



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

**ENTERING THE ZONE
STUDIO APPROACHES INSPIRING ARTISTIC
PRESENCE:
THE LINE AND AREA IN PAINTING**

A Thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

Visual artists spend a substantial amount of time during studio processes to arrive at a Flow state naturally. This state is characterised by the experience of unparalleled presence, or a paramount reality defined by discernible focus and a lack of comprehension of time and space. This practice-led research project concerns studio explorations of distinct drawing and painting exercises, referred to as *Zone-In* exercises, which rapidly facilitate entering the creative zone and accelerating a creative Flow experience. Through these specific time-precise technical methods, the Flow state can be anticipated and predicted without having to wait to enter the zone after a substantial studio time commitment.

This doctoral research consists of a series of creative works representing 80% of the assessable outcome due to the studio outcomes being the seminal aspect of this research project. The weighting of the exegesis is set at 20% as theoretical support to the concerns produced in the studio outcomes. As such, the seminal focus has been placed on researching and demonstrating the respective innovations concerning the discovery, development, and application of the *Zone-In* exercises through establishing the *Creative Flow Studio Model*. Its unique practice-led methodology weaves together the three key concepts of 'Flow', 'Process Art' and 'Anthroposophy' within the visual arts disciplines of drawing and painting. This model enables the practising artist to deliberately enter the zone or Flow state to maximise studio time and effort for enhanced studio production. The research outcome integrates the *Creative Flow Studio Model's* exercises with a Process Art-based practice and embodies a frame through which a sequence of artwork can be and is produced.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I Hele Ellis declare that the Thesis entitled *Entering the Zone Studio Approaches Inspiring Artistic Presence: The Line and Area* is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Date: 4th May 2023

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The practice-led research undertaken for this doctoral award gives practical, conceptual, and historical context concerning creativity within the visual arts discipline in relationship to a process art-based strategy of working in the studio with painting and drawing. The project-specific micro-niche of creativity made known by Hungarian American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi as Flow is a seminal area of investigation in this research. The process of entering the Flow state deliberately through activities within the creative arts studio, is the cornerstone of this research project. For Flow to arise, the activity must be challenging and complex but also creatively engaging as an activity so that a process-based outcome can be accomplished. I embarked on this research investigation in painting as it is the agency for my artistic production; however, the ideas developed and compiled in this exegesis can be adapted to other art forms and those artists engaged in them.

Human creativity is a multifaceted phenomenon including cognitive, attitudinal, practical, sociocultural, economic and environmental aspects (Plucker & Runco (1999) cited by Ranjan and Gabora in Gregerson et al. (eds.) 2013, p. 119). It is the driving force behind change, adaptation and evolution, the source of new possibilities and hope, action, and accomplishment (Dilts & Epstein 1991, p. XIII), with the entire process of creativity influenced and expressed through interaction and communication with others (Dilts & Epstein 1991, p. 358). Creativity has become generalised across numerous areas of activity, including the academic sphere, resulting in an overuse of the term (Pope 2005, pp. 25, 33). The philosophical ideas of creativity can be traced back to German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder in the 18th century, who theorised that creative acts imply awareness and circumspection. Herder's conclusions were followed by transcendental nature-based American philosophies by Ralph Waldo Emerson or Henry David Thoreau (Pope 2005, p. 61) who engaged with notions of experience and life to grasp creativity. German philosopher Martin Heidegger later developed a philosophy of 'being there' (*Dasein*) that progressed into philosophies of 'becoming' (as per Deleuze and Guattari in Pope 2005, p. 62) in view of fulfilment. Eastern models of creativity act as a corrective to Western stereotypes and speak of 'emptiness' and being 'emptied out'.

This research project, in its approach to creativity research, undertakes the blending of presence (*Dasein*) and a void (emptiness) through the application of exercises generating Flow caused by the temporal hypo frontality that is discussed in Chapter 2: *Literature Review*. This chapter discusses historical and contemporary creativity research in context, theory, and processes for application within studio practice. Chapter 3: *Creative Practice Review: Artist Case Studies* examines seminal artists and their work that specifically correlate to my project-specific studio practice. It also engages with the three concepts this study is concerned with: Flow, Process Art, and Anthroposophy. Chapter 4: *Methodology* explores research concepts that concern constructs surrounding methods and approaches to practice for this project and links to Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model*, carrying out and discussing the developed Flow Methodology. This chapter summarises contrasting approaches regarding the studio space from a philosophical point of view. It chronicles my own studio set-up and my specific research practice for this project and gives insight into the developed *Creative Flow Studio Model* with its outcomes and the significance of findings recapped in Chapter 6: *Conclusion*. *Appendices 1 and 2* allow for visually retracing the *Creative Flow Studio Model*'s development through the evolution of the *Zone-In* exercises and recount artwork produced with the application of the model.

The central focus of this practice-led research project concerned and illuminated my explorations of process-based drawing and painting methods that led to a sequence of applications that I have termed *Zone-In* exercises. This is detailed in Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model*, where the principle through which these studio activities are positioned. The movement-based *Zone-In* exercises in their artistic execution governed the formulation of the *Creative Flow Studio Model*, a framework in which artwork is produced through defining and capturing creative impulses as a proclivity toward creativity and as a method of evidence in visual studio research outcomes.

The principal research inquiry that is the central premise of the study or, as per Australian researcher Brad Haseman's terminology (2006, n.p.), the 'enthusiasm of practice', explored the question:

"What are the studio methods to reach a state of unparalleled presence for increased studio creativity and productivity?"

The *Creative Flow Studio Model* links the Flow state with Process Art and anthroposophical thought that relates to contemporary art production.

Flow is a term that was coined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the 1970s and describes “an almost automatic, effortless, yet highly focused state of consciousness” (Csikszentmihalyi (1997) in Abraham 2018, p. 73), further detailed in Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model* and Chapter 2: *Literature Review*. Process Art is associated with Performance Art and the Dada Movement and evolved from Minimalism and Conceptualism. Process Art applies where processes of production are seen as art, which is a central studio concern for the research.

Austrian-born social reformer Rudolf Steiner who founded Anthroposophy (derived from ancient Greek: *Anthropos* (human being), *Sophia* (wisdom)) called for a foundation of a new aesthetic, a cultural production that integrated art, science, and spirituality. Rudolf Steiner will be discussed as a key thinker for Process Art and a Process artist: “a catalyst for transformation and initiator of processes” (Ursprung in Bruederlin & Groos 2010, p 21).

The process-based exercises that are sequentially generated for this research project are processes that are to be perceived as art per se, to initiate a state of presence or Flow and are executed with the anthroposophical understanding of colour and form. However, a workspace separation of *Zone-In* exercise experimentation and the large-scale artwork production was essential as the artistic approaches applied during the exercises, were less duplicated within the artworks in progress, as detailed in Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model*.

Within the literature researched these three concepts (Flow, Process Art, and Anthroposophy) have not been previously linked as a basis to engage in studio creativity, a gap that this study seeks to address. The Flow experience ascribes to entering the zone which, as the existential nexus of my research, inhabits merely a niche area of creative cognition, a process approach to exploring creativity that is realised through this studio-based research. The significance of improving Flow within the visual arts can be accelerated through the Flow experience I have developed and discussed in the exegesis through the *Creative Flow Studio Model*. This means that without the practitioner (artist) waiting to enter the zone in their studio spontaneously, they can use this technique to strategically use their time effectively in a commitment to work creatively.

Moreover, by working so productively, the artist gains immediate feedback and insight into the aesthetic outcomes, as Flow expedites the creative art outcome process.

My anthroposophical background knowledge served as a basis and reference point for my studio strategy and led back to Rudolf Steiner's findings about the process of thinking in colours and forms. Steiner's role was decisive in transmitting last century's philosophy to contemporary artists for his contribution to abstraction through his explorations of colour and form with the introduction of terms such as *Bildekraft* (formative forces) or *Gegenraum* (anti-space) to advance painterly understanding from a scientific perspective (Karl Schulz-Koelln in Maeckler 1990, p. 241).

During my studies from 1987 to 1992 at the Kunststudienstaette Ottersberg (now HKS), Germany, I was introduced to Steiner's approach to colour, which is significantly based on Goethe's concept of colour classification and contemplations of creative principles (Figure 1). These formed my sense of aesthetics, concerning my studio approach. Movement and metamorphoses are key terms to Goethe's understanding of the laws of life that consider the archetypes of the mineral, plant, animal, and human worlds: without the instinctive ability to grasp ideas, the objective before us will not disclose itself, since all within the world does not exist by itself but is part of a larger context (Steiner 1986b p. 21).

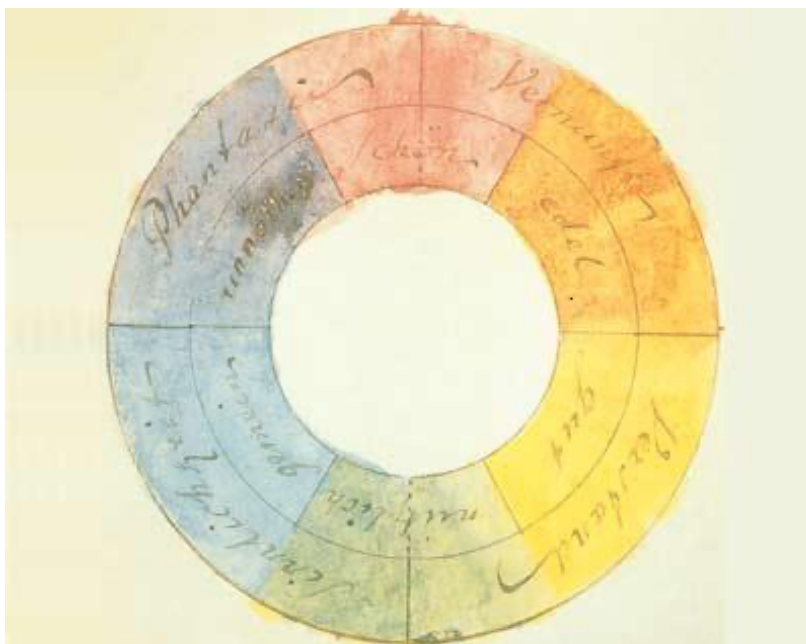


Figure 1
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Colour Circle*, 1810

Steiner (1986a p. 87) ordinarily positions form, compared to colour, as fixed or static within the composition. The form gets torn away from its lethargy when invigorated by colour, which is the world of the soul (*Weltenseele*). In effect, Steiner sees form as being developed by colour, enacting the characteristics of the colour's objective nature. Traditionally, the anthroposophical approach to painting sees multiple layers of over-lapping applied translucent colours, typically creating shapes or forms resulting in colour layering (veil painting) that alludes to potentiality. This creates an opportunity to see possibilities that lie beyond and engage the colour as a carrier of meaning in a three-dimensional fashion (spatial depth through *Farbwerte* (valeurs)). However, this research incorporates the gesture of the line through drawing as both aspects, colour and form, are crucial as stand-alone components of the exercise movements.

Steiner's approach was antilinear and pro-colour (for the colour to become alive and vibrate) and is still revolutionary as it portrays an inversion of all values (Konrad Oberhuber on anthroposophic art in Maeckler 1990, p. 305). Naturally, form and colour are seen as polarities, and accordingly, both drawing and painting activities complement each other. The dynamics of a line give an impression of colour, conversely, colour searches out forms from the colour itself; respectively, Steiner advised to "paint out of the colour" and "to draw out of the form" (Steiner in Kutzli 1981, p. 75). This aspect of correspondence and interdependence between drawing and painting is pivotal to an understanding of why colour (area) exercises in combination with drawing (line) tasks prove to be critical for my studio research as core elements to initiate an ongoing creative Flow experience as particularised in Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model* for the creation, contemplation and renewal of artwork within an ongoing studio methodology.

Early in my art career, I adopted an abstract expressionistic painting style and integrated elements akin to Colour Field Painting over time (Figures 2-5). My studio practice for this research deviated partially from past methods and saw aspects of Process Art more consciously infused (Figure 6 and *Appendix 1*). Due to experiential exercise activities, as per the intent and rationale of the study, the creative journey was not fixated on the final outcomes of the work, but rather was about engaging with and being dictated by, the work that was being produced through the *Zone-In* exercises (Figure 7 and *Appendix 1*).

I have developed three *Zone-In* exercises, which are Form Drawing (which is a drawing application utilising repetitive, therefore rhythmic movement), Dynamic Drawing (an unspecified drawing application for the liberation of thought) and Colour Bath (an all-over painting application for the equalising of feelings) that are to be executed in succession. These are the broad practical discoveries constituent of the *Creative Flow Studio Model* related to this research inquiry.



Figure 2
Hele Ellis, *Vertigo 1*, 2007



Figure 3
Hele Ellis, *Secret Order 3*, 2011

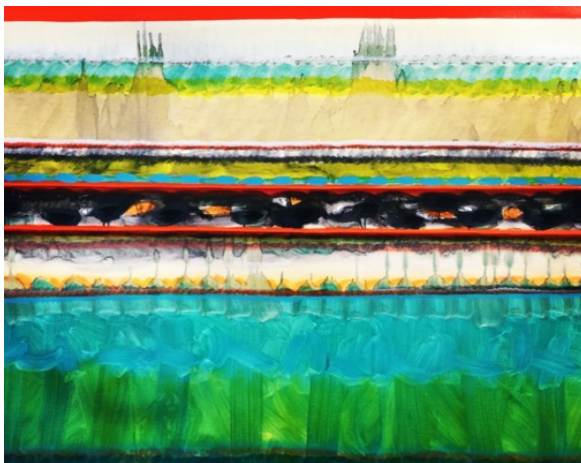


Figure 4
Hele Ellis, *Mono 5*, 2018



Figure 5
Hele Ellis, *Aramay 2*, 2018



Figure 6
Hele Ellis, *Across A-C (detail)*, 2020



Figure 7
Hele Ellis, *Untitled A-C (Zone-In exercises as Process Art Series), Series III*, 2020

Steiner propagated an integral view of humanity, and his influence on everyday life to date has led to innovative and holistic approaches that unite philosophy and spirituality, the arts (including architecture, drama and eurythmy (movement art form)), natural science (including medicine), agriculture, (biodynamics), and pedagogy. Steiner founded Waldorf schools (called Steiner schools in Australia), where *Form Drawing* finds application through repetitive rhythmic movements. Form Drawing compares to *Ars Lineandi* of the Middle Ages as humankind's oldest known art form (i.e., Bronze Age stone carvings, (Kutzli 1985a, p. 7)). Form Drawing is the imprint of a movement (*Spur einer Bewegung*) during which the will to draw decisive movements, thinking in concentrating on the accuracy of the drawing process, while imagining the complete form and the feeling engaged in for making the form harmonious (Spence in Kutzli 1985a, p. 5).

Through the symmetry in Form Drawing, which is not a mere mirroring across the axis, but a balance of play and counterplay between polarities in their interaction, the secrets of metamorphosis come to realisation (Kutzli 1985c, p. 87) in the subsequent artwork. Within Form Drawing, a field of bodily perception is experienced that assists spatial orientation, and a sense of balance which influences thinking in as much as painting with colours impacts the realm of feeling (Juenemann & Weitmann 1976, pp. 92-93). The grounding influence through Form Drawing (which is the first *Zone-In* exercise), the liberation of thought through Dynamic Drawing (the second *Zone-In* exercise) and the equalising of feelings through, what I termed, Colour Bath (the third *Zone-In* exercise) are the explicit practical innovations associated with this research inquiry (Figures 8-10 and *Appendix 1*).



Figure 8-10
Hele Ellis, *Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath, all Series V, 2020*

Through continual trial and error and supported by reflective and reflexive processes as documented through a paint application without upfront form (the monochrome, duo-chrome or pure chroma all-over approach and comparable to Colour Field Painting that prevents sharp tonal contrasts) and the development of Form and Dynamic Drawing practices (that consider the straight line and the curve as fundamental elements of painting and drawing) were forged. Further research and development established the final leading combination for effectively entering the Flow state as a framework to affect the production of two-dimensional artwork. These exercises, in combination executed consecutively, were of central concern as a stimulus to enter a Flow state produced as verification of developed technical practices and model which is the seminal concern of this research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

This chapter acts as an in-depth explanatory research tool and literature review that outlines the inception of creativity-based research and interdisciplinary approaches that have influenced my niche research area of Flow. This chapter further identifies and maps the historical and contemporary visual art theory and studio processes that are positioned within my studio practice. This supportive background information subsequently cultivated and expanded the structure of my studio approach, giving greater awareness to the dynamic and varied approaches that have been implemented to enter the Flow state for creative production. This research created a new theoretical space for renewed experimentation by applying the *Zone-In* exercises, developing a system of framing how the Process Art-based artwork is positioned within a set of guidelines as a result of the framework.

My research builds on the intersectionality of three major concepts: firstly, the Flow state experience; secondly, Process Art (an historical 1970s art movement); and lastly, studio techniques related to anthroposophical notions (in consideration of colour and form), which are the collective concerns of my studio processes. Process Art serves as a foundation to aid with entering the zone or Flow state and is accessed via anthroposophical studio approaches where the form is being developed by colour, and not vice versa, as commonly practised. This process enacts the characteristics of the colour's objective nature, directly relating to Process Art.

The defining feature of a Flow state is the intense experiential involvement in a moment-to-moment activity (Csikszentmihalyi, Abuhamdeh and Nakamura in Elliott & Dweck (eds.) 2005, p. 600). The Flow state is experienced as a state of being where a sense of total fluidity during a task one is passionate about results in non-distractible absorption, a merging of action and awareness that alters the sense of time and creates a feeling of fulfilment and motivation. The loss of self-consciousness is heightened, and self-reflective processes are silenced as the dualism of actor and action disappears (Csikszentmihalyi, Abuhamdeh & Nakamura in Elliott & Dweck (eds.) 2005, p. 601). In engaging with the Flow state, I developed three studio exercises to orchestrate this entering of the zone. The exercises are process related and prepare for engaged studio work.

The studio work continues to be a process, as a method, where the actions of making the artwork may be re-established when viewing the creative outcomes (Figure 11 and *Appendix 2*). My technical approach to studio work derives from the anthroposophical perspective to colour and form. Traditionally the anthroposophical approach to painting sees multiple layers of overlapping translucent colours applied, typically creating shapes or forms (Figure 12 and *Appendix 2*). This is called veil painting, a colour layering that alludes to the potentiality that marks possibilities for the composition to evolve into, and acts as a process-based painting approach.



Figure 11
Hele Ellis, *Tableau*, 2021



Figure 12
Hele Ellis, *Roseate*, 2020

2.2. Creativity

Modern academic inquiry into creativity, as the physiological inquiry of such an act, is necessary to understand how a human's brain engages with this specific subject matter. Commencing in 1950, American psychologist J.P. Guilford, proposed to the American Psychological Association to focus on creativity as a scientific subject. Research publications surfaced only gradually across different disciplines, which is because creativity is an ambiguous concept that based its earliest definitions on the creative individual, creating something novel and valuable, perceived as a mental ability, behaviour or process (Al-Ababneh 2020, p.1).

Creativity is therefore not entirely objective and correspondingly, creativity research demonstrates that creativity is not wholly domain-specific (Kaufman & Sternberg (eds.) 2006, p. 2) but is influenced by many developmental, social, and educational experiences. These collective experiences become interactive elements that take hold in different ways and are complex to explore as they need to combine several branches of learning. For instance, the interdisciplinary study of creativity in performances such as music, theatre, and ritual, that are of importance in view of events and actions, had been neglected for the most part by researchers. In recent years, acts of interdisciplinarity have been researched to help understand creativity in the arts and humanities. According to American art historian James Elkins, specifically visual studies have the potential to contribute a voice to the preeminent text-based practices in the humanities with the capacity to uncover largely disjointed parts of the university (Elkins 2003, p. vii). They demonstrate that such doings can benefit psychology more generally because it can draw on research in these disciplines and extend creativity theory (Sawyer 2010, p. 1).

The most prominent Flow researcher, American psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi postulated that creativity could be observed in the interrelation of a system that consists of three parts: the domain with symbolic rules and procedures nested in culture, the field including individuals that are gatekeepers of the domain and the creative individual itself through creative acts transforms the domain. From this perspective, creativity is any act, idea or product that changes the existing domain into a new one, but not without the explicit or implicit consent of the field responsible for it. That is, the interaction among domains, fields and persons jointly constitutes creativity. Therefore, personal creativity will only be relevant through exposure and inclusion in the domain through which creativity is manifested: creativity cannot be separated from its recognition, which means that creativity is cocreated and must be acknowledged by the community. However, this construct seems flawed as Csikszentmihalyi uses creativity synonymously with creative eminence (Davis 1983, p. 66) as exemplified that throughout history, creativity has been routinely vindicated in retrospect, constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed when experts recognised contributions, for instance, after the individual's departure, as in the case of historical example Vincent van Gogh (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, pp. 27-31).

Creativity is identified as one of the most complex human behaviours; consequently, thus defining what creativity is proves challenging (Runco and Okuda Sakamoto in Sternberg 1999, p. 62). Beyond this, Csikszentmihalyi (in Sternberg 1999 p. 110) recognised that the locus of creativity is the product of a far larger mysterious process as creative work takes place within a complex social manifold (complex social systems). Sawyer concluded that creativity research is still in its infancy due to the necessity for a fully developed interdisciplinary approach (Sawyer 2006, p. 305) that links different kinds of creativity. These are (in reference to American psychologist Robert Sternberg's triarchic theory of intelligence): synthetic/creative (human-made version of what has arisen naturally), analytic (problem-solving), and practical (skill-based) intelligence (Lubart (1995) in Lau, Na Na Hui & Yan Chak Ng 2004, p. 194). In addition, cultural variations and the interplay of responsible different brain structures and brain circuitry determine how creativity is developed.

Early creativity research, in mid-last century, served as background information and enriched my research topic with significant research explorations in the interdisciplinary field of neurobiology. At that point, my research project started gaining momentum as my findings from studio processes aligned with the literature on research in that field, demonstrating that my conclusions were valid and independently endorsed. From the neurobiological perspective, the specialisation of the cerebral brain hemispheres, specifically the brain's right hemisphere that controls creativity among other functions, the fronto-limbic networks (brain's affective system for processing and regulation of emotions) are relevant for creativity to arise (Mula, Hermann & Trimble 2016, p. 225). Specific attention has been given in the past two decades to the research on the prefrontal cortex, as it is suggested that it plays a vital role in the creative process.

2.3. Flow

German-born American cognitive neuroscientist Arne Dietrich, who is known for transient hypo frontality theory (THT), proposed that creativity results from deliberate and spontaneous modes of thought and emotional and cognitive information, with the prefrontal cortex performing the computation that transforms the novelty into creative behaviour, ultimately implementing creative expression (Dietrich 2004, p. 759).

Dietrich specifically discerned that creativity is a variation-selection process connected to the explicit system and activated when new skills are learned, therefore, when information is predicated on being knowledge. The implicit system Dietrich views as contributing to generating novelty that may not be creative (Dietrich 2004, p. 753), as this system describes the skill-based automatic performance of tasks that are neither consciously assessable nor verbalisable (Abraham 2018, p. 98). Concerning my creative output during Flow (refer to Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model*), I experienced that not all studio efforts resulted in creativity at play, which confirms Dietrich's findings that once the explicit system is offline (during Flow with transient hypo frontality), the generated output may not be the result of a creative act. This closely associates with Csikszentmihalyi's mention that Flow is a peak experience that is not necessarily tied to creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, Abuhamdeh and Nakamura in Elliott & Dweck (eds.) 2005, p. 614). However, with evidence mounting from neuropsychology of the processing of information in the brain, the creative process is currently to be thought of as two stages (not four as per Wallas: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification), that of 'intuition' and 'verification'. Verification could be collapsed into intuition, as well as intuition being a form of non-linear parallel processing, as per American philosopher Donald Schoen's contention that creatives use a 'feel' for the work they engage in (Bastick (1982) and Schoen (1983) in McIntyre 2012, p. 204). The brain mechanisms underlying Flow and integral to creativity occur through the dynamic interaction between the explicit system (subserved by frontal and medial temporal lobe structures) and the implicit system (undertaken by the basal ganglia). To facilitate the flexibility-efficiency trade-off during information processing (Dietrich (2004) in Abraham 2018, pp. 112-113)) and with the temporary lapse of the explicit system (transient hypo frontality), the opportunity allows for entering a state of Flow. The current brain-based creativity model proposes three modes: deliberate mode, spontaneous mode (explicit system of cognition) and Flow experience (implicit system) (Dietrich in Abraham 2018, p. 99). Nevertheless, according to Antonio Damasio (in McIntyre 2012, p. 40), brain activity that leads to creative behaviour results from physical, social, and cultural environments. For that reason, predictive brain mechanisms are not the sole factors to induce creativity, yet they explain the Flow experience from a neuroscience perspective.

The studio exercises developed during this project to experience transient hypo frontality as necessitated for entering the Flow state that forms the cornerstone of my research project, is a distinct niche subject of creativity with exceptionally modest literature available regarding the practical implementation to instantiate Flow. Considering that art and its artistic process function as a window into society and exhibit the *Zeitgeist* attitudes and values about creativity adequately (Runco 2007, pp. 107-108, p. 254), it is relevant to observe “what creators do” as individuals (Runco and Sakamoto in Sternberg 1999, p. 111) as a way forward in the development of creativity research. The experimental and intuitive doing, apropos of this studio project, is to be perceived as a contribution to further access and will assess creativity moving forward. Three dimensions of performance antecedents predict performance outcomes: ability, motivation, and opportunity. The AMO theory is commonly used to explain, measure, and forecast performance. This approach sees deliberate practice (as part of motivation) to become accomplished as more critical than innate ability (Ericsson in June Maker, in Lau et al. 2004, pp. 361-362), which aligns with the common debate that it would take 10% talent and 90% hard work to perform successfully. However, this deliberate practice that Csikszentmihalyi identified as Flow in the 1970s is a pleasurable and rewarding experience that accompanies a distorted time perception and a sense of expansiveness. The phenomenological state of Flow excludes negative emotions (e.g., apathy) while performing at an optimal level as the core strategy of this system allows for artists to work quickly and immersive without the risk of studio fatigue, which happens during a studio session that lacks full engagement. Anna Abraham lists nine components identified across a range of activities (from creative to work ventures) for Flow to arise: (a) challenge-skill balance, (b) a merging of action and awareness that is experienced as spontaneous and automatic, (c) clear goals, (d) immediate unambiguous feedback (instant self-evaluation), (e) present moment focused, (f) sense of control and (g) loss of self-consciousness, (h) transformation of time perception, and lastly for the (i) autotelic experience to be experienced as intrinsically rewarding (Abraham 2018, p. 255). Flow spontaneously occurs by chance when the above-mentioned external and internal conditions coincide. Nevertheless, it is more likely that Flow results from a deliberate activity, as provided through my developed exercises resultant of this research, using Csikszentmihalyi’s criteria (as per Abraham) as a frame of reference for ascertaining Flow.

This developed, methodical *Creative Flow Studio Model's* structured activity, as one of the doctoral practice-led outcomes, incites in its application a greater Flow state and increased activity within the studio. An experience, as framed by Csikszentmihalyi, that transports into a new reality with a sense of aesthetic discovery resulting in the growth of the self as key to Flow activities (Csikszentmihalyi 1992, pp. 71, 74). The Flow state or autotelic experience (self-generated activity) is seen as the most crucial stage of creativity. It has been compared to Eastern ideas on creativity with utilisation in many Eastern styles of meditation (Buddhist (i.e., Zen, mindfulness, Vipassana), Hindu (i.e., Vedic and Yogic) and Chinese (i.e., Qigong and Taoist)) articulated as one that “can be absolutely free to connect with the universe, and all he or she does is highly creative” (Sternberg & Niu (2006) in Phillip McIntyre 2012, p. 38). Parallels between the Japanese Zen concept of Satori and Flow are apparent as Satori requires constant practice, concentration and persistence, an “absorption to the exclusion of other things” (Torrance (1979) in Runco 2007, p. 275). For Zen there is no duality in action of the somewhat metaphysical activity in accord with ‘absolute nothingness’ (Watts in Dickinson 2006, pp. 18, 193). This, yet relaxed state (Flow), has been linked in the past with drug-induced experiences, metaphysical states or religious ecstasy, despite being without a sufficient neurobiological element to it. Recent findings in neuropsychology unearthed that rapid attentional set-shifting between cognitive precepts correlates to feelings of elation and satisfaction with the neurochemical processes involved increasing cognitive efficiency and creativity (Marr (2001) quoting Ashby, Isen & Turkel (1999) in McIntyre 2012, pp. 115-116, p. 202).

2.4. Process Art

The *Zone-In* studio exercises that initiate a Flow state are a precursor to artwork production. Simultaneously, these processes are the starting points of creating process-based work within the studio environment. These studio exercises, integrated into artwork, directly correlate to Process Art. Process Art was an art movement surfacing in the 1970s that included ephemeral or transitory elements to explore time, decay, intuition, expression with and without conception, but overall was about the free act of ‘doing’ resulting in the act of ‘making’ within the studio environment, and fulfilled the modernist doctrine par excellence: the object’s truth to materials (Butler 1999, p. 29).

Process Art was originally for its chronological slippage situated between Minimalism and Conceptualism however, Process Art signalled “a certain exhaustion” with the formal procedures of the reductivist tendencies of Minimalist practices that historically prefigured it, yet the notion of process in art became a critical thematic despite the rejection of formalism and paradoxically turned into an art historical category and style (Butler 1999, pp. 26, 81). Process drawings in its definition, and as per the study project exercises of Form and Dynamic Drawing segments, are works in which the making of the drawing becomes the drawing itself: drawing informs the moment of Process Art (Butler 1999, pp. 89, 91). Process Art also relates closely to process-driven Intuitive Abstraction, where intuition is used to create abstract works and is, according to American painter Natacha Sochet, “capable of transcending the unknowable” (natachasochat.com 2023, n.p.) in accreditation to the Flow state, during which activities are intuitively performed. The studio outcomes for this doctorate take the process-driven Process Art-based strategy and incorporate this with the temporality of time via two aspects: through the time-set exercises with its material components (Figure 13 and *Appendix 1*) and through a foregrounding of movements that eradicate time through experienced presence during Flow that dissolves composition (Figure 14 and *Appendix 2*). Korean-born, Japanese artist and philosopher Lee Ufan (in Fortenberry (ed.) 2014, p. 54) represented Mono-ha (Japanese ‘School of Things’, anti-modernist movement with installations of ‘not making’ and arranging of natural or industrial materials) as a return to a pre-rational recognition of the elemental process of seeing, feeling, and touching in terms of interactive relationships that eradicate the objectification to disclose the structure of perception and the relational context that destroys the autonomy of the art object.



Figure 9
Hele Ellis, *Dynamic Drawing (time set exercise), Series III*, 2020



Figure 10
Hele Ellis, *Circa A-C*, 2022

Process Art is linked to Mono-ha yet contrasts Mono-ha through the action of 'making', which does not reconceptualise the material as the importance is placed on the activity and not the aesthetic outcome of the material. The activity done to the material in Process Art is revealed in the finished form and makes the activity visible to the material rather than focusing on material artwork. For instance, German-born American sculptor Eva Hesse's work *Untitled* (Figure 15) (untitled rope piece, exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1970) integrated irregular organic forms of knotted rope dipped into liquid latex and hung in a web-like structure. Due to Hesse's pioneering work in natural and industrial materials utilised for mutability to self-complete, she established a cross-over between Process Art and Minimalism.



Figure 15
Eva Hesse, *Untitled (rope piece)*, 1977



Figure 16
Willem De Kooning, *Woman and Bicycle*, 1952/53



Figure 17
Willem De Kooning, *Woman I*, 1950-52



Figure 18
Günther Förg, *Untitled (Gitterbild)*, 2007



Figure 19
Günther Förg, *Untitled (Fensterbild)*, 1988



Figure 11
Günther Förg, *Untitled (Tupfenbild)*, 2007

The process of artmaking that becomes part of the subject's matter also played a role in Abstract Expressionism, specifically, Action Painting (coined by American art critic Harold Rosenberg in 1952, in Fortenberry 2014, p. 106), which refers to the overriding significance of the act of painting as represented in artists such as Dutch-American painter Willem de Kooning who was recognised for his profound and excessive mark-making (Figure 16) that was reminiscent of grandly agitated Cubism as the presiding force (Ratcliff 1996, p. 220). De Kooning caused controversy for staying fractionally figurative in his work (Figure 17), however, the process engaged in Abstract Expressionism was predominantly used to express feelings instead of exploring the materials and forms of the artwork itself (Fortenberry (ed.) 2014, p. 60).

In an irreverent reversal of artistic tradition, contemporary German sculptor and painter Günther Förg pursued the European legacy of American Minimalism (recalling Cy Twombly, 3.6. *Artist Case Study: Cy Twombly in Context*) and transformed the previous lattice structures of his grid painting series (Figures 18-20) (*Gitterbilder* and *Fenster Aquarelle*) to spot paintings (*Tupfenbilder*, exhibited at Hauser & Wirth, 2023) that reference colour studies and celebrate the act of painting through rhythmic gestural marks, that correspond to the aesthetic concerns relevant to the research of Flow.

Current literature about the applications of processes to promote creativity involves chiefly body-based exercises, with mixed evidence that such endeavours extend to creativity (Abraham 2018, p. 270).

These preparatory ventures include colour meditation practices as proposed by Steiner and visualisation techniques (Jose Silva 1977, p. 29), Qi cultivation (life force activation via bodily postures, Michael Gelb 2014, pp. 1-123), as well as other bodily practices that are void of a directive towards explicit processes for practical implications in the studio environment. Anthroposophical-oriented German Bauhaus lecturer Johannes Itten used breathing and relaxation techniques that supplemented rhythm to his art students' daily routine to prepare them mentally and physically ahead of creative work. Itten saw the body-mind-spirit connection as pivotal to creativity and with his so-called Bauhaus Yoga courses. In classical yoga theory and practice, meditation is a process that includes total attention and a prolonged focus on an object of concentration and the mind and merging the object with the mind so that the mind sees the object for what it is (in reference to Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi, (Carman 2012, p. 154)). Itten attempted to create a presence in action for the practitioner, fostering equanimity and self-understanding. The principle of "experience — perception — practical ability" (Itten 1975, pp. 9-10) was practised leading "the students' minds and muscles to a tabula rasa" (Elkins 2001, p. 34). This compares directly to my project, which is concerned with preparatory methods to initiate unparalleled presence. This also aligns with German researcher Marc Wittmann's focus on time perception as an indicator of cognitive functioning and emotion. Marc Wittmann's observations (Wittmann 2018, p. 24) that rhythm-induced trance leads to a dissolution of self, time and space promoting a Flow state was vital to the studio exercise development.

German artist Karl Otto Goetz (1914-2017) (in Wittmann 2018, p. 51) developed fast-paced, explosive abstract painting processes to experience the creation of present moments (Figure 21), akin to the rhythm-based abstract Dynamic Drawing exercises that were implemented for this project (Figure 22 and *Appendix 1*). Australian Sensorimotor art therapist Cornelia Elbrecht (2018, p. 14, p. 53 & p. 85) links Guided Drawing (a mindfulness drawing exercise) with rhythmic repetition for a focus on involuntary motor impulses, bilateral organisation, and sensory awareness for clients to 'get into the zone' and be present. Some of these mentioned practitioners promote creativity (through rhythm, fast-paced painting and drawing processes that includes traditional Form Drawing) and display an affinity to aspects of my project.

However, my approach differs due to the unique combination and procedure of the *Zone-In* exercises that create a unified system for entering the zone. Accordingly, no specific artist or their working process was focussed on in the development of my approach but rather were discussed as a way of demonstrating different artists who have engaged in a similar field of discourse to my own within the studio practice. This research's innovative non-practised exercise methods petition other practitioners to enact and adopt the framework as a strategy not just to experience what is being activated through my studio procedures but to allow everyone an opportunity to rethink the systems they use within their creative processes and outcomes.



Figure 21
Karl Otto Goetz, *Smolbeck*, 1956



Figure 22
Hele Ellis, *Dynamic Drawing (rhythmic capture)*, Series V, 2021

2.5. Anthroposophy

A certainly important seminal theoretical topic has been Rudolf Steiner's early modernist conceptual worldview, according to which the "Steiner cosmos had succeeded in extricating itself from the realm of romantic anti-modernism and presenting itself as a part of modernist avantgardism" (Loers in Bruederlin & Groos 2010, p.22) calls for decoding. Steiner was a social reformer who petitioned for a new aesthetic foundation. This was anchored in Anthroposophy, a cultural production that integrated art, science, and spirituality that was discussed previously in Chapter 1: *Introduction*.

To elucidate this further, it is critical to understand that his anthroposophical movement was commonly perceived as an ‘eruption of irrational forces in society’ that catered to the middle class with ‘pseudo-intellectual needs’ (Petritakis 2018, p.3). However, from the 1970s onwards, with the emergence of a new field of academic research devoted to Western esotericism, which remained until then at the margins of academic and cultural discourse, American sociologist Edward Tyriakian argued (in Petritakis 2018, p.4) that the blossoming of Steiner’s social phenomena might be the harbinger of a renewed cultural paradigm that replaces traditional institutionalised standards by offering new value orientations. In effect, starting in the 1990s, this triggered an outpour of scholarly works and exhibitions reconceptualising traditional painting. Women founded the Kuenstlergruppe Aenigma (as referenced), and with Steiner promoting women’s creativity, he welcomed and supported the group. They exhibited collectively between 1918 and 1932 (with a retrospective held in 2015 in the Czech Republic at Muzeum Umeni Olomouc to celebrate a hundred years of anthroposophical art to the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* that featured the diversity of such art and the art of living). The approval and promotion Aenigma received through Steiner resulted in a decree by the German Ministry of Culture that women in the group were permitted to study at the art academy, critiquing the image of conventional womanhood and the rhetoric of male supremacy (Petritakis 2018, p. 32), which testifies to Steiner’s *Weltanschauung* starting off to be implemented.

Steiner’s specific approach toward a revolutionary artistic construct, as frequently referred to as a revitalisation of Goethe’s *Farbenlehre*, gives testimony to a vanguard frame of reference for studio approaches with implications that reach the very verve of life’s perspective, as indicated in Goethe’s and Schiller’s *Temperamentenrose* (Figure 23). The spatial orientation is born out of colour to capture the liveliness and inner revitalisation that radiates outward (Konrad Oberhuber in Maeckler 1990, p. 304). Dimensionality and depth are therefore achieved through colour application and positioning rather than a framework of contours acting as a foundation for composition. Steiner’s lectures in *Das Wesen der Farben* (The Nature of Colours, 1914/1924, Steiner 1986a) give insight into the nature and essence of colour. Steiner emphasised that as an artist, one must understand to live with the colours and their inherent life force (*Lebekraft*) or *élan vital*.

This Bergsonian term (in reference to French philosopher Henri-Louis Bergson's theory on *élan vital*) links evolution with consciousness, a process ontology wherein nothing in the universe is viewed as permanent but undergoes metamorphoses. By getting in touch with the intuitive faculty, one can fathom a process in its processual state (Jancsary 2017, n.p.) conducive to Steiner's context.

Steiner specified that one needs to experience how colours 'flood' and how the flooding (*Farbenfluten*) instantaneously becomes alive (Steiner 1986a, pp. 86, 87). He illuminated this by comparing the nature of two primary colours: red draws on life and approaches as per its movement, and blue draws away or departs, with the figural to be experienced as 'breathing' through the glow of the colour. What appears as a modern translation of this colour understanding is undertaken by Hong Kong-born Australian artist John Young who, through a contemporary technological process, uses a series of computer filters to transform and amalgamate random selections of images from landscapes to amateur soft porn, where he chooses images "like a pilgrim's visit to a sacred site — like a pilgrim to the modern" (Natalie King 2008, p. 100) and are painted by assistants onto canvas (Figure 24).

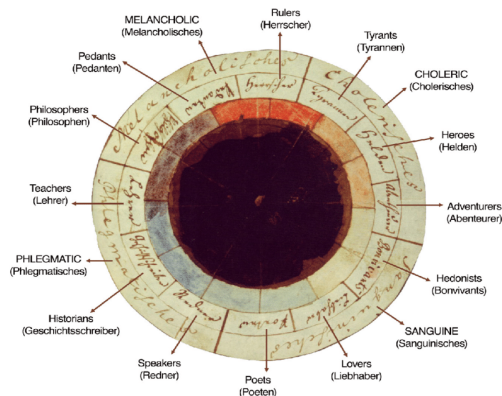


Figure 23
Goethe/Schiller, *Temperamentenrose*
(*Rose of Temperaments*), 1798/99

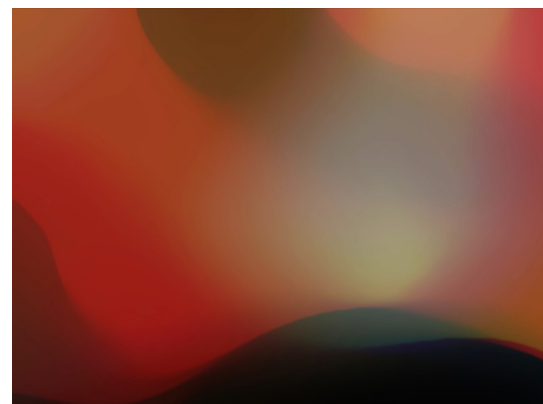


Figure 24
John Young, *Spectrumshiva II*, 2022

German painter Adolf Hoelzel's (1853-1934) artwork reflects the interest in Goethe's Theory of Colours and furthered the basics of his colour science employing musical analogies (Figure 25) (Niels Hutchison 1997-2022, n.p.). Hoelzel's *Gestaltung* is determined by the artistic processing of colours that he categorised into eight contrast groups.

These contrast groups are colour contrast in itself, light/dark, cold/warm, complementary contrast, intensity contrast, quantity contrast, contrast to non-colour and simultaneous contrast. He viewed the complementary contrast as fixed and all other contrasts as changeable for directing the iridescence (*Farbenspiel*) into a vibrational conclusion (Zoller 1989, pp. 16, 18). With the aid of colour theory, Hoelzel turned away from academic realism and became one of the first abstract painters (Figure 26). Hoelzel was a teacher of Itten at the Stuttgart Academy, Germany, a teaching position Paul Klee filled later, and the theories of also American-German artist Joseph Albers were grounded in Itten's work that was based on a colour-music code providing a painterly working method of considerable value as a useful colour system (Hutchison 1997-2022, n.p.).

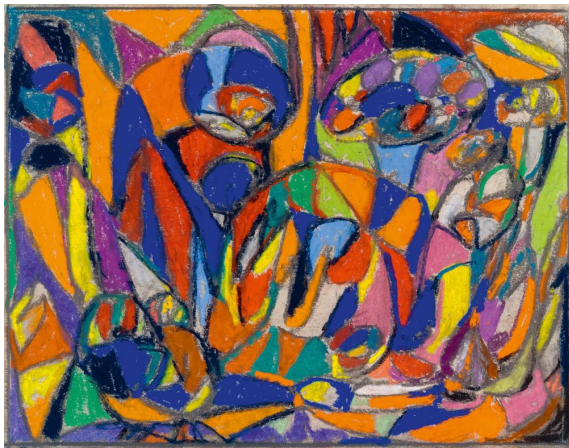


Figure 25
Adolf Hoelzel, *Untitled*, 1920s

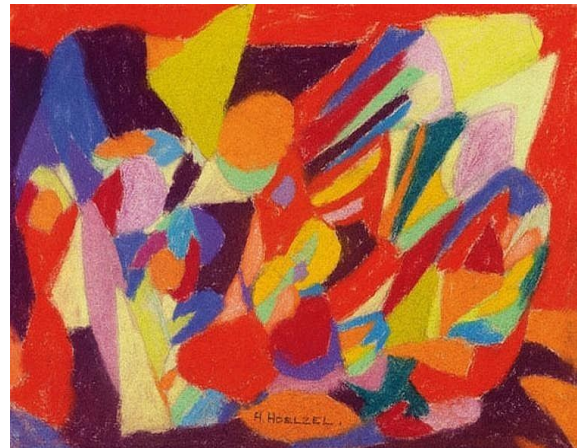


Figure 26
Adolf Hoelzel, *Untitled*, 1920s

Throughout my artistic career, including times as an art therapist, I have been deliberately engaging (or had the clients engaged) with the charged nature of colour. This was likewise applied and evident in the production of artwork for this research project, inclusive of the third exercise, Colour Bath, which was principally veil painted in an all-over application of colour/s acting as a field of tonality.

Steiner indicated that the movement of the will, the creative impulse, forms visions with the unconscious and attempts to interrupt these into thoughts. Once the visions are translated into a vital force, manifesting, for instance, as colour combinations, thoughts are held back, which Steiner called artistic achievement.

This describes the Flow state during which cognition is inhibited. Steiner's proposal for colour application fundamentally connects with the Flow experience as probed for this project. Maximised engagement with the subject matter by following creative impulses, i.e., colour area application, allows the formation of concepts to move into the periphery (Figure 27 and *Appendix 2*).



Figure 27
Hele Ellis, *Juicy A-B*, 2022

For Steiner, art was a continuous salvation of the mysterious life that needed to be extracted from nature and raised from its dead form (Steiner 1986b pp. 114-118). This signifies that the surface of the work, whether sculpture or painting, needs to be enlivened via the inner force of the artist who connects the manifest nature object with soul quality for it being animatedly existent or alive beyond the inherent nature of colour.

Steiner saw the artistic process as conscious and the creative impulse as unconscious. According to him, true artistic production (*kuenstlerisches Schaffen*) penetrates the spirit and stands spiritually before the consciousness by the agency of the artistic impulse. Steiner advocated that humanity must find its way again into the true realm of art with the artist moving beyond the subject and motif and to the content of the observed through the visionary creative, via the authentic original as in novel (Steiner 1986b, pp. 161-164, 206-207).

Steiner was convinced that the powers of the soul could systematically be obtained via the arts. He portrayed this as an elevation of consciousness (*schauendes Bewusstsein*), where not only the objects and transactions of the physical reality appear, but a spiritual world is unveiled through the artist's capability to paint the world of colours with their inherent virtues. This is experienced via sense perception so that allegoric-symbolic descriptions naturally fall short (Steiner 1986b, p. 111). Subsequently, direct sense-oriented imitation of the world Steiner viewed as illustration only, not what he called 'true' art. Steiner described true art as artwork where nothing is reproduced. He argued that the replication of nature's principles (*Naturwahrheit*) by emulating the mundane, treated art as an object and not as an appearance in its transitory nature. He therefore refuted so-called naïve realism with its fundamental principle that everything which is perceived must be real (Steiner 1986c, p. 108). Steiner identified the production of objective realism in art as an admission by the artist that they must borrow from nature and cannot follow the demand of aesthetic culture or the principles of art (*das Kunstwahre*). However, although some scholarly attention has been directed toward the impact of Steiner's theoretical texts on abstraction, his dynamic interaction with contemporary artists who engaged with abstract tendencies at the time (i.e., Kandinsky, Klee, af Klint, Mondrian) remains a desideratum for the art historian (Petritakis 2018, p.5).

Steiner embraced the Goethe legacy that summarises that artwork in its completion is the work of the human spirit and that a work of nature is as much an embodiment of the natural, transcendental, or supernatural, as that of the artist's creative perception (Steiner 1986b, p. 59). As such, a transformation of the natural reverberates the supernatural, and correspondingly the work of art in its form is to represent the innate possibilities that are otherwise without address: "*Der aesthetische Schein ist das durch den schaffenden Menschenggeist durchgoettlichte Sinnliche*" ("The aesthetic semblance is the sensual pervaded by the creative human spirit", Steiner 1986b, p. 40). To be appreciative of art, one needs to live in the work, to surrender one's senses to the world "if they are to mediate between him and the world" (Steiner 1961b, p. 85), thus heightening their perception of the concealed spirit of which the physical eye knows nothing – "listless towards space, time and self and lost in the work when sensing the nuances of characteristics thereby refining his inner soul life" (Steiner 1961a, p. 68).

Steiner's articulation about art production is the keystone to understanding the intertwining between creativity, the Flow experience through Process Art and its coupling with spiritual propositions, as evidenced through my practice-led research outcomes and as documented in this literature review.

Specifically, this chapter discussed research undertaken within anthroposophical concepts situated in various studio approaches and artwork production combined to represent the collective concerns for my studio processes and the developed Flow model. Within that, this literature review expanded on the foundations of creativity research and the interdisciplinary field of neurobiology with its connection to Flow positioned within process and intuitive arts-based strategies. Overall, the seminal literature researched for this doctoral study has created a frame in which I have positioned my studio work and the development of the Flow studio strategy within a historical, contemporary and theoretical discourse.

CHAPTER 3: CREATIVE PRACTICE REVIEW: ARTIST CASE STUDIES

3.1. Overview

This chapter will discuss research on specific artworks and artists positioned within the mid-century Modernist movements of Abstract Expressionism, Colour Field Painting, Process Art, contemporary forms of Intuitive Abstraction and the philosophy of The Formless. The selected works from these various art movements and theories align with my overall process-based artmaking approach. Subsequential artist case studies are analysed for their specific association with my three research project concepts: 1. Flow (or presence), 2. Process Art and 3. Anthroposophy. Further explored will be the significance certain artists' concepts link to my research and how I have developed these within my studio methodology. The seminal artists discussed in this chapter are Australian-based Aida Tomescu, German Katharina Grosse, American Amy Sillman, First Nations Australian Emily Kngwarreye, and American Cy Twombly. They individually work(ed) in varying forms of abstraction and align collectively with my position as an artist. Other artists within 20th century Modernist art movements related to the studio research are cited because their approach is germane to the study and serves as an agency to my theoretical framework. What this chapter will demonstrate is the interconnectedness between the theoretical context of Process Art, Flow and Anthroposophy, and specific historic and contemporary artists who have been, or are engaged in similar strategies to my studio research approach.

Abstract Expressionism followed the early 20th century art movement German Expressionism. It grew out of European Surrealism, which flourished in New York City in the 1950s due to European artists fleeing the Second World War, such as German Surrealist Max Ernst, who moved to the USA in 1939. Abstract Expressionism covered a variety of painting approaches that conveyed solid emotional content and was broadly divided into two groups (Taylor & Piscitelli (eds.) 2008 p. 502). Action painters such as American Jackson Pollock (Figure 28) and counterforce Willem de Kooning (Figure 29) who preserved the ideal of composition (Ratcliff 1996, p. 4), highlighted the performative quality of application for creating the artwork.

For them, the canvas became the aesthetic capturing of an urgently, emotionally, and passionately applied event. Secondly, Colour Field painters emphasised the emotional force of colour with less inherent drama and intended to create a heightened state of consciousness on the viewer's part (Taylor & Piscitelli (eds.) 2008 p. 502). Colour Field painters such as Barnett Newman (Figure 30) and Mark Rothko (Figure 31) sought the sublime in their pronouncements and applied paint with a conceptual vigour that emphasised an expansion of colour in chromatic intensity as a conceptual and emotional strategy that would represent, as per Goethe "the acts of sufferings of light" (in Kuspit 1984, p. 211) and dissolve the seeming opposition between matter and energy.



Figure 28
Jackson Pollock, *Convergence*, 1952



Figure 29
Willem de Kooning, *Door to the River*, 1960

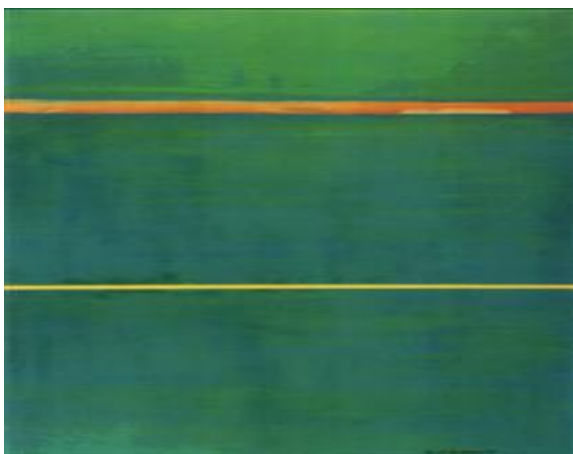


Figure 30
Barnett Newman, *Dionysius*, 1949



Figure 12
Mark Rothko, *Untitled (Red)*, 1958

In contemporary abstract based expressionistic artwork, e.g., Barnaby Furnas (Figure 32) exemplifies a traversing into The Formless (*L'Informe*). Formlessness was first introduced by French philosopher Georges Bataille in *L'Informe* (Formless) in 1929 and reintroduced by American theorists Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois via their curated exhibition *L'Informe: mode d'emploi* at Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, 1996. Bataille's enigmatic postulation of the *Informe* philosophy, a term without definition but declassifying power to the precepts of Modernism and to the undoing of form itself, was given shape in the Paris exhibition. Co-curators Bois and Krauss declared it to be an anti-concept as to undo categories by replacing them with principles of operation, operations that had been hidden but used in a "transverse corpus" (Sedofsky in an interview with Bois and Krauss for Art Forum, 1996, n.p.). The Formless was not a new idea for artists or theorists, as artists use form during studio operations. As such, it is the unformed that exposes the process as an expression of base materialism, which interconnects The Formless with Process Art that has been reciprocally used during this research project within the studio.

The Formless has been utilised as a tool for creativity from abstract expressionists to postmodern artists such as German Gerhard Richter as exemplified in his time-limited panoramic abstractions. For this series he applied paint via brush, and by moving a scraper across, the result is situated between conscious decision-making and a random process accentuating The Formless, as in *P19-2* (Cage Series), 2020 (Figure 33). Curiously, Richter was, together with Anselm Kiefer at the time, seriously involved with issues of German history and "irritatingly evasive" about it (Elkins 2002, p. 28). Richter bridged the gap between conceptual and perceptual art, of art as an analytic method and as the material expression, between thinking and doing (Storr 2002, p. 17). Despite scathing remarks on devotional art, he engaged with the abstraction's capacity to represent the unrepresentable (Storr 2002, pp. 66, 69), the metaphorical theme of light and the light divine (Figure 34, early 1960s). Native American painter Emmi Whitehorse, who gained attention for her Navajo-based iconography, reflects her abstracted natural surroundings more verbatim, as observable in *Jackstraw*, 2000 (Figure 35); however, this is contravened by embodying The Formless through her all-over intuitive approach to stake out her composition.



Figure 32
Barnaby Furnas, *Study for Parting of the Red Sea #1*, 2006



Figure 33
Gerhard Richter, *P19-2 (Cage Series)*, 2020



Figure 13
Gerhard Richter, *Schneelandschaft (Snowscape)*, 1966



Figure 14
Emmi Whitehorse, *Jackstraw*, 2000

3.2. Artist Case Study: Aida Tomescu in Context

Sydney-based Romanian contemporary Process artist Aida Tomescu utilises Formlessness in *Flinders Red*, 2004 (Figure 36) in her approach to composition by using a new vocabulary to engage with the vast Australian natural space and feelings of isolation after she arrived in Australia in 1980. Her work speaks of weathered surfaces reminiscent of sandy deposits in floodplains for which she, at times, literally uses sand to solidify these impressions with lyrical all-over colour application (Figure 37). Although engaging with her external surroundings, her translation is intimate as it derives from an internal process.

She uses the term 'image' in an almost Byzantine sense, referring to that moment when the work takes on an ineluctable presence, and has attained its own life and identity (McDonald 2006, n.p.). Toward the end of the 1990s, Tomescu's infinite powerful sequences became concentrated as heavily layered fields of colour (Figure 38) that make her uncompromising vision of process evident (McDonald 2015, n.p.). Her deciphering of the expansive landscape particularises my own experience and notion of creating artwork since arriving in Australia 28 years ago. The third exercise developed for this research, Colour Bath, relates to Tomescu's process of taking the colour experience to a higher pitch, akin to the anthroposophical concept of colour arrangement.



Figure 36
Aida Tomescu, *Flinders Red*, 2004



Figure 37
Aida Tomescu, *Into a Carpet Made of Water*, 2021



Figure 38
Aida Tomescu, *Heartland I*, 2015



Figure 39
Dale Frank, *crackle...& splat!*, n.d.



Figure 40
Helen Frankenthaler, *Eden*, 1956

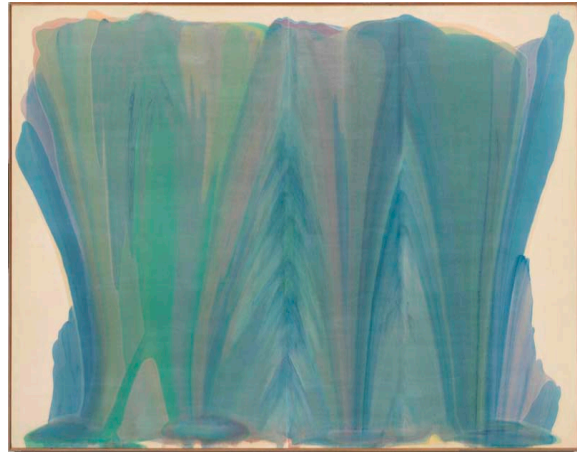


Figure 15
Morris Louis, *Tet*, 1958

Australian Process artist Dale Frank works through a multiplicity of stylistic references in his paintings like a “shaman’s need to improvise” (Magon 1992, p. 45) and particularly exemplifies contemporary forms of Intuitive Abstraction as seen in works such as *crackle... & splat!*, n.d. (Figure 39). American Morris Louis explored new compositional elements and technical methods in his 1950s and 60s paintings that were influenced and technically adopted from American artist Helen Frankenthaler’s soak stain artworks that saw a thinned oil mixture poured directly onto the unprimed canvas, which resulted in a watercolour impression (Figure 40) to produce his famous Veil Paintings in the mid-1950s (Figure 41). This series depicts subdued translucent washes with a fan of rich colour emerging around the edges. Louis considered the medium of painting alone “the paint to the canvas surface” (Moffett 1979, p. 5), which is descriptive of reserving his subject matter to colour application. He produced floods of unidentifiable colour with no emphasis on the image but on the chromatic relationships between colours (Ratcliff 1996, p. 222), intertwining Colour Field Painting with Process Art and Intuitive Abstraction. He liberated painting from gestural mark-making by allowing the pouring of liquid paint to determine the form, overlapping colours creating subtle spatial relationships and degrees of depth in the final composition (Fortenberry (ed.) 2014, p. 104). This painting strategy collectively challenges the traditional application of paint with a brush. Instead, it allows for randomness and change to become an important material in the conclusive Gestalt of the work as per the study’s Dynamic Drawing segment to alleviate imprinting of the reinforced formed shapes of Form Drawing.

American art critic Clement Greenberg noted regarding Frankenthaler's approach and her "aesthetic siblings" that the canvas "becomes paint in itself, color in itself ... more purely optical" (Ratcliff 1996, p. 222).

Artists influenced by Anthroposophy (succeeding Theosophy) also confronted established utilisation of paint application by using thinned layers of colour, known as veil painting, to create form and depth. For instance, early 20th century Modernists, Russian painter and art theorist Wassily Kandinsky, Swiss-born German artist Paul Klee, German painter and printmaker Franz Marc, Dutch artist and art theorist Piet Mondrian and Swedish artist and mystic Hilma af Klint (Figures 42-46) were affected by Steiner's position as a social reformer and Process artist and his movement that called for a foundation of a new aesthetic, a cultural production that integrated art, science and spirituality. They were optimistic that society could "be awakened to the spiritual truth by means of abstract painting" (Kuspit 2000, p. 71) through the renunciation of representation, resulting in *joie de vivre* concerning the dynamics of colour, gesture and space, thus reflecting the desire to articulate spiritual ideas that were unable to be expressed in traditional pictorial terms (Hofmann in Chipp 1968, p. 538). Af Klint significantly incorporated esoteric thought in her work by drawing from impulses such as cosmic imagery, vibration, synaesthesia, duality and/or sacred geometry (Tuchman 1986 p. 32).



Figure 42
Wassily Kandinsky, *Several Circles*, 1926



Figure 43
Paul Klee, *Castle and Sun*, 1928



Figure 44
Franz Marc, *Blaue Pferde (Blue Horses)*, 1911

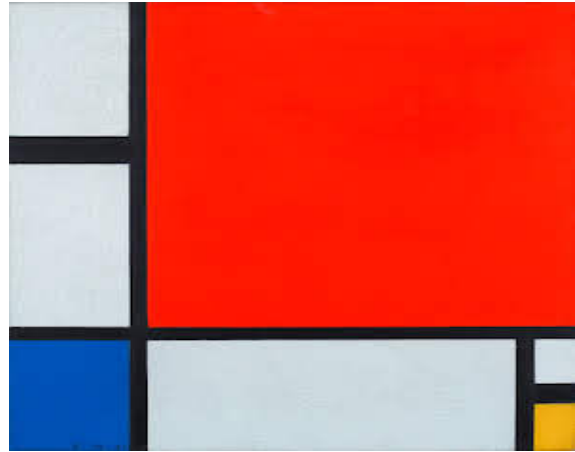


Figure 45
Piet Mondrian, *Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow*, 1930

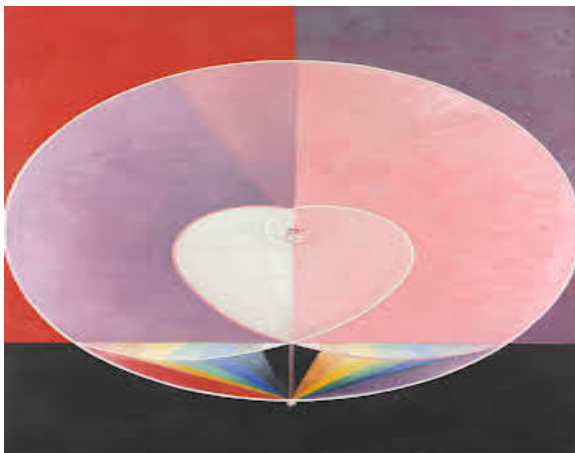


Figure 46
Hilma af Klint, *Dove No.2*, 1915



Figure 47
Wassily Kandinsky, *Traverse Line*, 1923

Firstly Kandinsky (Figure 47), then later German artist/theorist Joseph Beuys (Figure 48), engaged with the formal quality of the line and referenced the organic living form that was also vital for the drawing segment of my research inquiry. Beuys took up Steiner's radical reform ideas to change social conditions by linking art and life, transforming art from an object of aesthetic contemplation into 'social sculpture' (Fortenberry (ed.) 2014, pp. 80, 556; Bruederlin & Groos 2010, p. 11). For example, Australian performance artist Mike Parr's work *Blind Painting of a Tree*, 2022 (Figure 49), is a response to Beuys' seminal work *7000 Oaks*, 1982 (Figure 50), which was a reforestation project as an intervention to the urbanisation of cities.

Oaks were used to define holy places by the druids. On behalf of Beuys, a tree was planted outside the Art Gallery of New South Wales during the 5th Biennale of Sydney in 1984 as an environmentally concerned action that interloped contingently with anthroposophical notions echoing Beuys' motives. Parr is otherwise known for his durational performances testing the limits of his body and will.

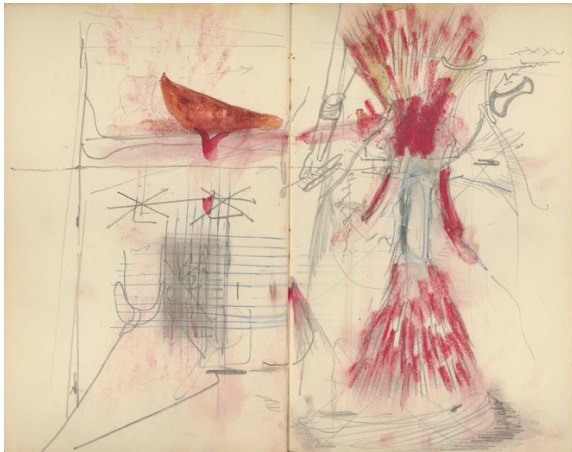


Figure 16
Joseph Beuys. *Ulysses (notebook 3)*, 1958



Figure 17
Mike Parr, *Blind Painting of a Tree*, 2022



Figure 50
Joseph Beuys, *7000 Oaks (7000 Eichen)*, 1982



Figure 18
Marina Abramovic, *The Artist is Present*, 2010

Performance artist Marina Abramovic, well known for her performance *The Artist is Present* (Figure 51), 2010 at the Museum of Modern Art, likewise consistently tests her endurance and the physical boundaries between herself and the viewer (Fortenberry (ed.) 2014, p. 588).

Moreover, Abramovic was quoted for a Waldorf school conference in Portland, 2015 that deliberated on The Question of Consciousness Today, which ties her to the anthroposophical movement: "The public is in need of experiences that are not just voyeuristic. Our society is in a mess of losing its spiritual center ... Artists should be the oxygen of society. The function of the artist in a disturbed society is to give awareness of the universe, to ask the right questions, to open consciousness and elevate the mind." (Lieberman 2015, n.p.).

3.3. Artist Case Study: Katharina Grosse in Context

The exhibition Rudolf Steiner and Contemporary Art at Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, 2010 referenced Steiner's idea of 'creative eversion' that ascribes to a new definition of the subject/object relationship. German-born inventor and sculptor Paul Schatz's invertible cube (*Schatz Cube*, platonic solid) was included to make the process in the form understandable whereby one form transcends into another configuration allowing diverse viewpoints (Figure 52) (Bruederlin & Groos 2010, pp. 128, 129) as per the intention of this exhibition. Contemporary German installation artist Katharina Grosse formed part of the exhibition with her work, despite only advocating for Steiner's integral systems yet demonstrates that varied perspectives were represented. Grosse enables painting to become spatial by combining colour and form in her immersive large-scale, site-related painting installations, creating immersive visual experiences. In artworks such as *Wunderblock*, 2013 (Figure 53) and *Espace Louis Vuitton*, 2022 (Figure 54), she employs three-dimensional elements to transform each site in which they are positioned. For her arresting voluminous use of colour (using an industrial paint sprayer for its nascent quality during application dynamics) and the colours' relationship of proximity, distance, confrontation or connection, she is generally called a colourist, yet Grosse excludes the overriding conjunction within the colour composition to interact" (Bruederlin & Groos 2010, pp. 128, 129). Grosse self-characterises her work as not representing a cohesive complete system because not all information is visually supplied for keeping a process in motion: the invisible is for her an inherent quality of the visible, an open aspect that has not yet attained its crystallisation and is co-existing as an incompatible paradox, just as the scale of her work mutually excludes and exists at the same time. Her internal process manifests in her work about the formless and the formed to remain simultaneously (Bruederlin & Groos 2010, p. 130).

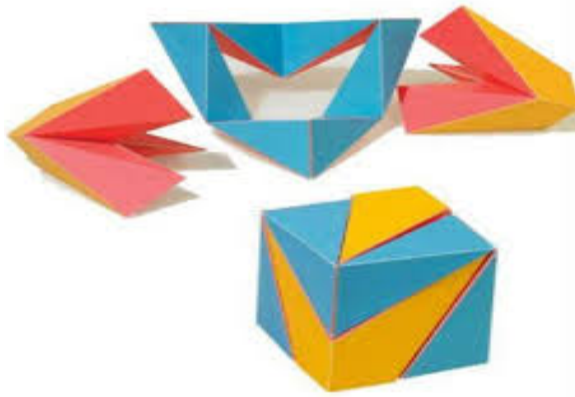


Figure 52
Paul Schatz, *Schatz Cube*, 1929



Figure 19
Katharina Grosse, *Wunderblock*, 2013



Figure 54
Katharina Grosse, *Espace Louis Vuitton*, 2022



Figure 55
Katharina Grosse, *It Wasn't Us*, 2020

Grosse's understanding of The Formless deviates from Bataille's L'Informe and refers to a literal understanding of the term, the unembodied or immaterial. Conceptual artist Sol LeWitt raised this concept in the 1960s that "ideas alone can be works of art; they are a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be made physical [to exist]" (Ratcliff 1996, p. 269). This asserts that artworks can have an aesthetics/physical presence without being created within a material outcome, indicating the unembodied or immaterial.

In viewing and experiencing Katharina Grosse's oversized installations, one is confronted with her work's simultaneous possibility and impossibility. Her colour selection creates an impasse regarding the shapes of the arrangements, as forms are placed routinely in juxtaposition to their architectural environment (Figure 55).

Her choices appear random, leaving more desirable aesthetic options open and unrealised. Grosse intentionally rejects an adaptation to Steiner's colour and form understanding yet incorporates it antithetically. Grosse is very clear when interviewed (Bruederlin & Groos 2010, pp. 128-132) about this duality that her conceptual design forges her bilateral approach in theory and realisation. She challenges the interviewer by postulating, "where does the piece exist? ... In the documentation, the memory, the description ... in all of these aspects that cannot be conventionalised" (Bruederlin & Groos 2010, p. 132). What is relevant for my studio research about Grosse's work is her stance regarding motion and process, as although her installations are anticipated to be proposed in detail, the finished compositions of the installations appear to be spontaneous and slightly underdeveloped. The exercises that evolved during this research do not emphasise aesthetics specifically, as they are considered a gateway to a state of being for working creatively in the studio. In that sense, the practice-led strategy outline of working with colour and form is sometimes considered crude, amateurish or unfinished and parallels Grosse's studio motives.

American artists Frank Stella's (Figure 56) and Sarah Cain's artwork (Figure 57) relate to that of Grosse due to a comparable intensity of colour and gesture, exemplifying the radical redefinition of space by incorporating three-dimensional elements into the composition of the painting. Stella and Cain's colour patterning is a flat device with layers generating surface illusion and spherical illusionism through perspective and pictorial energy. This method implies motion, movement without the usage of a line yet traverses from one pictorial plane to another, which makes it a mystical, shamanistic experience and dream state to be observed as a "battle of reason against magic" (Campbell et al. 2017, pp. 20, 22, 25). Canadian American installation artist Jessica Stockholder takes sculptural processes a step further by creating a conglomeration of elements (consisting of coloured plastic objects, paint, and found items), which arise from absurd relationships with things that she views as arising from chance occurrences, happenstance and from objects already laden with meaning (Figure 58). Her painting dynamics function as a pictorial entity, purely as an extension of the object, and to alter existing surfaces.

Stockholder structures her work so that the experience of it engenders a struggle between different ways of viewing, a confluence of the inner life with “concrete physical stuff” that makes use of the relationship between contradictory things (Figure 59) (Schwabsky, Tillman & Cooke 1995, pp. 132, 137, 140-143).

Stockholders’ impulse to create artwork emerges from making fantasy and emotional life as concrete as possible, as real and important as a refrigerator. Her compositions challenge thinking processes and taste or beauty: Stockholder’s sense of aesthetics is purposefully antithetical. Foremost for presenting as a Process artist, her work is relevant to my research project.

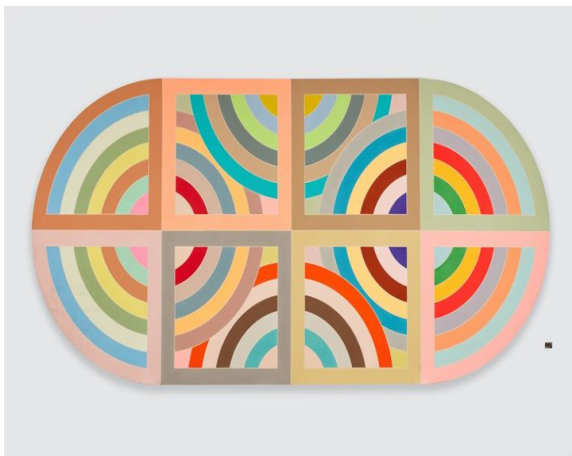


Figure 20
Frank Stella, *Variation II*, 1968

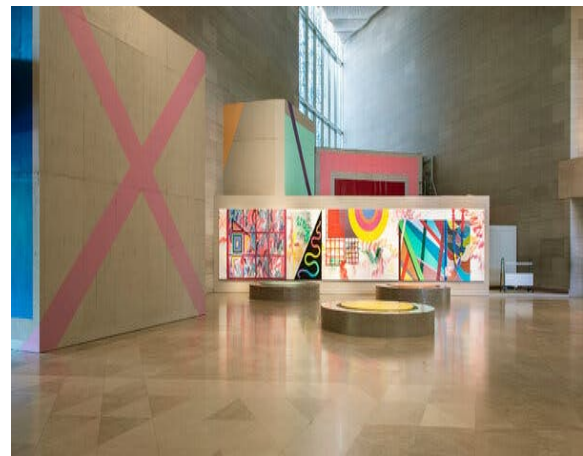


Figure 57
Sarah Cain, *My Favourite Season is the Fall of the Patriarchy*, 2020



Figure 58
Jessica Stockholder, *Growing Rock Candy Mountain...*, 1992



Figure 59
Jessica Stockholder, *Untitled*, 1990

Additionally, American Richard Tuttle's artwork, such as *#44 (wire piece)*, 1972 (Figure 60), likewise merged painting and sculpture early in his career yet in a reductiveness of formal means that subscribes to a transitive logic in a traversal of genres (Butler 1999, p. 44), revolutionising the landscape of contemporary art, akin to works of Stella and Cain. In an interview, Stella (in Campbell et al. 2017, p. 22) theorises that compositions are about how forms relate to each other to suggest movement, which entirely opposes Steiner's view on form where the spatial orientation is born out of colour and not a framework of contours. Interestingly, Stella self-recognises, after periods of producing patterned and striped paintings, that the physicality and construction of his later work (irregular polygons and protractors) (Figure 61) became more important than the painting aspect when creating his artworks (Campbell et al. 2017, p. 28). This indicates that if forms are not established through colour, as one of the features of colour is that of creating form, it turns the painting component negligible and disrupts the pleasure of painting.



Figure 60
Richard Tuttle, *#44 (wire piece)*, 1972



Figure 21
Frank Stella, *Untitled (irregular polygon)*, 1965/66

Cain's fearless approach to painting (Thilesen in Griffin, NY Times 2021) collapsed the category of painting into an installation by painting the gallery's floor to underscore how context impacts experience when viewing a painting. In addition, Korean-born Californian artist Yunhee Min parallels Cain's vibrant abstract imagery by likewise moving the placement of the painting from the wall to incorporate the floor as well, creating a slippage of orientation away from how paintings are traditionally viewed on a gallery wall, to now sharing the same space as the viewer.

This can be observed in *Up Close in Distance* (Figure 62), Hammer Project, 2019. Cain has added objects into her practice such as painted sofas at her exhibition at the Tang Museum with *Opener 33*, 2021 (Figure 63) or attached feathers, doilies or ribbons to the surface of her work, as in *Crying in Public*, 2012 (Figure 64) that amplified the physicality of her painting, which was critiqued as bad ideas yet American curator Molly Donovan noted that Cain “brings the tradition of abstract painting into the present” (in Griffin, NY Times, 2021).

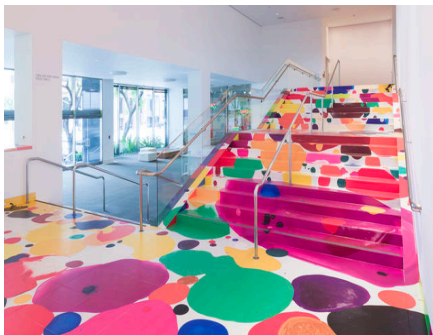


Figure 62
Yunhee Min, *Up Close in Distance*, 2019



Figure 22
Sarah Cain, *Opener 33*, 2021



Figure 64
Sarah Cain, *Crying in Public*, 2012

Dutch-born Australian artist Matthys Gerber’s paintings *Picnic*, 2017 (Figure 65) and *Bee Keeper*, 2017 (Figure 66) link to Cain’s work through similarly impacting viewers as they hover between an uncomfortable space of the familiar and the contrasting themes of abstracted landscape and portraiture. Gerber stated that he wanted to focus on the “amateurishness of painting, looking at its debased qualities” for being unsettling and evocative (Frost in an interview with Gerber for Art Collector, 2001, n.p.).

In essence, Grosse, Stella, Cain, Min and Gerber employ the shrill and intensity of paint as an entry point for form integration which appears with casual appreciation as a fragmented approach but includes the peripheral parameters into the composition to create a whole.



Figure 65
Matthys Gerber, *Picnic*, 2017

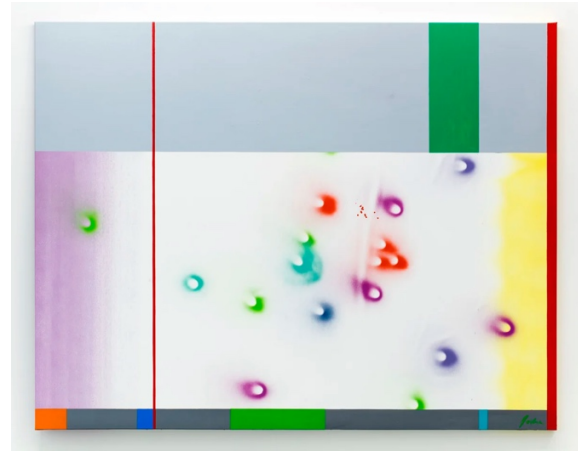


Figure 23
Matthys Gerber, *Bee Keeper*, 2017

My project approach, in its culmination, dismantles the revolution of the studio activity into fragments, with the intent to experience Flow as an integral state of being, where elements of my work can occasionally appear as the assemblage of sections on the canvas plane, similar to the aesthetic qualities of the artists discussed.

3.4. Artist Case Study: Amy Sillman in Context

In contrast to the previous artists analysed, New York-based Process artist Amy Sillman does not use colour to contend with form. She confessed to being a “process freak” when she lectured in 2009 at the American Academy in Berlin and exemplified this by flashing 47 stages in the birth of a painting (in Smith 2019, p. 9), which became the hallmark of future lectures of hers in Germany, a country she is linked to through her ancestry. Sillman elucidated that her impetus in making art is taking on the function of a bricoleur, flaneur, voyeur or auto mechanic to remake a strange new language (Barron, 2021, n.p.).

Sillman explores the combination of colour and forms more formally yet includes a variety of other media along with installation and occasional unconventional exhibition displays that correlate to Grosse’s, Stella’s and Cain’s methods. Sillman’s approach is predominantly grounded in drawing that erases and nullifies, and with consistent changes to her palette and style. Her *Bathtub Drawings* (Figure 67) testify to this process, where ink on paper is washed out in a bathtub repeatedly until finalised (Smith 2019, p. 77).

Sillman's use of calligraphy caused the terms 'drawing' and 'painting' to become interchangeable. Although drawing is paramount to Sillman, in her theoretical writing on drawing, she rejects the notion that "drawing is the thinking of painting", but instead that drawing is "a form of abstraction". Sillman identifies drawing as an intuitive open activity to get her into Flow (in Smith 2019, p. 85). Since the 1990s, Sillman has included lists, diagrams, charts, zines and implausible words in her work in the atmosphere of a strange abstract psychological construct (Figure 68) (in Smith 2019, pp. 17, 31). Her paradoxical impulses to disrupt and clarify simultaneously reaffirm her commitment to abstraction by "trying to perform a rescue of gestural form from its bad ideology", objectifying her subjectivity (in Smith 2019, pp. 52, 135).



Figure 24
Amy Sillman, *Bathtub Drawings*, 2015



Figure 25
Amy Sillman, *The O-G vol.10: The All-Over*, 2016

Sillman explains (in Olch Richards 2004, p. 247) that she feels connected to several modernist art strategies and styles, such as Abstract Expressionism because when she enters the studio, she just starts to paint, and Surrealism for its psychological content that has been described as a "power procreative" by taking the "anarchic energies of the unconscious" that has colour flowing in spontaneous currents that become automatic drawing and writing (Graham in Ratcliff 1996, p. 43). Sillman is informed by Indian art and its vernacular form in how it deals with nature, story, and figure through which she found a "spiritual buddy" that does not follow the Western modernist canon (in Olch Richards 2004, p. 248).

Sillman links her approach to Eastern philosophy as an enactment of being alive, evidenced through her immediate and improvisational aspect of working in works such as *Cliff 2*, 2005 (Figure 69), and what she calls a triangular loop of the eye-mind-world (in Smith 2019, p. 21). In that sense, Sillman's work is entirely individualistic, that gives away the elasticity of her trials and errors in her faux-naïf style that is inclusive, speculative and experimental and where abstraction is intertwined with the graphic representation of lively messes (Jeremy Sigler on Sillman's exhibition *Stuff Change*, 2016, n.p.). Sillman states that the relation between the inside and the outside ceases to be clear, blurring the borders between mind, body and space and hints at the "continuous present" we live in (in Smith 2019, p. 85). Similarly, art critic and director of the Nevada Museum of Art, William Fox, sees the interior/exterior motivation as inconsequential to abstract work (Fox 1999, p. 41). From an anthroposophical perspective (see *Schatz Cube* above), different viewpoints are conceivable through a diversity of procedures that generate different outcomes.

Sillman views painting as a private language that incorporates only a rectangle and some paint and tries to push the burden of art history at large aside as "the abstract fictional thing comes from you and at you" as an unknown element (in Smith 2019, p. 135). Sillman admits to overworking some canvasses as she does not always recognise when the process is complete, which leaves her with the option "to blow it off" or rework and likely wreck the final painting (in Olch Richards 2004, p. 248). Her solution to this issue is to start new work and leave canvasses at an impasse. She lets the work season by contemplating these half-finished paintings, allowing time to play a role in what actions may need to occur next to fulfil the finishing of such artworks. Sillman states that she swings back and forth between the extremes of working extremely sloppily (Figure 70) or neatly (Figure 71), which can be seen as an example of insufficiently dealt-with dilemmas every artist may experience in a unique form of creative predicament (in Olch Richards 2004, p. 249).

I am drawn to Sillman's imagery and her profound progressive methods that create an immediacy between herself and the paintings, mainly when her work appears contradictory, implausible, and unfinished, if not aesthetically ugly. By combining her psychological formulae with abstracted themes, she convincingly blends interior impulses with exterior surroundings.



Figure 69
Amy Sillman, *Cliff 2*, 2005



Figure 26
Amy Sillman, *XL14*, 2020



Figure 27
Amy Sillman, *C*, 2007



Figure 72
Amy Sillman, *Twice Removed (exhibition)*, 2020

Her ability to work radically yet without allusion testifies to Sillman's attitude to process and mirrors my strategy toward this specific research project as it evolved. For each theme she engages with, she experiments and researches the subject matter rigorously yet intuitively until a resolution is forged. Her show *Twice Removed* in 2020 at Gladstone Gallery, Manhattan, testifies to having researched her focus of attention, in this case, flowers, more than sufficiently (Figure 72). These dynamic improvisations reaffirm the revival of gestural abstract painting depicting still life afresh.

Sillman's conceptual process parallels my approach to this research study; however, her view on drawing and painting deviates from my undertakings as both activities I purposely separated for their contrasting significance regarding this study.

Sillman is not interested in historical reference points, such as other artists' actual or archival work. This accurately describes my overall position in studio production: to be engrossed in one's own processes as a way to intensify the focus of one's unique assimilation, perception and rendition.

3.5. Artist Case Study: Emily Kame Kngwarreye in Context

First Nations painter Emily Kame Kngwarreye's oeuvre (Utopia, Central Australia) speaks of her inspiration from her country and the Dreaming. Her body of artwork consists of paintings that, in essence, are the same painting, a trajectory that links both image and place in which her 'country' landscape is concentrated (Neale (ed.) 1998, pp. 23-24). Even though the work is content driven by cultural narratives belonging to the spiritual domain, her paintings do not deviate from abstract paintings' formal elements of lines, dots, colour and tone (Ryan in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 41). Abstract aspects Clement Greenberg (in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 48) defined as "the all-over decentralised polyphonic picture ... with closely similar elements repeating themselves without marked variation ... dissolution of the pictorial into sheer texture ... sheer sensation." Nevertheless, Kngwarreye's life, work, and artistic practice defy conventional attempts at definition as due to her original culture, inside knowledge would be necessary for an accurate, critical language: her paintings refuse to be labelled to describe them, but to read her work through stylistic equivalents illuminates the difference of her work rather than its similarities to Western terms of reference (Neale in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 23).

To seek to understand the unfamiliar by relating it to the familiar is, according to Australian art historian Roger Benjamin (University of Sydney), a potentially imperialising proposition, a Euro-American genealogy that draws upon the fallacy of isomorphism (Benjamin in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 53). Kngwarreye's "virulent strain of modernism" is referred to as Indigenous Modernism (McLean in Neale (ed.) 2008, p. 14) in contemplation of her development as an artist that parallels patterns of abstract expressionists, yet with a varied conceptual framework that has forced to revise the perception of abstraction; the agency of her specific mark-making transcends meaning, as for Kngwarreye "the material is immaterial" (Neale in Neale (ed.) 2008, p.15). Curator of Indigenous Arts Henry Skeritt (in White 2015, p. 67) positioned Aboriginal art as standing at the vanguard of contemporary art.

He reasons that Aboriginal art expresses the coequality of difference and demonstrates the meaning of living in a world of accelerating multiplicity, which self-explains contemporary comprehension, namely that Aboriginal Art in its distinctness, enriches the complexity of contemporary awareness and adds to the abundance of the domain.

Kngwarreye came to worldwide recognition when in her late seventies for making her 'inside' visual culture assessable to an outside audience. She visually presented Indigenous confidentialities to the public, which positioned her in an intercultural space that devised a language that speaks across cultures (McLean in Neale (ed.) 2008, p. 14). Kngwarreye is seen as both an enigma and a phenomenon. She was the first Aboriginal woman to have an important place within the Australian contemporary art scene, transcending categories of gender and race (Ryan in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 39). Her dynamism was daunting during her short eight-year period as a practising artist. Her output was matched only by her diversity of style (five major stylistic stages) with her early body of work (Figure 73), creating the baseline for later developments (Figures 74-77) (Hall in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 3). Her work exudes the power of her presence, as what she produced is the most abstract among Aboriginal artwork. It is neither descriptive nor was she forthcoming as to the meaning of her paintings (Benjamin in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 52). Director of the National Gallery of Victoria Tony Ellwood called Kngwarreye a colourist who understood to minimise her palette to subtle contrasts, likewise, celebrating paint, merging colour playfully and together with the power of her mark-making which transcends the local to the universal (in Neale (ed.) 2008, pp. 15, 20).

Kngwarreye pioneered the process related to a new visual language, a language that combines pure sensation with sensuousness (Neale in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 27). Her work is instantly recognisable, which is owed to it emerging from a disjunction to be observed between her cultural narratives and her production that convincingly exposes and deconstructs the history of contemporary art (McLean in Neale (ed.) 2008, p. 26). According to Japanese art critic Akira Tatehata (National Museum of Art, Osaka) Kngwarreye's complex and magnificent sense of vibration is achieved through the simple principle of combining monochromatic lines in endless configurations with a sense of rhythm that fuses through repetition, creating a continuity (Figure 78) (in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 29).



Figure 73
Emily Kngwarreye, *Ntange Dreaming*, 1989



Figure 74
Emily Kngwarreye, *Spring Celebration*, 1991



Figure 28
Emily Kngwarreye, *Desert Flowers*, 1995



Figure 76
Emily Kngwarreye, *Merne (Everything)*, 1996

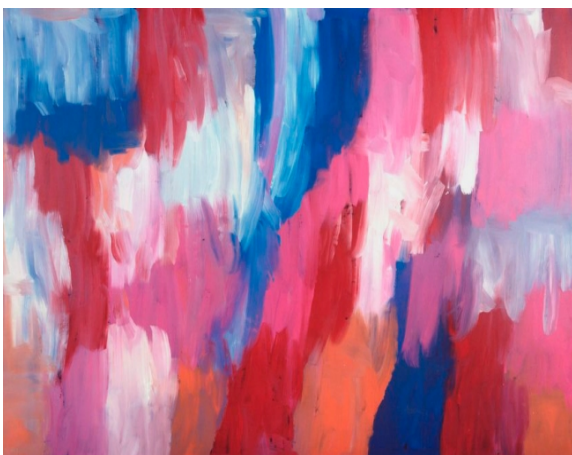


Figure 29
Emily Kngwarreye, *My Country*, 1996



Figure 30
Emily Kngwarreye, *Untitled (Awelye)*, 1994

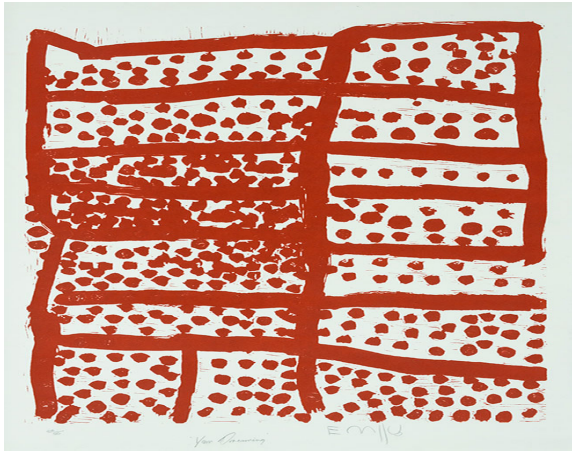


Figure 31
Emily Kngwarreye, *Yam Dreaming*, 1994



Figure 32
Emily Kngwarreye, *Yam Dreaming*, 1995

Kngwarreye's dreaming is the Yam rhizome (her second name, Kame, describes the seeds and flowers of the Yam plant), with the Yam dreaming (Figure 79) a theme that she emphasised in her second last series before her passing. This series of paintings is an organic tracery of interconnecting lines resembling patterns of cracked earth mirroring the network of arterial roots below the surface (Tatehata in Neale (ed.) 2008, p. 33). Commonly, linear patterns (like subway maps) reveal the links between places, are mapping references and signify the whole (Christopher Hodges of Utopia Art, Sydney, in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 33).

Aboriginal Dreaming is the spiritual realm of which many aspects are too sacred to share with outside cultures; accordingly, Kngwarreye's work is, to some extent, suggestive (like maps), referring to impressions of Western culture but is situated within First Nations Dreamtime. Her canvasses combine reality and mythology that imply an elemental vision with reverence for collective memory and kinship as well as ritual and ceremony (Neale (ed.) 2008, pp. 14-16), thereby attributing to Jung's notion of the collective unconscious and inherent archetypes (Tatehara in Neale (ed.) 2008, pp. 33, 34). Lastly, Kngwarreye's paintings are explicit statements about land and belonging with attendant implications in a climate of debate over custodianship and sovereignty (Philip Morrissey in Neale (ed.) 1998, p. 57).

Kngwarreye's performative approach to process coupled with her rhythmic gestural linework, which is particularly commanding in her late black and white Yam series (Figure 80), visually relates in a purely aesthetic mark-making way to my studio exercises, namely Form and Dynamic Drawing (Figures 81-82 and *Appendix 1*), which trigger Flow in their culmination with the Colour Bath exercise (Figure 83 and *Appendix 1*), a state of being that also speaks through Kngwarreye's work. Kngwarreye's painting strategy that mixes the exterior aesthetic perspective with visibly non-existent indications of conscious interior motives remains a contingent allegory for many artists' work, including mine.



Figure 81
Hele Ellis, *Form Drawing, Series II*, 2020

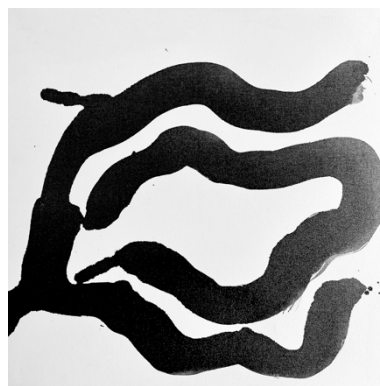


Figure 82
Hele Ellis, *Dynamic Drawing, Series VI*, 2021



Figure 83
Hele Ellis, *Colour Bath, Series V*, 2021

My brush application and colour choices changed since moving to Australia, integrating subconsciously a more lucid colour spectrum that reflects the crisp natural light and linework as a result of the topographic change in my life. The changing environment, from a European to an Australian location, has dramatically influenced the colours I use. This change I viewed, as articulated by William Fox in *Mapping the Empty* (1999, p.126), as “an empty screen upon which we project our deepest need to confront the alien ... mysterious and different ...” and describes my adaptation to the “lawless open” (Barker in Fox 1999, p.135) for coming to terms with uncharted territory of artistic freedom when “imagination, memory and observation meld” (Bonjorni in Fox 1999, p.167).

I work primarily outdoors with larger canvasses, which are placed on the ground to be worked on in sections rather than the overall composition of the artwork, akin to an Indigenous artmaking approach for millennia.

After my arrival in Australia and years before I moved my workspace predominantly into the open air adapting to the natural surroundings, I had moved my bedroom outdoors and into a yurt (Mongolian tent), initially as a camping-like set-up for children, but later to distance myself from the house and its noises. This was comparable to Oriel Lambs' action in *Cloudstreet* taken by moving from the house into a white tent beneath a mulberry tree, so as not to have to surrender to things that had not even declared themselves yet, but that would break her will (Winton 1991, pp. 133, 370). My argument today for sleeping outdoors is to be closer to existence, plant life and animals, with shorter sleep cycles due to better oxygen intake. My adaptation to the immediate Australian environment by sleeping and working outdoors refers to an internal adjustment to my surrounding that marks a veritable arrival on the land, which is oozing back into my work in technique and process.

Several female artists who, with strategies of colour without explicit connection to the Anthroposophical movement, are nevertheless linked not only to my research due to gesturally expressive brushwork but create a viewer-experienced presence through an observable Flow. These additional artists have incorporated all elements of my exercises (Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing and Colour Bath) but also use a similar colour palette to my artwork production. As such, these artists continue to inform my studio practice. Collectively the oeuvre of Americans Mary Heilmann (Figure 84), Joan Mitchell (Figure 85), and Helen Frankenthaler (Figure 86), as a feminist modernist trinitarian, I invariably and frequently engage with as their distinct individually contrasting styles where paintings translate into a visual feast is too compelling to ignore. That only a handful of female artists, such as Mitchell and Frankenthaler, managed to be museum-worthy is owed to their connections in the art world. Overall, female representation is to this day marginalised due to a male-dominated arts climate, particularly throughout Modernism, with "the male assumption that females are by definition negligible" (Ratcliff 1996, p. 272), hence a substantial amount of progressive female art fails to be made available to the public.

The female genre “of Pattern and Decoration, also called The New Decorativeness” flourished in the 1970s “in its lush, out-of-the-way corner” (Ratcliff 1996, p. 273) as critics dismissed the movement at large.



Figure 84
Mary Heilmann, *Splashy Cut*, 2013



Figure 33
Joan Mitchell, *Sale Neige*, 1980



Figure 34
Helen Frankenthaler, *Small's Paradise*, 1964



Figure 87
Mary Heilmann, *Go Ask Alice*, 2006

Mary Heilmann is considered one of the preeminent contemporary abstract painters incorporating Minimalism with her unorthodox approach to colour placing and particular emphasis on form (Figure 87). This can be seen to also be vested in the gestural marks of Sarah Cain, alongside Canadian painter Elizabeth McIntosh's work, who likewise explores gestural based geometric forms in pure saturated colour. In McIntosh's work, she provides a lack of 'resolve' of the subject and an open-ended response to traditional hard-edged abstraction (Figure 88) (Hasham in Melick & Morrill (eds.) 2016, p. 188).

Joan Mitchell moved from the United States to France in her mid-thirties and bought Claude Monet's property. Paralleling Monet's most famous late series (Figure 89), Mitchell's work (Figure 90) is expansive and covers multiple panels in a predominantly all-over approach (appertaining to Pollock and Tomescu discussed previously in the accreditation of *The Formless*), yet with her own interpretation and signifiers of an abstracted scenery as the primary source of her subject matter. Mitchell's work synthesises her emotions and the natural landscape she encounters, which pairs her with Monet and is evidenced in the exhibition *Monet-Mitchell, 2022* (Figures 89-90).



Figure 88
Elizabeth McIntosh, *Counting*, 2018

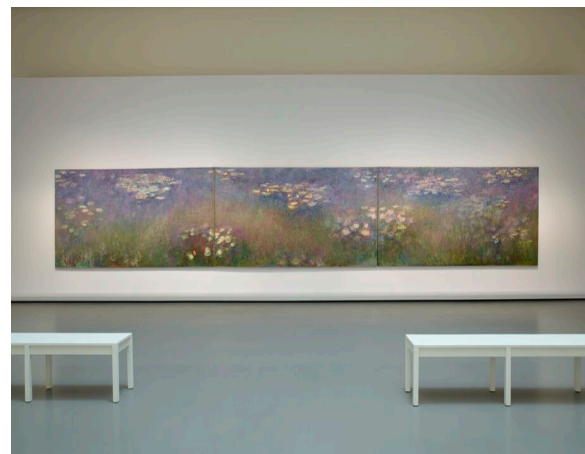


Figure 89
Claude Monet, *Agapanthus*, 1915-26

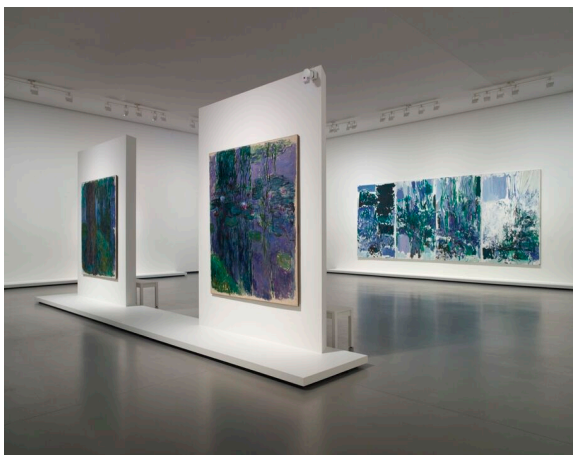


Figure 35
Joan Mitchell, *Le Grande Vallee*, 1983-84



Figure 91
Oscar Murillo, *at work at Rubell's Foundation*, Miami, 2012

The concerns of Mitchell's practice can also be seen in the abstract painting tradition of Colombian-born Oscar Murillo (Figures 91), who explores variations to his approach. Murillo works in different locations on mixed-media canvasses that absorb, accrue, and record a concentration of interests and meditate on time and process (Slyche in Melick & Morrill (eds.) 2016, p. 214), which is associated with my research project proposal. American Helen Frankenthaler influenced generations of painters, including current American abstract painter Elizabeth Neel (Figure 92), whose works are acts of immediate gestures within a narrative trajectory (Madden in Melick & Morrill (eds.) 2016, p. 218) that correlates to the cycles of life by using abstract marks to tell the story. Frankenthaler's invention of the so-called soak stain (thinning oils to the consistency of watercolour that was applied directly on unprimed canvas) ultimately led to Colour Field Painting, or Post Painterly Abstraction according to Greenberg, with a comeback in the last two decades as seen in American Patrick Wilson's *Hummer*, 2012 (Figure 93). Frankenthaler's innovative methods defined her career (of over six decades) and those of her contemporaries for her multifaceted exploration of colour and its potentially transcendent qualities. She remained open to her originality, demonstrated in her motto from the 1960s: "There are no rules. This is how art is born, how breakthroughs happen. Go against the rules or ignore the rules. That is what invention is about" (Frankenthaler in Barcio, 2019, n.p.).



Figure 36
Elizabeth Neel, *All the Cares*, 2020

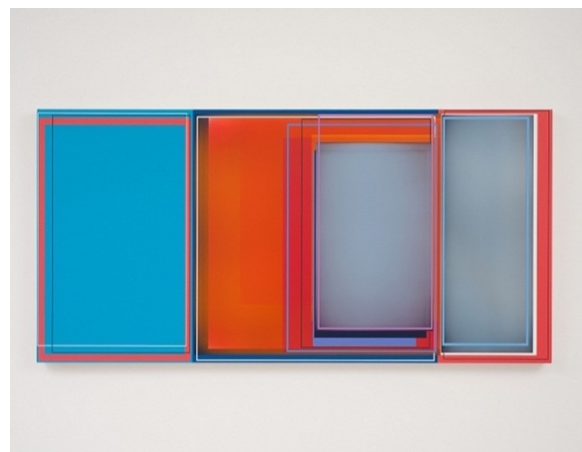


Figure 93
Patrick Wilson, *Hummer*, 2012

3.6. Artist Case Study: Cy Twombly in Context

Contemporary American artists David Reed, Brice Marden, Philip Taaffe and Cy Twombly, and French Process artist Bernard Frize employ across-the-canvas repetitive biomorphic shapes and patterns relevant to the research exercises to attain a Flow state. Reed's nonfigurative narrative paintings, such as # 625, 2011-12 (Figure 94), account for a fabula to be read as a logical sequence of events (Bal 1999, pp. 176, 179) and counters the Expressionism of his abstract predecessors.



Figure 37
David Reed, #625, 2011-12



Figure 38
Brice Marden, *The Annunciation Paintings*, 1978

However, he uses these as building blocks for constructing meta-styles where a historical style evolves into a singular brushstroke (McEvilley in Bal 1999, pp. 179, 180, 195). Reed's repetitive brushstroke directly relates to the applied Form Drawing exercise I have refined as an all-encompassing motion and a temporality with endless aesthetic outcomes when utilised in the studio. Brice Marden's paintings shifted from transparent fields of uniform colour (Wylie 1998, p. 15), the monochromes (Figure 95), in his earlier career to translucent grounds embedded with undulating ribbons (Garrels 2006, p. 17, Figure 96), which intend to identify his hand as the artist (Marden in Garrels 2006, p.96). Marden allowed the process to play a commanding role where linear structures create the dynamic of movement and figure that unites the *Cold Mountain* works (Figure 97) (Wylie 1998, p. 20). When asked whether he would like to paint the unseen, he responded, "I always wished I could paint air" (in Seidner 1999, p. 78).

This remark and his gestural marks owed to his emphasis on colour doubling lines for a greater chromatic resonance (Figure 98) (Wylie 1999, pp. 15, 42) could be read as unintentionally anthroposophically tainted. In contrast, Frize focuses predominantly on an industrial approach to painting by emphasising the anti-auteur approach (annulling a distinct style or thematic focus) to free his compositions of self-expression. This is only partially accomplished as his hand is as recognisable as Marden's with some series reminiscent of the anthroposophical approach to colour and The Formless discussed previously, such as *Isotopie*, 2006 (Figure 99) and *Wir*, 2018 (Figure 100).

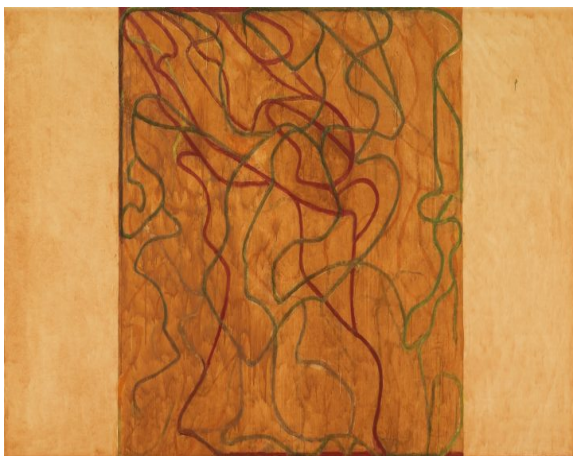


Figure 96
Brice Marden, *Qued*, 2018-19

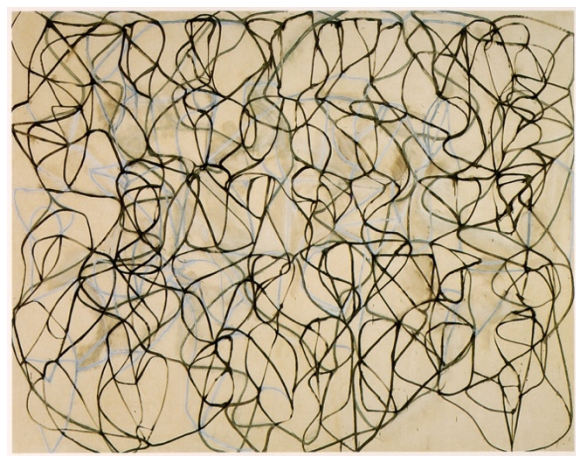


Figure 39
Brice Marden, *Cold Mountain 3*, 1989/91



Figure 40
Brice Marden, *Study for the Muses (Hydra Version)*, 1991-95/1997



Figure 41
Bernard Frize, *Isotopie*, 2006

American artist Philip Taaffe transforms historical works and defines a post-appropriative strategy near the artworks' original incarnation (Nickas in Birnbaum et al. 2011, p. 26). These artworks become a re-enactment of reductionist painting, for example re-engaging with American Abstract Expressionist Barnett Newman's zip motif which Taaffe called *We Are Not Afraid*, 1985 (Figure 101), into a spiral. Or the re-interpretation of English Op Artist Bridget Riley's kinetic work consisting of two-dimensional pieces, creating the illusion of a three-dimensional object (Figure 102) (Fortenberry (ed.) 2014, p. 82).



Figure 42
Bernard Frize, *Wir*, 2018



Figure 101
Philip Taaffe, *We Are Not Afraid*, 1985

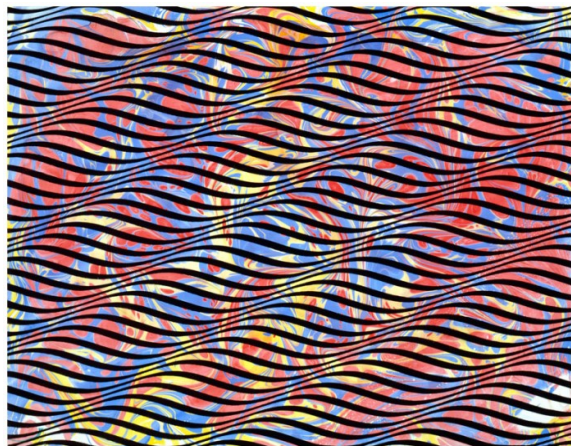


Figure 43
Philip Taaffe, *Water Music*, 2002



Figure 44
Philip Taaffe, *Sardica II*, 2013

With his move to Naples, Italy, Taaffe began a studio strategy of sampling world culture motifs (Figure 103) that integrated Italian Baroque and Islamic art (Seidner 1999, p. 1) among other accumulations of sources. However, Taaffe's work presents as complex psychological experiences founded in a synthesising of visual forces. Therefore, Taaffe can be described as a post-modernist for sampling various styles from Modernism, as well as cultural motifs and references, collapsing these into his practice in various strategies.

This research compiled elements of an eclectic collection of approaches as a dynamic working methodology for uniquely articulating a feasible *Zone-In* exercise sequence akin to Taaffe's accumulation of styles. Given my artwork production for this research project, I have, like Taaffe, been opportune in collecting, sampling and collating movements within the surface of my paintings, such as Abstract Expressionism, Colour Field Painting, Process Art and the contemporary forms of Intuitive Abstraction and the philosophy of The Formless, therefore utilising similar concerns of the post-Modernist art movement Neo-Expressionism from the late 1970s and 1980s, which Taaffe was associated with. This art movement consisted of artists (primarily painters) who focussed on expressive directions to create work that affirmed the redemptive power of art in general and painting in particular. This collection of artists drew upon a variety of themes, concepts and aesthetic styles, including the mythological, the cultural, the historical, the nationalist, the erotic, the expressive, the minimal, abstraction, portraiture, and landscape, to construct multi-faceted artworks that were not fixed to any one mode of aesthetic operation, which was the previous dominant strategy, prevalent in early to mid-20th century Modernism.

Cy Twombly's body of work, on the contrary, speaks of an intramural vocabulary discharged without reference to external markers, indicating an entirely internal discourse that established a unique articulation using his signature as an expressive element. For example, he transformed proto handwriting (preceding language) into a communicative application without prepared formulae (Varnedoe 1994, pp. 42, 45). The 'automatic writing' used by the Surrealists (Varnedoe 1994, p. 20) accentuated the uninterrupted flow of an unconsciously motivated line that is contrary to Twombly's 'blind' practice of uncensored scrawling cursive-ness that unfold his compositions slowly yet musically (Seidner 1999, p.136).

Twombly incorporated written words and fingerpainting that defies symmetry, implied a narrative and is animated by passages of compression and extrusion (Figure 104) with overtones of slashing defacement (Figure 105) that bespoke a wilfully coarse anti-aesthetic of depletion or 'impoverishment' and child-like or unaffected immediacy (Varnedoe 1994, pp. 9, 17, 18, 42, 49). His style was based on scribbled and graffiti-like marks as an act of becoming the subject of the image (Figure 106) (Taylor & Piscitelli (eds.) 2008, p. 513).

As part of the Abstract Expressionist movement, Twombly was known for his ingenious originality, described as being born ahead of his time and was owed to his complex achievements throughout his career. Twombly's work was discomfiting to many critics but earned importance through painters such as German Anselm Kiefer and the new Painterly Expressionism during the 1980s (Varnedoe 1994, pp. 9-10). Twombly fused the abstract freedoms of American painting with the essentials of the European expressive language (Varnedoe 1994, pp. 22, 51) due to having spent a good part of his life in Italy. However, Abstract Expressionist self-realisation to transform inner chaos into wholeness was in stark opposition to Twombly's obsessiveness and self-doubt, as evidenced in his layered works (Figure 107) that transitioned into massed imagery but later into a celebration of light and air that evoked openness and contributed to a sense of floating (Figure 108-109) (Varnedoe 1994, pp. 24, 50, 51).



Figure 45
Cy Twombly, *Untitled*, 1953



Figure 46
Cy Twombly, *Untitled (Bacchus)*, 2008



Figure 106
Cy Twombly, *Untitled*, 1952



Figure 47
Cy Twombly, *Untitled*, 1964/84



Figure 48
Cy Twombly, *Leaving Paphos Ringed with Waves III, IV*, 2009



Figure 49
Cy Twombly, *Lepanto*, 2001

Twombly's compositions are born out of the process that employs the convex and concave, which are represented by compressions and extrusions of his mark. Although not consistently detectable in my work due to the multi-layers employed in the final paintings for this research project, my process approach relates to Twombly's efforts with my initial method that is vaguely proposing connections of the canvas area which subsequently forms the composition, something that already constitutes Twombly's final resolve. Twombly's work relates to this research's second exercise of Dynamic Drawing, that echoes the movement from within. It consists of the second stage for arriving at Flow that Twombly incessantly used as a singular approach to artmaking, implying alternatives to *Anschauung*.

The artists discussed in this chapter enriched, illuminated, and situated my artmaking process in consideration of their respective genres and positions in various art historical movements and contemporary fields of inquiry. The five artists I have examined, namely Tomescu, Grosse, Sillman, Kngwarreye and Twombly, work within a process-oriented strategy, arriving at a Flow state through different stimuli. These artists, including myself, work with components in view of colour and form, comparable to Rudolf Steiner's findings about the process of thinking in colours and forms that can be associated with the anthroposophical approach to artmaking.

Articulating the artists' visual specificity regarding their interior or exterior rationale proved critical as it served as a frame of reference for the vocabulary of the artist that directly relates to their artmaking process and also built theoretical context regarding the creative output as related to Process Art, Flow and Anthroposophy that was seminal to this research. Overall, this chapter argued a positioning of my own studio concerns within the research of specific historical and contemporary artists who have or are engaged in similar studio strategies represented in the artwork produced from it.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

4.1. Overview

This practice-led research was initially developed from my versatile and specific technical knowledge within the studio environment to create inquiry-relevant processes and finalised Process artwork. The unique application of my artistic competence, through former education and career expertise in the following, was a prerequisite to my practice-led approach and therefore constituted a valid creative research strategy that I called the Flow Methodology.

Examining painterly procedures through review methods such as critical reflection, introspection, and the locus of self-actualisation (full personal achievement through the process of artmaking with visual outcomes) was pivotal for my creative endeavours to be constructive as self-critical observations linked directly back to further creative studio output. New insights formed during studio work processes were less likely to be evidenced in the finished piece alone. Processes were not necessarily observable witnessing the artworks; instead, these insights were made visible through ritualised journal work with entries generated concerning impasses and epiphanies that acted as a memorandum towards acuity into moments of crossroads (Figure 110). Charting these critical moments or junctures created a mind map (as for instance exemplified in *Creative River Journeys* by Australian artist-researchers Kylie Stevenson and Sue Girak in 2013).

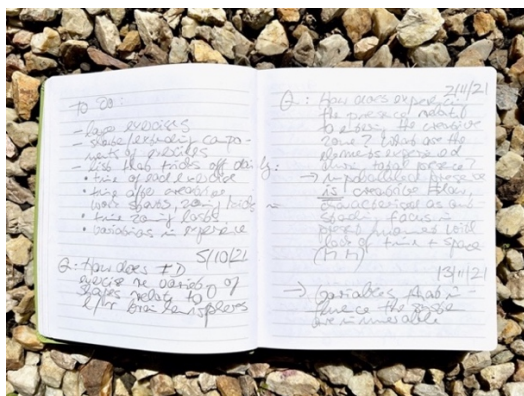


Figure 110
Hele Ellis, *Journal excerpt entry*, 2019

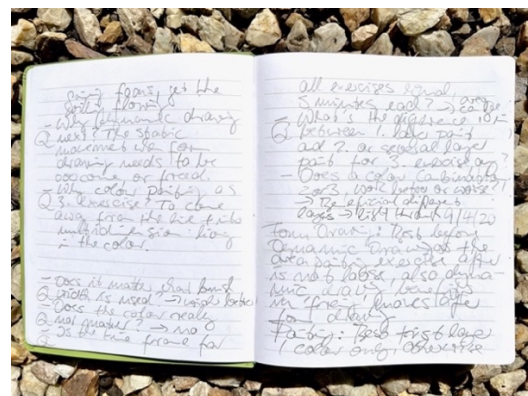


Figure 111
Hele Ellis, *Journal excerpt entry (Q&A system)*, 2020

This mapping was automatic and apparent, as evidenced foremost in retrospect when I had accrued sufficient marginalia to observe the course of the inquiry.

Ergo, I worked for the most part intuitively, trusting the process that relied heavily on contemplative progressive, if not uncompromising, dissection of methods during my creative undertakings and their observations with ensuing analysis.

The Tao teaches (in Coleman 1998, p. 175) No-method (*wu-fa*) and was strategically used as it is born out of the immediacy of artistic activity, renouncing traditional formulas. However, I developed a personal Q&A system for this specific Flow Methodology that created an approach within the practice that organically assisted the project development (Figure 111, for instance depicting the confirmation of the Zone-In exercise order). Through an array of similar questions articulated over time regarding the exercise details tested, the answers bore intricate differences and distilled the project. French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's approach to difference and repetition in the 1960s (in Pope 2005, p. 87), explored how differences arose from repetition. He articulated: "I make, re-make and un-make my concepts with a view to a moving horizon, a centre that is always off-centre, a periphery that is always out of place, and which repeats yet differentiates them". Deleuze refers to his concepts as producing corresponding yet variable results but also indicates that his concepts are verified. This Q&A method assisted in simultaneously answering exploratory and confirmatory queries that generated theory and testing assumptions. The ongoing reflexive dialogue between studio work and context captured compilations of particular importance to realise the project in its full spectrum.

Naturally occurring conversations that I fostered with other artists, creatives, and studio visitors led to authentic insights and co-articulations (Conquergood in Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 643) that opened avenues to multiple perceptions and perspectives and advanced my research venture. During such discussions with fellow artists in other fields of arts disciplines, such as dance and music, some unique methods of preparing for performance were reaffirmed. These ideas related to preparatory readiness, which I have utilised to attain Flow within the painting studio. What came out of these discussions and wider research is that such preparatory activities, even though foundational in other creative arts areas for the readiness of productivity, were lacking in the visual art studio. As such, this exegesis and research developed Flow as a set of studio-related formulations for exercises prior to creative engagement, a gap this research attended to.

4.2. Multiple-Methodology Strategy

The production of my works, which include the exercises that embody knowledge, circles back to Heidegger's praxical understanding and realises the bricoleur's approach, where work is conceived between considerably competing or overlapping perspectives and paradigms (Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 12) for the arrival at a pieced-together set of representations (Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 11). The Bricoleur-As-Bowerbird's Selection of Methods, a method of pursuing practice-led research is determined by the need of the project at hand, in situ to generate "empirical materials and arrive at embodied knowledge" (Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 313; Spatz in Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 643); accordingly, the selection of a Multiple-Methodology fuses genres of practices. It includes the methodologies of a performative approach, reflective practice, and self-reflexive inquiry processes with autoethnographic tenets for ongoing dialogue between studio work and the context of the research that were multilayered and upon which the existential nexus of my research rotated.

Having cultivated to work as a researcher using a bricoleur approach for this project allowed for integrating an array of practice-led methodological components as needed for an "understanding of the findings" (Bruner in Sullivan 2010, p. 45) and was, therefore, the most justifiable approach. Moreover, French philosopher Roland Barthes (in Pope 2005, p. 13) refers to bricolage as a capacity to re-combine existing elements of culture in patterns, to make sense for the user rather than the provider, which is a key emphasis for this research where artistic elements are brought together for a model to be utilised in the studio to produce artworks. The process of artistic production during which a thorough understanding is realised through dealings with the tools and materials used is described by Heidegger as handleability (Barrett & Bolt 2010, p. 31). This is reflected in the current anthroposophical Steiner school approach (termed the 'Waldorf School' outside of Australia) for understanding the world theoretically through physical handling by awakening the mind through working artistically (*kuenstlerisches Schaffen*) as advocated by Rudolf Steiner over a century ago (Steiner in Juenemann & Weitmann 1976, p. 7). Steiner's phenomenological studies inspired by the scientific works of Goethe (Bamford in Steiner 1995a, pp. xiii-ix, p. 23) built on the possibility of 'brain free' thinking, wherein the true practicality he views was born of objective thinking.

Thinking flows from the things themselves, such as objects of nature, for developing a practical viewpoint within thinking (Steiner 1995a, p. 23). Correspondingly, “tacit knowing and the generative potential of the process have the potential to reveal new insights” (Barrett & Bolt 2010, p. 31) with theory emerging from a Reflexive Practice (Hockney in Barrett & Bolt 2010, p. 31). Therefore, new knowledge in creative arts is emerging through the involvement with materials, methods, tools, and ideas of practice as praxical engagement rather than theoretical-cognitive engagement, making the findings neither perceptual nor rational, but tacit (Bolt in Barrett & Bolt 2010, p. 31).

Overall, qualitative research approaches have enabled artist-researchers to see art as research or the creative practice within university research. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2017, p. 804), multiple research methods are predicted to become the norm as researchers demand within the creative subjects the use of ‘more radical paradigms’ to ‘challenge outmoded forms of inquiry’ and ‘reflect reality in its complexity’. Therefore, individual tailormade strategies, such as specifically formulated studio experimentations accompanied by reflective and reflexive practices with autoethnographic elements (as put into perspective in 4.2.4. *Autoethnography*), were selected for my research inquiry. The meaning-making process where the arts merge with the inquiry and the ability to think “conceptually, symbolically and metaphorically” amalgamate the artist-self with the researcher-self by engaging in aesthetic experience as research (Leavey 2008, pp. 2, 11). Furthermore, experiencing Flow during a hands-on research inquiry assists the researcher-self in receiving immediate and direct feedback (see p. 38 detailing components of Flow as per Abraham (2018, p. 255)) as the frame of working with the Flow model allows the practitioner to begin creative activities with less concern of aesthetic outcomes and judgment, which burdens most creatives in their studio. The aesthetic experience in developing exercises, was prominent for this artwork production in this research project. The exercises needed to be established and viable for a Flow state to occur before I could generate an artwork as they became a foundation from which to launch artistic studio engagement.

4.2.1. Flow Methodology

Conventionally, the practitioner-researcher works simultaneously with “processes of creating and thinking strategies that are not designed nor feasible to function for the research path of an artist” (Biggs 2009, p. 29). However, Haseman (2006, n.p.) coined the term Performative Research for the practitioner-researcher who considers and applies their own techniques which are repurposed as a research strategy to probe the phenomena of practice, who views the research query as an enthusiasm of practice rather than a research problem and connects earlier and contemporaneous productions as a contribution to the overall research context which links it to the bricolage approach. English arts and humanities researcher Kitrina Douglas and English educational researcher David Carless (Douglas & Carless 2013, p. 55) amplify this rationale and identify core features of performative approaches, as integrated into my project as a strategy of ‘coming to know’ through creative processes. This includes the form of representation with the provision of an experience (response integration through the project-specific website and exhibition and in the following workshops) that aims at providing an alternative vision. The field of inquiry for this project built on my art practice as research that engaged in “intuitive leaps and creative shifts” that “relish in instability through messy forms” with “a design of uncertain nexus” (Denzin & Lincoln in Haseman 2006 n.p.; Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 319, p. 772) and offers an alternative to traditional methods, such as Grounded Theory or Phenomenology, as established in interdisciplinary research fields, like psychology.

Dutch visual art researcher Henk Slager expands on the immediacy of artistic research and the futility of deciding on a methodological perspective a priori, as artmaking is an operational process and an “open-ended work-in-pre-growth” (Elkins 2009, p. 54). Thus, the most fundamental methodological paradigm of arts research includes the awareness of divergence, which implies the capacity to activate an open attitude and tolerance for varied interpretations because a well-defined and rigid methodology excludes operational strategies that cannot be legitimised beforehand (Elkins 2009, pp. 53, 55). According to Slager, this form of research is an “indication of a zone” that needs to allow room for the continuation of the artistic experiment with the arrival of “a form of experience-based knowledge”, and the driving force of artmaking is not careful didactic plotting but where the creative work itself directs and formulates its own form of strategy.

This approach is exemplified through German painter Emil Nolde who gave painting a “sophisticated nomenclature and a battery of methods” (Elkins 1999, p. 119).

Without a stand-alone and fully formulated visual arts approach to conduct and conclude my research query, I implemented my artistic competence of previous education and career expertise as a visual artist for my practice-led approach as a valid creative research strategy, namely the Flow Methodology. With an in-depth understanding of method and technique through hands-on experience with empirical materials, I foremost created but also collected and analysed through self-reflection and introspection (as retrospection by accessing thoughts after their occurrence) (Mouchiroud & Lubart in Kaufman & Sternberg 2006, p. 99) which made for a dynamic, reflexive and fluid process. According to Schoen (1983, p. 56), reflective practice is coupled with a reflecting-in-action (intuitive knowing implicit in action), where the practitioner treats the research material as unique because standard theories or techniques do not apply. This reflection-in-action is a back-and-forth movement of paying attention to phenomena, assimilating an intuitive understanding through experimenting and reframing until the exploratory trials are hypothesis tested (Schoen 1983, pp. 129, 131, 132, 147). My explorations intrinsically embedded the structure of reflection-in-action as an integral part of my Flow Methodology.

Research journal entries incorporated the review of painterly procedures with entries generated before, during and after studio work, therefore acting as a record of the *Zone-In* exercise and *Creative Flow Studio Model* development (*Appendix 1*). This evidenced, in retrospect, the direction of the inquiry by trusting the process that relied on contemplative progressive dissection of the approach to the exercises during my creative efforts. This is evident in the ensuing analysis through my journal work to self-actualise.

With a modest amount of contemporary literature pertinent to the micro-niche subject of studio methods to reach a Flow state, the findings are largely based on my extensive studio procedures and observations indicative of an original practice-led research outcome with Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model* offering a detailed description of the enactment of my Flow Methodology and its relevance to artistic practice.

4.2.2. Methods of Data Collection

Data has been analysed from my practice through step-by-step data collection from studio experimentations (*Appendix 1*). Data collected includes canvas panel classification (Figure 112) of the developing *Zone-In* exercises to reference the production timeline and applications, which is paired with reflective journalling on the developing exercise approaches that clarify findings and identify progressive aspects. Journalling either happened in preparation for the next studio session, regarding assumptions in the studio environment to be experimentally enacted, during which practice brief notes, specifically of exercise timeframes, were taken, or afterwards to summarise experiences. Further, insights from experimentations were repeat assessed for accuracy scrutinising explorations (trial and error of drawing and painting applications in various forms (4.2.3. *Research Phases*)). Artwork production in association with the exercise development proved to be the essential feature for data collection to test the hypotheses regarding the developing model at work (Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model*, *Appendix 2*). Online presence through social media offered feedback and discussions with other artists offered insights. The final exhibition (Figure 113) included a large variety of artworks produced with the application of the *Creative Flow Studio Model* and a video clip demonstrating the *Zone-In* exercises to substantiate my findings that the *Creative Flow Studio Model*, with its preparatory exercises, brings about a Flow state.

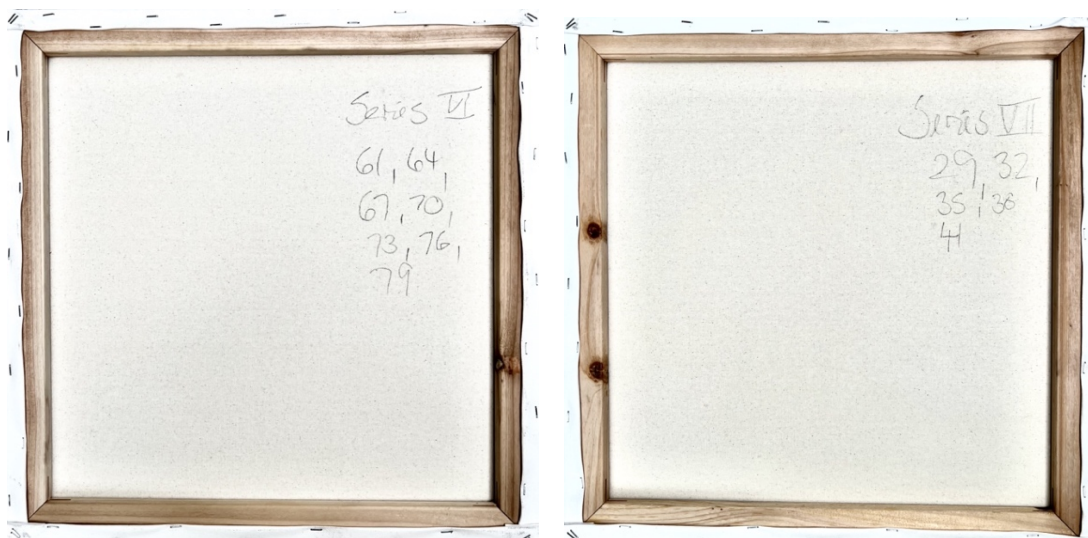


Figure 112
Hele Ellis, *Exercise panel classification examples*, 2021

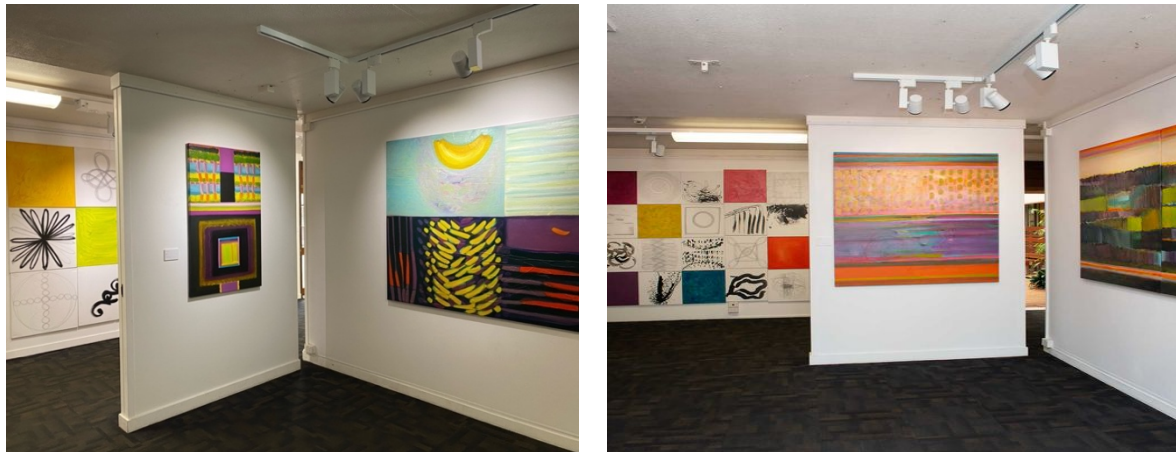


Figure 113
Hele Ellis, *Exhibition area impressions*, A Block, UniSQ, Toowoomba, 2023

Overall, the perspective of my inquiry has been amplified through a web of “ever-expanding references” (Haseman 2006, n.p.) via non-empirical elements as part of the conceptual framework. This created a substantial literature review on creativity (see Chapter 2: *Literature Review*), art and the study of contemporary and historical artists (Chapter 3: *Creative Practice Review: Artist Case Studies*) collectively associated with the central proposition of defining a studio practice (Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model*).

4.2.3. Research Phases

The correlating research phases of the Flow Methodology were given prominence according to functionality regarding studio activities for the multiple-methodology approach. These phases describe the practice-led approach from the pre-phase to phase 4 of this research (*Appendix 1* captures visually the process through the studio research phases). The pre-phase embarked on research and clarifications of the project’s methodologies regarding my research question, “*What are the studio methods to reach a state of unparalleled presence for increased studio creativity and productivity?*” including research into supporting material in the form of literature, images, and artists with approaches relevant to the study in terms of Flow, Process Art, and Anthroposophy. A knowledge-producing interweaving informed this pre-phase of theory and practice, and the practical studio activities during this first year of the research concerned trial and error of exclusive painting and drawing approaches for entering the zone but also saw drawing elements applied within painting segments.

All exercise *Series I, III and IV* trials took place on 70 x 70cm canvasses to test the size needed to emphasise bodily engagement during the exercises, foregrounding the experience (*Appendix 1*). *Series II* trialled 50 x 50cm canvasses successfully, and all exercises from *Series V* onward were performed on 50 x 50cm canvasses with validation for usage of the smaller format. The research Phase 1 in the following year saw the previous studio approaches abandoned as it became perceivable that a mix of studio approaches would need to be established that do not directly merge applications on one canvas. During phase 1, I incorporated drawing and painting activities in various mediums to gauge successful applications. Traditional Form Drawing shapes from the anthroposophical movement were experimented with to validate Form Drawing benefits. I trialled Dynamic Drawing on separate canvasses as the drawing element felt insufficiently explored and executed. Painterly approaches surfaced during the Dynamic Drawing exploration and the so-called Colour Bath (painterly application of explorative colour combining inclusive of shapes) as a response to the pre-phase turned into a mesh-up of activities, including integration of the exercises within the produced artwork impeding free mark-making (*Appendix 1, exercise Series II to IV*). Exercise *Series III* highlights yet another trial to combine elements of drawn and painterly applications without success (*Appendix 1*), however, a back-and-forth of trial and error regarding line (drawing) and area (painting) applications were necessary to define each exercises' significance and position in its consecutive order. Phase 2 in my studio enquiry's third year resulted in a breakthrough in establishing the sequence and most favourable application of the *Zone-In* exercises, namely Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing and Colour Bath, that formulated the *Creative Flow Studio Model* (5.3. *The Creative Flow Studio Model, Appendix 1, exercise Series V to VII*) and the production of artwork resultant of applying the model (*Appendix 2*). Form Drawing represents the imprint of an uninterrupted movement in a predetermined shape, Dynamic Drawing refers to spontaneous non-concrete mark-making and Colour Bath consists of an all-over monochrome colour application. Form Drawing exercises morphed into specific shapes considering the activation of both brain hemispheres; therefore, the Form Drawing exercises established a combination movement of straight and curved shapes in graphite only for improved accuracy. Dynamic Drawing of exercise *Series V* established that ink as a medium is best suited for free mark-making as appropriate for various applicators instead of brush-only use.

Exercise *Series VI* and *VII* refined bilateral applications for Form Drawing, tested free line movement versus non-brush use for Dynamic Drawing and advanced colour layering for the Colour Bath. Phase 3 concerned fine-tuning the specific exercises regarding preferred mediums, application techniques and timeframes (*Appendix 1*, exercise *Series VIII* to *X*) to respond to my research question with significant accuracy for a successful *Creative Flow Studio Model* application for the interested practitioner to re-enact, i.e., the three exercises of Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing and Colour Bath in consecutive order (5.3. *The Creative Flow Studio Model*).

All exercise series built on one another; either a new series was started when a series became too large in number (over 100), or once specific insights made during one series were adjusted through a change of application in the following series. Phase 4 concluded the research through artwork production that successfully included the model holistically within the artwork composition (Figure 131, Twelve A-L, *Appendix 2*) and the documentation of the study in its written form, including the final exhibition at UniSQ, Toowoomba.

4.2.4. Autoethnography

Reflective Practice calls for competencies that reveal uncertainties to self-educate the practitioner as a form of renewal (Schoen 1983, p. 299) besides retaining their instructive value through the articulated expression via narrative inquiry (Du Preez 2008, pp. 516, 509). The narrative inquiry of reflective practice has tenets of autoethnography that acknowledge the researchers' influence on the research by accommodating subjectivity (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011, pp. 274 — 278). It illustrates new perspectives on personal experience and eschews rigid definitions regarding meaningful research through its layered accounts (data, abstract analysis and relevant literature) and its vignettes of practice.

American professor of performance and communication studies Tami Spry calls this approach a “provocative weave of story and theory” (Spry 2001, pp. 713, 727), a tool that contributes to the burgeoning methodological possibilities representing human action in process and product.

Although, weaving excessive story and deficient theory together into a narrative without reflexive attention to the prose may result in chronicles that register as vainglorious.

American art critic Donald Kuspit (1993, pp.8-11) made this poignant by considering that the process and product (what he calls medium) catalyses introspection that affords awareness of internal as well as external states of being with the work positioned in the transitional space that intends to seamlessly fuse the internal and external. However, the emerging aesthetic state (as per Nietzsche in Kuspit 1993, p. 10) where transfiguration and fullness are projected and poeticised about a narcissistic state that self-affirms and integrates the disintegrated self, has the artist arising as a natural therapist with the work constituting the medium of healing. Australian artist and lecturer Caroline Durre (in Ravelli et al. (eds.) 2014, p. 192) addresses this dilemma and considers the autobiographical mode, as integral to autoethnography, in the discourse of the studio research degree as research of the self with the student emerging as a modernist hero owing to the unexamined assumption that the artist and the work are self-identical (Biggs & Wood (2005) in Ravelli et al. (eds.) 2014, p. 193). The artist's visual vocabulary using repetitive motifs would hint at traumas and their fixations of the creative enterprise with its origins in sublimation, where fantasies contain the fulfilment of a wish to improve reality. This assumption refers to the legacy of Freudian theory that all human behaviour must be viewed as motivated by instinctual drives. The ability to be creative was seen as a function that amounts to the operation of a sublimated libido for object-seeking in the realm of narcissistic aims that view creativity as being affiliated with neurosis. Freud's psychoanalytic perspective on creativity is nowadays predominantly viewed as reductionistic. Regardless, some schools of thought remain loyal to the early Freud, yet with little advancement on creativity, the "premier touchstone of contemporary art" (Coleman 1998, p. 156). Freud later remarked in his autobiographic study that psychoanalysis cannot elucidate the nature of the artistic gift, admitting that psychoanalysis cannot interpret creativity in its dimension (Bergquist 1975, n.p.). Similarly, Durre grants to not foreclose on speculation and to deflect away from the (psychological) source of creativity that honours its mystery, demonstrating that creativity research is at its advent as, by virtue, creativity is complex.

Half a century later, after Freud, Austrian psychoanalyst and art historian Ernst Kris cast doubt on Freud's theory and asserted that the mental processes crucial for creativity are preconscious aspects of the ego.

The ego allows regression to primitive modes of drive organisation for pre- and unconscious material to emerge as creative work requires ego functions to be exercised at their best (Gedo 1996, pp. 7-11). In any regard, neurotic distortion occurs when the conscious mind inhibits the creative process (Kubie in Bergquist 1975, n.p.); therefore, as the creative process is antecedent to conscious perception, creativity is untouched by the ploys of the ego. Behaviouristic explanations of creativity take operant conditioning and unconscious memory into account but cannot explain how the volume of pre-learned behaviour may be applied in a minimal amount of time for a masterpiece to emerge (Bergquist n.d., n.p.). Humanistic psychology, the third triad of creativity research from a psychological perspective, views self-actualisation needs at the highest level. As per American psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy, a pioneer in humanistic psychology, one's potential is realised through personal growth and peak experiences, such as transformed consciousness during Flow when creating art, as researched for this study. However, the concept of "activity pleasure" (*Funktionslust*) that describes the ability to operate effectively in the environment to fulfill a primary need is not new in psychology; German psychologists Karl Groos and Karl Buehler respectively elaborated in the early 20th century on this idea, which Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget included in the 1950s for the earliest stages of sensorimotor development "as the pleasure of being the cause" with the psychological thought focussing on the nervous system's need for optimal levels of stimulation to explain exploratory behaviour and the seeking of novelty (Csikszentmihalyi, Abuhamdeh & Nakamura in Elliott & Dweck (eds.) 2005, p. 599).

The above discussion on the psychological source of creativity was necessary to appreciate that autobiographical writing, as per James Elkins (2000, p. 254), may effectively dissolve analytic clarity into the "unruly disclosure of the writer's voice" because of incomplete self-understanding and lack of conceptualisation, possibly overshadowed by cavalier treatise.

Regardless, autobiographical, psychoanalytic, theological, or ethical critiques as a methodological aspect call for the importance of written reflection of doing, in reference to Schoen's reflection-in-action, and are to be featured as "alongside the sanctioned voice of theory" to give more freedom to speak about deeper intentions and could "span the gulf" (Elkins 2000, p. 156).

From a different perspective, French philosopher Michel Foucault speculated that the author's function would disappear in time, replaced and appropriated with the reader's experience (Foucault 1998, p.222). In correlation, Barthes viewed the author-writer as an excluded figure integrated by his very exclusion; Foucault and Barthes both emphasise the death of the author mainly as the loss of a traditional definition (Lancini 1999, n.p.). The importance of the reader's experience marks the overall intention of this project as particularised through this exegesis aiming at inspiring both myself and/or others to experiment with the *Creative Flow Studio Model*. Accordingly, I decided to arrive at a cohesive syllabus with the prerequisite of approximate autobiographic elements, given the discourse of the project that fronts studio practice and in consideration of the autobiographical overplay predicament mentioned above, a sentiment Gedo attended to, "the creative effort itself cannot be involved in the intrapsychic conflict but desires to transmit a message that represents highest ideals in the form of a perfected offering". Ultimately, according to Durre (in Ravelli et al. (eds.) 2014, p. 194), the autoethnographic approach is a means to contribute to history. By assembling a history of one's subjectivity and allowing curiosity to be the central part of the degree that values the experience, identity and the exercise of the critical voice, time turns the contemporary space in which creative negotiations are being made into an heir of evolution. Yet, articulating objective and generalisable knowledge for my exegesis to stand alone and apart from the creative process proved ambitious due to my subjective, intuitive studio approach, specifically in view of activities that concerned frontal lobe suppression (hypo frontality) naturally segregating thinking and doing uniformly. "Thinking with things is very different to thinking with words" (Daston (2004) in Ravelli et al. (eds.) 2014, p. 117) and references the difference between visual and verbal thinking whereby visual reasoning is multi-dimensional, multi-sensual and intuitive while verbal thinking is lineal and indentured to words of a language. Additionally, writing alongside the creative work in a parallel action dampened my creative enthusiasm as it consistently decreased studio time.

Gathering essential fulcrum for sense-making imposed laborious on-the-spot fact-finding explorations for arriving at a rationale for my approach to creative work as exegetical writing was principally founded in an intuitive path as a corresponding counterpart to my studio inquiries.

The method that unfolded was shaped through practice and with the nature of the process producing knowledge (Barrett in Barrett & Bolt 2010, p.9), which systematically categorised the exercises as consolidated with journaling. This journaling documented the process as the *raison d'être* for the personal experience, considering autobiographical fragments and as per value for the research that included, for a frame of reference, relevant engagement with the literature. This aligns with UK artist-researcher Iain Biggs' (in Ravelli et al. (eds.) 2014, p. 416) inclination that doctoral work in the arts is best approached with a dynamic amalgam of "ongoing imaginative speculation, material praxis, life experience, extended knowledge and analytical critique ... providing intellectual justification through the written argument for its quality as creative and transgressive research". As indicated by Biggs (in Ravelli et al. (eds.) 2014, p. 414), French psychoanalyst and philosopher Felix Guattari provided a context with the necessity to enact a greater differentiation regarding the self, speaking of an interdependent self, that is characterised by a degree of multiplicity that reflects diversity. This refers to adapting a critical voice for the autobiographical axiom where the self is examined and acknowledged as interconnected and contributing to the plenitude. Moreover, action and interaction as executed by the artist-researcher to "articulate the subjective and the sensory as an inextricable aspect of discovery" (Barrett in Ravelli et al. (eds.) 2014, p. 57) is a notion that takes the autobiographic aspect of this study full circle. In summary, the overuse of auto-biographical methodologies can be problematic from a psychological perspective; however, it cannot be eliminated to arrive at an equitable research outcome.

4.3. Interpretive Framework

The interpretative framework predominantly employed for this practice-led research concerned a form of spirituality of what French philosopher Jean Francois Lyotard called the "sublime", German artist Paul Klee the "invisible", and Swiss philosopher Adolf Muschg the "unthinkable" (in Bruederlin & Groos 2010, pp. 29, 30). The anthroposophical approach to artmaking (Chapter 2: *Literature Review*) is indicative of artwork being the output of the human spirit, an embodiment of the natural, transcendental or supernatural through the artist's creative perception by way of colours and their inherent life force (*Lebekaft*) which is linked to consciousness and integral to spirituality.

According to Rudolf Steiner, the source of inspiration is latent in every soul (Rosenkrantz on Steiner 1922, n.p.), a creative life force to be kindled. From this viewpoint, the artistic process is seen as a spiritual activity in exchange between creative stimuli and physical studio work. The artistic impulse brings the innate spiritual capacity into sensory manifestation (Zimmermann in Neumann 1990, p. 34). This perspective I elected early in my artistic career parallels aspects of my creative workflow in general and conjointly for this research project. Notably, this project transcends time and space during art practice and foregrounds the present moment (Flow state) so that a thought-free observation remains, which describes a meditative spiritual practice.

For Elkins, the sublime induces the experience of a liminal zone, which he describes as a 'value' that exceeds the classical logic of an 'absolute' and does not represent a 'property' as per traditional Western thinking (Elkins 2006, pp. 178-179). Elkins' view is consistent with Steiner's notion that art is typically considered an object, not an appearance, in its transitory nature. As per Michael Fried's essay *Art and Objecthood*, 1967, Modernism contrasts work of presence, its physical condition, and present-ness, transcending the merely physical (Krauss in Elkins 2000, p. 151), which refers to grace, immanence and transparent immediacy as experienced by the viewer. This invokes a "dual aspect of pictures containing both surface and virtual depth" as a "seeing-in" of human spatiality (David Summers & Michael Podro in Elkins 2000, pp. 151-156) and indicative of multi-dimensionality. Through the promotion of freedom and self-determination as whole human beings marked by multivocality and new textural forms, an age of greater spirituality within research efforts may be entered by reintegrating the sacred with the secular (Denzin & Lincoln 2017, p. 145). This reintegration of spirituality, which indicates a sensation of the limits of reason and representation, is pursued through my exclusively self-determined artistic research approach, made widely available through this project with its visual and written findings outlined comprehensively below in Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model*.

CHAPTER 5:

CREATIVE FLOW STUDIO MODEL

5.1. Overview

This chapter investigates the working methods utilised in my studio workspace, which acts as the research laboratory, the alchemic kitchen or arena of experimental perception and theory. The studio houses the collective thought experiments that are visualised empirically and where procedures in the recess of vision are achieved or fail (Bellony-Rewald and Peppiatt 1982, p. vi; Herbert Molderings on Duchamp's studio in Hoffmann 2012, p. 72). The term 'research laboratory' best represents what the thesis research is investigating. That is, the artist's studio not being a place for the creation of preconceived/planned artworks, but rather an open space where I (or any artist) can freely work both conceptually and intuitively, experimenting and developing outcomes that are not pre-planned. As such, the studio becomes a laboratory for a range of aesthetic propositions to be considered.

This chapter also discusses the ideas that have framed and emerged from the specific creative approach that led to defining the *Zone-In* exercises for entering the Flow state, which feeds into the developed *Creative Flow Studio Model*.

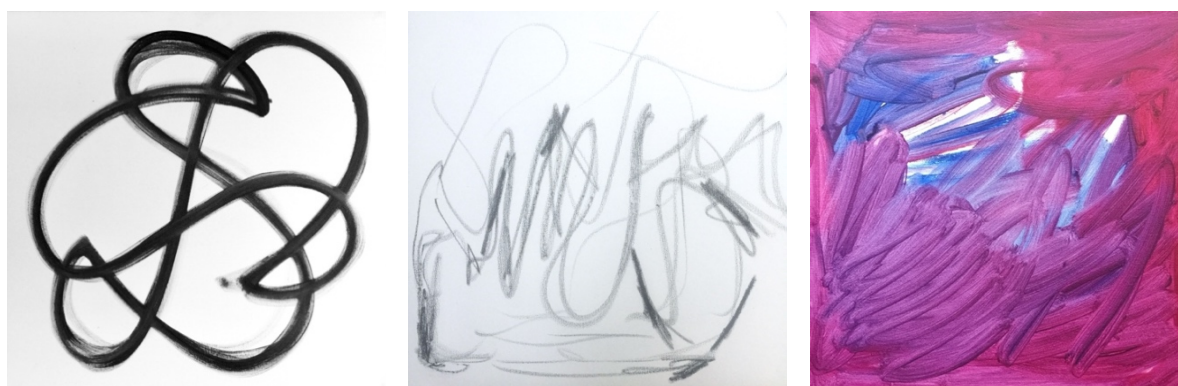


Figure 504
Hele Ellis, *Form Drawing, Series IV*, 2020

Figure 115
Hele Ellis, *Dynamic Drawing, Series II*, 2020

Figure 116
Hele Ellis, *Colour Bath, Series II*, 2020

The *Zone-In* exercises are a distinct and consecutively applied sequence of three (drawing and painting) applications for this project carried out on separate canvasses (for exhibition purposes) and completed ahead of studio pursuits, which embody the framework through which a sequence of artwork is produced. These exercises build on one another through their effects within their sequenced approach and are associated with a grounding, freeing and equalising experience. The exercises are, respectively, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing and Colour Bath (Figures 114-116 and *Appendix 1*) (see explanation of exercises below), and they collectively serve to hyper-accentuate the present moment of an artist creating artwork that promotes Flow in their artistic making.

The *Zone-In* exercises have been comprehensively developed over the past four years, with the assistance of reflexive studio processes such as reflective journalling, introspection and self-actualisation coupled with a reflection-in-action that advanced a critical lens (in the absence of data from external case studies as studio experimentations were carried out unassisted to better understand this process on a personal creative level) (Figures 117-119). Specific adjustments were made in view of time (between a minimum of five minutes and a maximum of ten minutes for each exercise), sequence (in what order the activities were to be created in), and approach (in terms of the most suited mediums that corresponded to time, sequence and activity).

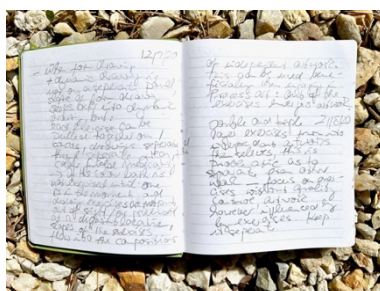


Figure 117
Hele Ellis, *Journal excerpt entry example*, 2020



Figure 118
Hele Ellis, *Journal excerpt entry example*, 2021

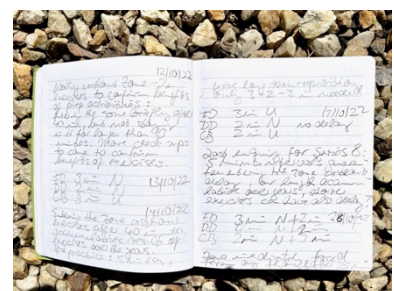


Figure 119
Hele Ellis, *Journal excerpt entry example*, 2022

The *Zone-In* exercises were finalised at the end of Semester 1, 2022, as the last phase of the studio exercise experimentation fostering the *Creative Flow Studio Model*. The research artefacts comprise a collection of 23 large-scale oil paintings (Figures 120-124 and *Appendix 2*), including two exercise panel walls (Figures 125-126 and *Appendix 2*), that are a result of the creativity-fuelled *Zone-In* exercises. The exercises create a framework to reach a Flow state (within the activity of creating artwork) expeditiously and follow a Process Art based system whereby working through the process of creating the artwork, the final aesthetic outcome is not predetermined but is also not necessarily eliminating the integration of the *Zone-In* exercises (Figure 127 and *Appendix 2*). For the external applications of the *Zone-In* exercises, I have created and maintained two virtual spaces to present, promote and discuss the studio activities. Interested individuals are invited to partake virtually via online platforms (Instagram, Hele Ellis Art) and a project-specific section of my website (www.heleellis.com) to help generate an animated dialogue throughout concerning the findings of the project. Additionally, locally run face-to-face workshops will be offered as an inspiration for the community to experiment with my model for critical feedback and dissemination of the project.



Figure 51
Hele Ellis, *Vapor*, 2021



Figure 52
Hele Ellis, *Tone*, 2021



Figure 53
Hele Ellis, *Converse*, 2021



Figure 123
Hele Ellis, *Maximus A-C*, 2022



Figure 54
Hele Ellis, *Poesy A-C*, 2022



Figure 125
Hele Ellis, *Exercise Panel Wall 1*, 2019-2020

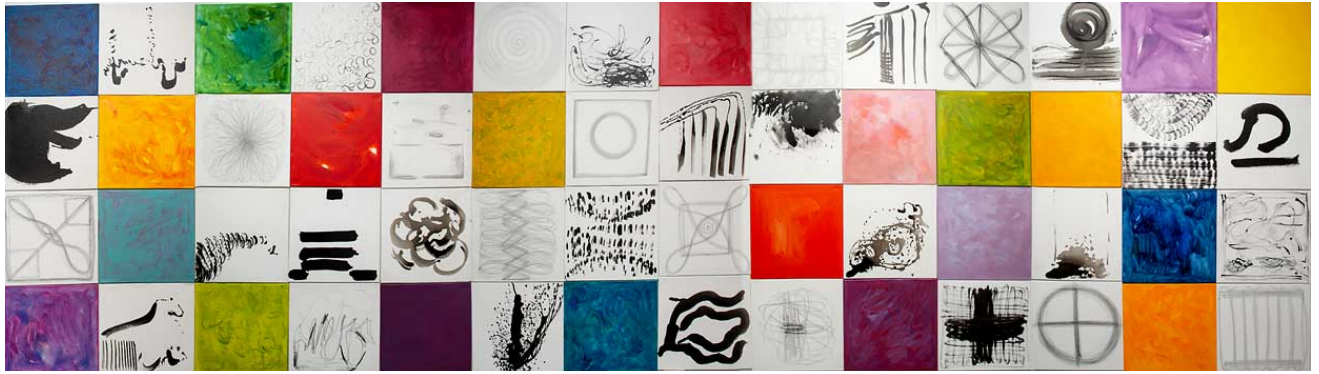


Figure 126
Hele Ellis, *Exercise Panel Wall 2*, 2020-2023

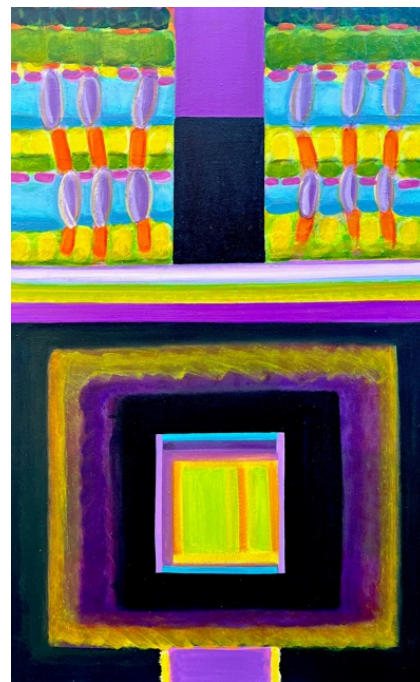


Figure 127
Hele Ellis, (left) *Helix*, 2021, (right) *Jet Just* (examples of Zone-in exercise integration), 2021

5.2. The Studio

The studio practice ordinarily happens in the workspace of artists, yet due to shifts and changes in art historical moments and movements such as Conceptual Art or Land Art, the notion of the studio and the space/s in which the work is made or presented has expanded from inside to outside beyond the confines of the traditional studio or gallery space.

Artists started to access alternative sites to make and display their work, whether that be a subway station with Sol LeWitt *Whirls and Twirls*, 2009 (Figure 128) at the 59th Street (Columbus Circle subway station, New York City), where forms derive from a cube creating a multitude of figures (as in *Schatz Cube*, see Chapter 3: *Creative Practice Review: Artist Case Studies*) or Walter De Maria's *Lightning Field*, 1977 (Figure 129), an installation of four hundred polished stainless steel poles set in a vast grid on a remote site in New Mexico, making use of high electrical storm incidences, which is seen as De Maria praising the forces of nature.



Figure 55
Sol LeWitt, *Whirls and Twirls*, 2009



Figure 56
Walter De Maria, *Lightning Field*, 1977

In his work, Minimalism meets the romantic conception of the sublime in its transcendental experience (Elderfield 2021, n.p.). In such cases, artistic production enlarged the concept and confines of the studio production and even the traditional mode of display within a gallery or museum space by literally getting outside the centralised, rigidified structures of art (Hoffmann 2012, p. 13; Ratcliff 1996, p. 254), as noted by American artist Robert Smithson who stated that “deliverance from the confines of the studio frees the artist to a degree from the snares of craft and the bondage of creativity” (Buren and Smithson in Davidts & Paice (eds.) 2009, p. 2, 15). Without recognising that the “seeming evaporation of the art object in Conceptualism could not be equated with a vanishing studio” (Lippard and Chandler in Davidts & Paice (eds.) 2009, p. 8), proclamations since the late sixties declare the death of the studio.

The studio turned into an arena for non-objective, non-narrative, non-linear activity where the body was used for repetitive pure process and exploited by conceptual artists whose move out of the studio was more of a political stance than a liberation from object making (Butler 1999, p.85). Key protagonists such as French conceptual artist Daniel Buren announced the studio's function to be extinct regarding the space's role and significance. However, he later revised this when he conceded that the studio could be viewed as a unique space for private production, isolating works of art from the outer world and since the work belongs in the studio, "it is in the studio and only in the studio that it is closest to its own reality" (Buren in Davidts & Paice (eds.) 2009, p. 71). The artist's space is a space wherein the process of working through an idea as a method of thinking and making takes place through a process of personal and aesthetic innovation. In this space, key processes for change, and acts of creative testing, can take place without judgement, enhancing the act that through making is essential to knowing (Wainwright in Jacob & Grabner (eds.) 2010, p. ix). American art historian Lisa Wainwright encapsulates that studio practice is a form of research that conceptualises, models ideas, and takes command of a critical discourse that is grounded in the realm of visual representation as a valuable resource in an exploding global semi-sphere (Wainwright in Jacob & Grabner (eds.) 2010, p. x).

This concept echoes my pragmatic attitude towards a studio focus for this research that is far less determined by philosophical deliberations and more concerned with the dynamics of circumstances; my work-space transforms organically. The studio has always been a multi-purpose area, a "fluid interchange between objects, activities and people" (Relyea in Hoffmann 2012, p. 219). During my career as an artist, I had worked in cellars, living rooms, offices, a walkway, a bathroom, shacks or on porches when I was travelling, taking up residencies or situated at home. For over a decade, I rented large studio spaces in the Byron Bay Arts & Industry Estate that served as a workspace and gallery. This co-working space became a place for individuals to visit and experience the creative, in-progress and installed activities. The studio became a place for the public to relax and forget about their own universe, not unlike Sarah Thornton's sentiment that "a studio isn't just a place where artists make art but a platform for negotiation and a stage for performance" (Thornton 2008, p. 203).

My current studio is a specifically converted double garage suited for art-making purposes at home with a sign in the window (and permanently drawn curtains) announcing opening hours to be between 10.30-11.00 am to attempt to have the studio restored to a private site of creation and to limit interference from the public. Since the commencement of this study, my studio lost its means as a portal of exchange between materials, labour and the art aesthete, and has shifted to a place of depository where experiments were executed and amassed. Consequently, another transformation within the studio was moving a selection of activities outdoors to create more extensive work without physical limitations (Figure 130), where larger canvasses, placed outdoors on the ground to be worked on, corresponds to an Indigenous artmaking approach undertaken for millennia (3.5. *Artist Case Studies: Emily Kame Kngwarreye in Context*). This meant that a workspace separation of *Zone-In* exercise experimentation and the large-scale artwork production took place naturally, which benefitted the creative workflow tremendously as the artistic approach during the exercises concerning brush application, gestures, and colours were less automatically imprinted onto the artworks in progress by isolating both activities.

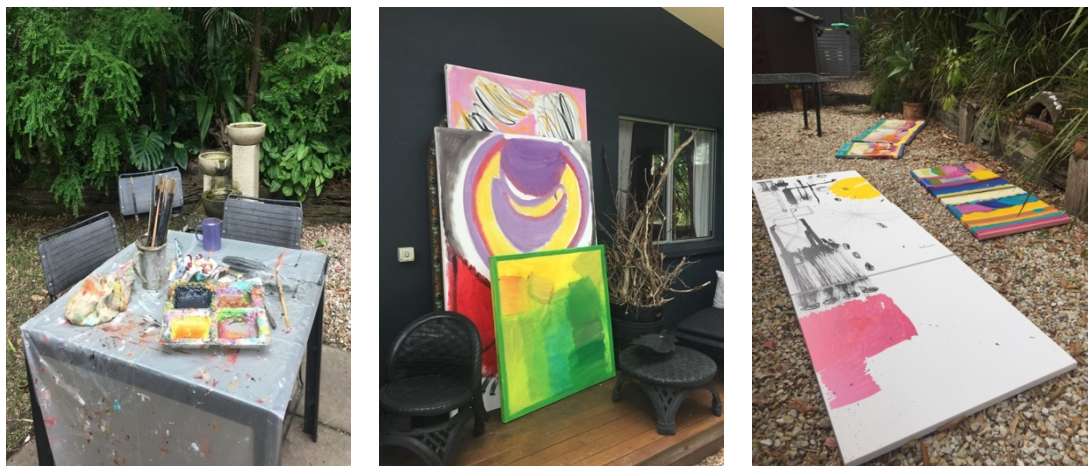


Figure 130
Hele Ellis, *Outdoor Studio Impressions*, 2020-22



Figure 131
Hele Ellis, *Twelve A-L*, 2022-23

Prior to separating both activities, the exercises' visual impact strongly influenced the approach to artwork production. This was problematic as the distinctions between exercises and artwork turned ineffectual by blurring artwork into a repetition of the exercises, which posed difficulties in advancing both the exercises and the artwork. Although the exercises were developed separately, imprinting of one exercise to the next when sequentially applied (specifically Form Drawing to Dynamic Drawing), posed an additional predicament that I resolved by changing the preferred application for the medium in Dynamic Drawing, using liquid ink with restricted brush use, to circumvent the self-activating shapes of Form Drawing. However, once the exercises were fully developed and followed by adequate expertise, I successfully amalgamated the exercises for my last multi-panel piece *Twelve A-L*, 2022-2023 (Figure 131 and *Appendix 2*) for this studio research.

An al fresco workspace is more taxing on the body due to exposure to the elements, such as heat and humidity. The number of hours of outdoor operation is limited due to the dependence not only on daylight but shade and other weather conditions like wind and rain (leaving debris on the canvasses, which form studio marks in the final composition). Regardless, working outdoors creates a very focused energy as all surroundings merge into the background with immediate critical distance taking effect. Working in an outdoor studio set-up largely also avoids the barrier to arriving and stepping into the studio for work, a conundrum French sculptor and painter Christian Boltanski conveyed during a studio visit interview. His difficulty immersing himself upon entering the studio with a habitual work routine is inferred when he contemplated, "really there is nothing here. It's like a place where you live. The only useful thing about the studio is that after some time you can imagine something. A forest for example. I walk in it. Today it is nothing for me, but perhaps in two weeks it will become something" (Boltanski in Hoffmann (ed.) 2012, p. 11). Boltanski indicated with this contemplation that the constant dilemma for artists when entering the studio is to find a starting point for engagement, particularly with the absence of work in progress condensing the feeling of vacancy and isolation. Artwork production can only be postponed without the ability to develop a modulation between union and separation within the studio (Zarrilli in Hoffmann 2012, p. 105).

I prefer working on several paintings simultaneously. The leading reason for this approach is not due to oil paint drying time or that working on sequential canvases allowed me to maintain a constant working condition, as stated by English artist Damian Hirst, “I need to work on twelve paintings at a time, minimum. Otherwise I get frustrated because there is not enough to do” (Hirst in Thornton 2014, p. 259), but is a vital strategy to dissociate myself from any singular work, allowing for short periods of activity and then periods of visual detachment from each artwork. This creates a critical distance for evaluation with the reflective and reflexive impetus built into my artistic practice and what is, in hindsight, a long-standing routine to process what is occurring in the work and relates to the very core of this research.

This research project’s studio practice deviated partially from past methods and saw aspects of Process Art (Figure 132 and *Appendix 2*), The Formless (that refers to Georges Bataille’s *L’Informe*, the performative force of the formless (Figure 133 and *Appendix 2*) (Bois & Krauss 1997, p. 9)) and contemporary forms of Intuitive Abstraction (Figure 134 and *Appendix 2*) that explores the process of creating abstract art, infused.

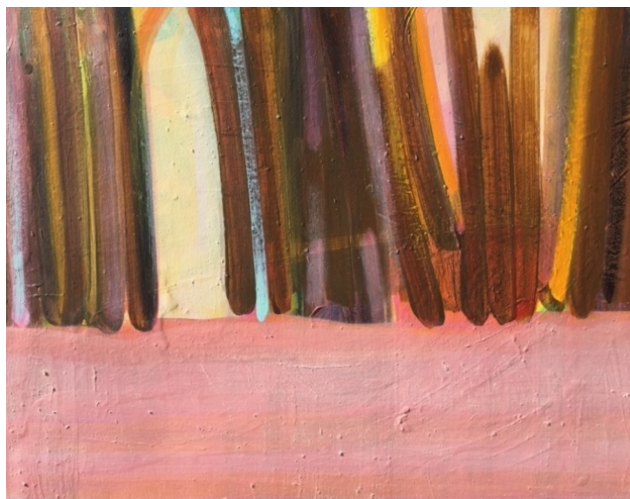


Figure 132
Hele Ellis, *Amber (detail)*, 2020-2021



Figure 133
Hele Ellis, *Balmy A-C*, 2022

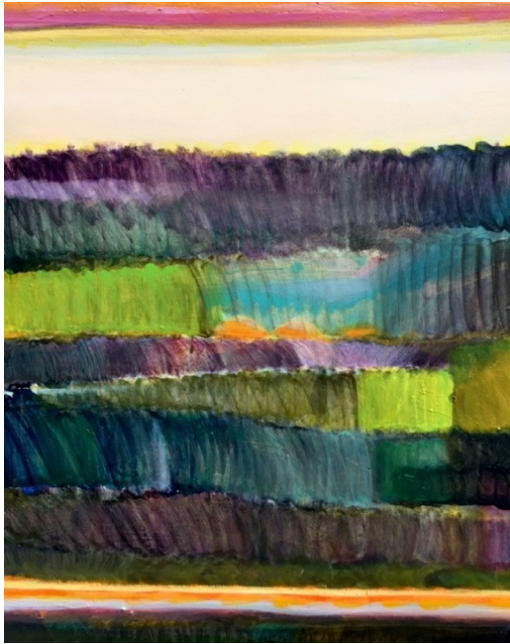


Figure 134
Hele Ellis, *Cadence A-B*, 2020-2021

These varying creative application methods are collated in Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model*, where the unique combination and procedure of the exercises that create a unified system for entering the zone to create artwork are discussed. However, 2.4. *Process Art* and Chapter 3: *Creative Practice Review: Artist Case Studies* with relevant artist case studies put this project into perspective, according to the associated art genres and their creative representatives. In any regard, the convergence of Colour Field Painting, Process Art, The Formless and Intuitive Abstraction creates a studio strategy that is enriched through expanding my artistic vocabulary.

My typical day in the studio, prior to this research, was already defined by creating procedures before the commencement of artwork production. These short and small tasks acted as a prelude to ease into creative studio work and can be viewed as a 'warm-up'. The research's specific habitual exercise activities in applying the developed model to initiate a Flow state transforms those activities, intentionally targeting by design a direct preparation to maximise creative studio work.

5.3. The Creative Practice

Steiner's recommendation to paint out of the colour, which means that form is being developed through colour application and not vice versa (also discussed below, in the Introduction, Chapter 2: *Literature Review* and Chapter 4:

Methodology), I have maintained throughout my art career and during this practice-led research. My growing attitude towards liberating thinking from the "semantic and servitude to thematics" processes of The Formless (Krauss in Bois & Krauss 1997, p. 252) is also incited in the simultaneity of movements. This echoes my trajectory to enter the Flow state deliberately through the framework I have developed and indicates the interrelationship to transcendence by adopting this approach.

My avowed mantra to creative work has been from early on that "to observe something closely, one moves into abstract dialogue, investigating the secret of creation". This is significant regarding my general artistic approach to abstraction. However, this articulation also aligns with Steiner's notion that only through observation does one first become aware of anything entering the circle of experience (Steiner 1995b, p. 31) as rigorously yet intuitively applied during my studio research processes. German-born American painter Hans Hofmann's doctrine that through inner perception (according to Steiner arising through observation), the essence of things can be comprehended beyond mere sensory experience (Carter Ratcliff 1996, p. 68) and that through using contrasts of colour, pictorial space can be evoked. Regardless, my mantra is polyvalent and describes the zooming in on specifics as the assimilation of an entirety is inconceivable: the unveiling of the in-between, the unrecognised, the sublime that can only be alluded to through a meditation on the process that leads from an impulse to gesture to mark (Figure 135 and *Appendix 2*) as per my interpretive framework of this study concerning spirituality (4.3. *Interpretive Framework*). This is comparable to American artist Brice Marden's stick use as an instrument for contemplation (Ratcliff 1996, p. 304). Marden utilised sticks to create a distance to the canvas while maintaining contact with the artwork. He explains his calligraphic approach employing sticks, asserting "calligraphy is a codified way to communicate using something supremely aesthetic. In the West we don't have a way to do that" (in Wylie 1998, p. 24, Chapter 3: *Creative Practice Review: Artist Case Studies*).



Figure 135
Hele Ellis, *Amity A-B*, 2022



Figure 136
Max Gimblett, *Enso Circling*, 2011

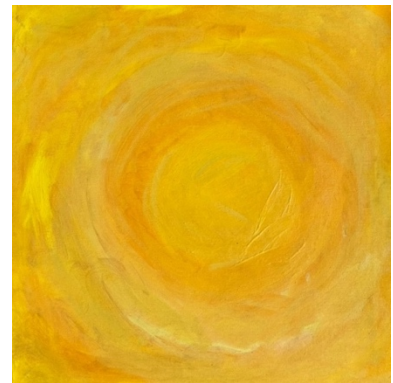
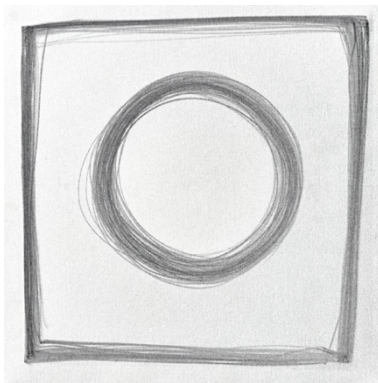


Figure 57
Hele Ellis, *Form Drawing (Enso), Series VII*, 2021

Figure 138
Hele Ellis, *Dynamic Drawing (Enso), Series IV*, 2020

Figure 139
Hele Ellis, *Colour Bath (Enso), Series II*, 2020

However, New Zealand-born American artist Max Gimblett's prolonged engagement with Asian Art, led to his learning during which he learned that drawing is egoless and not ego-driven to prove mastery. His black ink Enso Circling, 2011 (Figure 136), consisting of circles (which are a Japanese symbol for infinity and regeneration), are approached in one gesture (Yau 2009, p. 69), which I articulated independently during this study's three exercises, Form and Dynamic Drawing and Colour Bath (Figures 137-139 and *Appendix 1*) as the circle is the most straightforward and most stable shape with every section being equal to the next therefore signifying perfection, stability and balance.

The final series (*Series X* and *Appendix 1*) highlights this finding: the Form Drawing exercise was to secure a shape that grounds and equally balances, which was most perfectly realised with a circle or figure eight (lemniscate) shape in a circle format incorporating bilaterality. Gimblett was selected to partake in the Guggenheim's 2009 exhibition *The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989*, an expose that documented how American artists not only morphed Eastern ideas and art forms into new styles of art but also presented a new theoretical definition of the contemplative experience and self-transformative role of art (Munroe 2009, n.p.). This exhibition also included East-West identities with tenets of Karl Jung's formulations and Theosophy connecting Eastern Art with the anthroposophical approach as per this research. Given this project's intuitive studio experimentations and the journey of creating, my process-based art practice is comparable to the Eastern notion that views artmaking as a purifying process and contrasts the Western perspective of production. Eastern processes involve self-transformation and the discovery of the inner self through intuitive mark-making.

In contrast, the Western perspective is focused on a strategy of producing innovative products. Presence and incantation of the Flow state may be analogous to a meditative process, uniting the creative artmaking activity with a meditative state, during which presence is forefronted. This means that creative practice during the Flow state may be seen as enacting a spiritual practice.

Initially, the research concept concerned an either/or pathway to drawing (line) or painting (area) methods (Figures 140-141 and *Appendix 1*) to attain a mode of being that aids studio creativity. In the pre-phase of the research study, I presumed that colour exercises would draw out emotional processes that would "free the unconscious" (Adams in Weisberg 1993, p. 64) and stimulate studio production. However, a trial of exclusive painting exercises in oil on canvas (in monochrome, duo-chrome and/or pure chroma) (Figure 142 and *Appendix 1*) failed to produce results, and this approach was abandoned and revised when colour exercises alone did not result in an unparalleled presence or a Flow experience. Drawing, in contrast, and as another route for further experimentation, is regarded as "the mother of arts" (Butler 1999, p. 31), for all other arts originate from it. Nevertheless, drawing for a preparatory sketch does not entail the completed work; it also functions as a trace or a remainder left behind and suggests, for this study, the physical activity of movement as the primary outcome.



Figure 58

Hele Ellis, *Studio Research Practice (Drawing), Series I*, 2019

Figure 141

Hele Ellis, *Studio Research Practice, (Painting), Series I*, 2019

Figure 142 Hele Ellis, *Studio Research Practice (Painting, monochrome), Series I*, 2019

From an anthroposophical perspective, drawing and specifically Form Drawing (free hand repetitive drawing of non-representational forms) translates a three-dimensional body movement into the two-dimensional form of shapes on a surface that supports abilities such as observation, orientation and fine motor skills. Some of the perceptible critical parameters for a Flow experience are a deep immersion in the sensorimotor task (i.e., of creating artwork) coupled with high motivation and passion during the performance of the ability-matched challenge with the absence of a sense of time and total contentment in the moment (Abraham 2018, p. 74). The Flow sensation feels distinctly potent and will therefore not pass unnoticed; vice versa, the absence of the Flow experience is likewise readily detectable, a realisation any artist is exceedingly familiar with. These studio challenges arose during my project's first year and pre-phase through trial and error of exclusive painting and drawing methods. With nil results concerning anticipated outcomes, a reorientation concerning technical approaches toward the exercises had to take place. This included consolidation of practices by separating and simplifying the drawing and painting segments (straight/curved line and monochrome only) to gauge the effects more distinctly combatting the project's foreseeable failure (Figures 143-144 and *Appendix 1*). This epiphany allowed for critical re-evaluation and implementation of a study-specific reflexive process (Figure 145) integral to my adaptability for an emergence of alternatives to unfold.



Figure 143
Hele Ellis, *Studio Research Practice (Drawing), Series II*, 2020

Figure 144
Hele Ellis, *Studio Research Practice (Painting), Series II*, 2020

Figure 145
Hele Ellis, *Journal excerpt entry example*, 2020

Transdisciplinary Australian arts researcher and visual artist Daniel Mafe places a strong focus on abstraction and sees the ‘artist’s voice’ and its evaluation as a co-productive and post-subjective research tool (Mafe 2009, pp. 118-121) by empowering the creative (artist) in the critical and cultural discussion that comprises knowledge transfer. Nevertheless, given the complexity of this two-fold studio practice (processes of exercise development with additional artwork production), assessing my artist’s voice with actual critical distance towards this dual parallel perspective to practice proved to be a continuous challenge as my emphasis was situated on sensing the Flow experience and its intricacies and not on the analytical amplitude in the interim of artwork production.

Toward the end of my research, I integrated the exercises within the composition of the artwork (Figure 146 and *Appendix 2*), and I was able to experiment with the exercises and the artwork as one configuration, which had the burden of doing the exercises as a repetitive chore evaporate. Earlier during the research, I experimented with intentionally incorporating exercise elements within the artworks. However, the results constituted of a mesh-up rather than a distinct layering, as I needed to distinguish the exercise elements more sufficiently.

Respectively, the very enterprise to tailor the exercises conducive to entering the zone created doubt that was an ever-accompanying subversive experience up until the final stages of the studio artwork and research for this doctorate over the past four years. I routinely experienced that I would imagine the Flow state setting in during the first moments of its sensation and questioned its physical actuality. This doubt frequently faded into the periphery with the Flow state taking over.

The exercises combine a defocussing of attention and promoted associative thinking. According to American psychology professor Colin Martindale (in Sternberg 1999, p. 149), associative thinking occurs with low frontal-lobe and cortical activation levels and predominant right-hemisphere stimulus (using the less dominant hand). In conjunction, another American psychology professor, Anna Abraham (2018, p. 256) confirms that the state of Flow arises when the frontal lobes of the brain that orchestrate cognitive control are temporarily suppressed (transient hypo-frontality) (Dietrich (2004) in Abraham 2018, p. 256), thus enhancing creativity. This links directly back to my central research inquiry that is concerned with *Zone-In* exercises that create, through their application with transient hypo-frontality, and directly relate to a Process Art-strategy for increased studio creativity and productivity. The mode being experienced during this Flow state or unparalleled presence is due to altered brain wave activation and is ultimately relevant for the choice and combination of the *Zone-In* exercises to advance to this Flow mode.



Figure 146
Hele Ellis, *Twelve A*, 2022-2023

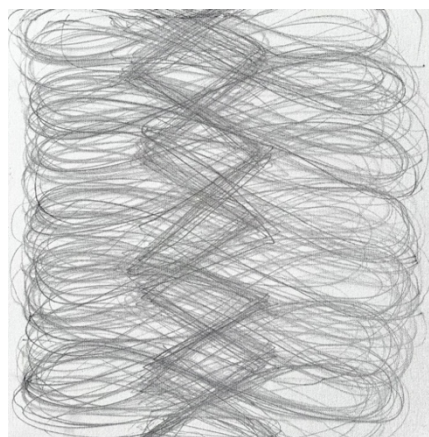


Figure 147
Hele Ellis, *Form Drawing (bilateral approach)*, Series VI, 2021

5.4. The Creative Flow Studio Model

For this studio research, I magnified an increased engagement with the fully developed discipline of Form Drawing (set repetitive, rhythmic, and uninterrupted drawing of a form). This system was created by incorporating a left/right-hand approach (alternating the use of either hand in reference to bilaterality) (Figure 147 and *Appendix 1*) which morphed into one of my key exercises that shaped the development of my studio practice. Form Drawing is promoted as a stand-alone exercise to “enliven creativity” (Kutzli 1985b, p. 75), yet this activity by itself fails to invigorate the creative Flow as investigated during this research project. Intuitive-based processes of diverse drawing and painting approaches led to a breakthrough of a workable combination of the *Zone-In* exercises that integrate rhythm sequentially. Specifically, trialling a variety of drawing and painting exercises in combination and sequence for optimised studio application as prompted by reflection-in-action included a fine-tuning of the time-sensitive combination through further experimentation. This eventually evoked a Flow state and consequently enhanced studio creativity. The best results for entering the zone or Flow state effectively require the execution of the following three distinctive exercises in consecutive order that form the *Creative Flow Studio Model*:

1. Form (Line) Drawing (the line as an imprint of a movement creating an uninterrupted form flow with an in advance set out shape) (Figure 148 and *Appendix 1*)
2. Dynamic (Line) Drawing (Figure 149 and *Appendix 1*) (involving non-specific gestural mark-making)
3. Colour (Area) Bath (Figure 150 and *Appendix 1*) (non-specific all-over monochrome colour application)

Within the research investigated, Steiner’s approach to line and colour unequivocally instilled both drawing (line) and painting (area) activities. This then parallels the concerns investigated, developed, and applied within my theoretical research and studio outcomes involving the three distinctive exercises listed previously. Form Drawing calms the mind and grounds the body through predetermined repetitive movements (Figure 151 and *Appendix 1*) (Juenemann & Weitmann 1976, pp. 92, 93).

Dynamic Drawing (Figure 152 and *Appendix 1*) releases the embodiment of Form Drawing through spontaneous gestural mark-making, as per my research findings. Finally, Colour Bath or monochrome colour exercise (Figure 153 and *Appendix 1*) liberates the drawing elements concerned with line work and expands these into areas of aesthetic outcomes that conclude with a meditative and contemplative ethos.



Figure 148
Hele Ellis, *Form Drawing (imprint of a movement)*, Series VII, 2021

Figure 149
Hele Ellis, *Dynamic Drawing (gestural mark-making)*, Series VII, 2021

Figure 150
Hele Ellis, *Colour Bath (all-over monochrome application)*, Series V, 2021



Figure 151
Hele Ellis, *Form Drawing (visible repetitive movement)*, Series X, 2023

Figure 152
Hele Ellis, *Dynamic Drawing (spontaneous)*, Series V, 2021

Figure 153
Hele Ellis, *Colour Bath (contemplative)*, Series II, 2020

The strategy for undertaking this Flow system of creative enterprise involves several key decisions. All work for the studio research outcomes has been executed on canvas not only due to its durability during the creative process, unlike paper or cardboard, where the surface can deteriorate based on the materials used, but foremost for exhibition and commercial purposes (canvas panels making for straightforward display and trading). The canvas panels are either 50 cm (minimum) or 70 cm each as studio activities have found that any size under this minimum requirement compromises the ability to work freely within the field of activity as one becomes physically constrained toward their movements, lessening or erasing the exercise outcomes. The canvasses must also be of square format (to be impartial towards vertical or horizontal preference where they do not reference a portraiture or landscape motif).

During the research, the exercises' drawing component saw various applications trialled, including graphite, carbon, felt tip pen, crayon, ink and oil paint (Figure 154 and *Appendix 1*). Form Drawing executed in pencil or graphite and Dynamic Drawing in liquid ink is recommended for leading results as per my experimentation. The most beneficial practice for beginning to ease into the *Zone-In* exercises and proficiently entering the Flow state is choosing paper strong enough to allow unrestricted movements during drawing and painting activities. Form Drawing, the first exercise, is a repetitive movement during which physical balance is activated, and the slim line of a pencil or graphite endorses the accuracy of that balance found (Figure 155 and *Appendix 1*). An upfront chosen simple shape, such as a circle or square, is repetitively drawn first with the dominant and later with the non-dominant hand for bilaterality with movement reversal afterwards. However, adapting with accuracy to a simple shape, a figure eight (lemniscate) movement is preferred as bilaterality is implied through this shape due to its inherent straight and curved elements and innate movement reversal (*Series V-X* and *Appendix 1*). For the second exercise, Dynamic Drawing, a limited application of brushwork in liquid ink (pouring or spraying suffices) is favoured as the ink flow allows for spontaneous gestures (Figure 156 and *Appendix 1*) to alleviate the substantially strong shapes of Form Drawing (*Series VII-X* and *Appendix 1*).

For the third exercise, Colour Bath, a prepared mix of paint (watercolour, acrylic or oil) and utilisation of primary colours (yellow, red, blue) is applied with a brush in an all-over fashion for the Colour Bath experience to take hold, with colour layering to ability-match thereafter (*Series V-X and Appendix 1*).



Figure 154
Hele Ellis, *Drawing (trial of various applications; ink, crayon)*, Series III, 2020



Figure 155
Hele Ellis, *Form Drawing (balance)*, Series VIII, 2022



Figure 156
Hele Ellis, *Dynamic Drawing (poured ink)*, Series VIII, 2022

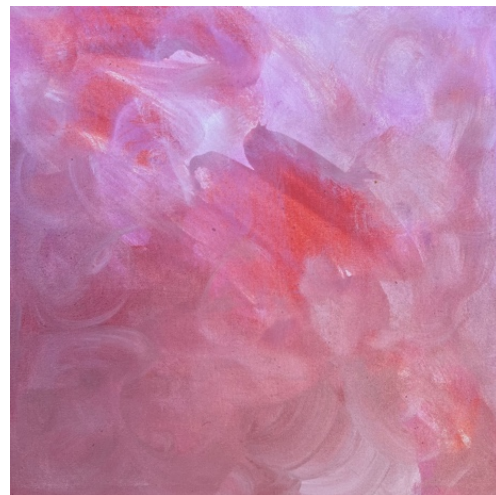


Figure 157
Hele Ellis, *Colour Bath (oil paint translucency)*, Series VII, 2021

The painting component of all works for this research consists of oil paint applied on canvas via brush. I have used this modus as a professional artist for many years due to the oil's overall more versatile characteristics than acrylic paints.

Unlike acrylic paint, where its material properties are designed to dry quickly, oil paint offers the opportunity to work wet into wet, blending layers and gradient of colour/s due to its slow drying time. Oil paint application allows multiple layers of translucent paint to suggest depth and richness in the final painted surface (Figure 157 and *Appendix 1*).

With respect to the creation of finished artworks, these are done using the classical oil painting technique (Elkins 1999, p. 169): the *imprimatura* (underpainting) goes before the underdrawing, the monochrome version before painted outlines and details. Contrarily, the *Zone-In* exercises deconstruct and reverse this process and the traditional order of operation is picked up once the final colour exercise is finished and studio practice begins. This developed reversal of operation for the exercises creates the Flow state characterised by unequalled presence. The activities that flow from this sensation are fluid and build on one another without cognitive considerations. According to my research findings, remaining within this timeless space for several hours is achievable. However, although a 3-2-3-minute exercise rhythm (considering each exercise respectively) is sufficient to enter the zone after a few minutes into studio work (due to a possible delay), it is recommended for the practising artist unfamiliar with the exercises to double the time for each exercise for a few months to warrant automatic brain apperception, that is, with long term application of the exercises the Flow state effect sets in slightly earlier (see graph, Figure 158). Once the practitioner is experiencing a Flow state, a short version repeat of exercises will double this state of being, even with a half-day break in between.

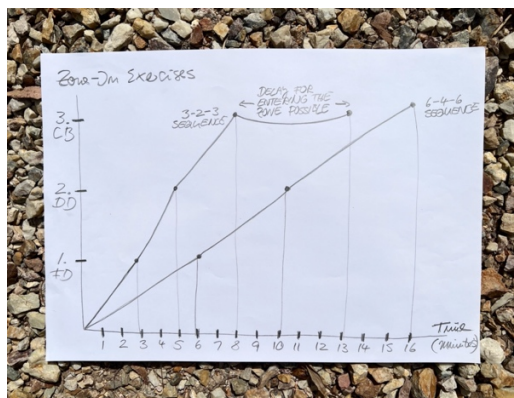


Figure 158
Hele Ellis, *Graph (Zone-In sequence with/without brain apperception)*, 2023

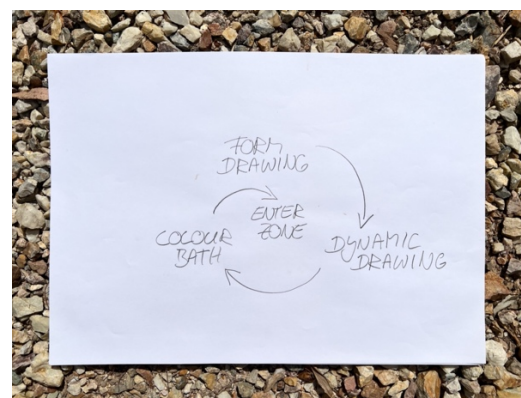


Figure 159
Hele Ellis, *Graph (The Creative Flow Studio Model)*, 2023

Due to the modest amount of current literature on the micro-niche subject of the studio methods to reach a Flow state, the findings discussed within this studio chapter are exclusively based on my extensive studio experiences and thus form an original practice-led research outcome. This enabled me to interrogate my practice subjectively and impartially for creative insights through reflexivity during the research process, yet with a bias toward a viable application for my future studio application.

The discovery and development of studio methods (*Appendix 1* offers a visual chronological overview of the exercise evolvment) based on the Flow Methodology (4.2.1. *Flow Methodology*) and its discussion of the processes that promote a state of unparalleled presence or Flow led to increased studio creativity and productivity, describing the *Creative Flow Studio Model* (Figure 159). This finding demonstrated that studio experimentations are instrumental to intentionally and easily entering the creative zone, significantly contributing to knowledge in the research field of studio creativity. Through re-enactment of the model and its three exercises in consecutive order outlined above (Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing and Colour Bath), the interested practitioner is likewise enabled to experience a Flow state.

The series of artworks that have been approached as studio experiments and, subsequently, final aesthetic outcomes meant that creative activity was free of the desire for completion in a preordained outcome. The artwork process has the freedom to transition from experiment to finished outcome in such a process. The creative journey was not fixated on a singular fine art object destination prior to a well-established exercise sequence; the production of process-based artwork has formed a critical part of the evident research outcome as a criterion for the *Zone-In* exercises to be feasible.

5.5. The Outcomes

The original contribution to knowledge and practice to the research field of studio creativity and its micro-niche Flow was the development of *Zone-In* exercises that consist of process-based drawing and painting activities to be used in a creative circulatory manner and to be adopted by others as the *Creative Flow Studio Model* framework. The implementation of this model is foremost directed at creatives from the art sector to improve studio creativity.

However, this studio strategy may also be transferred to interdisciplinary domains, such as education and health, where teachers and therapists use the model for pupils and clients to master being in the present moment. With popularising the model, organisations and corporations may utilise the applications of the model where channelling innovation and ingenuity are significant.

A further significant outcome was the documentation of the researched *Creative Flow Studio Model* system (5.4. *The Creative Flow Studio Model*) through the final exhibition, and its context is detailed below and per *Appendix 2*.

Developing the *Creative Flow Studio Model* as a tool to enter the Flow state at inclination exponentially improved my studio practice, expediting studio activities, and as time in the studio is more effectively spent, a commercial value cannot be underestimated. Chapter 2: *Literature Review* draws together the trilateral significance of this research, having brought together for this research Flow, Process Art, and Anthroposophy, from which my Flow Methodology (4.2.1. *Flow Methodology*) derived as a relevant consequence to further not only this research but specifically the feature of ritualised journaling bringing forth clarity for future regular studio application as a visual artist. Prior to this study, Process Art had not been part of my prioritised studio engagements. It is this aspect of the studio experimentations that I embarked on most unsophisticatedly, which through my unreserved approach proved fortunate as it allowed for many trials and errors through processes when developing the *Zone-In* exercises (*Appendix 1*).

Influential previous artwork relevant to my DCA research studio approach was artwork that contained notions of Abstract Expressionism, Colour Field Painting, contemporary forms of Intuitive Abstraction and The Formless. For instance, *Vertigo 1*, 2007 (Figure 2) integrates areas of a 'void' or undefined space and represents one of the composition styles I was experimenting with then. This piece references Eastern approaches to artmaking that consider a meditative resonance with integrating a single brush stroke, which was continually used during this practice-led research project. The convex/concave line application is particularly emphasised in this artwork and was used for both drawing exercises during the DCA. As part of this study's visual outcome, the works *Jet Just*, 2021 and *Vapor*, 2021 (Figure 127, Figure 120 and *Appendix 2*) chronicle a contemplative conclusion but were attained through repetitive brush stroke movements and layering of paint.

First Paradise, 2008 (Figure 160) also accommodates the convex/concave but incorporates a mirror image due to positioning a middle line within the composition as a segmentation process, a mode furthered for *Balmy A-C*, 2022 and *Vivi A-E*, 2022 (Figure 133 and *Appendix 2*) as presented in the doctoral exhibition. *Troika A-C*, 2022 (*Appendix 2*) likewise engages with the mirror image yet is diagonally offset, creating a visual triad.



Figure 160
Hele Ellis, *First Paradise*, 2008

Elements of *Troika A-C* integrate all three *Zone-In* exercises, quantitatively foremost the Colour Bath, with areas incorporating purposefully subtle colour tone variations (as evident in the varying violets between the three panels), accentuating The Formless. *Troika A-C* was positioned during the exhibition in an area later cleared for the video clip projection demonstrating the *Creative Flow Studio Model Zone-In* exercises. The series *Secret Order* (3), 2011 (Figure 3) experimented with black primed canvas and brush application reminiscent of some movements of the later-developed drawing exercises (foremost Form Drawing) to get into a Flow state. I stitched together canvas strips for the *Mono* (5) Series, 2018 (Figure 4), as a foundation for the composition encircling the colour fields. This was advanced through the series *Aramey* (2), 2018 (Figure 5) in the following, in which Aramaic-like letters in an all-over colour field impression were incorporated, thus arriving more amply at The Formless as a result of the specific brush stroke application, which played a significant role in the developed Colour Bath exercise in its formlessness, but also during artwork production for this DCA.

The passage size works (*The Other Side A*; *Flecks 2*; *Prism 1*; and *Polar 2*, 2016 (Figure 161), are some of the visual outcomes of my Master of Arts (Research) degree in 2017 (*Decentering the Subjective: The Transcendent Experience of Formlessness in an Abstract Expressionistic Painting Practice*), which proposed an aesthetic view on transcendence, that closed the circle to an Eastern artmaking approach, which has been relevant for this doctoral project in terms of Process Art.

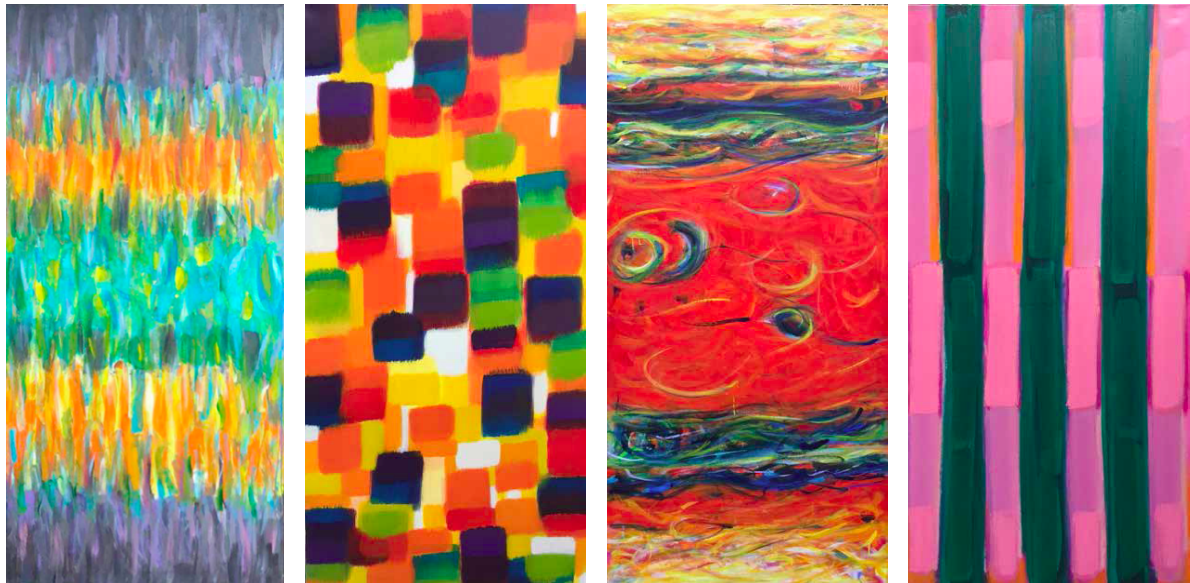


Figure 161
Hele Ellis, *The Other Side A*, *Flecks 2*, *Prism 1*, *Polar 2*, 2016

The passage size works (*The Other Side A*; *Flecks 2*; *Prism 1*; and *Polar 2*, 2016 (Figure 161), are some of the visual outcomes of my Master of Arts (Research) degree in 2017 (*Decentering the Subjective: The Transcendent Experience of Formlessness in an Abstract Expressionistic Painting Practice*), which proposed an aesthetic view on transcendence, that closed the circle to an Eastern artmaking approach, which has been relevant for this doctoral project in terms of Process Art.

The creative research strategy I applied (Flow Methodology) stretched throughout the research years as a continuum due to its structure embedding procedural processes associated with Process Art, combined with Schoen's reflection-in-action and journaling until the exploratory trials and hypotheses were tested for entering the Flow state.

With my competence as a visual artist, my creative endeavours turned constructive, as self-critical observations linked directly back to further creative studio output assisted by ritualised journal work, as processes were rarely observable in the artwork outcome alone. For the most part, I worked intuitively, trusting the process of in-situ dissection of methods through Schoen's reflection-in-action during my creative efforts and their observations with subsequent analysis.

The data from studio experimentations included canvas panel classification, journalling, online engagement, artwork production, and the final exhibition, which incorporated a video clip demonstrating the *Zone-In* exercises. This video aided in substantiating my claims and findings that the *Creative Flow Studio Model* and its preparatory exercises bring about a Flow state that benefits artwork production.

During the pre-phase and the first year of studio experimentations for this practice-led doctorate, I abandoned trial and error exclusive painting and drawing methods that gave me nil results of the anticipated outcomes to achieve a Flow state (Figures 140, 141, 142). With consolidation and conglomeration of practices by separating and simplifying the drawing and painting segments (straight/curved line and monochrome only) to gauge the effects more distinctly, the research project moved forward in early 2020 (Figures 143, 144). The next phase was shaped through practice, which constituted laborious on-the-spot fact-finding explorations (Figure 148). For example, I included rhythm and pouring for a rationale to creative work that intertwined with critical re-evaluation and the study-specific reflexive process, as documented through journal entries (Figures 110, 111, 117, 118, 119, 145) until the end of the DCA studio research in early 2023. This perfected the model to produce valid artwork and, in turn, generated knowledge contributions to a cultural discussion as a footing for knowledge transfer.

The practice-led studio outcomes' final presentation was at A Block Gallery, UniSQ, Toowoomba, in January 2023. This presentation/exhibition formed the significant outcome for this doctoral research, consisting of large-scale paintings (above one metre square) such as *Vapor*, 2021, *Converse*, 2021, and *Tone*, 2021 (Figures 120, 121, 122 and *Appendix 2*) as part of a suite of 23 works (including diptychs, triptychs, multi-panels, and two exercise example walls) on canvas or linen.

These were either detached from one another or on separate walls for works to be read both individually and collectively, as seen in Figures 113, 125, 126 and *Appendix 2*, where the *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 1*, 2019-2020 visually includes the works *Jet Just*, 2021, *Vapor*, 2021; and *Helix*, 2021; *Tableau*, 2021 and *Circa A-C*, 2020-2021. The most significant selection of countless *Zone-In* exercise panels was positioned and presented in a salon-style display, respectively *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 1*, 2019-2020, and *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 2*, 2020-2023 (Figures 113, 125, 126 and *Appendix 2*) that featured a cluster of works in an overall installation covering two walls of the exhibition space to contextualise the process of artmaking as Flow. This was a prominent aspect of the completed final artwork, as seen in combination with *Tone*, 2021, *Cadence A-B*, 2020-2021, and *Vivi A-E*, 2022, *Amity A-B*, 2022 or *Maximus A-C*, 2022 (Figures 121, 134, 135, 123 and *Appendix 2*). This display strategy allowed the viewer to experience in 'co-presence' (as per Haseman 2006) the finalised exercises of a series of completed artworks as a collective outcome that visually demonstrated the process of Flow as an internal and external artistic practice.

An outcome that transpired from the finalisation of the studio research and subsequent physical exhibition is an online presentation, documenting and re-exhibiting the project via Instagram (Hele Ellis Art) and a project-specific section of my website (www.heleellis.com). Additionally, future workshops introducing the creativity-enhancing *Creative Flow Studio Model* are planned (solo exhibition with workshops at Vampt, Byron Bay, October 2023) to amplify further the outcomes derived from the doctoral research. These outcomes are evidence of the multi-layered, purposeful application the *Creative Flow Studio Model* can have and were critically developed through the research and aesthetic outcomes within this doctorate.

Specifically, the series *Twelve A-L* (multi-panel piece), 2022-2023 (Figure 131 and *Appendix 2*) represents all aspects of the *Creative Flow Studio Model* as per my intention; the three *Zone-In* exercises are incorporated respectively regarding the anthroposophical approach to colour and form, exposing the processes of Process Art and combining styles Abstract Expressionism with Colour Field Painting, Intuitive Abstraction and The Formless.

This artwork was produced panel by panel, and each subsequent fresh panel was added to the previously completed panels, with the overall composition developing one outcome at a time; therefore, each panel is compositionally independent.

The final exhibition at A Block Gallery actively demonstrated different aesthetic outcomes that acted as proof of concept, namely the purpose of the *Zone-In* exercises and its *Creative Flow Studio Model* for external stakeholders to utilise. An example of an artwork that serves the above purpose is *Cadence A-B*, 2020-21 (Figure 134 and *Appendix 2*). This work touches on rhythm, per the approach to all three exercises to get into the zone or Flow. Repetition also plays a role in the artwork *Time*, 2020-2021 (*Appendix 2*), yet the rhythm is stretched throughout many sessions working on the piece. *Plains and Planes A-B*, 2019-2021 (*Appendix 2*) may appear pre-composed; however, the layers of different tones echo the emphasis of the anthroposophical approach for a form to come to existence foremost out of colour. For this reason, the colour is intuitively retained via a frame around the edges. *Tableau*, 2021 and *Helix*, 2021 (Figures 11, 127 and *Appendix 2*) were painted in succession and hung in proximity for the presentation, as both works contemplate the interior and exterior simultaneously, and the dialogue between both works plays off this dialectic. Similar and complementing colour schemes of both works support this angle of perception.

The artwork *Arcane*, 2021 (*Appendix 2*) was not shown as part of the exhibition due to space restrictions width wise; here, the emphasis was placed on a complementary colour arrangement (blue and orange), estimating the quantity of colour shading needed to arrive at an intransigent surface that cannot be pierced and appears therefore as cryptic. The artwork *Amber*, 2020-2021 (Figure 132 and *Appendix 2*) concerns the contending directions in brush stroke application, creating an expansive depth, or fathomage, without directly using a horizon; therefore, the visual alternatives are not privileged. For this reason, *Amber* was sampled for the invitation and used as a first visual impact at the exhibition site. *Vapor*, 2021 and *Just Jet*, 2021, but also *Converse*, 2021 (Figures 120, 127, 122 and *Appendix 2*) address the interpretative framework of spirituality or the sublime as applied during this DCA, and as referenced in these works through the accentuation and actualisation of The Formless, that in contrast includes the overaccentuated form cast.

The artwork *Tone*, 2021 (Figure 121 and *Appendix 2*), one of the three largest pieces on one panel, particularly testifies to The Formless approach, where the nuances represent a full spectrum of blending. *Roseate*, 2020 (Figure 12 and *Appendix 2*) evolved from a Colour Bath exercise and exemplifies The Formless. A variation of The Formless is embodied in the triptych *Circa A-C* (Figure 14 and *Appendix 2*), incorporating rhythm for its realisation and was hung vertically during the exhibition due to wall space width restriction that gave the work the appearance of a totem pole and accordingly more symbolic meaning than anticipated, as totem poles are primarily visual representations of symbolic stylised supernatural forms.

All the artworks produced in 2022 comprising variations of diptychs, triptychs, or multi-panel pieces treat the canvas surface area of each series as one overall composition, akin to that of *Circa A-C* with the exemption of *Amity A-B*, 2022 (Figures 14, 135 and *Appendix 2*). *Amity* purposefully breaks with the uniform appearance of the other series to outline the theme via compositional strategy as discussed for *Amber* (Figure 132 and *Appendix 2*), where elements of the work materialise antithetically but embrace the selection of colours and shapes in an all-together fashion. *Vivi A-E* (*Appendix 2*), as mentioned earlier, engages with a golden split, also known as the divine proportion or golden ratio (a fundamental characteristic of the universe with functionality in nature), to re-divide what had been brought together as a five-panel piece for a single composition by creating a mirror image. Generally, all work executed for the DCA presentation as a series of two or more panels can be hung separately; the composition of each piece of a series is within itself complete. Due to the gallery wall width restriction, *Vivi A-E* was hung in two parts as two separate works.

Production processes of layered brushstrokes are accessible to the viewer in *Balmy A-C*, 2022 (Figure 133 and *Appendix 2*), which exhibits a horizontal zip as also adapted for *Vivi A-E*, 2022 (*Appendix 2*) but implies an association to Process Art and The Formless due to the compositional arrangement being left monotonously prosaic. *Maximus A-C*, 2022 and *Juicy A-B*, 2022 (Figures 123, 27 and *Appendix 2*) also refer to The Formless yet incorporate significant elements of Abstract Expressionism through the gestural application of brush strokes suggestive of an emotional interpretation of scenery. Accordingly, *Juicy A-B* was positioned for the exhibition next to *Converse* (Figure 122 and *Appendix 2*), banding both works together for their interior and exterior motives.

Poesy A-C, 2022 (Figure 124 and *Appendix 2*) attests to a metamorphosis of form; although hung incompletely due to wall width limitations, it was positioned as if dialoguing with *Maximus* with its crude amorphic details.

The two exercise panel walls consisting of 18 and 56 pieces hung as multi-panel pieces: *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 1*, 2019-2020, and *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 2*, 2020-2023 (Figures 113, 125, 126 and *Appendix 2*) were arranged on the back walls of the gallery space as a testimony to the foundation of the complete enterprise. The *Zone-In* exercises appear as a significant part of the principal configuration, but also visually coming forward toward the viewer as an offering for further investigation, thus drawing the viewer's gaze into the exhibition.

Compositional decisions for all artworks were made during the Flow state in an automatic application with visible and experienceable underlying factors. As addressed for each artwork above, these factors attest to the *Creative Flow Studio Model* approach for producing artwork to meet objectives. Further, the placement of each work for the exhibition was decided intuitively to augment every single piece for its visual, emotional, and conceptual consummation. Whether it meant an overall colour combination established within the all-embracing vicinity of the gallery space or content-related connotations that were emphasised, the seminal focus of the exhibition as a post-graduate presentation of studio research was marked by purportedly bringing 'positive energy' to the space through the aesthetics of the finished artworks.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This practice-led research gave historical, conceptual, and practical context concerning creativity for deliberately entering the zone or Flow state through art-based strategies of creatively engaging painting and drawing exercises within the creative arts studio. My research question, “*What are the studio methods to reach a state of unparalleled presence for increased studio creativity and productivity?*” forged the development of the *Creative Flow Studio Model* with its three *Zone-In* exercises through the established Flow Methodology for process-based outcomes.

The original contribution to knowledge and practice is the finding that the developed *Zone-In* exercises can be used in a creative circulatory manner to improve studio creativity and be adopted by others as the *Creative Flow Studio Model* framework. This has contributed to the research field of studio creativity and its micro-niche Flow, and through the practice-led research and studio artwork outcomes, a potent creative output within the visual arts disciplines of painting and drawing has been produced as valid evidence.

The artwork in a final exhibition presented at A Block Gallery, School of Creative Arts, UniSQ, Toowoomba, in January 2023, brought forth a new understanding of creativity and painterly methods to promote creativity in achieving Flow within the studio environment. This exhibition demonstrated a representation of the research outcomes that included a selection of *Zone-In* exercises accompanied by a looped video to illustrate the exercise approach and the *Creative Flow Studio Model*. A substantial number of artworks produced (a collection of 23 large-scale oil paintings including diptychs, triptychs, multi-panels, and panel walls) with the assistance of the *Creative Flow Studio Model* were exhibited (*Appendix 2*).

Another outcome of the research is that a repositioning of artistic engagement in an individualistic setting is encouraged to be trialled and confirmed for the capacity to utilise the framework in other contexts. This proposition addresses and implores visual artists to adopt the *Creative Flow Studio Model*'s synopsis, operation and utilisation as part of their studio practice and as a harbinger to advocate and popularise this studio strategy with organisations and corporations. This is significant as this model may be transferred into interdisciplinary domains, such as education, health or technology, where presence, innovation and ingenuity are important attributes.

The central focus of the research embarked on practical, conceptual, and historical contexts concerning creativity. Chapter 2: *Literature Review* engaged with the literature on archival and contemporary creativity research in theory and processes for application within a studio practice that created a theoretical foundation and framework for the emplacement of this study. It addressed the gap within the literature researched regarding the three concepts of Flow, Process Art, and Anthroposophy that have not been previously linked as a basis to engage in studio creativity. Chapter 3: *Creative Practice Review: Artist Case Studies* reviewed seminal artists and their work that specifically correlated to my project-specific studio practice. This was categorised by their interior and exterior motivation, tradition, movement, and/or style, and particularly considered their applied concepts of Flow, Process Art and Anthroposophy in line with the overall seminal research concerns. Chapter 4: *Methodology* explored research approaches in the creative and visual arts and discussed constructs to methods and strategies to practice, which led to the formulation of my specific methodology, the Flow Methodology for the development of *The Creative Flow Studio Model*. The Flow Methodology combined my artistic competence as a visual artist with step-by-step data collection from studio experimentations (*Appendix 1*), inclusive of canvas panel classification and ritualised journal work, that incorporated the review of painterly procedures for self-reflection, introspection and self-actualisation to clarify findings and identify progressive aspects. Chapter 5: *Creative Flow Studio Model* discussed the art studio space set-up by other artists and my own studio environment from a philosophical and practical point of view. It also outlined my specific research practice for this project with the resultant development of three *Zone-In* exercises per the *Creative Flow Studio Model* for application as a tool to enter the Flow state to exponentially improve and expedite artistic studio practice activities.

The compiled evidence attends to the original contribution to knowledge through the outcomes of the practice of this studio research, which are the development of the *Creative Flow Studio Model* and its enactment for the final presentation/exhibition.

In summary, the aim of the studio outcomes and this supporting exegesis was to design a studio framework through the developed *Zone-In* exercises and a *Creative Flow Studio Model* that develops, governs and sustains an ongoing process-based art strategy.

This new innovative studio process, derived from my self-determined artistic research approach, served as an archetype that combined developed drawing and painting methods applied for general creativity evolvement and enhanced studio production as illuminated through this doctoral research. Through the various studio projects, termed *Zone-In* exercises (drawing (line) and colour (area) tasks), and the formulation of the *Creative Flow Studio Model*, it was aesthetically demonstrated in the doctoral exhibition, which is to be followed by workshops, seminars and symposia, that the current theoretical creativity research can be amplified for its utilisation in creative practice.

Ultimately, this doctorate research has realised the quest for Flow expediting exercises based on the development and outcomes of the *Creative Flow Studio Model*. Such an outcome benefits the visual artist's practice and, more widely, visual arts researchers, where process-based activities turn likewise into a meaning-making process that conjugates artmaking with research inquiries. Moreover, with the potential of expanding this model for use with other institutions and corporations that govern health, education or technology, a contribution to knowledge for a fully developed integrative approach within creativity research has been made.

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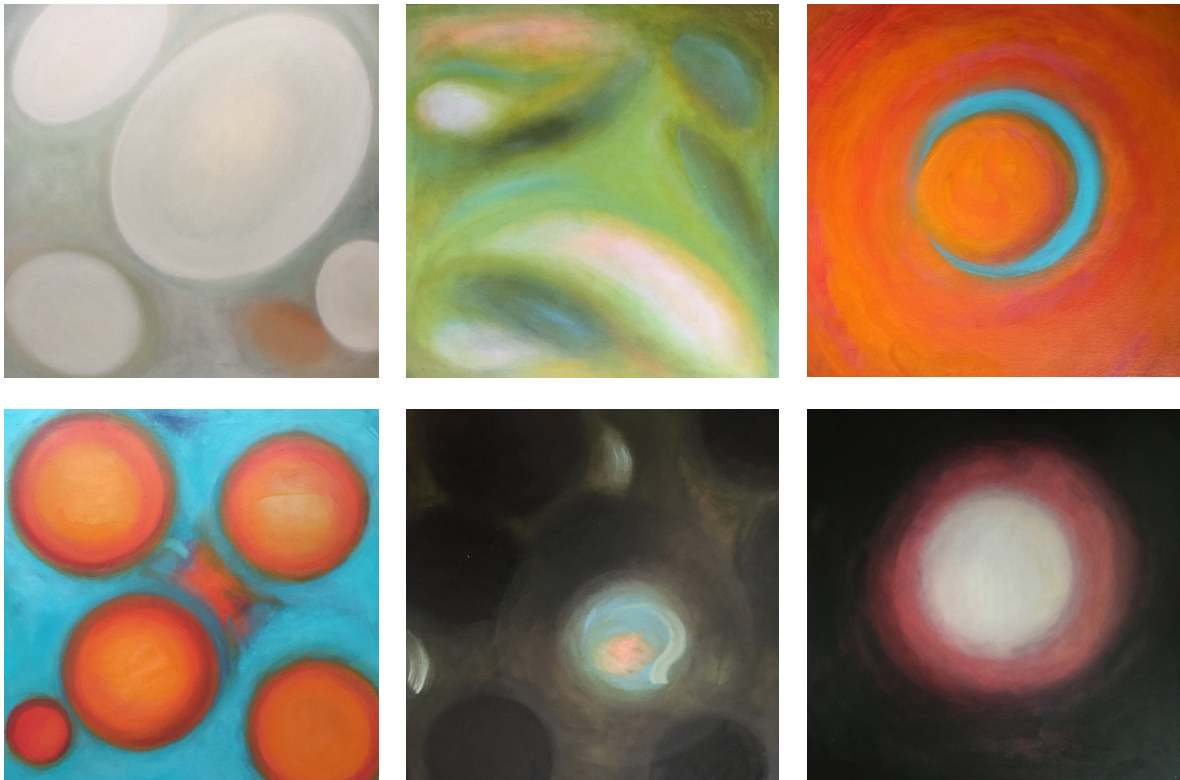
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APPENDIX 1: THE CREATIVE FLOW STUDIO MODEL DEVELOPMENT

This Appendix exemplifies a visual chronological overview of the important processes with explanations of how the *Zone-In* series of exercises evolved. It does this via a brief description underneath each series' last example, highlighting findings that informed the research. For better visual perception, the series are sorted by exercise (Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath).



Hele Ellis, *Series I*, Pre-Phase Studio Research Practice (painting trials with simple organic forms and limited colour variety), 2019, 70 x 70cm x 6, oil on canvas

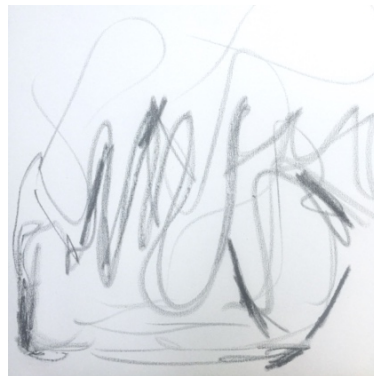


Hele Ellis, *Series I*, Pre-Phase Studio Research Practice (monochrome painting and drawing trials in oil), 2019, 70 x 70cm x 1/2, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series I*, Pre-Phase Studio Research Practice (drawing trials in oil, painting with drawing elements), 2019, 70 x 70cm x 2/1, oil on canvas

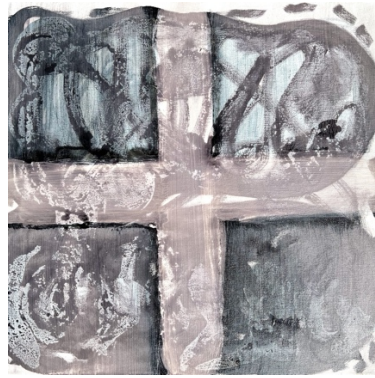
Series I Exclusive painting and drawing approaches were abandoned due to nil results for entering the zone. The trialled monochrome painting approach was trialled and rediscovered as part of the later developed Zone-In exercise sequence.



Hele Ellis, *Series II*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: traditional shape, Dynamic Drawing: line approach, Colour Bath: non-fully developed), 2020, 50 x 50cm x 3, felt tip pen, crayon, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series II*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: traditional shape, Dynamic Drawing: combined with loose Form Drawing approach, Colour Bath: form integration), 2020, 50 x 50cm x 3, felt tip pen, graphite, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series II*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: traditional coloured shape, Dynamic Drawing: mixed media with set shape, Colour Bath: form integration through colour), 2020, 50 x 50cm x 3, felt tip pen, crayon, ink, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series II*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: traditional shape, Dynamic Drawing: graphite doodling, Colour Bath: form integration through colours), 2020, 50 x 50cm x 3, felt tip pen, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

Series II Successfully trialled smaller size canvasses (50 x 50cm each) and mediums.



Hele Ellis, *Series III*, *Across A-C (detail)*, 2020

Process Art approach for *Zone-In* exercise sequence, 70 x 70cm x 3, oil on canvas

Series III Process Art approach for *Zone-In* exercise sequence was abandoned due to foregrounding of processes merging the exercises instead of separating them.



Hele Ellis, *Series III*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath (combination approach per one canvas; traditional Form Drawing shape, line mark-making for Dynamic Drawing, monochrome Colour Bath), 2020, 70 x 70cm x 3, graphite, felt tip pen, ink, oil on canvas

Series III "The one canvas approach" to Zone-In exercise development was put on hold as layering of the exercises failed to ascertain Flow state experience.

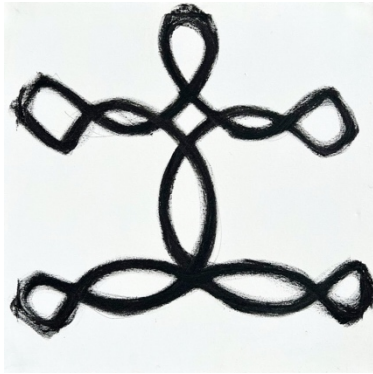


Hele Ellis, *Series III*, Untitled A-C, 2020
Process Art approach for Zone-In exercise option, 70 x 70cm x 3, oil on canvas

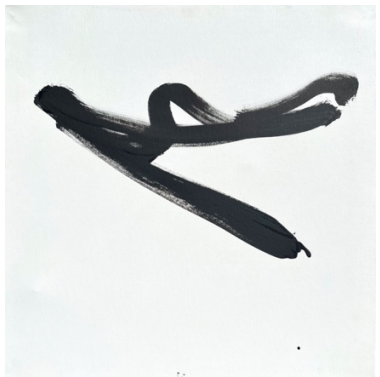
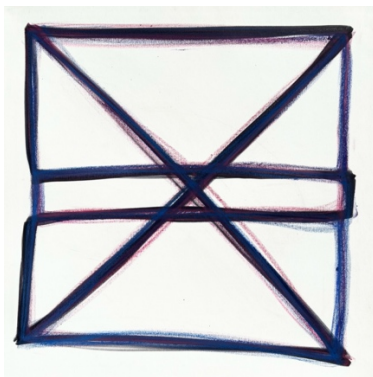
Series III Process Art approach when separating the exercises proved successful.



Hele Ellis, *Series III*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: two-tone shape, Dynamic Drawing: coloured time set approach, Colour Bath: monochrome colour variations), 2020, 70 x 70cm x 3, ink, crayon, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series III*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: Beauty and the Beast castle tile shape adaptation, Dynamic Drawing: light/dark contrast approach, Colour Bath: monochrome layering), 2020, 70 x 70cm x 3, crayon, charcoal, oil on canvas

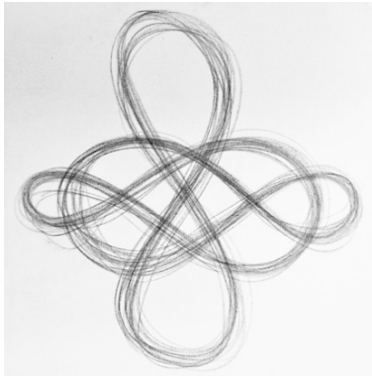


Hele Ellis, *Series III*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: angular shape, non-dominant hand approach for bilaterality, Dynamic Drawing: single stroke approach, Colour Bath: monochrome layering), 2020, 70 x 70cm x 3, ink, crayon, oil on canvas

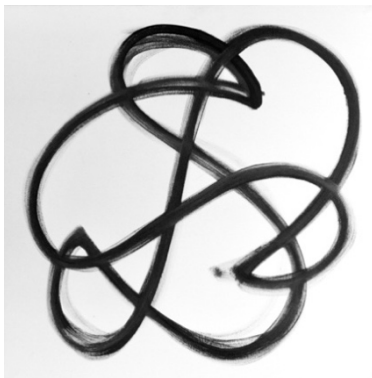
Series III With experimentation of application for each exercise separately, exercises developed at different rates. Development of own Form Drawing configuration.



Hele Ellis, *Series IV*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: simplest shape application for usability, Dynamic Drawing: colour layering, Colour Bath: two-tone application with colours separated), 2020, 70 x 70cm x 3, ink, oil on canvas

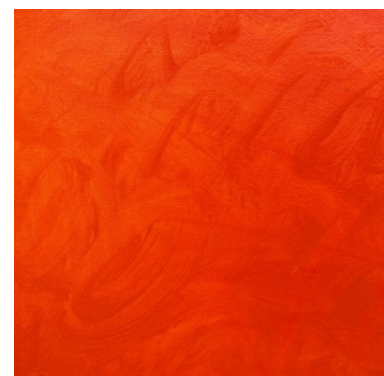
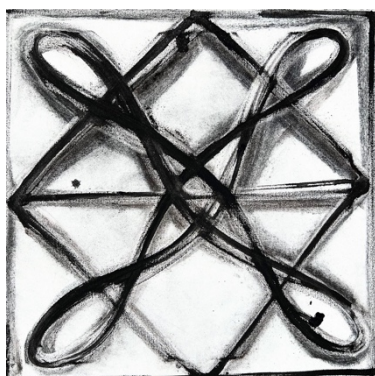


Hele Ellis, *Series IV*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: own configuration development, Dynamic Drawing: non-oil paint colour layers, Colour Bath: two-tone application with colours mixed), 2020, 70 x 70cm x 3, graphite, ink, crayon, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series IV*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence trial; Form Drawing: own shape development, Dynamic Drawing: two-tone singular stroke approach, Colour Bath: colour layering and segregating), 2020, 70 x 70cm x 3, ink, graphite, ink, crayon, oil on canvas

Series IV Continuation of own Form Drawing configuration development, singular stroke application trials for Dynamic Drawing, trials of colour layering for Colour Bath exercises proved successful.



Hele Ellis, *Series V*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curved/straight line combination for bilateral usability, Dynamic Drawing: all-over approach, Colour Bath: colour layering simplified), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series V*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: angular shape for bilateral usability, Dynamic Drawing: rhythm accentuated application, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

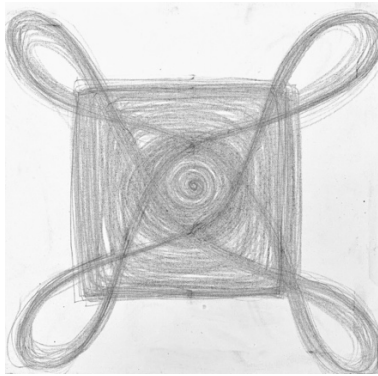


Hele Ellis, *Series V*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: double figure eight/lemniscate, Dynamic Drawing: rhythm accentuated application, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

Series V Double figure eight/lemniscate in focus for Form Drawing (curved/straight line re bilaterality), continuation of rhythmic mark-making, Colour Bath exercise layering successfully advanced. *Series V* marks the discovery of a workable Zone-In exercise sequence that verifies minimum size, preferred medium and application.



Hele Ellis, *Series VI*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curved/straight line balance, Dynamic Drawing: large brush versus poured medium, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

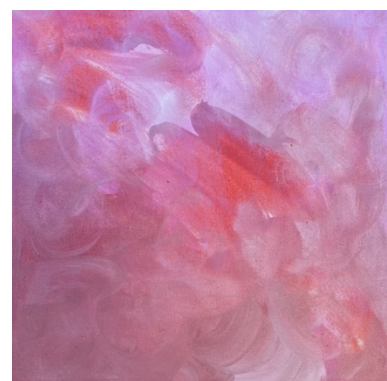
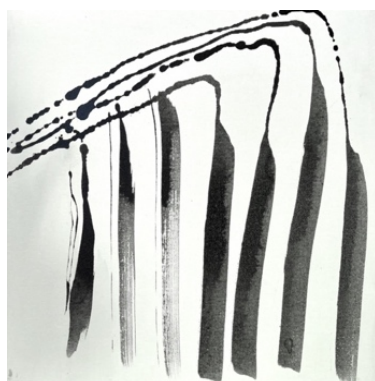
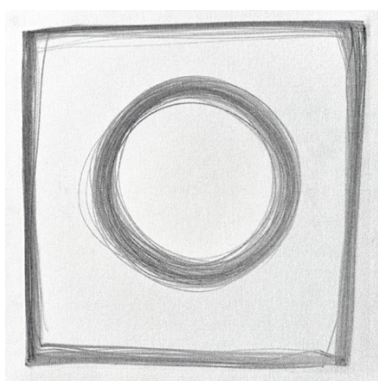


Hele Ellis, *Series VI*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curved/straight line balance, Dynamic Drawing: all-over approach, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

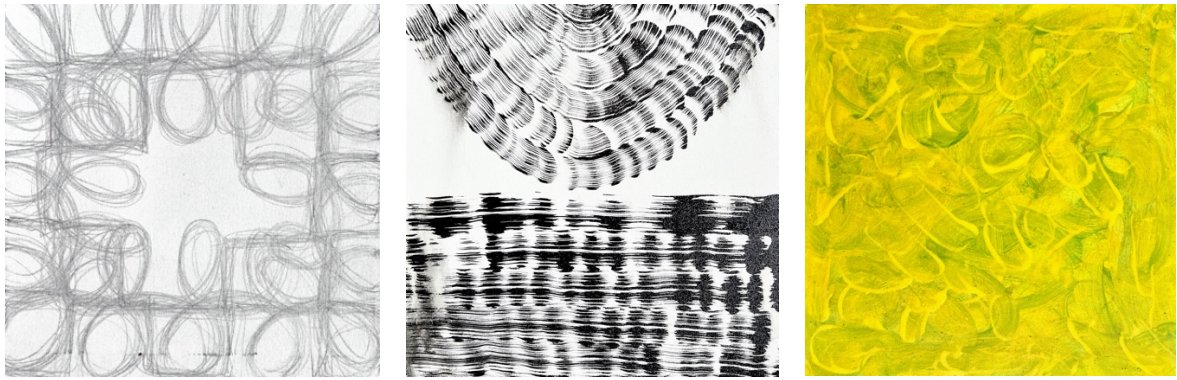


Hele Ellis, *Series VI*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curved/straight line balance, Dynamic Drawing: two-tone all-over application, Colour Bath: colour layering for depth without two-tone use), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, charcoal, ink, oil on canvas

Series VI Form Drawing experimentation for finding a unified form incorporating curved/straight line, large brush versus all-over approach trialled, Colour Bath exercise layering successfully advanced.



Hele Ellis, *Series VII*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curve/straight line balance, Dynamic Drawing: large brush versus dripping, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series VII*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: merging curved/straight line, Dynamic Drawing: dried brush with curved/straight line balance, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering via increased medium), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series VII*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: merging curved/straight line, Dynamic Drawing: simplification of brush stroke activity, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering via increased medium), 2021, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

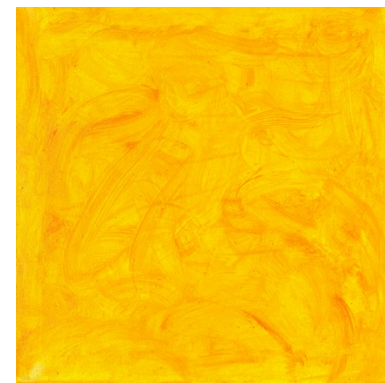
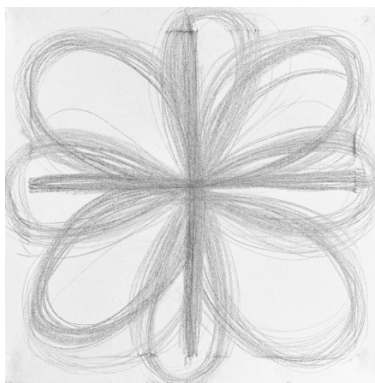
Series VII Form Drawing experimentations for finding a unified form incorporating curved/straight line, continuation of rhythmic reduced mark-making, Colour Bath exercise layering successfully advanced.



Hele Ellis, *Series VIII*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curve/straight line evenly balanced, Dynamic Drawing: poured medium, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering), 2022, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

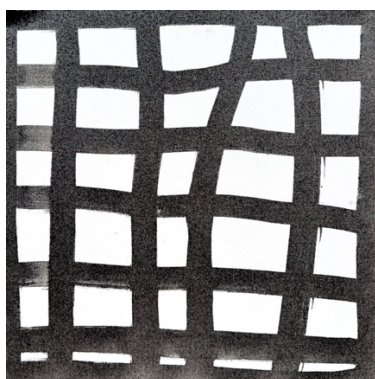
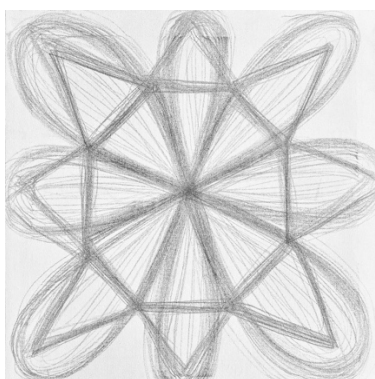


Hele Ellis, *Series VIII*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curve/straight line balance, Dynamic Drawing: directional gestural mark-making, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering), 2022, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series VIII*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curve/straight line balance, Dynamic Drawing: layered poured mark-making, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering (using canvas background tone)), 2022, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

Series VIII Form Drawing experimentation for finding a unified form incorporating curved/straight line (line efficiency for bilaterality), continuation of poured mark-making explored for Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath colour layering refined.



Hele Ellis, *Series IX*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: curve/straight line balance, Dynamic Drawing: negative/positive shape, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering (ending versus starting with a primary colour)), 2022, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series IX*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: duration with/out brain apperception, Dynamic Drawing: black/white proportion, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering (using white highlights)), 2022, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Series IX*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: duration with/out brain apperception, Dynamic Drawing: black/white contrast brush versus pouring, Colour Bath: two-tone colour layering (using white highlights)), 2022, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

Series IX Fine tuning of all exercises in terms of time, medium, tools. Approaches tested to achieve a most favourable colour bath experience.



Hele Ellis, *Series X*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: incorporating straight/curved line with/out brain apperception, Dynamic Drawing: pouring time, Colour Bath: exercise time for two-tone colour layering), 2022, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas



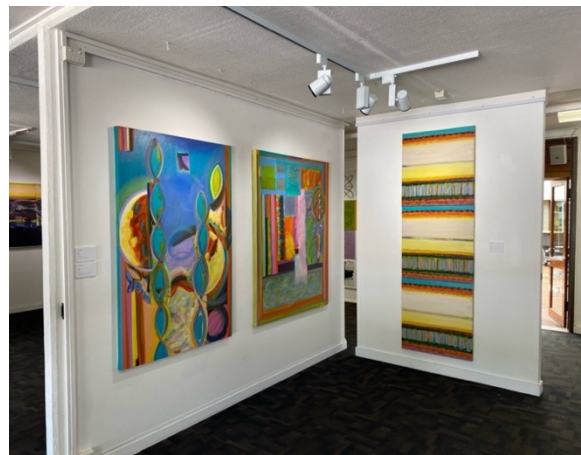
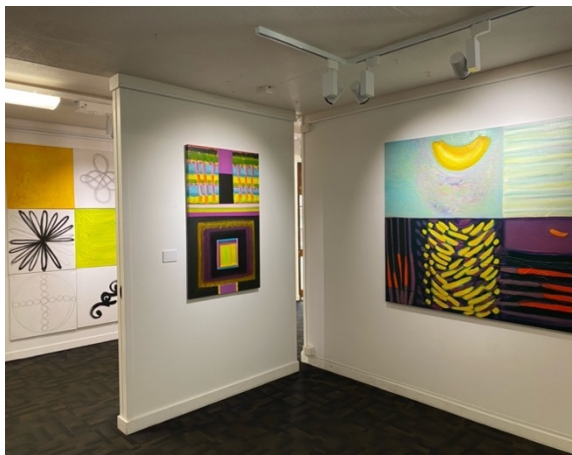
Hele Ellis, *Series X*, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath examples (sequence set; Form Drawing: exercise time with/out brain apperception, Dynamic Drawing: pouring time, Colour Bath: exercise time for two-tone colour layering, 2022/23, 50 x 50cm x 3, graphite, ink, oil on canvas

Series X Fine tuning of all exercises in terms of time, medium, tools. Approaches simplified and finalised for entering the zone.

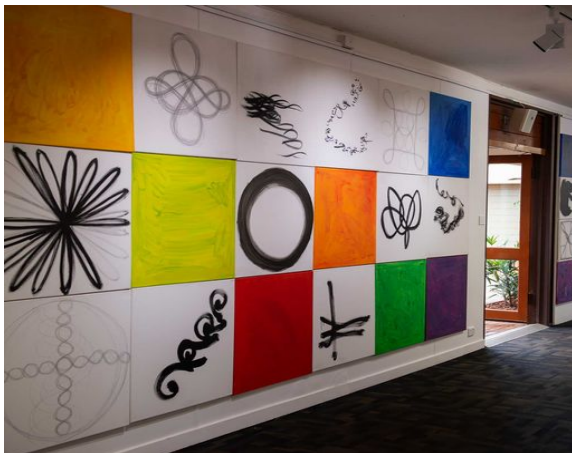
Experimentations throughout the research demonstrate the development of the *Zone-In* exercises and its *Creative Flow Studio Model* from exclusive painting or drawing strategies to segregating the exercises with a finetuning to medium, application methods and time for entering the zone.

APPENDIX 2: DCA EXHIBITION: OVERVIEW AND DIDACTICS WITH ARTWORK

The below-listed artworks formed the final presentation/exhibition (excluding Arcane due to wall width restrictions) at A Block at Gallery, School of Creative Arts, UniSQ, Toowoomba, in January 2023. All 23 artworks listed follow the production timeline and briefly describe conceptualisation below the caption.



Hele Ellis, *Exhibition Area Impressions*, A Block, UniSQ Toowoomba, 2023



Hele Ellis, *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 1*, A Block, UniSQ Toowoomba, 2023

Hele Ellis, *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 2*, A Block, UniSQ Toowoomba, 2023



Hele Ellis, *Exercise Panel Wall 2 and Artwork, A Block*, UniSQ Toowoomba, 2023
 Hele Ellis, *Exercise Wall 1, 2 and Artwork, A Block*, UniSQ Toowoomba, 2023



Hele Ellis, *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 1*, 2019-2020
 70 x 70cm x 18 (210 x 420cm), graphite, charcoal, crayon, ink, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Zone-In Exercise Panel Wall 2*, 2020-2023
 50 x 50cm x 56 (200 x 700cm), graphite, charcoal, crayon, ink, oil on canvas

Zone-In Exercise Panel Walls 1 and 2: Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, Colour Bath exercises presented as an overall installation



Hele Ellis, *Plains and Planes A-B*, 2019-2021

100 x 100cm x 2, oil on canvas

Plain for ugly (green) and Plane for flat surface: A bird's view of patches



Hele Ellis, *Cadence A-B*, 2020-2021

122 x 102cm x 2, oil on canvas

Marking rhythm: The movement made visible



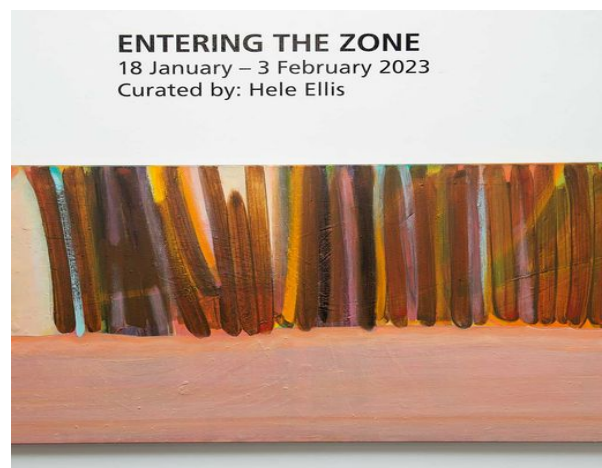
Hele Ellis, *Time*, 2019-2021
220 x 110cm (detail), oil on canvas

Temporal length: a long time coming to finalise

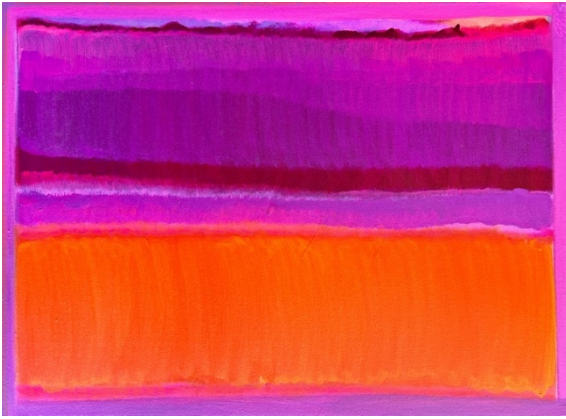


Hele Ellis, *Amber* (detail), 2020-2021
invitation image, 65 x 150cm,
oil on canvas

Flexuous golden brown: vertical plus horizontal



Hele Ellis, *Amber* (detail), 2020-2021
exhibition foyer image, 65 x 150cm,
oil on canvas



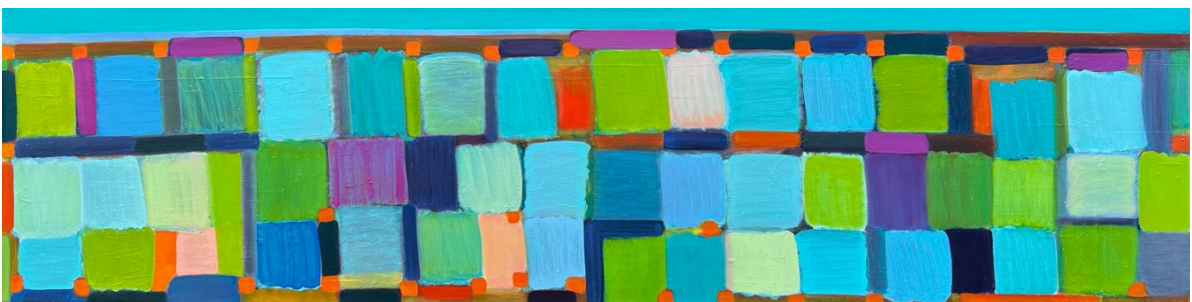
Hele Ellis, *Roseate* (Series III, 66, 69, 72, 81, Colour Bath), 2020
61 x 81cm, oil on canvas

The glow: Proximity to magenta, the other side



Hele Ellis, *Circa A-C*, 2020-2021
71 x 71cm x 3, oil on canvas, hung vertically due to wall space width limitation

An approximation: Parallel of latitude



Hele Ellis, *Arcane*, 2021
60 x 240cm, oil on canvas, not hung due to wall space width limitation

The cryptic: A secret code



Hele Ellis, *Tableau*, 2021
150 x 120cm, oil on canvas



Hele Ellis, *Helix*, 2021
150 x 100cm, oil on canvas

The scene: Viewing the interior and exterior simultaneously

DNA: The helix that turns on itself



Hele Ellis, *Vapor*, 2021
137 x 152cm, oil on linen

The haze: A meditation piece, conceptualised for the practice of observation



Hele Ellis, *Converse*, 2021
139 x 139cm, oil on canvas

In contrast: The ratio of travel



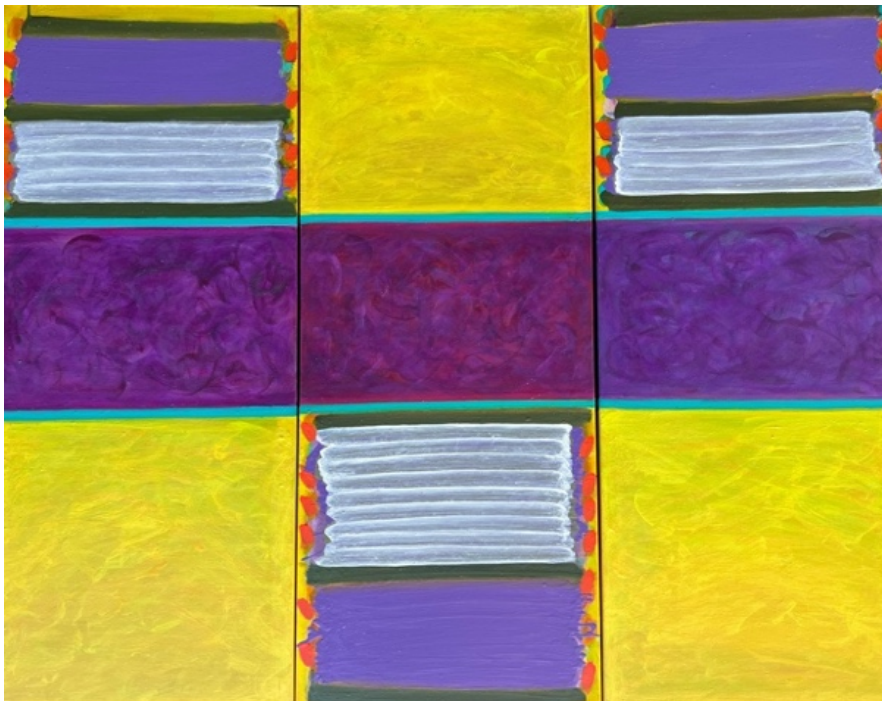
Hele Ellis, *Tone*, 2021
137 x 137cm, oil on linen

The nuance: And the volume of blending



Hele Ellis, *Jet Just* (sable
122 x 76cm, oil on canvas

Sable squares: Impossible



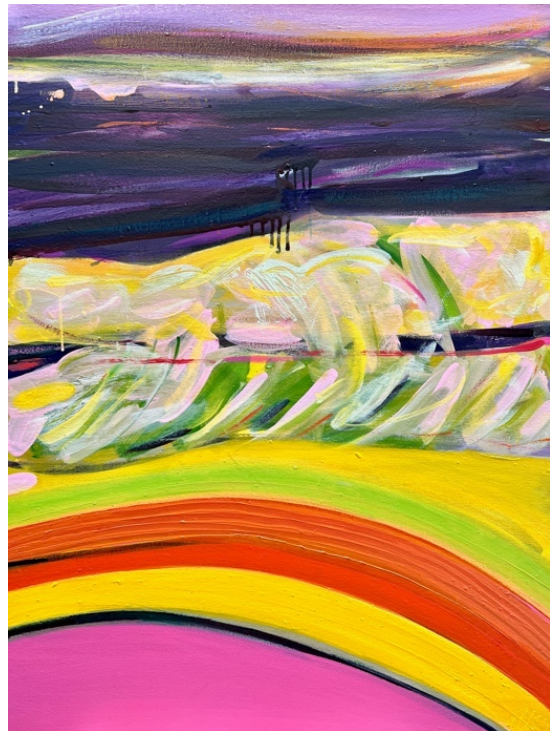
Hele Ellis, *Troika A-C*, 2022
92 x 56cm x 3, oil on canvas, hung until the video was initiated

A set of three: Trinity



Hele Ellis, *Balmy A-C*, 2022
149 x 40cm x 3, oil on canvas

Summerlike: Xerox of sunny



Hele Ellis, *Juicy A-B (the lush: alluring flow)*, 2022
102 x 76cm x 2, oil on canvas

The lush: Alluring flow



Hele Ellis, *Maximus A-C*, 2022
102 x 82cm x 3, oil on canvas

Ultimately: Plenty of layers



Hele Ellis, *Poesy A-C*, 2022
76 x 71cm, 76 x 66cm, 76 x 61cm, oil on canvas, B-C hung due to wall space width limitation

Poetry: A sentiment on form



Hele Ellis, *Vivi A-E*, 2022
92 x 56cm x 5, oil on canvas

Zippy zips: Segmentation as half is double



Hele Ellis, *Amity A-B*, 2022
76 x 76cm x 2, oil on canvas

Friendship between all: Together



Hele Ellis, *Twelve A-L*, 2022-2023
100 x 100cm x 12, oil on canvas

In its entirety: Highly composite, yet complete; painted during the twelve holy nights

