PSIAX 7

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A Closure that leaves Openings for New Beginnings: five artist/researchers' contributions to a theme for visual/material exploration titled *impactive space*

NATACHA ANTÃO, MICHAEL CROFT, SÍLVIA SIMÕES, VÍTOR SILVA

Perception in its five manifestations, available to experience more or less, exists as external sources that are brought into cooperation with the human through the body. While, arguably, it is not a simple binary situation, there is a sense of alternation between reception and receiver. Even if the human is only tacitly assumed to be the receiver, as in the case for example of an artist who does not acknowledge subjective relationship with what he/she is doing, an artist does in most circumstances play the role of instigating agent. The materiality of the relationship can be whatever is the conduit, which is often what is produced, and speaks about the said relationship in ways that point up both the integralism and uniqueness between the source of, and recipient of, the sensory perception. Put simply, the conduit may be the perception itself.

A group of five artists, hosted by i2ADS, Research Institute of Art, Design and Society, have come together to conduct a research project that concerns the observation of perception, considered through drawing. While these artists' sensory source is mainly visual, this does not exclude recourse to other senses that are variously implicated, if not always deliberated, in artistic activity. Couple with this the question of research, since the approach of the five artists is neither conventionally academic, nor solely artistic. What emerges as a result of the former is interest in how theory can provide both framing and interaction. The research's participants variously utilise theory pertaining to interoception, experiential connection with space, *tuchè* and contingency, objective reality versus imaginary narrative, and the psychodynamic unconscious.

Such theoretical resources inform rather than overly *shape* these artists' respective practices, which is an important distinction to make between the academic and the practical as here used. Theories that at-once position and obfuscate the human subject might exist antagonistically with more directly experiential theories, such as embodiment or phenomenology. Original Aristotelian and other philosophical notions may prioritize a subject's direction towards externalisation, for which reason a bigger existential perspective is explored in a visual practice. Digital tools and modes of working either interact ambiguously with physical pencil, brush and collage, or such traditional tools are employed exclusively. In terms of conversation, however, while artist and their references perform as a type of dialogue cooperatively with practice, the latter will ultimately step clear of such conversation with its own external voice. In this sense, the visual-material work itself may represent, if not *be*, the perception oscillating in the middle of that which is sensorily perceivable and available to experience.

The five articles in this PSIAX Special Issue are variously informative of practice-based artistic methods that infer and manifest perception in action, by which means perception is simultaneously observed. The particular focus on this occasion is *impactive space*, a coined theme for the set of papers relating to the existing theorised term *liminality*; a middle space, in a sense, that is charged by circumstances either side. The philosopher Alain Badiou (2018, pp. 204-5, citing Jean-Claude Milner), argues that the human *subject* from the psychoanalytical perspective is automatically inside liminality – therefore inside this middle-referenced space. The distinction is that while philosophy may be considered as the ability to discuss *being* without recourse to fluctuations of the individual *subject* of being, psychoanalysis presupposes the subject, especially the unconscious subject, as automatically within the midst of any such question. This question of at-once inside, or of outside looking in, may in phenomenological terms be the ratio between reflexively creative activity and reflection on such activity after the event, however close may be the two positions in time. The five articles can be compared and contrasted in either of these two suggested considerations, the aggregate of which is a presumption of the experiential basis of perception. While it would be convenient to suggest that each of the five artists are outside liminality for purposes of thinking about impactive space, irrespective of the extent, if any, to which they are inside liminality *in* their practices, this is not consistently the case with their writing. If such writing is considered itself *as-* rather than *about* impactive space, then instances of liminal-written are as apparent as, if not more apparent than, the liminal-visualised.

In Garry Barker's article, interoception provides the theoretical focus of what in Barker's practice concerns the visualisation of somatic pain, and is in his view '… central… to an understanding of perception'. Barker argues such a view through his own recent experience of Covid 19, during which he gained heightened awareness of how breathing can constitute a kind of 'crossing point between subject and object'. Barker has recourse to his memory of dream imagery that alludes to his experience of his own somatic suffering in which 'inside and outside experiences were blurred'. Barker states that he wishes to 'capture the feeling tone of the experience', and references the philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) to suggest

that one's imaginative capacity is linked with what he terms one's 'deep corporeal grounding'.

Safa Tharib takes a more distanced position of himself in relation to his visual-material practice when he suggests, in the context of digital-artistically derived fictional narrative, that the concern of the article is with 'a connection between the objective reality and the liminal space of the spectator'. Tharib references the film critic and theorist André Bazin (1918 - 1958) on objective and temporal reality, and the philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913 - 2005) on the constantly transitional state of narrative. While Tharib's own liminal involvement in his practice is much less stated than Barker's, he does discuss and show how he uses real physical locations of his own experience, subject to his own 'skills and weakness in the representation of the subject matter'.

Derek Pigrum plays off a psychoanalytical perspective on the *weave* as a semiotic signifier that is both a 'symptom' and – deduced from the cultural critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin's (1892 - 1940) tendency to 'bound memory, dream, and text work together' – as a 'multi-mode artefact', against the philosopher Bruno Latour's (1947 - 2022) notion of "circulating reference" (Latour, 1999). The latter reference suggests of images 'coming from the outside', due also to their tendency towards *tuchè* and contingent occurrence, that they slowly result in 'actualization and a closure that leaves openings' that can suggest new beginnings. Regarding the question of Pigrum's liminal presence within his article, the Benjamin quote cites text as itself part of the weave that Pigrum equates with symptom, and he variously identifies himself as 'we' within the text and distances himself from it through use of the 3rd person.

John Stell takes as his motif a space that he has had personal connection for sixty years, and seeks to understand it from the point of view of experience through drawing, taking as his theoretical basis the concept of "extensive connection" (Whitehead, 1929) of the philosopher A. N. Whitehead (1861 – 1947) and such terms as *inside*, *through* and *between* relating to computational practices in Artificial Intelligence. Stell's reports on the second and third of a set of three drawings contrast an approach to the second drawing in which he had 'a sense of recording... an ongoing event that I was a part of', and the episodic nature of the third drawing where he is 'struck by the way the space is separate from my experience of it'. Such phraseology suggests that one can be either inside or outside liminality according to the strategies necessary to conduct the drawings.

Michael Croft presents the process of visualising a hallucinatory phantom of a nightmare in a doorframe of the domestic space of his flat, where the latter acts as a space that was consequently transformed as impactive. The middle-ness of such a space is argued, via the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's (1901 – 1981) theory of the scopic drive, as analogous to the obfuscation of one's gaze by a psychic screen. Croft represents himself in the place of the phantom, most cogently in terms of being inside liminality when he feels and registers the distortion of the architecture of a utility room in which the phantom was perceived through 'subjective factors of human vision; trying to locate my experience of the space through the projection into it of my body...'

In closing, and to re-absorb the question of liminality into the research project's abiding question of perception, each author confers on the tendency of perception itself to oscillate spatially, considered subjectively but seeking physical metaphors for varying reasons. For example: perception can be influenced by multiple factors; one's externally negotiated psyche can be considered to operate both amidst and *as* one's perception; perception can be viewed as a parameter, along with consciousness, between which is the unconscious; perception is externally projected from the internal and can then be re-absorbed by the body; perception as spatial experience can be mediated by drawing. While each article is a consideration of impactive space through the medium of drawing, and involves perception, the latter phenomenon is in some respects displaced into writing as the medium. Further to the idea of voices of a conversation – to close, as it were, with suggestion of a new consideration – it is interesting to read and sense how the liminal exists in the writing of each author within their text.

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Um Encerramento que deixa Aberturas para Novos Começos: cinco contribuições de artistas/investigadores sobre o tema da exploração visual/material, intitulado "espaço impactante"

NATACHA ANTÃO, MICHAEL CROFT, SÍLVIA SIMÕES, VÍTOR SILVA

A perceção, nas suas cinco manifestações disponíveis para serem experimentadas em maior ou menor grau, existe como fonte externa que coopera com o ser humano por meio do corpo. Enquanto, indiscutivelmente, não se trata de uma simples situação binária, há um sentido de alternância entre a receção e o recetor. Mesmo que o ser humano seja apenas tacitamente assumido como recetor, como no caso de um artista que não reconhece a relação subjetiva com o que faz, um artista desempenha, na maioria das circunstâncias, o papel de agente instigador. A materialidade da relação pode ser qualquer meio, que muitas vezes coincide com o que é produzido, e exprime a referida relação por modos que apontam tanto para o integralismo como para a singularidade entre a fonte e o recetor da perceção sensorial. Em termos simples, o meio pode ser a própria perceção.

Um grupo de cinco artistas, sediados no i2ADS, Instituto de Investigação em Arte, Design e Sociedade, reuniu-se para realizar um projeto de investigação centrado na observação da perceção, entendida através do desenho. Embora a fonte sensorial destes artistas seja principalmente visual, isso não exclui o uso de outros sentidos que estão de várias formas envolvidos, nem sempre deliberadamente, na atividade artística. Aliado a isto, está a questão da pesquisa, uma vez que a abordagem dos cinco artistas não é convencionalmente académica, nem unicamente artística. O que emerge como resultado da primeira abordagem é o interesse no modo como a teoria pode fornecer tanto um enquadramento quanto uma interação. Os participantes da investigação utilizam várias teorias relacionadas com a interocepção, a conexão experimental com o espaço, a *tuchè* e a contingência, a realidade objetiva versus a narrativa imaginária, e o inconsciente psicodinâmico.

Tais recursos teóricos informam, em vez de *moldar* excessivamente, as práticas respetivas destes artistas, o que é uma importante distinção entre o académico e o prático, conforme espelham os seus trabalhos. As teorias, que posicionam e obscurecem em simultâneo o sujeito humano, podem existir em antagonismo com teorias mais diretamente experimentais, tais como a incorporação ou a fenomenologia. Noções aristotélicas originais e outras noções filosóficas podem dar prioridade à direção do sujeito para a exteriorização, razão pela qual uma perspetiva existencial mais ampla é explorada na prática visual. As ferramentas digitais e os modos de trabalho interagem de maneira ambígua com o lápis, o pincel e a colagem, ou tais instrumentos e suportes tradicionais são empregues exclusivamente. No entanto, embora o artista e as suas referências funcionem como uma espécie de diálogo cooperativo com a prática, esta acabará por se afastar com a sua própria voz externa. Nesse sentido, a obra visual-material pode representar, senão mesmo ser, a perceção que oscila no meio do que é sensorialmente percetível e disponível para ser experimentado.

Os cinco artigos desta edição especial da PSIAX são informativos de métodos artísticos baseados na prática, que inferem e manifestam a perceção em ação mediante a qual esta é simultaneamente observada. Nesta ocasião, o foco particular é o espaço impactante, um tema cunhado para o conjunto de artigos relacionados com a noção teórica existente, *liminalidade*; um espaço intermediário, em certo sentido, carregado de circunstâncias por ambos os lados. O filósofo Alain Badiou (2018, pp. 204-5, citando Jean-Claude Milner), argumenta, a partir da perspetiva psicanalítica, que o *sujeito* humano está automaticamente dentro da liminalidade – portanto, dentro deste espaço intermédio referenciado. A distinção é que, enquanto a filosofia pode ser considerada como a capacidade para discutir o *ser*, sem recorrer às flutuações do ser do sujeito individual, a psicanálise pressupõe o sujeito, especialmente o sujeito inconsciente, como automaticamente no cerne de tal questão. Esta questão do já dentro, ou do fora olhando para dentro, pode ser, em termos fenomenológicos, a relação entre a atividade reflexivamente criativa e a reflexão sobre essa atividade após o evento, por mais próximas que possam estar as duas posições no tempo. Os cinco artigos podem ser comparados e contrastados a partir de qualquer das duas considerações sugeridas, cujo conjunto presume a base experimental da perceção. Embora fosse conveniente sugerir que cada um dos cinco artistas se encontra fora da liminalidade para efeitos de reflexão sobre o espaço impactante, independentemente da medida em que se encontram dentro da liminalidade nas suas práticas, tal não é consistentemente o caso com a sua escrita. Se tal escrita é considerada *em vez de* ou *acerca de* o espaço impactante, então as instâncias de escrita-liminar são tão aparentes, se não mais aparentes, do que o visualizado liminarmente.

No artigo de Garry Barker, a interocepção fornece o foco teórico do que, na prática de Barker, diz respeito à visualização da dor somática e é, em sua opinião, "... central... para uma compreensão da perceção". Barker argumenta sobre essa visão através da sua própria experiência recente de Covid-19, durante a qual adquiriu uma acentuada

consciência de como a respiração pode constituir uma espécie de "ponto de cruzamento entre sujeito e objeto". Barker recorre à sua memória de imagens de sonhos que aludem à experiência do seu próprio sofrimento somático, na qual "experiências internas e externas se misturavam". Barker afirma que deseja "capturar o tom emocional da experiência" e faz referência ao filósofo Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) para sugerir que a capacidade criativa está ligada àquilo que ele nomeia como "fundamentação corporal profunda".

Safa Tharib adota uma posição mais distante em relação à sua prática visual-material quando sugere, no contexto da narrativa ficcional digital, que a preocupação do seu artigo tem a ver com "a conexão entre a realidade objetiva e o espaço liminar do espectador". Tharib refere o crítico de cinema e teórico André Bazin (1918-1958) sobre a realidade objetiva e temporal, e o filósofo Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) sobre o estado constantemente transitório da narrativa. Embora, na sua prática, o envolvimento de Tharib seja muito menos declarado do que o de Barker, ele explora e mostra como usa lugares físicos e reais da sua própria experiência e os submete às suas "competências e fraquezas na representação do tema".

Derek Pigrum parte de uma perspetiva psicanalítica sobre o *tecido* como um significante semiótico que é tanto um "sintoma" – deduzido da tendência do crítico cultural e filósofo Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) para "unir a memória, o sonho e o texto" – como um "artefacto multimodal", que se contrapõe à noção de "referência circulante" do filósofo Bruno Latour (1947-2022) (Latour, 1999). Esta última referência sugere que as imagens "vindas do exterior", devido também à sua tendência para a *tuchè* e para a ocorrência contingente, resultam lentamente numa "atualização e num encerramento que deixa aberturas" que podem sugerir novos começos. Relativamente à questão da presença liminar de Pigrum no seu artigo, a passagem de Benjamin refere o texto como fazendo parte da trama que Pigrum equipara ao sintoma; ele identifica-se a si próprio como "nós" no texto e distancia-se daquele utilizando a terceira pessoa.

John Stell escolhe como seu motivo de reflexão um espaço com o qual teve uma conexão pessoal durante sessenta anos, e procura compreendê-lo do ponto de vista da experiência do desenho, tomando como base teórica o conceito de "conexão extensiva" (Whitehead, 1929) do filósofo A. N. Whitehead (1861-1947) e dos termos como *dentro*, *através* e *entre*, que relaciona às práticas computa-

cionais em Inteligência Artificial. Os relatos de Stell sobre o segundo e terceiro desenho de um conjunto de três contrastam com uma abordagem do segundo desenho em que ele tinha "a sensação de registar... um acontecimento contínuo do qual eu fazia parte", e a natureza episódica do terceiro desenho em que ele fica "impressionado com a forma como o espaço está separado da minha experiência dele". Estas frases sugerem que se pode estar dentro ou fora da liminaridade, de acordo com as estratégias necessárias para realizar desenhos.

Michael Croft apresenta o processo de visualização do fantasma alucinatório de um pesadelo no vão de uma porta do espaço doméstico do seu apartamento, onde este atua como espaço consequentemente transformado, *impactivo*. O carácter intermédio de tal espaço é discutido, através da teoria da pulsão escópica do psicanalista Jacques Lacan (1901 - 1981), como sendo análoga à ofuscação do nosso olhar por um ecrã psíquico. Croft representa-se a si próprio no lugar do fantasma e, de forma mais convincente, dentro da liminalidade, quando sente e regista a distorção da arquitetura da despensa na qual o fantasma foi visto, através de "fatores subjetivos da visão humana: tentando localizar a minha experiência do espaço mediante a projeção do meu corpo..."

Para finalizar, e para reabsorver a questão da liminaridade do projeto de investigação dedicado à perceção, cada autor confirma a tendência da perceção para a oscilação espacial, aqui considerada subjetivamente como uma procura de metáforas físicas por razões diversas. Por exemplo: a perceção pode ser influenciada por múltiplos fatores; a psique negociada externamente opera tanto como meio como perceção de alguém; a perceção pode ser vista como um parâmetro, junto com a consciência, entre a qual se encontra o inconsciente; a perceção é projetada externamente a partir do interior e depois pode ser reabsorvida pelo corpo; a perceção como experiência do espaço pode ser mediada pelo desenho. Embora cada artigo seja uma consideração do espaço impactante através do desenho e envolva a perceção, este último fenómeno é, em alguns aspectos, deslocado para a escrita como meio. Para além da ideia das vozes de uma conversa – para encerrar, por assim dizer, com a sugestão de uma nova consideração – é interessante ler e sentir como o liminar existe na escrita de cada autor dentro do seu próprio texto.

Breathing: An artist's reflection on the visualisation of an interoceptive experience. The figurative imagination dissolves into the flux of process.

GARRY BARKER

Visualisations of interoceptive sensations slide between visual invention and memories of past experiences, between a need to rely on physical resemblances to other objects and a more abstracted understanding of energy flow. This report explores how images that rose unbidden from the unconscious when trying to visualise a particular somatic experience, were then taken formally further on, as another set of images were developed that responded to more abstract visual principles. This research report also explores how interoceptual research can become inseparable from a growing awareness of how the body knows itself and its own metaphors. Centred on a reaction to a Covid-19 induced problem with breathing there is an attempt to show how in the mind images are enfolded into a continuum whereby differences between subject and object disappear. As the process of drawing and image making develops, the artist first of all finds parallels between remembered visual forms and his experience of the sensations associated with being unable to breathe, then on reflection, a further series of drawings are produced that are responses to the process or flow of somatic awareness.

Keywords: interoception, somatic, body, perception, drawing, experience.

As visualizações de sensações interocetivas deslizam entre a invenção visual e as memórias de experiências passadas, entre a necessidade de confiar em semelhanças físicas com outros objetos e um entendimento mais abstrato do fluxo de energia. Este relato explora o modo como as imagens que surgiram espontaneamente do inconsciente, quando se tentou visualizar uma experiência somática específica, foram depois formalmente retomadas à medida que se desenvolveu um outro conjunto de imagens em resposta a princípios visuais mais abstratos. Este relato de investigação também explora o modo como a pesquisa interocetiva pode tornar-se inseparável de uma consciência crescente do conhecimento que o corpo tem de si e das suas metáforas. Com foco na reação a um problema respiratório resultante de covid, faz-se uma tentativa de mostrar como na mente as imagens são encapsuladas num continuum onde as diferenças entre sujeito e objeto desaparecem. À medida que o processo de desenho e produção de imagem se desenvolve, o artista encontra, antes de mais, paralelos entre formas visuais lembradas e a sua experiência de sensações associadas à incapacidade de respirar, para depois, em reflexão, produzir uma série de desenhos que respondem ao processo ou fluxo de consciência somática.

Palavras-chave: interoceção, somatização, corpo, perceção, desenho, experiência.

1. INTRODUCTION

Interoception is defined as the sense of the internal state of the body; (Khalsa & Lapidus, 2016, p. 2) can be both conscious and non-conscious and is central to the regulation of our body's internal systems. (Connell, Lynott & Banks, 2018) It is also an aspect of perception itself and is inseparable from it. The perceptual interpretation of received qualia begins with an awareness of the body, which we inhabit and develop a sense of for nine months before we emerge out into the external world. Interoception is in place well before the body begins to perceive external events. An understanding of interoception is therefore essential to the wider understanding of perception itself. If we think of perception as the flowing movement of our awareness, we can picture that awareness changing, sometimes one aspect coming into focus and then another. We abstract out of the flow, even if only for brief moments, we become aware as David Bohm (2002, p.13) stated, that 'various patterns have a certain stability'. However, these patterns dissolve into each other rather like the various flows of waters in a stream, at one moment they are a tightly swirling eddy as they pass amongst rocks and at another, smoothly flowing currents in a wide flat river plane.

2. THE VISUALISATION OF BREATHING

This report was developed by an artist who had had breathing problems associated with Covid-19, and who took advantage of the situation because he had in previous work decided that interoception and perception were entangled and intermingled in such a way that during times of distress clear boundaries between the two states disappeared.

2.1 THE SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE OF INNER BODY SENSATIONS

Breathing is central to our perception of life itself and it affects both body and mind. It has been pointed out (Hsu, Tseng, Hsieh and Hsieh, 2020, p. 289) that because breathing affects us in such profound and complex ways, it takes different parts of our brains to actively process breath awareness. Therefore, associated drawings were approached in a variety of ways, from phenomenological awareness to poetic or metaphoric responses to the phenomena experienced.

Anderson, (1986, p. 198) argues when speaking of Heidegger's approach to phenomenology, that 'truth' is what we term 'actual' experience. Drawing in this case is presented as a form of poetic truth to

the experience. When making these drawings they are also seen as an encounter with phenomenological thinking itself. An encounter informed by Gaston Bachelard's (2014) use of poetry to describe how we understand place and space, in particular how we come to a poetic visual awareness of the body's interior. When breathing, opening the mouth wider and using the diaphragm muscles, are actions that form a continuum with using the arms to open a door or a window to let in fresh air into a room: interior actions overlap with exterior events.

As Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1993, p. 26) point out, 'There is no abstract knower of an experience that is separate from the experience itself.' They also point out that reflection on an experience becomes part of that experience itself, (p. 27) and that this opens up new possibilities 'beyond current representations of the life-space'. These new possibilities are what hopefully begin to emerge as the images that try to visualise these inner body experiences are developed.

When exploring the relationship between Merleau-Ponty's concept of 'dasein' and Heidegger's, Morley (2001, p. 74) pointed to Merleau-Ponty's awareness of the lived body and how it grounds personal life in nature, becoming a crossing point between, 'subject and object, body and the world.' (Ibid, p. 75) Morley goes on to state that 'Breath control is the emblem or master metaphor of this goal.' (Ibid. p. 76) The reality of being unable to breathe and the mental control that is then needed in order to get past and recover from the situation, heightens an awareness of Morley's point that breathing sits right at the crossing point of subject and object. The loss and regaining of ability to breathe was also in this case associated with the slipping into and out of consciousness, a situation that suggested that drawings produced in response could be thought of as metaphors for consciousness itself.

Damasio when writing about the birth of consciousness states:

> The organism as a unit, is mapped in the organism's brain, within structures that regulate the organism's life and signal its internal states continuously; the object is also mapped within the brain, in the sensory and motor structures activated by the interaction of the organism with the object; both organism and object are mapped as neural patterns, in first-order maps; all of these neural patterns can become images. (Damásio, 2000, p. 169)

The first drawing that was done was a very simple map of where pain had been experienced recently; it was used as a method of thinking about where

ESSAY

GARRY BARKER
Artist, educator and researcher based at Leeds Arts University UK. Garry Barker has an extensive body of work that has recently included drawn responses to the current migrant crisis and visualisations of older people's awareness of the process of getting older. He has worked on publicly commissioned art projects, as well as having a gallery-based practice and is involved in several overlapping ventures including making sculpture, printmaking, ceramics, drawing, animation, publishing, and performance. Recent research involves the visualization of interoception and somatic perception. He is currently a member of 'The Observation of Perception, considered through drawing', research group, hosted by the i2ADS research unit of Porto University's Fine Art Faculty.

Artista, educador e investigador associado à Leeds Arts University UK. Tem um extenso corpus de trabalho que inclui, recentemente, a recolha de reações à atual crise migratória e visualizações da consciência dos idosos no que se refere ao processo de envelhecimento. Trabalhou em projetos artísticos financiados, desenvolvendo também uma prática ligada com galerias de arte. Participa em diversas iniciativas que cruzam e integram a escultura, a impressão, a cerâmica, o desenho, a animação, a publicação e a performance. A sua investigação recente envolve a visualização da intero ceção e da perceção somática. Atualmente, é membro do grupo de investigação 'The Observation of Perception, considered through drawing', que integra o i2ADS, Instituto de Investigação em Arte, Design e Sociedade da Faculdade de Belas Artes da Universidade do Porto.

rather than what things were in relation to each other. It was like an early map of unknown territory, a rough guide for an exploration of my own body's awareness of itself.

3. VISUALISING THE INTEROCEPTIVE EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE FIGURATIVE IMAGINATION

When having problems with breathlessness, help with breathing techniques is used to focus one's attention. You are told to draw in breath from deep down using your diaphragm, or to concentrate on nose breathing, or breathing with an open mouth. As you undertake these exercises you begin to feel the insides of the tube of the throat, the movement of the ribcage as it expands and contracts the lungs within, an awareness of the diaphragm muscles in the development of deep, more meditative breathing, or the flaring of the nose as you pull in shafts of air. As attention shifts into an awareness of the body's corporality, a more spatial understanding or three-dimensional somatic feeling tone emerges, one that slips backwards and forwards into the imagination of space. The experience of being unable to breathe had meant that these techniques had all been offered to me as part of the recovery process. As I lay in bed recovering, images of the initial breathing blockage would emerge from memory and one image would begin to slip into another and I often had to re-focus in order to ensure these images had the necessary distancing or 'bracketing' needed, if I was to make them into images that could be drawn.

Normally we spend little time attending to what James Morley (2001, p. 76) termed the 'sentient mass' of our bodies. In fact, usually when we are ill we 'depersonalise' our bodies, in order to distance ourselves from the trauma of the experience.

When focusing on breathing in yoga, participants engage with proprioception (Morley, 2001, p. 75) to enable the practitioner to feel their body's relationship between its inside self and the outside world. When a meditative process of breathing is undertaken, the practitioner gradually becomes aware that it is not something separate from the world, it is the world. Using similar breathing control techniques whilst being ill makes one even more aware of the corporeal space we inhabit. However, in the dream like state that illness induces, one becomes entangled into that psychic space whereby interiority and exteriority or inside and outside spaces dissolve one into the other. Just as the skin flows over the body and slips over the lips to then form the lining of the mouth, the interior of the lungs becomes part of the space occupied by a flow of air as it passes from outside to inside the body.

The first images to emerge from the process of trying to draw the feeling tone of the experience of breathlessness were developed from dreams of ribs morphing into clinker built boats and organs piping music through the ribbed vaults of Gothic cathedrals; the body's bony ribcage embedded into a poetics of metamorphosis. Memories of a constricted throat became a tunnel's blockage; tiny bronchial tubes became limestone tunnels. I relived a car ride through the Mersey tunnel that my father took me on as a boy, recalling the excitement as we plunged down out of the Liverpool daylight into the darkly lit tunnel. Memories and dream fragments of images of ribs, tunnels, vaulting and boat construction were in reverie glimpsed as if underwater, located alongside memories of the subterranean cisterns under Istanbul; a magical space where the water hides sunken medusa heads and recycled pillars from ancient temples; an inverted world reflected in waters that deepen into a dark infinity. In these dreams inside and outside experiences were blurred, image reflecting waters emerged from the bowels of the earth, wooden walkways become plank made boats with human ribs and past experiences that were associated with breathing took centre stage. Memories of being on a barge travelling through a canal under limestone hills emerged, real spaces becoming triggers for dream spaces as consciousness fell away. Interoceptual sensations seemed to be triggering corporeal awareness for both the conscious and the unconscious body. Particular personal memories became important, walking down into the Dikteon Cave in Crete was remembered as if treading on the insides of a huge body. The body experienced as a continuum of inside and outside is an ancient feeling; one that Lewis-Williams (2011) argues was intensified by rituals and drug induced states. In my case a mind befogged by illness began to let go the strictures of logic. I imagined my entry into the world through a birth canal, re-imagining the birth of Zeus. I sensed something somatically understood, as I began to draw the images associated with these rib/throat dreams and hallucinations.

The initial drawings were made on notebook pages using a biro; scribbled notes of the images dreamt. When art materials could be accessed, further drawings were made using inks and washes and these were scanned and edited in Photoshop. The next series of images began to rely more on collage made partly from sections of previous drawings, such as of ribcages, and partly from photographed images from old books and ones found on the internet, of tunnels, cathedrals, boats and other sugges-

Fig. 1 *Rib/throat/ boat*, 2022. Ink and chalks on paper © Garry Barker.

tive imagery. These were digitally deconstructed, and images that represented both what had been experienced at the moment of a breathing blockage and what had been experienced in reverie, began to emerge. Photoshop was used to adjust these images in order to achieve the 'feeling tone' that seemed to provide the most accurate 'representation' of the experience. Drawings of ribs became layered over photographs of cathedral ceilings, their fan vaulting rib-like, finger like and tree like. The collage process was however beginning to fragment the imagery and this felt unlike the experiences associated with the dreams, so in order to focus and create an essence of these images they were taken into printmaking; the process of converting images into prints uncoupling collage elements from their original associations and colour was used to give coherence and feeling tone.

As this was done it felt as if this working method became an extended part of the experience itself, the dream state extending into the imaginative period of image construction.

Husserl in his search for a pure phenomenological philosophy remarked that, '...each thing that appears has *eo ipso* an orienting relation to the body, and this refers not only to what actually appears but to each thing that is supposed to be able to appear.' (1989, p. 61) I.e., images that emerge from the imagination are also rooted in our deep corporeal grounding. In trying to capture what had been 'seen' during semi-conscious reveries I was finding it hard to differentiate dreams from somatic interoceptions. The drawings, collages and prints made during this time were sitting on a liminal edge between imagination and the representation of an interoceptive experience, and although interesting I decided they as yet failed to directly communicate the experience of loss of breath control.

In the next group of drawn images, ribbed structures began emerging that carried within them personal memories, Figure 4 for instance linking the severe cough I had to the pain experienced when I previously broke several ribs. The image that emerged was also informed by work I had done when developing votives in relation to the visualisation of pain with other people, an experience that I was very aware was directly feeding into this one.

It may appear as if by allowing my sub-conscious mind to take over that I was letting slip the focus for this investigation; however, on the contrary I began to feel as if the inner body and the hidden mind had a connection far deeper than any rational relationship.

By trying to focus on the various sensations that emanated from my body, I found my feelings entwined with the stories I was telling myself in order to understand the situation. What was partly an attempt to isolate interoception from perception, was

becoming a multi-layered complex composite out of which several images were made, all attempts to give imaginative visual form to embodied sensations and suggesting that there was an embodied almost mythic platform that images emerged from.

4. VISUALISING THE INTEROCEPTIVE EXPERIENCE USING IMAGINATIVE ABSTRACTIONS

Images already produced suggested that perception of the external world was both an extension of the internal one and something that could be taken back inside the body as an idea as well as an experience. As Bachelard himself thought, the sharp division between interior and exterior space was misguided, stating, 'outside and inside are both intimate, they are always ready to be reversed'. Bachelard (1958/1994, p. 217)

Another post-Covid-19 experience was a change in energy levels. I had three days when lethargy overtook me, and I could do very little except lie in bed. Partly in response to this, and partly in response to having read Bohm's 'Wholeness and the Implicate Order', I began to imagine my body as a moving mass of energy, sun-like, with hidden currents that would burst up to the surface at unexpected moments. I then, as enough energy returned to allow me to draw, attempted to visually re-insert my own now dissipating body back into the flow of experience and as I did so I realised I was also dissolving subject/object differences. The visual idea of energy flow was now part of my relationship with my body and not a separate thing that stood outside of it. The body as an image became a complex series of related energy flows; electrical energy, chemical change, air exchange, blood flow etc. Liquidised substances became my materials choice in order to visualise the flow and movement of sensations.

When you have Covid-19 one of the things that can happen is that blood flow is affected. Severe Covid-19 infection, it has been argued, (Janardhan, Janardhan, and Kalousek, 2020, p.555) puts people at greater risk of developing blood clots in their circulatory system. Therefore, a decision was made to use various different pigmented fluids, some thicker than others, a process that reflected the fact that haemoglobin and other substances are dissolved into blood.

As I revisited the experience of breathlessness I did so with an awareness that consciousness and emotion are, as Damasio, (2000, p. 16) stated, 'not separable', and that within consciousness the body is represented in the brain in a variety of ways all of which are tied to the maintenance of life. When

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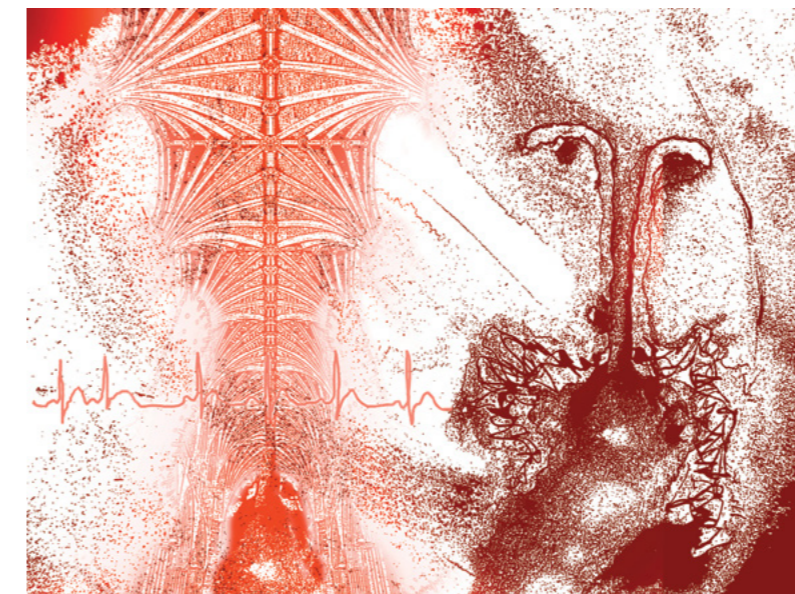
Fig. 3 *A dream of ribs and rhythms: Silkscreen print,* 2022. © Garry Barker.

threatened with a loss of consciousness, this became only too clear. Emotion, internal visualisations and feelings alongside drastic changes in my body's physical state, were all entangled in a desperate attempt to survive. I wanted to make a poetic response, but one that also allowed me to engage in phenomenological reflection. Smith and Sparks (2016) suggest 'bracketing' a direct experience, in order to stand aside from the constant flow of it. A series of drawings had already been made attempting to capture the feeling tone of the experience; raw representations of the forms glimpsed in my mind as I was gasping for breath. These images were necessarily sketchy and taken from a time when emotion and physical experiences were both heightened. The next set of drawings were an attempt to bracket the experience, and they consisted of diagrammatic notebook sketches, which were also a response to Damásio's point (2000) that the body is represented in the brain in a variety of ways, and if that is the case, I therefore concluded that my own representations could also come from a variety of aesthetic positions, including mapping.

Nancy states:

> If…drawing can find its worth as an element or dimension common to all aesthetic fields, it is because what one calls "aesthetic" concerns a "feeling", not as a sensory faculty that records information but a sensing, in other words, a faculty of making sense, or of letting it be formed. (2013, p.21)

He goes on to explain that a drawing does not give us information, what it does is communicate a sense of something. (Ibid). This 'sense' of something has to be achieved via or through the use of a particular visual language, and it was this language that I needed to continue to evolve if I was to suggest both the flow of the experiences and the way that we can abstract things from that flow.

I was also very aware that my visual research was part of a wider exercise in exploring drawing as a tool for the documentation of the act of perception itself. I wanted to foreground the central nature of interoception to an understanding of perception and highlight how drawing is key to this understanding. As a communication system I had begun to believe that it mirrored perception itself. Every image we make, like all experiences, is open to interpretation or perceptual expectation. This is what Gombrich (1980) called the beholder's share. The predictive theory of perception, as outlined by Seth (2021, p. 118), uses Bayesian inference concepts, a method of statistical inference used to update the probability for a hypothesis as more evidence or information becomes available. The predictive the-

ory (Kersten, et al. 2004, p.3) is used to explain how we decide in terms of a best guess what something is and how we react to things we have constructed and continue to re-construct from constantly changing inputs. Drawings made in an attempt to visualise the normally invisible sensations of interoception, have emerged from a constantly being moved-about body of wet materials, a complex morass that is not just an originator of interoception, but is a type of Rorschach ink blot on which the artist's visual system can perform its interpretive act. Each drawing made in this situation, is also an image trying to evoke the interoceptual act, a metaphor for Bayesian inference at work. In the act of a drawing's interpretation, interoceptual and metaphoric awareness slip between each other. An understanding emerges from overlapping simultaneous responses to the visualisation of the invisible somatic feeling tones of the body. This particular awareness when fused with Mark Johnson's use of basic shapes to show how our internal senses can be used as an 'imaginative schemata' (Johnson, 2007) then led to a way of working that began with notebook drawings made in response to 'live' events, followed by more reflective visualisations, that attempted to integrate a more painterly drawing language into the diagrammatic language of the notebook drawings.

5. DRAWING THE SOMATIC INTEROCEPTIVE EXPERIENCE

The notebook image Figure 5 was an attempt to bracket the feeling of the throat closing. The chest was starting to hurt and emotionally there is an attempt not to panic. The drawing has an open mouth at the top, surrounded by spiral signs for the air that was passing. The two lines below the mouth represent the throat, with a cross at the bottom representing an obstruction. Below, with a few lines representing ribs, are the malfunctioning lungs, surrounded by forms representing both pain and pressure.

From the notebook drawing, Figure 6 was made using pigments dissolved in water, felt-tip pens, brushes and a dip-in pen. The image is also a metaphorical representation of the fact that over sixty percent of our bodies consist of water and it is this water that facilitates the various chemical exchanges need to keep our body functioning. The drawing began using water dissolvable felt-tip pens responding to the scribbled note done the day before. Brushed water was used to loosen the initial drawing and to open the image out to a more 'liquid interpretation', and as forms began to appear they were worked up by adding additional pigmented liquids and using a dip in pen to draw through the damp surfaces in order to visually echo the initial sensations that were experienced. Colour gradually became more important, in particular the throat became red to represent the raw feeling of the restricted passage. What were initially marks made to represent ribs, were now visualised as forms squeezing the airway shut; the process of image arrival being not so much about logic, but about intuitive responses to an emotive situation. What had been the mouth was now a dying flower or trapped jellyfish, the drawing's liquid surface constantly being brushed into new forms, and as these came into being, some seemed to suggest what the experience felt like and others what it ought to look like. This process was more about energy flow than the representation of things.

On reflection the image seemed more authentic than previous attempts, but still failed to fully communicate the lung restriction felt at the time. So I went back to the notebook drawing and focused on the chest, the rib marks now becoming ribs inside the lungs, taking up half the space and being irritated by what I began to think of as grains of pollen, represented by orange dots of paint. The lining of the lungs was still red, but blue became the colour of suffocation, as if my insides were drowning.

Finally the more successful drawings were photographed and then adjusted in Photoshop, partly to tweak the colour but also to ensure the image would work for both print and screen.

Central to the medical concerns when your breathing is affected is sputum expectoration (Pra-

bawa, Silakarma, Manuaba, Widnyana, and Jeviana, 2021, p. 495). For the person suffering from breathlessness this is a 'rattling' or 'wheezing' effect, the feeling of something inside your chest that is needing to move, but is stuck. This is something you cant see, but you can feel and as you control your breathing, you will either be able to ease the situation or the effort of breathing will bring on a bout of coughing. This became the focus for the next series of drawings.

The cough forced the mind/body conjunction to have to grapple with another aspect of the sensation of narrowing air passages. In the resultant drawings, Figures 9 and 10, both texture and colour became vitally important. Forms were developed from drawings made to represent airflow and the opening and closing of lung spaces. These images were more about the feeling tone associated with muscles controlling breathing. Instead of having to represent an inability to breathe, the emerging images visualised the fact that I could breathe. The initial images were representations of the pent-up sense of air being put under pressure.

The visual sense of pent-up pressure was not however powerful enough, it was too static.

Using a collection of various coloured liquids and water-soluble felt tipped pens a new drawing was made of the feeling associated with a constricted airway. I began by indicating the various spaces that I sensed were blocked off and which opened out as a cough emerged. I was also very aware of the emotional intensity of the situation I had faced when a coughing fit led to an inability to breathe.

A zig-zagging orange form that drops from the top of the drawing was initially drawn in orange felt tip, then wet with brush and water, drawn over using a dip in pen and ink and then whilst still wet touched with a loaded brush of powdered orange pigment. This was dried off using a hair dryer and then another layer was added to suggest a thin cover that had been in parts broken through by the effort to breathe. This wasn't pre-planned; it was a response to the manipulation of materials. The flow of water suspended pigments suggested forms and I followed what was intimated. My attention during this drawing was on the possibilities of bracketed representation, sometimes direct memory experiences would reassert themselves and decisions would become more directed by them. I was not sure where marks would go, but gradually I became more assured in my decision making; in effect dissolving myself into it. I was in effect inside the actions I was taking, an arriving representation of a cough being something that emerged just as much from myself as an experienced cougher, as from myself as an experienced drawer. This was I decided at last an image that carried the formal conviction that I needed to communicate how something had actually felt.

Fig. 5 Notebook page: Lungs can't access air, 2022. © Garry Barker.

Fig. 6 *The feeling of the throat closing*, 2022. © Garry Barker Digital print made from ink washes.

Fig. 7 The lungs feel restricted, 2022. © Garry Barker Digital print made from ink washes.
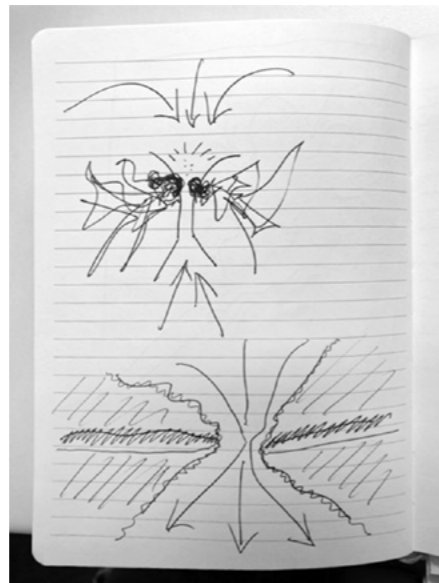

Fig. 8 Notebook page with sputum retention/dry cough images, 2022. © Garry Barker.

Fig. 9 The air in the lungs under pressure, 2022. Garry Barker Digital print made from ink washes.

Fig. 10 The restricted space in the lungs through which emerges the cough, 2022. © Garry Barker Digital print made from ink washes.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The visualisation of interoception as an aspect of perception can be understood as the drawing of informed predictions; as Seth, (2021, p.186) states in relation to perceptions, they are 'controlled hallucinations'. This, coupled with Robson's (2022) description of the mental activity relating to perception in his book, 'The Expectation Effect', as a 'prediction machine that constructs an elaborate simulation of the world' (2022, p.10), has led to an understanding that the process of interceptual visualisation through the drawing of images, not just mirrors this process of prediction, but that it can also operate as an analogous metaphoric activity.

The drawing imagination in this case is shown as based in a corporality that is both an interior and exterior experience. Morley (2001, p.76) explains, 'I am made aware of the body, habitually experienced as an "outer body" in contact with the external world, as being also an "inner body," not just occupying physical space, but as inhabited, psychical space.' The body and the world it inhabits, when imagined through these drawings, becomes a continuum; and we ought not to regard the drawings made as separate from ourselves. I have realised that an idea that begins in the body is also an extension of that body.

The imaginative representations of inner body experiences emerge from the body/mind of a particular animal. In making drawn images in response to this somatic body it is seen that drawings can be both the measure of experience and the source of the animal's figurative imagination.

Mark Johnson uses basic shapes to show how a human being's internal sense of balance can be used as an 'imaginative schemata'; (Johnson, 2007) and he explains how these basic schemata can lead to concepts such as the balance of logical argument and mathematical equality. There are various ways that these sorts of schemata can be combined, and the drawings made have embedded within them formal elements that can be read as complex body schemata.

It is in the recognition of the human body as a fluid process that is inseparable from and dissolved into the world, that we can hopefully find ways to avoid binary oppositions in our thinking and this series of drawn images hopefully helps us to visualise the situation.

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#7

The liminal narrative in temporal reality of sequential art forms

SAFA THARIB

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Safa Tharib is a UK-based academic, animation artist, filmmaker and animation researcher. He is currently a Lecturer and Research Professor at Buckinghamshire New University, which he joined in 2022. He specializes in the creation and application of 3D computer graphics to both real-time and pre-rendered works. Prior to joining Buckinghamshire New University, he was associated with a number of academic institutions. He completed his PhD in 2013 at Bournemouth University with research into the uncanny in character design, behavior and contexts. He was also associated with the National Center for Computer Animation, based at Bournemouth University, where he worked with other researchers in this field. He has been involved in a number of projects as an animation artist and filmmaker, and his work is part of the NCCA Bournemouth University collection. He has also published research on the uncanny, character design and 3D graphics. In addition to his academic and professional work, he is known under the stage name Kasper. He is currently developing a collection of sequential artworks using 3D digital methods in which he explores the process of story and character development, blending anthropomorphic characters with human characters in interwoven stories that change style and tone depending on the narrative.

Safa Tharib é académico, artista de animação, cineasta e investigador de animação com sede no Reino Unido. Atualmente, é leitor e investigador na Buckinghamshire New University, que integra desde 2022. Especializou-se na criação e aplicação de gráficos de computador 3D tanto para obras em tempo real como para trabalhos em pré-renderização. Antes de integrar a Buckinghamshire New University, esteve associado a várias instituições académicas. Completou o seu doutoramento em 2013, na Bournemouth University, com uma investigação em torno do estranho na conceção, comportamento e contextos de personagens. Esteve ainda associado ao National Centre for Computer Animation, sedeado na Bournemouth University, onde trabalhou com outros investigadores desta área. Tem estado envolvido em vários projetos enquanto artista de animação e cineasta, e o seu trabalho integra a coleção do NCCA Bournemouth University. Também publicou investigação sobre o estranho, sobre a conceção de personagens e gráficos 3D. Para além do trabalho académico e profissional, é conhecido sob o nome artístico de Kasper. Desenvolve atualmente uma coleção de obras de arte sequenciais com recurso a métodos digitais 3D em que explora o processo de desenvolvimento da história e da personagem, mesclando personagens antropomórficas com personagens humanas em histórias entrelaçadas que mudam de estilo e tom, dependendo da narrativa.

INTRODUCTION

Transient space pervades narrative on three basic levels. This article discusses the liminal nature of narrative through the perspective of the spectator, the author/artist and the elements used in the very creation of the work. Our lives and the lives of those involved in the creation of films, comics and other forms of sequential storytelling are themselves in a form of constant transition. This article aims to explore the use of transitional forms within narrative and the effects of such liminality upon the creation of the work itself. Liminality can be described as an in-betweenness, a point of existence that 'is neither here nor there' (McCooey & Hayes, 2017, p. 46). This can be thought of as a place somewhere along the point of transition without being at the starting or end points. In this article, liminality is understood to describe this transitional point between states. However, as will be later discussed many aspects pertaining to narrative are in a constant liminal state where in a start and end point are never clearly defined as to suggest that they would ever cease to be in a state of transition. This article will make a connection between the objective reality and the liminal perspective of the spectator. This idea is discussed later in this article and further explored using real-world transitional spaces in the comic *The Chronicles of the Damned*.

Narrative and our perception of the characters within said narrative are liminal in the spectators understanding. Different readings of the same film, comic and/or any sequential art form may change depending on the social and physical constructs that may or may not exist at the time of critique. There may be multiple factors that influence human perception. MacArtney et al., explores the notion of the effects of personal health on one's perspective. The human condition itself is a liminal experience that is dependent on environmental and physical effects (MacArtney, Broom, Kirby, Good, & Wootton, 2017, p. 624). It is difficult to make claims that social and individual views will change in the future. That said, even living today in what may appear to be an enlightened time when compared to social issues of the past that may or may not exist now; views will likely change. Elliot states that, 'the rhythm of change and alternation is normal in the life process and maintains homeostasis'(Elliott, 2015, p. 25). The idea of holding the same view throughout the life of an induvial or social group presents its own set of problems. 'Perseverating with ill-fitting structures of thought and action brings individuals and societies to the edge of pathology' (Elliott, 2015, p. 25). The idea that such temporal conditions are limited

to the spectator of the work is a fallacy, the artists themselves are defined by or in some cases in spite of the very social, physical and all together temporal conditions of the time and place they exist. We can understand this when we consider the changing attitudes to social themes that exist politically and are mirrored in art. Our relationship and acceptance of art be it in entertainment or more challenging forms is ever changing as a collective species.

1. OBJECTIVE REALITY

Bazin describes a physicality to an image referred to as the objective reality of it. It is here an interplay exists between the objectively real image and the fiction of the narrative. The spectator must first except the real image and then accept the fictional elements of the performance. This idea comes from theatre and was first coined by the philosopher and poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1817 (Coleridge, 1984, p. 8). The idea itself being the audience who understand they may be spectating a work of fiction must first be sufficiently convinced by said performance to willing suspend their disbelief and partake in the narrative. Bazin's ideas take this idea further wherein, 'Bazin holds that the cinematic image is more than a reproduction, rather is it a thing in nature, a mold or masque' (Bazin, 2004, p. 6). To understand this idea in a modern context we must first understand the filmmaking and photographic process of Bazin's time. While today an image is made up of different coloured of pixels, in Bazin's time film had a much more chemical process. There was no concept of mathematical resolution related to pixel density. What existed was celluloid and a chemical process to bring out those images captured by light and shadow. This becomes a contentious point when trying to apply such thinking to modern day digital practice. Bazin held a great deal of distain to German cinema stating 'German school did every kind of violence to the plastics of the image by way of sets and lighting' (Bazin, 2004, p. 121). It is safe to assume, that Bazin would not have appreciated the construction of the modern cinematic image due to the very fact that many images have little to no objectively real elements to them and what is physically there is likely heavily manipulated through digital methods.

The time and place in which a work was made has an impact and thus shapes the overall narrative of the work. The ideological concerns of the time and place may have and often do have a physical effect upon the work. Some social and physical conditions may be fleeting while other more enduring. Nevertheless, can and likely will have an impact

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on the work creating in the vicinity of the time and place. 'Liminality serves as a rendition of identifiable forms for marginal concepts and is also identified with epistemologies of physicality' (Nic Theo, 2016, p. 164).

Any idea that a work of pure fiction can free itself of this temporal reality is fundamentally flawed. 'Fiction mediates between the dichotomy of lived time and cosmological time by elaborating imaginative variations on themes' (Gerhart, 1989, p. 95). Even the most forward-thinking individual is still very much a product of their time and place, conversely so is the most regressively inclined. For even the most nostalgic of notions are still interconnected to the current time and place in which they are experienced. That said, the argument surrounding objective reality seems more pertinent when we consider a film where a sufficient amount of time has passed, and the actors and environments maybe be somewhat changed by the passage of time. Here the film remains as an objectively real record of the people and places involved in its creation. The narrative simply a reason for the film to be made in the first place.

2. A NARRATIVE OF TRANSITION

Permeations of time on narrative can be considered to have both a real-world objective effect as well as the perception of the narrative itself. The effect of time must be considered in regard to the work and how the social struggles of that time in history shape the views of the artist as well as the ease in which information was available to them. A seemingly historically accurate film would be different based on how limited the perspective of the storyteller was. Cohn suggests elements where historical information was missing will be filled in with characterisation and transformation occurs (Cohn, 1990, p. 780). The hypothetical example of a narrative based on historical information presents an interesting object of study. If we assume that where information is available, then the narrative should be the same when or wherever it was created. There are going to be significant points that need to be created to move the narrative along in the sense of story. These events will have to be created by the storytellers of the time. As we have discussed, these storytellers are liminal and influenced by the time and place they live. As such, each inception of this work would illicit different readings of the narrative depending on when and where it was created.

Lee describes how Korean ghost stories aim to invoke a discourse of social change. With such an objective, 'in order to function as social commen-

tary, the text needs to develop narrative strategies that will align the audience' (Lee, 2015, p. 127). The question being, if the social challenges of the time and place were different would these stories exist at all? If they would still exist, then how different would the narrative themes be? If we consider westerns from the 1950s or 1960s few films mention slavery, *Friendly Persuasion* (Wyler, 1956) being a rare example. This is not congruent with the Western genre films in the last twenty years. Such films have used slavery as a central theme, examples include *Django Unchained* (Tarantino, 2012), *Amistad* (Spielberg, 1997) and *Manderlay* (Trier, 2005). While slavery was a major part of 19th Century history, the very fact it does not feature in narratives of early Western cinema and features heavily in later examples speaks to the changing social discourse around the subject. It must also be argued that the intended spectator and how the work is spectated plays an equal part in the narrative discourse within the work. Schoppmeier explored the western narrative created for the video game *Red Dead Redemption 2* (Rockstar, 2018), in his paper Schoppmeier discusses how every event is awarded the same significance as any other. Schoppmeier disparagingly suggests that Red Dead Redemption's open world entertainment experiences positions all historical elements on the same level and are equally discardable. He goes on to state that politics are disavowed altogether and as a cultural work Red Dead Redemption ultimately amounts to a withdrawal from history' (Schoppmeier, 2022, p. 96). While the line between entertainment and challenging artwork may at times seem to blur. Nevertheless, the hypothetical line exists.

.The liminal perspective of the characters within the narrative is an equally important consideration as the perspective of the one who is reading/viewing it. While a narrative can exist with a single solitary protagonist or indeed no characters at all, many narratives feature other characters who contribute to the story with varying degrees of impact. Ricœur suggests that each one of these characters are transitioning through time, wherein if the narrator so wishes could direct the narrative to explore their story. 'The priority given the as yet untold story can serve as a critical example for every emphasis on the artificial character of the art of narrating' (Ricœur, 1984, p. 74). A character whether they be artificial or not is arguably always in a state of transition up until the point they cease to be. Where in at this point, they are defined by the very temporal context that surrounded them.

3. TEMPORAL REALITY

While Bazin's work largely ignored animated works (Bazin, 2004, p. xvi), one can surmise a great deal of information pertaining to the artist in a hand drawn image. During the 1940's and 50's the era in which Bazin's wrote much of his film criticism, animation was largely hand drawn. In the construction of the line and analysis of movement in hand drawn animated works one could pick out elements of a liminal and temporal reality that is co-dependent on the time and place the work was constructed. An exemplar of this could be the very ink that was used, the type of paper and the formal training of the artist(s) themselves. With the digital image, the physical presence is gone. 'Digital images not only can ignore the artist, they can ignore all reality'(Bazin, 2004, p. xvi). What remains is the Narrative. Narrative 'does not transcend but emerges out of contexts: it is situated socially in a context of communication, situated environmentally in a context of intelligible action, and situated biologically in a context of human embodiment' (Dwivedi, Nielsen, & Walsh, 2018, p. 5). In that is objectively real it is imposable to separate the real element from the fictional element completely. Barton Palmer discusses the notion of the actor and the acted, the performers must still remain themselves no matter what or who they are depicting (R. Barton Palmer, 2008, p. 67). When we consider the fact in drawn, modelled, or otherwise created characters that there is no performer in an objectively real sense, we should therefore consider the artist themselves. For here the characters and narrative which they are contained are created by an artist who themselves is positioned in a temporal reality dictated by the time and place where the character and narrative was ideated and ultimately created. 'Narrative itself, taken most fundamentally as a form of cognition, is paradigmatic of this relation of reciprocal and irreducible interdependence' (Dwivedi et al., 2018, p. 6). It is, therefore, impossible on a fundamental level to separate a particular work from the time and place it is created. Even with new digital methods of working where individuals can collaborate on a project while being at different locations are themselves positioned in a time and place. Such times and places have temporal cognitive impacts on the work created. While objective reality no longer exists in photographic mediums. What does exist is a transitional and temporal reality. Take the unique art styles that have permeated film, animation, and the sequential arts. It is clear to the spectator of such works which era they may have come from. 'The ideological significance of particular events, acts, or texts involves their relation not just to this systemic frame of reference but also to its internal, structural logic' (Dwivedi et al., 2018, p. 6).

The transition of time can have a physical negative impact on a work such as a particular art style dependent on conditions stipulated by the era of creation not having the visual fidelity of works created via a modern practice. When we consider the early arcade games of the 1970s, simple sprites were used to represent complex elements. Those engaging with the game would have to use their imagination to a great extent to envision what was being represented. That said, it would not be too long until technology improved enough that games could use sprites that had greater visual fidelity due the increased number of pixels later systems could afford. *Street Fighter 2* (Capcom, 1991). *Street Fighter 2* is the sequel to the 1986 game *Street Fighter* (Capcom, 1986). *Street Fighter 2* was a competitive fighting game that pitted two players against each other, Gingold compares its gameplay to that of rock-paper-scissors (Gingold, 2006, p. 157). *Street Fighter 2* 'is not the first competitive fighting game, it was the first major arcade success in the genre and credited with single-handedly reviving the arcade industry in the early 1990s' (Skolnik & Conway, 2019, p. 751). While *Street Fighter 2* is considered a classic, Street Fighter is not. These two games come from different eras of home console one being an 8-bit game and the sequel being a 16-bit game. *Street fighter 2's* visual style is what is referred to as pixel graphics. At the time pixel graphics was not a term used to describe the 2D art style, it is a modern term used to describe games that are made using pixels. Street fighter 2 was cutting edge at the time and was globally successful (Surman, 2007, p. 209). Featuring stereo sound, large sprites, and engaging game play. If there were no such limitations Street fighter 2 would be an exceptionally different game. An example of this is how the combo system emerged in the *Street Fighter* series. Originally this system emerged 'almost accidently' from *Street Fighter 2* due to the way the animation system worked at the time of development, this feature has now been intentionally developed in later games in the series and well as similar games developed by other companies (Ash, 2012, p. 193).

Fig. 1 Interior sequence
© Safa Tharib

4. MY PRACTICE

In the process of trying to incorporate objectively real elements into my work I have framed the narrative of my current project The Chronicles of the Damned in real world. The Chronicles of the Damned is in essence a chase story featuring where a masked time-traveller known as The Kount arrives in the city of Hemlocke through an unstable time portal to retrieve a stolen navigation crystal from an ancient and powerful witch named Aradia who has taken up residence within the city. With only seven hours before the portal will open again The Kount must navigate the city quickly to accomplish his mission or be lost forever. The main characters are themselves in a constant state of transition. While The Kount is disconnected from the world and people in which he finds himself in, Aradia up until the point the story takes place has been well integrated. It is later revealed that The Kount has been to the city previously during an earlier time when witches, ghouls and ghosts were part of everyday conversation that took place within Hemlocke. This change in social perspective forces him to accept the help of a local police detective Karla Banks. While the characters are digitally hand drawn the contextualising backgrounds are digitally manipulated photographs, see Fig. 1. Rather than photographic element be used purely as an efficient way of creating backgrounds it also allows me to plan and position characters in real world physical and objectively real locations, see Fig. 4. Here camera angles and focal lengths must be considered in the later composited characters in mind as if they were physically present. The city of Hemlocke itself is made up of real-world locations obtained photographically and with the use of 3D photogrammetry around the city of Leicester, Birmingham, as well the towns of Telford and Bridgnorth. The story is typically depicted on a square page with four panels of varying size. Manipulated photographs is not in itself a new concept in comics, there are examples of this in Japanese Manga (Mclelun, 2017). Comics and manga have been created with a wide array of different tools and technology throughout their inception. Hiroya Oku the creator of Ganz has used 3D techniques to facilitate in the creation of his works (Cimi, 2021). Shatter is considered to be the first digital comic and was made using the original Macintosh computer before the availability of digital pen inputs (Gillis & Saenz, 1985).

Due to the role the photographic images play in *The Chronicles of the Damned* the composition of each panel mirrors that one would expect in a live-action film rather than an illustrated comic. The transitional changes in technology work in unison with the depiction of the narrative to shape the story rather than despite it. This is not a limitation of the method but as previously discussed plays a part in the temporal reality of it. The images captured for the work have an objectively real property that is indeed temporal. Both interior (Figure 1) and exterior locations (Figure 2) are subject to the same external changes that any real-world object or person is. A building may last for many years or be demolished within a few days after its image was used in this work. Interior layouts may drastically change depending on new needs for that location outside of this project. As such there is no guarantee that any location will stay the same, nor would it be expected to. While meaning is instilled in these places via the fictional narrative, all places have meaning outside of the work. Real world physical spaces carry with them their own meaning that is bound to the people who inhabit or visit them. This meaning goes beyond the scope of any narrative that can utilise them for artistic storytelling purposes. Like with a live-action film an induvial enamoured with the story or characters related to the work can go and visit the real-world places. Meaning will change through time the narrative will be read differently but the objective reality of the photographic elements will remain objectively real.

One of the locations used for *The Chronicles of the Damned* was a shopping mall car park in Telford (see Figure 4). This is one of the less historically significant locations in the project. Nevertheless, this location forms part of the fictional city of Hemlocke. In real-life this car park is one of many car parks for the shopping mall and is located at the back of the large Debenhams department store. This Debenhams store has closed and is no longer operational and was closed a year prior to obtaining the photographic materials for *The Chronicles of the Damned*. While not an obvious example of significant reality, this location demonstrates the liminal landscape. One would not expect the signage of Debenhams to remain, the large store front itself may in time come to be used by another company. Using this location in *The Chronicles of the Damned* at this time demonstrates the temporal qualities that objectively real places exhibit. One may argue that this would be true whenever the images where captured, this is true because objective reality exists in every transitional moment.

While this method is not devoid of challenges that come with the creation of any sequential art medium, new challenges are introduced. Different focal lengths are use in traditional film making and photography to convey different meanings, moods, and context. The use of a photographic medium in this work combined with the semi-realistic character style means cinematic framing needs to be adhered to. As such drawing need to match the focal length
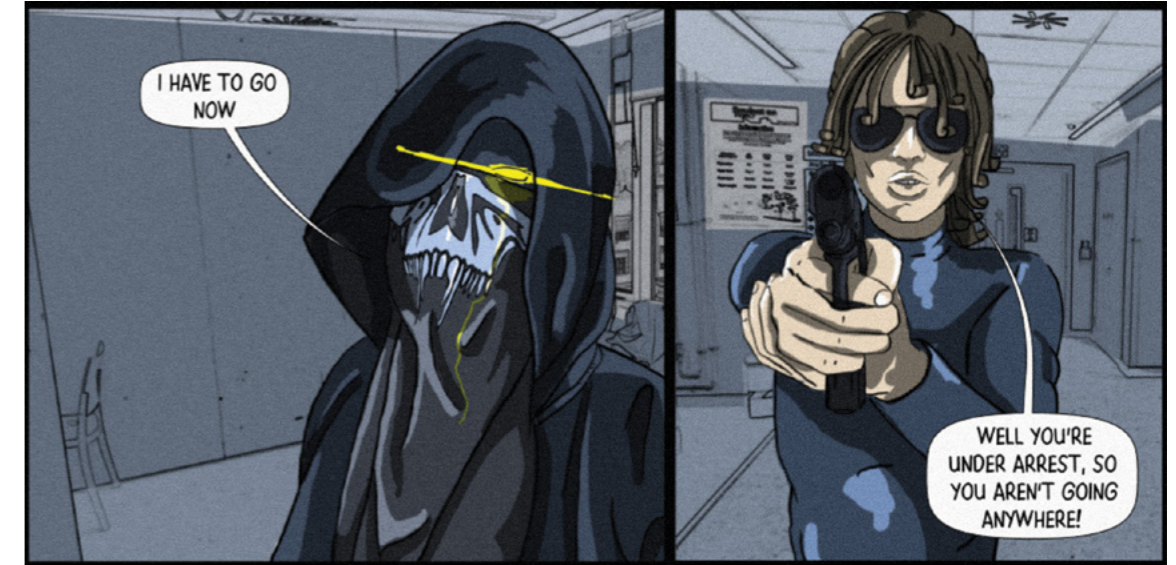
Fig. 2: Exterior
sequence © Safa Tharib

Fig. 3: Interior
sequence with varying
focal lengths © Safa
Tharib

Fig. 4: Positions

of the camera. In Figure 3, one panel at a 50mm focal length is juxtaposed against a panel at 20mm. This juxtaposition has narrative purposes express the potential danger The Kount is in with a weapon pointed close to his face. One excepted challenge was to have draw the characters at the same focal length as the backgrounds. When progressing with this project I expect a visual mismatch to occur when the lens distortion of the background and characters do not match. However, as can be seen with Figure 3, this mismatch does not interfere with the consumption of the image. One advantage of using photographic images for backgrounds is that they can be cropped and further processed to match the crop factor of different camera lenses providing the original picture is taken at a sufficiently wide angle and resolution.

While I have discussed how objective reality in the background images irrespective of the actual fictional narrative of *The Chronicles of the Damned,* there exists a temporal reality in the construction of the characters themselves. Figure 7 is a section from another project called *Clockmills Drive*. The narrative tone and formality are different to *The Chronicles of the Damned* and therefore so is the art style. Both *The Chronicles of the Damned* and *Clockmills Drive* have different methods and approaches in the construction of their image panels. As such, they each rely on different technological tools which in turn requires different approaches and working practices. Both of which are dependant of the time when the artwork was created. Both works are produced digitally, *The Chronicles of the Damned* mainly uses digital 2D tools in its creation and requires the characters to be hand drawn in various poses and expressions required by the narrative. While there are some 3D elements in both works *Clockmills Drive* uses 3D tool extensively. This requires the characters and backgrounds to be created before the image can be posed. Some of the advantages of this method is it allows for a wider range of angles when composing the image due to the ease in which the camera can be changed. Wide-angle shots such as in Figure 3 require more extensive planning and the speed and accuracy in which they can be created is dependent on artistic skill. As such, mistakes in character proportions can be made.

When comparing Figures 5 and 6 to Figure 7, the differences in the art style are apparent mainly due to the different processes employed. It would be remiss to deny the input from the creator and the execution of the various artistic decisions that need to be made in the creation of the image. Nevertheless, both technical and artistic aspects of these images are subject to the temporal changes in time as any other real object would be. This is made more apparent due to the

fact a single artist has constructed the entire image. Not only is the individual approach to the work captured in the image but also the skills and weaknesses in the representation of the subject matter.

While temporal emotional connections to objective reality may be more visibly tangible. The temporal reality of the constructed images exists and is equally dependant on the liminal social and physical changes that surround their creation. Moreover, as we have previously discussed in artforms that are directly dependent on technical advancements, here too, the availability and advancement of technology plays a role in the artistic options available to the artist and this in turn shapes the image. In the context of the project presented here, narrative construction, art style and the complexities of characterisation are all dependant on time, place, and context. With images created by an artist, be the final application physical or not it can be argued that a temporal reality exists within the constructed image.

LIMITATIONS

Some consideration must be placed on emerging creative technologies such as artificial intelligence which if considered as a temporal as a tool the argument of temporal reality still hold true. However, further discussion will be needed to understand the true liminal nature of practice that uses artificial intelligence as its use in creative work grows and develops.

CONCLUSION

As we have discussed, objective reality and liminality are intrinsically connected. In this article we have unpacked how social, technical, and physical changes impact digital creative work. This stipulates digital work to the same temporal effects that objectively real elements do. In this article we have made a case for temporal reality in the constructed image. While objective reality allows for those connected to and those not connected to the artistic work to have an emotional connection to the objectively real object or person contained within the work. Temporal reality requires engagement with the work to illicit any tangible connection in the spectator. The narrative, art style and overall construction of any creative work is dependent on the ever-changing conditions that surround it. While temporal changes in artificial works may be more apparent when a single artist has worked on them, especially when considered against a body of work. These temporal changes affect every contributor.

Fig. 5 Close-up panel
© Safa Tharib

Fig. 6 Medium-Shot
panel © Safa Tharib

LOWER EAST FUCKING SIDE, THE SHIT HOLE OF LA VALE

EXCUSE ME MISS!

POLICE, CAN I ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS?

Fig. 7 Clockmills Drive
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Flechtwerk or Weave Work: Interval, Event and Circularity

DEREK PIGRUM

The present paper traces the intermittent occurrence of the signifier of the weave and its variations like the mesh and the grid in notebook entries where the potential of the weave was neither assimilated or integrated with the author's creative agency but persistently deferred over a long period of time. Thus, the initial focus is upon the intervals between the appearances of the weave and their gradual increase in frequency in relation to the artwork where both can be seen as the emergence of the symptom. Here a parallel is drawn between Did-Huberman's study of Aby Warburg's Atlas Mnemosyne and the crowded montage of images on the board in the author's studio, the interstices between which also resemble an irregular weave or *Flechtwerk*. Continued deferral of the signifier of the weave was suspended with the three unforeseeable and contingent 'events': the etymological origin of the gate as a woven structure; a woven curtain in a Coptic Monastery separating the inner sanctum from the congregation; and sacking fissured by the interior pressure of plant growth. In addition to the psychoanalytic perspective of the signifier of the weave as symptom, we offer an alternative, but complementary reading of the weave and the mesh of enigmatic contingent 'events' as place holders that serve in the complex shaping of the singularity of the artwork and the practical knowledge of the efficacy of transformative repetition as Bruno Latour's notion of circulating reference.

Keywords: weave, interval, symptom, circulating reference.

Este trabalho traça a ocorrência intermitente do significante da trama e suas variações, tais como a malha e a grelha, em registos de cadernos de apontamentos onde o potencial do trançado não foi nem assimilado, nem integrado, como parte da ação criativa do autor, antes persistentemente adiado durante um num longo intervalo periodo de tempo. Assim, o foco inicial recai sobre os intervalos entre aparições do trançado e o seu gradual aumento de frequência na relação com a obra de arte, podendo ambos ser vistos como a emergência do sintoma. Traça-se um paralelismo entre o estudo que Didi-Huberman fez de Atlas Mnemosyne, *de Aby Warburg, e a montagem superlotada de imagens do painel no estúdio do autor, cujos interstícios também mostram semelhanças com um trançado irregular, ou* Flechtwerk. *O continuo adiamento do significante do trançado foi suspenso com três "eventos" imprevistos e contingentes: a origem etimológica da palavra "gate" [portão] enquanto estrutura tecida; uma cortina tecida num Mosteiro Copta, a separar o cenáculo da restante congregação; e um saco perfurado pela pressão interior de uma planta a crescer. Além da perspetiva psicanalítica do significante do trançado como sintoma, oferece-se uma leitura alternativa, mas complementar, do trançado e da malha de enigmáticos "eventos": a de marcações que concorrem para a complexa conformação + da singularidade na obra de arte, e para o conhecimento prático da eficácia da repetição transformadora, como decorre da noção de referência circular proposta por Bruno Latour.*

Palavras-chave: tecer, intervalo, sintoma, referência circular.

01

ESSAY

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ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

Following Semper, the archaic weave of branches woven together into a wickerwork was the precursor of the wall as dividing space within an enclosure (Semper, 1851/1989). The German word for wall is *Wand* and the *Gewand* (dress) derive from the same root indicating the woven nature of wall, clothing and cladding. Baert, following Siegert, refers to the grid-like pattern of the weave as 'the paradox of dealing equally with both occupied and empty spaces' (Baert, 2021, p. 60). In the present paper we trace the cultural inheritance of the weave, and the various forms it takes of the plait, grid, mesh, membrane, net and text (*ile*), its appearance in our artistic practices, and later its entry into the work of the series of collages entitled 'Curtains' 2022 (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) and 'The Archive' seen in fig. 3. The signifier of the weave appeared in notebook entries over a long period of time, and in drawings where erased lines of writing were supplemented with vertical lines making of erasure itself a kind of weave that highlights the etymological and material relationship between text and textile.

Metaphorically Walter Benjamin bound memory, dream and text work together in the image of weaving that makes the weave a multi-mode artefact. The Latin word for "text" (*textum*) means something woven…' (McCole, 1993, p.267) Another manifestation of the weave or *Flechtwerk* is seen in the irregular grid of masking tape between images fixed to a board in the studio. The board on which, what we have termed 'charged images' (Pigrum, 2021) are arranged along with other images in a crowded montage continually changed, photographed, and changed again in configurations that avoid definitive closure.

Pigrum and Stables have pointed to the interest artistic processes have for qualitative inquiry particularly in terms of liminality, thresholds and closure. In the article they point to the 'prolonged metonymy of unwinding' and 'the contiguity of signifiers in a state of suspended awareness' of their potential that at some point comes into focus (Pigrum & Stables, 2005, p. 4-5). In the above paper, Pigrum's notion of '*Das Gegenwerk*', a concept Wuthenow used to describe the notebooks of Paul Valery (Wuthenow, 1997, p.158), employs the two meanings of the German word *gegen* as both towards and opposed to, giving us *Das Gegenwerk* as a towards the work that is opposed to definitive closure. As such, it also has a relationship to Didi Huberman's 'survival of images' in Aby Warburg's Atlas Mnemosyne (Didi-Huberman, 2017). Massumi, writing about the psychoanalyst and artist Bracha Ettinger, describes what we perceive as the coming and going of the

weave as 'the continuance across things…of the middle', the liminal, where appearance and disappearance cross…' (Massumi, 2004, p. 20) We lingered over the appearance of the mesh of masking tape and its images, sometimes removing fragments and pasting them into a notebook, photographing and photocopying a section, and fixing it to the board.

In the paper we describe how the repeated deferral of the weave was eventually subject to a threshold where three pivotal events announced its potential as the signifier of a symptom that gave rise to formative acts. However, while we characterise the signifier of the weave as symptom we also view it and a mesh of three events from the perspective of the exercise of human powers of judgement that Scheffer quotes Nietzsche as stating, "sharpened and practised to the highest degree, reject[s], select[s], knot[s] together… [and] are culled out of many beginnings' (Schaeffer, 2000, p. 228); beginnings that we relate to Latour's circulating reference (Latour, 1999).

LINGERING OVER THE SIGNIFIER

One of the earliest entries on the weave in the author's smaller notebook series is in Notebook 12, 2006[1] with a note on the lace in a painting by Kandinsky, then again five years later in notebook 27, 2011, in an account of various forms of lace making. In notebook 28, 2012, there is a five-page reflection on Benjamin's '*Penelopewerk*' or the work of the wife of Odysseus who wove during the day what she unravelled at night to postpone the demands of the suitors. Again, an interval of five years passes before reference is made to one of Anna Opermann's ensembles showing a piece of curtain with ragged holes, one of which is patched up with thread. This was followed by the acquisition of a bag of lace remnants and a mixed media piece entitled '*Tageskarte*' or Day Ticket. From this point onwards, the time lapse between entries becomes shorter. In Notebook 43, 2017, the collage 'Tandelmarktgasse 5' is mentioned in which there appears a rent, a frayed edge and hanging threads. This is followed by a recollection of builder's nets seen on a visit to Lisbon. In Notebook 60, 2019 there is a rough drawing for the first painting that includes frayed and holed fabric. Notebook 66, 2021 contains an entry on the 'affective charge' of a thread-like vein of red marble that runs in an irregular line, around the marble cladding of the walls of the Baroque lecture hall of the Academy of Science in Vienna. In subsequent notebooks references to the weave become more frequent.

It becomes evident that for long intervals of time the actualization of the potentiality of the sig-

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1 All notebooks mentioned are unpublished and in possession of the author. To date there exist seventy-seven of the smaller series of notebooks and fifty four of the larger series.

nifier of the weave and its variations was repeatedly deferred. A possible answer to this deferral can be found in Bryant's book on Deleuze where he describes this discontinuity as a 'hollow' or hole where what is found is the unexpected 'event' that eventually induces us to re-think 'our experience on the basis of this sign,' that gradually 'forces itself to be taken notice of' (Bryant, 2008, p. 132), or the question, in the words of Roberto Calasso, of 'what is trying to repeat itself here'? (Calasso, 1994, p. 196)

EVENT

Calasso writes, 'in the idea of repetition lies our entire relationship with the past; figures detach themselves from time to time as if from an immense lapse of memory, in eager anticipation of reappearing.'(Calasso, 1994, p. 196) The first event of reappearing was the effacement by imprinting black and white paint onto reproductions of Rodin's sculptures and decorative artefacts that created the series entitled 'Gates' (see Figs 4 and 5). This series was followed by the event of the curtain hung in between the chapel and the inner sanctum seen in a Coptic Monastery, followed by photographs taken of the holes in the sacks placed over the rose bushes during the winter months in the former Hapsburg Royal Gardens in Vienna.

In Semper's *Der Stil* (1860), three strands are required to form a mesh. Semper writes '*Zum Geflecht gehören wenigstens drei Stränge die abwechselnd übereinander greifen…*' Or a braid or mesh that includes at least three strands that overlap alternately (Semper, 1860, p. 183). Three strands that join, separate, and connect. For Semper this basic *Geflecht*, weave or mesh is, as mentioned earlier, at the origins of architecture. In the section that follows we look more closely at the three strands of the mesh that gave rise to the 'Curtain' collages, but before doing so, we should bear in mind the words of Hayden White concerning 'Transitions' where he states:

> A "transition" is precisely what cannot be presented in any medium… because it is what happens "between" two states considered to be relatively stable… This moment cannot be represented because it has the same status as the blank space that divides two frames of a movie film. The moment in which something becomes something else or something other than it had earlier been cannot be presented in verbal or visual images because the moment is precisely a moment of absence of presence, the moment at which one presence is drained of its substance and filled with another'. (White, 2010, p.305)

In other words what we cannot show in a freeze frame is the moment in-between potentiality and actualization. But now we will look at why the Gates and the door have the character of a weave.

Fig. 5 *The Gate II*, 2022.
Mixed media, 30x21cm.

DOORS AND GATES

Siegert observes that the first form of the door was presumably the gate (*Gatter*)...'. The fold with a gate was recognised by Semper, according to Siegert, 'as the most original vertical spatial enclosure (*Abschluss*) invented by man' (Seigert, 2015, p.193). At the same time, the door is, what Musil in Siegert described as, 'a movable board set in a wall'. A door, according to Teyssot, offers, 'the means to settle within, but it is also what permits one to step out, to cross the border, to unsettle' (Teyssot, 2013, p. 269). This unsettling has the connotation of the uncanny. In Pigrum 2021 there is the following passage:

> '...a door becomes the interface between the ordinary and the extraordinary, the familiar and the unfamiliar or uncanny; a door (w)as part of the kind of wall we call a hoarding....the door in the hoarding could not be opened...a front door painted red, with the house number 8 above a brass letter box...Crossing a gap in the hoarding beside the door, I walked around to the other side ...and lifted the flap of the letter box. Inside was an envelope containing a collection of 1950s pin-ups or "bathing beauties", each torn in half (Pigrum, 2021, p. 20).

The *unheimliche*, or uncanny happenstance "finding" of these images and the charge they emitted, acted as the immediate impulse for a work. In Pigrum (2021), the notebook entry at the time of discovering the envelope is as follows:

> The power of the door is overwhelming yet its significance is unattainable – a door, once the front door of a house that is now part of a fence ... I shall never have, and in some way never want to have, knowledge of this strange combination of objects and events... It is similar to the unknown that exists behind every window, behind every other human being who, although they are in some way connected to me, can never be fully grasped... I accepted what lay in the letterbox and removed the photographs from the envelope.... (Pigrum, 1968, pp. 32-33)

This event had that 'unsettling' nature of the unpredictable and enigmatic quality of what Glucksmann-Buci (2013, pp. 60-61) calls, 'the double-edged power of vision: amazement interwoven with strangeness and the unknown,' or the 'powers and potentialities of the gaze in all its polysemic forms'.

Both the door as gate and, as we will see presently, the Curtain in a Coptic Monastery, were in the order of an encounter with *tuchè* or the ancient Greek word for luck that 'relies on the 'external con-

tingency' of happenstance encounters in the everyday. Following Lacan, Bowie glosses luck or *tuchè* as '*what may chance to break in upon us at any moment*' (italics are mine, Bowie, 1991, p. 103). Nussbaum, in her book on the dimensions and problems related to *tuchè* states, 'we must always be on the lookout for what is there before us in the world' and adopt 'a stance of openness towards the world and its possibilities' (Nussbaum, 1986, p. 300). Boothby (2021) relates the encounter that is *tuchè* to the experience of anxiety that Lacan would relate to affording a view of the unexpected, that prompts us to act in order to bring about a transfer of anxiety.

'NOWNESS' OF THE CURTAIN

On a visit to the Coptic monastery in Obersiebenbrunn, close to Vienna, on enquiring about the significance of the curtain in the middle of a partition situated in front of the congregation, I was told the curtain separates the congregation from the zone of sanctity housing the divine presence and has its origins in the ten curtains, coloured purple and scarlet with trimmings in gold, described in the book of Exodus (The Authorised Version of the Bible, 1954, Exodus 37, The Tabernacle verses pp. 8-38). The curtain that gives onto the inner sanctum is only drawn aside once a year by the high priest who performs the ritual sacrifice of the Passover. For the author, the sight of the curtain in the Coptic chapel was in the order of an intense experience of the charged image.

When closed the curtain conceals the entrance to the inner sanctum, when drawn aside it gives onto the threshold of the space beyond. Teyssot states that Walter Benjamin was deeply interested in places of transition such as the threshold, stating:

> The Threshold must be carefully distinguished from the boundary. A *Schwelle* (threshold) is a zone. Transformation, passage, wave action are in the word *schwellen*, swell, and etymology ought not to overlook these senses. On the other hand, it is necessary to keep in mind the immediate tectonic and ceremonial context which has brought the word to its current meaning. (Teyssot, 2013, p.87).

The curtain in the chapel in the Coptic monastery sets the scene and structure of the interwoven nature of concealment and unconcealment, of presence and absence. In an article in German by Claudia Blümle on De Chirico's painting, 'The Riddle of the Oracle', we see two curtains, one that opens onto a landscape, and one that almost completely conceals a statue in white marble of which only the head is visible.

In the de Chirico painting, an open curtain on one side invites the viewer to lose herself in an infinite distance and on the other side with a desire to see the full extent of what is behind the curtain (Blümle, 2016). Rudy, writing about art in the middle-ages, places the role of the curtain in visual works of devotional art as in front of an 'object of import' and its drawing aside as revelatory (Rudy, 2015). The curtain in the Coptic monastery serves as both a border and a threshold. Teyssot states that: for both Simmel and Benjamin, the border reveals itself through an "in-between condition". Any threshold or marginal zone induces a reciprocal state--it looks two ways at once' (Teyssot, 2013, p. 270), like the Janus head. We now turn from the curtain in the Coptic chapel to the holed sacks in the former royal gardens in Vienna.

'THE INNERMOST IMAGE OF WHAT HAS BEEN': THE SACKS

The function of the sacks, in what was once the gardens of the Hapsburg Royal Palace in the centre of Vienna, and in Schönbrunn Palace gardens on the outskirts of Vienna, are to protect the rose bushes from the rigours of winter. The rose bushes are first covered with heavy-duty paper bags and then sacks. In spring the new growth of the rose bushes penetrates the paper bags, frays, and eventually perforates the sacking. The holes are of different sizes, some are small fissures, and others gaping rents from which hang loose threads.

In an essay entitled 'Drapery of the Sidewalks' Didi-Huberman also refers to the, 'shapeless sacking' used to channel the flow of the gutter into drain outlets in the streets of Paris. Didi-Huberman describes the sacks as 'archaic objects' and 'time imprints', as '...never far from a hole, whether manhole or sewer vent': a hole that is the liminal zone between 'reality and disappearing'. Didi-Huberman, describes the abject sacking in terms of 'interface and fold, extension, envelope, inherence, entrails and surface' (Didi-Huberman, 2005, p.269), terms equally applicable to the sacks covering the rose bushes. In the series of collages entitled 'Curtains', an image inheres in the hole cut out from the photocopy of the holed sacks. Holes for which there can be no question of invisible mending.

Didi-Huberman in his essay asks how the sacks thrown onto the gutters of Paris, '...offer to the present – to the modern, if I may say so – the chance to grasp, if only by a ragged thread, "the inmost image of what has been"? Here Didi-Huberman, borrows a word from Walter Benjamin, the adjective *innerste Bild* or 'the inmost image of what has been', and

'the silent motion that transforms them', a motion of '*tactile sensuality*' and '*visceral reality*' (Didi-Huberman, 2005, p.271). Tim Ingold states:

> But if it is the weave of the mesh that holds the components of the assembly together, it is also because of the wear and tear, the fraying and eventual breakage of its constituent lines that things fall apart...Wear and tear holds the promise of renewal (Ingold, 2021, pp.219-220).

A renewal that takes place in the interval.

PROBING THE INTERVAL

The interval is 'an intermediate zone', an interstitial zone, like the prolonged intervals in-between the appearance of the signifier of the weave and its variations and derivations that, with the mesh of the three events mentioned above, underwent an intense contraction; a contraction that eventually took the form of the mixed media work Portal I and the painting 'Portal II' (see Fig.6 and 7), and two notebooks devoted almost entirely to reflections on the weave. With this transition we are, as Massumi quoting Whitehead says, 'on the 'utmost verge' of events taking shape in their own 'process of self-completion' (Massumi, 2015, pp. 207-208); a process of self-completion best described by Virginia Woolf in her Dairies where she writes:

> ...would like to come back to diverse notes she had made 'after a year or two, and find that the collection had sorted itself and refined itself and coalesced, as such deposits so mysteriously do, into a mould transparent enough to reflect the light of life and yet steady, tranquil compound with the aloofness of a work of art. (Woolf, 1975, pp. 13-14)

FLECHTWERK AND THE FRAME

The painting entitled 'Portal II' was initially inspired by a photograph taken of the broken mesh of a wire fence in the interval between the encounter with the curtain and the holed sacks. Initially, the broken, disjointed mesh of the wire, was photocopied, taped to the board in the studio, removed and used as the impulse for a painting where the image filled the entire canvas. Onto the structure of the mesh was superimposed a still from a film by Tarkovsky of a man standing in the frame of a doorway with his back to the viewer. This image had previously used in the centre of the mixed media work Portal I, seen in Fig.7.

The source of Portal I was the structure of a reproduction found by chance made in the 16th century by members of the Farrer family in Little Gidding (Hampton, 2015, p. 57). In Portal II the image of the man in the doorway passes into and out of the tangled, disjoined wire, or what Tarkovsky termed the 'perforated nature of existence'. Tarkovsky states:

> ...what you see in the frame is not limited to its visual depiction, but it is a pointer to something stretching out beyond the frame to infinity, a pointer to life', and on the next page, 'Once in contact with the individual who sees it, separates itself from its author, starts to live its own life, undergoes changes of form and meaning. (Tarkovsky, 1989, p.118)

Thiis-Evensen describes the function of the opening in the wall that is the door in terms of the 'frame motif' that, he states:

> conveys the feeling of entering *through* something, the split motif of passing *between* something, the deep set motif of entering *into* something...consciously or unconsciously we transfer our experiences to the motif we see. (Thiess-Evensen, 1987, p.259)

In the 'Curtain' collages the hole in the sackcloth encloses another image, but does this constitute the image of the sackcloth as a *parergon* or frame? Following Derrida 1987, we ask, 'Where does a *parergon* begin and end?' The image of the holed sackcloth is a photocopy where the hole has been cut and placed over another image. So, which is the *ergon*, the work, and which is the *parergon*, the frame? Or are they both something in-between a work and a frame? or an 'undecidable' *Terrain vague*.

The Gates, the image enclosed within the hole in the sacks and Portal I and II achieved closure. Conceived spatially, closure is a limit. Conceived of in terms of temporality Critchley states:

Closure is the activity or process of bringing something to its conclusion, completion... (however) closure must be rigorously distinguished from the concept of end; for an end signifies the completion of the act and not the act of completion. Thus, on a temporal level, closure signifies a state of being prior to the end, the bringing of a process to its conclusion. Closure, in both the spatial and temporal context, delimits both "inside" and "outside" of the closure. (Critchley, 1992, p.62)

Critchley states that closure always fails to circumscribe completely, always leaving openings that offer 'the promise of a new beginning'. If we think of the completed work as what Derrida referred to as a 'minor structure necessarily closed' (Derrida, 1987, p.54) then we can think of the signifier of the weave as a symptom opening continually beyond closure as the repetition of the unalterable nature of the unconscious that is at the same time not immobile, but through repetition with difference presents itself in different guises giving it the character of *Das Gegenwerk*, of a 'towards' that avoids definitive closure.

On the board in the studio there is an arrangement of what we have termed 'charged' images' (Pigrum, 2021), subjected to arrangement, rearrangement, occasional removal and destruction, insertion in a notebook, or as the ready-to-hand image in the composition of a work that, smudged with paint, is most often returned to the board. On removing an image from the crowded montage of the board another image appears, and beneath this, the board as a palimpsest of images (see fig.8 below). Didi-Huberman, writing about Aby Warburg's Atlas Mnemosyne, states:

> The Mnemosyne Atlas... is in its way, an avant-garde object. Not because it *makes a break with the past,* of course (a past into which it ceaselessly plunges); but because it breaks with a certain way of *thinking about the past*... The Warburgian break consists precisely in *having thought about time itself as a montage* of heterogeneous elements'. (Italics are Didi-Huberman's) (Didi-Huberman, 2017, p.317)

Didi-Huberman continues: 'This is the anthropological lesson of the 'survival of formations', which 'find(s) such a strong parallel in the meta psychological domain of the form of 'symptom formations' mentioned earlier.

THE SYMPTOM OF THE WEAVE AS 'CIRCULATING REFERENCE'

There is a bridge that exists between the unconscious symptom that Didi-Huberman refers to, our notion of *Das Gegenwerk*, and Bruno Latour's, 'circulating reference'. Bersani views this bridge as residing in the nature of the unconscious 'because (or not only because) it is the hiding place of the repressed; rather, the unconscious... is the reservoir of possibility, all that might be but is not,' and continues on the same page, 'Lacan places the unconscious between perception and consciousness...(where) it transforms subjecthood from psychic density into pure potentiality' (Bersani, 2008, p.25). Kochan quotes Latour on 'circulating reference' as phenomena that 'are not found at the *meeting point* between things and the forms of the human mind; phenomena are what *circulate* all along the irreversible chain of transformations'. Kochan goes on to state that 'phenomena ... circulate through a complex multistage sequence of material practices...'(Kochan, 2015, p.105). Although Latour is writing about science, following Kochan we perceive a vital link here to the way we have traced the transitional appearance of the weave in a slow process of emergence that gathers transformational momentum within practices that have their foundation in the contingent nature of what the world bestows, notebooks and the spatial configurations like that of the board and its palimpsest of images are drawn ever deeper into a growing, overdetermined array of associations that, at the same time, repeatedly postpone the actualization of potentiality. Here, then a link is suggested between Didi-Huberman's symptom and Latour's 'circulating reference.' However, it is important to make clear that 'circular reference' in science has the goal of replication with identical results, while the artistic processes described are based on the contingent, enigmatic and often uncanny encounter that draws into its rhythm of deferrals and intervals the transition to the shaping of the complexity of the symptom and the singular work of art that is seen below entitled '*Flechtwerk*'.

CONCLUSION

The weave stands forth in all its complexity as something that arrived unexpectedly and began at intervals to repeat itself in the notebooks, and in the margins of other things, other images. While the appearance of the image of the weave was lingered over attentively it was repeatedly deferred. Eventually the appearance of the weave increased in frequency and intensity. With the occurrence and interweaving of
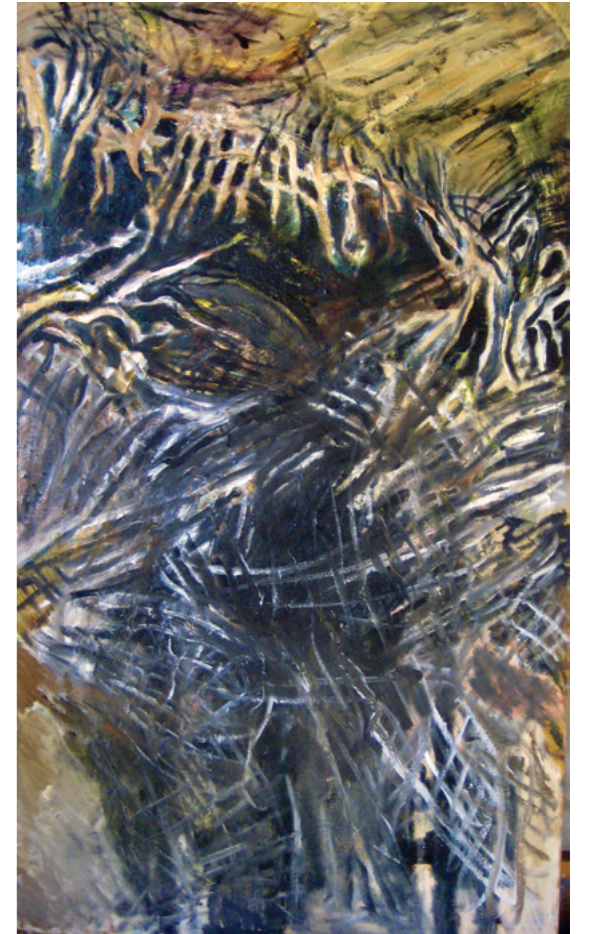
the mesh of three events, where each one was a variation on liminal spaces. At the same time, each one existed by virtue of a surround or frame that became the source of the emergence of the signifier of the weave as both symptom and *Gegenwerk*, or the work towards the work that avoids definitive closure. It has been suggested that, in addition to the emergence of the signifier of the weave as a symptom in the perspective of Didi Huberman on Aby Warburg's Atlas, the theme of the weave can also be seen from the perspective of what Bruno Latour describes as, 'circular reference', that explores and operates with an object or image coming from the outside that possesses a potentiality that only gradually moves towards actualization and a closure that leaves openings that offer 'the promise of a new beginning'.

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Drawing creating space

JOHN STELL

Some recent drawings are discussed in which the author recorded the passage of time in a familiar domestic space. Initially expecting to represent the space using ideas from different kinds of geometry, it is found that the drawings do not fit into this framework. Alternative conceptualisations are that the drawings record a process of exploration of the space, or that drawing is creating a space that only exists by virtue of the drawing process itself. The interactions between these options support reflections on how perception and spatial experience is mediated through drawing.

Keywords: spatial experience, drawing, tracing, time, architectural space

Discutem-se desenhos recentes em que o autor registou a passagem do tempo num espaço doméstico que lhe é familiar. Inicialmente, a expectativa era a de representar o espaço com recurso a ideias de diversos tipos de geometria; concluiu-se que os desenhos não se coadunam a este enquadramento. Concetualizações alternativas indicam que os desenhos registam um processo de exploração do espaço ou que o desenho cria um espaço que apenas existe em virtude do próprio processo de desenho. As interações entre estas hipóteses dão base a reflexões sobre como a perceção e a experiência do espaço são mediadas através do desenho.

Palavras-chave: experiência espacial, desenho, traçado, tempo, espaço arquitetónico

THE SPACE IN THE ROOM

I am in a familiar domestic space. A room, roughly square and maybe almost 5m on each side. There are windows in two opposite walls, and the other pair of parallel walls has doorways in diagonally opposite corners. There is a staircase in a third corner, where once a door led in from the outside when the original building was sub-divided into a terrace of small houses. Once the window in the rear wall was a doorway leading to a lean-to extension of which only the walls remain outside. This doorway itself had earlier been a window, and the precise sequence of alterations and interventions is largely undocumented, but the traces left are in general clearly readable.

It is a space I have known for almost 60 years, although there are no clear recollections from the earliest part of that time. The building itself only escaped demolition through the intervention of my father, who must have meticulously recorded it in measurements in feet and inches as well as in photographs that are archived but have not been studied or seen for years. While not somewhere I lived until relatively recently in the span of 60 years, it carries memories. Given the doorways and the staircase it has more of a transitional feel than a room to settle in. Often called "the middle room", naming it in relation to other spaces rather than its intrinsic qualities, it was often a route from one place to another rather than a destination.

I am facing the challenge of how to draw this space, or even simply how to draw in the space. Is there, maybe, a toolkit of ways of representing space that can be applied here? How can anything new be conjured out of such a familiar space?

REPRESENTATIONS OF SPACE

One obvious approach is the conventional plotting into space of coordinates. Taking numerical measurements, the room can be reduced to several polygonal surfaces joined along specified lines. Such things are routinely now processed by software that allows us to derive three-dimensional virtual reality visualisations, as well as conventional plans, sections, elevations, perspective renderings and other projections such as isometric, axonometric, etc. The process of gathering the numerical coordinates yields the room as a surface, approximately a rectangular box. Solidity is reduced to the interior faces of the walls, the floor, and the ceiling. The thick stone walls are indicated without substance.

This seems an unpromising direction. Surely such a conventional process would be incapable of

revealing anything new about my understanding of the space as part of my experience. Several authors have questioned the relationship between this kind of representation of space and actual human experience. For example, Whitehead (1929, p.v.) who in *Process and Reality* stated: 'In this enquiry we are concerned with geometry as a physical science. How is space rooted in experience?' This geometry as a physical science was to be something different from the conventional geometry of Euclid. The connection between perception and geometry was also considered in need of investigation by Felix Klein, one of the most notable geometers of the 19th century.

> Psychologists, by the way, now generally distinguish (following the example of E.H. Weber) visual space, tactile space, motor space as perceptual substrates. But how do they combine themselves into 'geometrical space?' Associations certainly play a role, but are they enough for an explanation? E.H. Weber also distinguished a general spatial sense. (1909, p. 48)

More dissatisfaction with the ability of coordinate geometry to model the "real world" in assuming that measurements could be made to arbitrary degrees of precision, is shown by Poston (1971a,b). Poston argued for a "fuzzy geometry" in which points which were close enough together would be indistinguishable. This applied to time as well as to space: "*a film builds visually continuous motion out of visually indistinguishable pictures at visually indistinguishable moments*" (Poston 1971b, p. 28). Poston's geometry is mathematically very different from the conventional account of space, but it appears to offer little insight into the representation of space through drawing. When making measurements in practical everyday situations there may not be an explicit tolerance or limit of distinguishability, but measurements are made to the nearest centimetre or whatever is appropriate. The view of fuzzy geometry, also called tolerance geometry, fits how we behave.

Despite the many dismissals of conventional geometry as capturing experienced space, describing the room in terms of cartesian coordinates is a somewhat surprising exercise to carry out in the traditional way by hand. Imagining at first that this must be simply reducing the room to a collection of numerical coordinates, you soon realize that there is a large gap between simply knowing the coordinate points themselves and the knowledge of how they relate to each other. It is necessary to know which lines between points and which surfaces bounded by lines, are actually part of the model of the room. Even as a thought-experiment, or an imagined

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drawing, the process is very instructive in terms of experience. Adopting the traditional tools of tape measure and notebook, I have to physically move along the edges of the room. There are physical challenges to completing the task alone, especially in anchoring one end of the measuring tape. The distances themselves are recorded in a specific sequence that follows a sketch plan. Not only the edges are followed with the measure; there are also invisible distances between the opposite corners that are needed to be sure the shape has been grasped. The plan is not all. The lack of true verticals in the walls means more careful use of the plumb line, ladders and recording.

The numerical model at the end of the measuring process holds little trace of the physical experience of the space. However, we can consider the process not as a means to an end, not as a way to obtain the all-important numbers, but as a performance where the idea of gathering measurements provides directions. This viewpoint, including the importance of moving through the space to make measurements, reminds us that human experience of movement in space and Euclidean geometry are by no means unrelated. Ivins has a footnote that

> If one remembers correctly, it was Ernst Mach who picturesquely pointed out that if [humans] were fastened immovably to rocks like molluscs in the sea they could have no sensory intuition of Euclidean space. (1938, p. 8)

This forms part of Ivins' argument that Euclidean space derives from movement and the tactile environment, but the projective geometry that supports perspective descriptions is the result of visual experience. The particular case of parallel lines is significant here. The tactile experience of moving one's hand over parallel edges on a piece of cut wood supports the idea of parallel lines never meeting. However, the visual experience of the edges of straight road meeting in the distance leads to another geometry.

Thinking of taking conventional measurements as a process in this way brings in experience but seems likely to produce drawings that are more conceptual rather than having a visual relationship to the experience. I reject the idea of carrying out this process in detail and consider if there are other notions of space that might be more productive. Whitehead's search for a "geometry of experience" did lead to a different way of thinking about space and its computational representation. Might this provide a way of drawing the space that can reveal something about perception? Looking for geometry based on experience, Whitehead rejected the

conventional infinitely small points as the building blocks of the theory. Points have no physical size; they cannot be perceived even in theory. Whitehead (1929) builds a theory of space and time on the idea of "extensive connection". Spatial perception can detect regions which extend in space but not infinitesimal points. These regions are the building blocks of Whitehead's account, and two regions may have a relationship of "connection" to each other. Thinking of regions in a simple case as two dimensional shapes that can be drawn on a flat surface, connection would correspond to the shapes overlapping or touching on the boundary. This approach has developed into a representation technique applied in Artificial Intelligence (Cohn and Renz, 2008) where spatial relationships between entities are central. Such relationships may be encoded in terms of a primitive notion of connection and can include various kinds of "inside", "through", "between", etc.

I consider how these relationships would be drawn. It is possible to build up a network of entities linked by labelled arcs for the relationships between them. Just as with the imagined exercise of the process of gathering detailed measurements, the drawings that would result do not seem to be essentially visual. That is, they carry no content beyond what is expressible in text. I can write that "the diagonally opposite corners have doors" without losing anything from making a diagram containing labelled blobs for the entities (corners and doors) and drawing arrows labelled by "diagonally opposite" and "is in". This can be a drawing, but I am looking for something essentially visual and not purely conceptual. I try a different approach.

THE FIRST DRAWINGS

A large piece of paper is unrolled onto the floor of the room. The floor is clear of furniture and the paper sits on the stone flags trying to regain its rolled up form. Sunlight comes through the windows on one side. The shape of each of the four openings appears as a bright area on the paper. I draw around the perimeter of each of the bright areas with a stick of 9B graphite. Sometimes it catches on imperfections in the underlying floor; sometimes the boundary between dark and light is not straight. The glass has irregularities that disturb the outline and the sunlight is sometimes delimited not by the metal edges of the frame but by striking it at such an angle that it is caught by the stone mullions dividing the parts of the window.

I try to work at a regular pace, drawing once around the first outline then moving on to the next and eventually coming back to the first one after

Fig. 1 Drawing from first series showing pyramidal forms (Photograph of drawing in situ, about 150 x 42cm, John Stell, 2022).
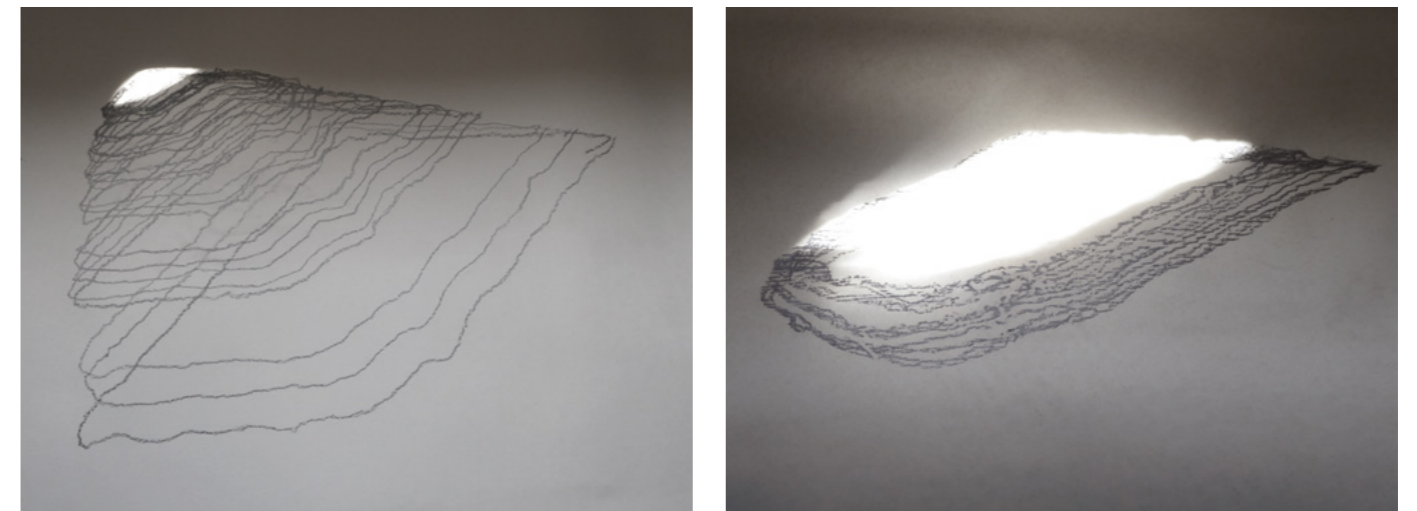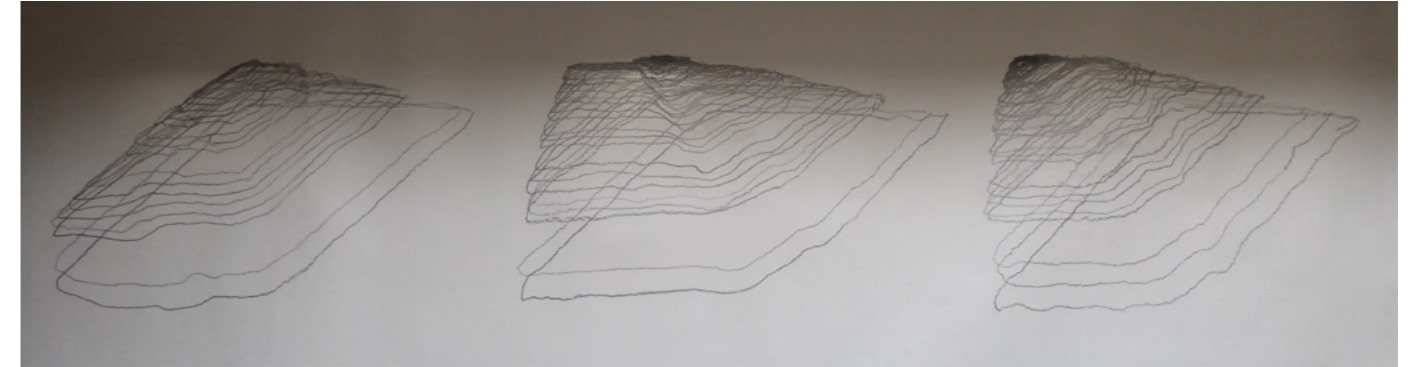
Fig. 2 Drawings from first series showing layers of light (Photographs of drawing in situ, John Stell, 2022).

completing the last. By the time I return to the first outline the changed position of the Sun is quite apparent. I am now starting to draw the first outline in a different position. The effect was actually visible even after drawing the first outline once; now the drawing of the other three having intervened, the effect is marked. The second tracing of each of the openings is displaced and also has a modified shape. As the Sun continues to climb higher, the bright areas on the paper shrink in height. The shrinking in height introduces a new feature. Making an effort to trace at approximately the same rate all the time, I find that the shrinking height of the shapes means the perimeters become shorter. Each one is completed in less time as the drawing goes on. Keeping to the process of drawing each one in succession I notice the traces of each become closer and closer. The interval in which it had to wait its turn to be recorded becomes less and less.

Eventually the bright areas shrink to nothing at all. The drawing has reached its natural conclusion. Unexpected aspects of the stonework around the windows are evident. The rhythmic process of repeatedly drawing in the same clockwise fashion has encouraged the paper to twist slightly. Even weighed down to prevent it rolling back up, it has not remained quite fixed with respect to the floor. What is most striking is the sense that the drawing presents a three-dimensional form. Something pyramidal has emerged out of the movements, Fig. 1.

The light through the piercings in the boundary of the room must, I realize, be a kind of prism roughly rectangular in section and bounded horizontally by the floor and vertically by the window. Maybe this volume might be revealed through dust or smoke if the room as a whole could be sufficiently darkened. But the volume appearing in the representation on the paper does not appear to be this itself; it seems to be some form created through the changing shape of just one face of this prismatic solid as becomes more and more skewed, shrinking until the volume it bounds collapses into flatness when the Sun's rays become parallel to the outside wall of the room.

The impression of light somehow describing a pyramid seems similar to Anthony McCall's Solid Light films from the 1970s. In my drawings the lighted area is a two-dimensional area shrinking over time but generating a three dimensional solid, whereas McCall's most well-known *Line Describing a Cone* (1973) appears to the audience as a one-dimensional line sweeping out the two-dimensional surface of cone, but not the interior volume of the cone. In *Four Projected Movements* (1975) the four installation drawings (Kelly 2013, pp.188-189) show a projected line sweeping out the quadrant base of

a quarter cone so that a three-dimensional solid is described. This is still different from what seems to be shown in my drawing, which would be more like the base of a cone rising up to the apex as it moves through the volume. Anne Wagner (2013, p. 17) writes about how McCall's films originate in drawings, a white line on a black background for each frame. Thinking about my first drawings, the process is reversed: the light comes before the drawing and leaves black traces on a white background. There appeared to be a volume depicted in the drawings, but it is initially elusive; I was only able to make sense of what it was when I saw that there was a new way to think of the space in the room, Fig. 2.

A FRESH SENSE OF SPACE

It was only after making the first drawings that a new aspect of the space became evident. This way of thinking of the room is not in the least novel or, in retrospect, surprising. It was simply a way of relating to the passage of time in the room that had never occurred to me as a vivid experience as opposed to a consequence of well-known facts. The interesting aspect is not the realisation itself, but the question of how this realisation came about, and whether there might be some mechanism that could be relied on to produce such new viewpoints – rather like a method in the same way that conventional perspective arises from a method and way of understanding space?

I had started imagining the room as a static space, within which people moved and outside which the rest of the world had carried on for at least two centuries and probably closer to three. I was in the room and the Sun moved outside the window. At some point this view flipped quite suddenly and I thought of the room moving, being titled at different angles to the Sun as the Earth rotated each day and progressed on its annual orbit. Instead of the paper recording a moving event as a window through which movement is observed, the paper itself was moving. As time went on the paper was oriented at changing angles to the light from the Sun. The paper was moving with the whole room and the changing position of the light on the paper was caused by the window meeting the parallel beams of sunlight at differing angles.

We are accustomed to thinking of the Earth moving around the fixed Sun, while also often thinking as if the Earth is stationary. For our common-sense everyday experience, we can interchange between the two views and, outside the realms of physics and astronomy which are invisible to everyday experience, these are two interchangeable views. The idea

of relative motion gives us the idea than one of these views is as good a way of thinking as the other. But we have no everyday way of distinguishing them by experience, although scientific experiments are another matter. This indistinguishability appears in a reported question of Wittgenstein:

> He once greeted me with the question: Why do people say that it was natural to think that the sun went round the earth rather than that the earth turned on its axis?' I replied: 'I suppose, because it looked as if the sun went round the earth.' 'Well,' he asked, 'what would it have looked like if it had looked as if the earth turned on its axis? (Anscombe, 1959, p. 151)

Seeing that it was possible to conceive of the paper as moving and the Sun as fixed enabled me to understand what the pyramidal volumes described earlier represented. Somehow the floor was tilting towards where the windows were. The precise motion due to the rotation of the Earth is not easy to envisage and is more complex than turning on an axis along where the window wall meets the floor. However, as a very crude model, turning in this way is easy to imagine and does have the correct effect that as time passes the floor moves towards where the windows used to be. A quick experiment with a paper substitute for the wall with windows and floor taped to a roughly hemispherical mixing bowl which is then rotated provides a check that this picture captures the most basic features.

On the floor the bright area of each window changes over time in shape but also is moving upwards so it must sit above the earlier, larger, illuminated areas. The roughly pyramidal volume made by this sequence of shapes, this succession of diminishing layers, can be imagined as rising above the largest area, the one drawn first in the drawing. This can be seen as a volume of light, and, in comparison with the Solid Light films of Anthony McCall mentioned above, the projection is onto a surface moving towards the projector but at a constantly changing angle. There is no direct visual illusion of the volume itself, but the projection on the paper of the slices through allows us to imagine such a volume. The pyramids grow as if each circuit of the outline belongs on a separate video frame. If able to draw fast enough two adjacent frames would appear visually the same, so we are back with Poston's fuzzy geometry:

> Similar considerations apply to measuring short intervals of time as with short distances of space, and the idea of time as a fuzzy continuum is equally well motivated by perception; just as a newspaper photo builds a visually continuous line out of visually indistinguishable dots at one moment,

a film builds visually continuous motion out of visually indistinguishable pictures at visually indistinguishable moments. (Poston, 1971b, p. 28)

SECOND DRAWINGS

I start a second series of drawings. It is earlier in the morning and the sun is only beginning to enter the windows on the floor. This is much larger, about 2m by 4m. I work as before in completing each window outline at a regular pace before moving on to the next one. Starting earlier means that the sunlight is obscured by trees and a plant immediately outside the window casts a shadow on the paper. The outlines of the windows are not sharp. The way the light filters through the trees is combining with the double-glazing to conjure multiple edges for the windows. Later in the day, as the sunlight becomes stronger and the trees are out of the way, this effect vanishes. But to start with, the process of just drawing the window edges is no longer simple. I decide to draw the multiple edges and to include the shadow of the large teasel that has established itself outside the window. The spiky seed heads create distinctive marks. The combination of gentle winds and light through the moving trees means that these marks are only rough indications of where things were. In the early stages the drawn shapes change rapidly from one iteration to the next, Fig. 3.

The whole drawing is an almost continuous process of about four and a half hours. It is physically tiring and the end result bears traces of the process of having to crawl and walk over the paper. On viewing the drawing in a vertical setting (Fig. 3) two features stand out. One is the way that the repeated drawing of the window boundaries rather obscures the sense of movement – having so many closely drawn images negates the effect of change rather than enhances it. The other feature is that there is an area (Fig. 4) where the indications of the teasel dominate and the later window edges have created a framework that appears to contain the plant. It is like a greenhouse with the window tracery caging the plants inside.

This framework containing the outside prompts another change in how the room can be conceptualised. The room is still tipping up as the Earth rotates, but it is no longer a solid, cube-like form moving through space. The successive positions of the windows and edges of walls trace out a moving cage. From the way the light changes, the earlier position of the plant (with respect to a fixed Sun) is later a position actually inside the room. It is possible to see the room like a carriage in a train. A person re-

Fig. 3 Second series, overall view
of first drawing (Graphite on
multiple paper sheets, 2390x3560
cm, John Stell, 2022)

Fig. 4 Second series,
drawing in progress
and detail from Fig. 3
(John Stell, 2022).

mains seated in a train but occupies a succession of locations with respect to the track which are all, at different times, locations in every different carriage. The room traces out a passageway, a tunnel in space and time that intersects with the form swept out by the plant as it moves. This is not in the least mysterious or novel; two people can follow the same road at different times but never meet. However, thinking of the room in this way feels very different from the idea of a fixed space which contains things. The walls have dissolved and the distinction between inside and outside becomes unclear in the new perspective.

THE THIRD DRAWINGS

The walls have lost their solidity with the second viewpoint. The drawing itself however seems too solid. The process of drawing continually has given such a closely packed framework that it appears to be woven densely. Exploring how to move away from this, I adopt the approach of drawing only every 15 minutes. Each quarter of an hour I go through the same process as in the previous drawing. I draw round the outlines, including the teasel standing outside and indicate some of the uncertainty in the outlines in the earlier part of the morning. The visual contrast is not especially striking. The framework of lines is more open, especially toward the end. The way the shape of the window changes is somewhat more pronounced. However, the experience of making the drawing is quite different, even though the drawing itself does not seem to convey this. Instead of drawing the four windows in order and immediately repeating the process, I have some 12 or 13 minutes each time to do something else. There is a clear experience of a succession of discrete drawings being made. Time is experienced as a series of snapshots rather than as a continuing duration, Fig. 5.

This time the drawing does not evoke a new perception of the room in the same way as before. By leaving the room and focussing attention on something else between each episode I am struck by the way the space is separate from my experience of it. In the earlier drawings I had a sense of recording something like an ongoing event that I was a part of. By sampling the state of the room at discrete times, I experience the room in a more separate way. It appears to have its own trajectory which I am no longer carried along with. This links back to the approach of Whitehead using extensive connection between regions of space, and more generally of space-time. Whitehead (1925, p.75) writes about the importance of events in his theory giving an example: "the event which is the passage of the car is a part of the whole

life of the street". The events which are the continued existence of the room and my own life have relationships that are more complex than one being a part of the other. In a sense, they intersect with each other, Fig. 6.

The idea of intersecting trajectories recalls some much earlier drawings (Fig. 6) made with an harmonograph (Goold n.d., Ashton, 2003). The drawing in Figure 6 was made with a device having two pendulums that could swing in elliptical orbits. One carried a board with paper, the other had an arm with a pen. This form of mechanised drawing has both the pen and the paper moving separately. The combination of the two motions constructs the drawing. Initially, the relevance of the harmonograph seems to be the continuous trace it displays, and the way this can be imagined as the progressive motion of the room throughout the drawing. In the first and second series of drawings I can see I was following the trace, being in the moving room, all the time. In the third series, I was sampling the trace at discrete intervals while on another trajectory that cut across, backwards and forwards.

The harmonograph has another and more telling relevance; one that applies not only to the third series of drawings. Both the harmonograph and the drawing process I explored are made by a combination of the paper moving and the drawing instrument moving in a separate motion relative to the paper. With the harmonograph, the pen has a determinate path that is effectively independent of the paper. In the drawings described here, the motion of the Earth carries the paper and me along with it. But the trace left by the graphite is made by a separate motion, driven by the way my hand moves and my perception of the position of the boundary of the window outlined on the paper. This suggests further experiments, and simply drawing round the outline of just one of the four windows without stopping to switch to the next window, does indeed produce a single line that repeatedly intersects itself very like the trace of an harmonograph.

REFLECTION ON THE PROCESS OF DRAWING

The drawings discussed here have been made by a very traditional technology of using graphite on paper. To step back and consider what the conclusions are from this activity it is instructive to consider a view from one of the pioneers of a very different technology in the context of space. Char Davies (2004, p. 103) emphasises that virtual reality's "perceptually refreshing potential is possible *only* to the extent that the virtual environment is designed to be *unlike* those
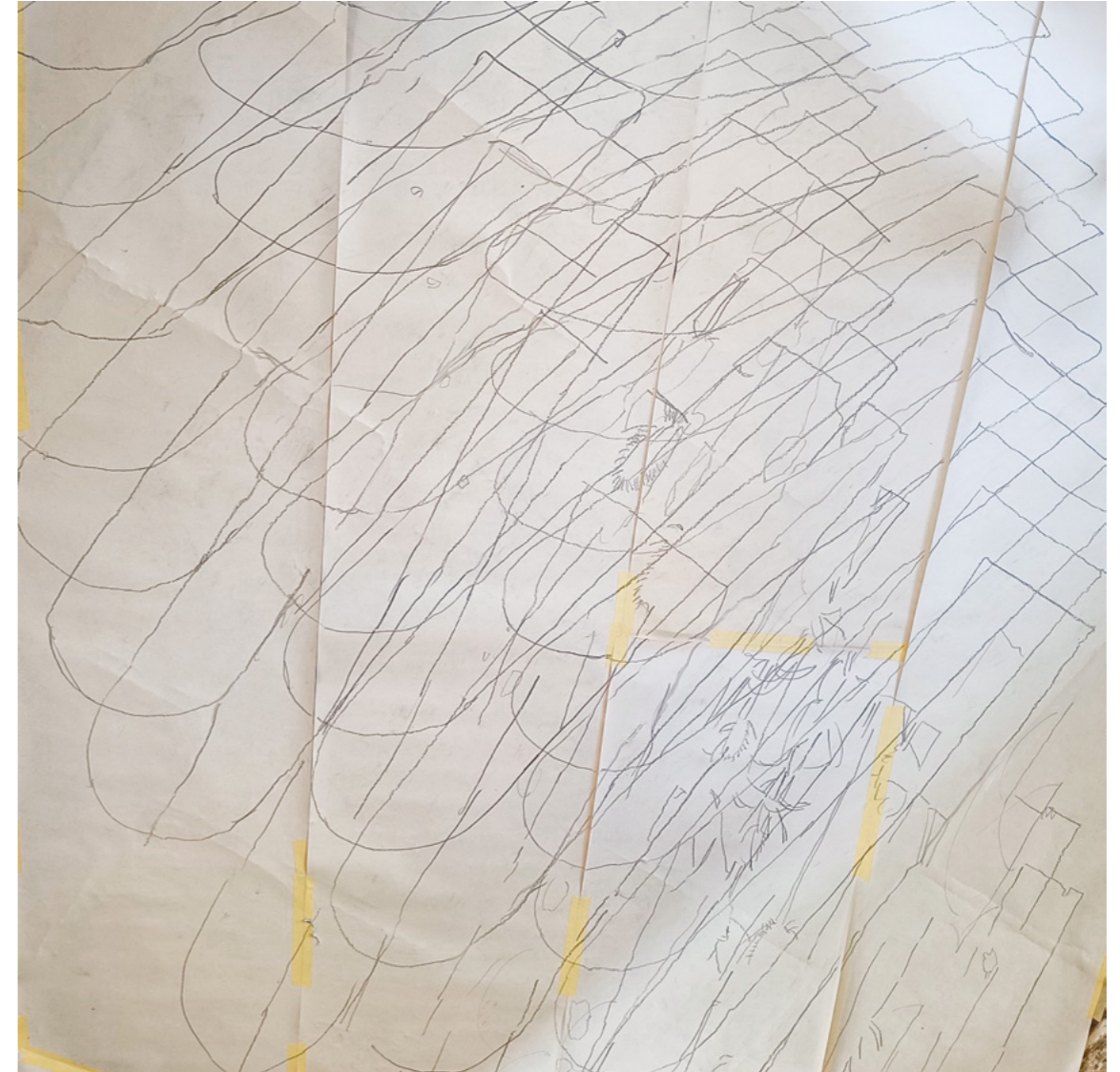
Fig. 5 Detail from third series (John Stell, 2022)
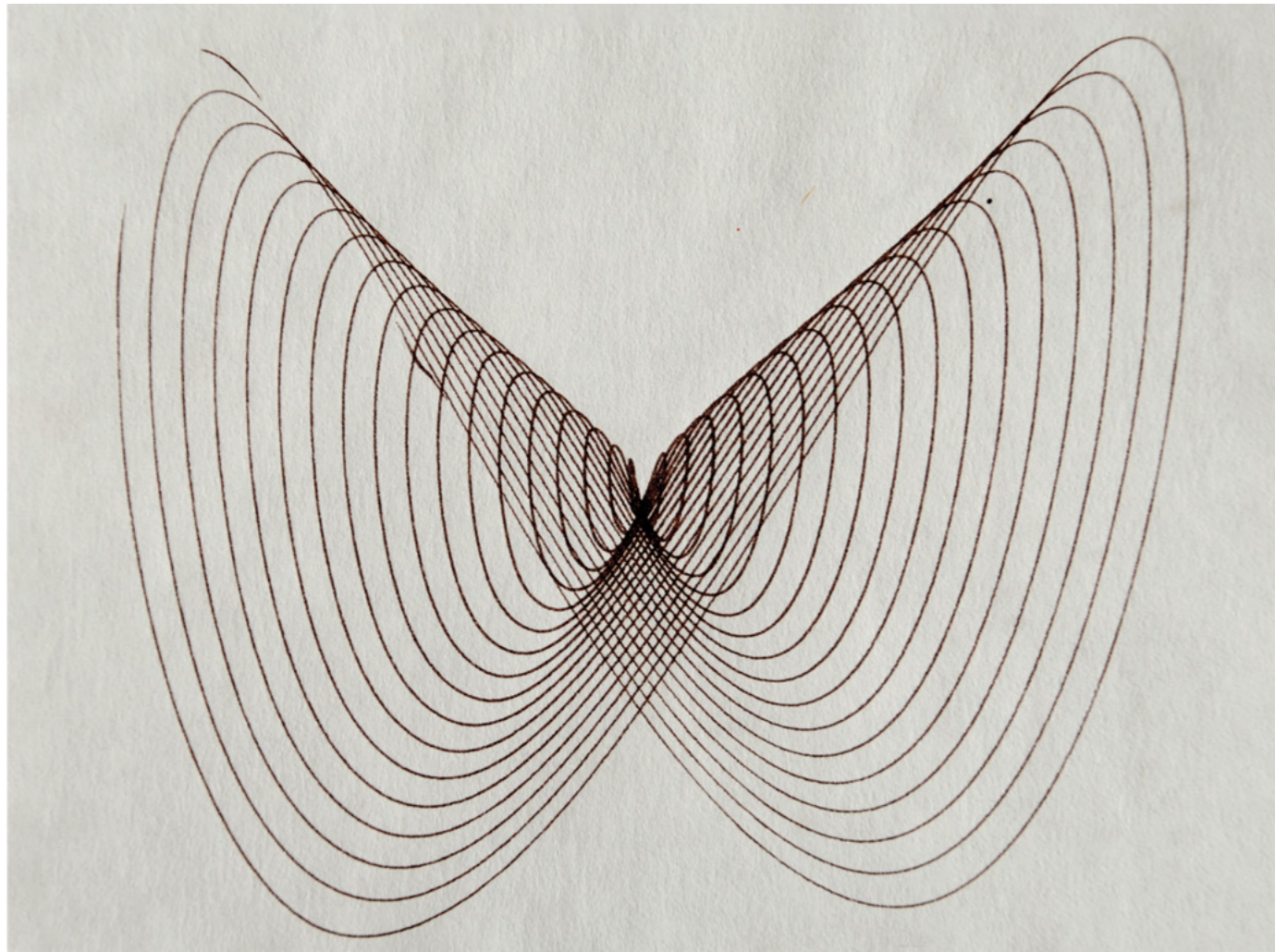
Fig. 6 Harmonograph
drawing, John Stell
c1975.

Fig. 7 Unfocussed effects of light
on floor and through a glass of
water. (Photographs documenting
drawing process, John Stell, 2022)

of our everyday experience". She argues that "immersive virtual space can be used to convey alternative sensibilities and worldviews" only when these spaces are "constructed in ways that circumvent or subverts the medium's conventions". This is arguing against the idea that virtual reality should aim to imitate our real-world experience as closely as possible. Such realism is achieved through the modelling of virtual space as conventional three-dimensional coordinate space. That is, the kind of space considered at the start of this essay as a way of modelling the space of the room that has been the main character here. Through means such as navigation and movement controlled by the breath and the changes to the body's centre of gravity, Char Davies manipulated virtual space to "provide a means of perceiving freshly". She showed it was possible to "redirect attention from our usual distractions and assumptions to the sensations of our own condition as briefly embodied sentient beings immersed in the flow of life through space and time" (Davies, 2004, p. 71).

The process described in this essay is an example of using drawing to explore part of space and time only on an individual level, instead of building an environment for multiple participants as in Davies' work. This is a very different activity and comparison of the aims or significance is not intended. However, in seeking a way of understanding how the drawing experiences fitted together, the phrase "briefly embodied sentient beings immersed in the flow of life through space and time" stood out as important. The drawing project had started without any specific research questions, except the very vague one of "what can be made out of the experience of this particular space through the activity of drawing?". As recounted above, a process evolved in which the experience of the room as solid and fixed developed into a much less conventional perception. The physical process of making large drawings was important in understanding how the new perception had emerged through bodily activity. Virtual reality (VR) has advanced in the quarter century or so since some of Davies' work, and continues to be subverted by artists to reveal non-virtual realities. The process used as a means of interrogation described here suggests, to use words originally applied to VR in (Davies, 2004, p. 103), that the technologically primitive activity of drawing still has much to offer as "a perceptually and conceptually invigorating philosophical tool".

The tool of making drawings had had a dramatic effect. The solid and familiar room vanished. Pyramids of golden light erupted from the floor. A greenhouse was flying through space with plants that were alive with independent movement. My own activity was sometimes in this space, travelling along with it, and sometimes cutting across it, like a passenger stepping in and out of a paternoster lift, or jumping between moving platforms like a character in a video game. Wielding the tool had somehow brought all this about. It was also clear that the drawings were only the initial steps and they could all be developed in further ways, Fig. 7.

The starting point appeared to come out of nowhere. Before it occurred to me how to start drawing, I saw a patch of sunlight on the floor; I looked at it from an adjacent room. I noticed what happened when I took photographs of the light through a glass of water (Fig. 7). There seems to be no explanation of where fruitful ideas come from, but maybe thinking of the boundary as a place of particular significance had helped here. The initial expectation and the first drawings are quite at variance. I understood that the light would move on the paper, but I had only a rough idea of quite what speed would be involved. The overall change of perception was completely unexpected.

Drawing can function in many different ways. The drawings described here were not using drawing as a way of representing things, either physical or imagined. It was used it as a tool that allows us to go on a journey of exploration in which familiar things are re-created in surprising ways.

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Drawing the space of in-between: Researching a Phantom Presence

MICHAEL CROFT

The paper presents an argument for impactive space characterized as a dynamic in-between that on this occasion is illustrated by a personal hallucinatory presence of a phantom appearing in a portal; the doorway between a utility room and a kitchen of the author's flat, experienced as seen by him from his bedroom in the middle of the night. The author discusses this experience in relation to a mechanical means, an action camera, that presents a similar presence in the artwork to the phantom in the nightmare, and in a theoretical context of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's notion of a psychical interpretation of the visual *gaze*. Meanwhile the artwork develops and proposes offshoots for potential consideration, where the question of impactive space caused by the phantom and how the latter is manifest in and as a visual-material medium can be further articulated.

Keywords: drawing, domestic architecture, phantom, theoretical psychoanalysis

Este trabalho apresenta o tema do espaço impactante, sendo este caraterizado por uma posição intermédia dinâmica, aqui ilustrada pela presença de uma alucinação pessoal: um fantasma que aparece num umbral, na passagem entre a despensa e a cozinha do apartamento do autor, tal como foi experienciado e visto pelo próprio, do seu quarto, a meio da noite. O autor discute esta experiência através meios mecânicos, uma action camera que ocupa na obra de arte uma presença semelhante à do fantasma no seu pesadelo, e, no contexto teórico, mediante a noção de interpretação psíquica do olhar visual, proposta pelo psicanalista Jacques Lacan. Paralelamente, a obra desenvolve-se e aponta ramificações para potencial consideração futura: o modo como o fantasma transforma o espaço impactante, como se manifesta no espaço e como constitui um meio visual/material.

Palavras-chave: desenho, arquitetura doméstica, fantasma, psicanálise teórica

Fig. 1a/b/c Top; view towards doorway between utility room and kitchen, from bedroom, ink on paper, 55.5 x 35.5 cm; lower left, view of action camera from behind it, attached to goggles, and lower right, digital graphic of how the camera appears optically while being worn in front of one's face © Michael Croft

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1. INTRODUCTION

The hypothesis of this paper is that impactive space can be defined and demonstrated as and through the process of development of a drawing that leans towards painting, in this case concerning a particular experience of a section of a domestic dwelling. By impactive space, I as the paper's author mean a sense of at-once constriction and fullness of liminal space, in other terms *interstitial* or *in-between* that is framed by physical and sentient spatial factors, and theory. The above-mentioned *particular experience* concerns a nightmare that involved the appearance of a phantom. This image, combined with another illusory although mechanical image, will increasingly emerge as the artwork approached as research progresses.

1.1. PORTAL

A section of a dwelling, a doorway or *portal* between utility room and kitchen perceived through a heavy wood-framed glazed sliding door from the location of my bed, which framed the phantom presence, can be illustrated by means of a sketch, as shown in Fig. 1a, below. Factors of distortion resulting from the imposition of the curved plane of vision on a rectilinear structure are indicated in the sketch, as well as the subjective phenomenon of a sense of fullness of certain areas of space. The sketch, therefore, may be said to transmute the visual physicality of the location to the domain of imagination.

1.2. ACTION CAMERA

While reference to an apparition can be explained as neurological factors that many people will have experienced during a nightmare, the means of recording the process of making the drawing as video has involved an action-camera worn close to my eyes, at-once disrupting my vision and causing vision to compensate by optically impacting the camera, due to which it appears to me as its own phantom imploded rectangle. According to Nielsen & Zadra (2005, p.930) 'sleep-wake transition disturbances' are where either a 'real perception' comes into sleep or a 'dreamed object or character into wakefulness'. Coincidentally, in my case while the phantom is dreamed the camera is both a material object and offers a perception, between the two of which, it might be considered in relation to the present paper, is a transition. This paper in effect *presents as* the transition. The rectangle of course vastly scales up in relation to anything it is recording, which blocks off portions of whatever is directly in front of it. By looking around the device, or by moving slightly to the left or right, I can effec-

tively see whatever is obscured in front of it. There is another determining factor, however, which is the fact that I am left-eye dominant, so the movement of vision appears to be from centre, in this case lower centre, feeding from the left, mimicking the curve of the clear-plastic goggles, to the right, Fig. 1b/c.

The imploded-rectangle apparition, the material component of technology affected by optical distortion, is not only also in the domain of my own cognition – it is not perceivable by the viewer of any of its videos except as image-based representation within the recording – but also coincides with the proportion, perceived at a perspective angle from my bed, of the portal in which the phantom appeared. (Compare the graphic of the imploded rectangle of the action camera, Fig. 1b, with the portal dimensions shown in Fig. 1a.)

1.3. TWO KINDS OF IMPACTIVE SPACE

Both the phantom contained within an architectural feature and the camera as means of recording the process of its representation coincide as two different kinds of impactive space. I might say that while the phantom swells out from the frame, the camera swells into it, as a two-and-one spatially pulsatile realisation. Of course, there are human corporeal implications in anything pulsatile, but insofar as impactive space is *felt* space, sentient, but not necessarily without physicality, this is not an inappropriate analogy. Böhme (2003, p.5) states in the phenomenological context: 'Although bodily space is always the space in which I am bodily present, it is at the same time the extension, or, better, the expanse of my presence itself'. This suggestion that while one's corporeal body is where one is at any moment in time, it in effect projects into and includes in its compass relevant surrounding space, is arguably what I have attempted to articulate in the sketch, Fig. 1a, above, through the analogy of how vision distorts space within the near compass of one's binocular plane of reference. In the Lacanian theoretical psychoanalytical context – where certain overlaps do exist between it and phenomenology – the contemporary psychoanalyst Clotilde Leguil (2023, p.5) references Lacan's Seminar XI, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* ([1964] 1998), which is also my own source of reference for questions of vision, when she states of dreams and nightmares: 'Dreaming is… experiencing vision', and goes on to suggest how similar this is to how 'intimately concerned' one often feels when looking at a painting.
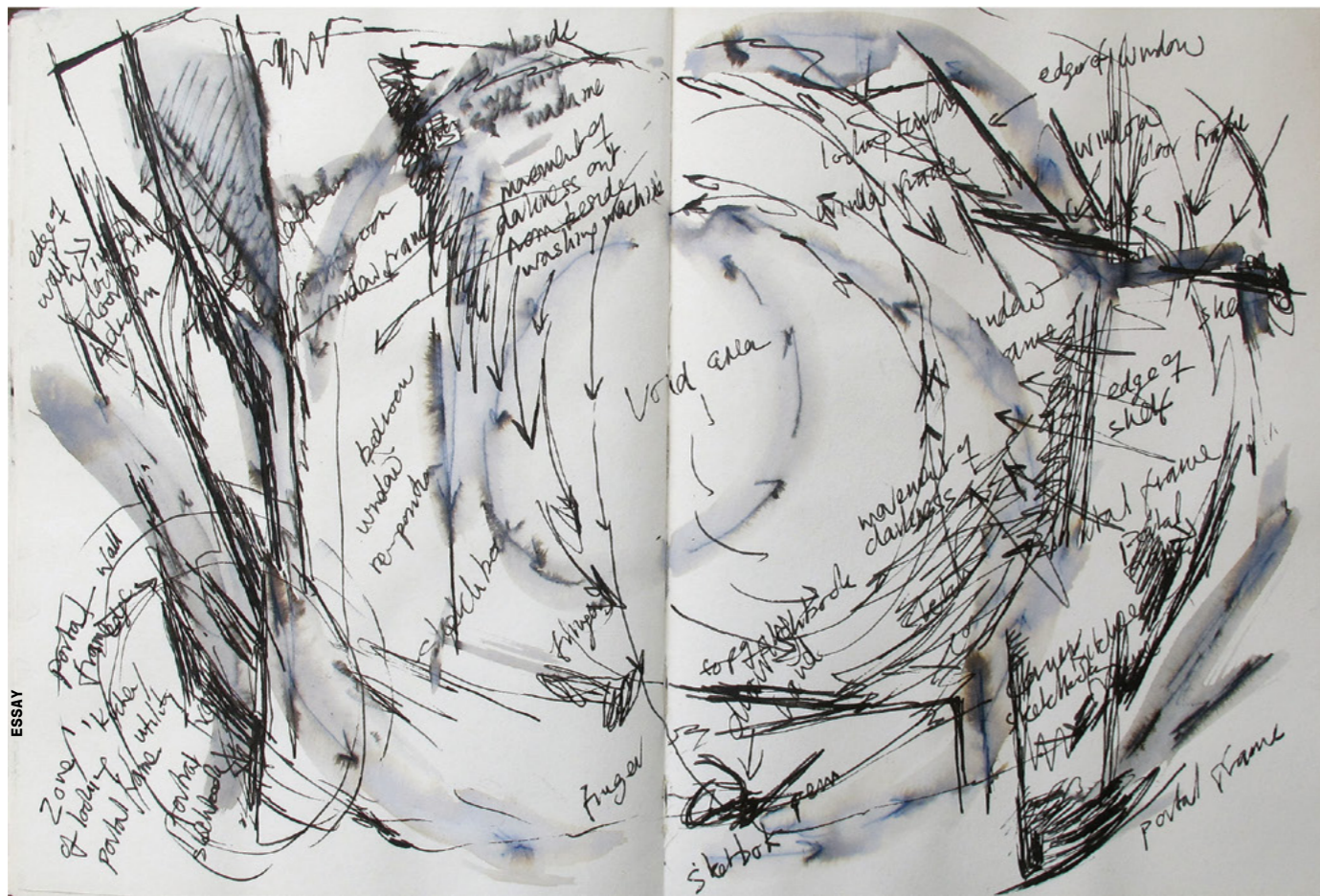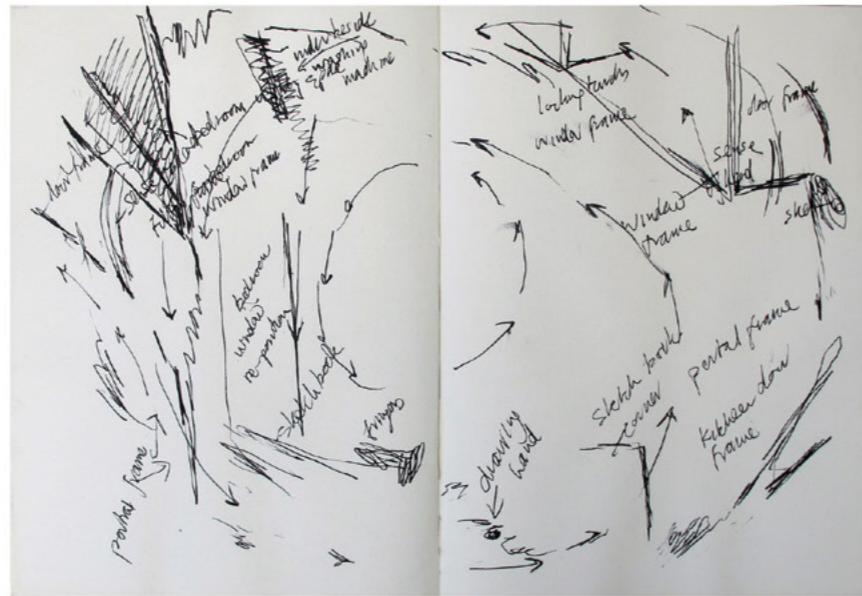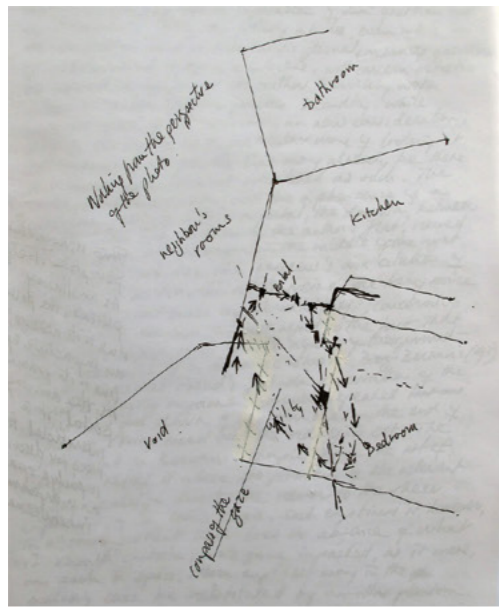
Fig. 2a/b/c Top, sketched floor plan, ink & acrylic on paper, 20.5 x 29.5 cm; Fig. 2b: middle, sketch from ground-level perspective, first state, ink on paper, 42.5 x 28 cm; Fig. 2c: lower, sketch from ground-level perspective, second state, ink & water on paper, 42.5 x 28 cm © Michael Croft

2. DISCUSSION

2.1. THE SPACE DETAILED FROM A PHENOMENOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

A sketched floor plan imposes a reading of the relevant sentient space of encounter of the phantom in the portal on a rough plan-view of the architectural space, Fig. 2a, below. In order to make the sketch I had to walk around the space and simultaneously imagine myself above it. The marks' pressures and inconsistencies convey, in and through their indexicality, sentient traces that in Kristeva's (1997, p. 35) semiotic theory will have psychic import. Few would disagree that a sense of subjective personality is conveyed in one's handwriting, and with regard to idiosyncratic use of line in mark making and gesture in drawing this may be considered little different. Benjamin (AA School of Architecture, 2005) uses the term 'porous' when he discusses the drawn line in terms that are of architectural interest within a larger focus on a drawing of the unconscious by Freud: "Lines both divide, and allow for movement." This has implications especially for the directional arrows delineating the particularly relevant compass of space in the sketch, Fig. 2b, shown below. From a phenomenological approach to space, the 'porous' line may be useful for designing on the basis of experience of *atmosphere*, the latter of which, according to the architectural theorist Juhani Pallasmaa in conversation with the architect Peter Zumthor (Aalto University, 2018), is "...suspended between the space and the experience," when experience is a phenomenon of the beholder.

While the sketch, Fig. 2a, is relatively conceptual, both Benjamin's and Pallasmaa's points are of greater relevance to the sketch, Fig. 2b, due to its more perceptual orientation from a ground-level perspective. In order to make the sketch I stood in the darkness of night in the threshold of the portal in which the phantom had appeared, and perceived myself as looking down on my open sketchbook, hands, and forearms, across to each of the wood-framed glass sliding door on the left and window and window-sill on the right of the utility area, and upwards towards a washing machine cupboard at the room's far end. The sketch then involved positioning the structural elements while *feeling* and registering their distortion by subjective factors of human vision; trying to locate my experience of the space through the projection into it of my body, as suggested above by the Böhme quote. I then brushed the sketch's ink-basis with water and reworked the result from the same viewing position. The indexical signifier, divorced from any obvious references apart from what is suggested by the relational use of

annotation, is now abundant, arguably, with atmospheric suggestions of its medium, Fig. 2c.

Whether or not line itself can be considered porous, certainly the absorbance of the paper, when wet, will inversely pull the medium of the line out from itself. This results in a degree of autonomy showing within the medium. Pigrum (2021, p.176) cites Heidegger's 'notion of *Entwurf* as a way of "opening the world to possibilities of doing", and states that the nearest equivalent to its meaning in English is 'drafting out or sketching out or transitional notation'. In the pedagogical context, Pigrum (2021, p.178) refers to 'the anxiety of postponing closure implicit in the notion of *Entwurf*', and suggests advising students – which may also be considered useful advice to oneself – in such terms as: 'sketch things out roughly'; 'don't worry about drawing over the top...'; 'if you can't draw it, write it'. In terms of architectural education such drawing, where the *Entwurf* is operative, is most likely to occur at the stage of early exploration, or be a type of exploration where the obligation towards the disambiguation of line necessary for plan drawings' ease of interpretation is delayed in order to see what transpires from more subjective levels of individual identification – of course transposed through one's medium – with one's subject.

Consider, for example, modelling from the three-dimensional suggestions implicit in the sketch, Fig. 2c, above. In this respect, Pigrum (2021, p.178) refers to '...the unexpected and uncanny that generates that form of intellectual uncertainty and anxiety that is a trigger of creativity'. The 'unexpected and uncanny' is in the present context firstly the phantom presence, and secondly, from then on as part of a developmental continuum that will concern what Pigrum (2021, p.178) refers to as 'dialogue and multi-mode use on a dispensable surface of inscription'. The above-referenced sketch in both its states is one such surface. Sketches of this type may or may not survive, as artefacts, but their purpose will have been to generate an interrelated level of intellectual and creative thinking.

2.2. THE SPACE OF PERCEPTION ITSELF

Given that perception is a wholly allusive phenomenon, variously considered through cognitive science, philosophy of mind, phenomenology, and theoretical psychoanalysis, my contention is that it has its place, symbolically and physically, midway between one's gaze and the perceived object. Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of the *scopic drive* (1998, pp.67-119) strongly suggests that perception is positioned midway between the object of the gaze and the object's beholder.

An important caveat to one's understanding of the gaze, however, at least in Lacan's theory, is that for paradoxical reasons of the obfuscating influence of the human psyche, the gaze is situated in and projected from the object *towards* the human recipient as their own *subject*: 'What we have to circumscribe… is the pre-existence of the gaze – I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides' (Lacan, 1998, p.72). In visual artistic terms, one may consider that the image has in effect been pulled or released from its basis in the object, and will in any case have been located somewhere physically apart or askance from the object on and in whatever visual-material circumstances hold its presentation. If the artistic terms are drawing, such circumstances are likely to be the paper or other drawing surface. If the artist is observing the object, they will be developing it as an image on a surface, a board or sketchbook, that offers further support between the object and the artist. The artist will be pulling their reaction to whatever is observed towards the drawing surface, which creates an intermediary gap between object and image. Albeit outside of the present paper's scope, the determination of desire in the midst of artistic creative activity, and suggesting why Lacan's theory is of more interest to me than other likely sources, Lacan (1999, p. 5) states: '…desire merely leads us to aim at the gap (*faille*) where it can be demonstrated that the One is based only on (*tenir de*) the essence of the signifier'. For inscrutable reasons, therefore, concerning desire, I find myself attracted by a discreet domestic architectural circumstance, a portal, whose portent has been to suggest a motif for the consideration of impactive space.

The imploded rectangle of the camera, as shown in Fig. 1b/c, above – itself a phantom – has the potential of hovering over the portal in roughly the same dimensions as I see it in askance-view from my bed. At the same time, which is the whole point of wearing the camera, it can record whatever I am drawing as I draw. This mechanistic derivation of the phantom, let alone the nightmare version, is, for the moment, a means of introducing a notion of Lacan of the psychic interference of the perceived image by what he terms a 'screen' that he likens variously to a 'stain'. Leguil (2023, p.6) states that the meaning of an apparition is as '…a strange experience that rips the screen'. If one imagines a screen as ordinarily closed, an apparition '…suddenly introduces an intense light which leaves no room for shade'. Concerning the 'stain', which is often replete with figural associations, according to Lacan (1998, p.74) it is 'the pre-existence to the seen of the given-to-be-seen:

If the function of the stain is recognized in its autonomy and identified with that of the gaze, we can see its track, its thread, its trace, at every stage of the constitution of the world, in the scopic field. (1998, p.74)

To help explain his theory, Lacan (1998, pp. 91-103) takes the familiar optical pyramid, whose point projects from the eye towards any view, and inverts it, such that the point projects from the object and paints a picture, as it were, in one's eye, the gaze thus projected of which is '…always a play of light and opacity' (1998, p. 96). Of the oscillation of the picture in the eye, Lacan adds: 'And if I am anything in the picture, it is always in the form of the screen, which I earlier called the stain, the spot'. There are interesting implications here, of the beginning of pertinent subjective content of the gaze as and from a point, and that this fans out as a constellation variously both transparent and opaque. Inasmuch as this inverted pyramid intersects the conventional optical pyramid (Lacan's diagram, 1998, p.106), the midway is constituted by a mediating 'image' and 'screen', the screen obfuscating the image that one ordinarily assumes to be visually clear in healthy vision or through correctly calibrated lenses, with a psychic dimension. Further in his discussion, Lacan articulates such a situation in relation to the painter (1998, pp. 105-19). While in the present context this is introductory, I explore this theory in more depth in previously published artistic research (Croft, 2022).

The point, however, for which reason the nightmare phantom will after all be a better choice of image than that which I can reproduce as a drawn or painted version of the imploded rectangle of the camera, is that the object chosen for unconscious reasons itself projects the gaze, the latter of which has what may be considered a kernel, in Lacanian terms the *object a* that is a surrogate object of desire. This, for me, is a compelling idea; that certain objects have in them what Zizek (2006, p.17) terms a '…blind spot, something that's …in the object more than the object itself', which is not the object of desire as such, but is in some way surrogate of the psychical *cause* of desire. Lacan himself states: (2016, p.70): '…there is a centrifugal dynamic of the gaze, that is to say, one that starts off from the seeing eye but also from the blind spot', and that it perpetuates 'the instant of seeing… as its prop'. Lacan (1998, p.72) refers to the gaze as 'a strange contingency', and then that: 'The object *a* in the field of the visible is the gaze' (1998, p.105). The contingency, whatever it is about the object that designates it in psychical terms as object *a*, is protected from the object to the image

Fig. 3a/b/c: top, screenshot of the author smearing oil paint onto mirror glass, from a video clip; Fig. 3b: lower-left, sketch, first state, ink & water on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; Fig. 3c: lower-right, *Impactive Space* image, first state, acrylic and paper on cardboard, oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm © Michael Croft

Fig. 4a/b Top-left, sketch, second state, ink & water on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; top-right, *Impactive Space* image, second state, acrylic and paper on cardboard, oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm; Fig. 4c/d: lower-left, sketch, third state, ink, water & crayon on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; lower-right, *Impactive Space* image, third state, acrylic and paper on cardboard, oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm
© Michael Croft

as both a point and a constellation; variously either a 'stain' or a 'screen'. While oscillating between suggested space and object, suggested by the theory, its psychical dimension means that it cannot be accessed in physical terms. Lacan (2006: 89) also likens the object *a* to 'imaginary space' that is comparable to 'excluded islets' – where there may be some word-play with *eyes*.

The nightmare phantom could conceivably be considered as a momentary occupant of a psychic 'screen', noticed by and relevant only to me in its otherness from reality, and not least due to its nocturnal timing. – Albeit as part of a deeper explanation of this psychic phenomenon than is within the scope of the present article, Zizek ((2008, p.56) refers to the subject in relation to the object *a* as finding '…a sort of pleasure *in this displeasure itself*…' – So could, by extending the metaphorical potential of the imploded rectangle, be the camera itself in its ability not only to record the objects and impressions in front of it but in how, in this instance, it imposes its own obfuscating presence. This form of phantom may be sharable, but only by others wearing the same device. I build the camera into this combined speculative, reflective and academic narrative because, due to my working methods, it has to be a participant in the following presented and discussed developmental drawing that illustrates and conveys the contention of combined image and screen as impactive space.

2.4. A VISUAL-MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTION OF IMPACTIVE SPACE

The starting-point is a screenshot from a video of myself apparently representing what I can see of the action camera worn over my face in its illusory imploded rectangular version, Fig. 3a, below. This figural image, by coming into the present research from a video clip that was itself research-based working material, links the question of impactive space to a previous consideration, so extending the natural matrix of my on-going involvement. The fusion of this image with the architectural motif will be through the interaction of oil paint on clear-plastic overlaying acrylic drawing on corrugated cardboard. Both a sketch and the larger drawing will be reworked until the figurative image is impacted in the door frame, the *portal* – sketched in as black line drawing at this stage – in the context of the surrounding space that also influences such events, Fig. 3b/c.

This is the early middle stage of a process that is both active and defers for as long as possible the question of finish. Each successive reworking of the sketch and the larger drawn image results in some

contraction or implosion of it towards the portal, Fig. 4a/b, below. The drawn image as photographed, as seen in Fig. 4b, is subject to reflections of light from the loosely hung clear plastic. Oil paint adheres to plastic, and its transparency on this occasion allows what is behind it to remain apparent. The figurative image is defined between the architectural features drawn in acrylic onto paper and cardboard ground, and therefore presents a conceptual tension between *behind* and *in front*, which also creates a perceptual and more intuitively sensed effect. By the third stage of the process the increasing blueness of the sketch, due to its medium of black writing ink that is brushed with water between each reworking, has been articulated in the larger drawing with blue oil paint on the clear plastic overlay, Fig. 4c/d.

The sketch and the larger drawing have now been imploded about as far as they can go before losing their figural reference. The image has not yet reduced sufficiently to neatly occupy the portal, and therefore bodes the question of further strategies to convey the sense of the phantom presence, Fig. 5a/b.

The under-layer of the drawing will now be reworked to identify aspects of green and brown of the portal, including the wooden horizontal crossbar of a glazed sliding door. The use of two sheets of previously discarded paper to absorb some over-flooded paint, each with a different view of an element not unrelated to the present concern, have been left in place. There are possibilities of both formal and conceptual relationship with this that now need to be considered, Fig. 6.

The question may now concern the diagram, which appears top left and lower centre-left in the drawing. The diagram was initially three-dimensional, comprised of layers of corrugated cardboard painted black, with a red straw running through the cardboard and a wavy clear plastic plane, Fig. 7a, below. The diagram is an image of the camera in its illusory thin imploded rectangular state, obfuscated by the above-discussed Lacanian 'screen' – which Leguil, as previously referenced, cites Lacan as linked with light – as a wavy plastic plane, with the red straw representing the trajectory, *point-of-gaze* (from *object*) to *Subject* on a left-to-right movement (as shown in side elevation, left-hand photo, Fig. 7a), passing through the conflated image/screen. This three-dimensional diagram may also be considered a conceptualisation of Lacan's above-referenced 'centrifugal dynamic of the gaze' and, literally, the seeing instant's 'prop'. My sketch of the drawing in the state shown in Fig. 6, above, shows how and where the trajectory, *point-of-gaze – subject*, projects forward from the image/screen and culminates in the region of the hand of the diluted ink sketch that
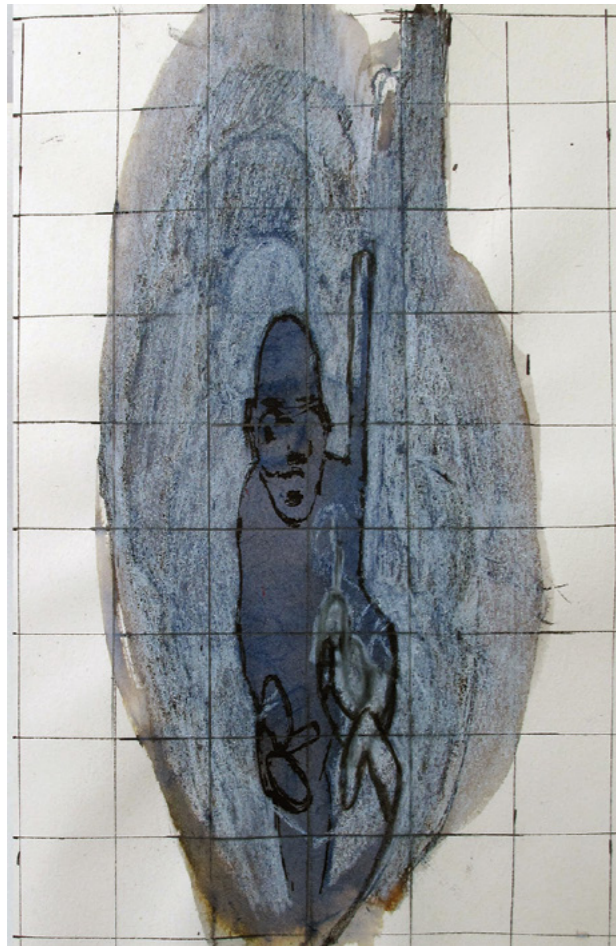
Fig. 5a/b left, sketch, fourth
state, ink, water & crayon on
paper, 21.5 x 28 cm; right,
Impactive Space image, fourth state,
acrylic and paper on cardboard,
oil on clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm
© Michael Croft.

Fig. 6 *Impactive Space* image, fifth
state, acrylic & paper layers on
cardboard + oil on clear plastic,
100 x 113 cm © Michael Croft.

has been progressively contracted for each state of the drawing, Fig. 7b.

Coincidentally, the porousness of the sketchbook paper shown in Fig. 8a of the Fig. 8 set, below, has caused the ink sketch to bleed through the back of the page, Fig. 8b. When the stain is digitally superimposed with the sketch, Fig. 7b, above, it corresponds to both the imploded rectangle of the camera and the culminating end of the *object – subject* trajectory, Fig. 8c.

I have now substituted the stain, the region of the object *a* of the trajectory, with a graphically painted rendering of my forefinger and thumb – see Fig. 3a, above – for the origin of this idea – with an indexical print of it to the right in orange-brown oil paint on the final state of the drawing-towards-painting, Fig. 9.

While I have used the orange-brown paint to indicate where the contracted repeated image of the phantom is and how it should ideally conform to its placement in the portal, insofar as the logic of the process has emerged from an interest in certain theory, my use of the same paint to strengthen the wavy-rendered screen oscillating with image in the diagram, top left, may suggest the permeation of a psychical element with the phantom image.

2.5. THE DYNAMIC STASIS OF CONTINUATION

Sketch diagrams of the drawing, Fig. 9, above, attempt a plan-view from the image's frontal aspect, laying the latter over the plan-view of the architectural space, Fig. 2a, above, as shown in Fig. 10a, below. What I cannot ignore, that imposes an anomaly on the represented space of both the large drawing and the present sketch, is the trajectory *gaze – subject*, which Lacan, as cited above, terms a 'centrifugal dynamic projected from an object's 'blind spot' that results in a 'prop' of the 'instant of seeing'. This is exactly what I have tried to conceptualise, using the phantom image of the imploded rectangle of the action camera. The lower diagram in Fig. 10a shows the origin of the trajectory in a spot fanning out, causing the image to bear more of a constellation, especially in scale in comparison with the two representations of the nightmare phantom, the black version standing a little forward from the portal, and the red version contained within the portal. To see what the image in the constellation is, one would need to refer back to the screenshot showing my right hand and its mirror reflection in Fig. 3a, and how I have reproduced forefinger and thumb in the circular near end of the trajectory in the large drawing, Fig. 9. The following reworking of the Fig. 10a sketch on an overlay of tracing paper shows several renderings of the imploded

rectangle of the action camera askance to the right of the phantom image, and how, when projected down onto the plan-view, they orientate with the phantom and the diagrammatic trajectory, *gaze – subject*, in the plan-view, Fig. 10b.

Interestingly, the cloudiness of the tracing paper superimposes an aura of light, alluding to the Lacan reference to 'screen'. Given what the conceptualisation of the blind spot comprises, as explained above, and that it is a psychic projection, or at least an idea of physicality to which such a projection might allude amidst two sets of phantom phenomena, the impactive space is in fact empty, as is the door frame and utility area of my flat until or unless I walk through and into it, respectively. What one may *project into* the space ahead of one, however, is, as cited of Böhme, above, 'the expanse of my presence itself', or, as is my preferred perspective, *receive from* the space, is evidence – however tenuous until one constructs it as artifice – of one's externally negotiated psyche operating both amidst and as one's perception, Fig. 10c.
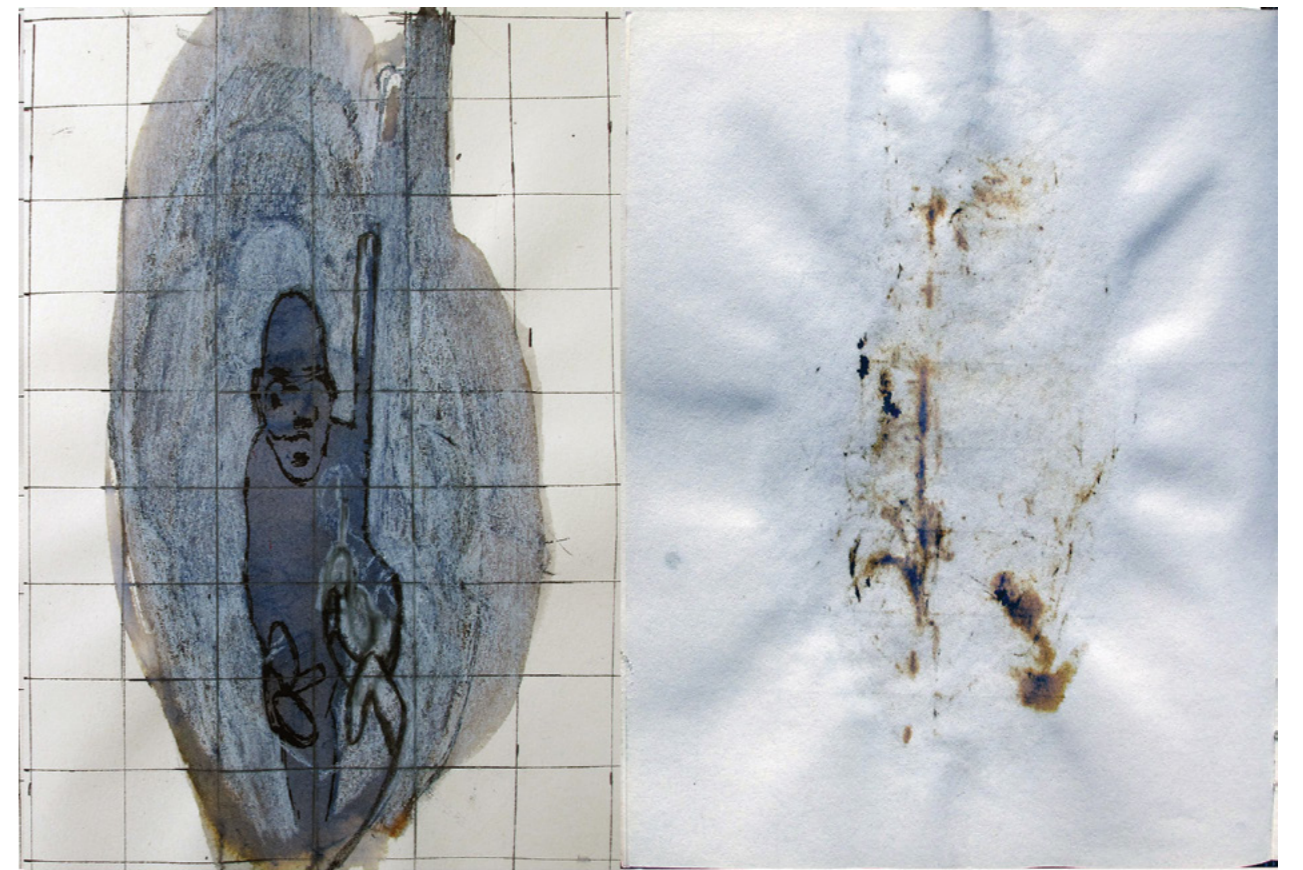
While a mere sketch, the design suggests the potential for a solid constellation of elements that are in fact wholly illusory.

While there is much to suggest conclusion of the research in the drawing in its final state, Fig. 9, the spirit in which it was conducted is commensurate with Pigrum's above-cited '…multi-mode use on a dispensable surface of inscription', where Pigrum's mentioned element of 'dialogue' that often accompanies my relatively diagrammatic mode of working has been in the form of the present article. If one imagines the drawing as tablecloth paper roughly taped to an appropriated section of a found corrugated cardboard box, with overlain clear plastic tablecloth cover, such a format is itself still dispensable. Only if and when mounted and stretched over a wooden frame will it take on the status of finished work. Yet even when hung on the wall, by chance the utility area bears on the image of which it is a representation with a contingent element, a visible reflection varying through times of day, Fig. 11a/b/c.

While Fig. 11a/b show two versions of reflected light from the image's clear plastic overlay, Fig. 11c shows the source of light as coming through the doorway to the utility area, in this instance rebounding from the open glass door. Under normal circumstances one tends to ignore reflections on the glazing of any artwork, yet on this occasion the effect pulls the image back to a less definitive state, suggesting further workable possibilities, the kind of continuation offered by the briefest of visuals, Fig. 10a/b/c, above.

#7

Fig.9: *Impactive Space* image, final state,
acrylic & paper layers on cardboard + oil on
clear plastic, 100 x 113 cm © Michael Croft

#7

blind spot
becoming constellation
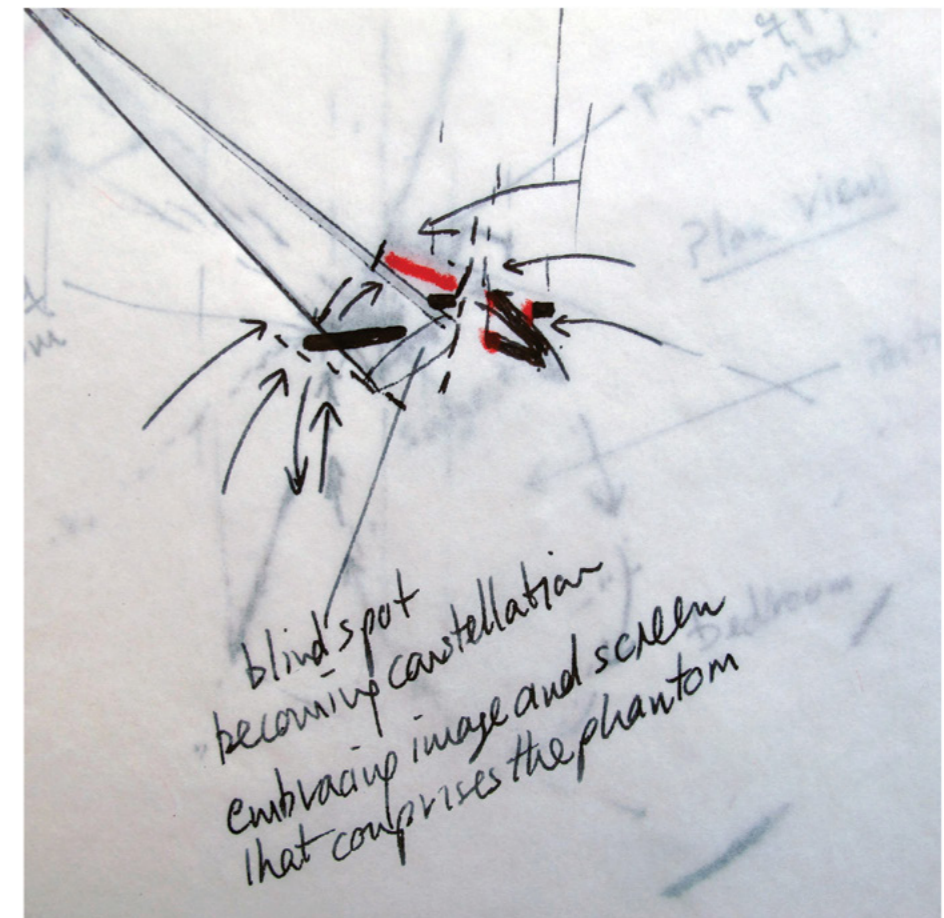embracing image and screen
that comprises the phantom
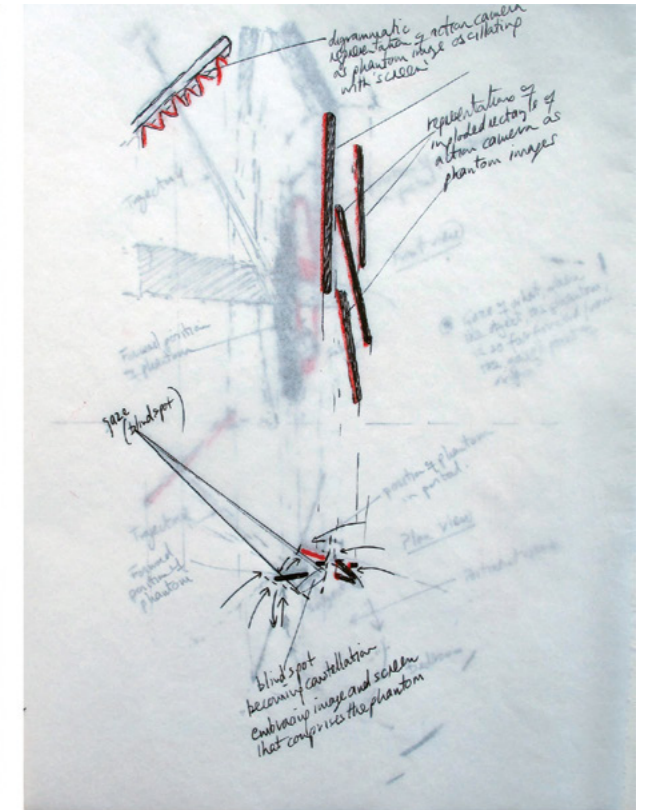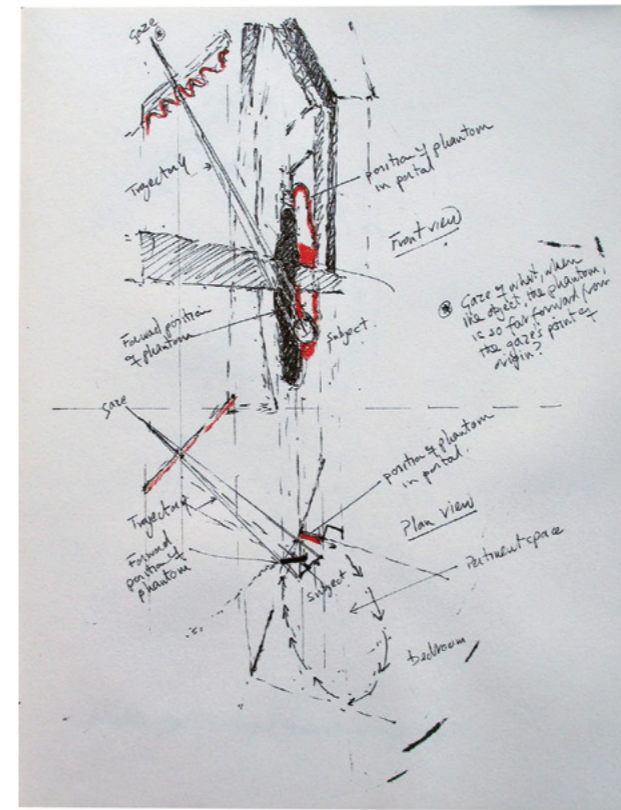
Fig. 10a: upper-left, sketch 2, *point-of-gaze to
Subject*, ink on paper; Fig. 10b: upper-right,
sketch 2, *point-of-gaze to subject*, ink on paper, 21.5
x 28 cm + overlain with tracing paper and
reworked to show imploded rectangle images
of the action camera and their projection
downwards to orientate with the region *Subject*,
of *point-of-gaze to Subject*; Fig. 10c: Lower detail of
Sketch 2, Fig. 10b © Michael Croft

Fig. 11a/b/c: Two views of *Impactive Space* hung in-situ, subject to light reflected from the open doorway between kitchen and utility room © Michael Croft

CONCLUSION

The paper mainly references Lacan's theory of the gaze from his Seminar XI ([1964] 1998), The context of the reference has been my experience of a nightmare phantom in a doorway of my flat and its use as a motif for artistic research. The research question has concerned in what terms the experience can answer to the idea of impactive space.

I have also indicated that one of the main mechanical means of enabling the visualisation of such space, an action camera, itself impacts space that I look towards while wearing the camera and looking around its own illusory imploded presence. A pragmatic sense has therefore been imposed on an otherwise illusory neurological phenomenon, albeit occurring in a domestic architectural setting. The visual-material manifestations of the work in progress, however, also convey a sense of the activity as a form of research. What I haven't referenced, but would be necessary for any in-depth consideration of my internal position in my work, is myself as my own *subject*. This has been mentioned in the paper, and occurs in the Lacanian theory, but not explored. The personal, in this sense, has been acknowledged for its starting-point as the experience of a nightmare, but has been displaced onto a research-based process of visual art-working. Research is, as such, necessarily incomplete. Creative work, if conducted as research, is a means of articulating this sense of middle-ness when, to fold the discussion of how I relate to the space in which the phantom appeared back into the discussion of research, I have suggested that such middle-ness can also be a region of impactive space.

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Porquê Psiax? Psiax é o nome de um dos pintores de vasos gregos que terão introduzido a grande mudança do desenho com a técnica das figuras vermelhas no início do século V a.C. Este é um dos mais notáveis aspectos da arte do desenho e da sua adaptação a uma necessidade tecnológica, empresarial, ritual e social, num dos períodos mais relevantes da cultura grega.

Se nos servirmos de uma analogia com a vida de Psiax na Grécia Clássica, e vivêssemos num período de figuras pretas, como se nos colocaria o quadro de inovação na representação da imagem nos artefactos que utilizamos dominantemente ou que poderão vir a ser utilizados? Ao ser produzido por meios digitais ou manuais, o que se inova e constrói? Como é que se acede a essas imagens? O que as caracteriza e como é que a representação ganha aspectos inovadores ou qualificadores da experiência artística?

A orientação editorial pretende promover e divulgar estudos sobre o papel que o desenho poderá desempenhar no nosso tempo, quer ele se concretize como processo de compreender o mundo, quer como meio de aprendizagem e ensino, ou como elemento caracterizador essencial dos objectos artísticos já existentes ou a criar.

Pretendemos dar a conhecer estudos sobre o desenho como imagem considerando que o desenho como arte plástica, manual ou digital, além de se constituir por um conjunto de elementos típicos e próprios da sua específica condição material, é, acima de tudo, uma imagem que ocupa lugares no universo infinito de outras imagens materiais, foto-químicas e electrónicas que hoje nos envolvem.

Importa ligar o passado do desenho - autores, modalidades, temas, tendências, escolas - com as urgências e o sentido de progresso e de ideologia, com as hipóteses que se levantam, com as necessidades que vão da sobrevivência ao sonho, recuperando a memória longínqua do desenho e conduzindo-a para uma actualidade em que se exigem novos entendimentos de uma arte básica do ser-se humano.

Interessa a publicação de estudos monográficos, analíticos, doutrinais, programáticos, metodológicos e críticos desde que se estabeleça, em qualquer dos âmbitos, uma relação entre o passado e o presente. Isto é, interessa colocar as diversas perspectivas em debate, em sintonia, em confronto, em paralelo, em analogia com os problemas, os esforços, as realidades, as obras e as teorias do nosso tempo, quer no domínio da pedagogia, da teoria e prática do desenho, quer no campo da expressão artística.

A actual edição da PSIAX integra, a título excepcional, uma proposta de cinco autores que praticam e investigam a criação de imagens gráficas e o desenho, em torno da exploração visual e material de um tema: o espaço impactante (*impactive space*).