

# **Been, Being and Becoming: the meaning of change**

Siew Har TEO

Bachelor of Contemporary Arts (Honours)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts

School of Visual and Performing Arts

University of Tasmania

December 2009

**Signed statement of originality**

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.



---

Siew Har Teo



---

Date

**Signed statement of authority of access to copying**

This thesis may be made available for loan and limited copying in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.



Siew Har Teo



Date

**Siew Har TEO**

**Master of Fine Arts**

**School of Visual & Performing Arts**

***Been Being and Becoming: the meaning of change***

## **Abstract**

Palimpsests, surfaces upon which images are layered one upon the other, can be found everywhere on Launceston's roadways. The palimpsests I am interested in are those formed by the numbering system of parking meters and road repairs. They provide clues to an understanding of the phenomena of life and nature, and by doing so, become markers for the passage of time.

The concept of a palimpsest implies a manuscript that has been inscribed in layers over time, with the earlier writing incompletely erased and often still legible. I refer to two types of palimpsest: one a deliberate erasure – the Council roadway number system, and the other the accidental erasure through road repairs that often seal over original structures and messages.

The outcome of the project, collages of paintings and digital prints, expresses the lyrical beauty of erosion created by the passing of time, and reveals itself through the process of decay. My objective in creating the works is to understand the world in which we live: from the 'now', where we peel back history, and gain an insight into how the present and the past make an impact on the future.

As a background to this project I have examined works by Jasper Johns, Jeffrey Smart, and Sean Scully. I have discussed their work in relation to issues that are relevant to my project: for example, I have studied the different ways those artists interpret ideas, how they deal with the collective memory, or recall places they have visited and overlaid these with experiences of the present to produce insightful works.

My aim has been to create mixed-media digital print images based on a virtual memory of the past. I have used layered images of the commonplace to build palimpsests that reveal traces of history and, at the same time, suggest a future. The project seeks to raise an awareness of the beauty of everyday things and life in Launceston. Without seeking to create a formal frame, for example by introducing the horizon in the painting, I leave viewers to reflect on their own experiences and imagination of the 'now' and 'then', in order to open up a door to speculate on the process and experience of 'becoming'.



## **Acknowledgments**

I am extremely grateful for the professional guidance, academic critique, and project support provided by my supervisors Professor Vincent McGrath and Penny Mason from the School of Visual and Performing Arts. I wish to acknowledge the advice and valuable information provided by Dr Deborah Malor from the School. Special thanks to Julian Ridgers for his patience and generous assistance. I would also like to express my most sincere thanks to Lim Su Fan for her unconditional love, support, and encouragement.

## **Contents**

List of Figures	vii
List of Works	viii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1      The Significance of Becoming	5
Chapter 2      The Concept of the Palimpsest	13
Chapter 3      The Influences and Inspiration	21
Chapter 4      The Development of Visual Works	31
Conclusion	40
References	43
Bibliography	47

## List of Figures

- 1-1 Gabriel Orozco, *Ping Pond Table*, 1998, Sculpture, installation, and mixed media.
- 1-2 Gabriel Orozco, *Ping Pond Table*, 1998, detail.
- 1-3 Siew Har Teo, *Untitled*, 2007, mixed media, 38 x 29 x 7.5 cm.
- 1-4 Siew Har Teo, *Untitled*, 2007, detail, from 2007 exhibition 'Carbon Trading' Inveresk Academy Gallery.
- 1-5 Jasper Johns, *Good Time Charley*, 1961, encaustic on canvas with objects, 38 x 24 inches.
- 2-1 My visual inspiration, photograph, 2007 Peterson Street, Launceston.
- 2-2 Road repair, photograph, 2007, Northcote Street, Inveresk.
- 2-3 Cy Twombly, *The Italian*, 1961, oil, pencil, and crayon on canvas, 199.5 x 259.6 cm.
- 3-1 Sean Scully, *Wall of light desert day*, 2003, oil on linen, 274.3 x 335.3 cm.
- 3-2 Jasper Johns, *Zero through Nine*, 1961, oil on canvas, 137.2 x 104.8 cm.
- 3-3 Jasper Johns, *Corpse and Mirror*, 1994, oil and encaustic on canvas, 50 x 68 1/8 inches.
- 3-4 Jasper Johns, *Fragment-According to what-Bent Blue*, 1971, 4 colour litho, newspaper monotype, 25 1/2 x 28 3/4 inches.
- 3-5 Jeffrey Smart, *Control Tower*, 1969, oil on canvas, 81.5 x 72.5 cm.
- 3-6 Jeffrey Smart, *Madrid Airport* 1965-66, oil on canvas, 55 x 70 cm.
- 4-1 Siew Har Teo, photograph, 2007.
- 4-2 Siew Har Teo, ink drawing on rice paper, 2007.
- 4-3 Siew Har Teo, *Pentimento Series No. 1 - 688C*, 2009, digital print, 124.7 x 89 cm.
- 4-4 Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 1 - 711C*, 2009, digital print, 129 x 87.7 cm.
- 4-5 Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912, oil and oil cloth on canvas with rope frame, 27 x 35 cm.
- 4-6 Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 3 - 24C15*, 2009, digital print, 90 x 130 cm.

## List of Works

Selected works for assessment. P, 42.

- 1 Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 4 - 334C8*, 2009, digital print, 173 x 89 cm.
- 2 Siew Har Teo, *Pentimento Series No. 1 - 688C*, 2009, digital print, 124.7 x 89 cm.
- 3 Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 1 – 711C*, 2009, digital print, 129 x 87.7 cm.
- 4 Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 3 – 24C22*, 2009, digital print, 133.8 x 89 cm.
- 5 Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 2 – 731C*, 2009, digital print, 157.4 x 89 cm.
- 6 Siew Har Teo, *Pentimento Series No. 4 – 108C7*, 2009, digital print, 68.3 x 172 cm.
- 7 Siew Har Teo, *Pentimento Series No. 3 – 42C7*, 2009, digital print, 89 x 169 cm.
- 8 Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 3 – 24C*, 2009, digital print, 78 x 173 cm.
- 9 Siew Har Teo, *Pentimento Series No. 4 – 108C15*, 2009, digital print, 80.3 x 172.3 cm.
- 10 Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 3 – 24C19*, 2009, digital print, 75.7 x 173 cm.
- 11 Siew Har Teo, *Pentimento Series No. 2 – 334C2*, 2009, digital print, 89 x 143 cm.

## Introduction

Time interval is a strange and contradictory matter in the mind. It would be reasonable to suppose that a routine time or an eventless time would seem interminable. It should be so, but it is not. It is the dull eventless times that have no duration whatever. A time splashed with interest, wounded with tragedy, crevassed with joy – that's the time that seems long in the memory. And this is right when you think about it. Eventlessness has no posts to drape duration on. From nothing to nothing is no time at all. (Steinbeck, 1992, p. 57)

Let me set the scene about how I have come to think about time. It all started long ago at home in Singapore. Time after time I used to stare at a wall opposite my studio window: there was a patch of greyish-green with a greenish-black outline that appeared at the top centre - it seemed like a kind of organic fungus that kept expanding slowly. It started making me wonder about the amazing phenomenon that is nature and life, and how they interact with the passage of time. Some years later, coming to Launceston, and looking out on to Invermay Road, I saw something I could never have experienced in the tight confines that exist between Singapore's high-rise buildings - a pile of fallen leaves was stirring up in a swirl: two winds were blowing toward one another, above me, a moving cloud had been caught by another wind and transformed into a galaxy.

All around us, things change in tiny and subtle movements, flowers bloom, leaves fall, steel becomes rusty, paint peels off, a fading painted surface appears on the road; these happen everywhere in everyday life. What make these things change, why does the process occur? What I see as the lyrical beauty of erosion is created by the passing of time, and reveals itself in decay: From the seemingly mundane, decay and erosion step forward to become the central point of this project: *Been, Being and Becoming: the meaning of change*.

Through an investigation of visual and written appreciations of philosophies and concepts we come to understand the world in which we are living: from the 'now', we peel back history, and gain an insight into how the present and the past will make an impact on the future.

In Chapter One, I will examine my own perception of the past and how the past contributes an important role in all our lives. It is a place contained in our collective memory and exists as a series of what might be termed souvenir images; this collective experience provides a chance for a better 'now'. Because today is the tomorrow of yesterday, we accept that the present is the becoming of the past.

In this sense time is at once the present – a current place for us to live in, to plan and to work things out for the becoming; the past is a stepping stone for us to come to this new point in life. Time is the duration to allow things to happen; it encompasses a kind of simultaneity for the past, present and the future. (Grosz, 1999) Evidence of the passage of time can be found in layers or palimpsests, the building of layer upon layer – it is a common phenomenon in Launceston, particularly on the city's roadways where repeated painting-over of metered parking spaces has in effect formed a palimpsest of stencilled and painted images. These images have become the central focus of my work and exploration.

I will reference pop artist Robert Rauschenberg's artwork *Erased de Kooning*, and Cy Twombly's scribbled, erasing works as examples for further discussion in Chapter Two where I examine how they depict a palimpsest in their work.

Roads provide evidence of time passing as well as marking potential future movement. They permit a journey (a sense of becoming) that leads to somewhere, or somewhere we desire to be, an adventure that connects the personal world to the outside world. Roads are, in short, a banal commonplace that are overlooked and ignored. Yet, I find beauty in the microcosm of the commonplace, and looking behind the façade of the everyday to discover a road's real nature.

To help me in my exploration of this theme, I have turned to works by Edward S. Casey, author of *Getting Back into Place, Earth-Mapping: Artists Reshaping the Landscape*; Elizabeth Grosz, author of *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and The Untimely*, and editor of *Becoming: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Future*.

In Chapter Three, I examine the work of a number of contemporary artists. Jasper Johns, taking commonplace images from the everyday, such as his Numbers series paintings – “the image that everybody knew but not knows” and in the process

“making them new.” (Varnedon, 1996, p.16) His works have inspired me to search for common images - parking meter numbers that I have found on Launceston footpaths and road repairs – transformed into a dynamic collage, to create images reminiscent of calligraphy. In my work, I combine the numbers and the road repairs to express a combination of different cultures and what has become a personal palimpsest. ‘It is a distinctly personal past, though not a past to which one looks back, as in missing or yearning for what has been. Instead, it is a past that invades and inspires the present, constituting a “now of recognisability.” On the basis of this recognisability, the materials act as memorial vehicles, ways of remembering the past in the present of artistic creation.’ (Casey, 2005, p. 25)

As Sean Scully said: “I certainly don’t like the idea of the present replacing and destroying the past. I see life and spirituality as a kind of continuum in which we honour the present and the future, but also the past....” (Scully in Zutter, 2004) “I think the beauty that we have now has more to do with the relationship that we make...it’s the relationship between things that expresses our truth, expresses some kind of spirituality that we have, or the possibility of this.” (Scully, 1996) I share a similar belief and will include this paradigm in my work. I will draw directly from the photographs of road repairs to create ink drawings on rice paper.

The works will appear like a Chinese painting but with a sense of the contemporary: I cut and paste, take photographs, print them on transfer paper and combine them with other photographs and materials to make collages. My ink drawings on rice paper manifest as a spontaneous expression of a life-form that looks like an organic fungus – a fungus similar to the one I saw many years ago in Singapore.

Again in Chapter Three, Jeffrey Smart’s realism is of a similar nature. His visions are ‘a reality, [in which] roads, bridges, steps and buildings lead us to a dramatic horizon and the mysteries of an unseen vista beyond....’ (Capon, 1999, pp.14-20) His ‘road’ paintings depict a sense of mystery, of heading to somewhere in a journey of self-exile. I will use his paintings to link with the symbolic meaning of the road.

Although their subject matter is very different, all these artists deal with the collective memory from their past or are recalling places they have been to, overlapping with experience in the present to create significant works.

Their beliefs have strengthened my ideas and have given me confidence to empower my artistic project.

The artist is always engaged in writing a detailed history of the future because he is the only person aware of the nature of the present.

Wyndham Lewis (Shlain, 2007, p.97)

As demonstrated in Chapter Four, I want to base my work on a virtual memory from the past, and represent these memories in mixed media, such as photographs, ink drawings, oil paint and resin to create a collage. Photographs capture the visual moment of 'here' and 'now,' ink drawings express a cultural perception that connects to the experience of the places, oil paint is a traditional material for painting, and resin is an industrial material that is not commonly used in painting. I use resin as a glue but it has a secondary characteristic of making the paper transparent. After applying layer upon layer of images, in effect, the building of a palimpsest, the images underneath will be revealed and the imprints will act as a trace of history.

Collages allow me to express myself by combining different materials to find new ways of expression - combining different materials in a framed surface creates a kind of representation of the real world and at the same time, an illusion of looking into a 'window'.

I am looking for a synthesis of the personal and the cultural, the psychic and the spiritual characters in my works, through balancing the materials, though not in harmonious or beautiful ways, because I do not want simply to make a beautiful painting. I want my work to have its own unique character to set a stage for the contemplation of time. As Steinbeck notes, 'Eventfulness has no posts to drape duration on.' (1992, p. 57) And so, without seeking to create a formal frame, I leave the viewer to reflect on their own experience and imagination of the 'then' and 'now', in the process opening up a door for them to speculate on the becoming.



## Chapter 1. The Significance of Becoming

Time ... gives nothing to see. It is at the very least the element of invisibility itself. It withdraws whatever could be given to be seen. It itself withdraws from visibility. One can only be blind to time, to the essential *disappearance* of time even as, nevertheless, in a certain manner, nothing *appears* that does not require and take time.

JACQUES DERRIDA, *Given Time: 1. Counterfeit Money*, p, 6

I seek to investigate the meaning of the becoming, the precondition that installs itself in the past and the present simultaneously to enable the new to evolve. This I will do by an exploration of a palimpsest based on a personal recollection of the past. In order to understand the concept of a past, present and future, time is the key factor. Time can be considered as the duration - the length that exists between two events, and change – a temporal becoming. The nature of time is a ‘process’ for the becoming.

Time has its own function and duties to maintain in the ordering of the universe. (Callahan, 1968) Time has no physical form. We can only have a sense of it by the shadow cast by the moving sun or when an event takes place.

However time constantly imposes on us, we have all become the slaves of time since the invention of a device to measure its passing. Elizabeth Grosz writes in her book, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely* that ‘time is not merely the attribute of a subject, imposed by us on the world: it is a condition of what is living, of matter, of the real, of the universe itself. It is what the universe imposes on us rather than we on it; it is what we find ourselves immersed in, given, as impinging and as enabling as our spatiality.’ (2004, p. 4)

For example, a friend told me that one day he decided not to wear his watch. He went to work and while waiting for a traffic light to turn to green, he saw a crowd standing on the other side of the road. Most of them looked anxious and kept checking the time. He said to himself: “No, I am not going to be a slave of the watch or time from now on.” Does this mean he is a freeman of time? Another friend said

every morning on her way to work, she had to walk and run at the same time in a zigzag way to avoid the people who were walking in front of her, because she was trying to catch up with time: if not, she would be late. In this case, was she chasing time or was time chasing her?

Grosz suggests that time is perhaps the most enigmatic, the most paradoxical, elusive, and 'unreal' of any form of material existence. 'Time is neither fully "present," a thing in itself, nor is it a pure abstraction, a metaphysical assumption that can be ignored in everyday practice.' (2004, pp.4-5) Ingthorsson (2002, p. 68) claims that 'Time cannot be a substance.' Time is an eternal natural force with no beginning or ending point, lasting or existing for ever at all times. It only appears as itself when an event occurs. It gives nothing to see, we use the saying 'the flow of time' or 'the passage of time' - it is just an expression. Time has no motion, it's an intangible phenomenon. The illusion of moving time is created by others moving: a sunrise, a sunset, the linearity of living forms, there is no 'passing of time' only living beings are impelled to live forward to the next moment. (Prior in Poidevin and MacBeath, 1993)

The Zen master, Kigen Dogen wrote:

It is believed by most that time passes; in actual fact, it stays where it is. This idea of passing may be called time, but it is an incorrect idea, for since one sees it only as passing, one cannot understand that it stays just where it is. (Shlain, 2007, p.165)

Two examples from my own life can explain how time is motionless. I used to encounter a sudden shock when I was reversing into a car park, because I always had the illusion that the car parked next to me was moving forward. A second example I remember is a scene from the musical '*Les Miserables*', where the performer was going to jump into the sea. As he started to jump down, the stage background was being pulled upward; this gave the audiences the illusion that the performer had really jumped and had committed suicide.

Can we suggest then that time is an individual natural force that does not correlate to or indeed coexist with others; it functions in its own way without any interruption by

other events. Time is independent. We notice that time has passed through the appearance of an object, through the occasion of something happening and, as I have observed, through things like repairs on the road, the erosion of road markings, fallen leaves gathered together at the corner of a street. These however are not an example of time itself.

In another of her books, *Becomings: Exploration in Time, Memory, and Futures* Grosz notes that 'time has a quality of intangibility, a fleeting half-life, emitting its duration - particles only in the passing or transformation of objects and events, thus erasing itself as such while it opens itself to movement and change.' She further explains that time disappears from itself in order to make an appearance; it disappears into events, processes, movements, things, as the mode of their becoming. (1999, p.2) She describes the notion of time:

The reality of time is not reducible to the reality of space and of objects, though it can only be seen in its effects on them. It is most directly understood and experienced outside of images, models, and representations as a force, an impulse forward that cannot be resisted, for it is lived as the subject's own growing, waiting, reminiscent, and anticipatory continuity. (2004, p.249)

Time has the quality of the infinite, it is simultaneously moving both backward into the past and forward into the future, a voyage without a start or ending point. Time has no visible form of its own. When time appears, it is always in the process of becoming. Becoming is an ongoing possibility that makes possible the future, it contains memories of the past as a 'reservoir' of our collective memory: it coexists with the present. Becoming is moving on to a state of reality in the next moment of time, it is also always a reflection of things past.

Although we cannot resist this always ongoing intangible temporal force, nevertheless it evokes a sense of possibility that it does not as yet exist.

Gilles Deleuze saw 'time as becoming, as an opening up ... as an open-ended and

fundamentally active force ... movements and operations have an inherent element of surprise, unpredictability, newness, or change.’ (Grosz 1999, pp. 3-4)

Following on, Mexican born artist Gabriel Orozco’s work, *Ping Pond Table* (1998) (Figure 1-1) is a cross-shaped ping-pong table for four players, the centre of which is a faux lily pond, complete with ping-pong balls for blossoms. (Guggenheim, date unknown) The shape of the lotus flower and the pond is a reference to Buddhism or Indian culture in terms of the lotus flower being expressed as the beginning of the universe. *Ping Pond Table* is formed from a number of predetermined elements; both its meaning and its spatial organization are subject to unpredictable and indefinite variation when literally put into play by the viewer or participant. (Carnegie International CI: 99/00, 2007) In his interview with Art 21, Orozco says:

“The Ping Pond Table is connected to this idea of a new space, a new possible space. When you have a normal ping-pong game you have a net which divides the space between the two spaces. But when you multiply that space by four, instead of two people playing you have four people playing in four tables. You open that space so the net is also open. And what you have there is a new space because it didn’t exist before.... That is the space that I’m interested in, the in-between space.” (Art: 21, 2007)



Figure 1-1 Gabriel Orozco, *Ping Pond Table*, 1998.  
Sculpture, installation, and mixed media.



Figure 1-2. *Ping Pond Table*, 1998, detail.

Normally the shape of a ping-pong table is rectangular but Orozco made four round-shaped tables, because the round shape increased the space for the players waiting for the ball to bounce back from three different tables, and hence the time they had in which to play the ball. The result of the game now depended on how skillful the players were, and how fast they adapted to the new table shape; it became a game full of surprises. (Figure 1-2) (Art: 21, 2007)

The temporal taking on its new identity as the becoming provides an unexpected chance to assess the precondition of the past – once a certain period of time has passed, we may realise that the consequence we perceive is an artifact of the past. The immediate present is the future of the past, the past acts like a container of unlimited capacity, taking whatever is receding from the present and transforming it into collective memories: the past itself still retains its dynamic potential. In this sense the present is correlated with the past and the future.

In 2007, I participated in an exhibition called ‘Carbon Trading.’ The exhibition’s aim was to raise consciousness in regard to the environmental cost of human activities. Participants were invited to explore new ways to reduce consumption of resources. I used a small housing timber cabinet that is usually used for storage in the kitchen.



My aim was to demonstrate widespread contempt for the environment: how pollution begins its vicious cycle, rubbish being flushed down the drainage system and into rivers and oceans, only to be evaporated back into clouds, to perpetually repeat the cycle. The artwork, titled *Untitled* (2007) (Figure 1-3) reflects the concept of the 'cycle of life', where everything is connected, meaning that, if we don't take care of the environment, we will end up consuming the rubbish we have previously disposed of. I deliberately placed plastic containers in tap water, dirty water, and oily water to represent the residue of our domestic activities. The exhibition ran for about a month and I examined what had happened to the various water samples at the end of the exhibition. I found the tap water in the container had evaporated (as expected), but the container that contained the oily water was distorted. (Figure 1-4) The reaction was caused by the changing temperature in the gallery. As well, the passing of time demonstrated the correlation in the relationship between the precondition of the past, the present and the becoming.

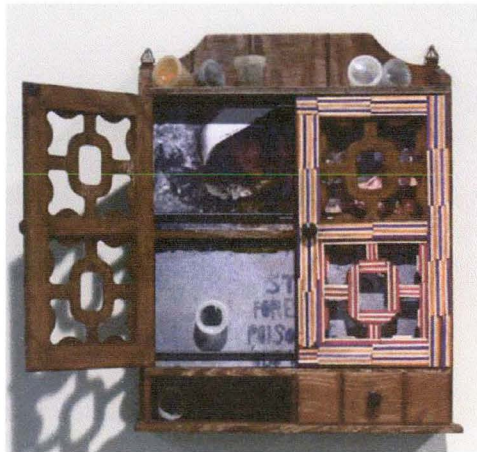


Figure 1-3. Siew Har Teo, *Untitled*, 2007, mixed media, 38 x 29 x 7.5 cm



Figure 1-4. Detail, beginning (left) and end of the exhibition.

As Grosz writes, 'The present is that which acts and lives, that which functions to anticipate an immediate future in action.... The past is that which no longer acts, and although it lives a shadowy and fleeting existence, it still *is*, it is real.' (2004, p. 175) We may therefore assume that the past remains accessible as collective memory, a perception of the past. The past remains nebulous until it has a chance to reconnect to a present perception, at which point it can be re-activated '... the present is not purely in itself, or self-contained; it straddles both past and present, requiring the past as its precondition, and is oriented toward the immediate future. Perception and action are oriented to present as the threshold of the future.' (2004, p.176) Every moment of the now will naturally fade into the past in the next moment; where the moment of fading occurs the past and the present somehow overlap one another, and that is simultaneity.

It is the past which is the condition of the present; it is only through its pre-existence that the present can come to be, one present replaces another. This means that there must be a relation of repetition between each segment...the past is not only the accompanying condition for every present, but also the (virtual) condition for any and every future... (Grosz, 2004, pp.182-4)

Jasper Johns explored time, space and change simultaneously in his painting *Good Time Charley* (1961). (Figure 1-5) He mixed hot wax and paint, a process known as *encaustic*, which involves the application of heat to fuse an image. Johns used a ruler to represent the hand of a clock, a real three-dimensional cup to create a space in between the canvas, a semi-circle to represent a universe. These elements expressed a sense of dynamic movement within the framed surface. The explanation Johns offered for seeking the added complexity of the encaustic process was that it revealed the earlier brushstrokes beneath the surface. Johns explains that:

I wanted to show what had gone before in a picture and what was done after. But if you put on a heavy brushstroke in paint, and then add another stroke, the second stroke smears the first unless the paint is dry. And paint takes too long to dry. I didn't know what to do. Then someone suggested wax. It worked very well; as soon as the wax was cool I could put on another stroke and it would not alter the first. (Shlain, 2007, p.260)

By using a technique termed *pentimento* - an underlying image or original drawing that shows through the surface of the top layer of a painting, Johns created a stage that 'allows the viewer to peek back through time to see sequential frames simultaneously within the spatial confines of a single canvas.' (Shlain, 2007, p.262) He also created a rich palimpsest in this work by building up the paints.



Figure 1-5. Jasper Johns, *Good Time Charley*, 1961  
Encaustic on canvas with objects, 38 x 24 inches

From this examination, time to me is a fleeting moment that captures at once the past, the present and the future. The past is an objective reality stored in our memory: it can be reconstructed or accessed in the present once a relevant stimulus is provided. Time itself cannot come to into existence or cease to be, however it has an ability to signal the possibility of the future, as well as to be part of a constant process of becoming.



## Chapter 2. The Concept of the Palimpsest

The land lies beneath, a palimpsest etched, erased and re-etched by wind and time.

Jenny Hamilton (Radok, 2001)

All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and re-inscribed exactly as often as necessary.

George Orwell (Radok, 2001)

The palimpsest belongs neither to the world of the subject nor to that of the object. As an abstract form, it simply implies residue. The palimpsest is the emblematic form of the temporal and as such it is the abstraction of narrative, of History, of biography.

Rosalind Krauss (Radok, 2001)

In 2006, I was wandering around the Inveresk campus precinct in Launceston, trying to get to know the place – its river, streets, public places and amenities. As writer Edward S. Casey writes in his book, *Earth-Mapping: Artists Reshaping Landscape*, ‘...mapping the land is also and equally *going over*, not in the sense of flying over...but in the sense of becoming acquainted with: going over something in order to become more familiar with it.’ (2005, p. xvi) Launceston, which is the third oldest city in Australia, has about two hundred years of Western history. But it is so well maintained that the passage of time hardly shows. I was very impressed with its beautiful scenery, including the colourful houses built alongside the river. These however did not inspire me. I was looking for something similar to the vista from the Eiffel Tower in Paris, where the gridded cityscape became etched in my memory. I searched for similarities here but failed to be inspired until I saw the numbers painted on the footpath in the city Central Business District (CBD). (Figure 2-1)



Figure 2-1. My visual inspiration, 2007

These markings became the visual inspiration for this project. The numbers are used to indicate parking spaces. What makes them so interesting to me is that the numbers are painted in two layers and in two different sizes, in different colours and using two different systems of producing the image. The numbers underneath are painted in a bright yellow colour by a stencil system, while the uppermost numbers are painted in white, using a new machine system. Information from the Queen Victoria Museum Reference Library shows that the first on-street parking meters in Tasmania were installed in Hobart in 1955, in the format of a single parking meter serving a single parking space; it cost six pence for 30 minutes. Parking meters came to Launceston two years later, and were installed in Paterson Street on 25 February 1957. The new multi-pay meters were first installed in George Street on 25 October 2000, when the original colour of the stencilled numbers was still yellow. In July 2007, the Launceston City Council went away from the stencil system to a new machine generated numbering system. The machine contains melted cement powder and transfers the powder on to the surface, where it is fused by heat. The longest parking meter bay is in Cimitiere Street, outside the Launceston Police station; it runs from number one to number ten. The shortest bays number only one to three. The numbers are a simple visual icon showing ‘the art of palimpsest’ (Hughes, 2007) in a commonplace environment.

The word palimpsest (‘*scraped again*’), refers to a manuscript that has been written on more than once, with the earlier writing incompletely erased and often still legible; a manuscript written on a surface from which an earlier text has been partly or wholly erased; or a manuscript in which the text has been written over an effaced earlier text. It derives from the Greek word *palimpsestos* meaning a papyrus or other

kind of writing material on which two or more sets of writing have been superimposed in such a way that, because of imperfect erasure, some of the earlier text can be read through the later over-writing. In archaeology, the term is often applied to landscapes, in which traces of earlier construction can be seen as well as the current ones. (Answer.com)

Galpin (1998) observes the forming of a palimpsest in terms of three stages, that is – initial writing, then the erasure, and finally the rewriting, or over-writing. However, the term now often seems to be used to suggest just the first and the third stages, writing directly over the top of the old text, without the erasure; the erasure and the rewriting have merged to become one – so that the erasure is the rewriting.

In parking meter bays, the action of the burning-out of the old text in order to create room for the new frequently produces a palimpsest, in that the past has been replaced by the present; the two overlapping one another to create a new image.

Robert Rauschenberg explored a similar approach in his work - *Erasure de Kooning*. He wanted to know if an eraser could create a drawing. He used almost forty erasers and took about a month to erase the drawing that Willem de Kooning had given him. After deliberately erasing the drawing until the surface of the paper was blank and empty,

Rauschenberg takes the viewer backward in time beginning with Rauschenberg's undoing of de Kooning's creation, and then back further to where de Kooning created a work the viewer can no longer even see. The empty sheet then reverberates with the step before de Kooning when it was also blank. Even though there is nothing in the frame but an expunged piece of paper, this blank space is redolent with the reverse direction of the arrow of time. That something wasn't, then was, and then was no more again, introduces the dimension of time into what had previously been a static, two-dimensional piece of paper. (Shlain, 2007, p.256)

Although the paper had become blank it still retained some traces of de Kooning's drawing; in effect, Rauschenberg had used an eraser as a drawing tool writing over de Kooning's drawing. The collaboration produced a new work by both of them. As

a palimpsest it was unique – erasure and re-writing occurring at the same time.

Another visual inspiration that I have discovered in Launceston is the repairs to road surfaces, which look like Chinese scripts or graffiti. In my personal memory, road repairs evoke a sense of nostalgia for my grandparents' place in Singapore. My grandfather had a small sugar cane field located in front of the house and my grandmother's garden was next to the house. When I was young, I liked to spend time with my grandmother in her garden and she would tell me all sorts of stories that she had encountered: something about her hometown in China, gossip about a neighbour's domestic problems, a story she had heard on a radio program, or things that threatened her precious flowers or plants. It was always a happy time when harvest came, and the sugar canes were ready to be gathered. My grandfather would cut the cane into 12 inch lengths for each of his grandchildren to enjoy.

Some years later, Singapore's city development board decided there was a need to build a new highway connecting the East and West coast of the island, and unfortunately my grandparents' place was on the route. Once the highway was opened to traffic, it became the busiest road on the island. Yet every time when travelling along the highway, those happy moments of my grandparents' place are subconsciously present in my mind. These collective memories influenced me to investigate the nature of the roads in Launceston, to see whether they too contained some memories of the past.

As Launceston is the third oldest city in Australia, many early roads were built by convicts. 'The first road into Launceston was from Evandale via Relbia, Penquite and Elphin roads in 1811. The next was from Perth, west of the present highway and through heavy bush to Strathroy bridge in 1819.' (Author unknown, 1986) As a consequence of the use of insufficient or inadequate materials the roads surface were muddy and excessively rough with large stones that posed serious hazards to road users. As industry grew the roads were considered a serious obstacle to commerce as well as to economic development. In 1807, the free-settlers of the Derwent (i.e. Hobart) began 'marking a convenient road'; in 1813 a road was 'made' between Norfolk Plains (Longford) and Launceston. (Newitt, 1988)

Roads are a major part of the infrastructure of most cities. In the early decades, roads were not only privileged to public transportation; horses, bullocks, carts and people walked or rode on the roads too. When we travel by car or public transport we are normally looking through the windows at pedestrians, or we window shop. Most people are only concerned about the functional nature of the road. The history of the road is mostly described by the buildings on it; the people who have lived there; the scenery along the roadside is part of the picture, but not the road itself. Roads themselves have become, in effect, invisible.

But there is something different about the roads in Launceston - the nature of road repairs. (Figure 2-2) They sometimes appear like an art form, like Chinese scripts or graffiti, but are not created by artists or street kids. Repairs are made necessary by the action of the weather, wear and tear, and the natural forces of erosion. Despite these commonplace origins, they resemble the work of Cy Twombly.



Figure 2-2. Road repair, 2007.

Cy Twombly's freely scribbled, calligraphic-style drawing, with its graffiti-like messiness of execution, combines the act of painting with writing. In his artistic career, he discarded figurative, representational subject-matter, citing the line or smudge – each mark with its own history – as its proper subject. (Figure 2-3) Twombly's work explores the cycles associated with the seasons, nature and the passing of time. The scribbled drawing, graffiti lines, marks and bright colours that he applies on his large-scale, solid fields of mostly grey, tan, or off-white canvas produce a spontaneous, and elongated child-like painting. He transforms the act of writing into violent physical gestures to create a sense of dynamic movement with a process of layering history. (20<sup>th</sup> Century Art Book, 1996) Marshall Berman says



about his work: ‘all that is solid melts into air.’ (Jones, 2007)

Jonathan Jones writes further:

It is essentially an art of erasing, effacing and delimitation, everything pared down to a mark or trace which slithers, unfolds or strides across his drawings and paintings with the ghostly presence of enigmatic characters or hieroglyphs... (2007, p. 2)

Barthes writes:

Twombly seems to cover up other marks, as if he wanted to erase them, without really wanting to, since these marks remain faintly visible under the layer covering them; this is a subtle dialectic: the artist pretends to have ‘spoiled’ some piece of his canvas and to have wanted to erase it; but then he spoils this erasure in its turn; and these two superimposed ‘failures’ produce a kind of palimpsest. (Barthes, 1985, p.179-80)

In Twombly’s own words: “Generally speaking my art has evolved out of the interest in symbols abstracted, but never the less humanistic; formal as most arts are in their archaic and classic stages, and a deeply aesthetic sense of eroded or ancient surfaces of time.” (Varnedoe, 1995)



Figure 2-3. Cy Twombly, *The Italian*, 1961,  
oil, pencil, and crayon on canvas  
199.5 x 259.6 cm

After studying his works, I have an urge to express my emotional memories inspired by road repairs through ink drawing to make collages; the process is a memorial vehicle for me to return to my childhood playground and to relate it to the place where I live now.

The question that I am trying to investigate is how can the past and the present contribute to or impact on the immediate future. As Edward S. Casey discusses:

... a past to which one looks back, as in missing or yearning for what has been. Instead, it is a past that invades and inspires the present, constituting a 'now of recognisability.' On the basis of this recognisability, the materials acted as memorial vehicles, ways of remembering the past in the present of artistic creation. (2005, p.29)

In Carl Jung's theory (date unknown), our collective unconscious or memory is also known as 'a reservoir of the experiences'. Casey alludes to this when he discusses how artists collect imagery from present experiences through their senses, feelings, or what they may think the landscape looks like to them, storing these images and impressions, recreating or transforming them in the future. In order to partake in the process of 'taking in and existing with' the landscape from the reservoir of memory, the artist 'takes out his or her experiences and reinvests them in a work of art: maps them out. Having gotten (back) into place by way of immersion, [the artist] gets place out of himself or herself, deposits it, as it were... [instead, he] transmutes all relevant prior experiences into the work.' The act of making is not to represent, or to preserve, 'it is to carry forward what has been held back and within as the *same*: a same that allows difference to flourish in its midst.' (Casey, 2005, p.169)

When we are looking at a piece of artwork, we have no idea of where the creative inspiration came from; but we do know it is a mixture of the artist's personal perceptions from the present and imageries drawn from the 'reservoir' of collective memory. To paraphrase Orwell (Radok, 2001) every history is a palimpsest; the accessible memories of the past are an important source that allows one to reassemble and make a new creation. An erasure is not to discard the old, but to incorporate its state of 'being', its memory, as an interesting influence on the future.

Without repairs Launceston's roads would look ordinary and commonplace: it's the repairs which give the roads a remarkable character, a sense of liveliness and energy, just as in Twombly's painting.

The difference between a deliberate erasure, as in Robert Rauschenberg's *Erasure de Kooning*; and the accidental erasure – road repairs - and Cy Twombly's scribbled work, is that *Erasure de Kooning* is an experimental work in which Robert Rauschenberg wanted to know whether an eraser could be used as a drawing tool. In the case of Launceston's roads, the new machine system of marking has been introduced simply for efficiency. In their own ways, road repairs and Twombly's work both evoke an unruly, impulsive sense of expression. Both processes of erasure, however varied, show the passage of time, the one a deliberate action, deliberate erasure, the other a manifestation of a journey marked by decay, a street which gains its own pictorial character through erasure, and over-writing in the form of patching and repairs. Part of this, a journey of discovery, always attracts the attention of contemporary artists to explore the road's mysterious symbolic meaning in their works.



### Chapter 3. The Influences and Inspiration

...all our knowledge comes from experience and through our senses...there is nothing in the mind except what was first in the senses. The mind is at birth a clean sheet, a tabula rasa; and sense-experience writes upon it in a thousand ways, until sensation begets memory and memory begets ideas.

John Locke (Shlain, 2007, p87)

Launceston roadways are my subject matter: this choice stems from experiences I had in Paris some fifteen years ago. Climbing the Eiffel Tower, I saw for the first time the grid layout of a major city, and this has inspired my later work. There is a second factor: I like to drive at night: I enjoy the altered perception this brings. When night falls and the highway is quiet and peaceful, the whole universe seems to just belong to me. To me, a road symbolises a new adventure, a change, self-exile, the unpredicted, excitement, wonderment, curiosity, freedom, an exploring of self-identity, and the discovery of things that you are familiar with but have not paid any attention to. A road can also be interpreted as a journey, a pathway connecting a person's intimate world to the outside world.

Three main artists have inspired me throughout my investigation - Sean Scully, Jasper Johns and Jeffrey Smart. All three have influenced me in different ways. For Scully, it is his visual style of painting. With Johns, it is his unique motif of flat imagery painting. As for Smart, it is his choice of subject matter and his perfect composition. In this chapter I will discuss the ways these influences have strengthened my belief in my own artistic intentions, the visual style of my work, my perceptions towards my subject matter and my choice of medium.

Sean Scully used to travel long hours on a train to get to work, observing buildings alongside the track. What he saw were the endless repetitive window structures rushing towards him, a continuous flashing of light reflected from the windows opposite.

He was unable to see what was happening inside those windows, yet subconsciously he interpreted what he saw from the train as life and hope, and represented these qualities in his work.

Sean Scully's abstract grid system painting has very strong architectural elements and a sense of rugged urbanity. (*20th Century Art Book*, 1996) In the course of his artistic development he achieved a characteristic motif of epic geometric abstraction, composed of parallel, slightly mismatched horizontal and vertical stripes, thick layers of earthy colours, and emphasized brushstrokes. (*Prestel Dictionary*, 2000) His works involves rustic architectural constructions of fading walls, cracked surfaces, rough edges and panels of densely and lushly painted stripes. I am truly inspired by Scully's geometric, abstract, and simple painting which demonstrates dynamic balance, thought and deliberation. (Gizzarelli, 2007) (Figure 3-1)



Figure 3-1. Sean Scully, *Wall of light desert day*, 2003  
Oil on linen, 274.3 x 335.3 cm

To me Scully's graphic backgrounds are influential in the formal structures of his works and provide an order and system to the expressive power of the paintings:

I'm very attracted to simple or basic systems of ordering. The way things can be put together in fours or fives, sixes or sevens, carries with it a strange and mysterious logic. If I put two panels together and one is divided with an even number - six for example - it tends to feel balanced and completed. But if the number of units is odd, like five, it can run on forever. (Scully in Zutter, 2004)

The simplicity in Scully's paintings captivates me and I find many similarities between his works and my own perspective of the urban landscape. The subject of his painting - vertical and horizontal stripes and bands - reminds me of the tiny blocks of houses and long narrow lines of roads I saw from the Eiffel Tower. He pays a lot of attention to the gap between each block and paints a number of layers in order to build up the gaps, giving them a physical body, a sense of light and life. His paintings have a sense of the poetic, illumination and the spiritual in a perfect balance and harmony of abstract painting. (Kuspit, 2006) As Scully said: "I don't want to make a painting that somebody just appreciates. I want to make a painting that really somehow empowers the person looking at the painting." (Scully, 1995) His works and experiences inspire me to express my world and the way I see things in my own unique way.

Edward S. Casey (1993) in his book *Getting Back into Place: toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, proposes that,

We spend most of our lives glancing – just glancing about, glancing around. You are probably also glancing about the room you are in, perhaps out a window onto the larger world. We glance at tiny things that catch our momentary attention ... The glance takes us out into the world, but it also brings us back to ourselves. It brings us up long and short at once... It takes us out into the 'open' of becoming – the 'pure ceaseless becoming.' (pp.79-86)

Building on this, the numbering system of the parking meters I found in Launceston's CBD intrigued me, and led me to undertake the investigation which is

at the heart of my project. Parking meter spaces are defined on the roadway - they are painted in a common place, a place that belongs to no-one but at the same time belongs to everyone. They are simply overlooked and ignored. I have struggled to develop ways to imbue this flat roadway image with an expressive painterly character in order to create a sense of layered meaning that encompasses duration, formal symmetry and enigmas.

Pop artist Jasper Johns has as the subject of many of his paintings alphabets, flags, targets and number series. The imagery mainly relates to everyday life and popular culture. His number paintings *Zero through Nine*, 1961 (Figure 3-2), in which numbers are superimposed on one another, resonate with my discovered number system at several levels. Johns has produced an ambiguous systematic abstract image in which none of the individual figures is clearly visible. The loose and colourful brushwork of bright blues, reds and oranges gives the work a feeling of energy. The rapid gestural application of paints has created a dramatic movement in between the spaces of each figure. (*20th Century Art Book*, 1996) In this series of works, he used a sequence of numbers to explore the time and space by overlapping one number to another, as a metaphor expressing the simultaneity of the past and present. 'Sequence became the key of time, and each duration followed in a progressive non-returning flow.' (Shlain, 2007, p.32) In my work the found numbers act as a starting point to a similar quest – to inscribe abstract symbols with other potential meanings.

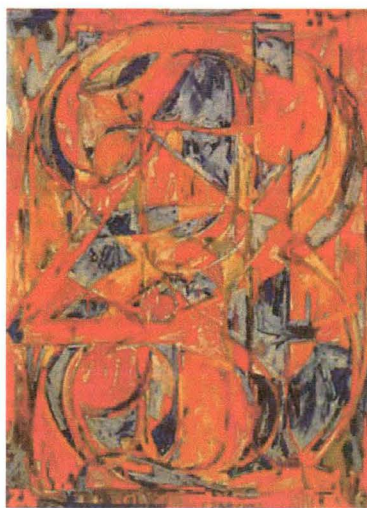


Figure 3-2. Jasper Johns, *Zero through Nine*, 1961  
Oil on canvas, 137.2 x 104.8 cm

Johns' inspiration of taking subjects from the mundane came from a dream he had one night. As a former commercial window display artist, he liked his subjects to relate to social, public, and ready-made common images that were shaped by cultural influences and by convention. Particularly, he was more interested in the relations between thought and sight – “the idea of knowing an image rather than just seeing it out of the corner of your eye.” In order to do so he needed to select subjects which were, in effect, invisible – things that were too well-known, too commonplace, and therefore not truly seen, like his famous motifs – the flags, targets, and numbers – “things the mind already knows,” but “seen and not looked at, not examined.” (Varnedon, 1996, p.16)

He demonstrates the notion that the inherited knowledge in our collective subconscious blinds us to experiencing the immediate environment. ‘By disrupting our habitual ways of seeing, could snap awake the senses and heighten our consciousness of being alive, ...[through] showing common things in unexpected ways – taking the familiar and “making it strange,” or “making it new” – was one way for art to effect this life-enhancing jolt.’ Johns expresses his intention of choosing to paint “things people knew, and did not know” because “I wanted to make them see something new.” He further explained, “When something is new to us, we treat it as an experience. We feel that our senses are awake and clear. We are alive.” He stressed that: “I think that one wants from painting a sense of life.... One wants to be able to use all of one’s facilities, when one looks at a picture, or at least to be aware of all of one’s facilities in all aspects of one’s life.... Like we were saying a while ago, a surprise. You may have to choose how to respond and you may respond in a limited way, but you have been aware that you are alive.” (Varnedon, 1996, p.17) This is what I would like to achieve in my paintings, to give them ‘a sense of life’, a soul of their own and to make them come alive. In my work, the spontaneous character of the ink drawing suggest a sense of liveliness.

In his hatched marks painting *Corpse and Mirror*, 1994 (Figure 3-3), Johns explored by using the crosshatch method, a technique commonly uses in drawing and graphic for adding depth and volume, or to demonstrate the light and shadow in space;



although the lines in his painting hardly ever cross. (Rondeau, 2007) Johns recalled his first glimpse of a pattern on a passing car:

I only saw it for a second, but knew immediately that I was going to use it. It had all the qualities that interest me – literalness, repetitiveness, an obsessive quality, order with dumbness, and the possibility of a complete lack of meaning. (Rondeau, 2007, p.58)

In this two panel painting, one side of the canvas is directly printed forms to create a tracing impression, on the other side the image appears to be direct transferred from the first image. As Varnedon writes: ‘This mirroring and variation effect of print transfer which dovetailed with Johns’s interest in basic matters of identity, repetition, and change...that juxtaposed a crisp pattern... suggesting a change of state with overtones of decay or death.’ (Varnedon, 1996, p.27)

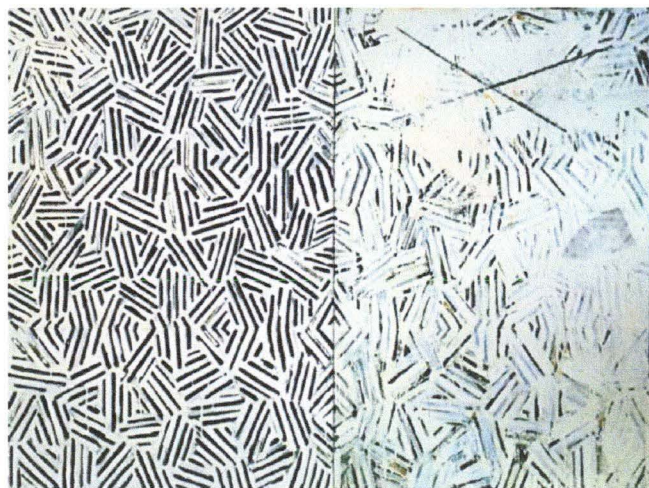


Figure 3-3. Jasper Johns, *Corpse and Mirror*, 1994  
Oil and encaustic on canvas, 50 x 68 1/8 inches.

Jasper Johns likes to cross or cancel out some part of his paintings. He explains the reason for this by referring to his Bent ‘Blue’ painting (Figure 3-4):

In a sense it is to say it is of no importance, because in Bent ‘Blue’, that area is constantly changing, so it’s not too important what’s there. But obviously it’s of great importance what’s there because that is what’s there. But it could be anything else – that or the next image. (Galpin, 1998, p. 6)

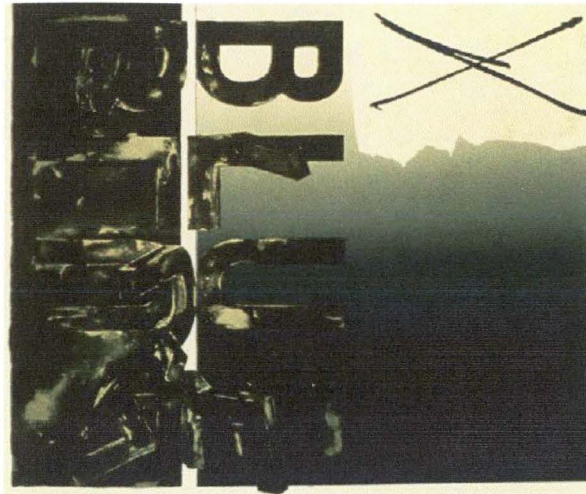


Figure 3-4. Jasper Johns, *Fragment-According to what-Bent Blue*, 1971  
4 colour litho, newspaper monotype. 25 ½ x 28 ¾ inches.

I believe that the crossing out attracts attention in a similar manner to the figures which always appear in Jeffrey Smart's paintings. The crossing out creates a tension or ambiguity: perhaps he is changing his mind over something? Whatever its intention, the practice of crossing out also creates a sense of drama, and without this, the painting would not appear so visually significant.

Jeffrey Smart, as a modernist, is passionate about perfect symmetry – balancing forms and shapes in order to reveal the idea of harmony. His interest in the geometry of forms came from his childhood environment. When he was young, he used to wander around the city to observe street activities, the structure of buildings, and signs at the roadside; he felt that the immediate surrounding was very exciting. The mundane, in the guise of traffic signs, roads, streetscapes, repetitive structures, and continuing blocks of buildings, had already imprinted themselves on his subconscious mind.

Perfect symmetry is a basic design principle used in almost every kind of art form and design. Smart's rhetoric is well-known on this subject matter: "my only concern is putting the right shapes in the right colours in the right places. It is always geometry." His has been a lifetime commitment of pursuing a single goal – a 'perfect composition'; he is willing to spend a few months on a single painting just to find

the right composition. In Kant's primary rule: 'concepts without intuitions are empty, intuitions without concepts blind...' (Casey, 1993, p.273)

Casey argues that

Conceptually, in other words, the real and the possible are identical (because, as Kant argued, existence is not a quality or attribute). Moreover, the process of realization involves limitation, the narrowing down of possibilities, so that some possible are rejected and others made real. The field of the possible is thus wider than the real. Implicit in this pairing is a preformism: the real is already preformed in the possible insofar as the real resembles the possible. The possible passes into the real through limitation, the culling of other possibilities. But through this resemblance and limitation, the real comes to be seen as *given* rather than *made*, as an inevitable outcome, merely waiting for real existence. (1993, p.187)

In Smart's *Control Tower*, 1969 (Figure 3-5), he made a few drawings of the tower but could not find anything to go with it, it took him a long time to find the perfect match, as he called it: "This subject took a long time to evolve. After having made the drawing at Fiumicino, I had many tries at it, but in the end I shelved the ideas and waited for something to turn up. It did, months later, when I saw a curved brick wall." (Smart in Capon, 1999, p.114)

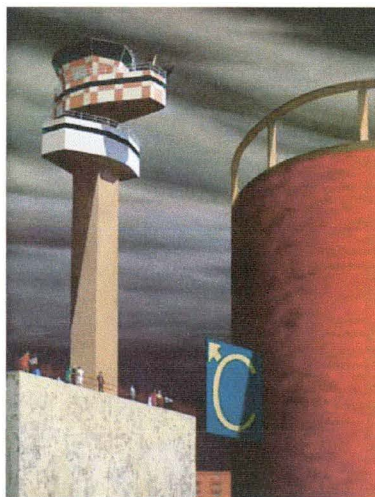


Figure 3-5. Jeffrey Smart, *Control Tower*, 1969,  
Oil on canvas, 81.5 x 72.5 cm



Elements of Smart's paintings are mostly taken from real places, sometimes described as lonely urban vistas from a post-industrial landscape. He makes sketches or takes photographs and studies them, arranges and manipulates them in his studio until he sees a picture.

Smart's skilful composition was shown definitively in *Madrid Airport* 1965-66 (Figure 3-6); every element is well planned and thoughtful. The yellow arrow points towards the front and moves away to the left; the numbers two and three express the sequence of time, number and position; the ubiquitous man is looking intently on the other side waiting for something to turn up. The painting is in effect a narration of life. As Henry Wadsworth Longfellow writes: 'Art is long, and Time is fleeting.' There is a sense of the passing of time, the common emblems express a narrative movement in everyday life.

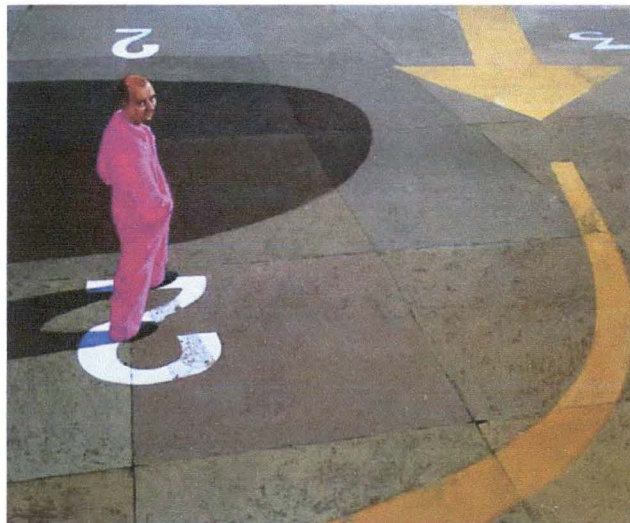


Figure 3-6. Jeffrey Smart, *Madrid Airport* 1965-66,  
Oil on canvas, 55 x 70 cm.

Smart's work has inspired me to create my own style by drawing on the form of the simple shapes and numbers from the footpath and road surface in my work. I pay attention to his sense of composition and the serenity of movement he expresses. When I was taking photographs of numbers on the footpath, I tried to recall Smart's work. I was exploring his composition through the viewfinder of my camera. I wanted to achieve his 'perfect composition' in my work. This process enhances the aesthetic, and creates a sense of harmony for my work.

Importantly, like Smart I am very much concerned with the sense of stillness, the calm of a moment before a subsequent notion might alter a vision to advance the idea of the ‘sense of becoming.’

The works by the three artists examined are inspired by the everyday in daily life. Although their subject matters and their expressions differ, they all search for significant meanings within their surroundings. Their works have informed and directed my own work, particularly in what I might now also call my quest for the ‘perfect composition’ as expressed by Smart. The visual expression of repetitive geometricity of Scully’s work reminds me of the images I saw many years ago in Paris when the city lay before in Baron Haussmann’s geometric and ordered grid.

As with the work of these chosen artists, I have sought to make what is visible but seldom seen become clearly visible – to elevate the mundane to an object of art which can be expressed and appreciated. Clearly, in the most commonplace street object, there can be life, a life which expresses itself – a life that can be observed for those who care to look. By scrutinising the place we live in with this newly acquired vision, we are actually making the journey of self-discovery and in turn, approaching an appreciation of what we hitherto had only perceived at a subconscious level.

If I have achieved anything through this personal journey, it is the development of what I might term a new personal vision – a vision which perceives what is in front of my eyes in a literal sense, but also discerns underlying patterns and the hidden beauty so often contained in ordinary objects as they come and go in their physical form as entities and memories.

## Chapter 4. The Development of Visual Works

Our relation to the natural world takes place in a place.

Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the wild*

I heard the earth singing beneath the street.

Wendell Berry (Casey, 1993, p. 186)

In this chapter I demonstrate the material choices I have made in order to achieve my desired artistic outcome. I combined photographs, ink drawings, oil paint, acrylics and resin to create mixed media collages, paintings and digital prints. By balancing these seemingly contradictory materials, I am seeking to gain what I would call a sense of lyrical sublimity – a sense of beauty which is not immediately obvious - in my work, as well as providing an emotional impact.

In the past few years, I have come across the phrase ‘the lyrical beauty of the everyday’ (Hirshhorn, 2004) that is a description of Gabriel Orozco’s approach to his art works. Viewing his works, I have felt a strong sense of connection and inspiration. Although I have my own interpretation of it, I believe Orozco and I share basically the same ideas, which are that the ordinary is both beautiful and unique. What Orozco sees in any surroundings is the natural grandeur, the flowing shadows, concealed movement, colour, shapes and designs that the untrained eye cannot distinguish. He uses found objects to make sculptures like his *Ping Pond Table*, 1998. (see Figure 1-1) Orozco’s inspiration comes from his peripatetic wanderings, where he captures the hidden, often overlooked day to day things that he encounters. Occasionally, he intervenes, arranging or manipulating them, finally photographing them as an art work or as a documentation of his works. His works also suggest an environmental focus by using recycled materials that are commonly found in our consumer society. (Dare, date unknown)

The act of taking these unwanted, disposable objects and imaginatively transforming them into art or part of an art work reinstates their value, even if the original purpose of the object has been re-made.

In order to document and create works I have used photography as part of my chosen medium. In much the same way as Orozco, I now always carry a small digital camera in my bag to photograph anything that captures my attention. I take advantage of the convenience and speed that photography allows as part of the process of documenting and creating my artworks. Although I share Orozco's ideas, passion and choice of medium, the end result of my artwork is very different, as I use and transform the photographs and combine them with other materials.

Photography has always been used as a documentary medium, for it is able to freeze a moment, an occurrence, in space and time. A photo provides precise information about the 'here', 'now' and 'there' – when it was, how it is now, and what it will be. Importantly, photograph allows me to preserve an historical event as an image. The photograph transfixes the glance with wonderment, giving immediacy to the past and to inevitable moments of change. (Watkins, 2005) Photographs also act as a 'mirror', as a reflection of the 'real' world, and can strongly influence how we see and interpret our world. Photographs open up a space for us to analyse things that we have taken for granted or have forgotten. (Clarke, 1997)

One of my collections centres on an image of two leaves lying side by side on a kerb. One of them is a desiccated leaf, the other is bright green. The image depicts a journey of decay, a narrative of time past, of portent and of prediction. It captures a sense of movement expressing the idea of history as layers, and the way they form an image of the present, or how they contribute to what will become a portent from the present. My work also suggests a sense of becoming through contrasting an object in an advanced state of decay against a recently fallen, bright green oak leaf. (Figure 4-1)



Figure 4-1.

I draw directly from my photographs of road repairs to create ink drawings on rice paper. The drawings express a personal and culturally-influenced appreciation of the road repairs, and also express a sense of ‘cultural overlap’ by superimposing the image of road repairs and ink drawings. (Figure 4-2)



Figure 4-2. Siew Har Teo, ink drawing on rice paper, 2007



They remind me of Chinese calligraphy and script, a major subject in school when I was in grade three, but something which is no longer used in Singapore's modern society. The quality of the rice paper, thin and translucent, allows me to produce multiple traces of ink drawings. By placing a few sheets of paper together, I have been able to create different densities and different colours - from dark to light in one simple act. It represents a virtual space which connects a virtual past and virtual future within a framed surface. I have cut and pasted, rearrange and manipulated these trace-like drawings in combination with photographs, and have transformed them into collages. Used in this manner, my photographs evoke a sense of space and time, and the layering of the ink drawings express the notion of a palimpsest, affirming a sense of what has been, what is being and what is to become. (Figure 4-3)



Figure 4-3. Siew Har Teo, *Pentimento Series No. 1 – 688C*, 2009  
Digital print, 124.7 x 89 cm

My works have formed two series:

#### (1) Grid Series

Grids provide a systematic ordering to show a repetition of patterns or images in a given space and surface. They set up units that can be accessed as individuals or as a whole. Every single unit has its own history, while yet remaining part of the whole. The repetition of the grid pattern evokes a sense of narrative, the passing of time and the possibility of the 'becoming' to come into being.

## (2) *Pentimento* (recalling the image of an earlier stage of the work) Series

I have used Photoshop techniques to create multilayer photographic images to reveal and then interpret certain images beneath the surface. During the course of this investigation I have used different papers with painted or printed different images to portray layers. This series of works is a combination of photographs, Photoshop manipulations and hands-on activity to produce palimpsests: revealing traces of earlier layers of work instead of obliterating.

Both series of work use similar methods of creating. Firstly, I superimpose two or three images in Photoshop through manipulating the opacity of each layer in order to retain certain areas which will be seen as underlying images. Secondly, I print the layered image – it acts as the base of the work - then I apply various painted or printed images to it.

This process is used to express the past, and becomes the second layer, the space between the different papers and images representing the linearity of time. In order to achieve the effect of *pentimento*, I use resin as a glue because it is able to make the paper transparent. After applying layer upon layer of images, in effect, building a palimpsest, the images beneath are revealed and represent traces of history.

Thirdly, I photograph the work. Instead of setting works on a wall or on a table, I place them against a window, either individually or as two images combined. The window acts as a light box, allowing the bottom image to show through. After photographing the images I repeat the layering process again and again until I am able to see a perfect picture.

Despite the relative sophistication of my processes, my chosen subject matter is simple and straightforward – roadways as evidence of the passage of time.

Although the subject matter of my investigation might seem deceptively simple at first glance, it does reveal more meaning upon further investigation. The various road markings are signs of life and this energy evokes a sense of the constant pull and push between life and nature, represented by decay and the process of over-writing.

With the aim of enhancing the emotional impact of my work, I have decided to create mixed media collages using painting and digital prints. I find this creates elements of surprise, and in the process builds up a palimpsest creating different perspectives. I want to explore the challenge of using non-traditional art materials to express different perspectives and depths within a framed surface and, in so doing, create a space for the viewer to develop their own view.

When a work of art ceases to behave according to our expectations, it seems to beg for instructions that explain or at least indicate how we are to relate to it... how a work is “to be looked at.” (Blythe & Powers 2006, p.13)

There are multiple layers in my work and they act as alternate ‘windows’ symbolising the act of looking through into other worlds. Usually when a person looks at a scene through a window there is feeling of isolation coupled with a sense of the difference between the inside and the outside. These ‘windows’ provide a certain fascination and hold the viewer’s interest. It is an idea that I would like to explore in my artwork.

... [receptive] surface on which objects are scattered, on which data is entered, on which information may be received, printed, impressed - whether coherently or in confusion. (Blythe & Powers 2006, pp.15-19)

Art historian Leo Steinberg discusses the possibilities of such surfaces as ‘gathering places’. He “insists on a radically new orientation, in which the painted surface is no longer the analogue of a visual experience of nature but of operational processes.” (Blythe & Powers 2006, pp.15-19) Blythe and Powers explain these writings or work surfaces that appear in Dadaist works by artists such as Picasso and others as often being

... opaque, they are not glassy gateways to imagery intended to trick the eye but rather solid ground on which all manner of things can actually be accumulated and arranged. (Blythe & Powers 2006, pp.15-19)



In my work, the photographs and the 'paper' layers act as windows leading to other layers of possibility. My intention is not to indulge in trickery but to arouse interest and to capture attention. The digital print creates another window into the 'real' world, fragments of reality captured and compressed from three to two dimensions. Photographs seems to be the most 'real' and therefore the most accessible part of my artworks, yet on further inspection, the viewer will come to realise that these photographs are actually illusions of reality. My work is the result of layering of images of everyday, mundane, ordinary things in order to give these objects a platform to show their beauty. They should provoke the viewer to question and re-examine what they see every day and what they know or understand. (Figure 4-4)

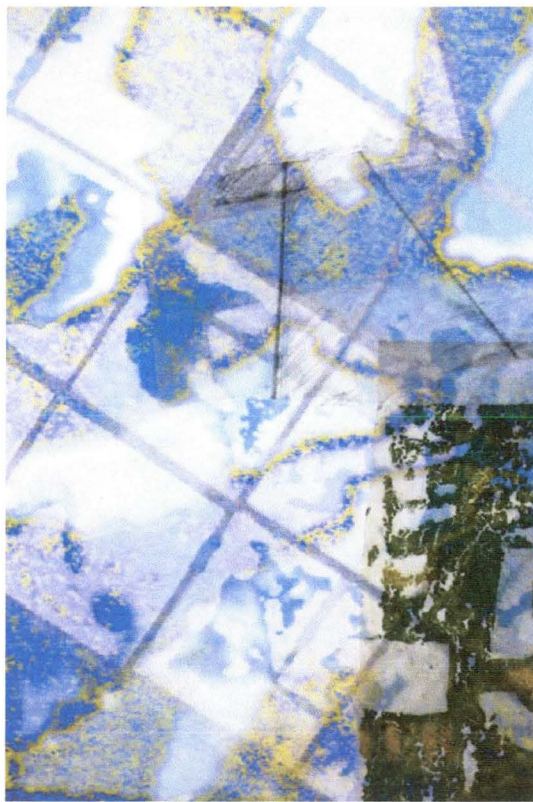


Figure 4-4. Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 1 – 711C*, 2009  
Digital print, 129 x 87.7 cm

These 'windows' allow me to express the idea of the real and the artificial, life and nature and the way they exist side by side. I want to introduce the notion of paying attention to parts of our surroundings seen from a different perspective, in order to create a sense that we can be looking into altogether different worlds; the current

world that the viewer is in, the digital world that creates different relationships to spaces, the photographic world that creates illusions of reality, and the painting world that expresses a personal vision. What is real and what is not? What is reality and what is imagined?

On the surface of Picasso's 1912 *Still Life with Chair Caning*, the patterned oilcloth, which creates the illusion of the collage's being made with real chair caning, suggests both an illusionist window and a real table, as if the viewer were seeing through a glass table top to the caning of a chair below. The patterned surface is thus a part of the 'real' world, yet one which in reality is fake. (Blythe & Powers 2006, p.22) (Figure 4-5)



Figure 4-5. Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Chair Caning*, 1912  
Oil and oil cloth on canvas with rope frame, 27 x 35 cm.

The idea of using different layers with photographs, digital prints and collage painting assembled within a framed surface is to create multiple traces of the history of Launceston's roadways. By achieving an interaction with viewers to investigate the reality, or indeed the unreality, of my artworks, I hope they will come to understand and to engage with my artistic aims. (Figure 4-6)



Figure 4-6. Siew Har Teo, *Grid Series No. 3 – 24C15*, 2009  
Digital print, 90 x 130 cm

The visual outcomes of my research concern the simple beauty that exists everywhere within the everyday of Launceston's roadways. They are an exploration of the passage of time that retain fragments of the virtual reality through road numbers and markings and indeed repairs and decay forming palimpsests, to manifest the anticipation of 'becoming'.

## Conclusion

The purpose of art is to lay bare the questions which have been hidden by the answers.

James Baldwin

My project has investigated the notion of the palimpsest as an active recorder of occurrences. I have used the numbering systems on footpaths and roadways to arouse curiosity in the provenance of fragments and traces. Numbers represent sequence, and sequence is a key of time. (Shlain 2007) In the ever-changing environment of Launceston's roadways, the physical condition and appearance of the numbers sometimes evoke a sense of lyric beauty of the process of decay. In parking bays the act of 'burning-out' the old text in order to create room for the new frequently produces a palimpsest, in that the past has been replaced by the present - the two overlapping one another to create a new image. Here an erasure is not to discard the old, but to merge its characteristics, its memory, as an interesting influence on the future.

Through the investigation I have come to realise that as Grosz (2004, p. 250) suggests '... time [is] in itself,' it is an individual natural force that does not correlate to or indeed coexist with others. Time is independent. We notice that time has passed through the changing appearance of an object, through the act of something happening. Time has the quality of the infinite, it moves backward into the past and forward into the future, a concept without a start or end point. When time appears it is always in the process of becoming. Becoming is an ongoing possibility that makes possible the future, it contains memories of the past as a 'reservoir' of our collective memory: it coexists with the present. The sense of becoming is moving on to a state of reality in the next moment of time, and it is also always a reflection of things past.

From this investigation I have found time to be a collection of fleeting moments that capture at once the past, the present and the future. The past is constructed from accumulated subjective and objective realities stored in our memory, it can be reconstructed or accessed in the present once a relevant stimulus is provided. Time itself cannot come into existence or cease to be, however it has a capacity to signal the possibility of the future, as well as to be part of a constant process of becoming.

The purpose of using a variety of layers with photographs, digital prints and collage painting within a framed surface is to interpret the multiple traces of the history of Launceston's roadways.

In searching for a synthesis of the personal and the cultural, the psychic and the spiritual, indeed through balancing the materials, I want my work to have its own unique character in order to set a stage for the contemplation of time. As Steinbeck notes, 'Eventlessness has no posts to drape duration on.' And so, without seeking to create a formal frame, I leave the viewer to reflect on their own experience and imagination of the 'now' and 'then', in the process opening a door for them to speculate on the process and experience of 'becoming'. Therefore, in using Steinbeck's words from *East of Eden*, I refer to the posts as a metaphor for the physical layers of the palimpsest holding clues to the passing of time in all its various manifestations.



## List of Works



1. *Grid Series*  
No. 4 - 334C8,  
2009,  
digital print,  
173 x 89 cm



2. *Pentimento Series*  
No. 1 - 688C,  
2009,  
digital print,  
124.7 x 89 cm



3. *Grid Series*  
No. 1 - 711C,  
2009,  
digital print,  
129 x 87.7 cm



4. *Grid Series*  
No. 3 - 24C22,  
2009,  
digital print,  
133.8 x 89 cm



5. *Grid Series*  
No. 2 - 731C,  
2009,  
digital print,  
157.4 x 89 cm



6. *Pentimento Series*  
No. 4 - 108C7,  
2009,  
digital print,  
68.3 x 172 cm



7. *Pentimento Series*  
No. 3 - 42C7,  
2009,  
digital print,  
89 x 169 cm

8. *Grid Series*  
No. 3 - 24C,  
2009,  
digital print,  
78 x 173 cm



9. *Pentimento Series*  
No. 4 - 108C15,  
2009,  
digital print,  
80.3 x 172.3 cm



10. *Grid Series*  
No. 3 - 24C19,  
2009,  
digital print,  
75.7 x 173 cm



11. *Pentimento Series*  
No. 2 - 334C2,  
2009,  
digital print,  
89 x 143 cm



## References

Answers.com, date unknown, *ReferenceAnswers*, accessed 7 March 2008, <http://www.answers.com/topic/palimpsest>

Barthes, Roland 1985, as quoted in Galpin, Richard 1998, February, *users.zetnet*, Erasure in Art - Destruction, Deconstruction, and Palimpsest, accessed 20 April, 2008, pp. 179-80, <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/richart/texts/erasure.htm>

Blythe, Sarah Ganz & Powers, Edward D 2006, *Looking at DADA*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Callahan, John F 1968, *Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, New York, p. 16.

Capon, Edmund 1999, *Jeffrey Smart retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 27 August – 31 October 1999, New South Wales, 26 November 1999 – 6 February 2000, Art Gallery of South Australia, 10 March – 21 May 2000, Queensland Art Gallery, 10 June - 6 August 2000, Museum of Modern Art at Heide, p. 114.

Casey, Edward S 2005, *Earth – Mapping: Artists Reshaping Landscape*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis / London.

Casey, Edward S 1993, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place – World*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis.

Clarke, Graham 1997, *The Photograph*, Oxford University Press Inc, New York, pp. 32-3.

Coplans, John 1972, Fragments according to Johns: An Interview with Jasper Johns Print Collectors Newsletter 3, May – June, p. 32.

*20th Century Art Book*, 2001, Jasper Johns, London and New York, Phaidon Press Limited, p. 220.

*20th Century Art Book*, 2001, Sean Scully, London and New York, Phaidon Press Limited, P419.

*20th Century Art Book*, 2001, Cy Twombly, London and New York, Phaidon Press Limited, p. 470.

Dare, date unknown, “GABRIEL OROZCO,” *Gabriel Orozco*, accessed 24 May 2007, <http://www.iniva.org/dare/themes/space/orozco.html>

- David Winton Bell Gallery, 8 September-28 October 2001, *Sean Scully: Walls Windows Horizons*, accessed 1 November 2006,  
[http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/David\\_Winton\\_Bell\\_Gallery/Scully.html](http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/David_Winton_Bell_Gallery/Scully.html)
- Galpin, Richard 1998, Erasure in Art – Destruction, Deconstruction, and Palimpsest, *users.zetnet*, accessed 20 April 2008, <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/richart/texts/erasure.html>
- Gizzarelli, Camille 2007, 'Light as Art - The Light Artists - Sean Scully', *Art Appreciation Site*, accessed 17 April 2007, <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art49720.asp>
- Grosz, Elizabeth A 2004, *The Nick of Time: politics, evolution and the untimely*, Allen & Unwin, New South Wales.
- Grosz, Elizabeth A (ed.) 1999, *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London.
- Guggenheim Museum, date unknown, Biography, *Gabriel Orozco*, accessed 26 May 2007,  
[http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist\\_bio\\_204.html](http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_bio_204.html)
- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden 2004, 'Gabriel Orozco: Extension of Reflection' 1 May 2004, *Press Release*, accessed 24 May 2007,  
[http://www.hmsg.si.edu/museum/press\\_release.asp?ID=50](http://www.hmsg.si.edu/museum/press_release.asp?ID=50)
- Hughes, Robert 2007, Art History Today: Cy Twombly, 27 April 2007, *Art History Today*, accessed 16 March 2008,  
<http://arthistorytoday.blogspot.com/2007/04/cy-twombly.html>
- Ingthorsson, Rognvaldur D 2002, *Time, Persistence, and Causality: Towards a Dynamic View of Temporal Reality*, University of Umea, Umea, Sweden.
- Jones, Jonathan 2007, Art History Today: Cy Twombly, *Art History Today*, accessed 16 March 2008, p. 2, <http://arthistorytoday.blogspot.com/2007/04/cy-twombly.html>
- Kuspit, Donald 2006, 'Sacred Sadness', *artnet Magazine*, accessed 17 April 2007,  
<http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/kuspit10-5-06.asp?print=1>
- Newitt, Lyn, Jones, Alan (ed.) 1988, *Convicts and Carriageways*, Department of Main Road. Tasmania, pp. 8-9.
- Orozco, Gabriel 1998, Gabriel Orozco: Games: Ping Pond, Billiards, and Chess, Pbs Organisation, *Art: 21*, 30 September 2007, accessed 18 June 2009, <http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/orozco/clip1.html>
- Orozco, Gabriel 1998, Ping Pond Table, *Carnegie International 1999/2000, CI: 99/00*, 30 September 2007, accessed June 18, 2009, <http://www.coma.org/international/html/art/orozco.html>



*Prestel Dictionary of Art and Artists in the 20th Century*, 2000, Prestel Verlag, Munich, London, New York, p. 293.

Prior, Arthur N 1993, Changes in events and change in things, MacBeath, Murray & Poidevin, Robin Le (eds.), *The Philosophy of Time*, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 35.

Radok, Stephanie 2001, Mildura Palimpsest # 4, *Artlink Magazine*, accessed 15 April 2008, <http://www.artlink.com.au/articles.cfm?id=2169>

Rondeau, James, *Jasper Jahns: Gray*, exhibition catalog, 3 November, 2007 – 6 January, 2008, The Art Instituta of Chicago, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, p. 58.

Scully, Sean 1995, interview with Ned Rifkin, in Ned Rifkin (ed.), *Sean Scully: Twenty years 1976-1995*, London: Thames & Hudson, pp. 57-80 (p. 73), accessed 17 April 2007, <http://www.nga.gov.au/Exhibition/Scully/Detail.cfm?IRN=128859&BioArtistIN=23432>

Scully, Sean 1996, interview with Hans-Michael Herzog, 'The beauty of the real', *Sean Scully* (exhibition catalogue), Milan: Charta, pp. 55-131 (p. 103), accessed 17 April 2007, <http://www.nga.gov.au/Exhibition/Scully/Detail.cfm?IRN=128833&BioArtistIRN=23432>

Scully, Sean 1996, interview with Hans-Michael Herzog, 'The beauty of the real', *Sean Scully* (exhibition catalogue), Milan: Charta, pp. 55-131 (p. 123), accessed 17 April 2007, <http://www.nga.gov.au/Exhibition/Scully/Detail.cfm?IRN=128856&BioArtistIRN=23432>

Shlain, Leonard 2007, *Art & Physics: parallel visions in space, time, and light*, Harper Perennial, New York.

Steinbeck, John 1952, 1970, 1980, 1992, 2000, *East of Eden*, Penguin Group, Victoria, London, New York, Toronto, New Delhi and Auckland, Rosebank.

Varnedon, Kirk 1996, *Jasper Johns: A Retrospective*. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, pp. 16-27.

Varnedoe, Kirk 1994, *Cy Twombly – A Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, The Museum of Modern Art, 25 September 1994 – 10 January 1995, New York.

Walker, Robert 1998, *Painters in the Australian Landscape*, Hale & Iremonger Pty Limited, Sydney.

Watkins, Philip 2005, *Downtown - Simon Cuthbert*, 'Crestfallen', exhibition catalog, 13 August – 11 September 2005, CAST Gallery, Contemporary Art Services Tasmania, Hobart.

Zutter, Jorg 2004, Interview with Sean Scully, *Sean Scully: body of light* National Gallery of Australia accessed 17 April 2007, <http://www.nga.gov.au/Exhibition/Scully/Default.cfm?MnuID=4&Essay=2>

## Bibliography

- Baker, Kevin 2003, Palimpsest Street, *New York Times*, accessed 15 April 2008, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C05E1DA173DF936A35753C1A965>
- Barrett, Estelle, and Bolt, Barbara (eds.) 2007, *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, London and New York.
- Breen, Shayne, & Summers, Dyan (eds.) 2006, *Aboriginal connections with Launceston places*, Stories in Stone #1, Launceston City Council, Launceston.
- Bey, Hakim, date unknown, The Palimpsest, *Hermetic*, accessed 16 March 2008, <http://www.hermetic.com/bey/palimpsest.html>
- Blaise, Clark 2001, *Time Lord*, Phoenix, London.
- Bolles, Edmund Blair 1988, *Remembering and Forgetting: An Inquiry Into the Nature of Memory*, the Walker Publishing Company, Inc, New York.
- Bright, Susan 2005, *Art Photography Now*, Thames & Hudson Ltd, London.
- Bryson, Norman 1983, *Vision and painting*, The Macmillan Press Ltd, London, Yale University Press, New York.
- Casey, Edward S. 2002, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis / London.
- Casey, Edward S. 2000, *Remembering: A phenomenological Study*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis.
- Casey, Edward S. 1976, *Imagining: A phenomenological Study*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and London.
- Catalano, Gary 1985, *An Intimate Australia: The landscape and recent Australian art*, Hale & Iremonger Pty Limited, Sydney.
- Chiu, Melissa (ed.) 1995, *John Young: the double ground paintings*, Australian Art promotions, Victoria.
- Clarke, Graham 1997, *The Photograph*, Oxford University Press Inc, New York, pp. 32-3.
- Clery, Val 1979, *Windows*, Penguin Books, Victoria.
- Cooke, Lynne, Schwabsky, Barry and Tillman, Lynne 1995, *Jessica Stockholder*, Phaidon Press Limited, London.

- Coveney, Peter and Highfield, Roger 1990, *The Arrow of Time*, W. H. Allen, London.
- Cuthbert, Simon 1998, *F: Divergent Abstraction and the Photographic Project*, Plimsoll Gallery, Centre for the Arts, 11 September – 4 October, Hobart.
- Cuthbert, Simon 2005, *Downtown*, CAST Gallery, Contemporary Art Services Tasmania, 13 August – 11 September, Hobart.
- Danto, C. & Fineman Mia 2004, *The Colour of Time: the photographs of Sean Scully*, Steidl, Gottingen.
- Davies, Paul and Gribbin, John 1991, *The Matter Myth*, The Penguin Group, Victoria, London, New York, Toronto and Auckland.
- Deeth, Jane 2001, *Strategic Cultural Plan for Launceston*, Launceston City Council, accessed 14 April 2008, <http://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/upload/1704/culturalplan.pdf>
- Dew, Christine 2007, *Uncommissioned art: the A-Z of Australian graffiti*, The Miegunyah Press, Victoria.
- 2004, *Launceston: A Pictorial History*, Queen Victoria Muesum and Art Gallery, Launceston.
- 1975, *Our view of Launceston*, Oakburn College, Launceston.
- 1981, *Robert Rauschenberg Photographs*, Centre Georges Pompidou and Editions Herscher, Pantheon Books, New York.
- Dickinson, Elizabeth Evitts 2008, *Urban Palimpsest*, accessed 15 April 2008, <http://urbanpalimpsest.blogspot.com/>
- Engberg, Juliana 1992, *Location – contemporary photo based work from Australia*, The Asialink Centre, The Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Victoria.
- Friedman, Terry 1996, *Wood – Andy Goldsworthy*, Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, New York.
- Friedman, Terry and Goldsworthy, Andy (eds.) 2006, *Hand to Earth – Andy Goldsworthy*, Thames & Hudson Ltd, London.
- Ganguly, Keya 2001, *State of Exception: Everyday Life and Postcolonial Identity*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London.
- Green, Anne 2006, *The home of sports and manly exercise: places of leisure in Launceston*, Stories in Stone #2, Launceston City Council, Launceston.



Green, Anne 2007, *A model municipality: places of management, mentoring & medicine in Launceston*, Stories in Stone #3, Launceston City Council, Launceston.

Grosz, Elizabeth A 1995, *Space, Time, and Perversion: essays on the politics of bodies*, Routledge, New York and London.

Goldsworthy, Andy 1990, *Andy Goldsworthy*, the Penguin Group, London, New York. Victoria, Auckland, Toronto.

Goldsworthy, Andy 1994, *Stone – Andy Goldsworthy*, Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, New York.

Green, David and Seddon, Peter (eds.) 2000, *History painting reassessed*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Groen, Geoffrey De 1984, *Some other Dream: the artist, the artworld & the expatriate*, Hale & Iremonger Pty Limited, Sydney.

Hawking, Stephen 1996, *The Illustrated A Brief History of Time*, Bantam Press, London, New York, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland.

Heidegger, Martin 1927, Being and Time, *Angelfire*, accessed 10 April 2008, <http://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/heidegger.html>

Helen, Daniel (host) 1989, *Expressway: invitation stories by Australian writers from a painting by Jeffery Smart*, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Victoria, Middlesex, New York, Ontario and Auckland.

Helfenstein, Josef 2007, *Robert Rauschenberg: cardboards and related pieces*, Exhibition catalogue, The Menil Collection, Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

Hemingway, Andrew 1992, *Landscape imagery and urban culture in early nineteenth-century Britain*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Holmes, Jonathan 2006, *Senses of Place: Art in Tasmania, 1970-2005*, Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, Centre for the Arts, 5 – 23 April, Hobart.

Hughes, Robert 1994, The Grafitti of Loss, *Time Archive*, accessed 14 June 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,981632,00.html>

Klepac, Lou (ed.) 2000, *Australian Painters of the Twentieth Century*, The Beagle Press Pty Ltd, Sydney.

Knights, Mary (ed.) 2007, *The Ranger*, Exhibition catalogue, South Australian School of Art Gallery, 12 – 18 September 2007, Adelaide.

Kotz, Mary Lynn 2004, *Rauschenberg: Art and Life*, (1990) Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated, New York.

- Lefebvre, Martin (ed.) 2006, *Landscape and Film*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, New York.
- Lenten, Tory 1978, *City/Art*, Heinemann Educational Australia Pty Ltd, Victoria.
- Low, Tim 2002, *The New Nature: winners and losers in wild Australia*, Viking, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Victoria, London, New York, Toronto, Johannesburg, New Delhi and Auckland.
- MacDermott, Maria 2004, *Timepiece*, CAST Gallery, Contemporary Art Services Tasmania, 11 September – 10 October, Hobart.
- McDonald, John 1990, *Jeffrey Smart: paintings of the '70s and '80s*, Craftsman House BVI Ltd, New South Wales.
- McGrath, Vincent 2006, *above the street awning*, Exhibition catalogue, University of Tasmania, School of Visual and Performing Arts, 28 April – 2 June 2006, Launceston.
- McGrath, Vincent & McGrath, Debbie 2008, *On My Street*, Exhibition catalogue, University of Tasmania, School of Visual and Performing Arts, 25 August – 19 September, Launceston.
- McCready, Stuart (ed.) 2001, *The Discovery of Time*, MQ Publications Limited, London.
- Morra, Joanne & Smith, Marquard (eds.) 2006, *The Prosthetic Impulse: from a posthuman present to a biocultural future*, The MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Press, Massachusetts and London
- Morris, John and Donald 1988, *History in Our Streets*, Regal Publications, Launceston.
- Nainby, Bryony (curator), Timms, Peter (essay) 2005, *The Place Where Three Dreams Cross*, Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, Centre for the Arts, 29 April – 2 May, Hobart.
- Naylor, Stephen 2003, Mildura Palimpsest # 5 – Symposium Introduction, *Arts Mildura - Australia*, accessed 16 March 2008, <http://www.mwaf.com.au/Palimpsest/pdfs/Palimpsest%205.pdf>
- O'Hara, Jonathan 2007, *Robert Rauschenberg: Transfer Drawings from the 1960s*, Exhibition catalogue, Jonathan O'Hara Gallery, 8 February – 17 March, New York.
- Quartermaine, Peter 1983, *Jeffrey Smart*, Gryphon Books Pty Ltd, Victoria.
- Pearce, Barry 2005, *Jeffrey Smart*, The Beagle Press, Sydney.
- Perl, Jed 1997, *Man Ray*, Aperture Foundation Incorporated, New York.

- Rea, M. C, date unknown, 'Four Dimensionalism' in *The Oxford Handbook for Metaphysics*, Oxford University Press, London. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy\\_of\\_space\\_and\\_time](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_space_and_time)
- Reynolds, John 1969, *Launceston-History of an Australian City*, Adult Education Board, Tasmania, Macmillan of Australia.
- Richardson, Peter (ed.) 2001, *On the Tide: stories of the Tamar*, Launceston Library, Launceston.
- Richardson, Peter (ed.) 2003, *On the Tide 2: more stories of the Tamar*, Launceston Library, Launceston.
- Richardson, Peter (ed.) 2007, *On the Tide 3: more stories of the Tamar*, Launceston Library, Launceston.
- Robins, Jack 2008, *Companion Planting*, CAST Gallery, Contemporary Art Services Tasmania, 24 May – 15 June, Hobart.
- Rosenthal, T.G 2000, *Sidney Nolan*, Thames & Hudson Ltd, London.
- Schama, Simon 1993, *Landscape and Memory*, Fontana, London.
- Taylor, Brandon 2004, *Collage: The making of Modern Art*, Thames & Hudson, London.
- Taylor, Brandon 2005, *Art Today*, Laurence King Publishing Ltd, London.
- Summers, David 2003, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism*, Phaidon Press Limited, New York.
- Tallman, Susan 1996, *The Contemporary Print from Pre-pop to Postmodern*, Thames and Hudson Ltd, London.
- Walker, Robert 1998, *Painters in the Australian Landscape*, Hale & Iremonger Pty Limited, Sydney.
- Wee, C.J.W.-L 2007, *The Asian Modern: Culture, Capitalist Development, Singapore*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong.
- Zika, Paul 2005, *Letitia Street Studios December 1998 - December 2004*, Plimsoll Gallery, Tasmania School of Art, 20 August - 11 September, Hobart.