victims and stand as a tribute to the decency of the human spirit that can prevail. Each piece stands alone - each segment cries out with their suffering and as a whole the five pieces are magnificent and should tour the world to remind us to keep peace in our hearts.

I gave it a cursory glance, thought "modern art" and was about to move on. Then I looked properly. A thoughtful and inspiring creation.

## 14.3 Ray, R. *9/11: The Falling Couple*, (2010)

A trader in bonds

Single and ambitious

You're alone at the top

of the corporate ladder

From the 79th floor

Magnificent Manhattan

is spread below you

in the crisp morning sun

But the iconic twin towers

are now the twin terrors

of a searing inferno

and sickening vertigo

On the ledge at your side

a tearful young colleague

looks up to you

But sees only utter despair

Gently she takes your hand

and together you step out

to the sidewalk

a thousand feet below

A single and ambitious life  
Its final account balanced  
with an intense human bond...

At the end you are no longer alone.

04.10.10 Roy Ray

## 14.4 Ray, R. *Liberation*, (2006)

A tangled heap  
of joined-up bones,  
not quite Gypsies,  
not quite Poles,  
not quite Jews and  
not quite human.

Whole families trampled into submission  
by the jackboots of a tyrannical regime,  
its horrific intention beyond belief  
until too late...

Too late now for liberation.  
In the flickering newsreel  
tumbling like naked rag dolls,  
they are gently bulldozed  
into the deep trench  
by a young soldier-  
a tearstained handkerchief protecting his nose.

One hollow-eyed skeletal corpse  
is suspended with outstretched arms  
on the pit wall.

This grinning parody of a human being  
who must once have known

childhood joys,  
the warmth of family love,  
the tears, laughter and hopes  
of life's fabric.....

A life deemed worthless arbitrarily  
and disposed of with industrial efficiency  
by monstrous oppressors.

Those staring sightless eyes  
meet mine with just one question.

Even now six decades later

I still cannot tell him why..

Memories of a 1945 newsreel while at Auschwitz.

November 2006 Roy Ray

## **14.5 Seidler Ramirez, J. *National September 11 Memorial Museum Tribute*, (2012)**

As we work to build an encyclopaedic Museum collection that engages with the September 11 terrorist attacks in their broadest cultural context, the recent donation of Roy Ray's 9/11 sculpture seems custom ordered to this mission. As a piece of response art, it provokes haunting memories of the inconceivable destruction of two quarter-mile high skyscrapers, each pulverised into a mash of pewter-toned ash and rubble in less than 10-seconds as they collapsed on that crystalline late summer morning, as another workday was breaking into full stride in Lower Manhattan. More importantly, the panel summons to mind the ineffable human loss of nearly 3,000 people whose traces in and around the Towers are tokened by the broken relics of computer keyboards and mute cell phones incorporated into the composition. As singularly savage and spectacular as these events were intended to be by their perpetrators, the assaults on the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon and failed strike on the U.S. Capitol building on 9/11 were not the most deadly of human-engineered evils in modern times. Roy Ray's *Evolution* Project grounds us in that sobering truth. By provoking us to consider the innocent victims of these killing events, a shift takes place in the viewer as our dismay and sorrow are joined by the historical record of human grit and resilience also entwined in these tragedies. The tension is engaging as we contemplate the capacity of humankind to destroy but also to console, heal and re-build.

A statement by Jan Seidler Ramirez, Chief Curator and Director, The National September 11 Memorial Museum, New York. January 2012

## 14.6 Ray,R. *Moving pictures*, (2010)

With sixpence to get in and tuppence for a bun

we queue at the Playhouse cinema

for 'Saturday morning pictures.'

Soon, our small shrill voices sing

to the ball that bounces along the words

up there on the silver screen.

Cheers greet Roy Rogers and Trigger

galloping across the Wild West.

Shrieks of laughter follow the technicolor antics

of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and Pluto.

Silence greets the Pathe newsreel.

A black and white world

where bomb doors open slowly

to release evil black shapes

that flutter down out of sight

and reappear one by one as holes

in the moving city map below.

Now, there are other images of conflict

more chilling,

beyond even adult understanding.

Images that should not confront the eyes

nor invade the mind of a small boy

31.01.10 Roy Ray

## 14.7 Ray, R. *His Footsteps*, (2011)

His footsteps came padding past you  
early that summer's day  
Footsteps that drew you to him  
and would one day take him away

A big man, running barefoot  
The glimpse of a handsome face  
A brief exchange of words  
though he never slowed his pace

A calm reassuring voice  
from a far distant place  
With just a hint of Cornwall  
the land of his Celtic race

From there his footsteps had brought him  
to the land of his boyhood heroes  
To where he'd fight his last battle  
at a place they now call Ground Zero

His footsteps led them to safety  
as in combat many years before  
When he'd never leave a man behind  
So he now went in once more

Last seen singing Cornish songs  
No concern showing in his face  
Then lost in the ash and dust  
where his footsteps left no trace

Roy Ray 2011

# Appendix 2

## **14.8 Aramburu, N. *Miles and leagues of space and time (two foreigners, two diaries), (2014)***

There is no single story, the stories are made up of polyphonic narratives that address the real event from different angles, attitudes and needs.

Immersed in a coming year to commemorate the death of Archduke Luis Salvador (1847-1915) many will be the acts, actions and demonstrations around the figure of this scholar and patron who spent time, that could have been a fleeting appearance but proved intense and immeasurable for the history of this physical and mental territory which are the Balearic Islands.

In Es Baluard we also wanted to participate actively in this review of Luis Salvador of Austria, and it will be precisely through a project that synthesises the fact to historicise from the eyes of the other. This is the staging of a coral research prototype driven by someone coming from outside the evolution of own social and life journey of this environment, a person just installed some years on the island, Natasha Hall, an artist and geographer who has articulated a system of diachronic actions and with whom we worked different ideas piloted both from the artistic as well as the educational and training side. The “Logbook: Natasha Hall and her crew” project comes to represent this idea, by juxtaposing the look of two travellers in time who transit a fascinating foreign landscape they

feel as their own, with which they play and transfigure to return it as a unique and universal heritage with all its dilemmas, contradictions and mysteries.

In the first conversations with Natasha at the time in which the implementation of the proposal was brewing, I clearly glimpsed the importance of two factors: the reconstruction of historical events through foreign eyes and the development work in progress as an open, shared and organic project. In this fragile and ambivalent gap, where we only could locate the starting point of a certain system as an interactive constellation as a perhaps uncertain and fraught with pitfalls, mistakes and successes, but above all a true reading. As real as befitting a conjugated time in the continuous present, as the will to safeguard an attitude rather than a few facts. As close as possible to the travellers attitude to assiduously take note, observe and understand, this will be the logbook, the appropriate medium of the becoming vital impulses under the severe impact of the weather and space.

Although he inhabited for years in the purest form of travelling in his ships Nixe I and Nixe II and all territory that could be a discovery, the Archduke first came to Mallorca in 1867 hiding under the name of Count Neudorf and taking up residence between Deia and Valldemossa. With him we become partakers and accomplices of the spectral, when the human harmonises with nature and loses its essence because he becomes a marker and a footprint of life, selective hue of his shadow. The spectra are characterised in advance for returning. The spirit of the Archduke is now a state, a way of understanding the culture, life and nature that permeates our territory and makes it eternal. Following the questions posed by Alberto Ruiz de Samaniego about the political dimension of

the spectral in Derrida we might think: “what is the thing itself and its replica in the way of their appearance? Does it not point to a future that can never be closed but will always be met, an apocalyptic time in which the image announces its return and, at the same time and thus end? “ (1) Logbook is a step forward as a contemporary approach to analyze and disseminate this historic process as linked to the scientific and creative as the telluric organic. What will geologists say, energy readers of Sa Foradada, the heirs of his heritage, speleologists of the caves of Drach, some books with ethnological descriptions, winds ... what will the trees that we do not understand because they have taken these exalted forms at the seaside tell us? We will never know what this sea wanted to tell us, mirror of the years and lives trapped in front of him, the disconcerting intensity of light. First of all, we can only take notes with scientific rigor and let the records disclose certain evidence. Gaston Bachelard stated that “even when a poet evokes a dimension of a geographer, he knows instinctively that that dimension reads the immobile because it is rooted in a particular dream-value”.(2) For this french philosopher, poet and physicist every landscape is a dream experience. Fruit of the social cultural construct, the landscape is inserted into the logic metric symbolic representation. Its own definition of “land area that is seen from a site” refers precisely to that look that requires to be decoded and is priestess of their senses. The romantic landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) link the high sentiment among landscape art in the East and who was developing in Europe. This concept of the sublime is noticeable also in Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) whilst it will remain a little bit further in the naturalistic landscape of John Constable (1776-1837). The fashion of the Grand Tour started in principle by the young English upper middle class shortly after the Peace of Ryswick

(1697) launched numerous diaspora travelling artists. Maybe the revalued and activated landscape of the Archiduke Luis Salvador, in the same place as the missionary monastery school in Miramar, did stay attached to the paintings of John Singer Sargent (1856 -1925) and Theodore Compton (1849- 1921) after their successive visits, as if each layer of paint was a holistic layer of memory of the environment, only here for a fleeting fraction of a past time. Now with the intention to rely on the historical figure of the Archduke and his impact, the succession of periods and decades intermingle and nature acts as a medium.

Natasha Hall (London, 1974), a student of a professional development course for artists Les Cliniques of Es Baluard, began to focus on Sa Foradada from a creative practice approach, in the area of land and sea close to Miramar, in 2012.

The British creator is not doing a landscape painting, but the painting in itself is a landscape, she does not use the first person but leaves it to others, to others to lead and guide us in a Homeric journey of which we only know how it started but not when and where it will end.

Using audiovisual as language, her logbook will be the reference to glimpse a part of everything and to be prepared for the spectral eternal.

Nekane Aramburu 2014

Director of the Es Baluard Museum of Contemporary Art

Palma de Mallorca

Spain

1. Ruiz de Samaniego, Alberto. Being and not being. Figures in the spectral domain. Editorial Micromegas. Murcia 2013. pp. 56
2. Bachelard, Gaston. The Poetics of Space. Edited by the Fund for Economic Culture. Buenos Aires, 2000. pp. 166

# Appendix 3

## 14.9 Hall, N. *Logbook*, (2014)

Format: Video HD

Duration: 12'35''

Languages: Catalan, English, Spanish and German

### Link to video with Subtitles in English

<https://vimeo.com/130729360>

**Password: Arxiduc2017**

### Link to video with Subtitles in Spanish

<https://vimeo.com/129752700>

**Password: Arxiduc2016**

*Filmed on location at Miramar Monastery, Sa Foradada, Cuevas del Drach at Porto Christo & the Banca March Library in Mallorca.*

### Exhibition History:

- Included in the exhibition 'Logbook: Natasha Hall and her crew', 17.12.14 - 01.03.15, Es Baluard Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Palma de Mallorca, Spain.
- *The spirit of the Arxiduc*, featured the exhibition of the 'Logbook' video in one of the caves, contemporary music and presentations, Cuevas del Drach, Mallorca 23.10.15 ( Press review: *The sprit of the Archiduke Lluís Salvador takes life in the caves of the dragon* – Última hora, 05.10.15 ) .
- *Conference on speleology* with reference to the Cuevas de Drach and global climate change – 19.2.15 with Nekane Aramburu (director of Es Baluard

- Museum, Mateu Duran (representative of the caves), Dr Joan Fornos (Speleologist), Dr Xisco Gracia (speleologist, biologist and diver), and myself in the Es Baluard Museum funded by Pere Sede (Wine company based in Mallorca).
- *Paths of the Arxiduc* was an event at the the Monastery at Miramar during which a presentation by the artist included showing the *Logbook* video. Dr José Maria Sevilla, creator of the Museum dedicated to Ramon Llull ( 1232 - 1315) who founded the monastery in 1276 and the Arxiduc who purchased it in 1872, explained the significance of the place and the homage the Arxiduc made to Ramon Llull.
  - The author co-ordinated the *Year of the Arxiduc 2015* events in Es Baluard 2015-16, which were funded by the Balearic Government, Es Baluard Museum, Saquavitae (elderly residential homes), Pere Seda wine, Cuevas del Drach and numerous smaller donations.
  - *Logbook* was included in a presentation at the Tabakalera, Madrid (20.02.17) shown in Ibiza in 2015 and travelled around the mediterranean on Balearia boats in 2016.

### **The Participants:**

***Dr José María Sevilla*** (collector, founder of the Miramar Monastery Museum and heir of the Arxiduc, <http://www.sonmarroig.com/miramar.html> ).

***Dr Wolfgang Lohnert*** (Founder of the Ludwig Salvator Society in Vienna, collector and investigator of the Arxiduc <http://www.ludwig-salvator.com/englbasis.htm>),

***Dr Joan Fornós*** (speleologist at the University of the Balearic Islands),

***Dr Isabel Cacho*** (Geologist at the University of Barcelona),

**Dr Laura de La Valle** (Geologist of the University of the Balearic Islands),

**Dr Adrian Martinez Asensio** (Oceanographer at the University of La Rochelle),

**Dr Eva Mayol Fajardo** (Microbiologist at the University of La Rochelle),

**Fausto Roldan Sierra** (Director of the Banca March Library)

**Daniel Alzamora-Dickin** (Composer living near Soller),

**José Truyol Anglada** (Cartologist & Numismatist),

**Mariá Cifre Sabater** (Phd student at the University of the Balearic Islands),

**Leonor Isern Hernández & Pilar González** (librarians from the Banca March library).

**14.10 Estaban, G. *Natasha Hall invokes the Arxiduc with Logbook in the Observatori of Es Baluard*, (2014) Ultima Hora Press Article, 17.12.14.**

MÉRCOLES, 17 DE DICIEMBRE DE 2014 CULTURA Y ESPECTÁCULOS

**ARTE** La creadora británica presentará el proyecto hoy, a las 19.00 horas, con la intervención de José M<sup>a</sup> Sevilla y la directora del museo, Nekane Aramburu

## Natasha Hall «invoca» al Arxiduc con 'Logbook' en el Observatori de Es Baluard

G. ESTEBAN

Alumna del curso de formación Les Clíniques d'Es Baluard, Natasha Hall (Londres, 1974) «invoca» al Arxiduc Lluís Salvador con el proyecto *Logbook*, un trabajo expositivo que ha completado junto con su tripulación de ayudantes y que presenta hoy, a las 19.00, en Es Baluard, acompañada por José M<sup>a</sup> Sevilla y la directora del centro, Nekane Aramburu.

«Ahora parece que se va a poner de moda la figura del Arxiduc conmemorando, en 2015, su muerte, pero lo que este proyecto tiene de específico, de diferente frente a todo lo que se pueda hacer, es que es un trabajo en proceso en el que dos personas, en el espacio y el tiempo, confluyen», explica Aramburu, que también ejerce de comisaria. «Es como un viaje en el tiempo donde casi el espectro del Arxiduc está



con nosotros», agrega. *Logbook*, instalada en el Observatori del museo, comprende una intervención pictórica, un vídeo documental, una vitrina que contiene los elementos que

se encontró Hall durante el proceso creativo, un libro de artista y unas chocolatinas fabricadas a propósito. «Mi idea original era investigar la costa de Mallorca hasta que en una tutoría

Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta me propuso indagar en el Arxiduc. Y eso hice», relata la artista.

**Logbook.** Hoy, a las 19.00, en Es Baluard.

**La artista británica Natasha Hall, ayer, en el Observatori de Es Baluard.** ■ Foto: JOAN TORRES

Natasha Hall (London, 1974), a student of the coaching programme of Les Cliniques of Es Baluard, *invokes* the Arxiduc Lluís Salvador with the *Logbook* project, an exhibited work which has been completed with her crew of helpers, and will be presented today, at 19.00, in Es Baluard, accompanied by Dr José Maria Sevilla and the director of the centre Nekane Aramburu.

'Now it seems that it is very fashionable to commemorate the figure of the Arxiduc in 2015, his death, but what this project specifically has is a different approach, in that it is a work in process in which two people, in the same space and time come together' explains Aramburu who commissioned the exhibition. 'It is as if we have travelled in time so that the Arxiduc is with us' she added. *Logbook* is installed in the the Observatori of the museum, has paintings, a documentary style video, a glass display case which contains the elements discovered by Hall during the creative process, an artist book and some chocolates especially made for the exhibition. 'My original idea was to investigate the coast of Mallorca until a tutorial with Fernando Gómez de la Cuesta when he encouraged me to investigate the Arxiduc, which I did', related the artist.

# 14.11 Wilms, A. A Magnificent Appreciation of Landscape, (2014) Mallorca Zeitung Press Article 31.12.14

Mallorca Zeitung – Nr. 765 – 31. Dezember 2014 REPORT 5



■ Die Crew des filmischen Logbuchs: Alle Gesprächspartner stehen mit einem der Bereiche in Verbindung, die der Erzherzog in seinen zahlreichen Werken behandelte. Foto: HMA

## „Großartiges visuelles Verständnis für die Landschaft“

**Die Künstlerin und Geografin Natalia Hall hat in der vergangenen Woche in Palma zeitgenössischem Museum Es Baluard ihr Projekt „Logbook: Natalia Hall and Her Crew“ vorgestellt. Für die Schau drehte die 40-Jährige unter anderem ein zweidimensionales Video, in dem vom Werk des Erzherzogs inspirierte Künstler zu Wort kommen. Die Britin, die seit fünf Jahren mit Mann und Kindern auf der Insel lebt, promoviert derzeit an der Balearen-Universität – für ihre Doktorarbeit untersucht sie zeitgenössische Landschaftsbilder. Im Gespräch mit der MZ erklärt sie, was sich hinter dem Projekt an Es Baluard verbirgt.**



■ Hall hat ein Kunstprojekt über den Erzherzog gestartet. Foto: FR

**Wann haben Sie zum ersten Mal von Erzherzog gehört?**  
Die Eltern meines Mannes sind von Mallorca, deshalb besaß er einige der Bücher des Erzherzogs. Allerdings war das für mich zunächst ein eher distanzierter Kontakt – wie wichtig Ludwig Salvator für die Insel und auch für viele andere Orte in Europa war, wurde mir erst klar, als ich mit den Vorbereitungen für mein Projekt begann.

**Was sagt Ihnen der Erzherzog als Wissenschaftler?**  
Er hat ein ganz wunderbares Verständnis für die Eigenheiten der Balearen unter Beweis gestellt. Natürlich sind die naturwissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen, die er damals anstellte, mittlerweile durch aktuellere Forschung überholt. Aber seine Leidenschaft für die Orte der Insel war beeindruckend.

**Zudem grüßen Wissenschaftler noch heute zum Vergleich auf seine Bücher zurück, beispielsweise im Bereich Klimaforschung – er hat als einer der ersten zahlreiche Wetterdaten der Insel niedergeschrieben.**

**Und als Künstler?**  
Ludwig Salvator war selbst ein großer Künstler, ich habe eine fantastische Zeichnung gesehen, die er von Sa Foradada anfertigte. Auch die Illustrationen in „Die Balearen in Wort und Bild“ berehen allseits auf seinen Skizzen. Er hatte ein großartiges visuelles Verständnis für die Landschaft – und ist nicht zuletzt ein sehr gutes Beispiel dafür, wie sich Kunst und Wissenschaft vereinen lassen.

**Erzählen Sie uns von Ihrem Projekt.**  
Es entstand in einem engen Dialog mit der Es Baluard-Direktorin Nekane Aranzabou. Mein erster Einfall war eine Reise entlang der Küste. So kamen wir schnell auf die Perspektive vom Meer aus. Und da ich mich kurz vorher mit dem Logbuch der „Boarty“ in der British Library

beschäftigt hatte, das im Ten ja auch von einer suchlichen Aufzeichnung der Daten zu einer eher literarischen Erzählung der Ereignisse wurde, erschien mir eine Art Logbuch das ideale Format – auch, weil es Memoraufnahmen erlaubt. Das Projekt soll übrigens nach der Ausstellung nicht beendet sein, sondern in der Zeit überdauern.

**Wie haben Sie Ihre „Crew“, also die Menschen, die im Video erscheinen, zusammengestellt?**  
Fast alle Kontakte entstanden im Gespräch mit Lesern, denen ich von meinem Vorhaben erzählte. Der eine sagte dann: Sprich mit dem! Der nächste empfahl mir einen weiteren Bekannten – es hat sich einfach so ergeben. Allen gemein ist die Begeisterung für unterschiedliche Aspekte des Erzherzogs – ich habe niemandem vorgeschrieben, was er machen soll, es gab von meiner Seite kein Skript.

**Die Bilder in der Ausstellung stammen auch von Ihnen?**  
Ja, ich habe viel Zeit in Minimar verbracht, wo ich in einem Studio

mit dem Blick auf diese wunder-volle Aussicht malen durfte – wobei die Landschaft dort heute ja ganz anders aussieht als zur Zeit des Erzherzogs: Wo heute alles grün ist, war die vorherrschende Farbe damals ocker – weil die Menschen die Hügel zum Bau von Häusern oder Schifflern abgeholzt hatten. Auch das habe ich von einem der Experten, die im Video zu Wort kommen, gelernt.

**Auf Ihre Anregung hin findet am 2. Januar im Es Baluard ein Workshop für Großeltern und Enkel statt – wie kamen Sie auf diese Idee?**  
Ich hatte eine wundervolle Beziehung zu meiner Großmutter und denke ganz allgemein, dass wir viel von unseren Vorfahren lernen können. In dem wir die Großeltern ansprechen, kommen wir der Zeit des Erzherzogs auch ein kleines bisschen näher – und auch die Konzepte Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft spielen in meinem Projekt eine Rolle. Die Generationen durch Kunst miteinander zu verbinden, ist eines meiner Ziele.

Nr. 765 - 31 Dezember 2014

## **‘A magnificent visual understanding of the landscape’**

*The artist and geographer Natasha Hall presented her project ‘Logbook: Natasha Hall And Her Crew’ in the contemporary museum of Es Baluard last week. For the show, the 40 year old artist made a twelve minute long movie whereby the Arxiducs work inspired artists come to word. The British lady which has been living on the island for five years with her partner and children is actually doing her doctorate on Landscape Painting at the UIB. During her conversation with MZ, she explained what lies behind the project in Es Baluard.*

### **When did you first hear about the Arxiduc ?**

The parents of my partner are from Mallorca, that is why he owns a few books from the Archiduc. It was a rather distant contact at the beginning - but how important Luis Salvatore was for this island and other places in Europe became clear when I started preparations for my project.

### **Was does the Arxiduc tell you as a scientist ?**

He has demonstrated having a wonderful understanding for the characteristics of the Balearic Islands. Most of the scientific analyses have in the meantime been improved but his passion for the locations of the island was impressive. Moreover, scientist are still today accessing his books for comparisons as for example in the subject of climate research - he was one of the first to register the many meteorological data of the islands.

**And as an artist ?**

Luis Salvator was himself a great artist. I have seen a fantastic drawing he made of Sa Foradada. The illustrations of 'The Balearics in words and pictures' are all based on his sketches. He had a fantastic visual understanding for the landscape - and it is also a good example how science and art can be combined.

**Tell us more about your project**

It emerged from a dialogue with the director of Es Baluard Nekane Aramburu. My first idea was a trip along the coast. We therefore (swiftly) came to the perspective from the Sea. And as I recently had dedicated myself to the logbook of the 'Bounty' at the British Library, that in tone has also to do with the recording of objective data which then became a rather a literary narration of these events, the logbook seemed to be the ideal format for me - also because it allows snapshots. The project is not meant to end after the exhibition, but meant to outlive in time.

**How did you arrange your crew, the people which appear in the video together ?**

Almost all contacts resulted through conversations with people I mentioned my project. One then said: speak to this person! And the next one recommended another acquaintance - that is how it happened. All they have in common is their enthusiasm for the diverse aspects of the Archiduc - I did not dictate what they had to do, there was no script from my side.

**Are the pictures in the exhibition yours ?**

Yes, I spent much time at Miramar, where I was allowed to paint in a studio with that beautiful landscape - whereas the landscape there today is very different to the one in times of the Arxiduc: Where it is green today the predominant colour used to be ochre then, because the people had cut down the trees for housing and boating. I have learnt this from one of the experts who appears in the video.

**At your instigation there will be a workshop for grandparents and grandchildren on the second of January at Es Baluard - how did you come up with this idea ?**

I had a wonderful relation with my grandmother, and I sincerely believe that we can learn a great deal from our ancestors. By addressing grandparents we are also coming a little bit closer to the times of the Arxiduc - the concepts of past, present and future play an important role in my project. One of my goals is to connect the generations through art.

## 14.12 *The Great Names of 2015*, Diario de Mallorca Press Article, 10.01.15

Sebastião Salgado, Max Bill, El Greco, Vallhonrat, Ignasi Aballí, Natasha Hall, Christian Boltanski, Francesc Ruiz, Pepo Salazar, Santiago Villanueva o Ricard Chiang are some of the names that will occupy the exhibition rooms of the museums on the island in the first quarter of 2015. Es Baluard will have a private view of Implosion (Cellular). Carte Blanche to Agustín Fernández Mallo. With other projects in the museum, the one that stands out is the one by Natasha Hall in the Observatori.



**Salgado, El Greco, Vallhonrat o Boltanski, los grandes nombres de 2015**

► Sebastião Salgado, Max Bill, El Greco, Javier Vallhonrat, Ignasi Aballí, Natasha Hall, Christian Boltanski, Francesc Ruiz, Pepo Salazar, Santiago Villanueva o Ricard Chiang son algunos de los nombres que ocuparán las salas de los museos isleños durante el primer semestre de 2015.

En Es Baluard, el próximo 30 de enero se inaugurará *Implosió (cel·lular)*. *Carte Blanche a Agustín Fernández Mallo*. Entre otros proyectos que tendrán lugar en el museo, puede destacarse el de Natasha Hall en el Observatori. En el Gabinet podrán contemplarse a partir del 18 de marzo obras de Ignasi Aballí, ganador en 2014 del premio Joan Miró.

CaixaForum abrirá al público del 5 de marzo al 24 de mayo el último proyecto fotográfico de Sebastião Salgado, quien durante ocho años ha explorado la belleza de la naturaleza por todo el mundo. Asimismo, mostrará en abril los retratos de Pedro Madueño. De junio a octubre aterrizará en el Gran Hotel una selección de obras de El Greco (en la imagen de arriba) que explicará la influencia que el cretense ejerció en pintores como Rusiñol.

El Solleric acogerá, además de la muestra del Ciutat de Palma y una dedicada al ganador del año pasado, exposiciones de Renate Gras, José Aranda (Espal Born), Marcos Vidal y Ana Laura Aláez (Zona Base), Francesc Ruiz y Pepo Salazar en Box 27 (dos de los tres artistas que este año van a representar a España en la Bienal de Venecia), Xisco Bonnín y otras que cuentan con apoyo del IEB: la de Carme Riera sobre el Arxiduc y las de Javier Vallhonrat, Santiago Villanueva y Ricard Chiang.

La instalación de Christian Boltanski se instala en Sa Llonja el próximo 17.

## 14.13 Clar, A. *Glances to construct narratives*, (2015) El Mundo Press Article, 02.02.15

EL MUNDO. LUNES 2 DE FEBRERO DE 2015

### *MIRADAS PARA CONSTRUIR RELATOS*

2015, Año Archiduque Luis Salvador de Austria, punto de partida de la muestra

NATASHA HALL 'LOGBOOK: NATASHA HALL AND HER CREW'

Observatori Es Baluard  
Hasta el 27 de febrero

#### ASUN CLAR

La muestra de Natasha Hall (Londres, 1974), comisariada por Nekane Aramburu, directora del Baluard, debe contemplarse, sobre todo, como un proyecto que, al materializarse, utiliza distintos soportes: vídeo documental, libro de artista, vitrina e intervención pictórica.

Todo este despliegue de medios, realizado junto a otros profesionales, es el resultado de un trabajo de campo que persigue una aproximación a la actitud del Archiduque Luis Salvador (1847-1915) contemplada desde una perspectiva histórica y geográfica. Precisamente, el trabajo de documentación desarrollado por el Archiduque al observar las tradiciones culturales, particularidades científicas, y el paisaje de las islas, plasmado en su obra *Die Balearen in Wort und Bild geschildert*, utilizando tanto el texto como la ilustración, contiene un cierto paralelismo con el enfoque del artista como etnógrafo que persigue un modo de interpretar la realidad mediante la mirada a la cultura del otro (generalmente, comunidades geográficamente distantes y menos desarrolladas): aunque existía una proximidad geográfica entre el observador y lo observado, su mirada, eso sí, entusiasmada, mantenía necesariamente una distancia determinada por su condición social.

Así, tomando como base las



Exposición de Natasha Hall en Es Baluard.

experiencias y estudios realizados por el austriaco, Natasha Hall cartografía sus pasos, indaga en documentos, explora sus mapas físicos y se nutre de sus paisajes, como Sa Foradada, profundizando en el significado de lo que aquel realizó, desarrollando un viaje entre dos momentos históricos y dos geografías: los observadores viajeros, austriaco y británico –instalada recientemente en la isla–, y lo observado, lo mallorquín, en una doble pi-

rueta en la que el papel pasivo sigue correspondiendo icómicamente al isleño.

Parte del formato de la exposición entronca tangencialmente con el arte archivístico al presentar, en su correspondiente vitrina, materiales que recogen el proceso investigador, así como por la intención documental del vídeo; se prioriza la documentación respecto al objeto artístico entendido de forma tradicional; lo que interesa no es el resultado objetual de su trabajo sino el

concepto de su propuesta. La memoria juega un papel importante en la idea de almacenamiento y archivo ya que los objetos son receptores de historia y puede desentrañarse su habla en el tiempo. Así, el ámbito de la investigación prima sobre la experiencia visual y el goce estético, en una puesta en escena en la que se organizan y reinterpretan las aportaciones del que podría pensarse –si se me permite la licencia– como otro artista *archivista*, el Arxiduc.

2015. Year of the Arxiduc Lluís Salvador of Austria, starting point of the artwork.

The work of Natasha Hall (London, 1974), commissioned by Nekane Aramburu, the director of Es Baluard, needs contemplation, because most importantly it is a project that in order to be materialised uses distinct media: documental video, artists book, glass display case and paintings.

All of these media are deployed together with the assistance of diverse professionals in the form of fieldwork to explore the Archiduke Luis Salvador (1847-1915) and to contemplate his character from a historical and geographical perspective. The documentation of the Archiduke himself developed by observing the traditional cultures, scientific features and the landscapes of the islands, and was captured in his work *Die Balearen in Wort und Bild geschildert*, using text and illustrations, containing a certain parallel to the focus of the artist as ethnographer that searches for a way of interpreting reality from a glance from another culture (generally geographically distant and less developed): even if there is a geographical proximity between the observer and the observed, the gaze is enthusiastically maintained as required by the determinate distance of social class. Like this we can touch base with the experiences and studies realised by the Austrian. Natasha Hall maps her processes, enquiring with documents, exploring physical maps and nourishing landscapes, such as Sa Foradada, deepening the significance of this process, developing a journey between two historic moments and two geographies; the travelling observers, Austrian and English - recently installed on the island-, and is observed, the mallorquin, its passive role completes a double pirouette as it continues on its path. Why not! to the islander.

Part of the format of the exhibition creates a diagonal tangent with the presented archival material, in its own glass display case, materials gathered together as part of the investigative phase, as for the documental intention of

the video; prioritising the documentation with respect to the artistic object as an extension of the traditional form; what is of interest is not the resultant objects of her work but the concept of her proposal. The memory plays an important role in the idea of storage and archiving those objects of historical value which can be uncovered as one explores time. Like this, the field of the investigation focuses on visual experience and aesthetic enjoyment, staged to reinterpret and organise the objects that you could consider - if I may have permission to say - like the other archival artist, the Arxiduc.

