Repetition and Difference: Poetic Invocations of Nature in Visual Art.

by

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Signed statement of originality

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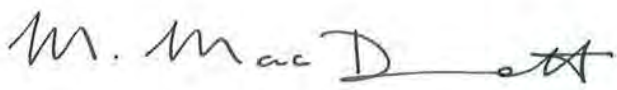

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Abstract

Repetition, particularly as employed in minimalist art, has been contrasted to the poetic insofar as it is associated with notions such as sameness and standardization, while the poetic is associated with uniqueness and difference. In my work however, my aim is to express a poetics of nature through the use of repetition.

Because of the centrality of repetition, minimalism was the initial context that informed the research. But while minimalists emphasized the modular, which has connotations of standardization and mass production, my interest resides in how repetition operates in nature where there is never an exact replication.

The key artists within the research context are Carl Andre whose use of the modular grid evokes a sense of environment; Claude Monet in relation to his investigations of the nuance of changing light and atmospheric conditions as manifested particularly in his water lily series; Paul Klee's use of repetitive tree-like structures; Agnes Martin's repetition of the horizon in her monochromatic paintings; Emily Kame Kngwarreye's repetition of marks/gestures that draw on nature in her paintings; and Vija Celmins' repetitions of marks and of oceanic and inter-stellar motifs.

Correlations have been formed in the research between Gilles Deleuze's understanding of repetition within *Difference and Repetition* and Gaston Bachelard's definition of poetics within *The Poetics of Space.* I propose that the similarity of the operations of repetition and poetics suggests they

can be viewed as being related, and that the essential condition of the two orders is mobility.

The three main aspects of nature that have been researched in relation to mobility and repetition are: the wave and its dual characteristics within water and light; growth, particularly leaf vein structures that appear uniform but are unique; and time seen through cycles and evolutions in nature.

My contribution to the field is in extending a dialogue in which repetition is not mere replication of the same but arises out of the recognition of difference within sameness.

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Introduction

This research began with the observation that within nature there is the appearance of repetition and that repetition in art has the potential to form poetic resonances with multifarious natural elements.

Repetition as it occurs in our everyday lives tends to be associated with standardization and mass production. However, within my observations of repetition in nature differentiation is characteristic of the outcomes of the operation. These observations link to my studio practice where, in undertaking repetition, the research explores the tension between distinctions and uniformities; points of subtle difference, that I consider as having most resonance in relation to my experiences of recurring elements in nature. Within this research these experiences focus on waves, leaves and natural cycles.

In previous work the theme of repetition and nature was a metaphor for life and death. My use of repetition now, still represents a philosophy that observes and accepts living and dying through natural processes; beyond this, however, it is my intention that my work should question how we value nature in our lives.

Chapter one of the exegesis provides an overview of the central argument. It introduces the subject matter: repetition and difference: poetic invocations of nature in visual art, and draws upon Gilles Deleuze's concepts of repetition and Gaston Bachelard's concepts of poetics in relation to space and the natural elements. This chapter also

provides an overview of the personal motivations driving the research, as well as introducing the three main natural themes: waves, leaves and natural cycles.

Chapter two discusses how the project was pursued. The early phase of the work was entwined with the undertaking of a two month wilderness residency at Lake St Clair within the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park in Tasmania. The project repeatedly drew on my experiences of nature during that time, as well as on expeditions to coastal sites in Tasmania, and everyday observations of sky, water, and trees around Hobart. The submitted works are discussed in detail focusing on materials and processes and the conceptual thoughts that underpinned them.

Chapter three addresses the context of the project. Beginning with what I see as a legacy of repetition from the minimalist movement in the late 1960s, the research then concentrates specifically on modernist, then contemporary artists who have, in a sustained sense, referenced nature and used repetition in their work.

The conclusion of the exegesis provides a summary of how the project has explored the relationship between repetition and a poetics of nature; and how those explorations have contributed to the field.

Chapter One: Introduction to the subject

Repetition, particularly as employed in minimalist art, has been contrasted to poetic realization insofar as it is associated with notions such as sameness and standardization, while the poetic is associated with uniqueness and difference. However, in my work, my aim is to express a poetics of nature through the use of repetition.

The concepts of Deleuze and Bachelard are pertinent in this research in view of the way they propose that, within the operations of repetition and poetics, there is a dynamic and singular essence that is working, or arising, in co-dependence with a structural regularity.

This dual relationship links to my observations of nature where uniformity and order are prevalent, but just as prevalent are singularities and distinctions. That no two leaves are the same, nor any two days or moments, is an underlying theme in the research. In nature we experience a profusion of what we feel to be the 'same', structurally or cyclically. Simultaneously, when we attempt to locate 'sameness', we are met at every point with nuances of difference. As a visual practitioner my aim is to examine the margin line between structure and inflection by adopting repetition in nature as a premise both conceptually and formally in the works. It is my intention that, in concentrating on the metric aspects of repetition, an exploration of the ways in which inflection occurs can be observed, charted and analyzed in relation to poetical aspects of nature.

Initially the investigation sought to explore the relationship between the 'multiple' and nature in visual art, as I felt there was a strong link

between regular, mechanically produced components in art works and my personal experiences of nature where perceptions of a prolific sense of sameness trigger mesmerizing effects. Initially the major works reflected the aim of seeking uniformity through mechanized actions such as slip-casting and serial mark-making. But what these works quickly exposed was that although uniformity was important to me, it was the crucial distinctions within uniformity, the points that make each component distinct, that I considered as having most resonance in relation to my experiences of recurring elements in nature; broadly under the headings of waves, leaves and cycles.

Deleuze's conception of repetition offers a useful basis on which to articulate how repetition is intimately connected with difference rather than being its antithesis. His view of repetition contrasts with that of Rosalind Krauss as outlined in her essay, *The originality of the avant-garde: a post-modern repetition*. In writing about repetition and its relationship to the grid in contemporary art Krauss states:

> Structurally, logically, axiomatically, the grid can only be repeated. And, with an act of repetition or replication as the "original" occasion of its usage within the experience of a given artist, the extended life of the grid in the unfolding progression of his work will be one of still more repetition, as the artist engages in repeated acts of self-imitation. That so many generations of twentieth century artists should have maneuvered themselves into the particular position of paradox – where they are condemned to repeating, as if by compulsion, the logically fraudulent original – is truly compelling.[1]

[1] Krauss, R., 'The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodern Repetition', *October*, No. 18 (fall 1981), p. 56.

It is crucial to note the way that Krauss replaces the term repetition with words such as replication and imitation. These words denote a copying of an original and presuppose a prototype. For Deleuze, by contrast, true repetition is not mere duplication but, rather is intimately tied to the idea of difference, and therefore each repetition necessarily contains its own uniqueness. Unlike equivalences, the singular movements of each repetition are not exchangeable. He explains the distinction between replication and repetition in saying that replication involves:

> The exchange or substitution of particulars...By contrast we can see that repetition is necessary and justified conduct only in relation to that which cannot be replaced. Repetition as a conduct and as a point of view concerns non-exchangeable and non-substitutable singularities.[2]

Krauss' argument that no original can be found in repetition is based on an assumption that the particulars of repetition are exchangeable and replaceable. But if we take on board Deleuze's distinction between repetition and replication we could surmise that the original - the unique singular, is found at every point in repetition.

Deleuze says repetition does not repeat a first time, a second, third, fourth, fifth time, but rather the first time is carried to the nth power.[3] Deleuze likens this to the repetition of festivals, quoting Peguy who says:

> [I]t is not Federation Day which commemorates or represents the fall of the Bastille, but the fall of the Bastille which celebrates and repeats in advance all the Federation Days; or Monet's first water lily which repeats all the others.[4]

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[2] Deleuze, G., trans. P. Patton, *Difference and Repetition*., Columbia University Press, New York, 1992, p. 17.
[3] Ibid. p. 2.
[4] Ibid. p. 1.

Deleuze suggests that unlike replication, where there is a concept that is repeated again and again, in repetition an initial concept does not exist, but remains mysterious, appearing through disguise. Another example he gives of this idea is that of masks; repetition is in a way like a series of masks. It is not beneath the masks where we find true repetition but in the differences between one mask and another.

In this way Deleuze distinguishes repetition from the logic of equivalences that pertains to the language of science, and connects it instead to lyrical language. He states:

> The repetition of a work of art is like a singularity without concept, and it is not by chance that a poem must be learned by heart. The head is the organ of exchange, but the heart is the amorous organ of repetition...Pius Servien rightly distinguished two languages: the language of science, dominated by the symbol of equality, in which each term may be replaced by others; and lyrical language, in which every term is irreplaceable and can only be repeated.[5]

Deleuze stresses that two operations occur simultaneously within repetition. He speaks of cadence-repetitions (what he also calls 'bare' repetitions) as being like regular measurements, and in between these metrical spaces, inequalities and inflections occur, and these Deleuze calls rhythm-repetitions (or 'covered' repetitions). He states:

> Cadence is only the envelope of a rhythm, and of a relationship between rhythms. The reprise of points of inequality of inflections or of rhythmic events, is more profound than the reproduction of ordinary homogenous

[5] Deleuze, G., trans. P. Patton, *Difference and Repetition.*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1992, pp. 1-2.

> elements...Even in nature, isochronic rotations are only the outward appearance of a more profound movement, the revolving cycles are only abstractions; placed together they reveal evolutionary cycles or spirals whose principle is a variable curve, and the trajectory of which has two dissymmetrical aspects, as though it had a right and a left. It is always in this gap, which should not be confused with the negative, that creatures weave their repetition; and receive at the same time the gift of living and dying.[6]

Deleuze proposes that what seems the same in repetition - metric and equal - only appears in relationship to another repetition disguised within it - inflective and unequal. He says in nature rotations might appear equal and continuous but that really these are an outward structure of something evolutionary involving variables and dissymmetry. The latter is the more profound operation: a creative force.

Given these characteristics of repetition it is little wonder that many artists have found repetition so intriguing. Could it not be said that repetition has the potential to question nominal givens within our culture and express difference by its very usage in visual art?

I suggest that, in his introduction to *The Poetics of Space,* Bachelard establishes a philosophical framework for the study of poetics that bears a strong relationship to the operation of repetition presented by Deleuze.

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[6] Ibid. p. 21.

In relation to the poetic image, Bachelard states:

> One must be receptive to the image at the moment it appears: if there be a philosophy of poetry, it must appear and re-appear through a significant verse, in total adherence to an isolated image; to be exact, in the very ecstasy of the newness of the image.[7]

We pick up on two points here. One is that the image must appear and re-appear (be repeated?) while simultaneously adhering each time to the novelty of the image. Bachelard sees that it is singularity that is essential in the operation of poetics just as, for Deleuze, singularity is what distinguishes repetition from replication.

Bachelard also says that nothing 'general and co-ordinated [can] serve as a basis for a philosophy of poetry [for this] would interfere with the essential psychic actuality, the essential novelty of the poem'.[8]

This correlates to Deleuze's proposition that repetition pertains to lyrical language rather than the language of science and causality.

Bachelard says that 'it is in the opposite of causality, that is, in *reverberation* [that he sees] the real measure of the being of a poetic image. In this reverberation, the poetic image will have a sonority of being'.[9] Bachelard uses the term reverberation to describe what he sees as the essence of the poetic image, because in its intangibility, and

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[7] Bachelard, G., *The poetics of space*, trans. M. Jolas, Orion Press, New York, 1994, pg xxxiv.

[8] Ibid., pg xv.
[9] Ibid., pg xvi.

invisibility; in its ability to fill, move and transform, reverberation defies causality in every sense.

Here Bachelard refers to Eugene Minkowski and his book *Vers une Cosmologie*, and, in a footnote, Jolas (Bachelard's editor) draws on the writing of Anna Teresa Tymieniecka in her *Phenomenology and Science*. We can say that for Minkowski the essence of life is not 'a feeling of being, of existence, but a feeling of participation in a flowing onward, necessarily expressed in terms of time, and secondarily expressed in terms of space'.[10]

Bachelard sees that reverberation operates in a doublet with resonances and repercussions. Resonances and repercussions are aspects such as memories or sentiments that a poem might arouse in the reader. But Bachelard sees these as secondary to reverberations:

> In the resonance we hear the poem, in the reverberations we speak it, it is our own. The reverberations bring about a change of being. It is as though the poet's being were our being...The exuberance and depth of a poem are always phenomena of the resonance-reverberation doublet... [And through reverberation the] image touches the depth before it stirs the surface.[11]

The resonance and reverberation doublet within Bachelard's framework of poetics bears a strong resemblance to the operations of cadence and rhythm or 'bare' and 'covered' repetitions as presented by Deleuze. Bachelard and Deleuze see that the two aspects must necessarily co-exist though one is more profound than the other in each of the operations.

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[10] Bachelard, G., *The poetics of space*, trans. M. Jolas,, Orion Press, New York, 1994, pg xvi.
[11] Ibid., pgs xxii-xxiii

It is worth noting that, of all the terms that Deleuze and Bachelard might have drawn upon to describe the profound essence within repetition and poetics respectively, they choose the auditory terms of cadence, rhythm, resonance and reverberation. That sound is used as the most appropriate descriptor in the operations of repetition and poetics strongly suggests that mobility is their essence and it is this sense of movement that I want to convey in my work.

I propose that the similarity of the operations of repetition and poetics suggests they can be viewed as being related, rather than repetition being seen as imitative or replicating a first condition.

Previous work: Ideas and Motivations

This investigation has its roots in my Honours work, where repetition was a recurring element though not the focus of the investigation which was to do with memory and narrative. In my Honours work I tended also to incorporate organic elements though the focus of the work was not nature itself. The elements of nature were used as a metaphor for something else. The work where the element of repetition was particularly prominent was *Rising and Diminishing*.

Rising and Diminishing comprised several strata, made up of a succession of shelves placed against a wall. At about knee height one encountered five ascending rows of numerous hand-formed small bowls containing crushed matter – soil, ash, hair, cuttlefish, rocks, shells, and rosemary expressing a theme of earth, sea, mortality and remembrance. On a larger shelf, above the bowls, were nine 'bones' leaning vertically in a row

against the wall. These were all 'fictitious' items fabricated from ceramic. Above these nine items were five pods that were encased in individual box frames situated in a row on the wall. The cocoons were made from wax and organic substances suggesting a flesh-like quality that contrasted and related to the petrified forms below. The collaged work above the five cocoons stretched in a vertical grid on the wall. The work was created from numerous shipping tags pasted with collaged motifs. These were dipped partially in shellac and hung from pins away from the wall. The motifs in the lower part of the grid showed snails, salamander, mushrooms, shells, sea-life, cell-life and flora. Higher up in the work these motifs gave way to floating grasses and leaves, butterflies and birds. The motifs were generally 'repeated' in groups of four. This played on the idea of animation stills that represent the idea of something moving through space and time. The dipping of each tag into shellac created a horizon line that collectively traveled in ascending and descending steps.

At a personal level, when I made my Honours work, the subject of memory was explored in relation to the death of my brother John who took his life in 1998. By 1999, the year I embarked upon my Honours research, a sense of ritual had entered my practice, which I see as a physical means of dealing with grief and loss. Examples of this can be seen in the cutting of 35 long stalks of grass (35 representing each year of my brother's life) from the scrub on the domain reserve situated near North Hobart, close to where I live. At home I bound the stalks with string into a simple bundle.

I also found myself collecting feathers and shells from my sojourns to beaches namely on Bruny Island off the east coast of Tasmania. These

feathers and shells combined with the media of melted wax led me to create my first cocoon series in 1998. Wax, in its capacity to capture and hold media, provided a means for embedding material and housed a space for meaning. More simply stated: wax preserves. Examples of this idea of preservation in my earlier works can be found in the embedding of hair, and the encasing of objects in wax.

These materials – wax, feathers, shells, and other organic elements and, later, unglazed white ceramic, have a kind of elemental simplicity. For me such media seemed apt in relation to my brother who enjoyed being in natural environments, and with whom I shared experiences of nature. The 'golden' characteristic of wax also resonated for me in terms of my brother's love of wood, and related to his fine carpentry skills. In my former work the materials were personally loaded but visually simple pertaining to the mundane and the mortal.

In the making of the work within Honours, I wanted to create objects that had grace and simplicity and a sense of quasi-preciousness. The works were for me like tokens of love for my brother, and I think one of the means, that I felt could represent this love as enduring, was the use of repetition. When love and endurance are combined – to endure becomes a kind of pleasure. At this time I was also contemplating the mundane repetitive tasks that people perform ritually for those they love, such as the washing and folding of garments.

These ideas were not articulated as such in my Honours paper, but were framed more generally in relation to memory and mortality. Perhaps in a sense, the initial motivation behind the Honours work was grief – but the course also allowed me to move away from these directly personal

associations to broader concepts which are retained within this PhD submission: namely, experiences of nature and repetition.

In undertaking this exegesis I would never have dreamed that I could write that I saw love and repetition as being related. But, now I see that it is not such a laughable idea. Deleuze comes near to saying as much when he states that 'the heart is the amorous organ of repetition'. And Bachelard also comes close to speaking about love in relation to poetics in terms of the soul:

> In many circumstances we are obliged to acknowledge that poetry is a commitment of the soul. A consciousness associated with the soul is more relaxed, less intentionalized than a consciousness associated with the phenomena of the mind. Forces are manifested in poems that do not pass through the circuits of knowledge...In my opinion, soul and mind are indispensable for studying the phenomena of the poetic image in their various nuances, above all, for following the evolution of poetic images from the original state of revery to that of execution. [12]

In terms of this research love has a relationship to poetics. One can never really explain why we might love a poem or an artwork. Is it a consequence of time in the form of an experience realized through the contemplations of the creator, or the viewer?

In my Honours work the theme of nature was a metaphor for life and death. My use of repetition, now, represents a philosophy that observes and accepts living and dying through natural processes such as fruiting and decay. Beyond this, however it is my intention that my work should question how we value nature in our lives: exotic and esteemed; or omnipresent and dispensable. What I want to express through the work is

[12] Bachelard, G., *The poetics of space.*, trans. Jolas, M., Orion Press, New York, 1994, pg xxi

that the pervasiveness of nature and its continual repetitions as well as its constant 'housing of our being', are precious.

Where, in my Honours work, I collected objects directly from nature, in the major works within this submission there is no inclusion of actual elements from nature – rather they are referenced through paint or ceramics. The reason for this is that I did not want to disturb nature or intrude upon it. Collecting now seems somewhat like a 'violation' of nature rather than a homage to it. While the process of collection is no longer a part of my practice, the operation of repetition, which has become central to me in many ways, follows the same logic. Like my previous collections, the operation of repetition in my current work is carried out without any full intention or knowledge of how the elements will be composed until the work is finished. I have found this tension between knowing and non–knowing to have been a central struggle within the course of the work. What I have discovered is that on the one hand repetition actually requires a large degree of knowing. One must in fact devise a formula to repeat. But at the same time I think this is something that was overly emphasized in early writings about minimalism which saw it as being formulaic and mechanical, mimicking the cool and impersonal processes in the industrial or commercial world.[13] While it may appear to be formulaic, no two repetitions are ever the same and it is the subtle differences between each one which became the source of fascination for me. Also, the unpredictability of the final arrangement of the component parts gave me a great feeling of freedom which contrasted with the discipline of the repetition involved in the making of the elements. Any nuance is possible but, if the formula is too

[13] For example Richard Wolheim as quoted in M. Archer, *Art Since 1960*, Thames and Hudson, London 1997, pg 46.

tight or the nuances too obtuse, the repetitions cannot be sustained. The works in this submission therefore are like the nourishment of repetitions with the focus being on mobility within a poetics of nature.

Movement and repetition in nature

One of the main movements of repetition researched in this investigation is that of the wave: ripples that move across the horizontal plane of water and waves of light that refract vertically off the horizontal plane. In particular I have been concerned with the dual characteristics of water: namely opacity and translucency which vary according to how light is refracted from its surface.

Another experience of movement and repetition has been researched in connection with trees and leaves. We may see two trees which, at first glance, appear to be the same as each other. As we move closer we see that in fact each tree is quite distinct and that the foliage of one tree is different from that of the other. Similarly at first glance all the leaves on each tree appear much the same and it is only on closer inspection that we appreciate the uniqueness of each leaf. Furthermore, each leaf exhibits a repetitive structure of veins and striations but, at the same time, no two veins are identical.

This is repetition researched in the sense of moving into a world of proximities: repetition at a more structural and atomic level due to spatial intimacy. This experience of repetition and movement has two sides. The closer we move into organic structures the more we are able to perceive distinctions, but simultaneously we are presented with new repetitions and the search for individuality becomes an increasingly

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difficult endeavor. In moving closer to something we may think we are gaining knowledge of some kind of order when in fact there is the continual sense of something disappearing from view.

These ideas of intimacy and distance have also been explored in the project through what I would term a poetic formalism where I draw on tonality and on the space of the gallery as well as multiple elements. The viewer encounters a sense of 'mistaken identity' about the work; a general impression of repetition en masse that on closer inspection reveals individuality.

The third experience of repetition and movement is in connection to continuities of time seen through cycles and revolutions in nature. One of the most prevalent experiences of this is in the ceaseless recurrence between day and night. Depending on ones circumstances, the cycle between day and night may become focused on the day that follows a day, the week that follows a week, the month that follows a month. This attitude toward time pertains to a numerical organisation such as in the progression of dates. An alternative perception of time is experienced in connection with nature, as when the gardener focuses on the revolution of the seasons watching for the onset of winter frost; the warmth of the soil; the growth, fruiting, and decay of plants. The observer of nature's cycles in this instance becomes alert to both continuities and change. Another conception of time and continuities in nature might be experienced by visiting the same place twice but at different times of the year. Even though the place is the same, one is struck by the differences rather than the similarities between the two visits due to the passage of time.

Take for example if one visited the central highlands of Tasmania in October and experienced a world brimming with the hungriness of growth. And then on returning to the same location in the following August, found the environment to be thickly iced with snow, paths and plains concealed. The two experiences in this case are simultaneously joined and held apart by a chunk of time and space that both marks the recognition of an environment and also what causes the distinctions between the first and second experience to be very pronounced. If however, one lived within that location for an extended period of time, then changes perceived within it might be felt more in terms of evolutions and subtle nuances of difference rather than in dramatic contrasts. One might see the budding and opening of flowers on a tree and become more alert to subtle changes in the atmosphere and the light.

One of the ways these ideas on continuities and change have been explored in the work is through the extreme movement between light and dark indicating experiences of nature where extremity marks the repetition of time such as that of night and day. Another way has been through the extremely subtle movements between light and dark indicating experiences in nature where slight changes such as in the changing hues of an evening sky mark the repetition. The investigation, however, does not endeavor to merely create a series of juxtapositions and distinctions. Rather the works have a course of growth that reflects stages in the development of my understanding of repetition and its correlation to a poetics of nature.

Chapter Two: Overview of the Work

Like many a post-graduate art student, I threw myself into my project via an 'outside of the institution' project. This was an endeavor called *vessels for the collection of harmonic elements* a collaborative outdoor, sculpture undertaken with Duncan Marshall, who had designed a large scale installation, that caught the sound of the wind; two tall erect wooden poles that had suspended between them 48 strands of fishing line, wound tightly through pegs in the poles, and each single line coupling with another via fishing hooks. On the ground underneath this I installed approximately 1000 bowls cast by me in ceramic, containing shells that I had collected from the site of Roaring Beach and had set in resin.

I think I gained some very valuable lessons out of this work. One was an introduction to the sheer labour and time and concentration involved in repetition. I have found that many 'small-scale' artists wish to 'up-scale' their work via the multiple, and although this is something that I have continued to explore in the research, I did not want the project to be ruled by mass. Another lesson was my feeling that I wanted to shift away from using the directly organic element, such as the shell, in my research. Why? Stated most simply, I did not like this 'taking' from nature. There is also an aesthetic reason: I wanted to see if perhaps my work could do what the shell does, which is set up a dialogue between the parts and the whole and, in this way, cause conceptual movements. The third lesson was that repetition lends itself to endless compositional solutions in that through its molecular and unfixed characteristics there is always the possibility for re-arrangement. This is relevant in relation to the bowl

element of this work which became resolved to a degree of satisfaction in 2004, where a different version was composed using an edited number of bowls, adding to their contents the substances of seeds, soils and spices, composed in a rectangular grid, with a Perspex covering sheet. This work is included in support material for the research.

In this early stage of the project, however, I was asking myself two questions. What is nature? And what is the multiple?

Theoretically and practically my thoughts diverged somewhat. I began researching the multiple in the context of art and attempting to locate something of its historical precedence to minimalism in the form of the modular. In the end, it was not the use of the modular in minimalism that concerned me so much, but rather the act of repetition. I was also taking 'plein-air' excursions with friends, or making art alone in my backyard. This celebrates an attitude to painting such as that of Derain and Vlaminck, where one takes oneself to the hills or by the water, and enjoys being *in* nature, and through the act of observational painting enters a quiet contemplation of natural forces, such as the sun and changing weather conditions.

One of the things I began asking myself in relation to these exercises was what does it mean to do a plein-air painting of a particular environment twice? And furthermore, what does it mean to take the plein-air experience home with you into the studio, and repeat it? And beyond that why does the plein-air experience necessarily need to be constructed through paint, when a sketch or recollection in the simplest notations could suffice and, in fact, be more profitable as a more direct reminder for

what has passed than the painting where its translation becomes increasingly separated from accurate visual details.

The next significant influence on my current research was the work I did during a two month residency at Lake St Clair in 2000, situated at the southern end of the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park in Tasmania.

Armed with a good supply of art materials, namely standard canvas panels, oils, acrylics, watercolours, clay and wax, I gleefully entered a long-desired period of isolation within a naturally stunning environment, with warmth, studio space and time. I simply contemplated the project question. Nature and the Multiple: Is there a connection?

And so I embarked on the first project, presented within this research as support work, called *Skeletal Structures of Loss*.

Skeletal Structures of Loss

Skeletal Structures of Loss (fig.1) comprises fourteen canvases, 20 x 15cm, in vertical format, that each feature translucent colour linear structures in the medium of acrylic paint.

The idea behind this work has a personal twist to it, for I had met someone called Waratah. I liked her, but I didn't know her very well, and I wondered what would become of our acquaintance. When I saw the Waratah trees at Lake St Clair, it was a bit like meeting a person.[14] I had

[14] In relation to the project, a specific Waratah tree situated beside the path en route to Waters Meet; North of Cynthia Bay.

heard of and seen pictures of the Waratah flower, but since it was winter, no flowers bloomed on this tree. Instead it was covered with lush waxen green leaves, some of which I decided to take home with me. I entered a daily ritual of walking, visiting, collecting, and contemplating in the form of observational paintings of some of the veins on the leaves.

I think this attitude was like an admission of my ignorance of the place. I did not know where to begin so I entered through the leaf of a specific tree. This also had a logical reason in terms of my project, in that leaves can be thought of in relation to repetition through our perception of prolific sameness that always proves to be in fact distinct.

What I first discovered about the process was that I found the Waratah leaf veins to be really very colourful, and their routes often proved to become rather curvilinear forming petal-like configurations within the leaves. I wondered if somehow in my observations of the leaves a larger whole could be formed that would speak of the absent flower. Also something I discovered when I attempted to place the canvases edge to edge (jigsaw fashion) was that my 'standard' canvas boards were not actually standard at all but in fact had significant dimensional variances of which I had not been initially aware. This is something that I found to be ironic, that the commercial world could not offer precision in this case and, after this lesson, I proceeded to have my painting panels cut with deliberate dimensional accuracy so as not to cut off the option of close compositional arrangement.

What remains of this artistic endeavor are fourteen individually framed paintings from a cross section of fourteen Waratah leaves. They are individual skeletal structures, of loss. But I also see them very much like

keys: keys to a map; quays of water; rivulets; tracks. Certainly they are the key to the experience and art work that followed, namely, *Sleeping Water*, also presented as support work within the research.

Sleeping Water

I remember feeling a bit bored and disgruntled with my work, and riding my bike down to the 'pump-house' which is situated at the southern end of the lake. That night I executed a swift oil painting in horizontal format on one of my canvas boards from memory of a lagoon and sky. After that I became somewhat entranced by water and light. *Sleeping Water* (fig.2) is significant although at the time I felt I was completely straying from the project, which in many ways I was. Also I asked myself was I not having just a little bit too much fun since the repetitions were occurring relatively swiftly and were being undertaken with excitement?

This work presents what I see to be one of the first successfully sustained repetitions within the course for I see that I was becoming drawn to the more subtle orders within repetition retained somewhat from the previous work which was visiting sites (now it was the lake) and collecting. Not collection in the form of a physical token this time but as a recollection of an experience namely of light and water, aided by pencil sketches and annotations.

In the work it can be seen that I set up simple structural devices in the panels that refer to the general landscape, namely the representation of water, land, and sky as three horizontal divisions across each canvas. However, it can also be seen that, aside from these formal similarities, I

did not strive for sameness. In fact the motivation behind the work was the very distinctness of a particular time and each day the different states of mind. The paintings represent moments of reverie in the form of the recollection of an experience of nature. Via recollection, or along with recollection, the reverie is experienced twice: in the first hand experience and in the experience of the recollection in the form of the painting act. Each painting also implies a unique moment of reverie in nature. For example, in one there are what appear to be grey clouds that are like the bodies of whales, in front of a sun lit sky; and in another the distant clouds hover like horizontal ice mummies shrouded in halos of grey that have an uncanny resemblance to U.F.O.s. More frequently, the paintings offer moments of contemplation in nature such as when the sun is softly or radiantly reflected and deflected off water; or when the sun is receding; or when the iciness of winter causes things to become very silent and motionless.

After my two month residency at Lake St Clair I returned home to Hobart and resumed my research at the Tasmanian School of Art. At this stage I felt that the word poetics, inspired by my reading of Bachelard's texts on the elements most specifically *Water and Dreams*, *Air and the Imagination of Reverie*, and the *Poetics of Space* [15] should be included in my research title. These texts resonated for me in terms of my experiences at Lake St Clair which were inspired by water and light.

Feeling a bit 'cooped up' in my studio at school I also decided to take the opportunity of leasing a spacious and elevated studio space for two

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[15] Bachelard, G., *Water and Dreams: An essay on the imagination of matter,* Pegasus Foundation, Dallas 1883
Bachelard, G., *Air and Dreams: An essay on the imagination of movement*, Dallas Institute Publication, Dallas, 1988
Bachelard, G., *The poetics of space*, trans. Jolas, M., Orion Press, New York, 1994

months that had a superb view of Mt. Wellington. Here I undertook works that I have no desire to erect again. *Flag* (fig.3) represents my conceptual confusion of the time as it seems to combine plein-air observational painting with the jigsaw approach to the multiple. The work was constructed from 99 canvas boards, painted in the media of oil tinted wax, and composed so that the left hand edge went down to the floor, like a flag pole. Generally speaking it was a painting of Knocklofty and Mt. Wellington and of the sky.

What I feel now about the work *Flag* is that I was not allowing myself the freedom to transpose my observations of the mountain into gesture because I was too concerned and confused by my attempt to describe the view in front of me. The multiple panels in the work were not repetitions as I understand the term now, because they served to support a picture rather than creating an image, that is, a product of the imagination. Put another way, repetition has nothing to do with a pictorial jigsaw as such.

Another lesson gained from this work was that, in creating the piece, which was executed observationally, I was working upward from the vegetation of Knocklofty, to the blue mountain, and then the sky. When I reached the sky, I ceased observing and found pleasure in roaming from one light hue to another and enjoying the rhythmic marks formed in the curvilinear and translucent brushstrokes of wax. In this section of the work I let go of the idea of making a picture and used gesture and colour to articulate something of the sky. Through this I found that it was the sky that promoted a sense of reverie while I was creating the work. Because in the sky I see nothing, it is a space that allows the mind to travel away from the body, or with the body, forgetting somewhat the

reason behind the enterprise which, in this case, was to paint observationally.

Flag developed into further experimentation that primarily focused on the mark and transparency of wax (and other materials such as glass and varnish). In transparency I found depth and through the mark I found movement. For a considerable length of time I had to train my body to make a mark that could be felt as repetitive and visually uniform. What I discovered is that the body finds it very difficult to execute straight lines. The curvilinear line has a deeper link with our bodies and is visually empathetic in relation to the gesture/mark that precedes and follows another. These findings led to the undertaking of *Lake of Light* the first major work presented in this submission.

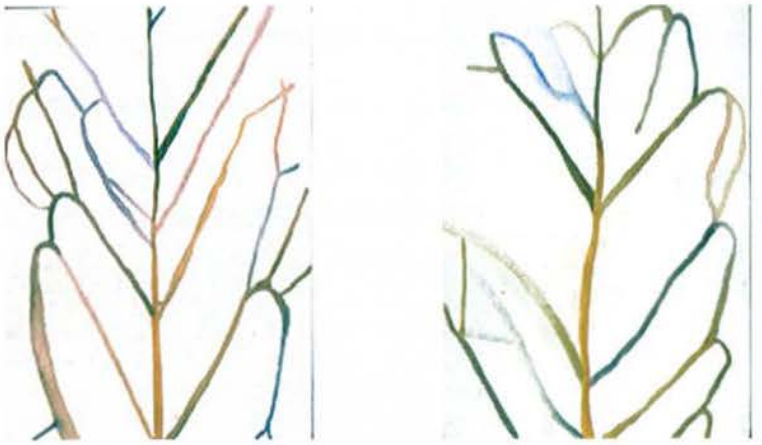

Figure 1

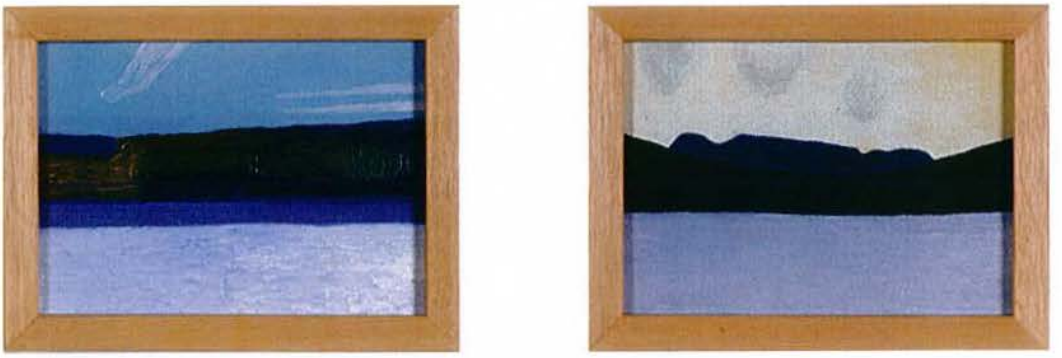

Figure 2

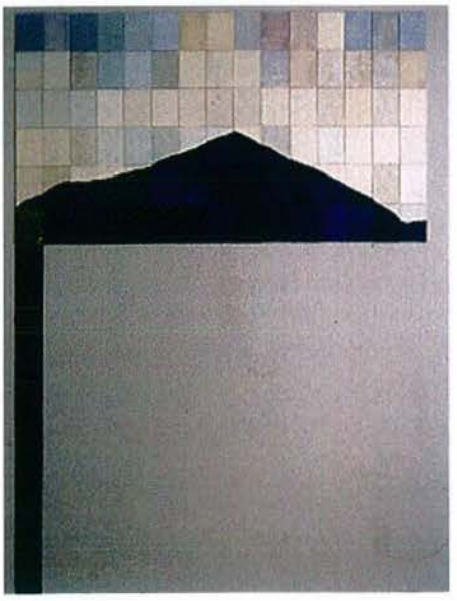

Figure 3

Lake of Light

The quality of reflection is a characteristic of water, while through transparency it simultaneously offers a field of depth beneath its surface. At Lake St Clair I found these qualities shifted depending on my perspective. If I was physically close to the water, say at the edge of the lake, or looking down from the jetty on a still day, I became aware of depth. I could look through the water and become mentally submerged by its clarity and stillness. I could see the rocks at the bottom of the water and I received an impression of the lake as a vessel. Sometimes I might catch sight of my own reflection in the water and at times the lake was a superlative mirror doubling the sky and landscape. At other times however, the light seemed to bounce off the surface of the water rather than penetrating through it. It is these latter kinds of experience of the phenomenon of water and light which I am drawing on in *Lake of Light* where I seek to evoke deflection and depth.

In its collective whole *Lake of Light* (figs.4 &5) is a planar sculpture 215cm x 155cm x 15cm made from 210 transparent acrylic panels, wax and painted wood. The singular repetitions occur in the 15cm x 10cm transparent acrylic panels that each figure sequences of linear curves in the media of wax tinted with a range of 'golden' oil pigments. These panels are placed face down on a white support and the sculpture is contained within a black frame situated in a darkened room.

The process of making this work was in some ways formulaic in that it involved the constant repetition of one act, that of the curvilinear gesture/mark. In other ways, however, the execution of the work allowed

a wide range of nuances as I roamed from gold hue to gold hue, fascinated by the opacity and translucency in wax and pigment. But the thought that ultimately sustained me through this work which was made near a hot frying pan with me wearing an industrial dust mask, was that with every gesture, I attempted to remember the wave. As the hot wax, accepted so readily by the Perspex, traveled its course I thought of the wave that perhaps splashes repeatedly against a rock. At other times, however, my mind wandered to ideas such as the striations of insect wings and also to the act of weaving. Hence the work can be seen as successfully providing a means by which I enter reverie although the repetitions continue to adhere to the original image, that of the wave. In this work the wave offered the idea of repetitive movement in which the same action is repeated over and over but at the same time no two waves are ever the same. Also with every wave, something begins anew, and simultaneously contributes to something greater; for example the wearing away of a rock.

In this work I knew I wanted to push the idea that repetition could form a unified coherent whole by placing the edges of the panels together to form a plane. The simplest solution was the squarish plane - the size of a fairly spacious bed in fact - something most people could visualize lying on. So I estimated that 21 by 10 panels seemed to constitute a good size and number. Then I asked myself, what is it, formally that I am dealing with here. This is a stage in the work, when after amassing for a while, one begins to classify the collection, which in this case was the classification of the panels according to tone. I think I was working with six tones which it was necessary for me to encode via a numerical schema, such that '6' was darkest and '1' was lightest. I wanted to make these tones and the marks sit together harmoniously. In the composition I

also accentuated the rise and fall of the wave by alternating the direction of one vertical panel to another, light against dark. In this way there is a corrugated illusion in the work. But essentially it was the distribution of tones in the work that excited me most. I could see the sense of light, both as a pool, where the lightest panels constituted the central area, and also as a ripple, which moved across the entire plane. These outcomes are what I consider to be the most subtle qualities of repetition: that arise like a surprise at the end of the work. Although I was not aware of it at the time this work represents how the individual repetitions, when arranged side by side in a greater whole, produce unexpected rhythmic effects.

Another significant element in *Lake of Light* is that of light itself. Every time I executed one of my panels I would excitedly lay it against a white surface. As every painter knows, a white opaque surface causes translucency to become even 'brighter' and 'deeper'. I knew this to be the source of light in the work, and I have found it interesting that many people have perceived the work as being under-lit. This is not the case. I had been considering making something that one is drawn to, and I see light as a very efficient means of achieving this. However it is not so much artificial light that intrigues me but simply light itself and the way it deflects off and travels through matter.

Through repetition, *Lake of Light* attempts to offer the viewer a moment of reverie caused by a confusion (or balance) between depth and surface. Whether the viewer reacts to the materials of wax and so might be reminded of honey or the buzzing of bees on a summer's day, or whether they liken it to a pond is no longer my concern. Perhaps if someone said it reminded them of the striking of a bell I would be interested for essentially *Lake of Light* is motivated by the mobility of the wave in a

way that is materially unattached to water and more to do with light (and, by inference, sound).

Figure 4

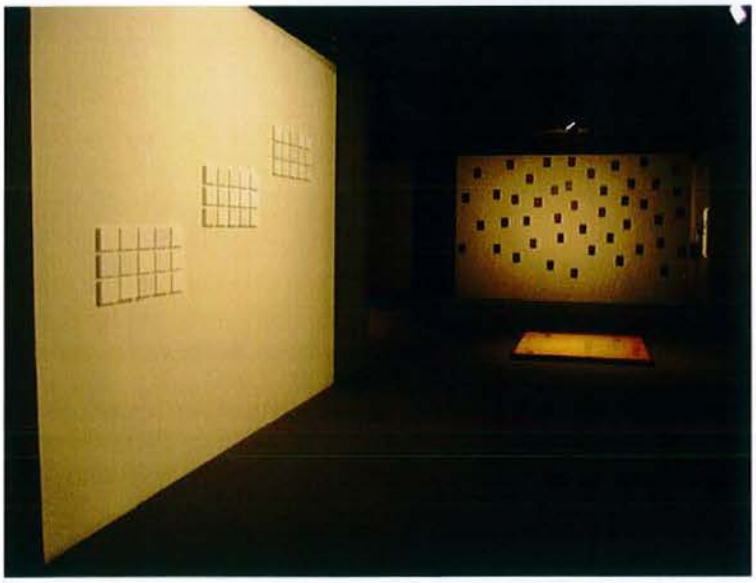

Figure 5

Fruits of the Air

This work (figs.6 &7) is a two meter by six meter white wall that supports 45, 15cm x 10cm, 'black' paintings arranged in a spatially generous cluster. Each painting figures either green or red luminescent bodies within regions of darkness.

What I see here is a pattern developing. I tend to make a work, undergoing a kind of endurance test involving repetition, and when that has ended I like to set myself up in a different space and think about something different. In relation to this, *Fruits of the Air* was executed initially in a portico, in my home, that looks out onto an enclosed garden, with rooftops, and the foliage of the Domain Hill reserve and the sky in the distance. It was here, armed with only paints and my painting panels, that I began to contemplate what I really felt were the essentials of nature. What evolved was a preoccupation with planets, seeds, foliage and trees.

Although it may not initially appear so, this work owes a lot to my findings in *Lake of Light* as technically and conceptually the painted panels are like small sources of light within darkness. Technically this owes much to translucency; the pigment of gold; and the white opaque surfaces of the boards - aspects that had also been employed in the former work.

But the repeated gestures in this work are entirely different, as the slow drying characteristic of oil paint allowed me to cover the gold translucent pigment with a dark opaque pigment, then prick the light pigment out of the darkness again in a process of atomic concealment and revelation.

Fruits of the Air grew out of what could be termed a cosmological contemplation in which elements alluding to the celestial realm e.g. stars and planets are juxtaposed with those alluding to the terrestrial world e.g. foliage. The motif in each painting provides an arena for reverie which can be seen as either out there in the heavens or in here in the most intimate realms of the vegetal world. But reverie also does not accept such dualities as mutually exclusive. Thus for instance, my inspiration behind the planetary works arose out of looking into flowers, while the vegetal works evolved through imaginatively picking out forms from clouds. The following passage by Crollius resonates for me in relation to the concepts explored in *Fruits of the Air*:

> The stars are the matrix of all the plants and every star in the sky is only the spiritual prefiguration of a plant, such that it represents that plant, and just as each herb or plant is a terrestrial star looking up at the sky, so also each star is a celestial plant in spiritual form, which differs from the terrestrial plants in matter alone..., the celestial plants and herbs are turned towards the earth and look directly down upon the plants they have procreated, imbuing them with some particular virtue.[16]

While the series of celestial and vegetal motifs began as separate from each other I came to realize that the poetry lay in their intermingling. I experimented with various arrangements.

At one stage the work began to look very 'Klee like' as trunks of trees began to mingle with flowers and flames. Ultimately however, it was the strong correlations between the planetary and vegetal that won me over. There are many formal and conceptual complements such as red and green, the commonality of gold, the circular/vaporous form – I propose

[16] Crollius as quoted in M. Foucault, 'The prose of the world' in *The order of things*, Tavistock Publications Limited, Great Britain, 1970, p. 20

that the celestial and vegetal motifs from the two series can in fact be seen as a repetition of each other. Michel Foucault's concept of 'emulation' as elaborated in his essay 'The Prose of the World' captures well, this form of repetition. Emulation, as Foucault explains it is a form of similitude that has been freed from the law of place and is able to function from a distance. The cords of convention break reproducing circles at a distance from one another: a resemblance that needs no contact.

Foucault writes:

> The relation of emulation enables things to imitate one another from one end of the universe to the other without connection or proximity: by duplicating itself in a mirror the world abolishes the distance proper to it; in this way it overcomes the place allotted to each thing...[E]mulation is a sort of natural twinship existing in things; it arises from a fold in being, the two sides of which stand immediately opposite to one another. [17]

The ideas in *Fruits of the Air* are derived from the reverie that I entered when I repeated the motifs: imagining forms from vapor, or vapor from forms. One can also see how visually the work correlates to Foucault's description of the sympathy/antipathy relationship, because while the stars and the plants may be attracted to each other and hence there are similarities of form, simultaneously the antipathy of the colours red and green keep the two phenomena apart.

[17] Foucault, M., *The order of things*, Tavistock Publications Limited, Great Britain, 1970, pp. 19-20

Figure 6

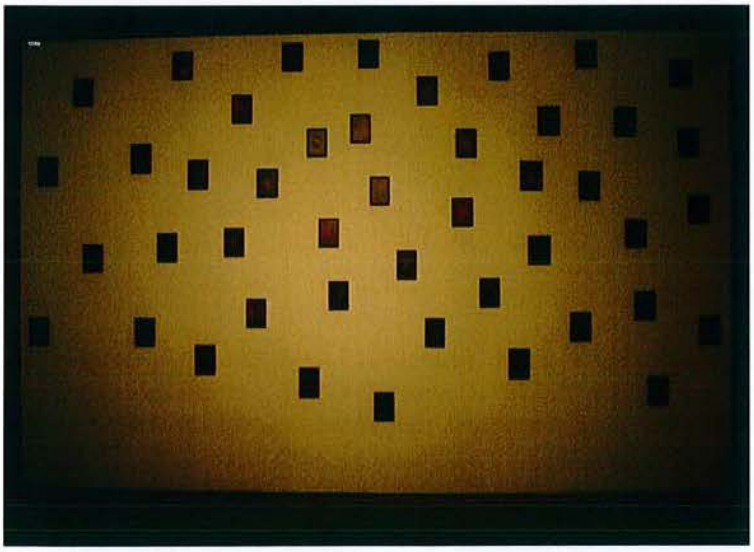

Figure 7

Horizon

When I embark on a new work I tend to change my environment. In relation to *Horizon* (fig.9) I temporarily set myself up in a lighter more spacious area below my studio in what we call the ceramic room. Using a large partition on wheels I was able to erect a long horizontal grid of primed and ruled panels and working from the right hand corner panel, down and then up the next row, I painted *Horizon*. *Horizon* has strong roots from the work *Flag* where, in painting the sky, I entered a reverie through 'roaming' from one light hue to another. However, it also deploys an adherence to three main hues and these hues are in fact made from the same colour combinations as those used in *Fruits of the Air*, except that in *Horizon* there is the admixture of white.

I became very interested in the implication of visual division as space rather than form – a space between two spaces. My interest in the horizontal evolved from an initial concern with the vertical stem.
I had been exploring this in relation to tonal contrast and translucency to evoke a vacillation between being and non-being in a work called *Stem* (fig.8) – a piece that coincided with my work *Fruits of the Air*. In *Stem* (included in my submission as support work) I struggled for a long time with the idea of a vertical division of light within darkness. In repeating the vertical line on panels in vertical format I realized that the body finds it extremely difficult to maintain verticality. In frustration I began to turn the panels on their sides and to paint fatter horizontal lines. These lines as opposed to the former appeared more vaporous and for this reason the concept of a form that could read as though it were a gap of light, or a body deflecting light, was more successful. In *Horizon*, this concept of an ephemeral division is articulated through an inversion of the material

characteristics of *Stem*. Tonal contrast and translucency are replaced with tonal similarity and opacity, and darkness with light.

The collective being of *Horizon* is comprised of 45, 10cm x 15cm, 'white' paintings arranged in three groupings of 3 x 15, situated at three different horizontal levels on the gallery wall. Each of the panels bears the hint of a hue along with the physical trace of a horizontal division.

Within the process the brushwork is initially vertical. I then move the wet paint horizontally across the panel creating a horizontal path by leaving a small gap so that the vertical brushwork remains within this gap. The paths are articulated through the junctures between the horizontal and vertical brushwork. These paths denote one of three horizons, either at the centre of the panel or a third below or above. In terms of their relationship to the other panels the paths travel in steps of ascents and descents.

Frontally, unless seen at close range so that the vertical and horizontal junctures are perceived texturally, the paths are not immediately apparent, or they may read as a kind of shimmer. From an angle, however, the paths shine, not unlike the shine of a snail's path. The paths appear less or more visible in accordance to how light is being perceived, that is as either reflective or absorptive in relation to opacity.

The paths are evocative of the horizon that represents a meeting point between sky and water, or land and sky. In *Horizon* the divisions within each panel suggest that the space below and above it, are like the reflection of the sky in water. In this sense the work is reminiscent of the

lake paintings executed at Lake St Clair, where reflection was investigated through divisions, tone and opacity.

However, there is no real point at which sky meets water or earth. The horizon is merely a point where the world disappears from view. In the desert the horizon might appear to be situated above a shimmering expanse of water, but this water is eventually realized as a mirage through its continual reconstitution with the horizon, that is, eternally in the distance. We *think* we see something, we are unsure, is it *something* or *nothing?*

The movement between being and non-being is materially reiterated through the concept of the sky and dematerialization.

For some time I have been drawn to the idea of the colourless sky and its evocations of space and presence. The following passage by Eluard quoted by Bachelard in *Air and Dreams* has stayed with me over the course of the investigation and has significance in relation to the work *Horizon*.

> Curious about a colourless sky from which birds and clouds have been banished, I became a slave to my unreal and innocent eyes, eyes ignorant of the world and of themselves. I suppressed the visible and the invisible, I lost myself in an unsilvered mirror... [18]

Bachelard says that this document gives us an impression of 'imaginary dematerialization, of emotive decoloration, that we will truly understand, by reversing metaphors, that the blue of the sky is as unreal, as impalpable, as filled with dream, as the blue of a glance.'

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[18] Eluard, P., 'Donner a voir' as quoted by G. Bachelard in *Air and Dreams: An essay on the imagination of movement*, Dallas Institute Publication, Dallas, 1988, p. 166

The words by Eluard, 'I became slave to my unreal and innocent eyes' powerfully evokes an attitude toward nature that is transmissive rather than separate. Eluard's eyes become the sky's eyes; 'innocent and unreal'; ignorant to the distinction between self and other; where differences between visibility and invisibility are suppressed; 'an unsilvered mirror' in which the self is lost. These thoughts lend themselves to a conception of the world where the subject becomes lost in the object, in this case the sky, through unifying the opposite impressions of presence and distance –'We think we are looking at the blue sky. Suddenly it is the blue sky looking at us.' Hence, 'the imagined world takes its rightful place before the represented world; the universe takes its rightful place before the object.' [19]

The decoloration, that Bachelard refers to in relation to the colour of the sky in Eluard's writing, is connected to the idea that colour and light are inseparable and that the colour of the sky is ultimately connected with infinite space in which nothing hinders the poetic dynamic of infinite transparency. Bachelard describes this as *morning absolute.* [20]

Carrying these ideas into the work *Horizon*, in which each of the panels describe what could be termed a colourless colour, or a variation of white, it can be seen that the white causes the colours to appear uniform and conversely makes distinct the subtle differentiations between them. There is a kind of dawning of difference in the work, a realization that the indistinct and distinct are unified. The differences between the light colours and the inflection of tonal variations suggest something of the

[19] Bachelard, G., *Air and Dreams: An essay on the imagination of movement*, Dallas Institute Publication, Dallas, 1988, pp. 165-167.
[20] Ibid, p. 166

colour of a cloud's underbelly; a sky that forewarns of hail; or the aura of the sun diffused in the traces of dusk or dawn. The perceptual shifting between the indistinct and the distinct, through colour, is accentuated further through line.

In composing the work, the three horizontal levels, in terms of the works occupation of the gallery wall, seemed entirely appropriate. The formation resonated both formally and conceptually with the ideas of occupation and emptiness, in that, clouds like the three conglomerates appear as drifting bodies. The composition also reiterates what I see to be a main question in the work, which is, where and what precisely *is* the horizon?

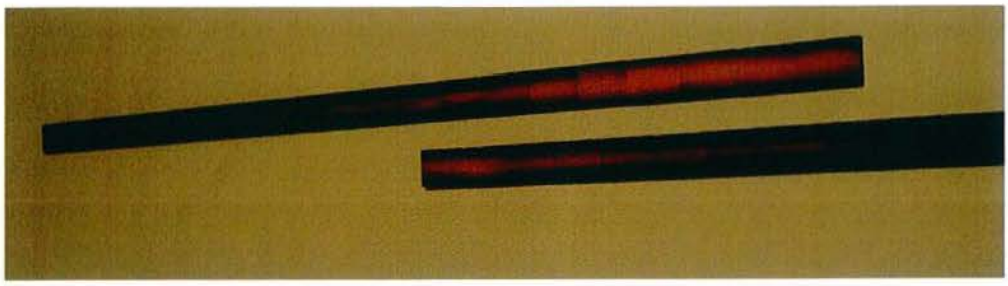

Figure 8

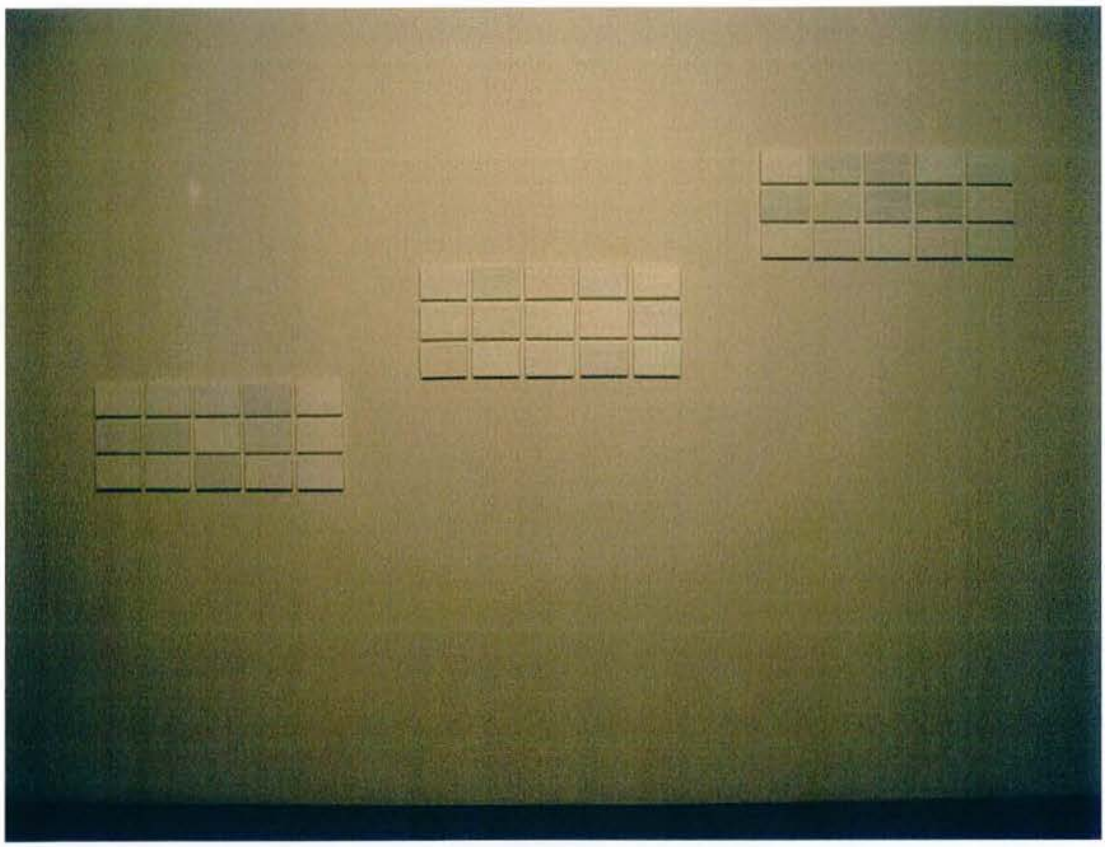

Figure 9

The Bone Cycle

The Bone Cycle has evolved over a long time. In fact elements of it were first seen within my Honours support work. It is made up of three pieces from numerous ceramic casts from a bone brought back to me from Maria Island off the east coast of Tasmania by my partner.

This reveals personal association in my process: Maria, which is my name; a bone, from a bird I suspect: I like bones; a token from my lover so fine and fragile, a symbol of our relationship? But not really, for what I find about these personal associations is that they die down and I just become interested with things like, its texture, or how the material so well resembles the thing that it was, or it looks rather like a stick. Ultimately the association draws on my experience at Lake St Clair where the sticks washed up around the shoreline of the lake, again and again, day after day, became bleached white in the sun and began to resemble bones.

At one level *The Bone Cycle* can be seen as celebrating an almost naïve correlation between the stick and the bone and hence the tree and life. But the work seems also to carry a quiet warning within it; it presents the viewer with 'surprises' through camouflage and the circuitous characteristic of the installation.

Ceramic and bone have potent meaning in our culture. The 'raw' state of white ceramic is suggestive of something bleached of its colour and worn through use and time. Ceramic, like bone, is a hardy material that is slow to disappear from the world. Just as from bones, skeletons can be reformed so, from ceramic shards histories can be reconstructed. These substances have a longer duration than ourselves and for this reason they

are mysterious because we know nothing about those to whom they belonged. The ceramic bone invokes the past; of belonging to a bygone use or function that is essentially unknowable. Simultaneously the delicacy and 'purity' of the forms suggest the embryonic, something raw and new and fragile. The casts in their different configurations reinforce a movement between future and past through themes of growth/structure and disintegration/fragility.

A crucial idea in this work is that of the 'fall'. The three separate pieces that make up *The Bone Cycle* each represent a stage of the fall. One work *Latent Tree* (fig.11) denotes the upright vertical, another, *Nocturnal Emissions* (fig.12) a moment of suspension and severance, and the third *Dormant Path* (fig.10) a passive moment of lying flat on the ground. The works are not meant to be seen as necessarily a unilinear sequence starting with verticality and ending with passivity. Rather there is the potential to continually link up again to a different stage of the fall which promotes the resurrection, so to speak, of the passive into the active, and hence the idea of a cycle.

In their compositions the three parts of *The Bone Cycle* evoke growth, severance, death and decay. These themes are articulated through deploying the bone forms within tree and branch imagery. *Latent Tree* could be thought of as a stylized representation of a tree such as the pine. This composition was inspired by Paul Klee's drawing *Parabola Tree* in which the vigour of vertical growth is expressed through symmetry.

In *Latent Tree* the vertical line of the corner is perceived as a shadow or gap caused by the juncture of two planes. Similarly the casts are perceived through the shadow of their forms against the white walls. In

this way the verticality associated with the tree is expressed through a kind of concealment. The work could be easily missed, but once located, the perceptions adjust and the work is clearly perceived. In this way the viewer may discover something that they were not aware of initially. The linear connectivity of the casts in this configuration suggests intervals of growth such as we detect within the vein structure of leaves and trees.

Linear connectivity is accentuated also in *Nocturnal Emissions* in which the casts form individual branches that 'float' across the four planar walls of a black room. The casts again invoke intervals of growth structures describing extension, bifurcation and directional change. However, because the branches are not anchored to a vertical stem there is a sense that the forms have become severed from the tree, frozen in their suspensions, delicate and individual.

In the third movement of the work titled *Dormant Path*, the casts are no longer suggestive of branch structures but lie one after another, along the floor, within a black rectilinear plane. Broken fragments of the casts ascend in size within the format of the work so that the composition of *Dormant Path* tapers to a point. Within this work the casts reiterate the skeletal through the way that the broken fragments, in their diminishing size, are reminiscent of a series of vertebrae that make up a spine. The deployment of broken casts in this work also suggests that unlike *Latent Tree* and *Nocturnal Emissions* in which only whole casts are used this work, more than the others, expresses material fragmentation and disintegration. Similarly, where the casts touch and connect to form linear continuities in *Latent Tree* and *Nocturnal Emissions*, in *Dormant Path* they barely touch, each one laid out in succession suggesting that

what previously contributed to structure now has become dislocated from the order of growth and pertains to a new order of dormancy and disintegration. But the process does not end there for, out of the decaying fragments, new life emerges and the cycle begins again.

In this work, repetition operates at many different levels. Firstly there is the repetitive process of producing the thousand bone casts. As with the other works this involved a constant rhythmic process which induced a meditative state. Also what emerged through this process was the fact that no two bone casts were the same despite the identical way in which each was made. Repetition is also invoked through the allusion to the never ending cycle of life and death in the final configuration of the work.

Figure 10

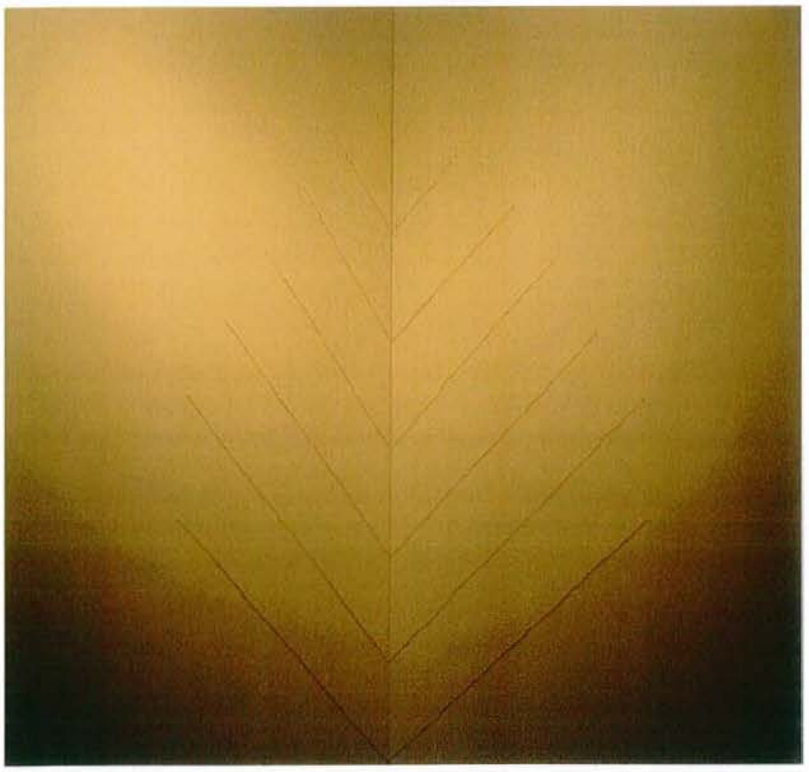

Figure 11

Figure 12

Chapter Three: Context

Because of my interest in repetition I initially turned to the minimalists as a context within which to locate my work.

In the decade between the 1950s and 1960s the word multiple was used to denote a certain kind of art object within art practice. During this period artists designed an art object with the idea of it being able to be fabricated into a line of replicas or, in other words, a run of products. The name given to the object as prototype, as well as to the objects reproduced, was the multiple.

In minimalism the multiple was extended in ways that can be seen as different from the former multiple production sense of objects. The multiple changes to a term particularly associated with minimalism – the modular.

In the former multiple production sense, the multiple was seen as a single unit. That is, they were generally not presented as a collated mass. Within minimalism we see that the collation of uniform objects was a preoccupation for certain artists associated with the movement. The modular, the grid, and repetition have been posed as three definitive qualities associated with the movement. [21]

The modules of the minimalists were often made through industrial fabrication. Indeed, the anonymous qualities that industrial objects contain was something that was seen as desirable by the minimalists. The

[21] Zelevansky, L., *Sense and Sensibility: Women artists and minimalism in the nineties*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1994, p. 8.

minimalists tended to use repetition to emphasise sameness rather than difference. It was for these reasons that I realized that the work of the minimalists was not the appropriate context for my work which focuses on the differences within repetition and which reference nature rather than the industrial world. The one exception was the work of Carl Andre. I propose that certain artists, accepted by the field as being minimalists, such as Carl Andre, achieve what could be seen as poetic outcomes in their work through the use of the modular, repetition and the grid, and their work lends itself to create invocations of natural environments rather than industrial processes. This is achieved by the materials of the modular; and the compositional make up of the repetitions.

Carl Andre

Carl Andre denies referential content in his work yet I suggest that many of his pieces are rooted in experiences of the world of natural phenomena, not through representation as such, but through affective triggers played out in formal structures of the work.

The materials of Andre's sculptures, although often manufactured (such as cement blocks and bricks) are in most cases earthy and are found objects with imperfections rather than being in pristine condition. Wood, bricks, metal and later 'found' natural materials such as river stones, boulders and mineral samples, comprise much of his work. These materials together with the mostly systematic ordering of the many parts that make up the works may lead the viewer to think of an ancient site, part of a dwelling, a lake, a plain. Andre does not hide his natural

references saying of his metal floor pieces that he wanted them to be as flat as water.[22]

Andre often wanted these pieces to be walked over and I imagine the viewer embarking on what must seem like walking on dark ice. He also occasionally hints at nature with titles such as *Plains* and *Prime Leaves*, although generally his titles display systematic concerns within the work involving numbers and equations.

In the strict paring back of his sculptural materials and their considered situation within the gallery, Andre does not set out to represent a particular environment. The experience of an environment is evoked, however, by sensations triggered through deliberate juxtaposing of elements. Andre achieves this through playing upon the binary qualities of factory and nature, or more broadly speaking of humanity and nature.

Andre's compositions of metal tiles arranged flat on the ground and edge to edge forming a larger single plain has relevance to my work *Lake of Light* in which the panels are situated next to each other on the horizontal plane, so that, collectively, they form a planar skin. The use of the grid and the modular here serve to create a single covering that contributes to invocations of the surface of water and also to movement.

Andre's metal tiles and the Perspex panels in *Lake of Light* share the characteristic of having a reflective surface - evoking the deflection of light off water. However, unlike the metal tiles the Perspex panels are also transparent, causing less of a shimmering effect but something more akin to the pooling and penetration of light.

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[22] Bourdon, D., *Carl Andre: Sculpture 1959-77*, Jaap. Rietman Inc., New York, 1978, p. 26.

The grid also imposes a rhythm within the larger planar field causing the eye to roam and dart but not to settle or be directed. The way I think about this in relation to water is that when we view light bouncing off water the sensation is felt to be simultaneously fragmented and syncopated. The grid imparts something of this with its equal elements suggesting syncopation and its junctures - fragmentation. In this way, the grid that forms a skin also contains a rhythm contributing to a sense of the active state of water and light.

The formal delineation of space through the grid, the modular and repetition are created by Andre to give a sense of environment. It is as though he appeals firstly to our most obtuse sensibilities with the flatness of the floor and the rectilinear shapes evoking either plateaus or vessels that allude to plains of earth and water. Other triggers such as the texture of the bricks, their multiplicity, their colour and their composition speak of circumambience, that is, the negative spaces between the modules which are as vital to the work as the modules themselves.

Andre's work, *Equivalents 1-V111* comprises eight rectilinear platforms on the floor. Eight floor pieces each consist of 120 bricks, stacked in two layers. Every layer has 60 bricks, aligned along their stretcher or header axis to constitute various rectilinear shapes in four out of six possible combinations: 3x20, 4x15, 5x12 and 6x10. Each permutation appeared in two possible variations, depending on whether the bricks were aligned along their short or long axis. The same 6x10 combination, for instance, can be both an elongated rectangle and a near square.[23]

[23] Ibid. p. 28.

In presenting numerical repetitions via physical ones *Equivalents 1-V111* generates vacillation. For instance we might 'know' that numerically the aggregates of bricks are the same, but we 'feel' their encompassment of space to be different. And when we 'feel' two of them to encompass the same volume of space - we 'understand' their formations to be different. The viewer may or may not be consciously caught in these vacillations, but the bricks and their formations evoke a sense of spatial difference that is felt in relation to the body.

Some of the formations are long and narrow and their shape offers a length to be paced; while others are 'square' and offer a sense of centrality; and others rectilinear - corresponding most closely with the proportions of the body. This engagement between the body and the encompassment of space is repeated in the work *Cuts* (fig.13) except that positive form and negative space are inverted, that is, the eight plateaus in *Equivalents* can be viewed as the eight cavities in *Cuts*. This inversion causes changes in our bodily engagement in relationship to the encompassment of space. In the former work the bricks in their formations could be associated with that which elevates, while in the latter, the cavities pertain to that which contains.

When I was deciding on the dimensions of *Lake of Light* I felt that the size of the sculpture should allow the viewer to imagine a bodily occupation. This is also why the sculpture was initially 50cm high: reinforcing the suggestion of depth and possible submersion. But given that it is the properties of Perspex, wax and wood that invokes depth through the penetration and deflection of light, rather than the depth of the frame itself, I decided to lower the work closer to the ground. The physical attitude for the viewer is one of looking *down* and *into* as well as

over and *across* the plane. There is a sense in this work that light is being emitted from beneath the sculpture. In this way containment is suggested through the juxtaposition of the dark floor surface and the qualities of light in the work. That the sculpture offers a bodily relationship to the viewer remains important in that it contributes to a site of containment whereby the activity of light is contemplated in the fragmented and rhythmic components of the Perspex panels and the linear undulations of wax.

While Andre's work can be seen to relate to repetition in nature I felt it was necessary to move away from minimalism to the work of other artists who have referenced nature directly while at the same time employing repetition. One of the key artists in this regard was Monet.

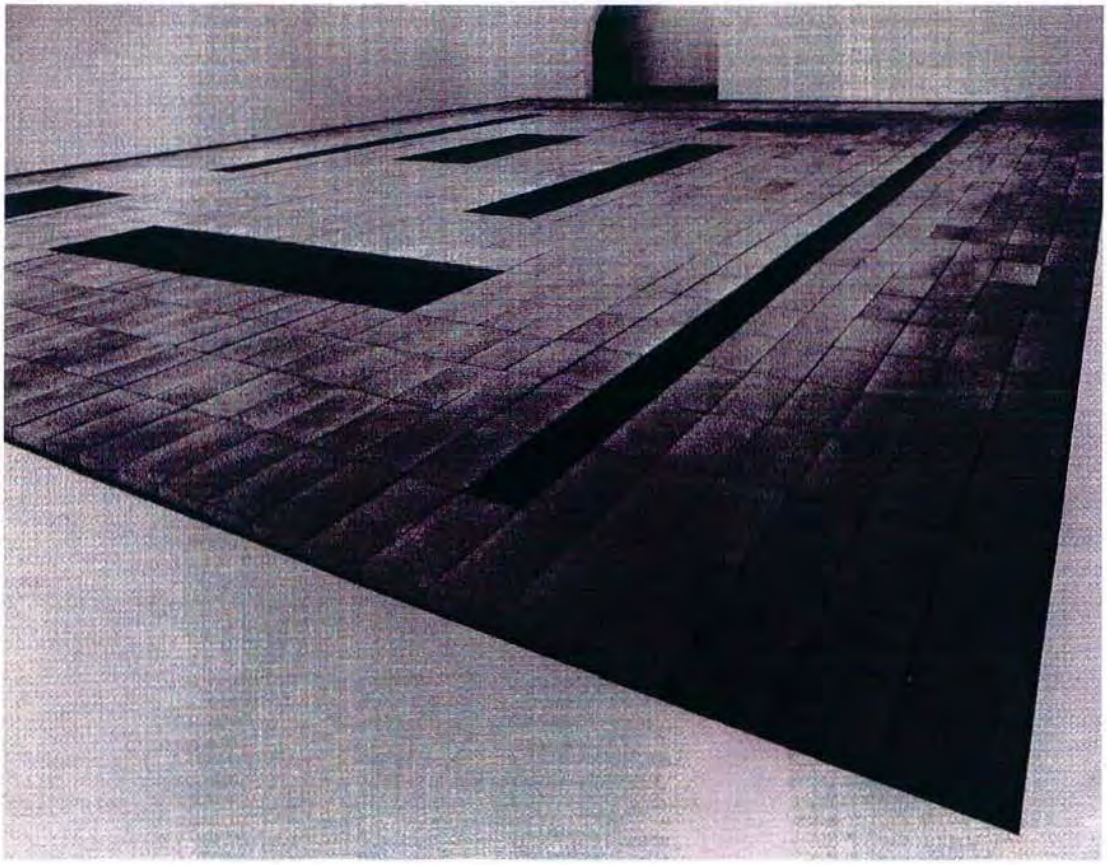

Figure 13

Monet

Monet's repetitions of single motifs such as his paintings of stacks of wheat, poplar trees, Rouen Cathedral, and his water-lily pool emphasize the transient effects of light in relation to phenomena in the world around him. Monet drew out spatial and temporal significances by posing a motif as the recurring element within a series, and the effects of light as an element that causes singularity within these recurrences. This is articulated through the shifting colour scales that exist from one painting to another, invoking the sense that the effects result from specific combinations of atmospheric conditions particularly in relation to light. In keeping the motif constant, the repetitions do not provide a sense of linear continuity, but hold the painted space still while the differing effects of light are felt to be the changing element that accompanies the viewer's perceptions.

The series that most closely relates to my concerns are his water-lily paintings which examine the changing effects of light on water as I do in my work *Lake of Light*.

Monet's last solo exhibition in 1909 featured 48 paintings of his water-lily pool, a subject he focused on intensely from 1904 until his death 22 years later.[24] The water-lily pond was the subject for his final work, the *Grand Decorations*, (figs.14-21) which resulted from his vision to install a series of paintings on the motif so that they would surround the viewer in a continuous formation. The work was installed in the two elliptical rooms designed for it at the Orangerie in Paris the year after Monet's death in 1926. In its unity the *Grand Decorations* offers a sizeable and

[24] Spate, V., *Claude Monet The Colour of Time*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1992, p. 250

coherent collection of some of Monet's repetitions, in which an analysis of the motif of water and its relevance to this research can be examined.

It comprises eight works, all 2 metres high, lining the walls within two ovoid rooms. The single works are all centered upon the water-lily pond: the paintings depict stretches of water in which banks of earth have been mostly eliminated. The works indicate water's surface and depth in relation to the reflection, transmission, and obfuscation of light. The repeated motif of water-lily pads and their flowers is situated horizontally across the water's surface. When we look at the eight works collectively we can see that half of them invoke the transparency of water through clear reflections of sky and the other half emphasize the surface of water through shadows. In these ways, water is shown to be both a transparent medium as well as a skin, off which light is deflected.

My *Lake of Light* also deploys shadow and transparency to allude to a simultaneous sense of surface and depth within water. Unlike Monet's paintings, that tend to emphasize either stillness and transparency or shadow and a sense of movement, *Lake of Light* superimposes these within the one work through its physical strata. The transparent material of Perspex provides a planar surface evoking the 'skin' of water through which light is able to pass and, off which, it reflects; while the curvilinear lines of wax beneath the Perspex partially disrupt this passage of light to invoke a rhythm of rising and falling - of the wave or current. The Perspex and wax bring together the idea that water can sometimes appear transparent and still, or shadowed and rippled – a dual characteristic associated with its fluid nature. When we are more aware of shadows and ripples on and within water the characteristic of transparency is disrupted. Similarly the wax lines in *Lake of Light* serve to partially block

transparency and the transmission of light; this invokes the movement of the wave across water.

In the depiction of water's surface and depth Monet is able to bring together that which is above the water and surrounds us, with that which is beneath and below the water. In this way Monet presents us with several aspects of the world coming together simultaneously within the aquatic realm.

Our usual experience of the phenomena of sky and trees is that there is an extreme spatial distance between the two but within Monet's paintings of water this separation collapses and the sky and trees become two sides of the one face. These ideas are relevant to my work *Fruits of the Air* where the motif of green plant-life is situated alongside the motif of red vaporous emanations so that the botanical and the meteorological form a close relationship. However, unlike Monet's paintings where the sky above and the world below are superimposed within water, *Fruits of the Air* disperses the two themes throughout to invoke a relationship based on rhythmic interjections and colour oppositions. The small scale panels are like spaces of darkness that close off the distance between luminaries of the sky and plants of the earth.

The paintings in the second room of *Grand Decorations* present the viewer with a different impression of the repetition of the motif of water with three out of the four works featuring sections of vertical trunks of willow trees.

At one level the willows serve to promote a movement of 'drawing toward' or 'receding', since the distance between the willows changes from the long distance view of *The Two Willows* to the closer sense of the trunks in *Morning with willows* and *Clear morning with willows;* culminating in the interiority of shadows in the work that does not feature willows but rather a cropped section of water, where we see *Reflections of Trees*. Monet's shifts in colour also reiterate the movement, with the light blues, pinks and yellows of *The Two Willows* growing slightly more intense in *Morning with willows* and then shifting to deeper greens and blues in *Clear morning with willows* and deeper still in *Reflections of Trees.*

Such tonal gradations operate through the presence of white within the palette creating a range of pale blues, light pinks and lemon yellows, while its reduction and near absence contribute to the ultramarine blues, aqua greens and deep, dark, tertiary colours made up from swathes of pure pigment in Monet's paintings. As a way of expressing distance, this drawing on white in relation to colour has relevance to my work *Horizon*. In *Horizon* the tonal scale is very light, ranging from bright off-whites to pale mauves and light pinks. The work draws on three different tertiary colours that have an accent of red, blue, or green while the large quantities of white added to these colours produce a high rather than deep, chromatic gray scale. The white serves to create a sense of distance that echoes the immaterial space of sky.

Although we might think of the sky as a generic pale blue, at different times our experiences of it reveal different colours which are connected to the presence or obfuscation of sunlight. The pale colours in *Horizon* speak of a time such as morning when the sun is not at its full height.

Monet's work *Clear morning with willows* has particular relevance in that although it offers the promise of the day, through the light pinks and golds in the reflections on the distant water, the presence of night still lingers in the shadowy greens in the fore regions of the water.

Figure 14

Figure 15

Figure 16

Figure 17

Figure 18

Figure 19

Figure 20

Figure 21 (detail)

Paul Klee

In the course of this research I have become engrossed in Paul Klee's pedagogical notebooks *The Thinking Eye* and *The Nature of Nature*, yet, I find within these, there is something ultimately mysterious and cryptic, due in part to the fact that they are notes that would have accompanied in an expanded form, lectures at the Bauhaus from 1921 - 1931. In my work *The Bone Cycle* I have drawn on certain theories and diagrams from within these texts as well as seeing the relevance particularly of art works that Klee executed toward the end of his life.

In his observations of nature, Klee saw that forms were made up of singular and collective components. One of his examples is of leaves that represent unique structures and the tree that represents a collective structure. He states:

> A leaf is part of the whole. If the tree is an organism, the leaf is an organ. These small parts of the whole are again articulated in themselves. In this articulation, articulate ideas and relations prevail that reflect on a small scale the articulation of the whole.[25]

Klee saw that the repetition of singular elements – working in conjunction with a collective structure - could form a static-dynamic tension that resulted in rhythmic outcomes in art work. One of the important distinctions that he makes is that neither the repetition of particular elements nor multiplicity in itself creates rhythm. Rather, it is the irregularities inserted over/within these components that cause rhythm to arise in the work.

[25] Klee, P., *Notebooks Volume 2 The Nature of Nature*, Lund Humphries, London, 1973, p. 5

Klee's discussion on the difference between static and dynamic movement is central to the concept of rising, falling and diminishing in my work *The Bone Cycle*. Klee says:

> It is incorrect to say that 'static' means 'at rest' and that 'dynamic' means 'in motion'. For 'static' can also mean 'in conditional motion' or 'becalmed motion', while 'dynamic' can mean 'in unconditional motion', in other words 'under its own motion' or simply 'moving'.[26]

Within *The Bone Cycle*, the individual works, *Latent Tree* and *Dormant Path* draw on ideas of becalmed and conditional movement such as in the regular progression of growth and the progression of disintegration, while *Nocturnal Emissions* expresses, through the construction of branches, a dynamic movement situated in the unconditional motion of falling. Klee says: 'When constructed things fall, they end as horizontals, and the same is true of fallen man or beast.' [27] This has particular significance for *Dormant Path* in which the particulate elements of parallel lines articulate a horizontal plane.

To highlight these ideas by Klee, I will discuss the watercolour on paper titled *Eros*, 1923. (fig.22) Within this deceptively simple work one sees Klee's careful construction of delicate and translucent horizontal bands repeated within a major vertical triangle, pointing up, and a minor triangle, pointing down, and overlapping the first. The triangles seem to glow against their dark backgrounds and invoke unity, while the horizontal bands evoke the perfect evolution of the colours of a rainbow; growing through stages of intensity and dimness. But Klee also imposes a drama over these subtle repetitions with two black arrows; a large one situated in the foreground of the work and a smaller version in the

[26] Klee, P., *Notebooks Volume 1 The Thinking Eye*, Lund Humphries, London, 1961, p. 176
[27] Ibid. p.176

distance. These arrows reinforce the upward vigor of the major triangle. The head of the minor black arrow also meets with the head of the minor inverted triangle, displaying a moment of perfect unison. In these ways *Eros* invokes the pacific and the dynamic.

These visual elements have relevance to my work, *Dormant Path,* which literally draws on the horizontal plane of the floor and deploys horizontal linear elements that taper to a point. These strategies invoke a sense of lying still, of being static, while the black background of the floor causes these dormant beings to have a certain life; not unlike the aural and visual sense of running through the black and white keys of a piano. In this way the many sleepers produce action.

In another work in *The Bone Cycle - Latent Tree*, the composition was directly inspired by a diagrammatic drawing by Klee in *The Nature of Nature* titled *Parabola Tree.* It is a deliberately symmetrical figuration that invokes a vertical dynamic through symmetrical diagonal lines diverging from points along the vertical axis and diminishing in length in relation to height. Discussing this diagram Klee states: 'Note that the line is charged with force especially at the point where it must produce as many branchings as possible, namely at the beginning, close to the stem.'[28]

This diagram and statement assisted me in realizing that one way to gain vertical strength in a tree motif using elements that are generally speaking uniform, was to resort to using negative elements, or in Klee's terms, restructive properties. In *The Nature of Creation* Robert Kudielka states:

[28] Klee, P., *Notebooks Volume 2 The Nature of Nature*, Lund Humphries, London, 1973, p. 5

> In Klee's understanding 'constructive' is a physically active but spatially passive, 'building from within', whereas 'restructive' means the 'decomposition from outside', which is spatially active in opening up pictorial space.[29]

In using the negative space of the corner vertical axis of an architectural space my work, *Latent Tree*, draws on a vertical power, although the image has a coinciding sense of pathos due to its near invisibility and the fragility of the casts.

In *Nocturnal Emissions* I find resonances particularly with works that Klee executed in the late 1930s such as *Park Near Lu (cerne)*, *Secret Writing*, and *Secret Letters*. (fig.23)

For most of his oeuvre Klee displayed a passion for organic motifs such as flowers and trees. Branch structure was especially important to Klee, because of the dynamic quality of angles, and the way these can represent 'pointers' or 'drawers' of energy and more than this, that they construe, in a collective sense, a kind of mysterious hieroglyphics. In relation to this perhaps Klee saw language as originally like a forest or overgrown garden which it was necessary to vivisect, in order to communicate.

Klee's painting *Secret Letters* (charcoal and white gesso on newspaper mounted on card) 48.5 x 33 cm, 1937, especially highlights these concepts. Within this painting we see a multitude of symbols, in the main detached from one another, floating, yet caught, like black scarifications, within a light grey ground. In these repetitions one might detect the letter M or a stick figure, one might also see upright and falling T's as well as an umbrella. There are also a lot of Y's. The wonderful characteristic of

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[29] Kudielka, R., *A synthesis of weight and movement – disrupted rhythms and latent figurations* in *Paul Klee The Nature of Creation*, Hayward Gallery, 2002, p. 162

branch structure is that they often look like the letter Y, and furthermore, represent a question: why? Also, this bifurcation can often look like a stick figure. Hence in this sense branch structures can symbolize two meanings at once, that is, the concept of existing and that of questioning existence. Ultimately, however, Klee offers a rhythmic yet dynamic work allowing the symbols to fall in and away from the centre of the painting. It is possible that Klee would have been utilizing the grid of the newspaper print beneath the image and as a result the work does not 'slip away' or appear awkward and, through the repetitive processes of delineation and elimination, Klee reveals his lively and mysterious document.

These ideas have particular relevance to my work *Nocturnal Emissions*. The branch structures, to me, are like letters of the night, constellations and beings that float and dictate something ultimately indecipherable. For this language has not come from the realm of words, but from the dynamic force of lines and angles, and most importantly the incorporation of spatial rhythms, unseen, deleted, in a way that relates to Klee's theory of restructive as opposed to constructive building. Although it appears that I am using the repetition of lines, I am also working with the repetition of space since the forms have been composed within a three part horizontal strata, repeated on the four walls. The branches are meant to flit and fall within the unseen strata.

Figure 22

Figure 23

Agnes Martin

References to nature often arise in relation to Agnes Martin's paintings. This is due in part to the artist's own comments which have often drawn on nature to assist in describing what Martin has termed the 'subtle' or 'abstract' emotions that she seeks to impart through her work. It has also been suggested that her repetition of horizontal bands within her standard sized square canvases are suggestive of a view of landscape that divides the world into 'fields', such as between earth, sky and water. (figs.24 &25) Martin once said that she did not protest the landscape reading of her work too much but has repeatedly stated that her paintings are non-representational, therefore, they do not in any way represent nature as much as invoke certain experiences of it, which Martin accords with concepts of beauty, freedom and perfection.[30]

The lightness (generally speaking) of hues in Martin's work, invokes an immaterial presence. The tonal shifts in the horizontal bands contribute to the sense of immateriality because the shifts are very close to each other, or very slight, and often appear barely perceptible from a distance but nonetheless play a crucial role in the outcomes of the works. I agree with Shiff when he writes that 'Martin's horizontal bands can be so pale as to seem white; you may have to stare to cause them to reveal their faint blush. This kind of color, a lapse in pure whiteness, is an imperfection. Through it, you imagine the perfect "white" of light.'[31]

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[30] Sandler, I., 'Agnes Martin interviewed by Irving Sandler', *Art Monthly* (U.K.), no. 169, Sept, 1993, p. 5

[31] Shiff, R., 'Agnes Martin: The nineties and beyond' *Artforum* (U.S.A.), vol. 40, no. 8, April 2002, p. 131

From earlier paintings which presented ruled graphite grids over light 'washes' of paint to later ones where the 'washes' are held in horizontal bands gently delineated with graphite rulings, the relationship between translucency and opacity in Martin's practice is suggestive of the immaterial and active presence of light. Ned Rifkin elucidates these qualities saying:

> Because the paint is diluted and combines with the chalky whites of her gesso, Martin's colors both absorb and reflect light...Her hues, so masterfully washy, are liquid intimations of color. They are also fields of space that recede and advance in relation to one another.[32]

In recent reading about this artist I was surprised to learn that in her earlier years as a painter Martin would ask her paintings to 'please grow'. When I was working on *Fruits of the Air*, I had a phrase in my mind which was something like 'tell me what you are?' Of course I never expected an answer rather I attempted to reveal *aspects* of form instead of trying to present any one clear or distinct thing. This process was facilitated by working with qualities of translucency and opacity for it was crucial that the white surface of the panel was able to be seen through the layers of paint so that I could feel that it was light itself that the brush and dark pigment were molding.

In a related work called *Stem*, the vertical line became a fascinating although frustrating, preoccupation, as I could see the potential for it to invoke space as much as form. An inability to achieve this led me to turn the panel on its side and, using ruled lines to guide me, I approached the central line moving the brush in short gestures along the horizontal edges

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[32] Rifkin, N., and E. Hirsch, 'Agnes Martin - The music of the spheres' in *Agnes Martin: The Nineties and Beyond*, The Menil Collection, Houston, 2002, p. 26

of the panel. Suddenly, the central line, the translucent layer of yellow - was fatter than I had ever allowed it to be when I was working in a similar way but in vertical format, and it seemed more able to breathe. There was a more vaporous sense in the central line/space. These developments in relation to the horizontal and the vaporous contributed to the next work *Horizon*. In this transition, certain resonances with Martin's practice arise; that is, the immaterial and active relationship of light is articulated in relation to subtle tonal shifts of colours as well as horizontal divisions within the compositions.

In *Horizon* I reversed many of the painting elements that I had been using. Thus, for instance, where there had been a lot of pigment and no white in the former work, there was now mainly white and only a little pigment. And where there had been the use of gestured brushwork in *Stem* there was now a more straightforward approach where a coarse brush dragged the paint horizontally across the panel, and then a softer brush plucked out a horizontal line leaving a band of small vertical striations within the larger horizontal ones. In this way the paint was no longer being used to reveal aspects of form, but to actually be form: to hold form in its materiality through the vertical and horizontal marks left by the brush. There was no longer any description of form as such but rather an articulation of its reduction through the relationship between shadow and light.

In *Horizon* the presence of shadow is central in ways that have links to Martin's work. Tonal shadows exist in the slight shifts in the three chromatic whites repeated throughout the work, as well as those formed from the striations of paint in the individual panels. The shadows within the work are like immaterial divisions that shift depending on the

perception of light. For instance the vertical striations create shadows through the directional shifts in the texture, and the relative intensity causes the deflection of light, so that the band appears to shine. The band of verticals is also more translucent than the two fields of space above and below this band - a consequence of the brush taking away paint as it plucks out a passage from one edge to another. From a close perspective one can sometimes see through to the white ground of the panels and to the faint graphite line that guides the horizontal passage. In these ways the horizontal band can be read as shadow, gap and shine - characteristics that in their immateriality bespeak of the invisible and fluid presence of light and air.

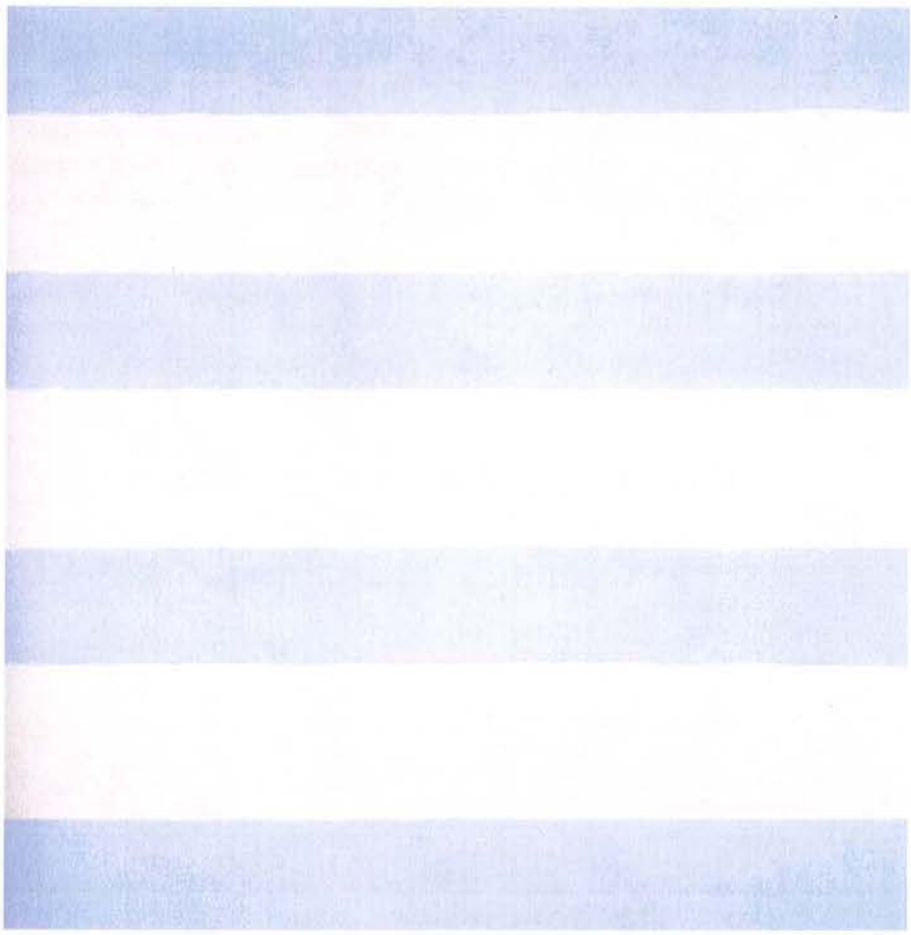

Figure 24

Figure 25

Emily Kame Kngwarreye

Within Emily Kame Kngwarreye's paintings I see connections to this research in terms of her gestural embodiment and repetition of the mark as a means for invoking a view of nature that is essentially dynamic. I propose that Kngwarreye's repetition of marks contribute to evoke aerial mobility and continuities within nature. These outcomes are intertwined with the animist beliefs of Kngwarreye's home, Alhalkere within Anmatyerre country, situated on Utopia Station, in the Northern Territory of Australia.[33]

Kngwarreye was a respected senior elder; custodian of Altyerre law (the central value of continuity) given to human beings by the Altyerre beings. Isaacs describes the relationship:

> The Altyerre beings were sometimes human, otherwise animals and plants. Each was super-creative making natural features of the land and, where they traveled and rested, entering the ground or metamorphosing into particular natural features. The laws of the Altyerre must be handed on in ceremonies through song, dance, performance and ritual or they may be lost. This concept continues in that without the ceremonies and with the loss of the creative being, plant species will cease to grow and the life force which that being causes to exist will cease.[34]

An additional factor that could be viewed as contributing to the non-static qualities in Kngwarreye's work might be suggested in relation to her name Kame, which means yam flower or yam seed. From the seed, vegetal life issues - plants flower and fruit, again bearing seeds from

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[33] Isaacs, J., *Anmatyerre Woman* in *Emily Kame Kngwarreye Paintings*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1998, p. 12

[34] Ibid. p. 15

which vegetal life issues. These ideas of growth and regeneration have been articulated in Kngwarreye's practice through her deployment of the repetition of dots that, together with colour, invoke flowering and pollination. In later paintings line alone suggests continuities of growth such as the extension of the shoot, which in virtue of repetition is an action that is resumed and sustained. Kngwarreye's gestural brushwork evokes aerial mobility through the repetition of the particular marks, and continuity through the repetition of line and it holds significance for works within this investigation, namely: *Fruits of the Air* that explores aerial diffusion through the repetition of small marks and *Lake of Light* that suggests continuity of flow through its linear repetitions.

In her paintings from 1990 and 1991 such as *State of my Country* (fig.26) and *Kame-Summer Awelye 1* (fig.27) the focus on the repetition of the dot is relevant to the short repeated brush marks deployed within *Fruits of the Air*. These paintings by Kngwarreye appear to be executed upon a black ground so that traces of darkness appear between and beneath the interstices of the coloured brush marks. The dark ground is a nuance within the works that does not serve to define form. In a way that is opposite to my approach, where *Fruits of the Air* utilizes a yellow ground over which subsequent layers of dark pigment are applied, either forming a centralized figure or emanations of light within darkness. Despite these differences, the use of short consecutive and layered brush marks in Kngwarreye's paintings highlights a sense of the aerial through luminosity and dissipation: themes that are significant within *Fruits of the Air* and which are articulated in relation to its brushwork.

In *State of my Country*, luminosity and a sense of emergence is revealed especially in terms of the yellow and red dots that appear more

concentrated in what we see as the lower half of the work. The blue, green and orange dots dispersed beneath, between and over these, offer a darker tonality that serves to push the yellow to the fore. Simultaneously this sense of emergence is not clear or delineated but rather pulsates in differing intensities throughout the work. The areas of compacted brushwork create a sense of density while the individuation of the marks simultaneously diffuses and disrupts this sensation.

Concentration and diffusion are similarly seen in *Kame – Summer Awelye 1*. The regions of yellow paint closely dotted in what we see as the upper right hand corner of the work appear to emerge in front of the ochre and orange dots within the centre. Conversely, the pinks and reds on the opposite side are felt to slip in front of the yellow. This sense of emergence and diffusion is evocative of compressed and dispersed particles. The repetition of the dot is suggestive of an immense profusion of seeds or petals - particles that are light and airborne hovering amongst each other freely and randomly.

These evocations of the particle and the aerial are significant to *Fruits of the Air* in which the short marks contribute to a sense of atomized form and of form dispersing. The repeated gesture in these paintings attempts to embody air in the sense that they touch the panel's surface in layers to create translucency and opacity through the compaction and dispersal of marks. Unlike Kngwarreye's paintings in which the compression and dispersion of the marks offer no sense of containment but travel across the works, *Fruits of the Air* is suggestive of particles momentarily held within air or dissipating into darkness.

The period between 1991 and 1994 saw Kngwarreye shifting away from the sense of dotting to a dotting that begins to morph into line. The repetition of line alone can be seen as a predominant characteristic in her works from 1994 to 1996.

The six black on white paintings from the Utopia Panels (fig.29) relate to six black on white striped works on paper that Kngwarreye executed in 1993 titled *Body Paint: Awelye 1-V1*. (fig.28) Awelye refers to the women's ceremonies within Anmatyerre culture in which ochre markings on the breasts, upper chest and upper arms were painted by the women on to each other's bodies. The consecutive linear marks that Kngwarreye reiterates across the surfaces in *Body Paint: Awelye 1-V1* and the six black on white paintings within the Utopia Panels echo these lines.

In the later work Kngwarreye concentrates on the manner in which the lines extend across the panels of canvas that are more than twice the dimensions of the surfaces in the former work. The way she achieves this can be related to her deployment of line in the large white on black work *Big Yam Dreaming* of 1995 in which it was observed that her tendency was to lay down one stroke, then bring another stroke towards it, followed by a third stroke connecting the two, dipping the brush for fresh paint each time.[35] Similarly, we see in the Utopia Panels that the adjacent lines are made up of at least two gestural marks each – perhaps one that extends away from the edge of the canvas to the centre and another that pulls away from the centre to the opposite edge. What happens is that the lines undulate in the rise and fall of the two gestures as well as creating vertical fissures caused by gaps or densities that are a consequence of the

[35] Smith, T., *Kngwarreye Woman Abstract Painter* in *Emily Kame Kngwarreye Paintings*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1998, p. 36

meeting point between the two movements. This creates a pause or inflection that invokes continuity through resumption. The undulations of the lines contribute to these evocations with the rhythm of rising and falling suggesting continuity through flow. The works hold relevance to *Lake of Light* in which the repetition of line is also deployed to invoke continuity and flow.

In experimenting with painting using melted wax I discovered that the temporal state of fluidity of the medium required swift and single actions. Through this I found a means to work with the liquid substance by adopting a fluid gesture. I would hold the panel in one hand and with the other drag a flat brush laden with melted wax across the surface in what could be described as a horizontal 's' motion. The connection between this motion and the fluidity of the wax had quite a profound effect on me, because in the repetition of the mark I felt as though I was exploring fluidity in a very essential manner. What I mean by this is that each time I made the mark I felt like it was the trace of a graceful splash, so to speak, which was to be followed by another. When other visual repercussions arose in the work, such as an overall sense of undulation that occurred when the panels were situated next to each other with rising curves alternating with falling ones, I felt this to be a consequence of the mark itself: an accumulative by-product of the repetition of fluidity.

Kngwarreye's line paintings have resonance in relation to these ideas in that they appear to be a gestural embodiment of growth. When these repetitions collectively give rise to a sense of topographical undulations, or evocations of fissures in the earth (which has strong relevance to the underground growth of yams that cause the land to crack when ripe) these

are consequences of an elemental movement in which the lines present a repetition of beginnings and endings to invoke growth and continuity.

Unlike Kngwarreye's lines that are clearly separated from each other as they ascend/descend the vertical length of the canvas, in my work *Lake of Light* the lines are layered to contribute to a sense of depth that I was seeking to impart through the work. The lines themselves, different to Kngwarreye's, are formed through a single motion but share the characteristic of undulation in which the inflection created in the pull of the wrist embodies a linking between rising and falling; beginning and ending; continuity and flow.

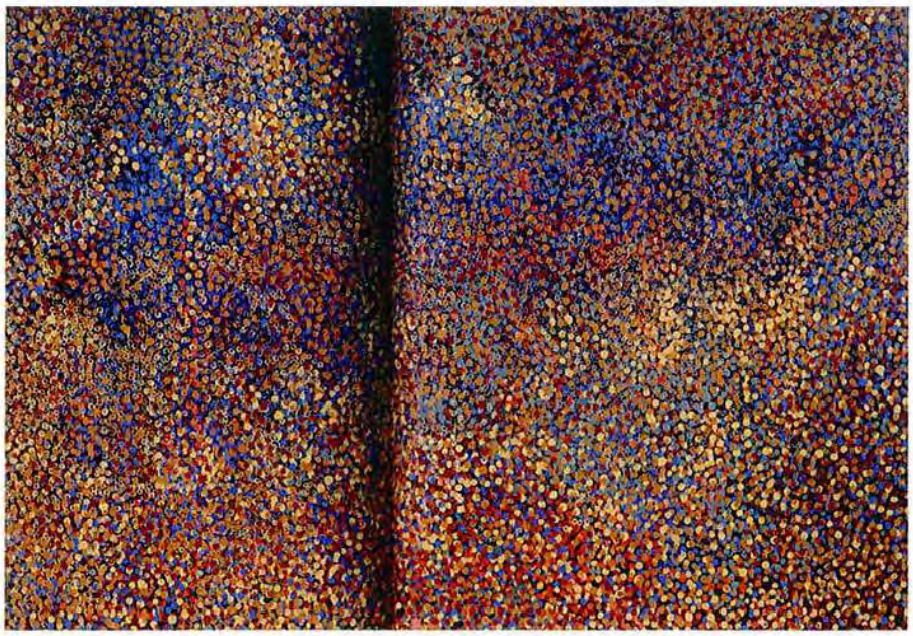

Figure 26 (detail)

Figure 27 (detail)

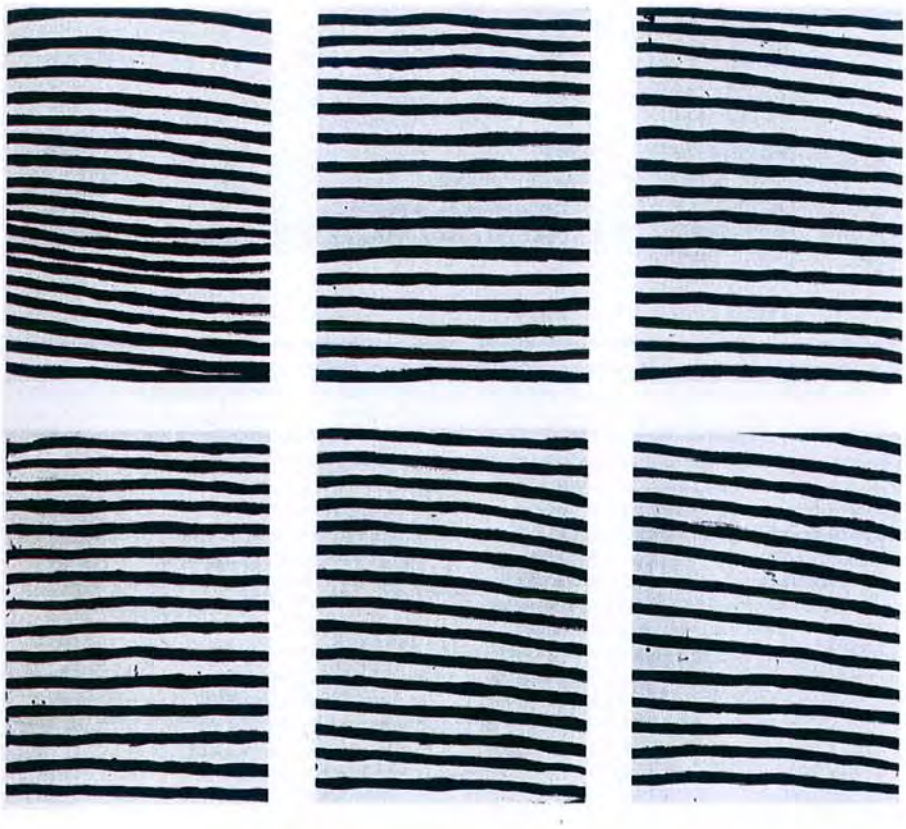

Figure 28

Figure 29

Vija Celmins

> My favourite thing would be to have a show, then take it down and paint it again. Then show it again, then take it down and paint it again just to readjust it a tiny bit. My wish would be to work on one painting the rest of my life. It's neurotic, no? I think part of it has to do with not wanting to reveal...[36]

Vija Celmins' repetitive mark making processes and the repetition of natural motifs - particularly oceanic and interstellar have relevance to two works within this submission *Lake of Light* and *Fruits of The Air.*

Vija Celmins started painting the ocean, (figs.30 & 31) galaxies (figs.32 & 33), and desert floors – small in scale but vast in intensity. She stopped painting for ten years and made graphite drawings of the same motifs - using the "mark" as something that builds and informs the image. In 1977 she began a series called *To Fix the Image in Memory*, in which she had eleven stones cast in bronze and then painted them in acrylic to look like the real stones. Then she began to paint again, slowly and incrementally, obeying the processes previously initiated of making physical reality fit within flat dimensions.[37]

Celmins is reluctant to speak about these natural motifs remaining adamant that the work is ultimately abstract. She states:

> Over the years, the thing that I have felt about working is that it's just another chance to adjust the image to the flat page. I tend to do images over and over again because each one has a different tone,

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[36] Vija Celmins interviewed by Chuck Close; edited by William S. Bartman, *Vija Celmins*, A.R.T. Press, New York, 1992, p. 46

[37] Rian, J., 'Vija Celmins: vastness in flatland', *Flash Art* (Italy). No. 189. vol. 29. (Summer 1996) pp. 108-11

> slant, a different relationship to the plane, and so a different meaning.[38]

The images in Celmins' work must be understood as evolving through her intense relationship to specific media and her time-consuming repetitive processes along with what she calls the armature of her reference to photographs that depict vast and empty spaces such as the ocean or interstellar space. It is important to acknowledge also that while these images can be seen as somewhat desolate or empty they are nonetheless full and active through the sense of the depth and movement of the ocean and of the depth and ceaseless fiery activities of the heavens.

I propose that the photograph in Celmins' practice acts as an aide memoir, or portal, to what one could call generic phenomena of the world, which are nonetheless psychically potent because they are places within which we cannot physically dwell. They are distant and mysterious places that we tend to dwell in through the scrutiny of the imagination. The idea of looking through a frame to what Celmins has called 'impossible places' is also reiterated in Celmins' tendency to work on a small scale, creating what she has called in her slightly self-deprecating tone 'little units that engage the eye'. The works invite us into them psychically but not physically in an all encompassing sense.

There is something extremely elemental in Celmins' work: the interstellar paintings show us space itself but it is a place where there is no air to breathe; and, again, with water we cannot abide in this environment. These barriers are also brought into play with the visibility of the artifice of an 'art' surface such as paper and canvas. But at the

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[38]Celmins, V., *Vija Celmins*, A.R.T. Press, New York, 1992, p. 38

same time these works deeply invite the viewer into them through the 'psychic' magnetism of the motif and the desire to apprehend the physical terms through which the images are made. These terms are physical and repetitive. In Celmins' work, as with Monet's and Kngewarreye's, there are in reality two kinds of repetitions occurring, one repetition resides at the level of the motif, the other at the level of the mark. Both forms of repetition play an imperative role. The repetition of the motif allows the artist to repeat what Deleuze would call an Idea without a concept. This ensures that the repetition is always new, and thus propels further repetitions. The repetition of the mark is more like an 'atomic' repetition, a physical mark that traces the artist's involvement in relation to the motif and the production of the image.

It is stunning to realize that the graphite ocean works and interstellar works are executed without an eraser. In every mark then Celmins needs to be mindful always of the integrity of the white surface. Every mark and every layer informs an image of depth and fullness; activity and light; a captured moment that lasts an eternity. She states:

> You can pin the drawing to the paper on the point. Each point is like a point of consciousness. So it is like a record of having been there... You get to be very intimate with the process of putting down the point of the pencil. I like that at that moment. I like the fact that I didn't have to smudge or erase, or push and pull.[39]

Thematically the water and stellar motifs hold deep resonance for me. It is true that on one level Celmins seems to be playing a game of duplicity through artifice (of both painting and photography) and motifs of space; but beyond that why has she so consistently repeated the water and stellar themes? Is it not because these motifs offer her a space of solitude, where

[39] Celmins, V., *Vija Celmins*, A.R.T. Press, New York, 1992, p. 53

no one is present, and hence the freedom, through the imagination and the act of art, to roam and enter these spaces. This is a space that Celmins inhabits and returns to through the repetition both of the mark and the motif, acknowledging that every repetition is unique.

The ocean series tends to hold one in a state of attentiveness because the motif is always such that it is slightly turbulent but also pacific; and in another duality it is both planar and deep. This holds relevance to my *Lake of Light* in which the repetitive marks and the support evoke a sense of undulation and planarity.

Even though the marks within *Lake of Light* are more gestural than in Celmins' works, there is, I think still, an inhabitation of the motif of light and water through each gesture in her mark making. Like Celmins' oceans that are not images of the ocean, *Lake of Light* is not an image of a lake, but rather it is a product of the psychic inhabitation of water and light through the repetitive marks, media and the imagination. *Lake of Light* also draws on the colour gold, which could be felt as far more emotive than Celmins' colourless works. However, it is apparent that in my work I tend to treat colour in a tonal way and in this sense I identify with Celmins tonal treatments, and see them as related to mobility and space through thinking about tone in an acoustic sense. Celmins states:

> I explored [the graphite] in a series of scales…I hit each one like a tone; the graphite itself had an expressive quality. I continued using the graphite in this way in a series of elongated oceans and then a series of galaxies.[40]

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[40] Larsen, S. C., *Vija Celmins, a survey exhibition*, Fellows of Contemporary Art, California, 1979, p. 30

In using terms such as scales, tones, the percussive act of striking, and expressiveness, Celmins is describing what Agnes Martin would call the subtle or abstract emotions such that we receive aurally through music. This idea holds relevance particularly to *Lake of Light* where the work was composed using a range of tonal weights that can be seen as both juxtaposed and radial in the work.

Celmins' interstellar works evoke the depths of depth itself and a sense of mobility through the evocation of the light and action of stars. Celmins' work with the stones seems to come to full fruition through these paintings where she treats interstellar space in a similar way to geographical soil and rock layers of the earth.[41]

Clemins, like Monet, could also materialise the sense of immaterial layers within the fluid spaces of water and light. However in her interstellar works there is no colour, instead there is only tonality.

In Celmins' interstellar works there are numerous layers in the work of which the artist says: 'The white is not painted on the black: both the white and the black develop together. I layer them until they become "fat," so they're like marble.'[42]

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[41] The following quote elucidates my meaning here:

To Fix The Image In Memory [the eleven stones cast in bronze and then painted in acrylic to look like the real stones] is sort of an exercise in looking, a 'super looking' as if the meaning of art was only in looking. I got the idea for this piece while walking in northern New Mexico picking up rocks, as people do. I'd bring them home and I kept the good ones. I noticed that I kept a lot that had galaxies on them. I carried them around in the trunk of my car. I put them on window sills. I lined them up. And, finally, they formed a set, a kind of constellation.
Celmins, V., *Vija Celmins*, A.R.T. Press, New York, 1992, p. 17

[42] Ibid. pp. 53 - 54

In drawing a comparison with Celmins' use of layering to achieve darkness and *Fruits of the Air* I can find both similarities and distinctions. Layering was important within *Fruits of the Air* and some of the panels have perhaps nine layers in them, others however have as little as one or two. The latter are not so dark and in this way there is a vacillation between depth and surface in the work through the light and darkness within it as a collective. In relation to *Fruits of the Air* I can identify with Celmins' artistic concerns in the following quote:

> I have long been interested in building a form in the painting. It's hard to define the word form, but I wanted to make a work that was multidimensional and that went back and forth in space yet remained what it was: a small, concentrated area that was essentially flat. Who knows why you want to do this. So, in a way, I thought of painting as building a dense and multileveled structure. Now I tend to think of it only in physical terms, but you could say that it alludes to a denser experience of life. You have to reimagine it in other terms, which is lead [graphite], paper, paint, and canvas. My feeling is that we all do essentially the same thing. I like to talk about it in terms of structuring because when I'm working, my instinct is to try to build and to fill. To fill something until it is really full.[43]

Celmins is able to return again and again to this idea of *filling* through her scrutiny and 'special affection' for the photographic motifs of interstellar space. Through her art she dwells repeatedly in those places, reinventing the motif through the tactility and slowness of her means that informs the new and distinct image: the poetic image.

[43] Ibid. p. 14

Figure 30

Figure 31

Figure 32

Figure 33

Conclusion

This project began with the basic premise that, in nature, there is the appearance of what we generally understand to be repetition, such as waves on water, marks in the sand, leaves on a tree, or the cycle of seasons that return year after year. During the research process, the concept of repetition became refined through my reading of Gilles Deleuze's concepts of repetition, and the way that he sees difference as not being contrasted to repetition but, in fact, occupying a central essence within the operation as he presents it. This understanding of repetition helped to clarify and strengthen my observations of repetition in nature which I saw as intricately entwined with subtle nuances of difference. The theme of nature also became clearer through my reading of Gaston Bachelard's texts, particularly his conception of poetics in his texts *Water and Dreams* and *Air and the reverie of the imagination* and, most specifically, his introduction to his text the *Poetics of Space*. By including the term poetic in my research title I was able, in a way, to get around the difficult question of 'what is nature?'; instead I draw on personal experiences of what I perceive to be nature and convert these into poetic texts.

Within this research I initially turned to the minimalists because of the prevalence of repetition within the movement. Although minimalism tends to reflect industrial processes rather than natural ones, one of the minimalists, Carl Andre, displays a practice that is suggestive of the poetics of nature with the arrangement of his 'earthy' modules invoking natural environments. With this in mind, Andre has had an influence on the project, especially in relation to the work in this submission titled

Lake of Light, which caused me to consider the properties of materials and their installation as geometric modules within the gallery.

Having largely rejected minimalism as a context for my research I turned to artists who had referenced nature more directly in their work while at the same time employing repetition. The artists discussed are: Claude Monet, Paul Klee, Agnes Martin, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, and Vija Celmins.

Although it is tempting to 'read' Monet's paintings within the *Grand Decorations* in terms of a linear continuity, it has been proposed in this exegesis, that the repeated motif of the water lily pond enabled Monet to explore the duality of water's depth and surface again and again. In this way Monet's paintings join together that which is above the water through the medium of reflection with that which is beneath the water through shadow. Monet's shifts in colour also reiterate a sense of movement with the tonal gradations indicating at their lightest – distance, and at their darkest – depth.

Monet is important to the research because he introduced the idea of time and space collapsing in the face of water, so that the heavens abide alongside the subterranean within his repetitions. I would say that water was the element that allowed Monet to return to a reverie where the universe folds into a state of unification and this has particular relevance to the works within this submission, *Lake of Light*, *Fruits of the Air* and *Horizon*.

Particularly in his pedagogical notebooks, *The Thinking Eye* and *The Nature of Nature* Paul Klee articulates a view of repetition where singular

structures or what I have termed in this exegesis - particulate elements - working in conjunction with a collective structure could form a static/dynamic tension that resulted in rhythmic outcomes in art works. Klee used particular elements to invoke a sense of growth in his work extending between the poles of above and below (or, in other works, from left to right). The element of line contributes to the expression of oppositional forces within collective branch structures and this has had a huge impact on the work within the research titled *The Bone Cycle.*

Agnes Martin's repetitions of tonally subtle, horizontal bands within her 'standard' size canvases bespeak of immaterial presences such as space, shadow and light. The paintings also invoke mobility through the way that the tones recede and advance in relation to one another. Martin's work has had particular influence on my work *Horizon.*

Emily Kame Kngwarreye's paintings have relevance to the research in terms of the reading that the repeated gesture/mark embodies nature in terms of aerial mobility and continuities of growth in nature. Kngwarreye's repetition of the dot invokes a sense of atomized forms and dispersal and this is significant to my work *Fruits of the Air.* The predominant use of line in Kngewarreye's paintings post 1995 has relevance to my treatment of line in *Lake of Light* where the repeated marks embody continuity and flow through the gesture of the wave.

Vija Celmins' practice is relevant to this research through her repetitive mark making processes that, together with the repetition of natural imagery, resonate with concepts explored in my work *Lake of Light* and *Fruits of the Air.* The images in Celmins' work evolve through intensely

time-consuming and repetitive marks building depictions of oceanic or interstellar space.

The three female artists discussed in this exegesis have been reticent about discussing their work in terms of subject matter. Martin describes her work as pertaining to the subtle or abstract emotions like that of music; Kngwarreye described her work as being about 'whole lot'; while Celmins repeatedly articulates her art in terms of surface and the artifice of the art object that nonetheless draws the viewer *in*. My endeavour in this exegesis has not been to undermine these concepts, but rather to pull them apart a little to investigate what drives these artists to employ repetition, and why their work can be seen as related to natural themes in terms of air, water, space and mobility.

My thoughts and current studio experimentations indicate that my practice is becoming increasingly focused on the materiality of objects and paint to speak of mobility such as through the vacillation between empty/full and gap/structure. I have also recognized that the cloud and sky motif is very significant to me in terms of the reverie that it brings forth and I aim to pursue the repetition of these aerial motifs.

Finally, my contribution to the field resides in extending a dialogue on repetition by working through a range of different media that highlights the cyclical rhythms of nature. Even when in some cases repetition can appear to be formulaic, it will always contain variations, and beyond these, the true essence of repetition is revealed only in the making - a poetic act that must contain a large degree of unknowing if the repetition or the work of art is to survive. In relation to this I see repetition, particularly when it is carried out through gesture, as pertaining to an

attitude of cultivation rather than creation. This also relieves the burden of myths that surround art making such as the idea that work can only be carried out via an inspired and rarefied thought as well as concepts of spontaneity and originality that seem far removed from nature.

Appendices

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Figure 16. Monet, C. The *Grand Decorations. The Clouds*, 1925, oil on canvas, 3 canvases each 200 x 425 cm.

Figure 17. Monet, C. The *Grand Decorations. Green Reflections*, 1925, oil on canvas, 2 canvases each 200 x 425 cm.

Figure 18. Monet, C. The *Grand Decorations. Reflections of trees*, 1925, oil on canvas, 2 canvases each 200 x 425 cm.

Figure 19. Monet, C. The *Grand Decorations. Clear Morning with willows*, 1925, oil on canvas, 3 canvases each 200 x 425 cm.

Figure 20. Monet, C. The *Grand Decorations. Morning with willows*, 1925, oil on canvas, 3 canvases each 200 x 425 cm.

Figure 21. Monet, C. The *Grand Decorations. The Two Willows*, 1925, oil on canvas, 4 canvases each 200 x 425 cm.

Figure 22. Klee, P. *Eros*, 1923, watercolor on paper mounted on card 33.3 x 25.5 cm.

Figure 23. Klee, P. *Secret Letters*, 1937, charcoal and white gesso on newspaper mounted on card 48.5 x 33 cm.

Figure 24. Martin, A. *With my back to the world*, 1997, acrylic on canvas 60 x 60" one of six panels.

Figure 25. Martin, A. *With my back to the world*, 1997, acrylic on canvas 60 x 60" one of six panels.

Figure 26. Emily Kame Kngwarreye. *State of My Country,* 1990, synthetic polymer paint on canvas 121.6 x 210.8 cm.

Figure 27. Emily Kame Kngwarreye. *Kame – Summer Awelye 1,* detail 1991, synthetic polymer paint on canvas 121.6 x 303.5 cm.

Figure 28. Emily Kame Kngwarreye. *Body Paint: Awelye* I-VI, 1993, synthetic polymer paint on paper 77 x 56.3 cm each.

Figure 29. Emily Kame Kngwarreye. *Utopia panels*, 1996 synthetic polymer paint on canvas 280 x 100 cm (six of eighteen panels).

Figure 30. Celmins, V. *Untitled (Ocean)*, 1970 graphite on acrylic ground on paper 14 1/4" x 18 7/8".

Figure 31. Celmins, V. *Untitled (Ocean)*, 1971 graphite on acrylic ground on paper 14" x 19".

Figure 32. Celmins, V. *Galaxy#1* (*Coma Bernices*), 1973 graphite on acrylic ground on paper size 12 ¼" x 15 ¼".

Figure 33. Celmins, V. *Galaxy#1* (*Coma Bernices*), 1973 graphite on acrylic ground on paper size 12 ¼" x 15 ¼".

Curriculum Vitae

Education:
PhD Candidate, Tasmanian School of Art, 2001
Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours), Tasmanian School of Art, 1999 -2000
Graduate Diploma of Education (Secondary Art), Queensland University of Technology, 1991
Bachelor of Arts (Visual Art), Queensland University of Technology, 1987 – 1989

Solo Exhibitions:
2002 *Site*: Entrepot Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart TAS
2000 *Material Monastery:* Entrepot Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart TAS
1996 *Residuum:* Snake Pit Gallery, Launceston TAS
1994 *Furious Silence:* Doggett Street Studio, Brisbane QLD

Selected Group Exhibitions:
2005 *Isolation/Solitude*: The Long Gallery, Salamanca Place, Hobart TAS
2004 *Mountain Festival Sculpture Trail*: South Hobart Rivulet, Hobart TAS
2004 *Conversation*: Entrepot Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart TAS
2003 *Island Art Prize*: Stanley Town Hall, Stanley TAS
2003 *Hiding Places*: Carnegie Gallery, Hobart City Council, Hobart TAS
2002 *Wunderkammer 02*: Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart TAS
2002 *Hobart Art Prize:* Tasmanian Museum and Gallery, Hobart TAS
2001 *Hutchins Art Prize:* The Long Gallery, Salamanca Place, Hobart TAS
2001 *Souvenir:* The University Gallery, University of Tasmania, Newnham TAS
2001 *Insula:* Entrepot Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart TAS
2001 *Sculpture by the Sea:* Roaring Beach Site, Tasman Peninsula TAS
2000 *Game Over (Honours Graduate Show):* Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart TAS
2000 *Lumpen:* The Long Gallery, Salamanca Place, Hobart TAS
1997 *The Big Deal (and other small works):* Doggett Street Studio, Brisbane QLD
1993 *The Last Show Down:* The Butterfactory Studio and Contemporary Art Space, Dayboro QLD
1992 *Potential Space: The Butterfactory Touring Initiative:*
. Warwick Regional Art Gallery, Warwick QLD
. The Butterfactory Studio and Contemporary Art Space, Dayboro QLD
. Pine Rivers Council Chambers, Pine Rivers QLD
. Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, Toowoomba QLD
1991 *9 Brisbane Artists – Sources and Outcomes:* The Butterfactory Studio and Contemporary Art Space, Dayboro QLD
1989 *Bachelor of Arts (visual art) Graduate Exhibition:* The Old Museum Building, Brisbane QLD

Curatorships:
2004 *Timepiece:* Contemporary Art Services Tasmania, Hobart TAS
2005 *Timepiece:* Devonport Regional Art Gallery, Devonport TAS

Awards:
2003 Emerging Curator Mentorship; Contemporary Art Services Tasmania, Hobart TAS
2000 Wilderness and Heritage Residency; Lake St. Clair: Arts Tasmania, and Parks and Wildlife Services, Hobart TAS
1989 Finalist, Hobday and Hingston Bursary; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane QLD

Bibliography:
2003 Klaosan, Diana 'The Art of Relocation', *Real Time*, April – May No. 54 p. 31
2001 Rhodes, Briony 'Insula', *Like*, No. 15 Winter pp. 57-58
1992 Ravenswood, Kate '9 Brisbane Artists – Sources and Outcomes', *Eyeline* No. 15 Winter pp. 28-29