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INBETWEEN

Drawing Breath

An Embodied Practice

A Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Maria O'Toole

2014



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Drawing Breath

Rooms of the Soul, Remembered in the Body.

Introduction

In this inquiry I explore the role of phenomenology and embodiment within a drawing practice.

In phenomenology of Perception (1945), French Philosopher Maurice Merleau Ponty argued that people perceive and conceptualize everything bodily. He stipulated that our very consciousness is embodied.

My closest companion on my journey is the philosopher Gaston Bachelard (Bachelard, 1969). Bachelard insists on the transfer of the poet's affectivity to the surrounding space and objects: a process, which endows all matter with a poetic essence and expands the experience of intimate space into a poetic space.

My practice is a perceptual experience of space and time, which focuses closely on the senses and sensuality.

When applying Bachelard's philosophy in the studio issues around embodiment arose. It became obvious that this project was bigger than the studio could contain, it needed to take a walk. In large-scale performative drawings I am exploring the inbetween space that I experience when taking a walk, when the rhythm of my body and imagining consciousness slips into another space where daydreams open up and expands my experience of a vast inner landscape. The resulting works are a form of lyrical abstraction.

In chapter one I discuss the work of those who are my companions on this journey. I discuss Gaston Bachelard's background and the effect his childhood experiences were to have on his academic choices. His philosophy regarding experience and intimate space is of particular interest. I have been exploring the 'rooms of the soul, remembered in the body' within my own drawing practice. I activate these spaces by walking and drawing, sometimes at the same time. I don't look at the surface or choose what to draw; instead I let my bodily responses guide the work. This way of working is phenomenological. I discuss the links between contemporary Brazilian Sculptor Ernesto Neto and Bachelard. They both describe space in such interesting ways and share an affinity for the experience of high places. Both connect the audience with space in their own way. Julie Mehretu has had a large influence on my MFA study. I discuss the influence her childhood and migrant experience has had on her work. I am interested in the layered drawing technique she has developed which she uses to create a narrative of her experiences. I am attracted to the idea of creating a palimpsest. I was introduced to Mehretu through Catherine de Zegher's book 'Julie Mehretu'. De Zegher, a curator, writer and historian has been influential in my choice of medium because she is an important figure within art today and a strong advocate of contemporary drawing. I discuss the thinking behind her most recent curatorial position at 'More Light' the Moscow biennale 2013. An interesting influence on Mehretu's practice has been the situationists of the 1960's, mainly Guy Debord. Debord is salient to my own practice. He was associated with the letterists who were attempting to fuse music and poetry with an interest in transforming the urban landscape. In 1953 they mapped out what they called the 'psychogeography' of Paris by walking through the city in a free associated manner. As the name suggests 'psychogeography' is psychology and geography combined. I also discuss William Anastasi's practice; his walking drawings and more recent subway drawings are traces of his walk and subway ride. His bodily responses to walking and the vibration of the train are recorded. Anastasi's process is a phenomenological one; he does not prejudge the experience preferring to let the experience reveal itself. Phenomenology is a connection my companions share. I will

end this chapter by discussing Maurice Merleau Ponty the main thinker in the area of phenomenology.

In chapter two I discuss how a drawing practice can operate, as a processual exploration of the poetics of interior space. I have chosen key areas that facilitate the poetics of sensory expansion identified through my research. I discuss these in dictionary style sub chapters, beginning with immensity. I begin with a John Pule poem that I received in 2012. I discuss how my research into Bachelard's philosophy has opened up an understanding of the poet's vast inner landscape. I also discuss Bell Hooks reflection on Emily Dickinson. In solitude she was able to access an expanded poetic of domestic space. In a chapter titled Intimacy I discuss Catherine de Zegher, she stresses that in contemporary society we live with too much information. De Zegher believes that in our busy lives we forget the everyday that can also be beautiful in our lives, she reminds us not to forget how important out intimate space is. In a chapter titled Embodiment I discuss the work of Eva Hesse. I am interested in her process with one development leading to another in free association, as her unconscious thoughts and memories came into play. I discuss Joanna Greenhill's suggestion that the memory of the body sits behind our physical experience of the work of Eva Hesse. Eva Hesse is an important reference for my own work as previous to my MFA body of work I had been working figuratively as an Illustrator. I wanted to make the switch from the figurative to the abstract; at the same time I wanted the body to still be visible in the work. In a chapter titled Psychogeography I discuss Conflux, an art conference in New York where participants turn New York into a playground of urban adventures. Organizers claim it's a chance to see what we would usually ignore. Chance and randomness is what excites them about psychogeography. Taking a walk has provided me the vehicle to slip into the inbetween. A place where my own unconscious thoughts and memories facilitate a new experience of the spaces I inhabit daily.

In chapter three I reflect on my own process and developments. I discuss the highlights and the low moments. In concluding this document I identify the important moments and discovery that has facilitated a new way of working and enriched my practice.

Throughout this document there are two streams of type. There is a main body of type explaining my research and work and there is a second stream that is a personal diary notation outlining my encounters of space and general thoughts during this Masters exploration.

'Drawing is about the immediacy of the moment. It is the avenue into perception; it's a language and a way of seeing and thinking.'

Richard Serra, 2012

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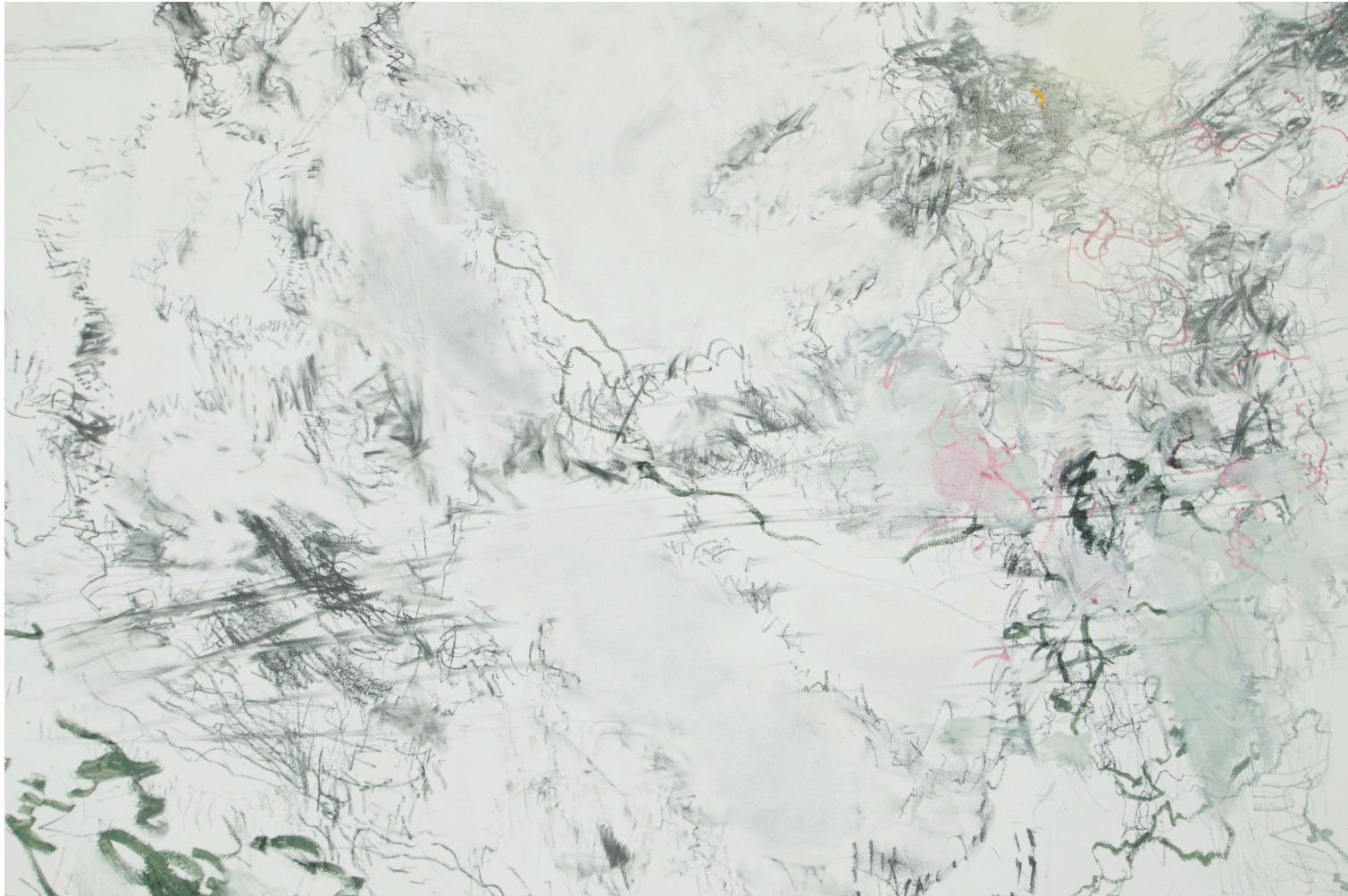
Drawing Breath

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Maria O'Toole, Puke Ahu (close up), 2013, Acrylic, Charcoal, Graphite and Oil on Fabriano

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Immensity, Intimacy, Consciousness, Phenomenology, Embodiment, Affectivity, Psychogeography

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IN BETWEEN, Drawing Breath. Maria O'Toole, The Engine Room, Massey University, Wellington Campus, February 7 – 15, 2014



Maria O'Toole, Ocean 1. (Close up), 2013, Acrylic and Graphite on Fabriano

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Preamble

The following diary entries and others throughout this document have been left untouched, laid bare. They each reveal a moment when a new direction or has revealed itself. I can still feel those moments and to re-tell them would be to lose their immediacy. Interestingly the immediacy that I require in drawing has become important in writing.

10th Sept

Six thirty a.m., Video Walk, One hour in the hills. I came across a large mossy clearing and lay on it. It felt great. - Connected but in a comforting way. I am looking with the video as I would when drawing, there is starting to be a connection. Made some site-specific drawings in the earth and on a rotten tree trunk, quite liked the effect when I looked at video. Not sure if there will be video content in my final work or if it is purely documentary? It solves some issues for me though, site-specific drawing in nature is an immediate response, I have been searching for immediacy.

16 Sept

*No one in sight,
exhilaration.*

Marks engraved in the snow.

a perfect curve.

*I went to the mountain on Friday morning. The weather was lovely
we got there early and skied all day. Great conditions. Snow
overnight and 15cm of new snow. Skiing on Saturday fun. I stayed
within the field, I wanted to go off the groomed field, out west or on
the glacier but fear stopped me, fear of damaging my body and not
being able to draw. More snow overnight Saturday, Sunday EPIC,
Didn't care about the risk anymore...headed out west, out of the ski
field and onto the fresh powder snow. It's a totally different style of
skiing, more aggressive, the unknown compared to the groomed
slopes. RISK, freedom; have faith that my body will respond
intuitively to the fall of the terrain.*

19th Sept

I have been reading Ernesto Neto.

*I am interested in the way he works with such simple ideas
that are common in all of us.*

Sensuality

Sexuality

Testing the limits, edges of the world

Expanding...

Connecting space, connecting ideas.

*Immersion – Nature/culture – inside/outside,
animal inside of us, giving meaning to space.*

Play, fragility

Fragility of the planet

Breathing – giving meaning to space (air)

Repetition

How we see things – nature – breathing.

Breathing spaces – intimacy

1. **Companions + Connections** The Pathway

In chapter one I discuss the work of those who are my companions on this journey.

'And the old house

I feel its russet warmth

Comes to the senses to the mind.' (Bachelard, 1969, p.48)

When I imagine my childhood home I can't see it as a whole, there are spaces that are very clear but I can't easily move among the other rooms. Spaces that are clear are unusual, I clearly remember the part of the lounge where the sofa was, I liked to bite its varnished wooden arms and seek refuge underneath. I remember taste's, textures and smells but I can't remember how to get from the lounge to my bedroom, I can't actually remember my bedroom apart from the smell of new wallpaper. It has occurred to me that the sofa was my fort, my raft and refuge.

In his lyrical exploration of home 'The Poetics of Space' first published in 1958 French philosopher Gaston Bachelard examines how we experience intimate spaces. In the house he discovers the hallways of the mind, the spaces of dreams, he writes of rooms of the soul, remembered in the body.

A touch of a door-knob, the smell of the inside of a wardrobe, intimacy in the refuge.

Bachelard (1969) describes lying awake in his city apartment and hearing the roar of Paris the rote of the sea, of hearing what is and what is not. He lived and worked in Paris as a professor at the Sorbonne University, his origins were however in provincial France and familiarity with things of the earth affected his intellectual life and influenced the course of his philosophical reflections.

Bachelard's phenomenological approach facilitates expanded poetic understanding. A description of the house could not lead us to transcendence the way a poem can. Our experience of the poem allows us an understanding of intimate space.

Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto, born in Rio de Janeiro in 1964 explores intimate space through sculptural forms. When describing his sculpture and the spaces within and above he talks of breathing and the air being different on the viewing platform. This brought to mind Bachelard's description of the house. *'Up near the roof all our thoughts are clear. In the attic it is a pleasure to see the bare rafters of the strong framework.' Here we participate in the Carpenters strong framework. As for the cellar, first and foremost the dark entity of the house the one that partakes of subterranean forces. We become aware of this dual polarity of a house.'* (Bachelard, 1969, p. 18)

'I felt freed from the powers of gravity and through memory succeeded in recapturing the extraordinary voluptuousness that pervades high places.' (Bachelard, 1969, p. 195)

Neto is interested in immersive environments that engage with all the senses. His large body like constructions made with tactile materials encourage the audience to interact with the spaces. Neto interests me as he is engaged with the body, the inner space of the body and the senses. His key influences are 1960's Brazilian Neo-Concretist artists, Helio Oiticica and Lygia Clark².

Bachelard was a revelation for me. He articulated the poetics of space, memory and time that I had been struggling to find words for.

Illus 1. Ernesto Neto, pg. 29

² Lygia Clark's Performative work 'Caminhando' (Walking) is of interest, however I have chosen not to include in this inquiry.

De Zegher + Mehretu Connection

As I became immersed in the work of my companions I also became aware of our diverse backgrounds, differing histories, pathways and connections, the artist and writer/curator most salient to my initial inquiry are artist Julie Mehretu and writer/curator Catherine de Zegher³. Mehretu is currently working between studios in New York and Berlin, like Bachelard she is also influenced by her childhood experiences. Mehretu was born in Ethiopia in 1970 a time of political activity and liberation movements. Following political upheaval in Ethiopia (1977) her family moved to the United States, Michigan. Mehretu feels connected to utopian perspectives and attracted to hopeful gestures of social movements promoting emancipatory ideas, examples are the Revolutionary art of the constructivists beginning in the twentieth century and Situationists of the 1960's, mainly Guy Debord. Mehretu examines ways to picture and map our relationships and interactions with our constructed world. She is concerned with contesting and reimagining the world. (Zegher, 2007)

'I think of the paintings as narrative vistas of memorial experience, weaving in and out of daily functioning resistance and understanding.' Mehretu (Zegher, 2007)

Mehretu starts out with many sketches on paper; she describes this as a liberating feeling, allowing for an uninhibited approach to planning the larger canvas. She uses a process of tracing and layering; the distinctions between mediums are dissolved. She creates new relations among them. Catherine de Zegher describes this ability to fuse the qualities of

³ Catherine de Zegher, Art historian, curator and author. Artistic co-director of the 18th Biennale Sydney, Australia in 2012. Guest Curator in the Department of Drawings at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, organiser of the exhibition On Line. Drawing Through the Twentieth Century (2010–2012), Published books on Eva Hesse, Julie Mehretu, William Anastasi, Agnes Martin and Richard Tuttle.

both mediums a stroke of genius, questioning and strengthening both in the process. (Zegher, 2007) The influence of Henri Michaux's⁴ calligraphic ink work in the Mescaline Drawings is visible in her work.

Illus 2. Henri Michaux, Mescaline Drawing, pg. 30

In discussing the 2013 Moscow biennale curator De Zegher⁵ describes the transfer of light and an opening of consciousness as transcendence. (Rann, 2013)

'In addition, on the lower level, I considered drawing as transition to light, to the opening of consciousness. Drawing remains very important to me, because drawing represents a very common gesture: it's something everybody can do. Therefore I asked 3 artists to make a collaborative drawing, connecting the very personal gesture with the collective gesture. The visitor moving through this space will feel an urge to go to the wall where the light is with the collective drawing.' De Zegher (Kondrashin, 2013, para 8)

Illus 3. Julie Mehretu, pg. 31

Illus 4. Maria O'Toole, Untitled 1, 2013, Parkin Prize Entry (Selected), Ink, graphite and Charcoal. Pg. 32

Mehretu's creative process intrigued me. She spent fifteen years exploring layers of meaning, mediums and marks, Mehretu found in herself what was important, an autobiographical account of what it is to be her right now, at this moment, a contemporary living artist who has created her own palimpsest. I had this idea that if I mined everything about her work and process I too could discover the rigour required to make contemporary relevant work of my own.

⁴ Henri Michaux (1899-1984), A poet, writer and painter. After experimenting with the drug mescaline, he produced a number of drawings and paintings from 1955 to 1962.

⁵ 5th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art «BOLSHE SVETA» / MORE LIGHT. The Curator of the Main project: Catherine de Zegher.

The Debord Connection

Guy Debord⁶ was associated with the letterists, who were attempting to fuse music and poetry with an interest in transforming the urban landscape. In 1953 they mapped out what they called the ‘psycho geography’ of Paris by walking through the city in a free associated manner, or drifts. Texts on this activity were first published in *Naked Lips* in 1955 and 56, in essays titled “Detournment: How to use and Theory of the Derive.

John Harris⁷ (2012) describes ‘The Society of the Spectacle’⁸ written in 1967 by Debord as an eerily accurate portrait of our image-saturated, mediated times in his article for *The Guardian*. (Harris, 2012) Harris discusses Guy Debord’s predictions in 1967 of our distracted society. *‘In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all life presents as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation.’* (Harris, 2012, para 1)

Similarly Dan Coombs (2013) refers to ‘us Westerners’ in his article as living in a bubble forecast by Debord. In his words predicting total commodification, where being is replaced by having, and experience usurps reality. He goes on to quote the philosophy of ⁹Deleuze and Guattari expanding on the self being pulled in so many directions by spectacular media.

Coombs shares these thoughts in *Abstract Critical* for the occasion of the Zabłudowicz collection exhibition of Albert

⁶ Guy Debord (1931-1994), b. Paris, french marxist theorist, member of the Letterists Int. and the Situationists Int. Theoretical critique of capitalist society.

⁷ John Harris is a journalist and author, Harris, J. (2012, March 30). Guy Debord predicted our distracted society. *The Guardian* .who writes regularly for the *Guardian* about a range of subjects built around politics, popular culture and music.

⁸ Guy Debord’s *Theory of the spectacle* which explained the nature of late capitalism’s historical decay.

⁹ Gilles Deleuze (1925 – 1995) was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris VIII, and Felix Guattari (1930 -1992) a psychoanalyst at the la Borde Clinic and a major social theorist and author of *A thousand Plateaus*, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

Oehlen's¹⁰ work. Coombs describes the contemporary German Expressionist as providing us with the fiction of romantic heroes. (2013) He talks to Oehlen's work as being expressionistic therefore connected to the self because of his intuitive process and also the possibilities of it being self indulgent as opposed to conceptual art. There is a line where he sums up his view of expressionism as *'The raw intense energy of gesture acts as an umbilical cord back to the self.'* (Coombs, 2012, para 2) He goes on to state that the self no longer seems large enough.

I was introduced to Debord through De Zegher's book about Mehretu's work. She cited him as being influential to Mehretu and discussed Mehretu's interest in psychogeography. Mehretu uses large projections on the wall of maps and architecture. She then traces them to form her initial layers. I initially experimented with this way of working. It was extremely studio based and I did not feel the connection to the space, my senses weren't engaged. It became apparent that I needed to physically be in the space. Like Debord I began my own drift through the everyday spaces of my daily life.

Sensory Experience

Multiple sensory dimensions of objects architectures and landscapes is quickly becoming a central tenet of material culture theory (Howes 2004). Chris Pinney¹¹ anthropologist and art historian argues that the field of visual culture needs to be superseded by an engagement with embodied culture that recognises the unified nature of human sensorium¹². *'The limits of my language are not the limits of my world, or in other words, that the evidence of our senses is equally worthy of our attention.'* (Tilley, 2005, P.162) Finnegan¹³ suggests that setting aside linguistic models and attending to the multiple respects in which culture mediates sensation and sensation mediates culture can be a source of insights into the 'interconnectiveness' of human communication (Finnegan 2002)

¹⁰ Albert Oehlen (b. 1954, Krefeld, Germany) studied at the Hochschule für Bildende Kunst. From 2000-09 he was a professor of painting at the Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf.

¹¹ Christopher Pinney is an anthropologist and art historian. He is currently Professor of Anthropology and Visual Culture at University College London

¹² The entire sensory system of the body

¹³ Prof Ruth Finnegan, Emeritus Professor, Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, The Open University, United Kingdom,

In the handbook of material culture edited by Chris Tilley¹⁴ (2005) insights are offered on potential global cultural connection through the unified nature of human sensorium. David Howes¹⁵ anthropologist quotes Barbara Bender¹⁶ from *In Contested Landscapes*, she writes '*Landscapes are not just 'views' but intimate encounters. They are not just about seeing, but about experiencing with all the senses*' (Tilley, 2006, p136) Howe's similarly highlights that increasingly sensual orientation of material culture and the emergent focus on objects and environments within 'sensual culture studies'. (Tilley, 2006, p.161)

'If I wanted you, the reader, to begin to understand about landscape, I would not start with the work of anthropologists, or geographers, or academics of any sort. I would begin with novelists and poets, because, long before reflexivity or multivocality or any other aspects of postmodern conceptualization were invoked by academics, writers were subsuming them, incorporating them, taking them more or less for granted.' Barbara Bender (Tilley, 2006)

The theories presented in 'The Handbook of Material Culture' supports other research within my inquiry with regard to the importance of sensory communication in a global world. I have included the previous quote by Barbara Bender as there is a connection to my own approach. Poetry has been an important 'in' to experiencing all the senses as referenced in Bachelard.

Dillon on Drawing

Dillon's essay and the book created for the occasion of the exhibition, *The End of the Line: Attitudes in drawing*, 2010¹⁷ interested me because it was the first contemporary publication I had seen where drawing was considered as a strong

¹⁴ Chris Tilley PhD, Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge, Professor of Anthropology & Archaeology

¹⁵ David Howes is Professor of Anthropology at Concordia University, Montreal and the Director of the Concordia Sensoria Research Team (CONCERT). He teaches courses on law, commerce, aesthetics and the senses in cross-cultural perspective. His research explores the life of the senses in society.

¹⁶ Barbara Bender is Professor of Heritage Anthropology at University College London.

¹⁷ *End of the line, attitudes in drawing*, curated by Hayward Touring, 2009 in collaboration with MIMA, Bluecoat and the Drawing Room London.

important contemporary genre in its own right and not just merely as preparation of another work. The exhibition features eleven international artists. All of the artists treat drawing as a primary means of expression a practice in its own right with its own integrity. Dillon looks at the attitudes to drawing throughout the 19th Century; He considers the views of the historians, critic's, theorists and philosopher's during this period. Attitudes are discussed, Ruskin's¹⁸-innocence (detachment from the world), Berger's¹⁹ – Discovery (unfolding of an event) and Barthes²⁰ – Gaucherie, (notation and graffiti) as the non mastery considered essential to drawing since the middle of the 19th Century, which exclude attitudes such as knowledge, narrative and concept. Dillon discusses the possibility of revisiting the fundamental elements of drawing in a newly heightened or concentrated fashion. He rejects the decline of drawing as some evidence of the aesthetic bankruptcy of contemporary art and the notion of intellectualized vacuity of contemporary art education where students are not taught to draw as frivolous and an untruth. (Dillon, 2009) What interests him is that drawing lives on in the era of installation, conceptual and video art. Drawing risked becoming obsolete but in the words of Dillon drawing lives on in an error of installation, conceptual and video art,

'Healthily impure and exposed to the elements that once threatened to undo it.' (Dillon, 2009, p. 13)

Brian Dillon²¹ argues that drawing has returned both in its abstract and realist forms not as a ghost of itself but as a shade that strikes surprisingly contemporary attitudes. He addresses the history of drawing and recognizes that contemporary drawing has been altered by its own history and by the blurring of generic boundaries. (Dillon, 2009, p. 14)

¹⁸ John Ruskin (1819 – 1900) was the leading English art critic of the Victorian era, also an art patron, draughtsman, watercolourist, a prominent social thinker and philanthropist. In 1869, Ruskin became the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at the University of Oxford, where he established the Ruskin School of Drawing.

¹⁹ John Peter Berger (born 5 November 1926) is an English art critic, novelist, painter, poet and author of 'Ways of Seeing'.

²⁰ Roland Barthes 1915- 1980, French literary philosopher Roland Barthes was educated at the Sorbonne, and went on to help establish structuralism as one of the leading intellectual movements of the 20th century. His work made important advances in the areas of semiotics, anthropology and post-structuralism.

²¹ Brian Dillon was born in Dublin in 1969. Dillon is a regular contributor to the Dublin Review, the London Review of Books, Art Forum, frieze and Cabinet, the conceptual quarterly where he works as UK editor.

Monika Grzymala²² Swoosh 2007 as featured in 'The End of the Line' was influential in my choices around scale and lyrical abstraction. The energy, materiality and physicality evident in the work drew me in. That's when I knew wanted to make large immersive embodied work.

Illus 5. Albert Oehlen, pg. 33

Illus 6, Monika Grzymala, Swoosh 2007, tape, pg. 33

Maurice Merleau Ponty's Phenomenology

In his Phenomenology of Perception originally written in French 1945 and translated into English in 1965, Merleau-Ponty argued that people perceive and conceptualize everything bodily. He stipulated that our very consciousness is embodied, abolishing the idea of a separation of mind and body²³, which stretched back to Plato. (Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, 1965) His philosophy was heavily influenced by the work of Edmund Husserl²⁴ (1859-1938) it is believed that the philosophical movement known as phenomenology originated with Husserl. *'Art and only art Merleau-Ponty claimed is able to show us in full innocence the sensible and opened world such as it is in our life and for our body.'* 1964 .The reasoning given is that art and only art can exhibit for us the world, as we perceive it. Merleau-Ponty explains, *'It has something to do with the kind of seeing that the artist practices, and the way that when the artist records what he sees on the canvas, it allows us to also take part in his way of seeing the world'* (Parry, 2011, p.11)

²² Monika Grzymala , German artist, born 1970 in Poland

²³ The embodied mind thesis is opposed to other theories of cognition such as cognitivism, computationalism, and Cartesian dualism.[1] The idea has roots in Kant and 20th century continental philosophy (such as Merleau-Ponty).

²⁴ Husserl is considered the founder of phenomenology.

Phenomenology in Action

William Anastasi²⁵ began by making walking drawings. These were done holding a pad and walking, watching where he was going rather than watching the pad, this was in the 1960's. These drawing's lead to his pocket drawings, he folded a piece of paper and then put it in his pocket, with a soft pencil he drew on the paper while walking. There are no decisions made regarding the moment when the unfolding and refolding of the paper may happen, the drawing is not consulted, the process is phenomenological. (Nackman, 2012)

These drawings lead Anastasi to the subway drawings. These drawings are made during his daily ride in the subway. Anastasi doesn't look at the paper preferring to let the motion of the train guide the quality of his line.

Phenomenology²⁶ is an effort at improving our understanding of ourselves, and our world, by means of careful description of experience.

Illus 7. Anastasi, William, Subway Drawings
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Illus 8. O'Toole Maria, Sasha & Babe
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Illus 9. O'Toole Maria, Wall Drawings
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Illus 10. O'Toole Maria, Window Drawings
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Illus 11. Roni Horn, Earth Grows Thick
Pg. 66

'Drawing is ... the first visible thing of the form of the thought, the changing point from the invisible powers to the visible thing ... It's really a special kind of thought, brought down onto a surface, be it flat or be it rounded, be it a solid support like a blackboard or be it a flexible thing like paper or leather or parchment, or whatever kind of surface ... It is not only a description of the thought ... You have also incorporated the senses ... the sense of balance, the sense of vision, the sense of audition, the sense of touch.' ¹Joesph Beuys 1984 (Ann Temkin, 1993)

²⁵ William Anastasi In Conversation With Rachel Nackman March 2012, New York,

²⁶ Phenomenology can be described as an attempt to describe experiences without metaphysical and theoretical speculations.

20 Sept

Walked early, thought about the video. Shannon Te Ao said that it could be too pretty as it is. I like the bush in the rain, whole new colour palette, thought about looking, the act of looking for drawing. I want to make more video about looking. Thought about the body, long tree limbs, bushy growth on the trees, the height of it, I thought about lying in the moss, crawling into an enclosed small bushy area. Thinking about Bachelard a lot. The intimate space being expanded into the poetic space. Thinking about two video loops, one of the bush walk one of the walking drawing. Played one after the other. Drawing video

I keep thinking about the wall drawings, I want to try a public performance piece. Not sure how? Accompanied by music? Soloist? Aluminium with paint solution? Drawing directly on the walls?

I thought about three very simple pieces. I video, 2 loops. 1 drawing on paper, long and languious, 1 performance drawing.

Really simple, elegant, not trying to be beautiful, being something more than beautiful which reaches in and tugs and twists a little.

SUBTLE

Go back into bush, video pieces of interest.

Make drawing on paper again, playing video and other.

25th Sept

Working in studio

Playing with the wall, trying to make work on the plaster wall that I have painted.

Splashed and rolled ink on it. I quite like the effect. Tried sanding it

Discovery, for the work next week in the test space I will put more layers of primer/plaster on walls at least three thick layers. I am thinking about also putting another layer of one coat gesso, and then there will be a relationship between the paper and the wall work. I have been drawing and listening to music. I have been reading and re-reading the Gaston Bachelards chapter on intimate, immense space. Depth of the inner has become of interest, like the depth of the sea. The outer and inner

Crawling down a shelf in a reef

I have begun making drawings with my video camera; I am focused on the immense, the velvety moss carpet, intimate, immense space. My walk that I do each day, my intimate meditation, that I do each day. Not sure if I want to include or not, might test next week?

So I am showing, two large drawings on paper, wall drawings across two walls prepared with primer/plaster and gesso. (ink, graphite, charcoal, and 1 or 2 colours maybe?

Orange? Blue? And something else

Also playing with rabbit skin glue on my paper, not sure if I will pursue.

Each encounter with a new companion has strengthened my own thoughts about drawing and embodiment. The more I immersed myself in their life and work the more confident I felt in my choices. When I began this inquiry I had ideas of creating my own visual language centred in the body and incorporating space, place and time, I imagined it to be quite graphic. But in taking on a phenomenological attitude I have engaged with experience. I have trusted in myself to let the experience guide me. In this meditative place and with the help of my companions I have discovered the poetics of sensory expansion.

Since leaving Design School in the 90's I have continued to draw the figure. Life drawing became my most loved moments of undergraduate study. On reflection I think that was partly because between study, two school age children and a part-time job those moments where I was able to access another place, a deep meditative space, was a valuable escape. For many years now I don't look at the paper when drawing. I imagine the touch, texture and weight of each form with my eyes. With one continuous line I explore the figure in space. I am always surprised at how accurate the drawing is when I look at the end. I believe my continued life drawing practice has facilitated the shift to phenomenological embodied abstraction.



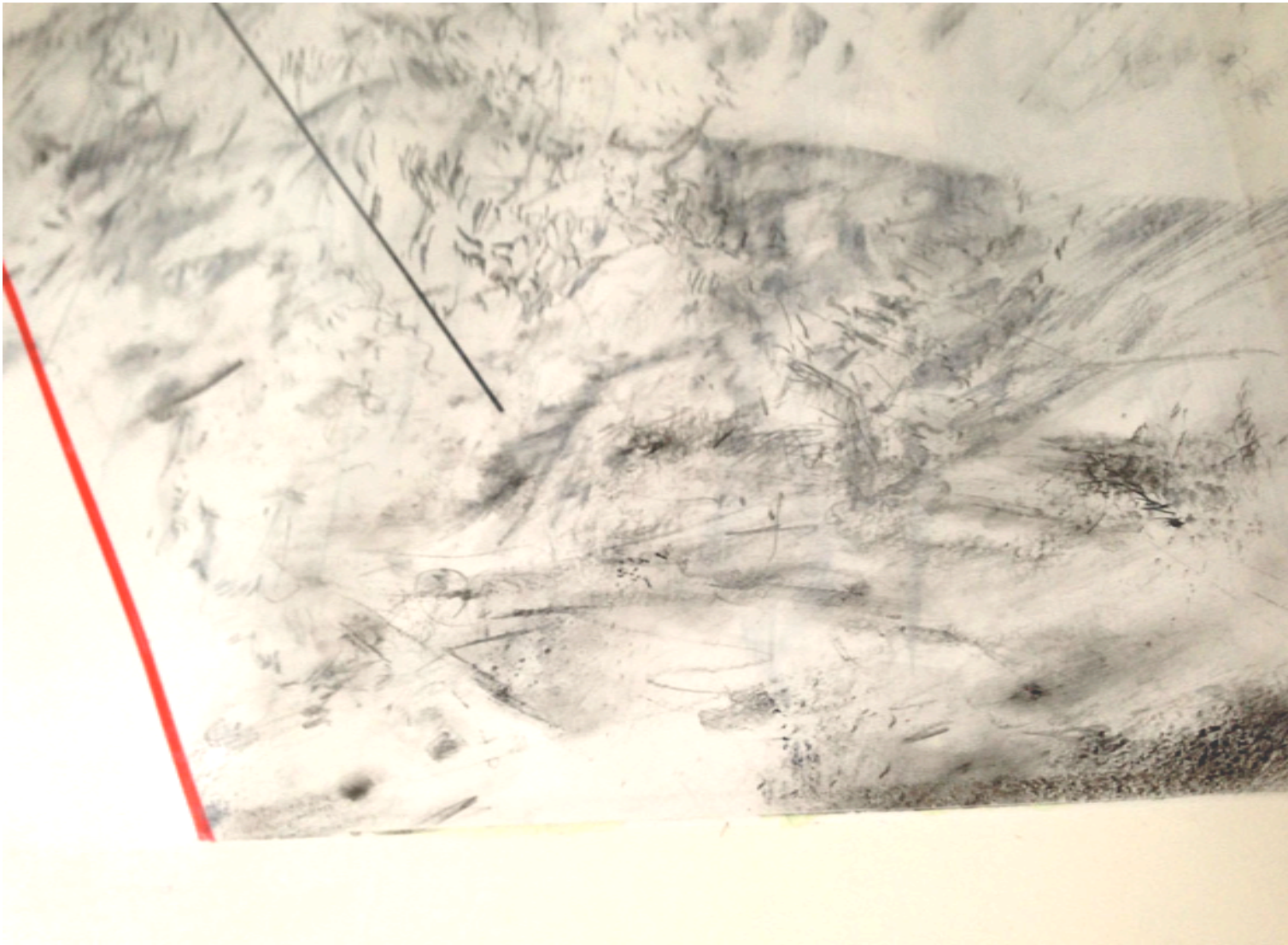
Illus.1. Ernesto Neto, The Sun Lits Life, Let the Son, Ernesto Neto (2012), Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York



Illus. 2. Henri Michaux, Untitled, 1960, Mescaline Drawing



Illus. 3. Julie Mehretu, Atlantic Wall, 2008-09, Ink and acrylic on canvas

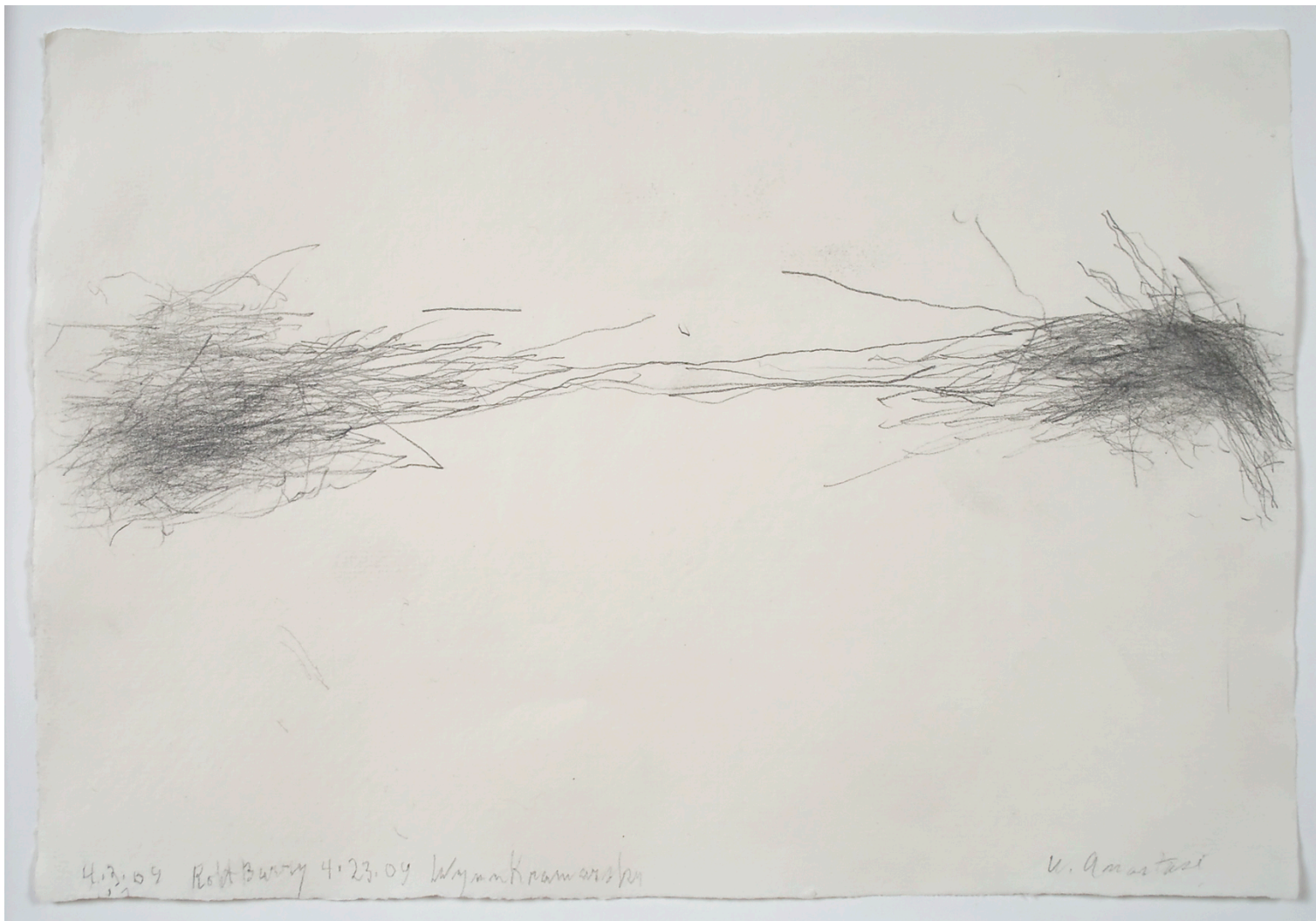


Illus. 4. Maria O'Toole, Untitled 1., (Close up), 2013, Acrylic, Graphite and ink on Fabriano, Parkin Prize Drawing Exhibition 2013



Illus. 5., Albert Oehlen, 2012, Untitled

Illus. 6., Monika Grzymala, Swoosh, 2007.



Illus 7. William Anastasi, Subway Drawing, 2009, Graphite on Paper

2. Immensity The Poetics of Sensory Expansion

Immensity, Intimacy, Consciousness, Phenomenology, Embodiment, Affective, Psychogeography

In chapter two I discuss how a drawing practice can operate, as a processual exploration of the poetics of interior space. I have chosen key areas that facilitate the poetics of sensory expansion identified through my research. I discuss these in dictionary style sub chapters, beginning with immensity.

Immensity

Immensity creates an inner state so unlike any other. According to Bachelard '*The daydream transports the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity*' (Bachelard, 1964, p. 183). He goes on to explain that since immense is not an object; a phenomenology of immense would refer us directly to our imagining consciousness. Bachelard speaks of opening the world by transcending the world seen as it is, or as it was before we started dreaming. (Bachelard, 1964,p.184)

It was during John Pule's²⁷ Massey Residency in 2012 that the following conversation took place.

I had been thinking about globalization.
I spoke of my interest in migration,
my difficulty was that I have no experience of migration.
He asked me if I had lived anywhere else,
The Southern Alps I replied,
What did it 'feel' like he asked.

²⁷ John Pule b. 1962, Liku, Niue Lives and works in Auckland, New Zealand, Pule immigrated to New Zealand at the age of two in 1964. Pule is an accomplished painter, printmaker, poet and writer.

John could have chosen to describe migration but instead he guided me through direct experience. This has in essence has fed my MFA work. This simple conversation drew me to think about space, place and time, feelings, memory imagination and the senses. In answering my question with a question I was set on a path of discovery. Although I can never truly understand how it would be to be an Niuean living in New Zealand, or an Ethiopian living in New York, what is interesting is that we all sense and feel and the possibility that a cross-cultural dialogue of the experience of being in the world at a particular moment could be explored through sensorial drawing encouraged me. He gave me a copy of the following poem.

*My hands
spent one
night as
the ocean

for two years
my hair
glittered as
wonderfully
as the sun.*

John Pule , 2012, Wellington

Initially the poem was a mystery, however I did understand on some level that the language was a metaphor for immensity. With Bachelard's assistance I now have a greater understanding of poetic space. The poet's affectivity is in transporting us to

another world, our imagining consciousness. Bachelard gives as example this text by Philippe Diolé²⁸. *'By leaving the space of ones usual sensibilities one enters into communication with a space that is psychically innovating.'* (Diolé.P, Bachelard,1958,Pg 206)

The imagery provided by Pule when he describes his hands spending one night as the ocean activates the imagination.

Thoughts of the immensity of the ocean combined with memories of seawater flood my imagination. In the expansion of the hands I experience his feelings of grandeur.

'The world is large but in us it is deep as the sea.' Rilke, R.M. (Bachelard, 1964, p.183)

'Immensity is within ourselves, it is attached to a sort of expansion of being that life curbs and caution arrests but which starts again when we are alone.' (Bachelard P. 184)

In reading this quote I am reminded of a beautiful essay in *Earth Grows Thick* a publication created to accompany an Exhibition by Roni Horn²⁹. The essay is written by Bell Hooks³⁰. 'Solitude' Hooks maintains was essential for nurturing the creative imagination of Emily Dickinson. The title is 'between us: traces of love – Dickinson, Horn, Hooks. Hooks describes solitude as the space where Dickinson's soul could come out of hiding and be heard. Like Bachelard, Dickinson felt there was no better place to care for the soul than inside the home. In her seclusion the poet could fully open the realm of her senses and sensually experience space, (Hooks, 1996)(pg 58). Hooks goes on to describe the emotional bond Horn feels with Dickinson and the traces of love in her work that bind their worlds although they have never met. Hooks refers to a palimpsest or mapping of an inner geography that brings together these different women and connects them.

²⁸ Philippe Diolé, (1908-1977), French author and undersea explorer.

²⁹ Roni Horn, B.1955, American visual artist and writer

³⁰ Bell Hooks, b. 1952, American social activist, feminist and author.

25th Sept

Notes for Thursday

Work more quickly, work in a processual way again

Bodily parameters, as last drawings. Breathing drawings

Think about breathing in a space again

Air, vast, draw to new video.

I am pleased with the effect and the immediacy directness, but need to find a way to combine with the breath drawings, I need to get back to process. As with the breath drawings. I keep wondering if what is interesting about those drawings is the conversation in the middle, creating that depth of tone in one place.

'Without the distraction of worldliness, Dickinson could fully open the realm of her senses and sensually experience space both in the domestic household and in the Natural World.' (Hooks, 1996,p.58)

Intimacy

Through the poets, facilitated by Bachelard I discovered that the most personal intimacy is found in the interior domestic spaces of the house. Intimacy is in the memories and lived experiences of a home.

'When I imagine my childhood home I can't see it as a whole, there are spaces that are very clear but I can't easily move among the other rooms. Spaces that are clear are unusual, I clearly remember the part of the lounge where the sofa was, I liked to bite its varnished wooden arms and seek refuge underneath. I remember taste's, textures and smells but I can't remember how to get from the lounge to my bedroom, I can't actually remember my bedroom apart from the smell of new wallpaper. It has occurred to me that the sofa was my fort, my raft and refuge.' (Maria O'Toole, 2013, chapter 1)

Bachelard insists that our memories of lived experiences are sensory within the interior spaces of the home. His philosophy is supported in an account of the memories of my first home written for the occasion of the 2013 Massey Symposium. (as above)

According to Catherine de Zegher (2013) *'It is important not to forget how important our intimate space is'* (Rann, 2013). De Zegher describes our lives as being overloaded and that we risk forgetting the beauty in everyday life. She is interested in the interaction of the intimate and the monumental. In 2013 De Zegher curated 'More Light' the 5th Moscow Biennale. The exhibition is about the transformative effect of art. The exhibition was held in the large former riding school opposite the Kremlin.

Like Bachelard and Dickinson, De Zegher believes in the importance of our intimate domestic space in our daily life. She stresses the importance the inter-personal relations that take place with these spaces. De Zegher predicts that relations within the intimate and domestic will be increasingly important as we come to depend on each other within a global landscape. (Rann, 2013)

'Art is part of this process and can also be imagined as generative energy – energy that occurs as the result of joint reflection and shared understanding. It counters the negative processes of division and displacement that thrive in a contemporary society teeming with violence, alienation and exploitation. Everything is mercurial and mobile. Slow space-time is an expansive space-time in which things can happen, can be attended to. It is in the intensity of this attention for each other, for the everyday and our environment that our understanding together takes place. This is the place of the imagination, and of creation in consciousness. It is about how art, so involved with light itself, shines in our life and in the world at large. In the exhibition, it is apparent in the interleaving of intimate and public space, the architectural and the domestic, exterior and interior, of the macro and the micro.' (Rann, 2013, para. 3)

I began my studio work with experiments of intimate space from memories of my first independent home as a teenager. These were layered explorations with maps, terrain, and textures of the high country environment I inhabited at that time. The domestic intimate spaces were layered also. However the intimacy and immediacy felt distanced. It was once I began drawing in nature on my daily hilly climb that I felt connected to place and space. My breath became part of the space, I began to think of the ultimate intimate act, that of breathing.

Bachelard reminds me that in Baudelaire's correspondences he speaks of the sixth sense that seeks to model and modulate the voice. He describes it as a delicate little Aeolian harp that nature has set at the entrance to our breathing as a sixth sense, following and surpassing the others and states that it quivers as the merest movement of metaphor; it permits human thought to sing. (Bachelard, 1969, p.197)

Bachelard declares that BAUDELAIRE'S key word is 'Vast', he reasons that in his opinion 'vast' is a vocal value. He continues describing it as a word that is 'pronounced' never only read and that it is a word that is ever only spoken softly. (Bachelard, 1969)

'The word vast, then, is a vocable of breath. It is placed on our breathing, which must be slow and calm. And the fact is that always, in Baudelaire's poetics, the word vast evokes calm, peace and serenity. It expresses a vital, intimate conviction.' (Bachelard, 1969, p.196)

Bachelard (1969) concludes that in the word vast the vowel 'a' retains all the virtues of an enlarging agent. With it he says we take infinity into our lungs, and through it we breathe cosmically, far from human anguish.

30th Sept

I was thinking about Ernesto Neto's you tube video. When describing his sculpture he talked about the air, he talked about the air being different up on the top floor, viewing platform. It reminded me of Bachelards, description of the house (being three stories) attic, living and the basement. The attic is for dreaming, the basement is uncomfortable? Re read that chapter.

He talks about breath and air so poetically. I am also interested in the way he talks about the earth and fragility in the body and the world.

I've been thinking about the pink and woody gray of an old beech tree, there is a quote in intimate and immensity that I need to use about pink and woody gray, I think I want some colour, but only subtle and chalky..it must be chalky,

27th Sept

Finish drawing, on paper. Refer to video.

Maddie - Question ?

Are you bring another place here?

One chapter of Bachelard – Intimacy /

immensity

Different

30th Sept - Studio

I am incorporating some new marks made with an ink roller, I wanted some different tonal values and qualities. I remembered as an undergraduate in printmaking I did a series of monoprint paintings using the roller flat and on its edge to achieve point line and plane. Other printing making is a slow process but monoprint is quick, what if I worked directly onto the paper, with no undercoat/ghesso.

I am pleased with the effect and the immediacy directness, but need to find a way to combine with the breath drawings, I need to get back to process. As with the breath drawings. I keep wondering if what is interesting about those drawings is the conversation in the middle, creating that depth of tone in one place.

I want to hang and draw in the test space I have prepared for this week. I meet with Sally on Thursday and I would like to have some interesting marks and some sort of dialogue between wall drawings and drawings on paper by then. I am also interested in testing the plaster surface and the gesso surface, which one is working?

I also want to play with the colour saturation of the movie, pulling it back, maybe it needs to be pink and woody gray?

p.m.

Had a great catch up with Connah, discussed my video work. Talked about it being a sound piece.

Talked about possible exhibition spots. Talked about the sound being on when you come in to the space, say the entrance to the engine room. Walking through it like a sound curtain?

Connah reminded me of the work by Ceal Floyer we saw at Documenta entitled 'Til I Get It Right' 2012

Floyer Slyly dissects and twists the mechanisms by which we perceive reality.

I am interested in another layer of work, but I don't want it to be as literal as the video, I don't want people to know what it is about, I want them to feel their way to their own conclusion. The breath sound has a rythmn to it which I think is mirrored in the drawings. I also feel there is a connection with Ernesto Neto's discussion on the limits of the body, limits of the planet, as the breathing deepens.

Talking about Zen and the art of archery

Leave something out – Ceal Floyer leaves out certain words in the song

I have decided to take everything out of the video except the breathing

Leave out the mind – zen

Flowing – flux

Electrical impluses in our body

Slow down what was happening, look closely at things

Fluidity

Space is really time

Embodiment

'The memory of the body sits behind our physical experience of the work of Eva Hesse thus they achieve the status of objects in their own right, independent but with a connection to memory and experience. They prick the conscious mind, creating affinities through this suggestion of the body, which is then confounded by the repetition and the framing of the work using/playing with the forms of minimalism' (Greenhill, 2006, p228). In her essay 'Everything in Eva Hesse's work was different' Joanna Greenhill³¹ contemplates the influence of Eva Hesse's own work on her practice. She speaks of repetition as a way of building form, achieving scale and status. This meant she could repeat to excess, without limits. (Greenhill, 2006)

'I have always tried to make work that was like a heartbeat, like the regularity of the breath, just there. An expression of being, of being in the moment, alive... just that ...' Joanna Greenhill (Pollock, Corby, 2006, Pg 228 229 230 231)

Illus 12. Eva Hesse with Expanded Expansion (1969), pg. 67

Carolee Schneemann³² tests the limits of her restrained body in 1973-76 with her performance 'Up to and including her limits'. Tony Orrico³³ and Trisha Brown³⁴, both with dance backgrounds explore performative drawing as part of their contemporary practices. In his work the 'The Green Line' Francis Alys³⁵ carries out the ultimate poetic act in taking a line for a walk, by painting, 'dripping' a green lines between Palestine and Israel he performs an everyday form of

³¹ Joanna Greenhill, b.1949, she currently lives and works in Gloucestershire. She studied sculpture at the RCA and was the former director for the MA Fine Art Course at Central Saint Martins from 1995-2010.

³² Carolee Schneemann b.1939, American visual artist, known for her discourses on the body, sexuality and gender.

³³ Tony Orrico (b. 1979) grew up in Chicago, He attended Illinois State University where he took his first dance class .Tony Orrico developed his own physical symmetry practice as point of entry into his creative work.

³⁴ Brown, Trisha, 1936–, American modern dancer and choreographer, b. Aberdeen, Wash. Brown collaborated with Robert Rauschenberg, Donald Judd, and other contemporary artists, and with composers such as John Cage and Laurie Anderson.

³⁵ Francis Alys (b. 1959, Antwerp, Belgium) uses poetic and allegorical methods to address political and social realities, such as national borders.

resistance. (2007) My drawings are performative, due to their scale. My entire body is involved in the work. However I am not performing to an audience.

Illus 13. Francis Alys, pg. 68

Illus 14. Tony Orrico, pg. 68

Illus 15. Trisha Brown, pg. 68

Illus 16. Emily Kam Kngwararray, pg. 69

An artist I admire whom dreaming³⁶ was a constant theme in her work is Emily Kam Kngwararray³⁷. I have explored the notion of the daydream in creative practice through the philosophy of Bachelard. Bachelard considers immensity to be a philosophical category of a daydream. The daydream takes the dreamer on a journey from the immediate world into immensity.

Affectivity

‘The notion that painting and sculpture could be a vehicle for emotion and feeling, transmitted directly to the viewer, obviously remains a dream of many artists’ (Coombes, 2013). Dan Coombes notes that in recent time contemporary art has been an art of ideas, but he stresses though the difficulty to muster a subjectivity that can stand its ground against the overwhelming forces of the media spectacle. Dan Coombes made these comments when discussing the work of Albert Oehlen.

Bachelard insists on the transfer of the poet’s affectivity to the surrounding space and objects: a process, which endows all matter with a poetic essence and expands the intimate space into a poetic space. To give an object its own poetic

³⁶ 'the Dreaming' Altyerr - the creative principle which saturates the world with meaning. Popularly called 'the Dreaming', the essence of the Altyerr remains in the world today, manifesting itself in the topography of the land, in its life forms.

³⁷ Emily Kame Kngwarreye c.1910 – 1966, Born: Alhalkere, Soakage Bore., Australia. Emily was one of the senior artists of the Utopian Art Movement.

space is to give it more space than it has objectively, it is to follow the expansion of its intimate space. (Bachelard, 1969)

When I draw the figure I am affected. My body shift's into another place, an inbetween space. In this space of unconscious meditation anything seems possible. In this space I can really see. I don't assume shapes and weight, I feel them in my own body and respond. I became curious, I wondered if the affectivity that I experience in the process of making would transfer to an audience.

Phenomenology

'When there's motion, let that motion, rather than predetermination, be the energy for the drawing – rather than consulting the aesthetic prejudice of the moment, my eyes are closed or looking at the floor, at peoples feet. It has become an important part of my day exclaims Ana-stasi³⁸, ...a meditation.' (Nackman, 2012)

When Richard Dorment³⁹ reviewed the show Eva Hesse⁴⁰: Studiowork held at the Fruitmarket Edinburgh in 2009 he describes the work as intimate manifestations of the artist's thought processes. *'In these pieces we can sense Hesse consciously working through formal problems, seeing what might happen if she tried this or that material or technique, without necessarily thinking of the end result. While she worked, unconscious thoughts, memories, and desires inevitably came into play. As one step in the development of an idea led to another, the sculpture took shape by a process not unlike free association.'* (Dorment, 2009)

Illus, William Anastasi, Subway Drawings, pg. 34

³⁸ William Anastasi, American, born Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1933.

³⁹ Richard Dorment is the Daily Telegraph's chief art critic.

⁴⁰ Eva Hesse (1936 - 1970), died at 34, she was a German-born American artist.

Phenomenology has been the key to my change in practice. Once the mind is not leading and the entire body with all its heightened senses begins to experience space new possibilities present themselves.

Taking a walk can be an uncanny experience explains Doug Aitken⁴¹ in describing 'Electric Earth'. *'Propelled by our legs we find rhythms and tempos. Our bodies move in cycles that are repetitious and machine-like. We lose track of our thoughts. Time can slip away from us; it can stretch out or become condensed. But this loss of self-presence, it seems, can sometimes produce another kind of time, the speed of our environment becomes out of sync with our perception of it. When this happens, it creates a kind of gray zone, a state of temporal flux.'* p.67 Doug Aitken (2001) by Daniel Birnbaum, Amanda Sharp, Jog Heiser.

⁴¹ Doug Aitken was born in California in 1968. He lives and works in Los Angeles and New York. Aitken utilizes a wide array of media and artistic approaches to lead us into a world where time, space, and memory are fluid concepts.

2nd Oct

Space for the mark

Work into the corner, left to right

Lead in with video of walk

Drawing Breath

Breath as a sixth sense

Past/present/future

Taking a trace of the walk into the space and combining those two spaces...air

Imagination ...lead into by images, daydream simple

3rd Oct

Meeting with Sally

Likes the work on the plaster end wall

Question –

Is the work about the space or could it be anywhere?

10th Oct

Horrible week!

Been writing for the last two days.

Looking at John Virtue and reflecting on Albert Oehlen's work.

The decision to purchase the large canvas's is a good one. I am happy, after a period of indecision. Can't wait until they are ready.

I will work at school, ask for a space at school. Walk at school, be in dialogue with John Pules poem. (response)

I will walk around school, make a square track, then find a high spot to draw in one of my plain books..buy more books, they will become part of the show.

I will then take those drawings into the studio or engine room and draw for as many hours as I can handle, repeat the following day.

Start tomorrow – Friday, on paper until my canvas ready.

Walk, draw in high vantage point, roof garden or top of museum or?

Then into studio for the day.

Ink, acrylic, shellac maybe oil (colour)

Buy some shellac

Psychogeography

The psychological and the geographical

Taking a walk has provided me the vehicle to slip into the inbetween. A place where my own unconscious thoughts and memories facilitate a new experience of the spaces I inhabit daily.

Its transformative power lies at the heart of what makes psychogeography ⁴²worthwhile. *'When you remake your environment, or find wonderful things in it,' he says, 'It breaks you out of the machine.'* (Mandl)

For Dave Mandl, a photographer and avid psychogeographer who attended the Conflux⁴³ and is the co-founder.

Christina Ray⁴⁴, one of the conference organizers, describes the common threads hold these urban adventures together: Just what is psycho geography? Break it down into its two parts, she says. *'It's the psychological and the geographical. It's about how we're affected by being in certain places, architecture, weather, whom you're with, it's just a general sense of excitement about a place. 'Psycho geography encourages us to buck the rut, to follow some new logic that lets us experience our landscape anew, that forces us to truly see what we'd otherwise ignore.'* *'Chance and randomness,' says Ray, are what's exciting.* (Ray)

⁴² The word 'psychogeography' was coined in the late 1950s by the letterists and the situationists -- French artists and social theorists who adopted the playful-serious agenda of the dadaists and surrealists in an effort to break through the crust of postwar conformity. But modern psycho geographers are equally influenced by earlier strains of urban adventure, including the 19th-century concept of the flaneur, the idle man-about-town who observed and commented on the urban scene. The most flaneur-like style of psychogeography, of course, is algorithmic walking, that 'first right, second left' approach. Hart, Joseph, (July/Aug, 2004), *A New Way of Walking*;

⁴³ At Conflux, participants turn NYC into a playground, a laboratory and a space for the development of new networks and communities. All events are free and open to the public. They include walks and tours, lectures, workshops, street games and tech-enabled expeditions, interactive performance, public art and installations.

⁴⁴ Christina Ray has presented lectures, received grants, taught classes and workshops and participated in panels and juries for organizations including the New Museum of Contemporary Art, The 92nd Street Y Tribeca, the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York Foundation for the Arts, among others.

The Accidental Discovery

I have always done a lot of walking. It's always helped when I've been stressed to find a calm space. At the beginning of this study in February I was experiencing a high level of anxiety. My supervisor's had expressed to me that I needed to find a way to relax. I turned to my old faithful 'walking'. I had recently bought a camera to attach to my helmet for skiing. I started taking the camera with me into the hills. I approached the filming as I would a drawing, I followed the contours, studied the textures. Each day I would think of a new thing to try, a new question to be answered. I had begun reading Bachelard and was identifying with his chapters about the poetry of space and forests, about breathing the air of trees, about being at height. On my return from a walk I would head straight to the studio, replay the video and draw. I wasn't looking at the video while drawing but in having it playing in the background my unconscious memory remained in the hills. Some days I wouldn't take the camera, choosing instead to take a pencil and small drawing pad. Eventually I took nothing and made site-specific drawings with whatever I found. Some were made with sticks in clay, some with a small pebble in a rotting log and some with my body in moss. All of the walks were phenomenological. My only decision was to walk and take something to draw with or take nothing. The meditation opened up for me a new way of seeing of experiencing not just how the experience is for my eyes and mind but how it is for my body in its entirety including touch, balance and breath.



Illus. 8., Maria O'Toole, Sasha + Babe, 2013, Charcoal on Fabriano

15th Oct

Did some more drawing and took photos from old museum building steps.

Have phoned the curator of the war memorial and asked if I can go inside and draw from height, curator away, ring back 23rd.

Thinking about site specific, thinking about Massey as site. Took photos.

Tomorrow I will head in early and walk the campus and video at the same time.

Take cord to download to lap top. Take meths to make shellac

Make shellac before walk.

Make work as breathing drawings,

Ask John about framing

Pick up canvas?

Work in processual way – as breathing drawings. Use drawings and videos.

Exhibition, keep it simple – sketch books on table. Drawings x 3 framed. Large Canvas's x 2

5 large works + sketch books.

22nd Oct

Warm wind

Walking

Drawing

Blown

Breeze

Unique

Wellington

Daydream, flux

Blown along,

Looking, seeing, shapes, lines, colours

Sound

Physically being blown around

October winds.

Architecture, power of shapes, they change a space, feeling,

In and out, internal, external,

Memory,

October winds...

3.Mark Marking: Navigating An Inner Landscape

Marking my Interior Space

In chapter three I reflect on my own process and developments.

In concluding this document I identify the important moments and discovery that has facilitated a new way of working and enriched my practice.

24th Oct

another windy day..

walked the grounds, packed up my space will have to move to block

12 as no other space ready.

Walking drawings ok,

Might do more. Enjoyed letting the wind bash me about, and

*letting the pencil replicate the feeling of cool breeze on the back of my
neck.*

Playing

Playing too much?

Tried to play with colour in the drawing of the motorway

construction site. Not working

Needs to be more subtle.

Settled into new studio

Prepared big canvas

Prepared paper

25th Oct

gale force winds and rain

walked usual path

walked inside museum too for shelter

new studio

like being higher

collected some surface textures

more marks

bliss

feeling ready to write

25th Oct, p.m.

Played with colour shape and erasure, really like what is happening, used palette similar to pastels in breathing drawing, grey/green as in bachelards description of the forest, think I will keep to one colour.

Walking, filming, drawing, campus area

Flux, daydreams, grey areas

Rhythm, marks

Notation, traces remain

VAST, say the word v..a..s..t..

Make breathing drawings but take a step further

Breathing + some detail etc as sketchbooks

Erase, paint over as palimpsest

Pick out areas to work on

Abstraction/figuration – create an uneasy tension between the two

Modernist approach to post-modernism

Imagination

Cont...

Layer upon layer of information

Collected

Remembered

Imagined

Breath as a sixth sense

Past/present/future

Taking a trace of the walk into the space and combining those two spaces...air

Imagination ...lead into by images, daydream

Simple

Beautiful essay by Bell Hooks – between us: traces of love.

Roni Horn and Emily Dickinson

Interesting example of imagined phenomenology,

The role imagination and memory and her own experience play also the direct experience for the audience.

One artist reaching out to another through time

Memorial

4th Nov

tap into an inner resource.

*Draw/Walked this morning, discovered the name of the mount which
massey university sits is a sacred mound, Puke Ahu*

*Stopped to sketch shapes of memorial, and the lions head, the lions head
is interesting me.*

*When I draw the figure, I am in another place a third place
(not trying to draw, not looking at the paper but having faith that my
body will respond,*

When I draw the landscape I want to draw it realistically?

Why?

The rhythm of walking is interesting, the movement and flux

Lyrical abstraction

5th Nov

I was thinking about puke ahu

Scared mount

About October winds, about the trees,

I imagined I am in the wind

From the depths of me,

from lasting realities,

material images

and I conclude...

My inquiry began many years ago,

in a disused ballroom in a once grand home,

Calm, calmness,

Drawing,

bodies in space,

trace, mark, memory, touch,

escape

transcendence

calm

Processual Conclusion

Breath has become important to my own work, the expansion of breath was the source of Breathe Illus 2. & 3., in searching for immediacy I took a video with me into the hills on my daily walk. On my return, on a pre-prepared large sheet of fabriano and standing in front of the wall to which it was attached I drew with the video playing in the background. There was duality, two graphite sticks in each hand. The rhythm of the breathing as I climbed the hill along with the accompanying bird and forest life were filtered through me and appeared on the paper through my bodily response.

The intense marks reveal the limits of my body as it becomes harder to draw breath into my lungs but interestingly there are fragile marks also. I was in a meditative space. I am not sure to what the marks refer, the fragility in me, or the space I was travelling through. I enjoy the space 'inbetween'. As explained in chapter two, I have previously easily entered that meditative space when drawing the body but not so easily when drawing from other sources.

Illus 17. Maria O'Toole, Breathe 1, 2013, pg. 70

Illus 18. Maria O'Toole, Breathe 2, 2013, pg. 71

Illus 19. Maria O'Toole, Sound 1, 2013, pg. 72

Illus 20. Maria O'Toole, Walking Book, 2013, pg. 73

I enjoyed these drawings, I still do. But, on reflection they were very symmetrical. I decided to make more work. This new work needed to be sensory as I was concerned that in the 'breathe' works there was too much of the physical body present. The resulting drawings from the 'depth' series are definitely more sensuous. They still talk about my body, my journey through space and time, but it is a far more subtle affective experience. In the 'breathe' drawings I move through the space strongly. In the 'depth' drawings I slip in and out of the space, lingering in the inbetween for as long as was

enjoyable. I changed my medium for these works also, I had previously been using, graphite, ink, oil and gouache. For the Depth series I used large sticks of willow charcoal.

During this time I was also making small walking drawings in a book format. I began walking on the Wellington Massey Campus site and area's beyond. Each morning I would arrive at approximately 7.30am. Its great to experience a space as it wakes, it has a whole other feeling. I would walk for roughly an hour. I began these walks in October, the windy month. At first I felt frustration at being bashed about, then on the second or third day Anastasi came to mind. I decided to let the experience be. I stopped trying to draw in the wind a let my bodily responses make the drawings. I named them walking drawings but a more accurate title would be - Wind Drawings: A Trace of October.

The marks change as I move from interior and exterior spaces. The interior of a café there is music playing the marks made are relaxed and lyrical. At the Memorial Building Site they become loud and linear. They are a sensual trace of my everyday experience.

Illus 21. Maria O'Toole, Depth Series, 2013, pgs. 74, 75

Illus 22. Maria O'Toole, Encounters, 2013, pg. 76

Lyrical Conclusion

my drawing and writing are now in collaboration

streams of thought, layered, overlapping, written side by side, sans serif, serif, a variety of scale

quiet words crawling into the intimate expanded spaces of solitude accessed via the senses,

a memory of a home from the past

scrawling, vigorous notations exerting their self determination and resistance

my companions formed clusters on the page, often they intermingled and share a space at other times repel.

sometimes;

It is necessary to rub bits out,

in the erasure I discover something else.

My theory like my practice is an open-ended exploration.

My Studio practice is process based to a point, I begin with a process, the process does not dictate the outcome however, and at some point the experience takes over and drives it until it tells me to stop.

The potential of drawing is of interest to me,

the fluid immediacy,

the open-endedness,

the interweaving of body and soul and the unknown outcome created of that conflux. I am interested in finding even subtler

levels of awareness of being in the world through drawing. I am also interested in the space where marks,

traces and gestures merge to form something else,

the unexpected, unknown element - creating both integrity and tension within the work.

A depth in the space is formed. It becomes a space to make anew.

Illus 23. Maria O'Toole, Being Higher, 2013, pg. 77

Illus, Maria O'Toole, Ocean, 2013, pg. 78

I undertook this masterate study because I wanted to change my studio practice. I felt very strongly that I would enjoy the process, be open to every option and have faith in my own ability to make change. It was extremely scary to step away from the figurative, from what I know and love. I have however been rewarded. A vast inner sensory landscape has opened its doors. I found a way to navigate this inbetween space and make abstract embodied work that connects with an audience sensually.

*'I found a way, my way to make.
I walked after Anastasi
I read and re-read Bachelard
In the walking, the writing, research and drawing I discovered...
an in-between-ness,
Scale, time, space,
Vast.
I spoke the word vast, repeated it, let it rest on my breath.
I found high ground in which to experience a vastness,
Imagination,
Grandeur,
Calm,
a vast inner space.
The delicate
the allusive
slow space... inbetween'. Maria O'Toole 2013*

*'Each one of us should make a
surveyor's map of his lost fields
and meadows. In this way we cover
the universe with drawings where
we have lived. These drawings need
not be exact, But they need to be written
according to the shapes of our inner
landscapes.'
(Bachelard, G., 1958)*

Illus 25. Maria O'Toole, Depth, 2013, pg. 79

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Illus 9. Maria O'Toole, Wall Drawing, 2013, Charcoal on Gesso on Board



Illus 10. Maria O'Toole, Window Drawings, 2013, Marker on Glass



Illus 11. Roni Horn, Earth Grows Thick



Illus. 12., Eva Hesse, Expanded Expansion, 1969



Illus 13. Francis Alys, The Green Line. Illus 14. Tony Orrico, Human Spirograph. Illus 15. Trisha Brown



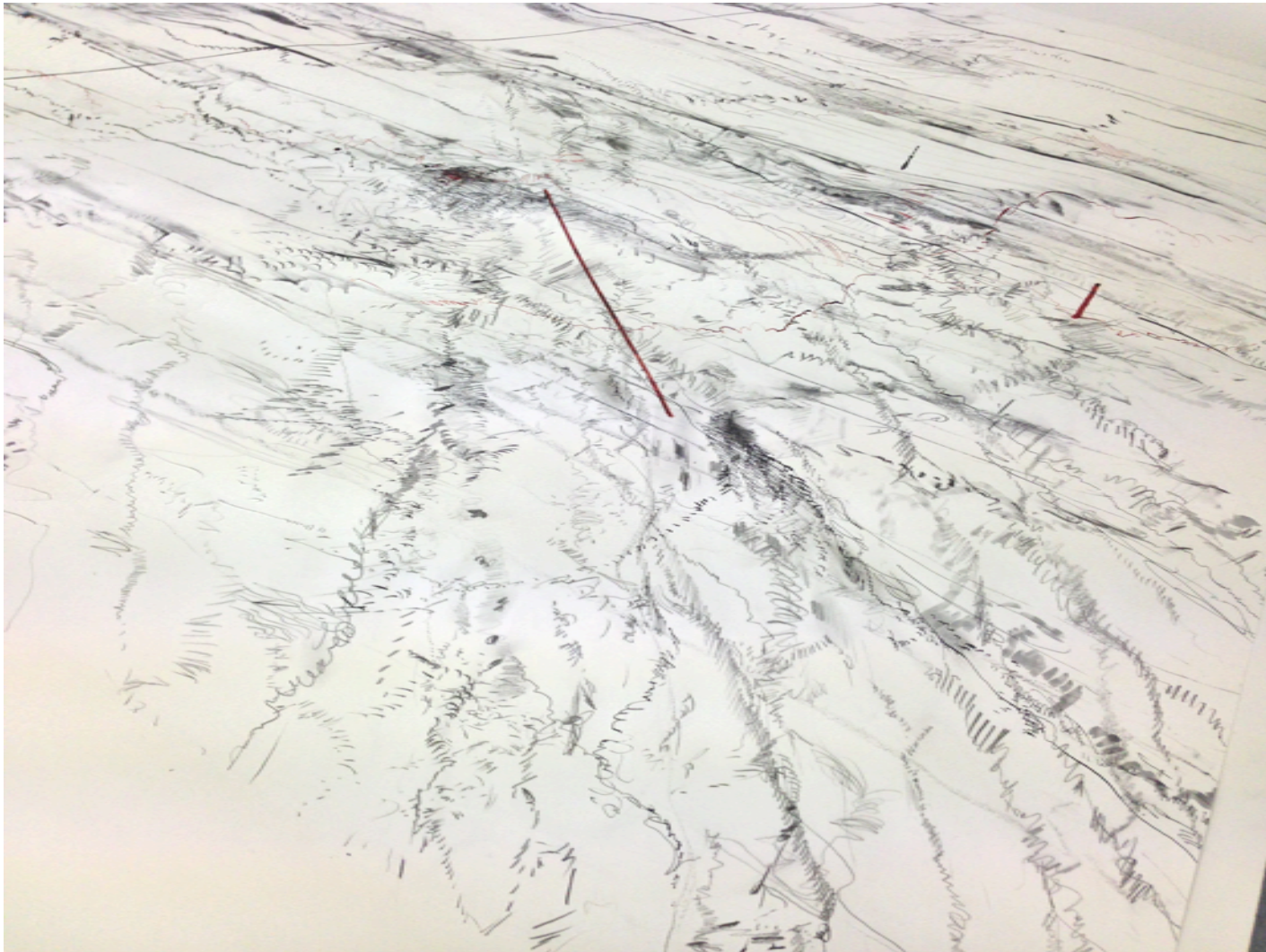
Illus 16. Emily Kam Ngwarry, Big Yam, 1996



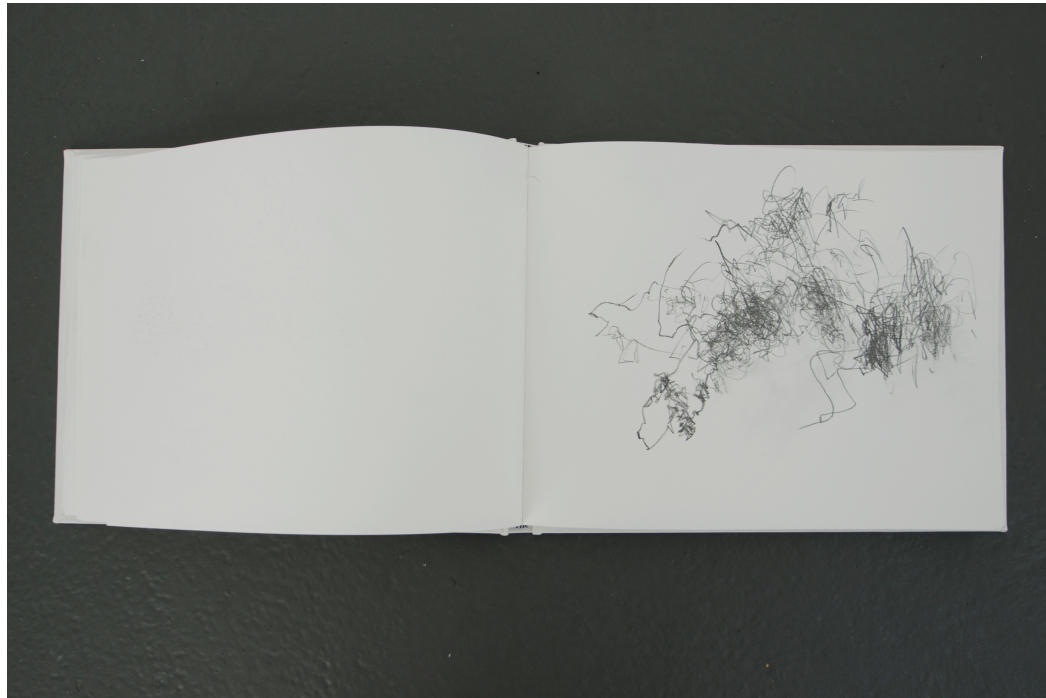
Illus. 17., Maria O'Toole, Breathe 1, 2013,
Acrylic and Graphite on Fabriano



Illus 18. Maria O'Toole, Breathe 1, 2013,
Acrylic, Graphite and oil on Fabriano



Illus 19. Maria O'Toole. Sound 1, 2013, Ink, Graphite and Charcoal on fabiano



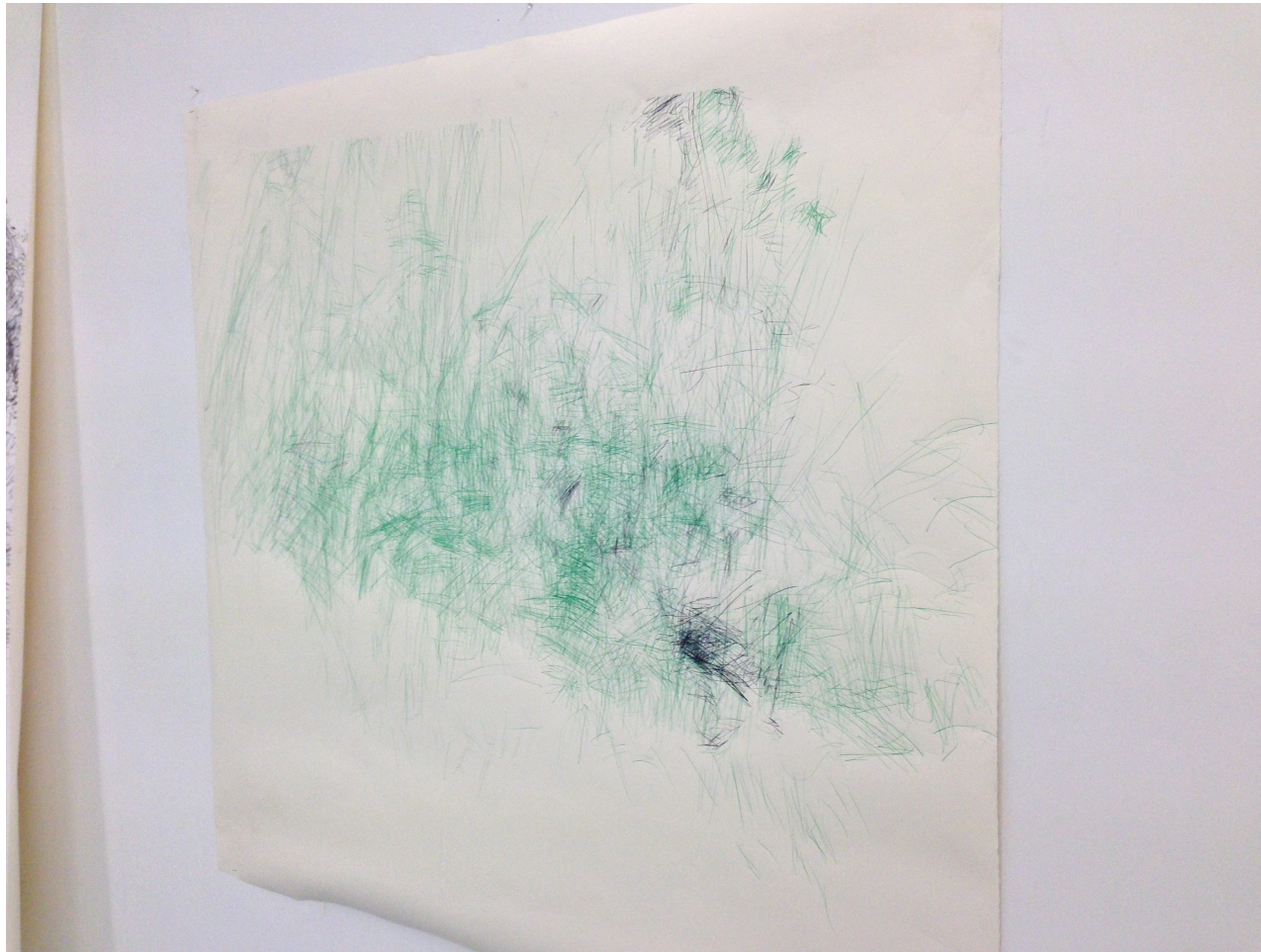
Illus 20. Maria O'Toole, Walking Book, 2013, Graphite



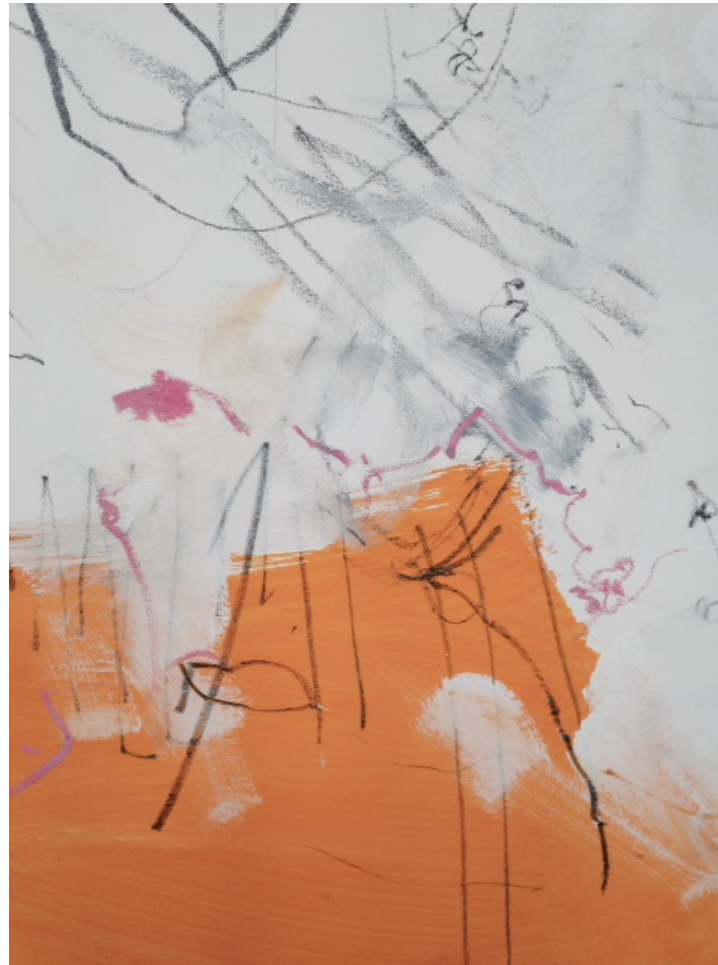
Illus 21. Maria O'Toole Depth Series (hanging), Acrylic, Charcoal on Fabriano



Illus 21, Maria O'Toole, 2013, depth series, Acrylic, charcoal on Graphite



Illus 22. Maria O'Toole, Encounter, Ball Point Pen on Fabriano



Illus 23. Maria O'Toole, Being Higher, Acrylic, Gouache, Charcoal, Graphite and oil



Illus., 24., Maria O'Toole, Ocean, 2013, Acrylic and Graphite on Fabriano



Illus. 25., Maria O'Toole, Depth, 2013, Acrylic and Willow Charcoal on Fabriano



