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Distant painterly perspectives

War, atrocities and the suffering of others

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

Inspired by my desire to act in some way against the injustices of atrocities, this research sets out to establish how a socially motivated painting practice can operate to activate its audience to acknowledge the suffering of others due to atrocious events. It investigates the role that the mediated imagery of photojournalism and other sources, play in our encounter, as distant spectators, with the suffering of others.

With concentration on painting, this research aims to analyse the socially motivated art practices and artworks, of artists responding to thematically similar issues in their work. I will attempt to locate my art practice in response to the culture of the spectacle in which I maintain, we currently reside. I explore the counter arguments as to whether spectatorship is a passive or active role, in order to establish what that brings to the experience of viewing a painting. I will also look into where ethics and aesthetics intersect, and how this crossroad impacts upon both the artist's realisation of their work, and the viewer's reception of the artwork.

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