ART AFTER ATROCITY:
POST-HOLOCAUST REPRESENTATION AND AFFECT.

A thesis submitted by

Dan Elborne, BCA (First Class Hons)

For the award of

Doctor of Philosophy (DPHD)

2019

Abstract

The thesis investigates how to effectively address (through visual art) events of war and traumatic memory, with particular focus on the Holocaust and its subsequent visual representation. Through critical analysis and interviews with artists, theorists, historians, philosophers, writers and curators as well as the studio-based outcomes: the research creates a detailed analysis of traumatic, memory based visual representation and effective memorialization, and its purpose in contemporary society. The PhD advances the role, positioning and association of memory within the representation of horrific experience, and how this effects the creation, presentation and affecting qualities of art based on perpetrated atrocities and near incomprehensible human experience (*Art After Atrocity*). Accompanying the written research is a single, large-scale artwork produced in parallel to the written research. This artwork, *Deathgate*, consists of an individually handmade ceramic 'stone' for each of the 1.3 million people detained in the Auschwitz network of concentration camps creating an immersive installation environment.

The thesis involves the examination of memorialization, remembrance and traumatic memory in the context of visual art. The written research responds to 3 distinct research areas: firstly, German philosopher, Theodor Adorno's suggestion that there can be 'no poetry [art] after Auschwitz', which opens discussion into the problematics of post-Holocaust representation. Secondly, ideas established by French philosopher, Jean- Francois Lyotard regarding the sublime as a way of visually and physically 'presenting the unpresentable', and lastly, German Jewish philosopher, Walter Benjamin's theory concerning the transcendental qualities or 'affective dimension' of art ('aura theory') in order to establish and position the new term 'aura of atrocity' within the field of art theory. This term is directly associated to art with implications of traumatic memory and extreme, seemingly incomprehensible human capability and experience. The investigation of these three research areas will demonstrate the historical, and continually changing function, necessity for, and ongoing role of memorialization and the importance of visual art in relation to the continued representation, legacy and relevance of historical events such as the Holocaust.

Certification of Thesis

This Thesis is entirely the work of Dan Elborne except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

Principal Supervisor: Dr Kyle Jenkins

Associate Supervisor: Dr David Akenson

Associate Supervisor: Alexis Tacey

Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my principle supervisor Dr Kyle Jenkins whose tireless commitment the arts and the power of education is truly inspiring. His encouragement and support kept my research moving forward and never backward. Thanks to my secondary supervisor's Dr David Akenson and Alexis Tacey: David for his encyclopaedic mind, his willingness for tough conversation, and his attention to detail in analysing and editing my work. Alexis for her unwavering and infectious passion for ceramics, for her generosity of space and conversation when it comes to my studio practice, and for asking the difficult but necessary questions.

I would like to thank those who kindly gave their time to be interviewed for this project: Holocaust survivor Ana de Leon; artist, arts writer and curator Sandy Pottinger; artist and teacher Ursula Haynes; artist Susan Bahary; and art dealer Rex Irwin.

This project was undertaken with the support of a Research Training Program Stipend Scholarship from the University of Southern Queensland for which I am extremely grateful. I would also like to thank USQ for providing the space and equipment that makes it possible for me to work at a scale I am yet to find the boundaries of. I would like to acknowledge and thank Laura Black for editing the thesis and giving unforeseen clarity to the written research.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and support. To my partner Laura Trenerry for reminding me of what's truly important. Her encouragement, openness, intellect, humour and passion keep me stable and driven. To my parents Brett and Yvonne Elborne for raising me, and for their unconditional support of all I do. To David Usher for lending me both mind and muscle in order to keep my practice progressing, and also for his strength as a friend, mentor, colleague and artist. To Alexandra Lawson for being a true champion of the arts and my practice. She is always there to talk, to help, and to keep me grounded. To Lachlan Malone for his depth, motivation and guidance: a friendship that I don't know what I'd do without. To Sue Lostroh and again, Sandy Pottinger for their belief in me and their inspiring power both individually and collectively. To Steve and Wendy Roche for their incredible generosity and trust. And once again to Ursula Haynes for her mentorship and wisdom. Despite the distance between Australia and France, she fuels my ideas and informs my studio practice on a daily basis.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

Art After Atrocity: Post-Holocaust Representation and Affect

> 'They, who passed away long ago, still exist in us, as predisposition, as burden upon our fate, as murmuring blood, and as gesture that rises up from the depths of time.'[1]

This Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), through practical and theoretical research, investigates the history, relevance and role of visual art in the representation of traumatic events and associated human experience. The research is primarily concerned with visual art outcomes, both historic and contemporary, which aim to elucidate the broad field represented by continuing attempts to address extreme human experience and capability. Using visual art-based examples and the Holocaust as a primary reference; the thesis determines how to effectively address or visually represent incomprehensible human experience, the role of 'the viewer' in regard to how such work is made and influenced as well as how it is received, or rather the potential 'affective dimension' of such representations. This will be investigated through practice-led and art historiographic research in conjunction with memory theory in order to present the current artistic representational limits, at least in a totalistic sense, of traumatic and seemingly inconceivable human experience.

The concept of 'the sublime' will be discussed to provide aesthetic answers in the face of such totalistic representational limits, which then lead to discussion of the affective qualities of such work via 'aura theory'. These theoretical fields offer an analysis of post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork throughout their development, production and exhibition. This thesis discusses this visual field through the work's historical basis and catalytic qualities, its material production and aesthetic considerations, and its eventual presentation and reception. All of these stages are considered and interrogated from a historic, societal and cultural perspective in order to position the PhD as well as provide a current analysis of the visual field that the work is positioned in: art based on incomprehensible loss and atrocity.

[1] R.M. Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet,* Random House Publishing, New York, pg. 52-53.

The theoretical focus areas of this study; 'post-Holocaust/traumatic representation', 'memory theory', concepts of 'the sublime' and 'aura theory' are all established fields in art theory[2] and will all be considered in relation to studio research that is focused on traumatic experience, as it is through the lens of the current field of memorials and visual art that the research/discussion is centered. These theoretical fields involve detailed investigation of the problematics, necessity for, and ongoing responsibility of visual art in the representation of sensitive history. In particular, this PhD is focusing on the Holocaust as the prime example for the research. This is important at this point in history because the responsibilities of the recollection and depiction of the Holocaust are being passed from the few remaining first-hand survivors to a new generation of people interpreting such events. This reality opens an area of research that explores the role of future generations and peoples in the depiction and recollection of history that is becoming further removed from direct lived experience.

As a field (post-Holocaust/post-traumatic visual art) that is in a constant state of flux due to passing time and occurrences since the Holocaust of mass injustice and persecution; ongoing discussion is needed to ensure appropriate, informed and relevant work continues to be produced in a visual field that is heavily engaged with the past as a means of raising concern for the future, or artwork as a reminder to stay vigilant against injustice, prejudice and violence. To assist in this continuing discussion, the written outcomes of the research aim to establish not-yet-existing terminology for artwork addressing incomprehensible and traumatic human experience: an *aura of atrocity*.[3] 'Aura' applies to the affecting, emotive functions of an artwork in relation to 'the viewer', while 'atrocity' is a descriptive connector to instances, acts and histories of incredible cruelty, inhumanity, violence and evil. This term is being established to ultimately assist in the ongoing discourse of memorial based artwork, 'war art' and artwork based on the representation of traumatic human experience. The practical outcomes of the research aim to physically incorporate elements of the theories discussed in the writing into a parallel body of work, which will be the first large-scale artwork about the Holocaust to be produced and presented

[2] Each is explained more extensively throughout Chapters 3, 4 & 5.
[3] The term *Aura of atrocity* is further explained in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity.*

in the state of Queensland.[4]

To summarise the foundational structure of what is argued in this thesis, both the original written and practical outcomes respond to three distinct research areas: firstly, German philosopher, Theodor Adorno's (original and later retracted) suggestion that there can be 'no poetry [art] after Auschwitz'. Secondly, ideas established by French philosopher, Jean-Francois Lyotard regarding 'the sublime' as a way of 'presenting the un-presentable', and lastly, German Jewish philosopher, Walter Benjamin's theory concerning the transcendental qualities and affective dimension of art (ideas based in 'aura theory'), which will establish a theoretical framework for positioning the new term an *aura of atrocity*[5] in the field of art theory. The investigation of these three research areas will prove (in the PhD) the necessity for the ongoing role and importance of visual art in relation to the continued depiction, relevance, discussion and legacy of historical events such as the Holocaust as well as in the representation of broadly affecting and traumatic human experience.

These focus areas involve subsequent theoretical research and critical writing on the historic and contemporary role of memory (both personal and collective), representability, and affect in the context of visual art. These topics will be interrogated through the established theoretical frames of 'memory theory' in the discussion of memory, 'the sublime' in the discussion of representability and 'aura theory' in the discussion of 'affect' between artwork and viewer. The research will draw from theorists, philosophers, writers, critics and artists associated in and around these fields of research in order to create a platform for the proposition of contemporary artwork-based engagement with these issues. As such, these theories will be discussed via artistic examples that address the Holocaust (as a seminal example of atrocity in 20th Century history), alongside other events of war and experiences associated with the central theoretical frames of memory, the sublime, and aura, while incorporating surrounding topics such as disease, discrimination and disaster as traumatic human experiences that have initiated a variety of artistic responses. All these research areas in conjunction with collated interviews with

[4] Further explained in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[5] '*Aura of atrocity*' is an original term established through the research undertaken for this thesis.

seminal figures in the field[6] are being utilised to investigate and produce theoretical and practical outcomes regarding the creation, presentation and affective qualities of art catalysed by atrocities (*Art After Atrocity*). Those outcomes, as previously mentioned, primarily involve the written research establishing terminology[7] that is specific to the visual research being discussed, which is in order to assist continued dialogue and theorisation of the field through both theoretical and parallel studio research outcomes.

In his 1955 publication, *Prisms*[8], Adorno was amongst the first to infer problems associated with post-Holocaust representation. 'The critique of culture is confronted with the last stage in the dialectic of culture and barbarism: to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric.'[9] This quote has been extensively addressed and scrutinised since its publication in 1955, with it often being shortened to 'no poetry after Auschwitz'. This statement is utilised in vast amounts of Holocaust-related scholarship, particularly those that discuss the problems of representing such an event. Contemporary examples include American literary theorist Naomi Mandel's *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America* 2006, and Australian literary theorist Jill Bennett's *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*[10] 2005. It requires mention that Adorno later retracted this statement in the final chapter of *Negative Dialectics*[11], but nonetheless, the 'no poetry after Auschwitz' suggestion is foundational to the discussion of post-Holocaust representation because it is commonly considered [12] that Adorno's comment addresses the vast effect this event has had on society, and the subsequent impossibility of condensing such tragedy into a single work of art (referenced as poetry).

[6] Undertaken as research specifically for the PhD.
[7] '*Aura of atrocity*' further explained in *Chapter 5: An Aura of Atrocity.*
[8] T. Adorno, *Prisms*, MIT Press, USA, 1982.
[9] T. Adorno, ibid, pg. 34.
[10] J. Bennett, *Empathic Vision, Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Stamford University Press, California, 2005.
[11] T. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, Great Britain, 1966.
[12] By the previously mentioned Lyotard, Mandel and Bennett, but also by later discussed theorists such as Jacques Ranciere and Hal Foster.

This raises questions as to how anyone can represent such barbarity, and the idea of 'presenting the unpresentable', as Lyotard characterised the problem. In relation to the investigation of 'aura theory' established by Benjamin, which uses the word 'aura' to reference the transcendental or affective dimension of art: the theoretical research also aims to establish and position the term *aura of atrocity* within art theory.[13] This term will be developed more extensively later in this PhD, however it refers to an artwork's affective dimension that prompts an emotional response from the viewer in the presence of the work. An *aura of atrocity* is specific to the relationship between artwork and viewer when the work is representative of exceedingly traumatic events and human experience. 'Atrocity' has been selected as a word that describes multiple experiential facets of events such as the Holocaust. Those facets include acts of injustice, prejudice, cruelty and murder. This theoretical research maintains a critical and reflective relationship with the studio research, which means the decisions regarding what is made in the studio run parallel to the development of this writing. To elaborate, major elements of the studio research such as aesthetic decisions and documentation/presentation methods have been directly informed by this theoretical enquiry, and the studio research has been primarily focused on the creation of a large-scale Holocaust related artwork since mid 2015, titled *Deathgate*.[14] This reflective relationship aims to have the written research outcomes assist with the broader creation and exhibition of memory-based and war art in a national and international cultural context.

Regarding the studio research itself and the focus of this thesis, the choice to reference and address the Holocaust comes from three distinct reasons, they are: the lack of Holocaust related visual material in Australia (particularly Queensland), to offer insight into a personalised perception of the Holocaust in its current historic positioning, and lastly, the lack of research on what the responsibilities are in the visual representation of such an event, once all the first-hand survivors have died. To address these three reasons; firstly, the lack of Holocaust-related visual material is assisted by the development, production and exhibition of *Deathgate*. Secondly, the insight into current personalised perception of the Holocaust is by contextualising the

[13] Further explained in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity.*
[14] Further explained at length in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*

research according to the *Deathgate* project, which is directly motivated by a recent personal visit to the Auschwitz camps as they are today. This second point also investigates the artistic aestheticisation of exceedingly traumatic human experience and the affect of these aesthetic outcomes on its viewer, where the artwork is created for the purpose of memorialisation and remembering. Thirdly, there is growing concerns regarding the memory of the Holocaust, as there are very few left who experienced the event and who are still alive today. As stated in the opening paragraph of this introduction, this opens a research area that is addressed in this thesis and is concerned with the current and future depiction of traumatic events and history as it is gradually removed from direct lived experience.

This examination of 'who, where and how' in relation to the memory of the Holocaust as discussed and represented, is complicated and arguably enforced by my positioning outside of first-hand experience. I am not Jewish, nor do I have Jewish lineage, so an element of the investigation considers that position, and how it is received/considered by others, while also making example of the broader, inherent[15] and changing responsibility regarding the representation of such events. In specific relation to the studio research, the major bodies of work have all referenced personal memory as a catalyst for the studio research outcomes. The artwork is based on a relational engagement to personal memory and experience. Therefore, the studio research for the PhD and decision to reference the Holocaust also draws from my personal visit to the preserved Auschwitz concentration camps in February 2016, where the resulting body of work is an attempt to represent experiences, places and spaces that have been most profoundly and personally affecting. I am also interested in utilising this history to enable broader discussions about the horror humans are capable of socially, culturally and politically, and how to demonstrate this through visual artwork. Although the studio research is based on the Holocaust, I have consciously created the work to be ambiguous and (on a surface level) non-specific. This is in order for the work to simultaneously echo an understanding of the totalistic representational limits of that history,[16] offer insight into a personal perception of such history, and also reference broad ideas surrounding the fragile and fleeting nature of life through

[15] Discussed at length in Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*
[16] By reductive forms and techniques as well as a minimalist method of presenting the work, which will all be explained in detail in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*

extreme human experience and capability.

The following thesis incorporates critical analysis and writing on the before-mentioned fields of research (visual art-based memory theory, the theory of the sublime and aura theory) in order to situate their employment in a contemporary visual context. Seminal theoretical figures include previously mentioned philosophers in the field: Adorno, Lyotard and Benjamin, who are complimented with theoretical research on American and Australian critical theorists such as Mandel and Bennett, Italian writer Primo Levi, German philosopher Immanuel Kant, French philosopher Jacques Ranciere, Italian Philosopher Georgio Agamben and American art critic and historian Hal Foster. Relevant historical and contemporary artists in the field will also be discussed, including German artists Anselm Kiefer and Joseph Beuys, Polish artist Lukasz Surowiec, French sculptor/installation artist Christian Boltanski, Australian artists Ben Quilty and Alex Seton, English artist Cornelia Parker, American artist Leon Golub and American writer/illustrator Art Spiegelman (among others). These artists' work will be explored to offer criticality of the existing and ongoing spectrum of approaches to the visual representation of war, traumatic memory and the Holocaust in contemporary society. This is important because art, as a practice that can transcend language and educational barriers, offers a unique opportunity in the discussion, representation and memorialisation of such events and experiences. By visually addressing incidents that have profoundly affected the world, and with such broadly affecting history generally being well documented literarily; art allows for physical action and objects to depict history in a material, tactile and visceral sense, and can give viewers another avenue to both learn and empathise with victimised/traumatised people who have experienced such events first hand.

The PhD is structured into six chapters where each one deals with a theoretical aspect of the field of research. Chapter 1*: Studio Research,* will focus on the studio investigations, experimentations and final creative works as the 'studio research' component of the PhD. This is primarily through the development and construction of a large-scale ceramic installation artwork *Deathgate* (detail) 2015 - 2018 (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1

The *Deathgate* project follows on from previous studio themes and outcomes that, since 2012, have addressed similar research topics such as the trauma and effects of illness, heritage as well as attempting to aesthetically capture historical degradation. For further context on the development of the *Deathgate* project, Chapter 1: *Studio Research* will discuss a number of previous studio-based artworks, which have focused on the representation of sensitive historical events and memories (both personal and collective) such as *Five Hundred* (detail) 2016 (Fig. 2) and *One Drop of Blood* (detail) 2013 (Fig. 3).

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

The current PhD studio research falls into the realm of 'ceramic installation work', and is concerned with utilising, as metaphor to overarching topics, the precious and fragile, yet permanent, nature of ceramic materials to address sensitive historical or personal events. For example, in previous artwork, a family member's military service: *Five Hundred* (Fig. 2) or a family member's fight with cancer: *One Drop of Blood* (Fig. 3). The studio research is focused on the use of ceramic materials partly because of its inherent, historic association to functionality and necessity. As a material, clay is often recognised, via anthropological and archeological study, to be rooted in basic necessity and survival, where its material permanence is important to 'historical record' or in linking us to past societies, or at least as much as its fragility echoes the fragility of fixed civilisations. Ancient examples are the utilitarian wares of Neolithic China 6000-1000BC (Fig. 4), and the wide range of Roman ceramics, both decorative and functional 1st Century AD (Fig. 5).

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

As will be further discussed in Chapter 1: *Studio Research*, the utilisation of clay throughout all of recorded history gives the material a potent ability to convey or allude to lived human experience because of its longevity and versatility, alongside its broad cultural significance, and historic relevance, together with its metaphorical value to ideas of fragility, vulnerability and permanence. Previous major projects[17] relating directly to the studio research of the PhD have collectively focused on depicting traumatic human experience, and will be discussed as examples that acknowledge an ongoing investigation of the representation of traumatic/sensitive

[17] Later discussed in Chapter 1: *Studio Research*

memory through visual art as well as an interest in the role of memorialisation through visual outcomes.

With the provided context of previous studio projects, Chapter 1 will specifically focus on discussing the practice-led research outcome of the PhD that has involved the development and construction of the *Deathgate* ceramic installation artwork. This work stands as a significant contribution to the memorialisation of the Holocaust; particularly considering the absolute lack of Holocaust based visual material in Queensland.[18] As an initial summary, the *Deathgate* project is an object and ratio-based interpretation of all those detained in the Auschwitz network (1940-1945) of concentration camps, giving a tangible visual reference to the number of deaths against those who survived. The artwork presents an individually handmade ceramic object for every Auschwitz victim (1.3 million victims/individually made objects) as a metaphorical allusion to each detainee as well as each piece being an index of bodily interaction and uniqueness. The objects are made to resemble the stones that cover and surround the railway line leading into the Auschwitz camps. The ceramic 'stones' are made to reference the main mode of prisoner transportation and what is still existing on site at Auschwitz today, but also to utilise the Jewish significance of a stone as a metaphorical symbol to permanence and legacy.[19]

The development, production and exhibition of *Deathgate* are each considerate of the theoretical research outlined in this thesis. This is via informed decisions at each stage of its design, where theoretical, conceptual and philosophical interrogation of what the work means, where it sits in the broader field it is engaged with, and what it is trying to achieve, have been important factors in its creation. These interrogations are framed in the discussion of memory, 'the sublime' and 'aura' as separate theoretical elements that correlate to assess what the work is, how and why it was made, and its potential or projected affect on the spectator. The five theory-based chapters of the PhD beyond Chapter 1: *Studio Research* will discuss the seminal fields of theoretical enquiry (representability, memory theory, the sublime and aura theory) that have framed the research. This theoretical focus will be considered in relation to the

[18] Discussed at length in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[19] Discussed at length in Chapter 1: *Studio Research*.

practical outcome/s, as it is through the lens of visual art that the research/discussion is centered. This involves detailed investigation of the problematics, necessity for, and ongoing responsibility of visual arts' presentation of sensitive history, while also establishing new, appropriate terminology for work addressing such things.

Chapter 2: *Literature Review* will involve a summary of the major text and reference materials that have framed the research. This chapter will be ordered in a manner that begins with the foremost seminal theoretical writing, which has been foundational in the development of this thesis. As the literature review progresses, the summarised materials will move to secondary literature before concluding with writing and reference materials that have been useful but are considered to be on the periphery of the main theoretical focus areas of the study. Chapter 2: *Literature Review* will act as a resource in the establishment of a theoretical frame that is utilised throughout the chapters of the thesis.

Some key references include the previously discussed *Prisms* by Adorno in order to address the topic of representational limits associated with traumatic and inconceivable experience, Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) in order to discuss the 'post-modern sublime'[20] and its relevance to aestheticising traumatic events, history and human experience, and Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936) in order to discuss the 'affective dimension'[21] or emotive qualities of artwork that address such instances. Collectively, the literature review outlines the breadth of published assets utilised for this thesis and the production of the practical element of the PhD. Each text is summarised in accordance to how and where they aligned with the focus of this research, meaning that individually, each published resource is assessed and detailed as to how it assisted or contributed to the research outcomes of this study. The literature review exists to deliver argument and detail of the broader fields in question in this thesis, which then substantiates the focus areas of the following thesis chapters.

[20] Explained at length in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*
[21] Explained at length in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity.*

Running parallel to the aims of the studio research,[22] the major theoretical investigation will begin in Chapter 3: *History and Memory*, which will engage with traumatic history (primarily that of the Holocaust), with a particular focus on the experience of directly affected people and how lived experience produces problematic, art-based representational limitations. The 'history and memory' chapter will investigate what was experienced during this time in order to discuss how, through concepts of 'memory theory', the memory of such events/experiences can be translated, documented, represented and honoured, where visual art will be argued as an effective tool in this endeavour. Although the PhD is centrally referencing the Holocaust, this research is applicable to the representation of traumatic memory/experience and seemingly incomprehensible past and present events, where examples will include other major wars and modern/current conflicts alongside traumatic experiences related to issues such as disease and natural disasters; which are experiences that have informed practical outcomes previous to the *Deathgate* project and are explained in Chapter 1: *Studio Research*. Beyond the direct examples in this thesis and the focus on the Holocaust as a post-represented event; 'aura of atrocity' can apply to other instances of atrocity, or rather, instances of profound cruelty and inhumanity. These arguably under-represented instances include Australian colonial violence or the Frontier Wars and other genocidal campaigns such as the Armenian genocide and Rwandan genocide. Instances such as these, although not specifically addressed in the thesis because of the primary focus on the Holocaust, form the foundation for ongoing practice-led research.

Seminal to this research is the writing of Jill Bennett, in particular, *Empathic Vision, Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art,* where she discusses the role of art in the representation of traumatic events, similar to that of Lyotard. Bennett argues that the affective dimension of art is a useful tool in the representation of trauma and is able to place viewers in a position of reflection and contemplation. She also addresses the problematic aspects of attempting to 'reduce trauma or painful experience to a mere aesthetic concern'.[23]

[22] Discussed in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[23] J. Bennett, 2005, pg. 5.

The limitations of representation are particularly evident when creating work based on an event such as the Holocaust, which inevitably creates problems with the production of associated artwork. This is because such an event is so far reaching in its devastation and effect that it will 'fall short' in any attempt to represent it.[24] 'What is important is that art itself challenges rather than reinforces the distinction between art (or the realm of imaginative discourse) and the reality of trauma and war.'[25] In particular, with *Deathgate*, this distinction between art and reality is supported by an admittedly removed/limited, but personal memory of visiting the Auschwitz camps and the effect this had on me. A personal visit to the preserved Auschwitz sites has been employed as an influential aspect in the studio research outcome of the PhD. It requires noting that my visit to the Auschwitz camps was a relatively fleeting experience to be drawing from, for the production of work about the Holocaust; nevertheless, it was the profundity of the experience that confirmed *Deathgate* as an endeavour.

As a result of the representational limitations that will be discussed in Chapter 3, it is the 'Auschwitz' visit that has informed many of the major aesthetic decisions regarding the studio-research aspect of this study. Although limited, it is through this experience that the artwork is produced, and in its simplicity and degree of abstraction, the work admits to the inherent representational limits. This is because it is primarily representative of personal impressions from visiting the camps themselves, and is not trying to physically depict anything beyond these baseline personal impressions of scale, labour and reduction of life.[26] By creating work that is largely representative of a personal experience in visiting Auschwitz, the aim is to recognise these limitations and allow the work to stand as the result of personal memory through aesthetic development with accompanying theoretical enquiry (in this thesis).

Another theoretical aspect discussed in Chapter 3 will focus on 'memory theory' and its use in artistic practice. Further to the key theoretical figures and text in this field is American-born historian Dominick LaCapra, in particular his text, *History and*

[24] This is the concern raised by Adorno and discussed in Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*
[25] J. Bennett, 2005, pg. 4.
[26] This will be further explained in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*

Memory After Auschwitz 1998,[27] where he writes specifically on memory-based, post-Holocaust representation in art and literature, referring to the problematic aspects of representing traumatic/sensitive history in a way similar to that of Bennett. 'The problematics of trauma should not lead one to mystify problems or to discount the work of both memory and reconstruction with respect to limit-events.'[28] LaCapra suggests that regardless of these limitations, the creation of work related to an event such as the Holocaust is still necessary for the purpose of maintaining remembrance and commemoration. This recognition of limitation and difficulty is a necessary and unavoidable aspect of post-Holocaust (and other sensitive events/memories') representation because of how complex and vast the range of human experience is. This is not just considering those directly affected but also the recurring effects on future generations alongside broad societal, cultural, political and economic effects. An event such as the Holocaust cannot be contained or, as previously mentioned, wholly represented, which means a certain degree of caution should be practiced in the production of post-representative artwork. This is because of sensitivities and recurring effects/affects relating to such history, and its representation (by any means) being potentially triggering for viewers.

This particular inquiry in the field of 'memory theory' allows for argument against the 'no poetry after Auschwitz' theory put forward by Adorno. Although this suggestion by Adorno was part of a discussion on the general difficulty of representing something such as the Holocaust, it has become a common source for starting dialogue on how an artist could create work about something beyond (their) comprehension. This means that from the particular perspective of visual art, every element and decision of an attempted post-traumatic representation should consider this 'barbarity', because it involves a deeper consideration and justification of things such as material choice, employed processes, aesthetic decisions, presentation methods and documentation.

[27] D. LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1998.
[28] D. LaCapra, ibid, pg. 183.

The research of personal and collective memories is integral to successful post-Holocaust representation, 'in order to approach as closely as possible, events that necessarily involve gaps, distortions, and limited evidence; at least with respect to the experience of trauma itself'.[29] This means that when representing broadly affecting and multi-layered events where the lived experience of an enormous amount of people is varied and complex; no amount of work can possibly represent the lived experience of each individual (who have directly experienced and been affected by the event) as many of their stories have faded and distorted through time. This leaves the research outcomes to partly speak on behalf of an estimated understanding of collective experience via those who are able to share individual stories, which is also accompanied by statistical information left in the wake of such events. Mentioning that they 'partly' speak of this is because there is also the inevitable element of visual art that is aesthetic engagement with a topic according to the subjective experience, impressions and limitations of the artist making the work. This research on memory theory within visual culture explains the inevitable limitations and potential problems involved with their visual representation, which establishes a basis for discussing how traumatic and sensitive memory, history and experience can be successfully aestheticised and incorporated into visual art.

Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable* will investigate theories of 'the sublime'. These are traced back to the text of 18th Century Irish-born philosopher, Edmund Burke. Burke was the first to link the human subject and aesthetics to negative and positive feelings associated with what is external or greater than that subject's ability to comprehend. Burke's enquiry leads to Immanuel Kant's account of 'the sublime' where he argued; 'the mind is in the presence of the sublime, attempting to imagine what it cannot'.[30] This suggests that the sublime links with incomprehensibility: an inherent element in work associated with traumatic experience and events such as the Holocaust. This is because the experience of those victimised, or even those who witnessed elements of the event are beyond the standard comprehension of human experience.

[29] D. LaCapra, ibid, pg. 182.
[30] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hackett Publishing Company, USA, 1996, pg. 97.

Interpretations of Kantian sublimity have been an important point of reference for justifying a link between the theory of 'the sublime' and a research focus area for the PhD. These interpretations include the literature of English feminist philosopher Christine Battersby in *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference*,[31] where she stated: 'whatever is fitted to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects… is a source of the sublime'.[32] Further to this, another interpretation of Kantian sublime is found in English philosopher Paul Crowther's *The Kantian Sublime, The Avant-garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard*[33] *w*ho writes: 'the term 'sublime' is aptly applied to art when it is of colossal size or terrifying power, or employs form or imagery which successfully invoke such overwhelming associations'.[34]

The terror and tragedy of events such as the Holocaust translates through associated artwork and allows the work to be a source of this sublime effect. The expansive, varied and incomprehensible nature of what is experienced through events like war is where a direct association with the sublime can be drawn. The incomprehensibility of the event implies that, as mentioned before, its representation is problematic because it cannot be contained by any measure or means. This again relates back to the theory of Adorno,[35] which subsequently accompanies Lyotard's writing in: *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge.*[36] In this text (also interpreted through Crowther's writing), Lyotard characterises the sublime as 'presenting the unpresentable'.[37] These theories broadly highlight the aesthetic difficulty, problematics and ethical dilemmas of representing memory and tragedy based on widely incomprehensible human experience. Even Lyotard accepts that the unpresentable can be presented, at least in some aestheticised form. This notion of the 'unpresentable' refers to previously discussed theories of Bennet and LaCapra, where the barbaric and tragic nature of an event introduces unavoidable, totalistic limitations for their visual representation.

---

[31] C. Battersby, *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference*, Routledge Publishing, New York, 2007.
[32] C. Battersby, ibid, pg. 24.
[33] P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime, the Avant-garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard*, New Formations Number 7, 1989.
[34] P. Crowther, ibid, pg. 72.
[35] That 'poetry [art] after Auschwitz is barbaric'.
[36] J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, USA, 1979.
[37] J.F. Lyotard, ibid, pg. 78.

These limitations are due to the intricate and complicated array of experiences within events that affect and traumatise a wide range of people, which also have recurring societal effects.[38]

The sublime or 'unpresentable' is an aesthetic category that addresses the complexities and broad reaching consequences of certain events and experiences. This line of inquiry is integral to the investigation of effective memorialisation and its ongoing role in contemporary society as well as in the development and outcomes of the studio research, because it recognises the core problems and difficulties in aestheticising and addressing sensitive/traumatic history, therefore allowing for written, constructive development and for considered and informed responses via visual artwork.

The reading in the research field also extends from the personal affects of traumatic memory[39] and the aestheticisation of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation (further theorised through 'the sublime'),[40] to then focus on the potential affect of artwork regarding these topics in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity*. An understanding of Walter Benjamin's text and current interpretations such as German-born French art historian Rainer Rochlitz's *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin*[41] and American literary theorist John McCole's *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*[42] offer insight into the role of 'aura theory' in relation to this 'affect-focused' field of research, and how the concept of aura connects to effective memorialisation through a visual research outcome. Benjamin first engaged with 'aura theory' in his writing found in a posthumously published collection of essays[43], *On Hashish* 1927-34[44] and later expanded on his theories in the seminal text, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*[45]. Aura relates to the

[38] Further discussed in *Chapter 4: Presenting the Unpresentable.*
[39] In Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*
[40] In Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable.*
[41] R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin,* Guilford Publications, USA, 1995.
[42] J. McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*, Cornell University Press, London, 1993.
[43] All of which were written many years before his death and found later.
[44] W. Benjamin, *On Hashish*, Harvard University Press, USA, 2006.
[45] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Prism Key Press, 2010.

transcendental qualities of an object: a 'relational engagement' or particular 'presence', which directly affects the viewer. The term 'relational engagement', which will be used throughout the thesis in discussing the auratic capabilities of artwork, is determined as direct engagement between a single viewer and a particular artwork. 'Relational engagement' thus describes the direct relationship and emotive functions established between viewer and artwork. This 'aura' or transient quality is commonly associated with aesthetic beauty, pleasure or uniqueness, and in Benjamin's writing, he defines aura as 'a strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close it may be'.[46]

Chapter 5 will interrogate Benjamin's definition and position 'aura theory' as a theoretical tool in discussing the 'affective dimension' of artwork or rather, the relationship between artwork and viewer. In considering that the written research is engaged with disturbing and traumatic visual representation, the term '*aura of atrocity*' will be introduced specifically to the affective dimension of the type of artwork discussed throughout the thesis. This term is introduced in order to delineate a particular emotive response catalysed by post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork, which is consequential to the broad ideals of 'aura theory' and specific to the likely uncomfortable or disturbing affect such artwork has on its viewer. This is to say that the emotive affect of an artwork is often intrinsically tied to the meaning and topic of the artwork itself. With artwork that is based on atrocities: acts of excessive and largely incomprehensible cruelty and inhumanity; the resulting emotive affect is then based in considering instances of such perpetrated atrocities. Benjamin's description of aura identifies it as something beyond the tangible: a sense of 'distance' or an untouchable quality, regardless of an observer's proximity to something. It will be shown in the research that this concept of aura, and an artwork's affecting qualities can relate to an array of factors. In the case of the studio research,[47] it investigates whether a sense of aura can be produced through work relating to specific, traumatic historical events and memory where 'the aura sometimes appears as an 'atmosphere' that seems to envelope an object, a scene, or a moment'.[48]

[46] W. Benjamin, ibid, pg. 17.
[47] Discussed at length in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[48] J. McCole, 1993, pg. 3.

Further to this, the writing will propose the new aura-related terminology,[49] which can be attached to the ongoing studio research, alongside related works in the field of contemporary art. This interrogation of existing aura theory will be further discussed in Chapter 5 as it relates to the theories of Benjamin, Rochlitz and McCole amongst others. Rochlitz, for example, offers a deconstructive investigation and methodical perspective on the abstract theories of Benjamin, where his assessment aims to organise the dissonant array of Benjamin's writing on topics such as 'aura'. In a similar sense, McCole examines the writing of Benjamin in order to pragmatically establish connections between aesthetics and their potential affect on the spectator. In assessment of Benjamin's 'aura theory', and primarily through the thesis, this writing will establish and situate the new term 'aura of atrocity' in the broader discourse of contemporary art theory regarding totalistic representational limits, the sublime, aura theory, war art and memorials.

The PhD research will investigate the possibility of a transcendental affect, where traumatic, inconceivable and sensitive history is utilised as a catalyst for the creation of artwork. Through such sublime presentations, that in the case of this study is post-Holocaust/traumatic artworks, this 'aura of atrocity' or 'atmosphere', as described by McCole is present by virtue of the work's disturbing influence. In such a position and via association with a specific historical event (such as the Holocaust), the work produces transcendental effects, which is to say it elicits emotional sensations in the viewer during direct relational engagement between viewer and artwork. The studio research, is not however suggesting, in any way, that the tragedy and horror of the Holocaust can be correlated, or be wholly representative of individual experiences that occurred during that time, but instead, empathetically addresses that history in relation to personal experience and research because the totalistic representational limitations are inherent and unavoidable.[50]

The aim for the term 'aura of atrocity' is for its application to the broader field of memorials and war art, as well as to any artwork that addresses atrocities and their associated traumatic memory or experience. This proposition will be further

[49] An *'Aura of Atrocity'*
[50] As is the focus of Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*

developed (in this thesis) via examples of artwork and writing from a wide range of artists, including those listed earlier in this introduction and the collated interviews undertaken as part of the PhD research. The associated 'aura of atrocity' of the studio research, and its connection to 'the sublime' both stem from the work's proximity to the specific history of the Holocaust and its relationship with trauma and memory. Understanding the theories associated with these enables a basis for informed and appropriate contextualisation of studio practice and research, as well as the development of written outcomes that recognise both the limitations and possibilities for art practice to act as a catalyst in the field of memorialisation and post-Holocaust/traumatic representation.

The primary goal of the written research is to inform or otherwise contextualise the studio research alongside the work of contemporary artists who are seminal to the field of post-Holocaust representation, but also the fields of memorialisation and 'war art'. This area of focus will be elaborated in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response* and will include reviews, critiques and the writing of previously mentioned artists, as well as others such as Chinese installation artist Ai Weiwei, Cuban-born American conceptual artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres, and Brazilian artist Adriana Varejão. These seminal artists have all created commentary-based installation artworks, which are informed by memory and loss, and are intended to affect the viewers that experience the work. By researching their artist statements, interviews and broader writing, while discussing their individual works at length, the writing allows for a shared conceptual investigation between their outcomes and the practice-led outcomes of the PhD studio work. Two examples of projects that will be discussed at length in Chapter 6 are existing monumental and acclaimed Holocaust memorial works such as American architect Peter Eisenman's *Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe* 2005 (Fig. 6) in Berlin, and English sculptor/installation artist Rachel Whiteread's *Nameless Library* 2000 (Fig. 7) in Austria.

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Both of these works are positioned in historical epicentres of the European Nazi occupation during WWII and will be focused on as they represent permanently located artworks, which broadly address Holocaust history and were both developed and produced with the knowledge that they would be positioned in areas where the population has been profoundly affected by that period of history. The pressure, level of research and expectation behind these works makes them potent examples of the necessary artistic considerations relating to the memorialisation and representation of such history. In relation to the factor of location, their permanent positioning and subsequent affect will also be questioned in relation to the travelling capability of works such as *Deathgate*.[51] Alongside examples such as these, documentary-based works will reference more specific details of the Holocaust and its aftermath rather than addressing the overarching history/event itself as occurs in the work of Eisenman and Whiteread. These examples include the work of Germans Anselm Kiefer, Joseph

[51] This will be discussed in Chapter1: *Studio Research*.

Beuys, and Polish artist Lukasz Surowiec, whose individual practices represent more personalised impressions and reactions to such an event rather than its visual representation in a broad or ambiguous sense.

By researching various artists and artworks (such as these), the aim is to show commonality through their chosen themes, enabling comparison to be drawn between the studio research of the PhD and an array of historic and contemporary studio practices that have a shared engagement with the field of research. This allows for the presentation of varied, critically engaging examples of studio practice, which translate the theoretical focus areas of the thesis in a physical sense. This means that the artworks discussed will see the theoretical research 'put into action' as the research (both theoretical and practical) is concerned with visual art outcomes. Also, a wide range of artistic examples allows the outcomes to be engaged with an arts industry via positioning the current state of the visual field with external examples alongside the PhD's studio research. This will offer a better understanding of artistic representational limits, at least in a totalistic sense, regarding art that endeavours to depict events such as the Holocaust and broader traumatic human experience in contemporary society.

Overall, this thesis involves an investigation of incorporating history and memory into the production of artwork, where concepts of 'the sublime' or 'presenting the unpresentable'. 'Aura theory' and associated terms allow for the range of considerations that must be made when attempting to create work in the wake of incomprehensible or traumatic human experience. Detailing those theories and establishing new terminology (an *'aura of atrocity'*[52]) in order to assist in the greater discourse of this field of research is intended to work in parallel with continuing studio research. The research outcomes and contribution to the field involve a comprehensive analysis of the role of memorialisation and post-traumatic/Holocaust representation through art. This will be investigated primarily through practice-led research alongside 'traditional' research into history/memory-based theory in order to present the current artistic representational limits of traumatic and seemingly inconceivable human experience.

[52] A term invented through the original research of this PhD.

Concepts of 'the sublime' will be investigated to support the discussion of aestheticising particular histories and memories in question before leading the enquiry to the affective dimension and viewer interaction with such work via 'aura theory'. To assist in this discussion and considering the lack of specific terminology correlating viewer and post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork; 'aura of atrocity', as a term relating to the affective qualities of art representing traumatic memory and sensitive history, will be established. This new terminology is important to maintain the trajectory of discussion and theorising the production and exhibition of post-traumatic artwork in parallel to its proliferation[53] in contemporary art practice.

As atrocities continue in contemporary societies, alongside the shifting responsibilities to artistically represent those of the past, discussing the specifically or emotionally disturbing affective dimension of such artwork will aid in broader and currently scarce theorisation regarding how viewers interact with the visual field of enquiry. These fields will all utilise the Holocaust and post-Holocaust culture/art as prime examples for this discussion, which will be presented alongside other traumatic events and experiences because collectively, and as this thesis will detail, they represent the approaches, successes and failures of visual art engaged with the field in question. Also discussed will be current analysis, critique and dialogue with seminal global figures in the field of research, and analysis of the original, substantial body of work via studio research (the creative works component of the PhD) *Deathgate*, which aims to primarily represent the Holocaust and its victims.

Ultimately, the aims and outcomes of this thesis are centred on finding the current role and effective practice-based methods regarding post-Holocaust/traumatic visual representation in contemporary society. The primary source material of this research is the Holocaust and its subsequent visual representation because of its relevance and historical positioning. This is to say two points: first, that the Holocaust is one of the 20th Century's most atrocious events, which fundamentally changed society to be what it is today; and second, that at this time in history, where there are few remaining survivors of the event, its representation is moving into a new mode of

[53] Discussed in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*

questioning and responsibility. Without direct lived experience, this research investigates the possibility and effectiveness of representability, memory and history, aesthetics and artwork-to-viewer affect in relation to post-Holocaust artwork, which can also be applied broadly to artwork that 'presents the unpresentable' or rather, presents human experience that is incomprehensible in its totality.

The chapters outlined within and following this introduction are focused on each stage in the development, production and presentation of art catalysed by incomprehensible experience and atrocity. To analyse the current field of this type of art practice, established areas of theoretical and philosophical theory will be engaged in accordance and comparison to existing contemporary works by artists' spanning the disciplines of painting, sculpture, installation, sound, video, performance, participatory art and memorials. This is done in order to contextualise and position the practical research outcome of the research and question its relevance in both a national and international context. The research will also demonstrate certain artistic approaches and outcomes that engage aesthetically in both visualising and offering viewers' contemplative space regarding abhorrent traumatic events as they are positioned in contemporary society. This will prove the appropriate artistic/representational considerations of such artistic practice alongside the necessity for, ongoing role of, and importance of *art after atrocity*.

Chapter 2

The Studio Research: Deathgate.

> 'We must be listened to: above and beyond our personal experience, we have collectively witnessed a fundamental unexpected event, fundamental precisely because unexpected, not foreseen by anyone. It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say. It can happen, and it can happen everywhere.'[54]

The central task of the thesis is to explore and evaluate the most effective elements of artwork that aims to represent traumatic memory, history, events and human experience. This will be achieved through both theoretical and visual-art-focused investigations that will coincide with practical, studio-based research, where the artistic outcomes visually incorporate the findings of the theoretical enquiry. The studio research outcome of the Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) is also representative of my ongoing arts practice, which has explored the representation of traumatic memory, experience and history since 2012 through several projects such as *Five Hundred* 2016, which addressed my Grandfather's military service, *One Drop of Blood* 2013, which addressed my mother's fight with breast cancer and *Arbeit Macht Frei: Work Makes you Free* 2014, which is in immediate response to my personal visit to Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany.[55]

This chapter will focus on this ongoing studio arts practice, where previous major projects will be explained as contextualisation for the 'practice-led research component' of this PhD. As previously stated, this studio research outcome runs parallel to the theoretical issues that will be discussed in the thesis such as 'representability, memory, the sublime and aura theory'. As research that is based in contemporary visual engagement with the representation of traumatic memory, history and experience: the ability to refer to theoretical concepts alongside tangible outcomes of studio research is important to the explanations and propositions within this investigation. This is because in investigating the theoretical imperatives of this research, which include representability, memory, history, aesthetics and viewer affect regarding work catalysed by traumatic human experience and events such as

[54] P. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, Vintage publishing, New York, 1989, pg. 199.
[55] All of these projects will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

the Holocaust; providing artistic examples and discussing my own art practice (including the practical component of this PhD) shows how the theoretical research is applied practically to the field. This is via tangible outcomes (artworks) that serve representational goals and offer a space for viewers to contemplate, in the immediacy of the work, what is being considered within this thesis.

To broadly describe my art practice: the work is primarily focused on ceramic installations, which employ the use of individual pieces, presented together, in order to alter the gallery environment (a concept referred to in this context as using 'the multiple'). This is intended to create an experiential environment within the gallery space, where the repetitive nature of the presented objects imposes a 'number-based' reading of the work. In terms of my artworks, this use of 'the multiple' both encourages a statistical reading of the artwork via the number of objects produced, alongside an inherent and interpretive metaphoric symbolism dictated by the objects themselves. This experience of the work in the gallery environment via installation-based intervention is accompanied by the exploitation of the fragile, vulnerable and precious nature of ceramics to reference particular chosen topics. This means that the work is considerate of sensitive historic and personal experiences/themes via the use of materials that are broadly regarded as being sensitive in their materiality. In material-based consideration and its theoretical implications, the pieces also employ generically and historically appealing qualities of ceramic materials such as high-gloss glaze, floral decoration and 22 carat gold detailing for the purpose of aesthetic accessibility. Assessing and incorporating historical standards of beauty such as these examples is intended to infuse the surface of the work with a sense of viewer adoration and familiarity. Alongside this, the created objects, in their form rather than their surface, are physically representative of traumatic experience via connotative relation to subjects such as war and disease. These elements of materiality, surface, form and installation method are imperative to the viewer's experience for reasons that will be explained further in this chapter. Specific attention to these details is individualised and circumstantial to each of the studio research projects outlined within this thesis.

In terms of the collective work explained in this chapter, there are however, certain consistencies in regard to the production and presentation of each project. Although

the themes and histories vary throughout the studio research, they are each based in ultimately traumatic human experience. Because of this, the repeated use of certain elements such as materials, detailing and installation methods, finds commonality across the range of studio-based projects. Discussing these foundational aesthetic and conceptual through-lines of the collective work throughout this chapter will establish the physical and visual elements of the work that are most effective in portraying broader themes of traumatic human experience and history, which form the underlying conceptual frame of each project. This chapter will discuss previous and current practice-based outcomes primarily from a personal perspective. This is so that they are first considered from a purely artist-intention-based perspective without intensive theoretical and philosophical interrogation. This will allow the later-explained theoretical enquiry[56] to be considered in relation to my personal aims for my own artwork and their comparative value to seminal, international contemporary works in the questioned aesthetic field.

The following projects are examples that acknowledge an ongoing, studio-based investigation of the collective representation of traumatic memory, history and experience through visual art, as well as an interest in the role of memorialisation. All these projects through researching, investigating and constructing artwork, engage in the theories outlined in the thesis introduction. Those theories include the discussion of how to aestheticise traumatic memory and history via artwork (through concepts of representability and 'memory theory'), theories of 'the sublime,' which is used as an aesthetic category for representing experience that is beyond comprehension or understanding, and lastly, the affective dimension of artwork that addresses such things (theorised specifically through an 'aura of atrocity'). Collectively these theoretical concerns have assisted in developing writing and practice-based research on how, through visual art, issues relating to traumatic memory, history and human experience can be effectively represented. I address these topics in my art practice because they are experiences, events and memories that have had the most profound effect on my perception of both the world as it surrounds me, as well as the history that has shaped the society I inhabit.

[56] In Chapters 3, 4 & 5.

Specifically, representing the Holocaust through my art practice, my lack of heritage and religious attachment to what was perpetrated is secondary to my personal compulsion in creating the work. This is for several simultaneously active reasons; firstly, my personal visits to preserved Nazi concentration camps had lasting contemplative resonance, which, in accordance with my personal memories of visiting the camps, determined the creation of artwork from this admittedly limited experience. Secondly, in visiting the concentration camps as they are today, I realised that visual, tangible material relating to this history is scarce within Australia despite many survivors resettling here, particularly in Queensland, where there is no existing museum or major memorial work. Thirdly, with my practice being broadly interested in the representation and memorialisation of traumatic human experience and history, I am interested in the role of representation beyond direct lived experience. As the Holocaust is currently moving into a new mode of remembrance, which is to say that there are few first-hand survivors alive today, this research investigates post-Holocaust representation and responsibility from the perspective of those born later; further removed from lived experience and memory. Lastly, as acts of intolerance, injustice and hatred perpetually continue in society; the Holocaust, as an event still within lived experience, becomes a warning against what such acts can lead toward. Its representation exemplifies a sense of vigilant solidarity against prejudice and hatred, while also acting in remembrance and memoriam to the particular event itself.

In a broader sense, the studio work across various projects discussed in this chapter partially derives from an interest in human capability at its spectral extremes: the capacities for human compassion, resilience and strength that are catalysed by exceedingly traumatic experience or perpetrated atrocities. I am fascinated by humankind's ability to survive, adapt and persevere, and hope to present this optimistic aspect via the expression of broader traumatic experiences and histories. This interest is accompanied by my belief in the importance of memorialising and remembering the past as a means to learn, honour, adjust and remain vigilant against acts of injustice or inhumanity, which continue to manifest in human culture and development. In an interview conducted for this PhD research, I asked Hungarian Holocaust survivor Ana de Leon what she felt was the purpose of artistically memorialising events of the past and her reply was "we preserve memories of people or events 'lest we forget'. It allows us to remember past mistakes and move

forward."[57] This is a sentiment echoed in much of the work discussed throughout this thesis and will later be explained in reference to artist writings and critiques in Chapter 6.

To give context and examples of the ongoing studio research, previous outcomes include *Five Hundred* (detail) 2016 (Fig. 8), which is an artwork originally made in 2012. In 2016, the work was recreated in its entirety to feature a decorative design better suited to the history that the artwork represented. Both iterations of the work, and the way it is exhibited features 500 individually slip-cast[58] ceramic bullets with a dark blue floral design. This artwork represented my Dutch grandfather's military service during The Indonesian War of Independence, also known as the Indonesian National Revolution between 1945 and 1949 (immediately after World War II). The moulds that were created to produce the 500 ceramic bullets involved casting the same standard issue ammunition (.303' caliber bullets) given to my grandfather as one of 500 men initially drafted to go and fight in Indonesia. The 2016 version of the work is decorated with traditional Dutch Delftware patterns (also known as "Dutch blue and white" or "delft blue") that are personally taken photographic copies of the decorations featured on the Delftware plates my grandfather was given when he completed his military service.

As mentioned before, the 2012 iteration of the project featured a different pattern, which was a generic and commercially produced 'blue and white' floral design. The decision to recreate the project using photographs of the patterns featured on my grandfather's own ceramic wares is because of the added emotive value behind using decorative designs that are related directly to the subject of the work. Further to this, the bullets are made from earthenware clay, which is the material traditionally used in the production of original Delftware ceramics. In their form, the objects portray violence, death and brutality, while their surface portrays a sense of heritage, beauty and prestige. This dichotomy aims to reference the realities of war in the connotations

[57] Written interview questions answered by Ana de Leon, who participated in an official written interview project undertaken specifically for this PhD research. USQ Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154.
[58] Slip-casting is a mass-production technique, which involves a plaster mould of an original object. The plaster mould is repeatedly filled with clay slip or liquid clay that dries within the mould before being taken out to then refill. This process allows for ongoing production/replication of the same clay object.

of the object, juxtaposing war's sensitive and personal effects in their design.

Fig. 8

Another autobiographical work is *One Drop of Blood* (detail) 2013 (Fig. 9) that comprised of 21,243 individually made porcelain cells. The ceramic objects were representational of human white blood cells, and as a group are the equivalent to a 'high ranging' white blood cell count, which is 20 to 25,000 white cells per single drop of blood. A high ranging white blood cell count often indicates that the body is fighting disease or infection. This installation was an interactive work where viewers were encouraged to take cells away in exchange for donations to the National Breast Cancer Foundation. The interactive element of *One Drop of Blood* aimed to emulate my mother's plummeting white blood cell count during chemotherapy. This effect on her blood cell count was a concerning side effect of the treatment, which made her dangerously susceptible to infection and illness, and is a common occurrence during chemotherapy treatment.

Fig. 9

Since originally being produced and exhibited in 2013, the *One Drop of Blood* project has been the subject of several workshops hosted in venues including *Metro Arts*, Brisbane's multipurpose studio space, and the *Victorian College of Art* (VCA), Melbourne's sculpture/ceramics studio. These workshops have involved an 'open call' for people to come and assist in replenishing the number of porcelain cells in order for the work to feature in exhibitions in its original state each time. Allowing public participation in both the depletion and replenishment of the 'white blood cell count' has allowed the work to facilitate continued discussion and reflection on something that affects an enormous percentage of the population (recent estimates from the National Cancer Institute state that 38.5% of the global population will develop cancer at some point in their lives). This participatory element adds another dimension to the artwork itself, where the work is less about the 'object as artwork,' and is instead, an 'engaged device' that relies on physical intervention for its meaning to be portrayed. The interactive element puts the onus on the viewer as an integral component to the intention of the artwork. Consequently, the conceptual basis for the work offers a defined and cyclic relationship between the artist, the artwork and the viewer. This means that through active participation the artwork becomes experiential, and requires viewer interaction in order for the concept to be realised. The participatory aspect of *One Drop of Blood* is inspired by the seminal work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, who will be discussed at length in Chapter 6 because his practice, applicable to the PhD research, represents aestheticised personal, lived memory and artwork as an interactive device, where the viewer becomes an incorporated component of the work.

Conceptually closer to the 'practice-led research component' of the PhD (the *Deathgate* project), was the work *Arbeit Macht Frei: Work Makes you Free* 2014 (Fig. 10). This artwork featured a replica of an autopsy table, which remains today in the pathology lab of Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Oranienburg, Germany. This project was a response to my 2013 visit to the preserved Sachsenhausen site, and involved the re-creation of a single object that most affected me from that visit. To elaborate, in retrospect of spending a day touring the camp grounds and learning about the many atrocities performed there, the most visceral experience while visiting the site was within the medical facilities built for Sachsenhausen. Perhaps due to the

clear purpose of equipment such as an autopsy table, and in the context of its presence in a Nazi concentration camp: it's that table which appeared to me as the most potent, remaining symbol of death in a place that was dedicated to a genocidal campaign. The affecting qualities of that table in particular became the catalyst for a new period of personal studio research that has since focused on the representation of the Holocaust[59]. Regarding the replica autopsy table, each porcelain tile was handmade, which inevitably characterised each tile in a unique way during the making process. The 'hand-made' elements of this work aim to transcend the chilling sterility of the original table, and introduce 'human qualities' to a work representing such inhumane treatment or to make personal the almost impersonal.

Fig. 10

Due to the process behind creating each of the porcelain tiles used for the artwork, each individual tile features abnormalities and intricacies that can be discovered upon close inspection of the work. This includes fingerprints that are permanently featured within the clay itself, and undulations on the surface of each tile depending on how the clay slip was mixed and how each individual tile was dried before being fired. These details, which are the result of hand-made processes, are embraced as a contrasting element to the machine-made, existing autopsy table at Sachsenhausen.

[59] This will be further explained shortly.

In the hope of memorialising and acting in remembrance of human suffering, the artwork purposely combats the mechanical, de-humanising objects and practices carried out within the camps by presenting a careful re-creation that celebrates its handmade qualities in defiance of the history it represents. Alongside this, and to aid in the recollection of the visit to *Sachsenhausen,* I internally cooled the replica table for the exhibition so it was cold to the touch. This internal cooling was also an investigative experiment in the potential 'viewer affect' of involving non-conventional, sensory elements to ceramic artwork (similarly investigated through the interactive element of *One Drop of Blood*), which addresses traumatic experience and history. In consideration of the sensory experience of visiting the preserved Sachsenhausen site, it felt appropriate for the artwork, as a direct response to this experience, to incorporate experiential and affecting elements beyond visual aesthetics. Allowing viewers to touch the work as well as having it internally cooled was intended to be reminiscent of what I experienced, and how things such as the original autopsy table are presented at the Sachsenhausen camp.

Visitors are able to freely explore Sachsenhausen, where there are guided sections featuring memorabilia behind glass as well as sections that are preserved exactly as they were such as the pathology lab of the camp, where visitors can explore and touch what is left with limited restrictions. Internally cooling the piece acts both as metaphor and recollected exercise. My visit to Sachsenhausen was in the German winter of 2013, which is generally a time of sub-zero temperatures, and my memory of this visit is consequently influenced by the literally cold temperatures of that time. Cooling the table was in order to reference both the metaphorically cold nature of the history that the work represents, as well as how I personally, physically experienced the place that inspired the artwork.

More recently and during the development/pre-production stages of the PhD *Deathgate* project is another body of work relating to World War II (WWII) titled *Where They Burn Books* 2016 (Fig. 11). This project primarily acted as a memorial to the 1933 Nazi book burnings, where over 25,000 volumes of text were deemed "Un-German" and subsequently destroyed. The work featured slip-cast porcelain 'books' presented alongside similar darker forms. These darker 'books' are made from the

compressed ashes of the original books used to create the moulds for the porcelain pieces. This work references the power, resilience and preciousness of knowledge, which is made increasingly apparent through the act of burning books for the purpose of oppression and eradication.

Fig. 11

In the case of this project, by slip-casting these books I am able to reframe the recognisable object of 'a book' into a heightened state of esteem due to the nature and rarity of Royal Copenhagen Porcelain,[60] which was used in the production of each white 'book' in the series. Porcelain, as a material, is also able to withstand the highest temperature of any clay type meaning that the pieces of *Where They Burn Books* are immortalised and strengthened by an intensive 'firing' process. By creating the moulds needed to produce the porcelain 'books,' several real books were ruined beyond repair. These were subsequently burned in a controlled environment in order to utilise and compress their ashes into the darker 'book' forms visible throughout the artwork. This consequently presents objects that reference the historical event with immediacy and direct relevance. By this I mean that the 'ash books' represent the physical act of burning books, while the dominant 'porcelain books' symbolise ideas of permanence and preciousness: literally unable to be destroyed by fire in their vitrified state. This project was an honorary exercise by virtue of recreating familiar objects through ceramic art processes. The recognisable nature of the presented objects directly references the chosen event and history, while the material choices

[60] A highly regarded and sought-after porcelain recipe that is no longer manufactured and therefore a rare commodity.

and production methods physically and metaphorically represent the broader implications and effects of particular traumatic human history and experience.

Produced during the final year (2018) of the PhD study, and closely linked to the *Deathgate* project by means of its process-based and statistical requirements, is *48 Hours, 24 Minutes and 15 Seconds* 2018 (Fig. 12). Made as a durational performance work,[61] this project responded to the most recent global estimate by the World Health Organisation that the current 'world suicide rate' is that a person dies by suicide once every 40 seconds. For the purpose of suicide prevention and awareness, and supported by the White Wreath Association: an Australian not-for-profit working as a suicide prevention service, I produced an individual ceramic object once every 40 seconds, without taking a break for as long as I felt capable.

Fig. 12

The title of the work was determined by the length of time spent consecutively making these ceramic objects: 48 hours, 24 minutes and 15 seconds. Resulting in 4,356 objects, the entire performance[62] was live streamed on YouTube with a link to donate to the White Wreath Association. The project began on World Suicide Prevention Day (September 10th), which occurs during a week of global initiatives regarding suicide.[63] The action performed within every 40 second period involved

[61] An endurance-based form of performance art, where a certain period of time is an important conceptual element to the artwork.
[62] Of making the objects themselves: one every 40 seconds.
[63] Including *R U OK Day* among others.

refining the edges and base of an extruded terracotta form, then leaving a gestural thumb impression at the peak of each piece. This results in individualised, loosely figurative objects: one for each person's death by suicide within the timeframe of producing the work, which gave a direct visual and tangible reference to the 'epidemic-like' global suicide rate. The project's durational performance element was intended to suggest that despite the production of the work coming to an end, if capable, the creation of the objects, just as the deaths by suicide, would indefinitely continue. This project further explored the process-driven themes investigated by the *Deathgate* project, where 'time and labour' are important elements to the completed work.[64] Alongside this, I utilised the '1:1 ratio as presented work' and 'object as metaphor' concepts[65] in order to provide an immediate, tangible reference to the topic of the work.

In addition to these five projects, the ongoing studio research has also resulted in various smaller series' of works that have informed conceptually or materially the PhD studio work. Examples, and most applicable to the focus area of this study is the *Remains* series 2014-2017 (Fig. 13) and *Ceremony* 2018 (Fig. 14).

Fig. 13

[64] These elements of 'time and labour' will be discussed at length, in reference to *Deathgate*, in this chapter.
[65] Both of which are further discussed shortly.

Fig. 14

Both the *Remains* and *Ceremony* series involved an experimental process of dipping animal bone into porcelain, where various types of layered glaze are then used to fuse the clay onto the pieces of bone that maintain their structure under the high temperatures of the firing process[66]. Series such as *Remains* and *Ceremony* don't reference specific histories or experiences like the previously mentioned projects. Instead, they focus on two things; Firstly, the work is small-scale, material-based experimentation, where non-conventional methods and materials are incorporated into rich, historic, ceramic traditions. This is undertaken in the hope of finding new ways to use ceramic materials, which can then be translated into larger scale projects. Secondly, the work broadly investigates the topics and concepts within the larger scale works, which include the historic and contemporary role of memorialisation, commemorative practices and ideas of preservation.

Through experimentation and the utilisation of materials such as porcelain, gold and bone, there is metaphorical, historical and cultural resonance with important themes in my practice. These themes include preciousness, revere and delicacy via material choices such as porcelain and gold, alongside themes of mortality, life, death and memory via materials such as bone. By physically encapsulating bone in both historic and precious materials (porcelain and gold); the bone itself is 'made permanent' or frozen from any possibility of continued decomposition. Using a layered glaze process and a variety of intensive 'high firings' (upwards of 1260 degrees Celsius),

[66] 'Firing' will be further explained within this chapter.

the bone both absorbs and is surfaced with glass, which is what glaze becomes at high temperatures. This alongside a protective outer case of fragmented porcelain means that the bone is strengthened, protected and preserved as it was found. This process, which I have been refining since 2014, is based in material experimentation but is ultimately leading toward future large-scale projects that will potentially incorporate the process and material results.

I believe the thought provocation and concepts afforded by halting bone decomposition and honouring the final remains of a former living being is useful in addressing traumatic experience and memory because of the previously mentioned common associations of bone, as a material, to themes including mortality and memory due to their materiality/physicality as the final remnants of life past. Honouring this material with, arguably, what are equally thematically potent materials such as porcelain and gold is going to allow a future, larger project to speak further on a major focus of my practice: memorialisation, remembrance and the physical/visual representation of ultimate spectral ends of human experience: incomprehensible trauma, death and their respective memory.

These studio outcomes have all led to and informed the *Deathgate* project 2015-2018 (Fig. 15), which is the central 'practice-led research component' of this thesis and has been developed, produced and exhibited in a parallel timeline with the theoretical research in this PhD.

Fig. 15

Deathgate presents, 1.3 million handmade ceramic objects at a 1:1 ratio (as a metaphor) of all those detained in the Auschwitz network of camps. This network consisted of three major camps: Auschwitz I, which was the original concentration camp of the area, later expanded to include the Auschwitz II (Birkenau) extermination camp, which was the most concentrated site in Europe for mass killing by the Nazi's. The third camp, Auschwitz III – Monowitz, was built after Auschwitz II as a forced labour camp in the latter years of WWII. Alongside these three main camps, the Auschwitz network included 45 satellite or sub-camps built for specific purposes including forced labour, general detention and mass murder. In total, and including all of the sub-camps of each major site, the Nazi's built over 40,000 camps within Europe. Of the six million killed in the Holocaust, Auschwitz II (Birkenau) is responsible for 1.1 million of those deaths. Aesthetically, the *Deathgate* project both draws influence from but also (in a sense) replicates the railway leading through the main entry to Auschwitz II (Birkenau) extermination camp, established in 1940 (Fig. 16). This railway was used as the main mode of prisoner transportation into the camp that was accountable for the vast majority of deaths across the Auschwitz network. Where this railway leads through the entrance of Auschwitz II (Birkenau) is commonly referred to as 'the death gate.'

Fig. 16

The artwork comprises of individually hand-made ceramic 'stones' comparable to those surrounding and covering the actual railway with one stone produced for each of the 1.3 million people detained in the Auschwitz network of camps. The pieces of

the artwork are installed on the floor, piled at a width of 2.5 metres and running in a straight line along the length of the gallery. This installation method is designed to be reminiscent of the railway leading through the 'death gate' of Auschwitz itself. The decision to use the railway as the primary aesthetic influence behind the *Deathgate* project is for several reasons. These reasons include the historical and logistical relevance of this railway line to the function of the Auschwitz camps. As a designed and engineered site for persecution, forced labor and mass extermination, the use of the railway was the most efficient mode for the continued and massive delivery of prisoners to the Auschwitz sites, therefore making the railway line a potent symbol in the grand design and killing within the Auschwitz camps. The creative relevance of the railway line is also for its metaphorical implications. A railway line can be indicative of ideas surrounding 'transience, distance and destination' as well as a cumulative symbol to both 'beginning and end.' These metaphorical signifiers are each important to the overarching history and human experience the work represents but are also emblematic of the physical production period of the work itself.

The decision to create 'stones' is similarly symbolic because it references the Jewish tradition of placing stones on grave sites: a tradition most notably referenced in the final scene of Steven Spielberg's 1993 film, *Schindler's List*, where Jewish people are filmed placing stones on the gravesite of Oskar Schindler (Fig. 17): A man responsible for directly saving the lives of 1,200 Jewish people within Nazi Germany. This ritual has been interpreted in various ways but is commonly recognised as an act of memorialisation, where the stones (unlike flowers that wither and die) remain on the gravesite as a symbol of the permanence of memory and long-lasting legacy.

Fig. 17

This interpretive and inherent quality of inanimate objects relates to American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce's theories on 'signification' and the 'representative symbol' via his extensive writing on semiotics and symbols or the study of objects and symbols that have broad and important cultural meaning. Applying to the 'stone' forms comprising *Deathgate,* Pierce developed writing on the dissemination of certain objects or phenomenon to a signified meaning of something greater. Further informing the symbolic potency of stones are reviewed/edited writing on Pierce's theories in books such as British authors' Rossella Fabbrichesi Leo and Susanna Marietti's *Semiotics and Philosophy in Charles Sanders Peirce* 2006[67], and American writer James Hoopes' *Peirce on Signs* 1991.[68] In the case of stones and their relevance to both the *Deathgate* project and the history it represents: the 'stone' is a signifier in a metaphorical sense of permanence and strength, and in a historical sense to Jewish tradition and memorial practice. Adding to the metaphorical and historical symbology of stones is their signifying qualities in a physical sense to Holocaust history and Auschwitz itself. The *Deathgate* project, aesthetically and physically, aims to directly reference the stones that can be found covering and surrounding the railway line within the preserved Auschwitz II (Birkenau) camp. Using reference images (Fig. 18) taken during my visit to the Auschwitz camps, the ceramic 'stones' produced as part of *Deathgate* were purposefully created using a color ratio (Fig. 19) to closely match what I witnessed at the camps as they are today.

Fig. 18

Fig. 19

The initial development of the *Deathgate* project was undertaken during a six-week international artist residency at *Ateliers Fourwinds Art Centre* near Aureille in France

[67] R.F. Leo & S. Marietti, ed. *Semiotics and Philosophy in Charles Sanders Peirce,* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, United Kingdom, 2006.
[68] J. Hoopes, ed. *Peirce on Signs*, The University of North Carolina Press, London, 1991.

(June-July, 2015). Primarily utilising this residency as a platform to calculate logistical requirements, and establish an effective/efficient process, the first ceramic 'stone' was produced during this residency on Sunday, June 28, 2015. Consequently, the final 'stone' for the *Deathgate* project was produced on Wednesday, November 21, 2018. This timeline considers seminal dates of the function of the Auschwitz concentration camps, where the first 'gassing' of prisoners (the main mode of mass extermination) happened on Wednesday, September 3, 1941, and the mass killing ceased due to the liberation of the Auschwitz camps on Saturday, January 27, 1945. This timeline: both the duration of mass killing in the Auschwitz network of camps, and the physical production of the *Deathgate* project, took a total of three years, four months and 24 days or 1,241 days. In terms of producing the *Deathgate* project, 1,241 days allowed the work to mirror the history it represents, where the imposed deadline for completing the work required a certain amount of physical effort and gave further perspective (primarily in a personal sense) of the immense, systematic extermination of people within that network of camps.

The project, both in its production and scale, is the first installation of its kind in Australia and is unlike that of the two major, dedicated Holocaust memorials in other parts of the country including the *Sydney Gay and Lesbian Holocaust memorial*, Sydney 2000 (Fig. 20).

Fig. 20

This project was made possible by a group of community activists, who raised funds for a public memorial to honour the gay and lesbian people victimised under the Nazi regime. This memorial is placed in Green Park, Darlinghurst, Sydney, which is considered to be the 'heart' of Sydney's gay and lesbian community and was designed by Australian artists Russell Rodrigo and Jennifer Gamble of Chris Matthews and Associates Architects, and then *Urban Art Projects*, *Sydney* constructed the memorial. The second existing Australian Jewish memorial is the nameless *Holocaust memorial*, Perth, 1995 (Fig. 21).

Fig. 21

This monument was made possible by Jewish community leaders of Perth and is broadly dedicated to all those lost in the Holocaust. It features plaques that read:

> *"This memorial is dedicated to the memory of 6,000,000 Jewish men, women and children who perished in the Holocaust: 600,000 Romany (Gypsies) and millions of other civilians who died at the hands of the Nazi regime because of their religious, political, social beliefs and ethnic affiliations."*

Alongside these two public memorials is the existence of three major Holocaust museums: the Sydney Jewish Museum, Sydney, the Jewish Holocaust Museum and Research Centre, Melbourne, and the Holocaust Institute of Western Australia, Yokine. These museums host rotating exhibitions and permanent collections of Holocaust related visual material. Alongside these, the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra opened a permanent Holocaust display in 2016. AWM Director Brendan Nelson in an interview with the Australian Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) stated "…in the small exhibition which is in the second world war galleries,

which is important, has seven objects in it. While it's important, I was embarrassed by the inadequacy of that. We now have 85 objects that are displayed in this permanent gallery."[69]

Despite appeals primarily made by Queensland based Jewish community members, the state of Queensland currently does not have a dedicated public memorial or museum of any kind. This leaves an identifiable gap in the visual representation of the Holocaust within the state of Queensland, which was a major concern in the decision to develop, produce and firstly exhibit the *Deathgate* project in Queensland. The focus of those previously discussed Holocaust-based studio outcomes since 2014 is also due to this gap within Queensland alongside other reasons discussed earlier in this chapter. Those reasons include representing, from limited personal experience and perspective, the moments and histories that have affected me most. The Holocaust-based studio outcomes are because of the profound personal effects felt visiting the preserved sites of Sachsenhausen and Auschwitz. This is accompanied by an interest in the responsibilities to post-Holocaust representation, as it is now moving away from direct lived experience toward a new mode of representation beyond the abilities and recounting of first-hand survivors. I also identify the Holocaust, due to its aftermath regarding migration as well as its effects on global humanitarian concerns and perspectives, as an event that fundamentally shaped the Western culture and society I am part of. The event of the Holocaust is also a stark and relatively recent warning to what public and governmental attitudes of racial, religious and personal intolerance and prejudice can lead toward, which means that its continued representation is a reminder against such attitudes.

The *Deathgate* project required less technical skill than it did a commitment of time and labour. This detail of the work is intended as a means for accessible viewer engagement with a foundationally conceptual artwork, where time and labour are proposed as valuable commodities that are broadly understood and recognised by a wide range of people. The significance of time is primarily expressed through the previously mentioned durational production of the artwork. In reference to the history

[69] M. Jamieson, *New Tribute to Holocaust Victims Opens at AWM Canberra* (December, 2016), accessed 5/10/2018, https://www.sbs.com.au/news/new-tribute-to-holocaust-victims-opens-at-awm-in-canberra

the artwork represents 1,241 days were spent in the physical production phase of the work as a matching timeline to the mass killings carried out in the Auschwitz camps. The significance of labour is expressed primarily through the individualised creation of each ceramic 'stone'. This involved the processing of a large amount of clay (approximately 16 tons) and the physical production of each piece, which was carried out entirely alone. Both of these elements: time and labour, are intended to echo, through the artwork, the sentiments and reality of what happened within the Auschwitz camps. This is not to suggest that the production of the *Deathgate* project is in any way comparable to the experience of those within the camps themselves, but instead is meant to reference the everyday, monotonous, painful turmoil of life in Auschwitz. To be imprisoned there for several years (as many were) is unfathomable, as is the oppressive forced labour and physical effort of merely surviving in such an environment. With those things being such incomprehensible experiences for those who were there, *Deathgate* is intended to reference this via what could be considered (to some extent) as an excessive amount of time, labour and discomfort spent on a single artwork.

Beyond the primary focus on time and labour as a prominent element to the project, there are particular choices and processes in the production of the work that subversively engage the history it represents. The choice to exclusively use clay in the production of the work is one such example because of the material's previously discussed ability to 'record' human contact (through indexical impressions) but also because of the strength of the material when it is fired. Each ceramic 'stone' for the *Deathgate* project has been fired within the maximum temperature range of each respective clay type. This means that each piece is taken to temperatures ranging between 1100 and 1300 degrees Celsius, which hardens and strengthens the clay to be comparable, and for some clay types, harder, than stone.

Another example of a subversive 'process-based' detail that addresses the history represented through *Deathgate* is the act of firing the clay itself. This process involved the repetitive act of loading approximately 10,000 dried ceramic stones into a large kiln at one time and firing the kiln to extreme temperatures in order to solidify or 'make permanent' the ceramic pieces. This process, as well as the number of pieces

fired at one time draws similarities with the method of mass extermination and cremation within the Auschwitz camps, where between the four largest gas chambers and the smaller, initially built chambers within the camps, 8 – 10,000 people could be killed at any one time.

Alongside these details that are specific to decisions and processes involving the experience of creating the work, the logistical obligations of the *Deathgate* project offered avenues for community engagement. Namely, the process used for the final calculation of the number of ceramic 'stones' produced for the artwork. During the main production period of making the 'stones' themselves (March, 2016 to November, 2018), I approximated an average number of individual pieces that could be made from the initial weight of each block of clay. Because the weight of clay changes drastically through the firing process, a secondary, comparative 'total number' was required via counting the completed, fired ceramic 'stones'. I consequently hosted a workshop, which was a public 'open-call' offer for a limited amount of people to assist in an 'official human count' for 10% of the final work. Held in February, 2018, a full day workshop was facilitated for interested community members, who volunteered their time to individually count 130,000 ceramic 'stones' (Fig. 22 & Fig. 23).

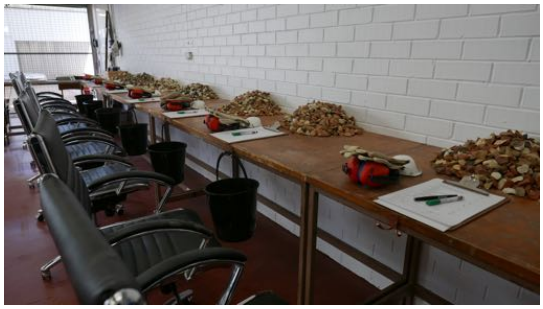

Fig. 22

Fig. 23

This process involved counting 'stones' into groups of 1000, which were each weighed and stored. The workshop allowed for 130 weight samples of 1000 stones, which was then averaged to equal 9.997kg per 1000 'stones'. This average weight was then used to calculate the remaining 90% of the fired ceramic pieces for the *Deathgate* project. The significance of weight is entirely for numerical accuracy. Although the number of 1.3 million Auschwitz detainees is not exact, it is historically

the closest estimate at this point in time. Due to this, and because the *Deathgate* project is intended as a 1:1 ratio of a ceramic 'stone' to each detainee, the total number of ceramic 'stones' produced needs to be accurate. Physically counting and weighing the artwork (once before firing and again after firing) ensures that this 1:1 ratio is accurately achieved.

Each ceramic piece for the *Deathgate* project is handmade and consequently unique, which makes direct reference to the individuals who suffered. The pinching technique (Fig. 24) used for making the 'stones' leaves a physical imprint on each object as a gestural and felt mark, but also as an indexical trace of the body as metaphor to each individual who was detained in the Auschwitz camps. The significance of individualised and unique objects in response to the history is a contemplative strategy, that upon close inspection of the work, a permanent fingerprint can be seen on each individual piece as a result of the making process (Fig. 25). This fingerprint is evidence of personalised attentiveness, which separates these hand-made objects from comparatively similar natural stones. With close inspection and the feature of a human fingerprint on each piece, viewers are given an opportunity to examine this gestural mark as an anthropomorphic attribute or index and therefore, to consider each piece as intrinsically human.

Fig. 24

Fig. 25

This 'mark of the hand' is a way to demonstrate a commitment to symbolising each of the detainees of the camp and recognises each life as individually important, and is also an attempt to introduce a sense of human physicality into an event that is so shrouded in inhumane atrocities. Alongside this, the physical requirement of producing the stones is a personal exercise in comprehension of the event itself. The

statistic being addressed through *Deathgate* is in many aspects inconceivable. Visually and physically translating the number of 1.3 million provided an avenue for each digit of that number to pass through my hands, both individually during the making process and collectively during the firing, mixing and bagging processes. Despite the longevity and physicality of these exercises (and not surprisingly), entirely imagining each individual piece as a human being remains beyond my imaginative capability. In saying this, my consideration of this number as a whole has altered due to the production of *Deathgate.* The work itself, purely in its physical representative value, provides a tangible perspective to a precise number that is most often only read or heard.

As previously discussed, the aesthetic, metaphoric, cultural and historical qualities of stones have been considered in the development and production of *Deathgate*. In conjunction with this, the pinching process and general production of the work is also an ultimately and deliberately reductive exercise. This 'reduction' is something aimed, for historical purposes, to echo the ideological attitude of Nazi's against their victims, where Jews' (amongst others) perceived value was sub-human and reduced to that of vermin. The treatment of Nazi victims within concentration/extermination camps was also evidence of an ultimate reduction of humanity, which is personified in the major death camps such as Auschwitz.

As an exhibited work, *Deathgate* is presented as two separated amounts of ceramic 'stones.' One amount contains 1.1 million 'stones' to represent those who were killed in the Auschwitz camps, and the other contains 200,000 to represent the survivors. This gives a direct visual reference to a staggering statistic associated with the Auschwitz camps. The work is presented as two straight lengths of stones running parallel to each other. When viewed from above, it appears as a simple bar graph. Each length is 2.5 metres wide to match the width of the train line *Deathgate* was inspired by. For its first showing within the *Goods Shed* exhibition venue in Toowoomba, Queensland, the bed of 'stones is approximately six inches deep and the length containing 1.1 million pieces runs straight for 110 metres, while the length containing 200,000 runs for 20 metres.[70]

[70] Within the *Goods Shed* in Toowoomba, *Deathgate* totals 325 square metres of utilised floor space.

The physical scale of the finished project aims to offer insight into the enormity of the event it represents while also referencing the most affective personal elements of my own visit to Auschwitz. To elaborate, I reference back to the previously discussed project, *Arbeit Macht Frei: Work Makes you Free* 2014 (Fig. 26), where I recreated the autopsy table that remains in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp because it was the most personally affective object I was in contact with while visiting the camp.

Fig. 26

Similarly, several of the elements that are evident in the *Deathgate* project are from personal impressions of the Auschwitz camps themselves: the most prominent and memorable being a felt sense of scale while there. The size of the *Deathgate* artwork is responsive to my visit to Auschwitz having an overwhelming and oppressive tone due to the sheer size of the camps themselves, which imposes on a visitor's (my) body. *Deathgate* is consequently designed to present the viewer with a large-scale work that requires a certain amount of effort to inspect in its entirety. For instance, to walk the length of the artwork, end to end, is not an effortless exercise and both intends to impose a sense of enormity alongside offering a time-intensive, contemplative opportunity for viewers to walk from one end to the other.

The *Deathgate* project, both in its creation and presentation, signifies an awareness of the inherent limitations of post-Holocaust representation via an ultimately crude and minimal display. The 'unpresentable,'[71] is recognised both in the aesthetic simplicity

[71] Discussed in detail in Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable.*

of the objects, alongside the monotonous exercise of their production. Primarily through its association to Holocaust history, but also through the production of individualised, unique objects: the project aims to produce an 'affective atmosphere' or an 'aura of atrocity' because of its historic and traumatic connotations. It is intended for the work to not only commemorate the victims within the Auschwitz camps, but also reference the magnitude of the Holocaust, honouring the legacy of those who experienced and suffered through such ordeals. It also has the ability to draw comparisons to other moments of degradation within history and those that suffered and perpetrated such events, while intending to engage the viewers' capacity for empathy. Further to the aesthetic ambiguity of *Deathgate*: this gives it the ability to broadly speak about the abhorrence and ongoing nature of things such as genocide, injustice and prejudice. This is an important aspect of the research and final outcome because instances of discrimination and hatred continue to manifest in contemporary culture, and artwork allows for both their condemnation and broad discussion.

In the memorialisation of events such as the Holocaust, a sense of vigilance about how the event began[72] is instilled. The lessons should be remembered if for anything, then for history to not repeat itself. The aesthetic, physical, metaphorical, philosophical, historical and cultural implications, considerations and qualities of the *Deathgate* project are intended to harmonise to both represent the wider event and effects of the Holocaust, alongside specific details to the Auschwitz camp network and my personal impressions of visiting the preserved sites as they are today. Broader than this, *Deathgate* is evidence of an ongoing theoretical investigation, which continues to explore how to effectively represent traumatic memory, history and experience via visual art. This theoretical investigation, discussed at length in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 aim to encompass the overarching goals of this practice-led project and contextualise it within the established and continually changing theoretical framework of representability, memory theory, 'the sublime' and 'aura theory.'

Contextually aligned with the broader focus of my art practice, the practical component of the PhD continues to represent the events, experiences and memories

[72] Discussed in detail in Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*

that have had the most resonant personal affect. *Deathgate* is intended to be an affective experience for the viewer reflecting on my admittedly limited experience in visiting the preserved Auschwitz camps as they are today. By specifying an 'affective experience for the viewer', *Deathgate* is concerned in visually and tangibly presenting my personal impression of engaging with Holocaust history, to place the viewer in a position where they consider the event and its effects in a way not readily available in Queensland, and scarcely available in the whole of Australia. The work is an example of the theoretical enquiries of this thesis being utilised in a practice-based research outcome that aims to effectively address an event like the Holocaust through visual art, while questioning the contemporary role of this type of visual representation and the current state of memorialisation practices in a visual arts context.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

The literature review will discuss seminal texts that have been foundational to the ongoing field of theoretical and studio-research, which predominantly assess post-Holocaust/traumatic art. The texts that have been identified as important to the theoretical research address a range of topic areas: memory, representation, 'the sublime,' 'aura theory,' and both historical and contemporary artist writings. Collectively these texts have assisted in developing writing on how, through visual art, issues relating to traumatic memory, history and human experience can be effectively represented.

The researched texts have allowed for contextualisation of the studio research as well as offer insight into the ongoing theoretical investigation of the role, relevance and effect of memorials and post Holocaust/traumatic visual representation. Such artworks have been assessed according to the problematic issue of representation, which is underpinned by the study of history and memory; the aesthetic considerations of such work through the aesthetic category of 'the sublime,' and the artwork-to-viewer relationship or affective dimension of such work via 'aura theory'. This research leads toward the establishment of new terminology, 'an aura of atrocity', which is in specificity to the affecting qualities of the artwork produced for the PhD and referenced throughout the thesis. All these texts are fundamentally linked by concernment in the affective dimension of works of art, the role of memorialisation in contemporary society and the inherent limitations, at least in a totalistic sense, of addressing a powerful and tragic event, such as the Holocaust, through visual art.

The literature review is ordered in a manner that begins with the seminal texts that are most relevant to the research, which outline the origins and fundamentals of each theoretical concern: post Holocaust/traumatic representability, the aesthetics of the 'the sublime' and 'presenting the unpresentable,' and the consequential 'aura' of such representations, or rather, their ability to affect the viewer. These seminal texts are followed by secondary literature that assisted in shaping the theoretical investigation,

which is to say that the secondary literature developed from the seminal, foundational texts to place those theoretical concerns in a contemporary-art-based context; applying them to recent visual outcomes in the field of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork. This literature review individually summarises each written work to offer perspective on their foundational arguments, developments and relevance to this study.

T. Adorno, *Prisms*, MIT Press, USA, 1982.

Originally written in 1967 and as a whole, *Prisms* is a collection of essays by Adorno[73] that broadly engage in cultural criticism and discuss society at large. Offering philosophical and critical perspective on a variety of topics, *Prisms'* discussion ranges through music, literature and 'the museum', where Adorno investigates the underlying cultural, political, economic and aesthetic concerns regarding aspects of everyday life. In this collection of essays, Adorno was amongst the first to suggest problems regarding post-Holocaust representation, stating 'the critique of culture is confronted with the last stage in the dialectic of culture and barbarism: to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric'.[74] This quote has since been addressed and interpreted by many theorists and philosophers,[75] and within the field of research, is shortened to 'no poetry [art] after Auschwitz' by (later discussed) writers such as Jill Bennett in *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Lisa Saltzman in *Anselm Kiefer and Art After Auschwitz* and Naomi Mandel in *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America*. This PhD will address Adorno and the vast effects this event has had on society, and the subsequent impossibility of condensing such tragedy, in a totalistic sense, into a single work of art (referenced as poetry).

Adorno's suggestion is fundamental and foundational to the questions about how anyone can represent such barbarity, and the idea of 'presenting the unpresentable', as Lyotard stated.[76] The event of the Holocaust, in many ways, is far beyond comprehension, and this writing of Adorno is an important point of reference in

[73] Discussed in the thesis introduction.
[74] T. Adorno, *Prisms*, MIT Press, USA, 1982, pg. 34.
[75] Many of which are discussed in this thesis such as LaCapra, Ranciere, Mandel, Bennet and Ray.
[76] Jean-Francois Lyotard's theory is addressed in Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable*.

initiating debate on how to represent such an event. Investigating this in the context of the PhD research establishes the origin of Holocaust-based representational concerns in order for the theorisation of how, aesthetically, such an event can be presented beyond the representational problematics initially stated by Adorno.

J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, USA.

In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge,* Lyotard[77] applied the term, 'presenting the unpresentable' to the field of art theory and aesthetics. 'Let us wage war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unpresentable.'[78] By 'unpresentable', Lyotard means that an object associated with tragedy or trauma beyond our comprehension is considered 'unpresentable' because of its inherent representational limits or rather, the artwork's inability to represent such events and experiences in their entirety. Lyotard suggests that viewers can witness the unpresentable through knowing the impossibility of aestheticising objects of dynamical sublimity. This theory of the 'unpresentable' is most aptly applied to the representation of history or real human experience associated with mass trauma or loss, where the artwork is forced into the realm of sublimity by association with its historic or experiential influence. For instance, an event like the Holocaust, where six million people were murdered under a prejudiced ideology, is unable to be represented in any sense of totality. The breadth and recurring/generational human effects, let alone the broader cultural, social and political fallout, is far beyond any capacity for comprehension. This leaves it ultimately, by definition, 'unpresentable' in totalistic aesthetic terms. In the face of aestheticising that kind of incomprehensible history, the work is presented as a sublime indicator toward what it is referencing. This means that a post-Holocaust/traumatic representation is inherently abstracted in its representational goals because such events and experiences can't be presented in their totalistic effect.

In terms of discussing concepts of the sublime, which are further discussed in Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable* of this thesis, Lyotard's writing of the 'unpresentable' is foundational to the field of contemporary sublimity and its further

[77] Discussed in the thesis introduction.
[78] J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, USA, pg. 64.

theorisation by writers, critics, historians and artists such as Paul Crowther in *The Kantian Sublime, The Avant-garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard* (1989), Gene Ray in *Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory* (2005), Christine Battersby in *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference* (2007) and Jacques Ranciere in *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009). In this postmodern landscape of art practice, Lyotard's literature offers an opportunity to further develop and discuss contemporary art and studio research outcomes that pertain to the 'unpresentable' or sublime via their association with events such as the Holocaust. Ultimately, Lyotard's theory of 'the sublime' describes and contextualises an aesthetic category that applies to the visual art examples and practical component of the PhD from a contemporary visual context. This means that through Lyotard's discussion of 'the sublime', the aestheticisation of events such as the Holocaust is discussed beyond the realisation of its inherent representational limits, at least in a totalistic sense.

W. Benjamin, *On Hashish*, Harvard University Press, USA, 2006.

On Hashish is an early publication of German philosopher Walter Benjamin that explored drug-based experiments between the years of 1927 and 1935. These experiments were in search of what he called 'profane illumination' and his documentation methods include written essays, journal entries, letters and sketches. The book contains the expansive experiences of both Benjamin and his colleagues who experimented with a range of psychoactive and hallucinogenic substances in order to document the thought processes and revelations of their intoxicated state of mind. The majority of the writing is from the perspective of drug-induced experiences, where users describe feelings of inhabiting multiple planes of existence and vivid philosophical immersion in ideas.

The writing and results of Benjamin's 'hashish experiments' are divergent in scope but the importance of this text to the enquiry of this thesis is because *On Hashish* contains Benjamin's first written record of the concept of 'aura' as the perceptive gaze of a viewer in the presence of something profoundly affecting. Benjamin's writing of 'aura' in *On Hashish* explores it as the observed 'qualities' of a person or object from the perspective of a spectator. It is related to the noticed emotional effect of a particular subject, such as a person, place or object, to the viewer of that subject.

As this thesis is focused on theories surrounding how to effectively address traumatic events, history and human experience through visual art; the concept of 'aura' is important as it discusses the potential affecting qualities of art addressing such issues. As stated in the introduction and further explained in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity*, the concept of 'aura' and its further development via the new term 'aura of atrocity' is the basis for this research discussing how artwork catalysed by incomprehensible human history/experience, is to affect viewers and create an artwork-to-viewer experience that is profoundly contemplative and affecting. The establishment of 'aura' within *On Hashish* led to further theorisation of the concept in Benjamin's *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*.

W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Prism Key Press, USA, 2010.

Originally written in 1935, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* is a short essay written by Benjamin as a responsive action to the growth of film and photography as artistic mediums for the time. To give context to the length of this essay, the edition being assessed is in a book that solely contains this seminal essay and totals 49 pages. The essay discusses a perspective-based shift in the viewing of art because of both the representational accuracy of photography and the continuous nature of film. It also discusses a level of disdain for these developing technologies as artistic tools because of their mechanical nature.

> 'Let us compare the screen on which a film unfolds with the canvas of a painting. The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations. Before the movie frame he cannot do so. No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed. It cannot be arrested.'[79]

Through this, Benjamin is suggesting that by film's ability to control narrative and directly represent its subject by mechanical means, the spectator's mind is focused on following what is presented to them rather than a level of contemplation that is offered by a painting. To elaborate, a painting has layers of readable information not just via the subject captured within the painting but also through the spectator's

[79] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Prism Key Press, USA, 2010, pg. 42.

knowledge that an artist has executed the representation through their own aesthetic choices and technical skill. The ability for photography and film to 'copy' or perfectly capture a specific moment in time is considered by Benjamin to be a 'reproduction' that lacks authenticity. He believes that a reproduction of 'time and place' via a mechanical medium such as film or photography is absent of the essence to be found in traditional representations such as paintings or sculpture, which gain authenticity through the human labour of an artist attempting the challenges of accurate/effective representation. This idea is theorised by Benjamin in relation to an 'aura' that is lost by mechanical reproduction (via photography and film). 'Aura,' as Benjamin writes, is related to a 'unique quality' that is present because of an artwork's historical context as well as the circumstance in which it was created. 'Aura' relates to a spectator's experience of an artwork, which is affected by his or her own personal, historical, social and political awareness:

> 'The uniqueness of a work of art is inseparable from its being embedded in the fabric of tradition. This tradition itself is thoroughly alive and extremely changeable. An ancient statue of Venus, for example, stood in a different traditional context with the Greeks, who made it an object of veneration, than with the clerics of the Middle Ages, who viewed it as an ominous idol. Both of them, however, were equally confronted with its uniqueness, that is, its aura.'[80]

This means that the concept of 'aura' is a direct relationship between the artwork and the viewer. The viewer's experience is dictated as much by the meaning and intention of the artwork as it is the personal situation of the viewer: a reciprocal relationship where the 'aura' of an artwork is individualised to each person viewing it. Benjamin believes that during the time he wrote this essay (when the technology of mechanical reproduction was advancing at an enormous rate), the disintegration of human involvement in creating artwork would ultimately eliminate the 'aura' of the work. Meaning that without things such as the gestural marks of, for instance, a paintbrush or the chiselling of marble, artwork would lack an affecting or unique quality that positions spectators in a place of true contemplation. 'One might subsume the

[80] W. Benjamin, ibid, pg. 19.

eliminated element in the term 'aura' and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of a work of art.'[81]

This text is seminal in one of the primary theoretical focuses of this thesis. The concept, relevance and development of 'aura theory' in this PhD research will discuss the relationship between artwork that represents incomprehensible human experience (such as *Deathgate*) and the viewer of that artwork. Using 'aura theory' and developing a new term inspired by Benjamin's writing is invaluable to the aim of this thesis because it assesses, in specificity to post Holocaust/traumatic artwork, how the viewer is affected by representations of traumatic history, events and experience.

J. Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Stamford University Press, California, 2005.

Empathic Vision, Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art by Jill Bennett adds to the broad discussion on art's role in the representation of traumatic history, events and human experience. In this book, Bennett addresses the problematics of attempting to 'reduce trauma or painful experience to a mere aesthetic concern'.[82] Alongside discussing these problems within post-traumatic artistic representation (as is the case for many of the chosen texts within this thesis) are the affecting qualities of work addressing such things. Bennett states: 'up until now, theorists of trauma and memory have paid relatively little attention to visual and performance art. Yet in those fields, there is a long tradition of engagement with affect and immediate experience, not just as sources of inspiration or objects of representation, but as fundamental components of a dynamic between the artwork and the spectator'.[83]

Through broad discussion about the concept of 'un-representability' and more specific discussion about the affect of artwork representing traumatic history, Bennett's writing offers a bridge between two of the major theoretical concerns of this thesis: that of contextualising theories of the sublime within the current field of contemporary art and memorials, and that of the affective dimension of such work, or as it is discussed in this PhD: the 'aura of atrocity' presented by artwork with such

[81] W. Benjamin, ibid, pg. 14.
[82] J. Bennett, 2005, pg. 5.
[83] J. Bennett, ibid, pg. 23.

connotations. Bennett discusses the affecting qualities of art in terms of the spectator's empathetic response to work that represents specific history or experience. She explains that via an artwork's association with particular traumatic themes, the concept of empathy expands, and through the artwork, offers the ability to contemplate the experience/trauma of others in a new way.

E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, N. Hailes Publisher, London, 2017.

Anglo-Irish philosopher and political theorist Edmund Burke's text, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* was originally written in 1757 and is the first written record of the concept of 'the sublime' being linked to human experience and comprehension. In his theorisation, this text separated the concept of 'the sublime' into an isolated aesthetic category associated with what is beyond human capacity for comprehension or what is a conundrum of rationality. This establishment of 'the sublime' as an aesthetic category and field is what lead to its development by philosophers and theorists who are important to this research such as Kant and Lyotard in their publications, including *Critique of Pure Reason* by Kant and *The Postmodern Condition* by Lyotard. Issues of the sublime situated within artwork is discussed predominantly in Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable* through modern theorists (who are discussed shortly), and in conjunction with visual examples by artists including Goya, Picasso and Attie.[84]

I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hackett Publishing Company, USA, 1996.

Following Burke's discussion of the sublime in the 18th century is Immanuel Kant's developments of those ideas in *Critique of Pure Reason* originally published in 1781. This book ultimately investigated the scope and limits of 'pure reason', where Kant explores what human reason can determine without the aid of other human senses or faculties. Although complex and bordering on 'unreadable' due to Kant's use of hyper-specified terminology and the depth of his philosophical thinking, *Critique of Pure Reason* nevertheless addresses the concept of sublimity in response to Burke. In the literature, Kant states: 'the mind is in the presence of the sublime, attempting to

[84] All of which are discussed in Chapter 4: Presenting the Unpresentable.

imagine what it cannot'.[85] This suggests that the sublime links with incomprehensibility and is adorned by association with something that is beyond reasonable understanding.

Kant's writing within *Critique of Pure Reason* offers a historic and philosophical foundation in the later developed theories of the sublime as they relate to aesthetics or artwork. Contemporary writers in the field such as previously mentioned Lyotard, along with Paul Crowther, Christine Battersby and Gene Ray, have used this writing in the establishment of their developments of 'the sublime' in the postmodern world and in relation to contemporary art that aesthetically deals with concepts of incomprehensibility, horror and trauma.

P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime, The Avant-garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard*, New Formations Number 7, 1989.

In the context of furthering and modernising theories of Kantian sublimity is English philosopher Paul Crowther's, *The Kantian Sublime, The Avant-garde, and the Postmodern, A Critique of Lyotard.*[86] Within this text, Crowther, as a seminal figure in the development of 'sublime theory, states: 'the term 'sublime' is aptly applied to art when it is of colossal size or terrifying power, or employs form or imagery which successfully invoke such overwhelming associations'.[87] Crowther's discussion of the sublime is in direct relation to aesthetics and the production of artwork. With his theorisation being primarily framed by the writing of Kant and Lyotard, Crowther's work is important in recognising the lineage of development regarding the sublime and its relationship to aesthetics/artwork. In order for this thesis to use concepts of the sublime to investigate the aestheticisation of historical events such as the Holocaust: a comprehensive analysis of existing and seminal writing on the sublime is necessary. *The Kantian Sublime, The Avant-garde, and the Postmodern, A Critique of Lyotard* is therefore seminal in linking the origins of 'the sublime' to its postmodern developments via Lyotard. This is then further discussed in relation to contemporary art practice and how 'the sublime' is incorporated into projects such as *Above and*

[85] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hackett Publishing Company, USA, 1996, pg. 97.
[86] P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime, The Avant-garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard*, New Formations Number 7, 1989.
[87] P. Crowther, ibid, pg. 72.

Beyond 2001 by American artists Ned Broderick and Rick Steinbock; and *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* 2014 by English artist Paul Cummins and British theatre designer Tom Piper.[88] Projects such as these are exemplified to discuss contemporary applications of 'the sublime', but also to contextualise the main practice-led studio research outcome for this PhD (the *Deathgate* project).

T.M. Costelloe, ed. *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012.

American philosopher Timothy M. Costelloe compiled a range of critical essays alongside his own writing for *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present.* The book offers a comprehensive examination of 'the sublime' as a topic of philosophical discussion, exploring its relevance to art, aesthetics and human experience across several centuries. Each essay has been chronologically and carefully chosen; offering an analysis of the origins and implementation of the concept both historically and in contemporary visual culture such as the print work of Goya, paintings by Picasso and its use in contemporary art practices including mixed media installation work, interactive artwork and video art.

D. LaCapra, *History and memory after Auschwitz*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1998.

History and Memory After Auschwitz is seminal to the research of memory theory in visual culture within this thesis. In this book, LaCapra[89] writes specifically on memory-based, post-Holocaust representation within art and literature; referencing the problematics of representing trauma in a way similar to that of Jill Bennett. 'The problematics of trauma should not lead one to mystify problems or to discount the work of both memory and reconstruction with respect to limit-events.'[90] Throughout the text, LaCapra suggests that regardless of the inherent limitations, at least in a totalistic sense, in consideration of representing an event such as the Holocaust, the creation of, and necessity for artwork related to such an event (if anything) is in the hope of 'remembering' for the sake of history not repeating itself. In discussing the complexities of post-Holocaust representation, LaCapra uses examples such as

[88] Both of these projects are discussed in Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable.*
[89] Discussed in the thesis introduction.
[90] D. LaCapra, 1998, pg. 183.

Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah* (1985) and Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus* (1991), which are used as effective models for post-Holocaust referencing within this thesis.

A. Benjamin, ed. *Walter Benjamin and Art*, Continuum Publishing, London, 2005.

Walter Benjamin and Art is a collection of essays compiled by Andrew Benjamin. Each essay is primarily focused on discussing the seminal book of Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, where Benjamin's writing is critiqued and applied to the fields of philosophy, literary criticism, art history and cultural studies. 'The project of this collection of essays is to use Benjamin's text as a way of opening up questions within the practice of art.'[91]

Of particular relevance to Chapter 5 of this thesis are the essays *Aura, Still* (2002) by Robert Kaufman and *Aura, Face, Photography: Re-reading Benjamin Today* (2005) by Diarmuid Costello. These essays specifically focus on Benjamin's theorisation and subsequent interpretations of 'aura theory,' which is an important theoretical field that the thesis utilises to discuss the affective dimension of artwork and the experience of the spectator in relation to post Holocaust/traumatic contemporary art across all mediums.

J. McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*, Cornell University Press, London, 1993.

American literary theorist John McCole's *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition* analyses a wide range of written works produced over the course of Walter Benjamin's career. In critical response, McCole interprets many of Benjamin's paradoxical and contradictory theories into a new mode of coherence, where he maps the development of Benjamin's thoughts on cultural tradition and philosophy. In the book and of particular relevance to this thesis is an analysis of Benjamin's 'aura theory,' where McCole confirms Benjamin's definition of 'aura' as the inherent 'uniqueness and authenticity' of an object or artwork, allowing it to emit meaning beyond its appearance and physicality. McCole states in regard to the 'aura' of an

[91] A. Benjamin, ed. *Walter Benjamin and Art*, Continuum Publishing, London, 2005, pg. 2.

object: 'the authenticity of the object, its uniqueness, rests in its full historical testimony, that is, in the entire range of contexts it has passed through, not just in its singular, documentary testimony to its origins'. This indicates toward an object or artwork's affective dimension not just deriving from its aesthetic presence, but also its historic and experiential influence and context.

R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin,* Guilford Publications, USA, 1995.

The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin delves into the collective works, theology and intentions of Walter Benjamin's literary accomplishments, where he both isolates and compares topics of language, ethics, politics, philosophy and art. This investigation both places Benjamin's theories in the context of the time in which they were written, as well as questioning their relevance to contemporary art and philosophical theory alongside contemporary art itself. 'For Benjamin, art is a manifestation of the human power of naming – or of revealing through language the true nature of things and beings.'[92] Particularly relevant to the focus of this thesis is Rochlitz's[93] writing on Benjamin's 'aura' or the transcendental/affective dimension of art in *Chapter 2: Destruction of the Aura, Photography and Film* and *Chapter 3: Modern Art and the Sacrifice of the Aura*. In these chapters, Rochlitz offers a rare chronology of each 'aura theory' related development within Benjamin's writing. This identifies aura as both relating to the unique or un-reproducible qualities of art as well as a definitive term for the viewers relationship to or affective dimension of artwork itself.

R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Vintage Books, London, 2000.

French philosopher Roland Barthes wrote *Camera Lucida* in 1980 shortly before his death. The book investigates the cultural and artistic integrity of photography as a medium, arguing that it has a special ability to capture and portray emotion. Of particular relevance to the thesis is a concept Barthes coins as 'punctum'. The term is derived from 'puncture' and is discussed as the elements of a photograph that have the ability to emotionally 'pierce' the viewer. Similar to Benjamin's concept of 'aura;'

[92] R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin,* Guilford Publications, USA, 1995, pg. 48.
[93] Mentioned in the thesis introduction.

'punctum' investigates the relationship between spectator and image/object, where there are certain aesthetic elements, which can elicit an emotional response in the viewer. This can be seen in the work of French artist Christian Boltanski[94] whose installation-based practice incorporates found photographs of Jewish peoples as a strategic reminder of the mass murder of Jews by the Nazis. His work, both in imagery and chosen materials, represents a deep contemplation regarding the reconstruction of past through historic photographic assemblages.

M. O'Neill, ed. *Adorno Culture and Feminism*, Sage Publications, London, 1999.
Compiled by British writer Maggie O'Neill and in its entirety, this book is a collection of essays focused on applying Adorno's critical and central theories such as authenticity, the culture industry, aesthetics and negative dialectics to contemporary feminist thinking. Within the book and of immediate relevance to this study is O'Neill's *Chapter 2, Adorno Benjamin and the Aura: An Aesthetics for Photography* written by Shierry Weber Nicholsen. This essay investigates Adorno's impressions and response to the theories of Walter Benjamin outlined in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. In the essay, Nicholsen discusses Adorno's disagreement with Benjamin's inference that the development of photographic technology essentially negates the 'authenticity' or 'uniqueness' of original works of art and therefore diminishes the transcendent quality or 'aura' of artwork at large due to technological reproducibility. Adorno instead argues for the critical and formal potential of mediums such as photography to the modern art world, arguing that aura is less reliant on uniqueness, as it is the political, dialectic and critical capacity of art regardless of the medium used to produce it.

Although much of the writing is focused on Benjamin and Adorno's specific attitudes on photography itself rather than its theoretical implications, it is through this essay that Adorno's contributions to the discussion of 'aura theory' can be further investigated and analysed.

[94] Discussed throughout this thesis.

J. Ranciere, *The Future of the Image*, Verso, London, 2007.

The Future of the Image is a book that continues Ranciere's engagement with discussing the links between art and politics. Earlier books in his lineage of publications include *On the Shores of Politics* (1995) and *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2004). Rather than basing itself in the field of political philosophy (as is the case in those previous titles), *The Future of the Image* is particularly focused on ongoing and broad research on modern and postmodern aesthetics. This book marks a turn in Ranciere's writing, where he is more concerned with the social role of art through the lens of previous writing on art's political role. The book achieves broad discussion on the relationship between artist and artwork, as well as artwork and spectator. In the title, Raciere's use of the word 'image' is in a non-conventional sense. The 'image' is not only something the viewer sees, but instead, something the viewer experiences. The artistic image is discussed in terms of its function, its affecting value and broader meaning beyond its direct aesthetic appearance.

Of particular relevance to this study, Chapter 5: *Are Some Things Unrepresentable* (in *The Future of the Image*) is important contemporary writing on the discussion of 'the sublime' and 'presenting the unpresentable' as stated by Lyotard. Through this chapter, the ideas of Lyotard's 'un-representability' are put under scrutiny and discussed in relation to aesthetics, where the role of 'sublime art' is defined as the field in which to represent incomprehensible experience.

> 'In Lyotard in particular, the existence of events that exceed what can be thought calls for an art that witnesses to the unthinkable in general, to the essential discrepancy between what affects us and such of it as our thinking can master. It is then the peculiarity of a new mode of art – sublime art – to record the trace of the unthinkable.'[95]

As mentioned, *The Future of the Image* is a contemporary example in the continued discussion of 'sublime art'. Using Lyotard's 1979 writing and theorising of this field of art, Ranciere's research puts ideas of the sublime in the context of studio outcomes, contemporary society and visual culture as it stands in the 21st century.

[95] J. Ranciere, *The Future of the Image*, Verso, London, 2007, pg. 111.

J. Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Verso, London, 2009.

As a follow-up to *The Future of The Image*, Ranciere's *The Emancipated Spectator* reflects on the role of the spectator in relation to contemporary art. Through the discussion of modernist, avant-garde and contemporary art, theatrical performance, photography and cinema, Raciere explores the experience of the spectator, and the 'activation' of the artwork via their viewing of it.

Particularly applicable to the focus area of this PhD is *Chapter 4: The Intolerable Image* (in *The Emancipated Spectator*). This chapter is entirely focused on the representation of traumatic history, events and human experience and how seemingly 'unpresentable' visual material is to be presented and received by the spectator of the artwork.

> 'At first sight, the question seems merely to ask what features make us unable to view an image without experiencing pain or indignation. But a second question immediately emerges, bound up with the first: is it acceptable to make such images and exhibit them to others?'[96]

By this, Ranciere is asking whether it is appropriate for an artist to create work that is catalysed by the traumatic experience of others: whether or not (to the maker of the artwork) the creation of work based on incomprehensible experience is worth attempting.

The developments in Ranciere's writing, where he specifically uses the Holocaust as an example in this discussion, are particularly important. This is because post-Holocaust artwork is repeatedly referenced within the theoretical enquiry while the practical component of the PhD is based on the Holocaust and its representation. Of more specific significance to this research is Ranciere's statement on 'presenting the unpresentable,' 'because at the heart of the event of the Shoah there is something unpresentable – something that cannot structurally be fixed in an image'.[97]

[96] J. Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Verso, London, 2009, pg. 83.
[97] J. Ranciere, ibid, pg. 89.

G. Ray, *Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan, USA, 2005.

American critical theorist Gene Ray's book *Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory: From Auschwitz to Hiroshima to September 11 and Beyond*, compiles a range of critical essays accompanied by Ray's own writing on the societal effects, artistic response and literary arguments catalysed by globally reverberating atrocities such as the Holocaust, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the September 11 attacks. The investigated essays include pieces by Adorno and Benjamin, amongst others, where concepts of 'the sublime' and 'representability' are questioned in relation to traumatic historical events as well as in the context of current wars in the Middle East. The enquiry leads the writing to recognise post Holocaust/traumatic visual art as a means to both mourn in the remembering of catastrophic events and to also critically and politically analyse conflict-based decisions and actions of our time.

N. Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America*, University of Virginia Press, USA, 2006.

Naomi Mandel's writing in *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America* discusses ideas surrounding the 'unpresentable'. By using examples such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved,* Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List,* and William Styron's *Confessions of Nat Turner*, Mandel recognises the nature of traumatic and ultimately incomprehensible human history and experience, but argues that the assumption of trauma being un-representable, or as she puts it, 'suffering is unspeakable,' works to quiet our own human ability to suffer, and could ultimately lead us to forget our own vulnerabilities and capacity for trauma. By this she reduces the discussion/representation of incomprehensible human experience to it being 'unspeakable'/'un-representable' is to diminish our own ability to comprehend or experience things ourselves and does not lend itself to remember or memorialise horrible events of the past.

In the book, Mandel addresses Adorno's 'no poetry after Auschwitz' statement and poses its broader implications. Like that of Ranciere using the term 'image' to reference art and its purpose, 'Auschwitz' when used in the 'no poetry [art] after

Auschwitz' discussion means, 'in short, the immense, cumulative, complex, profound, prosaic, stunning, and disturbingly banal process that produced what is known as the Holocaust'.[98] Through this Mandel states that in discussing 'art after Auschwitz,' the word 'Auschwitz' is further reaching and descriptive than the literalist reading of the word itself.

Mandel's discussion, particularly that of the broader implications meant by Adorno's statement, and the arguments against concepts of the 'unspeakable' or 'un-representable' are important to the theoretical enquiry of this thesis. The discussion within Chapters 3 and 5 of this thesis, which address concepts of memory and the sublime in relation to artwork representing events such as the Holocaust, are particularly important as this is the primary visual field being investigated.

P. Crowther, *Art and Design: The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*, Academy Group Ltd, Cambridge, 1995.

The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock by English philosopher Paul Crowther is part of a series of books titled *Art and Design Profiles*. In this book, Crowther investigates the implications of the concept of 'the sublime' to contemporary art practice. Beyond investigating the theorisation and philosophical utilisation of the term, Crowther discusses a range of contemporary artists and artworks in order to provide examples as to how 'the sublime' applies to artworks that are referencing a variety of issues including war, violence, sexuality and race such as French artist Yves Klein, American artist Barnett Newman and English artists Cornelia Parker and Abigail Lane.

J.S. Librett, ed. *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1993.

Of the Sublime: Presence in Question contains a collection of essays regarding the theorisation of 'the sublime' that have each been translated and feature an afterword by the translator and American literary theorist Jeffrey S. Librett. The translated essays include the work of Jean-Francois Courtine, Michael Deguy, Eliane Escoubas,

[98] N. Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America*, University of Virginia Press, USA, 2006, pg. 31.

Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Louis Martin, Jean-Luc Nancy and Jacob Rogozinski. Across these range of essays, seminal philosophical figures such as Heidegger, Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, and Kant are each addressed in accordance to their thinking of the broad and paradoxical theorisation of the sublime. The book has a particular focus on the Kantian sublime as an avenue to investigate ideas of immeasurable beauty and subsequently, aesthetic ideas on representational limitations. As an example, Librett states the 'emergency' of the Kantian sublime as this: 'What the imagination cannot grasp is (aesthetically – subjectively) incomparable by virtue of its non-comprehension: one can indeed only with difficulty compare what one cannot comprehend'.[99]

The complexity of searching for aesthetic answers within a concept that by its definition exceeds definable qualities is investigated within this text. This makes it an important reference in both researching the origins and developmental cycle of the sublime as an artistic concept as well as assisting to discuss the postmodern interpretations (including those of Lyotard, LaCapra, Bennett and Mandel and Ray) that are at the forefront of discussing the sublime within this thesis.

C. Battersby, *The Sublime: Terror and Human Difference*, Routledge Publishing, New York, 2007.

English feminist philosopher Christine Battersby's *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference* outlines the nature and utilisation of 'the sublime' as it applies to art, literature, politics and culture. Throughout the book, Battersby explores 'the sublime' in reference to particular events such as the September 11 attacks, alongside debates on topics such as race, religion and gender. This offers a broad application of 'the sublime' as a concept and descriptor of what is terrifying, incomprehensible or culturally/societally divisive. Battersby's writing positions 'the sublime' within contemporary culture through an understanding of its origins and implementations since the 18th century. This allows her writing to be a source of understanding 'the sublime' as it was to theorists such as Burke, Kant and Hegel, leading through to Lyotard and its current application to art, literature and culture.

[99] J.S. Librett, ed. *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1993, pg. 215.

J. Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation,* Rutgers University Press, London, 2014.

American historian Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich in *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* investigates the representation and memorialisation of the Holocaust within three distinct Holocaust museums: Israel's Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Germany's Jewish Museum in Berlin and the United States' Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in Washington D.C. In exploring differing approaches to the depiction and education of the Holocaust through these institutions, Hansen-Glucklich questions how geographical location and cultural memory influence the design, curation and visitor experience in these different destinations.

Of particular interest to this thesis, Glucklich's chapter titled *We Are the Last Witnesses: Artifact, Aura and Authenticity* investigates the role of artifacts in the representation and depiction of traumatic history. In this chapter Hansen-Glucklich compares the symbolic and representational power of artifacts to that of artwork and uses Benjamin's 'aura theory' to assess the relevance of artifacts to museum practices alongside artistic expression to the representation of the Holocaust.

> 'Despite obvious differences, art objects and Holocaust artifacts share essential characteristics that justify extending the concept of the aura from the former to the latter: in both cases the aura arises from the object's unique presence in time and place and fulfils ritual functions.'[100]

This sentiment continues to argue for the affective potential of certain objects, while questioning the qualities that elicit an emotional response from the viewer. Through this discussion, the affective potential of art objects and the relationship between artwork and viewer can be analysed, particularly as it relates to objects or artworks representing Holocaust history.

[100] J. Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation*, Rutgers University Press, USA, 2014, pg. 125.

O. Bartov, *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementations, Aftermath,* Routledge Publishing, New York, 2000.

The Holocaust, Origins, Implementations, Aftermath, as the name suggests, details the entire history of the Holocaust, including how and why it happened, the processes involved in its undertaking and its recursive effects as they relate to politics and culture at large. In the text, questions of memory, testimony and justice are asked in relation to what led to the Holocaust, what happened during the Holocaust and how we inhabit post-Holocaust societies.

M. Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion*, Columbia University Press, USA, 2009.

Israeli-born philosopher Marc Nichanian's book *The Historiographic Perversion* investigates the consequential cultural teachings of atrocities using examples including the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide. In discussing the impact and absolute nature of these events, Nichanian addresses the complexities of representation by questioning; 'what images are themselves possible when the event that demands visibility consists in the destruction of the visible',[101] which is to say the destruction of humanity itself. Through asking such questions, Nichanian argues that despite such events posing an impossible task of totalistic representability, the existence of people who deny such atrocities means that admittedly 'limited representation' is still required.

M. Blanchlot, *The Writing of Disaster*, University of Nebraska Press, USA, 1995.

French philosopher Maurice Blanchlot is an important contributor to postmodern literature. His writing is recognised for not being definitive in the theoretical concerns of philosophy, art, aesthetics and politics, but rather for posing disjointed questions in the field of literature through the paradoxical dilemmas of such topics. As an example, and with relevance to the focus of this thesis, his book *The Writing of Disaster* is a published, fragmented record of his thoughts on the difficulty of art and literature in the representation of immense tragedy. The book is structured as a collection of bullet points, some being a single sentence in length and others being

[101] M. Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion*, Columbia University Press, USA, 2009, pg. 101.

several pages. Each point is partially self-contained as a thought or question regarding the impossibility of condensing traumatic human experience in any form of art, literature or otherwise, as well as extremely broad questions regarding topics such as 'life and death' and 'memory and forgetting'.

Originally written in French in 1980, the 'new edition' has been translated by American literary theorist Ann Smock and published in 1995. The fragmented writing style, which negates any sense of totality for the writing, suits the primary concern and harmonious element to the points within the book. It avoids any suggested conclusion and instead, through the writing style, poses an example of the impossibility of condensing or entirely summarising the complexity of broadly affecting traumatic experience. Specific to the focus of this thesis, in the latter half of the book, Blanchlot addresses the Holocaust as an example to the problems he raises throughout the entire book, where he states 'we read books on Auschwitz. The wish of all in the camps, the last wish: know what has happened, do not forget, and at the same time never will you know.'[102]

D. LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*, Cornell University Press, London, 1996.

Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma by previously mentioned LaCapra outlines a theoretical approach as to how historians contextualise and comprehend the events of the Holocaust. He argues that the historiographic representation of the Holocaust is a continually revisable field. In fact, he argues that this is the case because more intricate details of the event itself (at the time he wrote the book) are being uncovered alongside the continued processing and documentation of its traumatising effects.

S. Clift, *Committing the Future to Memory: History, Experience, Trauma*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2014.

American writer Sarah Clift's book, *Committing the Future to Memory: History, Experience, Trauma* investigates instances of traumatic human history and its effect on our perception of both present and future histories. She poses that human

[102] M. Blanchlot, *The Writing of Disaster*, University of Nebraska Press, USA, 1995, pg. 82.

experience itself is what imposes the conception of existence, understanding and knowledge beyond those experiences, suggesting that memory and the theories associated with it are foundational to how we approach the world today.

Clift particularly references the aesthetic and philosophical art-based theories of Hegel, who suggested that art and its representational ability is a vital resource in capturing the 'spirit', as Hegel put it, of a particular time and place. Beyond utilising Hegel in her core enquiry, Clift looks at theories of German-born American political theorist Hannah Arendt and Benjamin as well as Blanchlot in her investigation of memory/experience and its recurring effect. Of particular relevance to this thesis, Clift's *Chapter 5: In Lieu of a Last Word, Maurice Blanchlot and the Future of Memory (Today)*[103] expands on the writing of Blanchlot as a kind of 'blueprint' to the importance of memory in how the world is experienced today and how we can predict the experience of the future.

'The specificity of the future that Blanchlot invokes – the singular event that he refers to, simply, as 'Auschwitz – resides in its continual refusal to give itself to understanding.'[104] By virtue of experiences such as those in Auschwitz, which involves what happened to the victims along with the capability for human beings to perpetrate such an atrocity; a level of uncertainty for the future is proposed. This suggestion directs Clift to reference a required vigilance against the reoccurrence of such traumatic experience in order to maintain a stable future. She subsequently proposes that literature such as Blanchlot's *The Writing of Disaster* provides a profound reference of a fractured humanity because of its broken writing style, therefore making it an important resource in post-Holocaust representation, literature and discourse.

S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, ed. *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2003.

Image and Remembrance Representation and the Holocaust is a collection of essays edited by Canadian writers Shelley Hornstein and Florence Jacobowitz. The compiled

[103] S. Clift, *Committing the Future to Memory: History, Experience, Trauma*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2014, pg. 172-200.
[104] S. Clift, ibid, pg. 193.

essays investigate the conundrum of Holocaust representation and the limitations of such practice. This is detailed through essays that range through perspectives of Jewish studies, literature, curatorial studies, philosophy, film, photography, public memorials, sculpture and painting.

> 'As this collection [of essays] addresses questions of representation, it follows that many of our contributors raise the problem of what it means to aestheticize the Holocaust. In addition to having commemorative value, the art raises complex issues of how aesthetics functions, and why there is a stronger response to some works than to others.'[105]

This curated collection of 18 essays, which are primarily concerned in the visual representation of the Holocaust, finds grounding on the 'no poetry after Auschwitz' statement by Adorno. From that previously discussed foundation of totalistic representational limits, both Hornstein and Jacobowitz have compiled critiques, theories and artists' writings on both national/government-based and personal/artist-based responses to the Holocaust, where the role of the museum and public memorial is assessed alongside more isolated, individual visual representations of the Holocaust. Within this and particularly relevant to the research of this thesis are essays within the book that assess the work of artists such as Boltanski and Whiteread, who are seminal artists to the research in this thesis. Critiques of these artists is particularly in focus in essay no.6: *Material Memory, Holocaust Testimony in Post-Holocaust Art* by Marianne Hirsch and Susan Rubin Suleiman[106] and essay no.15: *Memory Block, Rachel Whiteread's Holocaust Memorial in Vienna* by Rebecca Comay.[107] Utilising published critiques and impressions of those artists allows for informed and detailed discussion of their work in the context of the studio research and visual art-based focus of this thesis.

[105] S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, ed, *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2003, pg. 6.
[106] S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, ed. ibid, pg. 79-96.
[107] S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, ed. ibid, pg. 251-271.

S. Hornstein, L. Levitt & L.J. Silberstein, ed. *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art After the Holocaust*, New York University Press, New York, 2003.

Impossible Images: Contemporary Art After the Holocaust is a collection of essays, which investigate a range of artist responses to the Holocaust. Using examples of visual art, architecture, photographs, museums and monuments, the included essays particularly focus on a concept of 'belated memory,' where the works assessed are all created by people born after the Holocaust itself. Ultimately, the book focuses on the responsibilities of art in specific regard to the Holocaust, while questioning how visual culture and the production of post-Holocaust art inform the ongoing memory of such events.

J. Gibbons, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance,* I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, London, 2007.

Based in memory theory and the discussion of contemporary art's role in memory studies, British writer Joan Gibbons' book, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance* primarily investigates the re-collective and representational approaches of artists' responses to the past. 'Memory is essentially an unstable and variable phenomenon that, nevertheless, has been captured, represented, tested and contented in multiple ways in contemporary art.'[108]

In specific relevance to the thesis, Gibbons' *Chapter 4: Postmemory, 'The Ones Born Afterwards'*[109] focuses on the Holocaust and its subsequent visual representation as an example to the representational dilemmas of incomprehensibly traumatic memory. In this chapter, Gibbons offers artistic examples by artists such as Boltanski and Kiefer. These artists are used in the discussion of what is to be considered when approaching the artistic representation of memory associated with an event such as the Holocaust. This is done while elucidating concerns of first-hand survivors, and the dichotomy of not wanting their experience depicted by those who were not there, but wanting their experience to never be forgotten.

[108] J. Gibbons, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance,* I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, London, 2007, pg. 147.
[109] J. Gibbons, ibid, pg. 73-95.

> 'Hungarian writer Imre Kerresz, a former victim of Auschwitz and Burchenwald, admits to a certain amount of possessiveness with regard to the Holocaust accompanied by a fear of the appropriation of its ownership by secondary witnesses. But these primary instincts give way to an understanding that if the Holocaust is to be known, then a price has to be paid, which he characterises as the 'stylisation' of the Holocaust.'[110]

This writing and the accompanying artistic examples are important to both the written and practical components of the PhD research because they contribute to the initial outline regarding representation, aesthetics and viewer affect. This means that the focus of Gibbons' book opens to a more detailed inquiry of the field from a visual art-based evaluation, as well as a theoretical and philosophical perspective for this thesis.

S.W. Murray, ed. *Understanding Atrocities: Remembering, Representing and Teaching Genocide*, University of Calgary Press, Canada, 2017.

Understanding Atrocities Remembering, Representing and Teaching Genocide is a collection of essays compiled and published by Canadian literary theorist Scott W Murray. The papers were each presented at a conference held at Mount Royal University in Calgary in February 2014. Each paper discusses enacted atrocities or genocide and their role in educational systems around the globe. Ranging from examples of Canadian Indigenous genocide, Armenian genocide and the Holocaust: the papers broadly ask what we can learn from these past events and what is the role of their continued representation/recollection. The conference presentations address the historical documentation and archaisation methods regarding such events, what post-representational approaches offer to the remembering of such events, and what, educationally, institutions (for example: universities and museums) can do in educating students and the public on how such events can be prevented in the future.

Z.J. Ryn & W. Sulowicz, ed. *Auschwitz Survivors: Clinical-Psychiatric Studies*, Goldruk Publishing, Krakow, 2005.

Auschwitz Survivors Clinical-Psychiatric Studies is a selection of papers written by staff of the Department of Psychiatry of the Academy of Medicine in Krakow, Poland. The papers included range through topics of psychiatric

[110] J. Gibbons, ibid, pg. 75.

assessments/diagnoses of Auschwitz survivors, the pseudo-medical experiments carried out within the camps, the psychological examinations of children who were detained in the camps, and the psychiatric after-effects of the camps on second-generation survivors. Through topics such as these, the individualised and felt experience of the camps are analysed from case studies with those who were there by medical and psychiatric professionals. The book in its entirety offers the breadth and scope of the psychological, lasting and generational effects that the Auschwitz camps had on the individuals detained within its borders.

B. Lang, *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics*, The Jon Hopkins University Press, USA, 2000.

This book investigates what it is to represent the Holocaust primarily through writing (both fiction and non-fiction). It explores the limitations of totalistic representation posed by an event of such enormously traumatic proportions. However, the book argues for words' ability to represent anything imaginable, using fictional writing as an example for transporting reader's imaginations to scenarios not of this world. This ultimately argues for the written word as an effective medium when attempting to represent history such as the Holocaust. This because of its ability to metaphorically transport the reader via descriptive text, or present the experience of others in an accessible format.

D. LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2001.

Essentially based in trauma studies, LaCapra's book *Writing History, Writing Trauma,* investigates traumatic experience and its aftermath and how those topics affect broad historical discourse and literature. LaCapra focused his attention on the 'victim's voice' as an important tool in the recollection, memory and representation of traumatic experience. In this discussion he uses Holocaust survivor testimony as his prime example. LaCapra states: 'The attempt to come to terms with survivor videos poses an important challenge to history in that it forces a question to which we may at

best provide essentially contested answers: how to represent trauma and to give a place in historiography to the voices of victims and survivors'.[111]

P. Levi, *If This is a Man – The Truce*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1979.
Italian chemist and writer Primo Levi is a survivor of Auschwitz, where he was deported after being arrested as a member of the anti-fascist resistance in Italy. Levi's personal account of life inside the deadliest network of concentration camps is documented explicitly within two books: *If This is a Man* and *The Truce*. Both of these books have since been published together for a detailed summary of his experience, afterthoughts and ongoing effects of his time spent in Auschwitz. In his introduction to *If This is a Man*, Levi writes: '[*If This is a Man*] has not been written in order to formulate new accusations; it should be able, rather, to furnish documentation for a quiet study of certain aspects of the human mind'.[112]

Levi's writing itself is detailed through various quotes included in Chapter 3 of this thesis, which pose as examples of the potency and importance of victim testimony in the discussion and representation of an event like the Holocaust. Throughout *If This is a Man* and *The Truce*, Levi documents his experience in intricate detail, where he testifies to his experiences in a manner that reads as every-day and relatable experience. Through his writing style, the horror he describes is portrayed as what was 'normal' to those victimised in the camps. Because of this relatable quality, these two books are frightening and honest in shaping the current understanding of what was experienced by Holocaust victims, and lend themselves to an empathetic standpoint by readers to the life of Levi himself and the other prisoners he describes. This testimonial account and resulting empathic position of the reader is important in the discussion of what can be achieved in the depiction/representation of the Holocaust and the affective dimension of such depictions/representations, whether they be through written word or other creative media.

[111] D. LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2001, pg. 113.
[112] P. Levi, *If This is a Man – The Truce*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1979, pg. 9.

G. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, Zone Books, New York, 2002.

Italian Philosopher Georgio Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* discusses the role of victim testimony in the recollection and future depiction of events such as the Holocaust with a particular focus on those who survived Auschwitz to later give a testimonial of their experience. Using a range of examples including consistent reference to Primo Levi and his writing/poems, Agamben, similar to Ranciere, recognises that spoken victim testimony is a form of representation at its most potent format. He argues that witnessing and subsequent testimony is the most direct way that the 'unspeakable' finds an effective voice. In terms of the PhD research, this discussion of victim testimony in 'speaking the unspeakable' impacts literary and visual outcomes by prompting them to be representative of informed and engaged understanding of the event and its effects on those who were there.

R. Chow, *Entanglements or Transmedial Thinking About Capture*, Duke University Press, London, 2012.

Chinese cultural critic Rey Chow's book, *Entanglements or Transmedial Thinking About Capture* is a collection of essays that each blend broad and established philosophical ideas with ill-linked theoretical and cultural theories. This results in disparate and previously unchecked literary partnerships and comparisons that aim to excite developmental thinking on topics and experiences of dominance, submission, force, victimhood, masochism, madness and terror (amongst others).

Particularly relevant to this PhD research is Chow's *Chapter 4: Sacrifice, Mimesis, and the Theorizing of Victimhood*, which investigates the aesthetics and ethics of the unpresentable, primarily through the discussion and theories of Benjamin and Agamben. The essay explores the relationship and responsibility of visual representation in the face of totalistic representational limits. This is discussed via the Holocaust as an event that was so ultimately reductive of human life, and what that problematically raises in terms of its later discussion and depiction as 'such bare, reduced life, life shorn of all human decency, needs to be returned and restored to its

due human connection'.[113] Through this essay, Chow investigates this 'need' to restore human connection, posing art and its practice as a means to such an end. This is because of its connective potential in both creating and experiencing or viewing art.

A. Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, Pantheon Books, USA, 1980.

The Complete Maus is a graphic novel containing two comic book volumes that collectively chronicle the story of Art Spiegelman's father from his youth and marriage in pre-war Poland, to his eventual incarceration and survival within the Auschwitz concentration camps. The two volumes include *Volume I: My Father Bleeds History* and *Volume II: And Here My Troubles Began*. Spiegelman is a New York based writer and artist and received the 1992 Pulitzer Prize for *The Complete Maus*: a prestigious American award for excellence in newspaper, journalism, literature and musical composition.

The Complete Maus presents Spiegelman's father's story via comics that depict Nazi's as cats, Jews as mice, Poles as pigs and Americans as dogs. This subversive strategy in representing the real story of what was experienced during the Holocaust aids in the digestion of the material by the reader. The 'unrepresentable' is subdued by the delivery of the material via cartoons and comic strips. The entire story is also told from the perspective of Art Spiegeman himself interviewing his father while in the process of producing *Maus*. In-between pages that depict the actual experience of his father, the frames are repeatedly brought back to Spiegelman interviewing his father or at his desk, in the process of writing/drawing what happened, and struggling with the task of producing *Maus*. This allows the graphic novel to express the recurring and generational effects of history such as the Holocaust, as well as presenting the artistic difficulties in representing something beyond comprehension.

The Complete Maus is recognised by writers such as Dominick LaCapara and Naomi Mandel (both discussed in this thesis) as a seminal example of successful post-Holocaust representation. Through awards such as a Guggenheim Fellowship and the

[113] R. Chow, *Entanglements or Transmedial Thinking About Capture*, Duke University Press, London, 2012, pg. 85.

Pulitzer Prize, alongside nominations including the National Book Critics Circle Award, *The Complete Maus* is a literary and artistic accomplishment in regard to the representation and legacy of the Holocaust.

L. Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer and Art After Auschwitz*, The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, 1999.

Lisa Saltzman's book primarily explores the representation of the Holocaust through German artist Anselm Kiefer's paintings (amongst other examples of his installation-based sculptural works). It investigates the possibilities and limitations of post-Holocaust representation, particularly focusing on German post-war artists such as Kiefer, Joseph Beuys, and Georg Baselitz. *Anselm Kiefer and Art After Auschwitz* documents and critiques various seminal works focused on 'presenting the unpresentable,' which collectively question the formal, thematic and philosophical dilemma of aestheticising incomprehensible and varied trauma.

Using Kiefer as a prime example, Saltzman discusses post-war German artists whose practice explores themes of 'German guilt, identity and reflections' on their country's complex and traumatic history. The book addresses 'what it means to create, aesthetically, culturally, in the aftermath of fascism and genocide'.[114] Kiefer's practice, as an artist whose childhood was immersed in, and defined by the German aftermath of WWII and the Holocaust, and who is still practicing today, is one of the most important points of reference in the discussion of artwork representing Holocaust history. His artworks offer insight into the various complexities and ethical considerations required in the task of post-Holocaust representation, and are used as integral artistic references to the visual art focused study within this thesis.

M. Bohm-Duchen, ed. *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, 1995.

After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art compiles artist writings, critiques and essays regarding art that is directly responsive to the event of the Holocaust. Included in the analysis are works by concentration camp victims

[114] L. Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer and Art After Auschwitz*, The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, 1999, pg. 2.

themselves such as drawings and carved sculptures created while imprisoned. As well as this the book features nationally funded Holocaust memorials by a variety of European artists, artworks created by those directly affected beyond the events of WWII, and contemporary works made by indirectly affected artists. Collectively, all of the works in the book embody the task of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation, and how it can be approached or influenced.

A. Sieradzka, *Forbidden Art: Illegal Works by Concentration Camp Prisoners*, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Poland, 2012.

Forbidden Art: Illegal Works by Concentration Camp Prisoners focuses on uniting and discussing artworks created by prisoners of the Nazi concentration camps while they were detained. As forbidden practice across all major camps, the associated risk of creating work, the stories of the artists themselves and the meaning of their work is discussed via the records of museums and memorial departments including the Auschwitz Memorial, Buchenwald Memorial, Ravensbrück Memorial and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (among others). Spanning drawings, etchings, and wooden carvings, this book provides reference to artistic endeavours, compulsions and works in the immediacy of experience within the camps themselves. The works and depictions shown in this book also offer documentary evidence of the everyday and atrocious happenings of many of the deadliest camps established by the Nazis during WWII.

M. Biro, *Anselm Kiefer*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2013.

This book is part of the Phaidon Focus series: an ongoing publication effort that prints name-specific books, with each focusing on an 'internationally renowned modern master' of the contemporary art world. The *Anselm Kiefer* Phaidon book is written by American literary theorist and 20th Century art expert Matthew Biro, who has been engaged with the work of Kiefer for over 20 years. The book chronologically investigates the German, post-WWII artist's life and work, referring to seminal pieces throughout his ongoing career. The book examines his primary working topics of war, energy, religion and politics, where Kiefer's attention and dedication to mixed materials and their intrinsic, metaphoric, cultural and historic relevance are discussed in homage to his long-standing reputation as a prolific living artist.

A. Antliff, *Joseph Beuys*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2014.

This book is another edition of the Phaidon Focus series and is written by Canadian literary theorist Allan Antliff who specialises in the history of modern art, contemporary art and anarchist studies. Joseph Beuys is a German post-WWII artist with a similar trajectory and prominence to that of Kiefer. The *Joseph Beuys* Phaidon book discusses his life experience (especially that of his military service as a German soldier in WWII) as being importantly contextual to the violent and confrontational nature of Beuys' sculptural, installation-based and performance works.

C. Saines, ed. *Gerhard Richter: The Life of Images*, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland, 2018.

Gerhard Richter: The Life of Images is the official catalogue publication of a retrospective exhibition of the same name that was displayed at Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane in early 2018. With a foreword by QAGOMA director Chris Saines, the catalogue compiles essays, reviews and summaries of career spanning work of German artist Gerhard Richter who works primarily as a painter but also produces prints, textiles and photographic works. Particularly important to the focus of this thesis is a large four-panel painting series displayed during *The Life of Images* exhibition titled *Birkenau* (2014). This work is part of ongoing, sporadic representations of the Holocaust by Richter and in the catalogue is an essay by the curatorial manager of international art at QAGOMA, Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow that specifically discusses this series. In reflective detail, Barlow's essay discusses the artist himself, his childhood in East Germany during WWII, how this has affected certain series of autobiographical works, and the broader relevance of work such as *Birkenau*.

D. Eccher, ed. *Boltanski: Souls, From Place to Place*, Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2017.

Boltanski: Souls | From Place to Place documents a variety of Christian Boltanski's seminal works. Through transcribed interviews and a range of essays including one from Boltanski's brother, this book critically engages with work that broadly addresses concepts of time, death, the Holocaust and memory (both individual and collective). Particularly referenced in this thesis are the 'photographic installation'

works of Boltanski,[115] which open representational questions via the immediacy and historical context of his chosen photographs. Several of his largest 'photographic installations' such as *El Caso* 1989, *Reserve des Suisses morts* (The Reserve of Dead Swiss) 1990, and *La Rou de la chance* (The Wheel of Fortune) 2011 are discussed in this book as well as Boltanski's focus on artistically representing the Holocaust itself over a 35-year career engaging with this subject matter.

J. Reston Jr, *A Rift in the Earth: Art, Memory and the Fight for a Vietnam War Memorial*, Arcade Publishing, New York, 2017.

American author James Reston Junior's *A Rift in the Earth: Art, Memory, and the Fight for a Vietnam War Memorial* is focused on American artist and designer Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* built in Washington D.C. in 1982.[116] In exploring all that led to the controversial construction and public opening of that memorial, Reston questions notions of memory, politics, race and national identity, which all played a role in the development, design, placement and production of Lin's memorial. Broadly, this book explores the considerations and implications of permanently installed, public war memorials; using Lin's work as a solitary example in the exploration.

A. Blais & L. Rasic, *A Place of Remembrance: Official Book of the National September 11 Memorial*, National Geographic Society, Washington D.C, 2015.

As stated in the title of the book *A Place of Remembrance* is the official book for the National September 11 Memorial and Museum built where the towers once stood in New York. The book discusses the iconography and history of the twin towers, the terrorist attacks that destroyed them and killed 2,983 people, the tender and decisions regarding the construction of a memorial and museum, and the consequent purpose of that memorial and museum. The mission statement of the memorial reads: 'May the lives remembered, the deeds recognised, and the spirit reawakened be eternal beacons, which reaffirm respect for life, strengthen our resolve to preserve freedom, and inspire an end to hatred, ignorance, and intolerance'.[117] In Chapter 6 of this thesis,

[115] Discussed in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity*.
[116] Discussed in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity*.
[117] A. Blais & L. Rasic, *A Place of Remembrance: Official Book of the National September 11 Memorial*, National Geographic Society, Washington D.C, 2015, pg. 5.

the September 11 Memorial is discussed in relation to the concepts and considerations outlined by the research, which involve how to aesthetically and artistically represent massive loss of life. This book discusses the considerations made by artists, architects and designers specifically faced with memorialising the 9/11 attacks where they happened.

K. Smith, H.U. Obrist & B. Fibicher, ed. *Ai Weiwei*, Phaidon Press, New York, 2009.

This book investigates a wide selection of seminal and controversial works by Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei. As a prominent figure in contemporary art practice, Weiwei's often politically fuelled work protests generational experiences of oppression by the Chinese government. Several of his major, large-scale works have been representative of traumatic human experience, making his work an important point of reference for the writing of this thesis. Included in this book are interviews, reviews and artist writings on works based in sculpture, performance, installation, painting, video and architecture, which reference themes including politics, collective memory, trauma and death.

T. Marlow & A. Locke, ed. *Ai Weiwei*, Royal Academy Publications, London, 2015.

This publication is the official catalogue for a retrospective exhibition titled *Ai Weiwei* at the Royal Academy of Arts in London. In the catalogue are essays, interviews and statements regarding Weiwei's work across the entirety of his career to the date of the exhibition itself. Weiwei's artistic development and rise to prominence is exhibited and written about in chronological order, which provides context to the current major focus of his practice. This focus is dedicated to discussing/representing the refugee crisis[118] as Weiwei considers it to be the most pressing and atrocious humanitarian issue in the world today.

---

[118] Several examples of this current work are within this thesis.

A. Downey & A. Pardo, *Richard Mosse*, Barbican, London, 2017.

This book primarily explores a seminal work of Irish documentary photographer Richard Mosse titled *Incoming* (2015-16). The work itself addresses the current refugee crisis via both video and photographic stills taken by a military-grade, drone-mounted camera designed for thermo-imaging/targeting. The book contains an essay discussing *Incoming* in the context of Mosses' broader practice, by British editor and art critic Anthony Downy, as well as a written interview regarding the work between British curator Alona Pardo and Mosse himself. The publication offers both artist-specific and formal critique on a work that is important to the field and current production of artwork based on traumatic human experience.

G. Clark & J. Pagliaro, ed. *Shards, Garth Clark on Ceramic Art*, CAF: Ceramic Arts Foundation & DAP: Distributed Art Publications, England, 2003.

Garth Clark is the Editor-in-Chief of CFile: an online resource for the distribution, promotion, critique and education of contemporary ceramic art. CFile offers a range of free and subscription-based services, where visitors and patrons can access lectures, literature, technical demonstrations and documentation of current ceramic artwork and ceramic art practices. South African born Clark is recognised as a writer, critic, collector and gallerist who specialises in ceramics and has published 60 books alongside hundreds of critiques and essays. He has received many accolades; Fellow of the Royal College of Art, London, several honorary doctorates and lifetime achievement awards, the 'Art Book of the Year' award from Art Libraries Society of North America, medals from the Independent Publishers Association and others.

The anthology, *Shards, Garth Clark on Ceramic Art,* acts as a compendium to the writing of Clark. This collection of essays leading up to 2003 has been curated and edited by American artist and writer John Pagliaro as well as Clark himself. In an 'editor's note' Pagliaro writes: 'Please engage this poignant text, which emerges from the very annals of ceramic art history, with an open mind and heart, with an exacting critical stance, but most of all, with a willingness to hear the deeply invested stances within the text'.[119]

[119] G. Clark & J. Pagliaro, ed. *Shards, Garth Clark on Ceramic Art*, CAF: Ceramic Arts Foundation & DAP: Distributed Art Publications, England, 2003, pg. XIV.

In terms of this book's relevance to this thesis, it is important in discussing the studio research element of the research. As the studio research is firmly based in ceramic art practice, the writing of Clark enables consideration of the materiality of clay alongside its historical potency and trajectory as a utilised material in contemporary art practice. This allows for an informed approach to justifying the primary use of clay in the practical research as well as contextualising this material choice in the broader field of contemporary ceramic art as well as contemporary art practice at large.

T. Morris, *New Wave Clay: Ceramic Design, Art and Architecture*, Frame Publishers, Amsterdam, 2018.

Tom Morris' *New Wave Clay* acts as an encyclopedia of current contemporary ceramic art practice. Detailed within the book is the work of 65 international ceramic artists practicing with the medium today. With artwork photographs alongside the overarching statements of each individual artist, *New Wave Clay* gives examples of current innovations, experimental approaches and material-based developments with ceramic materials. Alongside the 65 artists are separate essays written by renowned British artists Edmund de Waal and Grayson Perry on the nature of clay and its cultural, historical and contemporary relevance. This book aids in discussing and positioning the material of clay within contemporary art practice. Alongside this, the book celebrates material-based resurgence and argues toward the material's ongoing utilisation in the fields of craft, design, architecture and fine art.

A.C. Bell, *Clay: Contemporary Ceramic Artisans*, Thames & Hudson, Melbourne, 2016.

Australian author Amber Creswell Bell compiled this book to document what she refers to as a recent 'renaissance of clay.' Similar to *New Wave Clay*, Bell's book details the work of 53 international, currently practicing ceramic artists who are primarily based in the creation of functional work. In discussing the work and popularisation of ceramic art practice; this book provides current opinion on the inherent and interpretive qualities of ceramic materials. This, accompanied by books

such as *New Wave Clay*, assists in positioning and discussing the focus on ceramic materials for the studio-based element of this PhD research.

***Documents of Contemporary Art* series, multiple volumes, Whitechapel Gallery & MIT Press, UK, 2006-2018.**

The *Documents of Contemporary Art* (DOCA) series is an ongoing publication by MIT Press (in the U.S.) and the Whitechapel Gallery, based in the UK. The publication series began in 2006 and contains over 40 separate books. Each one is focused on a different topic or theme relating to contemporary visual culture. Uniformly, each book in the DOCA series contains a foreword that states:

> 'Each volume focuses on a specific subject or body of writing that has been of key influence in contemporary art internationally. Edited and introduced by a scholar, artist, critic or curator, each of these source books provides access to a plurality of voices and perspectives defining a significant theme or tendency.'[120]

The DOCA series is contextualised by the increasing boundaries of contemporary art practice, where certain ideas, topics and themes become a field of practice in and of themselves. Each volume is based on a certain overarching concept that is then theorised, contextualised and developed by an edited assortment of text from a range of artists, critics, curators, historians, theorists and philosophers. Acting as an anthology of written record, the curated texts within a DOCA publication are intended to provide a diverse scope on topics and themes that are defining studio practice, contemporary visual art, literature and culture.

DOCA publications are a useful resource in initial development of particular research focus areas surrounding contemporary art practice. Volumes that have been particularly useful to the research within this thesis include: *Documents of Contemporary Art: Beauty; Craft; Destruction; Ethics; Materiality; Memory; The Object; Practice; Ruins; The Sublime; Time* and *Work*.

---

[120] S. Morley, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: The Sublime,* White Chapel Gallery & MIT Press, UK, 2010, (foreword) pg. 5.

The literature review has outlined the most directly referenced and utilised texts in developing the theoretical research in this thesis. The summarised literature addresses representational limitations, at least in totality, of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork; the aesthetic category such artwork employs via 'the sublime'; and the artwork-to-viewer relationship or affective dimension of such work via 'aura theory'. In exploring these fields, post Holocaust/traumatic artwork's relevance, contemporary role and effectiveness is assessed and raises an identified gap in the continued discussion of this field of art practice.

This 'identified gap' considers the affecting qualities or relational role between artwork and viewer, where there is a lack in specified terminology regarding how artwork based on traumatic and incomprehensible history and human experience engages with its viewer. An 'aura of atrocity' will consequently be introduced as a term relating to the artwork-to-viewer interaction, where art that is representative of events such as the Holocaust has an affect that is disturbing and uncomfortable in nature. In establishing this term, the aim is to assist in future discussion regarding such artwork in the contemporary field, while also contextualising the practical component of this PhD in each stage of development, production and exhibition.

The literature chosen is important to the research because it outlines the establishment and foundations of the chosen theoretical focus areas. In discussing the origin of post Holocaust/traumatic representational concerns, the aestheticisation of events such as the Holocaust beyond these representational concerns, and the affect these representations have on those who view them; the research moves into contemporary engagement with these concerns. Beyond these foundations, theorists are investigated who discuss the topics in relation to current documentation, archiving and artistic practices. This positions the research to apply questions of representability, aesthetics and artwork-to-viewer relationships in the context of current engagement and responsibilities regarding the representation of events such as the Holocaust.

The reviewed literature is subsequently incorporated into the thesis to provide an analysis of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork as it is positioned in the current state of

this ongoing and changing field of arts practice. This is not just to produce a written outcome as it applies to the field today, but to also analyse the considerations and implications of the *Deathgate* project as an original contribution running parallel to the written research; positioning it both aesthetically and theoretically within historicism and current contemporary debates within the field.

Chapter 4

History and Memory: The Problematics of Representation

> 'Study of the Holocaust, the ultimate realm of death, is in a profound way also the study of life, for it exhibits the extremes of human nature. By itself, the Holocaust is an unmitigated disaster; it is only the application to it of the intelligence and the imagination that can transform it into tragedy, that is, an event upon which some pattern of meaning, however grim, can be imposed.'[121]

To address a particular historical event requires an understanding of its intricacies and involves researching the social, political, geographical, statistical, economical and generational factors of that historic event. These research elements accompany further investigation of the physical and psychological experiences and memories of those living through the historic event in question; particularly when considering the employment of visual art in the representation of historical events such as the Holocaust (1933-1945). The sensitivity and broad reaching, generational effect of such history obliges an artist to understand (to the extent that such an event can be understood) the documented and lived experience of the event itself in order to address it appropriately within the artistic outcome/s being considered, developed and constructed. This means that for a practice-based approach to memorialising/representing an event such as the Holocaust, the artwork requires researched and calculated decisions in its production. This is so the work can be associated with real, informed consideration of elements that are documented and known via evidence and testimony in the wake of such an event.

In its totality, the Holocaust defies reason and comprehension, although, as this chapter will discuss, within the limitations to its visual representation, broad-reaching traumatic experience can be represented with the knowledge of the event, and with an understanding of its inherent representational limits. In the exercise of artistic post-traumatic representation, where 'post-traumatic representation' can mean or combine representing the trauma itself, the event that triggered it, or what resulted from it; an

---

[121] J. Chicago, *Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light*, Viking Penguin & Penguin Books, USA, 1993, pg. 85.

imposed sense of meaning can be injected into events that are ultimately shrouded in meaningless violence and absolute atrocity.

Historically contextualising a visual art-based role in representing traumatic memory, genocide, and in particular the event of the Holocaust, is important to the major focus of this thesis. That focus is based on discussing contemporary art's role in memorialising and representing traumatic history, events and human experience. Explaining the historic and overarching artistic lineage addressing such things allows this research to position the current state of post-Holocaust visual representation in contemporary art practice and its association with the broader field of post-traumatic visual representation. Giving historic context to the field also allows for discussion of the development and continuing role of concepts such as 'the sublime' and 'aura theory'[122] as a means to explore aesthetic answers to the broad question of 'un-representability' and the affective dimension/intention of artwork that represents events such as the Holocaust.

Before discussing visual art examples of post-traumatic representation,[123] this chapter will describe some broad historic elements of the primary event in focus: The Holocaust. This will offer a perspective on the main theoretical enquiries of the thesis, which explores the current relevance, importance, necessity and responsibilities of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork from a historically accurate positioning. Within this chapter, those theoretical elements are focused on the inherent limitations, in a totalistic sense, of post-Holocaust representation via historic context and the discussion of 'memory theory'. Beyond this chapter's introduction of 'history and memory' as conceptual underpinnings of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation, the thesis will engage further discussion of ideas about 'presenting the unpresentable' or the aestheticisation of events that are beyond comprehension via 'the sublime' (in chapter 4), and the intended or consequential affect of such representations on those who view the artwork via 'aura theory' (in chapter 5).

[122] Both 'the sublime' and 'aura theory' are discussed at length in Chapter 4 and 5.
[123] Most of which will be discussed in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*

In regard to this chapter's discussion of the history and memory of the Holocaust itself, that history should be considered as stimulus for its later artistic representation, which is then unpacked in terms of aesthetics and viewership in the subsequent chapters. This chapter will discuss the limitations and considerations of this historic and memory-influenced artwork, in order to discuss and develop relevant theories of contemporary art's role in post-Holocaust/traumatic representation. In discussing the historic and memory-based influence of the artworks in this thesis, the 'representational limitations' expressed do not suggest a negation toward post-Holocaust artwork. Instead, the term 'representational limits'[124] is an acknowledgment of the impossibility of condensing such broad-reaching, affecting and traumatic events into any kind of singular outcome: whether that be literature, spoken word, visual artwork or otherwise.

To explain, the position of this chapter, and consequently this thesis, utilises 'representational limits' as considering the totality of an event such as the Holocaust to be in excess of any representational attempt. This means that in post-Holocaust/traumatic visual representation, by inheritance of its historic and memory-based influence, such artwork can only suggest a sense of the event in question because of its vast reaching effects. It is in this representational suggestion, not in a futile attempt at total representation, that an artwork can effectively act in remembrance or initiate a sense of viewer contemplation. Therefore, this chapter will argue that 'representational limits' do not come at the cost of producing anything related to particular historic events or experiences, they instead position a necessary acknowledgment that the totality of such instances is beyond comprehension or total representation, but is worth recognising nonetheless.

In establishing the 'limitations' of post-Holocaust representation, the research begins with Adorno's previously mentioned theorising that 'to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric'. Adorno's comment acted as a catalyst in mapping the considerations associated with the post-Holocaust representation. Lyotard (further discussed in chapter 4) formally addressed that despite these problems, its representation is worth

[124] Discussed and debated further in this chapter.

attempting if for anything, other than to simply 'remember' and hope that history does not repeat itself.

> 'Adorno's assertion of the barbarism – not the impossibility, but the barbarism – of writing lyric poetry after Auschwitz is an instance of the application of this representational limit and one that at least in its premise ought to be taken seriously in any judgment of imaginative writing about the 'Final Solution'. Admittedly, even if Adorno's claim were accepted at face value, a justification might be given in favor of the barbarism he warns against as a defense to still greater barbarism – against Holocaust denial, for example, or against forgetfulness.'[125]

Before further discussing the writing of Adorno and the artistic/representational limits of the Holocaust as an event, this chapter will briefly investigate Holocaust history, victim testimony and memory in order to give perspective on the event in question. Through researching and outlining these well-documented fields of inquiry, the representational limits of Holocaust history are contextualised according to the broader reality and experience of the Holocaust itself. Later in this chapter, and with the historical and memory-based research in mind, these limitations will be elaborated on, primarily through the writing of Adorno, as well as additional theorists.

There are certain artefacts of Holocaust history, namely, Adolf Hitler's manifesto, *Mein Kampf* 1925, which encompasses the mentality and ideology behind an event responsible for the murder of over six million people (primarily Jews). The contents of this manifesto propose a kind of doctrine to the Nazi ideology, which, since the late 1920's, infectiously influenced populous Germany before expanding to the greater reaches of continental Europe. The ideology outlined in *Mein Kampf* rose under the presence of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (or the Nazi Party), and was foundationally focused on an anti-bourgeois and anti-capitalist positioning with a sub-structure of anti-Marxist, racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric. As a direct example of these sub-structured ideas within *Mein Kampf*, Hitler wrote;

---

[125] B. Lang, *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics*, The Jon Hopkins University Press, USA, 2000, pg. 70.

> 'The Jew possesses no culture-creating force of any sort, since the idealism, without which there is no true higher development of man, is not present in him and never was present. Hence his intellect will never have a constructive effect, but will be destructive, and in very rare cases perhaps will at most be stimulating, but then as a prototype of force which always wants evil and nevertheless creates good. Not through him does any progress of mankind occur, but in spite of him.'[126]

This anti-Semitic prejudice gained clout as the heavily 'right of centre' political party rose in popularity beyond the defeat of Germany in World War I (1914-1918). The ideological guidelines of Hitler's manifesto exemplified their most heinous actions and capabilities via the Holocaust during WWII (1939-1945). Disturbingly, and in considering the events of the Holocaust, Hitler stated, 'once this book has become the common property of a people, the Jewish menace may be considered as broken'.[127] These two short excerpts from a 720-page book are examples of the intensity of Nazi anti-Semitism, and the subsequent positioning of Jewish people during Nazi control. To think beyond the absurd reality that there was a receptive audience to Hitler's sentiments within this manifesto; it must be noted that the attitude present in those two citations influenced an enormous population, and subsequent military orders fueled by such ideology were carried out by a Nazi army: 13-million strong.

The Nazi party or National Socialist German Workers' Party was established in 1920 soon after the end of World War I (1914-18). The political movement steadily increased in power before a meteoric rise from 1933 to 1945, when it disbanded at the end of WWII. In the period 1933-1945, 'Nazi Germany' expanded its controlled territory to encompass the vast majority of European countries as well as the Western regions of Russia. Through military intervention and totalitarian control, the Nazi regime, under the lead of Hitler, promoted national pride and racial superiority. This was in the hope of a 'new world order' that eradicated anyone who was not considered as 'master race' or Aryan (put simply, tall, blonde and blue eyed). Under the Nazi ideology, Jews were perceived and promoted (via literary text and

---

[126] (excerpt from Mein Kampf within) S. Gigliotti & B. Lang, *The Holocaust: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2005, pg. 77.
[127] S. Gigliotti & B. Lang, ibid, pg. 80.

propaganda) as being in total opposition to the Nazi archetype of a master race. As a consequence, the 'final solution' to the 'Jewish problem,' as the Nazi's saw it, was the Holocaust, also known as the Shoah. Primarily targeting Jews, the Holocaust also victimised others who were considered to oppose the ideals of the Nazi regime. Other victimised groups include Poles, Slavs, Soviet POW's, Serbs, Romani, disabled people, homosexuals, Freemasons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Spanish Republicans and political enemies such as leftists and enemy nationals.

The genocide of the Holocaust primarily took place in camps that were purpose built for prisoners, forced labour and extermination as well as in established ghettos of Nazi controlled countries. To reiterate the details described in Chapter 1, under the Nazi regime 40,000 camps were built to carry out the goals of the Holocaust. This number includes all sub/satellite camps that were attached to larger networks of concentration, labour and extermination camps. Without the sub/satellite camps, over 15,000 major sites were built for the purpose of imprisonment, forced labour and mass extermination of those victimised by the Nazi ideology. Countries where these camps were built include: Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Yugoslavia.

With some of the historic information in mind, the discussion will now focus on the experience of those who suffered under the 'final solution'. In terms of this thesis discussing the visual representation of this event, there are two primary fields of investigation for historic accuracy; first is having perspective on the historic and statistical information itself; second is accompanied research on the experience and memory of those who were there. For this thesis, this is a means to assess the effectiveness of visual post-Holocaust representations, where the history itself and the experience of those present needs to be considered in its subsequent artistic representation. In the combination of history and memory, and as will be further explained in this chapter, the context of the event's 'representational limitations' is established because, in detailing the historical information and in discussing the lived experience of those who were there, the vast, varied and atrocious effects of the Holocaust are made relative and confirm that the event can't be represented in its

entirety. However, it will be shown as the primary position of this chapter, that 'representational limitations' do not constitute 'no representation'. Even in an admittedly limited depiction of an event such as the Holocaust, there is a suggestion[128] toward its totality, which serves to remember and contemplate events and experiences that have served as seminal historical and global milestones in shaping the world as it is today. In further extending the contextualisation of Holocaust-based 'representational limitations', this chapter will now accompany the historical and statistical information with memory-based documentation, testimony and recollection. 'Memory is a crucial source for history and has complicated relations to documentary sources. Even in its falsifications, repressions, displacements, and denials, memory may nonetheless be informative – not in terms of an accurate empirical representation of its object but in terms of that object's often anxiety-ridden reception and assimilation by both participants in events and those born later.'[129]

With both the historic information and memory-based accounts of what happened in Nazi Germany, its subsequent visual representation (further explored later in this chapter) can be discussed and assessed in an informed and conscientious depiction of sensitive and broad-reaching events such as the Holocaust. As recent history, access to testimonies and historical recounts of Holocaust survivors is an accessible and vital resource in the memory and re-telling of the event. An example of such testimony is the written work of Italian-Jewish writer and poet Primo Levi, who will be discussed shortly. The stories of survivors are not just relevant to the recounting of this period in time, but also allow for a renewed and ongoing engagement in the historical knowledge, allowing effective ways of producing post-Holocaust representation because, as Israeli/American literary theorist Omer Bartov stated, 'for us who were not there and the post-Holocaust societies we inhabit, there is a need to listen to the voices from a universe we cannot penetrate, even if we will never understand'.[130]

---

[128] Or an imagined, contemplative sensation of the event in its totality, which is discussed via concepts of 'the sublime' in the following chapter.
[129] D. LaCapra, *History and memory after Auschwitz*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1998, pg. 19.
[130] O. Bartov, *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementations, Aftermath,* Routledge Publishing, New York, 2000, pg. 235.

Reading the testimonies of those who were directly victimised also allows a better opportunity to both personally empathise, and subsequently attempt to incorporate this empathic response into post-traumatic visual representations. In an interview conducted for this PhD research, Hungarian Holocaust survivor Anika Deleon responded to a question about what she considers to be the most effective way/s for art to represent traumatic memories and human experience: 'I would like to think it would be with a lot of sensitivity, empathy and consideration about imparting lessons for the future'.[131] This empathic response and incorporation will be further discussed in relation to 'aura theory' in chapter 5 because in discussing the effectiveness and role of post-Holocaust/traumatic representations, the relationship between viewer and artwork (as discussed later through 'aura theory') is important in assessing the artwork and practical research in question.

One of the most seminal writers of their experience and survival of the Holocaust is Primo Levi, who wrote books such as *Survival in Auschwitz: If This is a Man* (1947) and *The Drowned and the Saved* (1986). Famously within *The Drowned and the Saved*, Levi discusses the implications of post-Holocaust ethics and describes moral confusions within camps such as Auschwitz as a kind of '*gray zone*' of human experience. Describing Levi's writing and his survival of Auschwitz, he 'felt charged with a mission to recount the events he had barely survived as truthfully and accurately as humanly possible, so as to save from oblivion at least some fragments of all that the Nazis had tried to totally erase'.[132]

Levi's prose primarily recollects his personal experiences within the concentration camps, which are described at length in *If This is a Man* (1947). This book depicts, with intimate detail, the everyday experience of Levi during his imprisonment in Auschwitz. His experience is often described with an eerie sense of normality, which acts to highlight that 'normal life' within the camps was a continual and compounding horror. An example is within the chapter *Our Nights*, which describes Levi's sleeping arrangements in the barracks during an Auschwitz winter. Two naked men would

[131] Written interview answer by Anika Deleon, who participated in an official written interview project undertaken specifically for this PhD research. USQ Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154. Interview answers are included in the appendix of this thesis.
[132] O. Bartov, 2000, pg. 251.

sleep 'head to toe' on each single bunk of the barracks. They would sleep on top of a thin straw mattress with a small thin sheet to cover both men. Because the prisoners were only fed watery soup to 'satisfy their hunger' as Levi puts it, the prisoners would have to relieve themselves several times each night as they were only ingesting liquids. Each barrack had a 40 gallon bucket for prisoners to urinate in. The prisoner who filled the bucket to capacity was required to then empty it in a latrine outside. This exercise of emptying the bucket was risky, as the prisoner would have to be overseen and needed to declare their assigned prisoner number to the supervising guard, which would often put them at risk of being called from a list the following day to go to the gas chambers. As an example of Levi's writing and in reference to the 'head to toe' sleeping arrangement and this exercise of emptying the bucket, Levi writes:

> 'It is our task to shuffle to the latrine with the bucket which knocks against our bare calves, disgustingly warm; it is full beyond reasonable limit, and inevitably with the shaking some of the content overflows on our feet, so that however repugnant this duty may be, it is always preferable that we, and not our neighbor, be ordered to do it.'[133]

Further documentation and a written record of those who were there, is found in French writer, philosopher and literary theorist Maurice Blanchot's *The Writing of Disaster* (1986). This book contains a collection of small excerpts relating to writing in the wake of traumatic events and the inherent limitations of doing so. Throughout the book, Blanchot refers to victim testimony from Auschwitz and writes 'as Lewental, whose notes were found buried near a crematorium, wrote to us, 'the truth was always more atrocious, more tragic than what will be said about it'.[134] In Blanchot's writing, an identifiable link to the sentiments of Adorno can be drawn. In the above quote, and as is the case in many excerpts from *The Writing of Disaster*, there is a suggestion toward the failing of written and spoken word in encompassing what was experienced during the Holocaust.

[133] P. Levi, *If This is a Man*, The Orion Press, New York, 1959, pg., pg. 66.
[134] M. Blanchot, *The Writing of Disaster*, University of Nebraska Press, USA, 1995, pg., pg. 82.

Similar to Adorno's original inference that there can be 'no poetry after Auschwitz', a sense of limitation is put on representational outcomes for the event in question. With an event like the Holocaust involving such broadly recurring effects, no amount of work can wholly represent something involving the sensitivity and complexity of victim's direct, traumatic lived experience. Their individual trauma alone cannot be contained by any means: speech, literature, art, or otherwise. Further arguments about these limitations can be found in Israeli-born philosopher Marc Nichanian's *The Historiographic Perversion* (2009). This text includes the recollection of genocide, particularly through the 'archivisation' of victim testimonies, and how that practice, despite it being directly linked to those with lived experience, raises moral and ethical dilemmas through the limitations of such practice. As an example, Nichanian writes, 'archivisation was cutting short the memory of the victim and the impossible mourning'.[135] In these links to Adorno's inference[136] it is important to recognise that Adorno retracted the statement[137] in order to re-contextualise it as not indicating the negation of representational attempts, but instead recognising the Holocaust as being un-representable in its totality because it is too 'barbaric' or incomprehensible. In Adorno's retraction and beyond, the argument can be put forward that the event's representability wears its inherent limitations as a descriptor or indicator of its absolute nature. This means that through the discussion of 'representational limits', is an acknowledgment of the event's enormity and effects.

To further explain, Jacques Ranciere's writing[138] in *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009) discusses victim testimony and its restrictions on encompassing broadly affecting history, regardless of direct experience. Reflecting on a video-recorded testimony of an Auschwitz victim, Raciere writes, 'his words do not capture the event in its uniqueness; they are not its horror directly expressed. It will be said that that is their merit: not saying everything; showing that not everything can be said'.[139] In mentioning the 'merit' of 'showing that not everything can be said', Ranciere states that there is benefit in representational limitation because it means that, inherent to the

[135] M. Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009, pg. 110.
[136] That 'to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric'.
[137] As documented in the introduction of this thesis.
[138] As documented in the introduction of this thesis.
[139] J. Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Verso, London, 2009, pg. 90.

recollection or visual representation of the Holocaust, it is a suggestion toward a vast reaching reality. To know that not everything can be said or not everything can be depicted, therefore becomes a reminder to broader, imaginative qualities in the listening, reading or viewing of post-Holocaust/traumatic representations.

These representational limitations and dilemmas explored by theorists such as Blanchot, Nichanian and Ranciere for example, demonstrate the un-representability of traumatic experience only in its totality. There are limitations however, even through the testimony of victims, because of the broadly affecting nature of events such as the Holocaust. A testimony, although recounting real lived experience in a traumatic event, is according to the experience of one among a multitude of other individuals who have experienced perpetrated atrocities. This is not to discount the importance of victim testimony but to enforce the existing representational limitations of such an event by any means. This discussion neither claims that representation of the event should be avoided, but instead warns against connotations that may be associated with a claimed 'representation', and positions such an event to constitute 'representational attempts' because of its inherent and inconceivable totality.

'The holocaust defies literature… We think we are describing an event; we transmit only its reflection. No one has the right to speak for the dead… Still, the story must be told. In spite of all risks, all possible misunderstandings, it needed to be told for the sake of our children.'[140] This means that the research outcomes (in both written and practical contexts) of this kind of artistic representation will inevitably be received and recognised in obligation to this reality[141]; it is an unavoidable element of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation: that the event/experience in question cannot be contained. In terms of the previously discussed studio research in Chapter 1, those practice-based projects maintain a level of aesthetic ambiguity or non-specificity in order to present an estimated understanding of collective experience, compiled largely by those who are able to share individual stories associated with the conceptual frame of the work. These testimonies are also accompanied by the presentation of historic statistical information associated with the event in question. Examples from the

[140] R.S. Landau, 1994, pg. 142.
[141] That reality being that the event can't be represented in its entirety.

previously discussed studio research are projects that represent specific stories or events, where the work represents the memory and testimony of suffering individuals via the presentation of ‘numbers’ or ‘the multiple’ as metaphor for associated statistics. For example, 500 bullets representing 500 initially drafted Dutch soldiers in *Five Hundred* (Fig. 27), 21,000 porcelain white blood cells to match a specific ‘high ranging white blood cell count’ in *One Drop of Blood* (Fig. 28), and 1.3 million ceramic ‘stones’: one for each person detained in Auschwitz in *Deathgate* (Fig. 29).

Fig. 27

Fig. 28

Fig. 29

The unavoidable limitations in post-traumatic representation leave art to inevitably display a simplistic ‘version’ of an intrinsically complex event. When attempting to represent events or experiences that, by their nature, affect and traumatise large groups of people, the word ‘simplification’ is used because, as has been discussed in this chapter, the complexities and varied experiences of such events cannot be wholly represented. ‘Simplification’ and representation via metaphor are utilised because of inherited representational limitations. Providing a contemporary artistic example is English sculptor and installation artist Cornelia Parker’s *War Room* 2015 (Fig. 30 &

Fig. 31). This work reflects on the memorial practice of the 'remembrance poppy', which is an artificial red flower that is worn by the public primarily for Remembrance Day (November 11) to commemorate service men and women killed in all conflicts. Remembrance Day is recognised by the Commonwealth of Nations including Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand and hosts many ceremonies across the globe in memory of armed forces who have died in the line of duty. The 'remembrance poppy' was initially established in 1921 to commemorate those lost in WWI and has since been adopted to remember those lost in all conflicts. Parker's *War Room* resulted from a trip she made to Aylesford in Kent, UK, in order to visit the factory that produces the artificial poppies for Remembrance Day.

Fig. 30

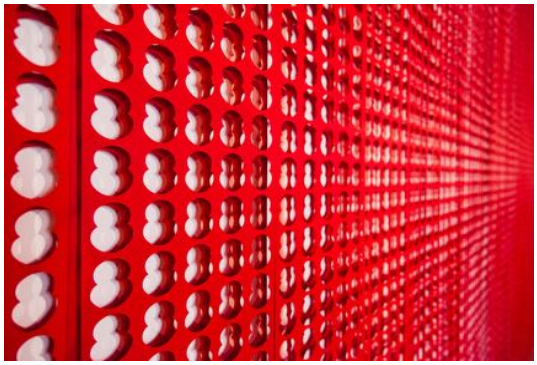

Fig. 31

The work utilised the rolls of red paper, which have had the poppies punched out of them, and draped them through the gallery space. This created an immersive environment that accentuated the negative space and silhouette of the red poppy, which is synonymous in representing lost life. The work consequently presents a consuming, metaphorical mass dedicated to those lost in war. British arts writer Eleanor Mills writes on Parker's *War Room*:

> 'Each year, over 40 million poppies are punched from rolls of red paper before being distributed across the world, but it is not the poppies themselves that Parker is interested in. She has taken the rolls of punched paper from the factory and layered them to create a tent-like poppy room. It is not hard to be moved by what those poppy-

> shaped holes represent – just like any memento mori, the effect is thought provoking but tremendously sobering.'[142]

Referring back to the writing of Levi through an assessment by previously mentioned Omer Bartov in *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath* (2000), and considering this idea of unavoidably 'simplistic' representations, 'the only way to recount the horror to those who were not there is by simplifying it'.[143] Because of inherent representational limits, post-traumatic art conforms to a type of simplification, and is effective when viewers are given the opportunity to consider the enormity of an event or experience via an ambiguous[144] artistic representation. For example, the two previously discussed (in the introduction to the thesis) Holocaust memorials by Peter Eisenman and Rachel Whiteread. These permanent memorials exemplify a simplified, ambiguous recognition of the broad history they address. Eisenman's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* 2005 (Fig. 32) offers an immersive, physical experience for visitors, designed to feel confusing, oppressive, expansive and disorientating, which is a subverted attempt to place visitors in a physical and mental state that is partially comparable to the confusion and disarray experienced by millions of Jewish people during the Holocaust.[145]

Fig. 32

[142] E. Mills, *Cornelia Parker's Poppies at the Whitworth* (February, 2015), accessed 30/09/2018, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/cornelia-parker-poppies
[143] O. Bartov. 2000, pg. 251.
[144] Particularly when considering the totality of the represented event.
[145] Eisenman's work is discussed further in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*

Similar in its utilisation of 'scale' as a means to give the artwork an oppressive presence is Whiteread's *Nameless Library* 2000 (Fig. 33). This work, via the inverted books featured on each surface of the memorial, lends itself to the visitor's imagination through what appears as unrecognisable or trapped stories, a metaphor of what was lost or untold in the Holocaust.[146]

Fig. 33

As discussed, this 'simplification' of form and presentation is a product of the complexity and vast effects of the represented history. At its essence, and as has been the focus of this chapter, the Holocaust presents totalistic representational limits in its broad, recurring and varied social, cultural, personal, economic, political and historic effects. As Adorno first inferred, the 'art after Auschwitz' landscape is complex and representationally challenging. Further to Adorno's suggestion and in a broader sense, when referring to 'Auschwitz', it is not as much the specifics of that network of camps, as it is a symbol or marker for discussing the representation of the Holocaust as a whole.

Due to the history of the Auschwitz camps (being responsible for the most mass killing and a place that epitomised the abhorrent nature of the Holocaust), the word 'Auschwitz' is synonymous with the entire event of the Holocaust. To suggest that it is 'barbaric' to create art in the wake of 'Auschwitz' is to suggest that post-Holocaust representation requires certain considerations and adherence to its impossible condensation. With the enormity of the event posing unavoidable representational

[146] Whiteread's work is further discussed in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*

limits, an understanding of historic context and engaging with the documented memories/experience of those victimised is required in an attempted visual representation. The following references American literary theorist Sarah Clift's *Committing the Future to Memory: History, Experience, Trauma* (2014), which investigates Maurice Blanchlot's previously discussed text, *The Writing of Disaster*. 'For Blanchot, those limits of what we can know constitute memory as an obligation *without limit*: 'Keep watch over absent meaning,' thus reciting the oft-repeated formula of post-Holocaust ethics, 'do not forget.'[147] Despite inherent limits, post-Holocaust/traumatic representation serves a purpose of 'not forgetting', and as those with direct experience die, the representation of an event such as the Holocaust enters a new realm of representation and remembering. This is through aesthetic objects that embody and are carriers of these stories and histories into the future.

To conclude this chapter and in considering visual art based on events such as the Holocaust, the entirety of event-based effects poses unavoidable representational limitations, at least in its totality. These limitations do not negate a representational attempt, but instead establish an inherent consideration that no artwork can condense such an event and the experiences it comprises, into a singular aesthetic outcome. It has been argued in this chapter that 'un-representability' acknowledges the totalistic nature of events like the Holocaust. Further to this and for the sake of memorialisation and remembering: visual depictions, recitals and writing in the wake of such events are merited in the fact, as Ranciere states, that 'not everything can be said'. The representational limits and suggestion toward totality then allow the nature of the Holocaust to be considered as it is: incomprehensible.

With the history of the Holocaust told and documented in many ways throughout history, the sequential representation of such things falls on the role of historical documentation, memory, lived experience, and how to theorise and/or decide on aesthetic answers for a vastly complex, problematic historical event. These theoretical elements of history and memory, which discuss the inherent limitations involved in post-Holocaust/traumatic visual representation are further theorised through 'the

[147] S. Clift, *Committing the Future to Memory, History, Experience, Trauma*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2014, pg. 198.

sublime', and ideas surrounding the 'presentation of the un-presentable'. These ideas of 'the sublime' as an aesthetic category will be discussed more comprehensively in Chapter 4, which utilises this historic and memory-based context to formulate how, aesthetically, events such as the Holocaust can be depicted, memorialised and represented through visual art.

Chapter 5

Presenting the Un-presentable: The Sublime as Aesthetic Category

> 'The silence of an injustice, or of Auschwitz, or of the sublime;
> as if a feeling is without articulation, form or structure, and
> hence cannot be elucidated.'[148]

Since the 18th Century, the Western conception of 'the sublime,' as a field of critical and theoretical aesthetic enquiry, has been rigorous and varied. Broadly speaking, its terminological value is associated with an aesthetic beyond perceptive limits that cannot be wholly described or contained. In this chapter, 'the sublime' is investigated as a category and descriptor for the aesthetics or representation of 'the un-representable'[149] catalysed by disaster, atrocity and traumatic experience. The initial use of the term in critical literature and philosophy (during the 18th Century) was for the purpose of categorisation inside the discussion of aesthetics and art in the neoclassical era.

This chapter will discuss the historical context of 'the sublime' before detailing its theorisation in the postmodern landscape of artistic practice. In this postmodern era (from the mid-late 20th Century onwards), 'the sublime' was linked with ideas of un-representability and deliberation on the presentation of what was ultimately un-presentable content. It is this characterisation of 'the sublime,' where it is an aesthetic category for the 'un-representable', that this chapter will investigate in relation to post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork. 'The sublime's utilisation in this manner can be linked to a 20th Century recognition of the earlier implications of the term's use, when it was broadly related to an aesthetic that invoked emotional response, meaning 'the sublime' could be just as aptly connected to an aesthetic of suffering and atrocity as it had been connected to an aesthetic of admiration and beauty. This chapter will draw the conclusion that while the prohibition on representation[150] has merit insofar as it confirms that the totality of events like the Holocaust can't be wholly represented; it

---

[148] N. Hodges, ed. *Art and Design: The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*, Academy Group Ltd, Cambridge, 1995, pg. 71.
[149] A term by Lyotard, which is later explained in this chapter.
[150] As discussed in Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*

will be argued here, that with caution it is indeed possible to visually represent such events and experiences via an aesthetic category of sublimity.

In terms of the research focus area of this thesis, the 'postmodern sublime' offers an avenue for the discussion of art's role in the representation of events such as the Holocaust because it is based on assessing and theorising the aestheticisation of traumatic human experience, tragedy and atrocity. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the inherent representational limits, as they relate to representing the totality of events such as the Holocaust, manifest certain aesthetic problems. These problems are centred on the reality that such events have broad, varied and recursive effects on vast amounts of individual people alongside societal, cultural, political and economical effects. The range of this affect/effect[151] consequently means its representation, in a totalistic sense, is fundamentally impossible by any means of written or spoken word as well as in any singular visual outcome.

'The sublime' is a category for discussing aesthetic approaches to things such as Holocaust representation despite these apparent aesthetic limitations. Approaches to such representation will therefore (in this chapter and thesis) be assessed, where aesthetic elements of ambiguity, overt violence and stark minimalism will be discussed through sublime theorisation to find what is effective when 'presenting the un-presentable' or aestheticising the incomprehensible. Through discussion of contemporary ideas of the sublime and via examples of varying and 'critically successful' artworks, answers to the question of how to represent events such as the Holocaust can be discussed in the current landscape of artistic practice. This will be done by utilising the long history of 'the sublime' as a tool for aesthetic theorisation and because aesthetics itself is a cornerstone to art, art-practice and practice-led research.[152]

In the case of this study, researching 'the sublime', and especially sublime theorisation in the postmodern era, is to discuss the aestheticisation of what is

[151] The delineation between affect and effect is a contentious field. For the purpose of this thesis and in basic terms, affect applies to what is internal, emotive and human; effect applies to what is external, tangible and environmental.
[152] Aesthetics as a field relates to the visual elements of an artwork, or rather the elements that the viewer is engaged by.

ultimately 'unpresentable' as stated by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*. In the field of post-Holocaust representation, the amount of trauma, loss and sheer affect in the wake of events involving genocide, mass persecution and injustice constitutes an array of aesthetic considerations when creating art based on such instances. In the case of this thesis, discussing artwork that is in memoriam of traumatic events and histories, these aesthetic considerations include how a representational attempt of an event such as the Holocaust could be received or interpreted by a range of people. This includes people who have personal experience with direct or relatable trauma to what is depicted, as well as those born later.

The sensitivity of such history and the potential for it to be a traumatic trigger for the viewer posits a responsibility to its aesthetic representation. Because of this triggering capacity and particularly in the case of broad reaching events such as the Holocaust, its aestheticisation must be carefully approached so as to not claim ownership of other's experience but to address it in contemplative remembrance. Another aesthetic consideration involves the previously discussed representational limits of broadly affecting traumatic events, where aesthetically, an artwork should not claim to represent the event in its totality but rather admit its position as a fragment of the overarching event or experience because its totalistic representation, as established in Chapter 3, is impossible. Therefore, 'the sublime' as an established theoretical tool for discussing this type of aestheticisation, can be employed in writing about such representations. Regarding this, Jacques Ranciere stated;

> 'The existence of events that exceed what can be thought calls for an art that witnesses to the unthinkable in general, to the essential discrepancy between what affects us and such of it as our thinking can master. It is then the peculiarity of a new mode of art – sublime art – to record that trace of the unthinkable.'[153]

Through this viewpoint, Ranciere acknowledges 'the sublime' as a descriptive marker for the aesthetic representation of what is beyond standard comprehension. As was discussed in the previous chapter, atrocities such as the Holocaust defy representation and are, in their totality, based in unthinkable practices and effects. Art of

[153] J. Ranciere, *The Future of the Image,* Verso, London, 2007, pg. 111.

unavoidable representational limits or 'sublime art' as Ranciere writes, is how the aestheticisation of such events can be categorised. Before further discussing these contemporaries[154] of 'sublime' theorisation, this chapter will first outline earlier modes of its development, particularly that of Kantian sublimity, which led toward Lyotard's discussion of the concept and its application to the artworks questioned in this study.

'The sublime', as a theoretical and philosophical field of enquiry, is important to the overarching goals of this PhD research as it bolsters the discussion of aesthetics, which is a foundational pillar to art-based practice, in both a historical and contemporary positioning. American literary theorist Samuel Holt Monk, who has written extensively on the history of the sublime stated, 'no single definition of the term [sublime] would serve in any single decade for all writers, for such unanimity was never attained; but the word naturally expressed high admiration, and usually implied a strong emotional effect, which, in the latter years of the century, frequently turned on terror'.[155]

The historic resonance of this theoretical field alongside its continuing application to the discussion of aesthetics in contemporary art practice makes it an effective research focus area because it applies to the discussion of artwork across several centuries. This means that the longevity (from the 18th Century to now) of 'the sublime' as a category in aesthetic theory gives it a well-documented and theorised position to contextualise the practice-based research element of the PhD as well as the discussion and assessment of contemporary arts' role in representing or aestheticising the primary topic of this study: The Holocaust. Investigating post-Holocaust/traumatic artistic representation via concepts of sublimity is in order to position contemporary art practice[156] and the studio research of this PhD (discussed in Chapter 1) within the current state of this ongoing/continually-changing field of research.

[154] Ranciere, Lyotard and others.
[155] S.H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-century England*, University of Michigan Press, USA, 1960, pg. 233.
[156] Researching and discussing seminal artistic examples, which is the primary focus of Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*

As mentioned above and in the thesis introduction, the theorisation of 'the sublime' and art originated in the 18th Century via Anglo-Irish philosopher and political theorist Edmund Burke, who was the first to link human experience and aesthetics to negative and positive feelings associated with what is external to the subject and beyond standard comprehension. In relation to Burke discussing art and 'the sublime', he stated, 'whether fine, or gross, of a dangerous or troublesome encumbrance they are capable of producing delight; not pleasure but a sort of delightful horror, a sort of tranquillity, tinged with terror; which as it belongs to self-preservation is one of the strongest of all the passions. Its object is the sublime'.[157] Here, in relation to art, Burke develops his ideas of 'the sublime' by linking aesthetic sublimity with emotive capability.[158] Australian artist Ruth Li's *Florilegium* 2017 (Fig. 34 & Fig. 35) is a contemporary artistic example of work addressing 'the sublime' as it relates to early theorisations of the concept.

Fig. 34

Fig. 35

The work consists of a circular, wall-mounted collection of amalgamated objects that take their form from scientific vessels (test tubes and flasks). Growing off these vessels are symbols of organic life such as flowers and wings, which are seamlessly melded to the sterile, experiment-based vessels. In writing about her work, Li explains: 'I explore different ways of narrating traditional and multicultural concepts of beauty, transcendence and the sublime as a cross-cultural language into the

[157] E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautifu*l, N. Hailes Publisher, London, pg. 142.
[158] The aesthetic qualities of a work of art enabling an emotional experience for the viewer.

spiritual'.[159] In combining objects of 'hard science' with spiritually, metaphorically and culturally loaded appendages, Li achieves a work that engages the viewer with its beauty to enable discussion and contemplation of the 'cyclic dualities of creation and being', Li continues by stating that '*Florilegium* morphs into a contemporary reconstruction of the sublime and sacred estate. In this work, I invite viewers to muse on our own temporalities, identities and physical accountabilities, and the spaces we inhabit as micro beings in a vast and dynamic assemblage'.[160]

The 'contemporary reconstruction of the sublime' discussed in relation to Li's work is in reference to the origins of sublime theory, where it applies to a transcendence of immediate contemplative value, and positions itself to trigger broad, emotive and metaphorical considerations. 'The sublime', however, as it applies to post-Holocaust/traumatic visual representation shows an expansion of its definition (particularly beyond the postmodern era) to be an aesthetic that cannot wholly represent the subject of the artwork. This is because of the totalistic incomprehensibility of the Holocaust itself coinciding with the basis of 'the sublime' as the aestheticisation of what is beyond comprehension.

The presence of 'the sublime' in an artwork is recognised in its ability to invoke a sense of 'pleasure', as Kant stated. This 'pleasure' of the sublime effect is not entirely as the word ordinarily suggests, but rather describes a complex array of emotion linked to primal human instincts of 'self-preservation'. The described 'pleasure' is subsequently associated with an appreciation and recognition of humankind's emotive capability and survival. 'The sublime', then, is an aesthetic category that appeals to a human facility of experiencing opposed emotions simultaneously: 'delight and horror' or 'tranquillity and terror'. This theory was also discussed by German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, situated alongside further developments by Kant.[161] In addressing Hegel's theorisation of 'the sublime', American philosopher Timothy M Costelloe's *The Sublime: From Antiquity to Present* (2012) offers a historical summary of sublimity from a Hegelian perspective (among others). Costelloe states

[159] R. Li & S. Tan, *The Journal of Australian Ceramics Vol 57 No 1*, The Australian Ceramics Association, Australia, 2018, pg. 22.
[160] R. Li & S. Tan, ibid, pg. 22.
[161] Which is further discussed shortly.

'Hegel provides a powerful way of framing the relationship between experience and the attempt to grasp, explain and express it in philosophical terms'.[162] As a baseline enquiry into the history of the sublime, these sentiments of Hegel align with earlier and similar inferences by Kant that engage with 'the sublime' as a means to explore the indefinable qualities of human experience, or the attempt to contain the intricacies of emotion through literature or art. Kant divides the sublime into two categories: the 'mathematical' and the 'dynamic'. Mathematical sublimity references a calculated sublime effect, where metrics can be used to aid in perceiving totality. For instance, the difficulty in contemplating the size of the Earth's sun can be assisted by the fact that 1.3 million Earths equal its size. It remains difficult to comprehend but is aided by a mathematical reasoning. Dynamical sublimity differs in that it references emotive capability or that which is less quantifiable than metrics such as size and mass. The dynamical sublime references objects imbued with emotions such as fear and love: measurable to a degree but incomprehensible in their complexity, particular in the instance of collective experience, memory or trauma.

'In Kant's terms the sublime hinges on a relation between perceptual and imaginative excess and rational containment. It is the generality of this relation which gives the Kantian sublime such a broad potential application.'[163] Because of this broad potential of Kant's theorisation of the sublime, its application to postmodern sensibilities led to it linking with the aestheticisation of exceedingly traumatic and horrific human experience. This is because in the postmodern era of arts practice, disciplines including new media, performance, conceptual art and installation-based experiential art became prominent. With the utilisation and development of these artistic disciplines, art became increasingly political and critical of culture. As such, the postmodern artistic era professed ideas of protest, distain and aggression toward both earlier artistic practices and society at-large.

As a focus of the time, this is why the concept of 'the sublime' found its (postmodern) theoretical application as an aesthetic category associated with trauma, extreme human capability and atrocity. Through the previously discussed viewpoint of Kant:

[162] T.M. Costelloe, ed. *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, USA, 2012, pg. I.
[163] N. Hodges, ed. 1995, pg. 11.

Kantian sublimity is based in the aesthetics of 'perceptual and imaginative excess', or what is beyond standard comprehension and 'rational containment'. This means that the Kantian sublime references a futile attempt to rationalise/condense what is beyond comprehension. It is in this broadly applicable Kantian development of sublime theory that leads to its postmodern strain, which is a category of aesthetic theory used to discuss the aestheticisation of human experience and broadly affecting traumatic events that are beyond comprehension. More specifically and in this postmodern theorisation of 'the sublime' is its linking with the aesthetics of post-Holocaust representation, or 'presenting the un-presentable' according to Lyotard.[164]

To elaborate, Crowther wrote that 'Kant divides sublimity into two modes, the dynamical and the mathematical. The former arises when some vast object overwhelms our capacity to comprehend'.[165] It is in that 'former' mention of the Kantian 'dynamical sublime' that current discussion on the representation of incomprehensible experience can be traced. The 'dynamical sublime,' is where the aesthetic questions of ultimately un-representable events and experience are (to a degree) answered. Kant has written 'the sublime is limitless, so that the mind in the presence of the sublime, attempting to imagine what it cannot, has pain in the failure but pleasure in contemplating the immensity of the attempt'.[166]

This dichotomy of pain and pleasure as a source of 'the sublime' is what later contextualises its discussion in the artistic representation of events such as the Holocaust. In saying this, referencing pleasure is not to state that contemplating trauma or the Holocaust is enjoyable. It is instead stating that the mind is engaged in imaginative and critical discourse because it is struggling to understand the immensity or metaphorical implications of what is presented. Pleasure is then imaginative engagement and pain is contemplative difficulty. 'The sublime' therefore becomes our human ability to recognise, painfully; that what is presented cannot be fully understood. Further to this idea of painful realisation: 'Kant defines sublimity as the capacity of certain phenomena to evoke an awareness of our super-sensible self. Vast or destructive natural phenomena overwhelm our ability to comprehend them at the

[164] Discussed shortly.
[165] P. Crowther, 1989, pg. 67.
[166] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hackett Publishing Company, USA, 1996, pg. 97.

level of ordinary perception and imagination and so evoke a feeling of inhibition and pain'.[167]

It is this pain, or the painful reality of human perceptual limitations, that forms the basis for modern and postmodern discussion of 'the sublime' in relation to the artistic representation of things beyond the capacity of human comprehension. Although this detailing of 'the sublime' is conceptually and philosophically dense; it is important in establishing and contextualising the definable qualities of the theory in order for its application to the artworks and practice-based research of this thesis. It is also important to outline the inception of 'the sublime' so as to explain the foundational elements of the concept. These foundational elements are that 'the sublime' expresses an aesthetic of human experience/emotion beyond the felt experience/emotion itself, which forms a specific conception of the theory as it relates to post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork.

Since establishing that 'the sublime' links with incomprehensibility: an inherent and unavoidable detail of events such as the Holocaust, interpretations and critiques have formed the basis for discussing the aesthetics of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation. Interpretations of Kantian sublimity, and particularly that of the 'dynamical sublime,' have been an important point of reference for developments such as Lyotard's theorisation of 'the sublime' and his ideas surrounding 'presenting the un-presentable': a concept that aptly applies to the artistic examples discussed throughout this thesis. Lyotard believed that 'to represent is to make relative, to place in context, within conditions of representation. Therefore, one cannot represent the absolute, but one can demonstrate that the absolute exists'.[168]

The ultimate nature of events such as the Holocaust, where 'nature' involves a vast affective dimension of atrocity, horror and genocide means that its artistic representation is bound by representational limits as they apply to 'the absolute' of the event itself. This is because the effective/affective vastness cannot be contained in any sense including that of art or otherwise (as was discussed at the beginning of this

[167] N. Hodges, ed. 1995, pg. 35.
[168] S. Morley, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Sublime*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2010, pg. 134.

chapter and in Chapter 3). In light of this intrinsic representational limitation, and considering the discussed theories of the sublime, which involve sublimity being defined as an aesthetic attempt to represent what cannot be wholly contained or is beyond comprehension; post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork can be a source of a 'sublime' effect. Because of the expansive, varied and incomprehensible reality of what is experienced through events like war, 'the sublime' applies to the aesthetic category of its artistic representation, where its depiction is a presentation of what is un-presentable, at least in its entirety.

As described by Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, 'the sublime' is 'the paradox of an object, which in the very field of representation, provides a view, in a negative way, of the dimension of what is un-representable'.[169] This means that art, in the face of traumatic events and in the knowledge of representational limits, is going to be in this paradoxical position of serving representational goals that cannot be wholly achieved by a single work of art. A contemporary artistic example of this is American artist Shimon Attie's *Writing on the Wall* 1991-92 (Fig. 36). For this project, Attie projected pre-WWII photographs taken in the Jewish districts of Berlin onto the same areas where the photographs were originally taken 60 years prior.

Fig. 36

Regarding this work, Attie stated, 'by using slide projection on-location, fragments of the past were introduced into the visual field of the present. Thus, parts of long-destroyed Jewish community life were visually simulated and momentarily

[169] S. Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso Publishing, New York, 1989, pg. 203.

recreated'.[170] In Attie's interventionist and fleeting projections, he is suggesting a past Berlin that has undergone radical change due to the events of WWII. The work is a limited, sublime representation of a 'time and place', as it applies to people, that was severely affected in recent history, and a reminder of the Holocaust itself via subversive means rather than directly depicted violence. According to Attie, 'by attempting to renegotiate the relationship between past and present events, the aim of the project was to interrupt the collective processes of denial and forgetting'.[171]

Referring back to the theory of Lyotard, it is in the representational paradox raised by Žižek that Lyotard frames the 'un-presentable' as the totality of the event or experience that is to be represented, and 'presenting the un-presentable' is the aesthetic/artistic attempt to represent, or more accurately, aesthetically reference the event or experience in spite of this reality. The necessity for such representations is in recognition of the vast impact of such events on contemporary society and culture. For instance, the amount of human displacement and destruction caused by WWII shaped Western populations and cultural identities via the immigration of displaced survivors to countries including Australia and the United States. This is accompanied by collective efforts to rebuild destroyed areas in Europe, Japan, Africa, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. These causal reverberations are brief examples of the effects of World War events, and their relevance to current societies and cultures. Consequently, this amounts to post-Holocaust/traumatic art having broader implications than what is directly depicted by the artwork or art object itself because of its association with broader trauma or disrupted human experience.

The nature of the 'un-presentable' carries to previously discussed theories of Adorno, Bennet and LaCapra in this PhD, where the barbaric and tragic nature of an event introduces unavoidable and certain considerations in its visual representation. 'The sublime' or 'un-presentable' is recognition of the purely aesthetic complexities and broad-reaching consequences of such events and experiences. An example of work praised for its effective depiction of the realities of war is that of Spanish printmaker and painter Francisco Goya's series *The Disasters of War* 1810-1820 (Fig. 37).

---

[170] M. Bohm-Duchen, ed. *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, 1995, pg. 147.
[171] M. Bohm-Duchen, ed. ibid, pg. 147.

Comprising of 82 prints, Goya produced this series in response to the conflict and performed atrocities between Napoleon's French Empire and Spanish resistance between 1808 and 1814. Originally titled by Goya as *Fatal Consequences of Spain's Bloody War with Bonaparte, and Other Emphatic Caprices*, the series was divided into three categories: *War, Famine* and *Bourbons and Clergy*, which each depicted different aspects of the conflict and its effects.

Fig. 37

Each print is accompanied by a caption that describes the image in brief detail. For instance, the print referenced above (Fig. 37) is Plate 18: *Bury Them and Keep Quiet*. British art historian, curator and Goya expert Juliet Wilson-Bareau in discussing the series stated, 'I have lived with these prints, which many people consider too shocking, absolutely unbearable, and I find in them – besides the heartbreak and outrage at the unspeakable violence and damage – a great well of compassion for all victims of the suffering and abuses they depict, which goes to the very heart of our humanity'.[172] Produced at a time when 'war art' focused on depictions of heroism and pride, Goya's series, shown in 1863, 35 years after his death, was the first recorded body of work that represented the harsh realities, violence and atrocities that accompany events of war. Another example to the aesthetic representational challenge of war is Spanish artist Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* 1937 (Fig. 38): a large-scale painting in direct response to the bombing of Guernica (a village located in Northern Spain) during the Spanish

[172] A. Sooke, *Goya's Disasters of War: The Truth About War Laid Bare* (July, 2014) accessed 06/07/2018, http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140717-the-greatest-war-art-ever

Civil War 1936 – 1939. A Spanish nationalist governmental movement spearheaded this bombing with aid from the Nazi party during their rise to power.

Fig. 38

In Dutch historian Gijs van Hensbergen's book *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon* (2004), he stated in regard to the painting, 'there was nothing that specifically alluded to Guernica, or the terror that rained down from the skies. Instead, Picasso had resorted to employing images whose simplicity and meaning could travel across every cultural divide'.[173] In an interview (conducted for this PhD research) with Australian artist, arts writer and curator, Sandy Pottinger, she discussed *Guernica* when asked which artworks relating to war and sensitive historical events had most affected her. In relation to the painting, Pottinger stated that it is 'amongst arguably the most dramatic anti-war images one can see'.[174] The painting's monochromatic tones link to the war-related photography of the time, while the imagery, composition and the scale of the painting (3.49 x 7.77 metres) depict an overwhelming landscape of chaos and despair that envelope the viewer like a blanket of degradation and human depravity. These elements act as sublime indicators of the broader realities of the bombing and the experience of those in Guernica at the time. To elaborate on such sublime indicators Costelloe states:

> 'The concept of the sublime enables Lyotard to carry out what he calls 'an anamnesis of criticism itself (in Kant's sense)'. By this, he means that the

[173] G.V. Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon*, Bloomsbury Publishing, Great Britain, 2004, pg. 4.
[174] Written interview answer by Sandy Pottinger, who participated in an official written interview project undertaken specifically for this PhD research. USQ Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154. Interview answers are included in the appendix of this thesis.

> concept of the sublime makes possible a renewal of Kant's critical project: it directs us toward and allows us to reflect on the limits and conditions of our experience. In doing so, it shows us how those limits can be forced, effecting a kind of negative but unfettered aesthetic process, which enables us to reconceive how we orient our thought and our action in the world, and in particular, how we do so through art.'[175]

This means that it is through a critical relationship with memory, experience and history that the presentation of the un-presentable can happen. To elaborate on the difference between 'presentation' and 'representation,' 'presentation' specifically relates to an artwork, as it exists. 'Representation' is the overarching goal or focus of such presentations. This is to say that a presentation is in retrospect of a particular event, experience or influence. Through knowing the existing complexity of human experience in events of large affect and trauma, certain aesthetic processes are required in order to avoid any implication or potential interpretation of an artwork being entirely representative of such events.

These aesthetic processes involve methods of artistic practice that leave ambiguous elements of the artwork to allude, in a broad sense, to the wider implications of what it represents. As an example and referencing back to the practice-led research element of this PhD, the creation and presentation of ceramic 'stones' is an aesthetic process that involves both the physical representation of a 1:1 ratio of all those detained in the Auschwitz camps,[176] but also references the diminished state or absolute reduction of human life in the camps (via their minimisation to a simplistic form of a 'stone'), the method of prisoner transportation into the camp (via it being installed in reference to a railway line), and the scale of the camps themselves (via the physical scale of the artwork). Alongside this, the *Deathgate* 2015-18 (Fig. 39) project also alludes to Jewish mourning traditions (of placing stones on gravesites) alongside utilising the philosophical and metaphorical weight of stones as a symbol of permanence and strength.

---

[175] T.M. Costelloe, ed, *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012, pg. 120.
[176] *Deathgate* involves a single handmade ceramic 'stone' for each detainee of the Auschwitz camps.

Fig. 39

When considering 'the sublime' as both the presence and acknowledgement of an incomprehensible/un-representable quality, the very existence of a sublime object or piece of sublime art presents an 'open imaginative space' in the viewer's perception of the work. Because the work cannot wholly represent the history, memory or experience it addresses, there is a sense of ambiguity, where viewers need to extrapolate or imagine beyond what is presented to them in order to contemplate or allude to the broader meaning of the work itself. It is this ambiguity or imaginative space that Kant initially addressed as 'negative presentation' and was later utilised by Lyotard. Costelloe noted:

> 'Importantly, for Lyotard, the mode in which the sublime achieves this presentation of the un-representable is one of 'negative presentation'. In spite of, in fact, because of, the incapacity of the imagination to render a presentation adequate to the un-presentable idea of the absolute, we are brought to feel the presence and the power of the content of that idea in the experience of the sublime.'[177]

In reference to the focus of this writing and Costelloe's 'idea of the absolute', it is in this instance, the absolute nature of genocide. The Kantian 'negative presentation' is aimed at defining the relational negative/empty space that accumulates beyond the representational limits of an artwork: the parts of the historic event, memories or experiences that are not directly depicted through a sublime work of art. For example, the artwork *Above and Beyond* 2001 (Fig. 40) by American artists Ned Broderick and

[177] T.M. Costelloe, ed. 2012, pg. 121.

Rick Steinbock alongside a team from the *Veteran Artists* initiative founded in 1981. Originally commissioned and displayed by the *National Veterans Arts Museum* in Chicago, the work displays 58,000 individual American dog tags hung from the roof of the museum.

Fig. 40

Each dog tag is representative of an American soldier lost during the Vietnam War (1955-75). Along with the American artist-architect Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* 1982 (Fig. 49 & Fig. 50) in Washington D.C (which is discussed in the following Chapter 5): these are the only two existing memorial works that directly present the names of all service-members lost in the Vietnam War 1955-1975. In reference to the described 'negative presentation;' in this work it is present in the association of a single dog tag necklace to an individual soldier, where, without bodies or representational figures present, the work is implicit of an enormous loss of human life and gives perspective to this sheer number (via a Kantian mathematical sublime) in a subversive way. As stated by a representative of the National Vietnam Veterans Arts Museum in Chicago:

> 'When visitors first enter the museum, they will hear a sound like wind chimes coming from above them and their attention will be drawn upward 24 feet to the ceiling of the two-story high atrium. There they will see tens of thousands of metal dog tags, spaced evenly one inch apart, suspended

from fine lines which will allow them to move like a living thing with the shifts in air currents.'[178]

The 'negative presentation' is in the observer's ability to personify a human being to each individual dog tag. According to American critical theorist Gene Ray and in reference to 'negative presentation': 'suffering permits no forgetting' it 'demands the continued existence of the art it forbids. But suffering should be represented only negatively – evoked through absence, or through indirect, oblique, or sublime forms of presentation'.[179] In the case of art representing an event like the Holocaust, this 'negative presentation', which is the amount of content relating to the event that cannot be included in a single artwork, is vast. This is because of the sheer scale and effect of such an event.

As an artistic example that is conceptually and logistically linked (insofar as the work is mathematically sublime) to the *Deathgate* project, English artist Paul Cummins and British theatre designer Tom Piper's installation *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* 2014 (Fig. 41 & Fig. 42) featured 888,246 handmade ceramic poppy flowers: one for each British and Colonial fatality during the First World War (WWI) 1914-1918. The work was installed to fill the moat of the Tower of London between July and November 2014 to mark 100 years since the start of WWI.

Fig. 41

Fig. 42

In a publication dedicated to this project, Cummins stated 'the exact number of lives lost that needed to be represented for this project was 888,246 – an enormous loss of

[178] *National Vietnam Veterans Arts Museum*, 2007-2018, accessed 01/09/2018, http://www.artinasia.com/institutionsDetail.php?catID=0&galleryID=1225
[179] G. Ray, *Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan, USA, 2005, pg. 65.

life, which I hoped, once visually showcased, might bring new meaning to viewers'.[180] With each handmade ceramic 'flower' representing an individual WWI fatality, the 'negative presentation' within this, like that of each ceramic 'stone' of *Deathgate*, is the space between the physical object itself and the physical human being it represents. It is in that contemplative, metaphorical space or 'negative presentation' that viewers are encouraged to fill with their imagination – making the passive viewer into an active, contemplative agent. When viewing artwork such as this, one of its primary intentions is that the viewer translates what is presented to them into a group of human beings, where the viewer's imagination multiplies the scale of each object to human scale resulting in a group that is difficult to envision by standard comprehension.

What makes artwork a source of 'the sublime' is the culmination of the physical object itself, the history, memory and/or experience it represents, and the 'negative presentation' offered by those elements. It is through this culmination that 'presenting the un-presentable' as Lyotard stated, is possible. In the case of post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork, recognising the representational limits of what is being addressed leads to aesthetic choices that must be considered beyond their direct meaning. When an event is so vast in its destructive effect, the broader representation or metaphorical implications of whatever is presented becomes part of the work by virtue of its ultimate 'un-presentability' and because events such as the Holocaust or events causing immense trauma cannot be condensed into a singular format.

The major theoretical endeavour of this thesis involves an enquiry into the historic relevance and role of events such as the Holocaust and other instances of incomprehensible/traumatic human experience. This is done in order to assess their effect on the contemporary societal landscape as well as the field of representational artwork in their wake. In the discussion of aestheticising such events and human experience, 'the sublime' is an important, established theoretical field that acts as a categorisation for discussing the representation and aestheticisation of what is beyond societal, cultural and viewer-based comprehension or understanding. This is because

[180] P. Cummins & T. Piper, *Poppies: Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, IWM Publishers, London, 2018, pg. 8.

of ‘the sublime’s’ theoretical basis as an aesthetic field that reaches beyond the sum of its perceivable parts, or rather its use to categorise an aesthetic that explores issues that cannot be contained.

This discussion applies to both the artist in their aesthetic decisions and approaches, as well as the viewer in their catalysed interpretation of the presentation. Assessing both the history itself (in Chapter 3) and the aesthetic concerns of its representation (via ‘the sublime’ in this chapter) is in order to evaluate the developing and continually changing field of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation. Contemporary engagement with this field and the particular focus on the Holocaust as an event is because its representation is currently at a crux period where first-hand survivors of the event itself are passing away, meaning that the responsibility to its recollection, depiction and representation is being passed to further removed generations.

To conclude, this chapter has outlined the parameters of ‘the sublime’ as it pertains to the representational challenges and limitation of art, as well as the aestheticisation of the incomprehensible. With its emotive nature and attachment to concepts of contemplative value in early descriptions of ‘the sublime’ via Burke, Kant and Hegel; the theory was led toward expansion and pragmatic application of an aesthetic of horror, violence and atrocity via Lyotard, Ranciere, Hodges, Crowther and Ray. These philosophers and theorists were chosen because, in the case of Burke, Hegel and Kant, they are seminal to the early establishment of ‘the sublime’ as a theoretical field associated with what is beyond comprehension or based in imaginative discourse. The later theorists were chosen because they are specifically relevant, in a contemporary context, to discussing ‘the sublime’ as an aesthetic category relating to post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork and broader discussions of aestheticising incomprehensible and horrific human experience.

Considering ‘the sublime’s’ several century-long linkages as an aesthetic category to emotional capability and response; its application to visual representations of exceedingly emotional events such as the Holocaust is appropriate because they are cast in emotional cause and effect. Utilising ‘the sublime’ as a descriptive marker for post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork allows the aesthetics of such representations to be

categorised as representing what is known to be un-representable, at least in its totality. In discussing such artworks, adding the caveat of 'sublime' to their aesthetic description allows for recognition of their unavoidable representational limits or rather, their totalistic un-presentability.

Establishing the current state of the history itself, its representation, and how, aesthetically, artistic practice approaches this, allows the following Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity*, to discuss the transcendental effect or affective dimension of such artwork and the role of 'the observer' regarding both the production of post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork and the viewing of such work. This means that the thesis' discussion centres on the development and production of such artwork through historic, memory-based understanding and assessment, which utilises 'the sublime' as an aesthetic theory and category, to then focus on the receiving of, or exhibition of such artwork.

The following chapter is focused on the affective dimension/qualities of the work, or rather, the relationship between the artwork itself and the observer, focusing on several artists as seminal aesthetic and conceptual examples of this engagement. In recognition of this chapter and the issues of unrepresentability, the 'unpresentable' and aestheticising incomprehensible human experience: Chapter 5 addresses artwork-to-viewer relationships and affect in the context of visual engagement governed by aesthetics. By establishing the aesthetic category and considerations (via 'the sublime') involved in post-Holocaust/traumatic representations, the theorisation of how such artworks affect those who view them is done in accordance with these aesthetic considerations. The inherent 'negative presentation' of post-Holocaust/traumatic aesthetic outcomes, and the resulting imaginative discourse or extrapolation necessary to consider the depicted event or experience is where the witness of the artwork finds an affecting and emotive response, which will be discussed in relation to 'aura theory'.

Chapter 6

An Aura of Atrocity: Artwork- to-Viewer Affect

> 'The aura consists in the uniqueness of the object and the presence it seems to radiate; together, these constitute its authenticity. But this historical presence is not simply some enthralling, charismatic immediacy. Instead, it is the appearance of historical depth inherent in the object.'[181]

Chapters 3 and 4 discussed the artistic representational limits of traumatic history and human experience being inherent due to the array, depth and recurring effects of such instances. Consequently, their visual representation cannot be condensed and presented in any sense of entirety because these effects are too vast or, rather, inconceivable in their totality. Theorised through 'the sublime'[182], any artistic representation of inconceivable experience involves an ultimately ambiguous aesthetic approach because the history/experience cannot be contained by any means; its artistic representation can only indicate toward the topic.

In order to further analyse the artworks discussed throughout the thesis, this chapter investigates beyond these questions of representation and aesthetic categorisation to discuss the reception, or rather the viewer-to-artwork relationship, regarding completed post-Holocaust/traumatic based artwork. This will be discussed via the 'affective dimension' of such artwork, or the intention and potential for the artwork to affect those who view it. This emotive response of the viewer will be discussed through 'aura theory'. This theoretical field is used because it is based on discussing the relational immediacy between a completed artwork and an individual viewer.[183]

Alongside the discussion of how 'aura theory' was established within the broader discourse of art theory, this chapter will investigate how and why artworks have the ability to affect viewers. Alongside the discussion of artworks that represent traumatic experience, especially the representation of the Holocaust, this chapter will develop

---

[181] J. McCole, 1993, pg. 6.
[182] Particularly the theorisation of 'the sublime' within and beyond the postmodern era, where its application broadened to an aesthetic category related to traumatic and inconceivable human experience and suffering. This was discussed in the previous chapter.
[183] The history and theoretical basis for 'aura theory' will be explained in this chapter.

new terminology in retrospect of the foundational 'aura theory' established by Walter Benjamin. The term developed by this original research (discussed in the latter half of this chapter), 'aura of atrocity' aims to define the affective dimension of artwork that represents events such as the Holocaust. It will be a term that is specific to the viewer's emotive response that is catalysed by artwork representing incomprehensible and horrific human experience. These 'representative artworks', which elicit an emotional response, involve both direct representations of atrocity alongside indirect representations that involve a strong sense of ambiguity or are individually responsive artworks relating to broader reaching events and experiences. Seminal examples of these are included and explained throughout this and other chapters, because they represent the soon explained affective capacity of different aesthetic and conceptual approaches to such artworks.

Firstly, considering the concept of aura in relation to visual art, we refer back to previous research discussed in Chapter 4 relating to 'the sublime'. 'Negative presentation' as Kant coined it, and was further developed by Lyotard, is where the viewer adopts imagination in order to engage with the elements of the addressed topic that aren't physically represented through artwork.

> 'The recognition of a transcendence that, because of its limitlessness, cannot be represented impels the experience, distinguishing it from the more conventional (limited) aesthetic judgment with which Kant contrasts it. So, in his example, the limitlessness of the power and expanse of the ocean cannot itself be represented, but the viewers' recognition of that limitlessness attests to their capacity for going beyond all physical limits (including their own).'[184]

It is within this imaginative discourse, or the human recognition of 'capacity beyond physical limits', that this chapter will engage with Benjamin's theorisation of aura. This is in order to discuss the affective dimension of both the studio research discussed in Chapter 1 and also the seminal artworks discussed in the following

[184] B. Lang, *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics*, The Jon Hopkins University Press, USA, 2000, pg. 56.

Chapter 6, as well as throughout the entire PhD in relation to the development, production, presentation and consequential affective dimension of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork.

In consideration of the theory outlined in Chapter 4, the writing in this chapter will investigate the origin[185] of Walter Benjamin's theorisation of aura, where he linked the phenomena primarily to the field of photography before it was subsequently extended to broader artistic practices such as painting and sculpture. Beyond its initial specificity to photography, 'aura theory' was utilised to discuss the affective dimension of artwork, that is, how artwork affects those who view it. Theorists such as Rochlitz, Battersby and Adorno (amongst others introduced in this chapter) also engaged with Benjamin's discussion of aura in relation to aesthetics and viewer interaction/response.

Further to providing a historical summary of 'aura theory', this chapter is concerned with developing and employing the concept of aura in relation to contemporary art practice; particularly that of artwork aiming to represent incomprehensible and traumatic human experience. 'Aura' as a theoretical field that investigates the transcendental qualities of artwork and how those qualities affect viewers, will be incorporated as a means to evaluate whether artwork that represents events like the Holocaust can offer an opportunity for viewers to feel a sense of 'weight' regarding such history. Also, it will look at how art can attempt to engage a viewer's capacity for empathy in considering past traumatic events that have lasting and profound effects on society, culture and history.

While investigating aura in relation to the studio research component of the PhD, as well as the artworks discussed throughout the thesis, this chapter will propose and position a sub-category to 'aura theory' that is specific to the emotive capability of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork. This will be done for the purpose of expanding theoretical discourse in specific relation to the artworks assessed throughout this thesis, where, currently, there is an under-developed field of terminology regarding how viewers experience such artwork.

[185] To later discuss its application to contemporary art practice.

An ‘aura of atrocity’ is the term that will be positioned in the broader context of art theory and will be established in order to assist in future discussion of the affective qualities and relationship between viewer and artwork, where art attempts to ‘present the unpresentable’. This is important when considering that, in relation to post traumatic/Holocaust artwork, the field of memory, testimony and representational limits (discussed in Chapter 3: *History and Memory*), and the consequential aesthetic approaches to such work via ‘the sublime’ (Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable*) are well established fields: the relationship between such artwork and those who view it is not as strongly developed. This is because the discussion of representation and aesthetics is centuries old, whereas the discussion of viewership is not as historically developed.

Through Benjamin’s ‘aura theory’, this affective dimension will be developed in direct correlation with post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork to provide a direct avenue in the theorisation of how such artwork can affect and engage the observer. This is important to the aim of this thesis because in analysing the responsibilities, effects and role of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork within contemporary society; beyond establishing the representational field and aesthetic category of such artwork, its affective dimension is investigated to confirm the viewer’s reception and potential ‘success’ of the work. This is to say that in theorising the affective dimension of post Holocaust/traumatic representations, what is experienced by the viewer can confirm whether such artwork invokes the artistically instituted educational or contemplative goals of the artwork itself, or simply, whether the artwork serves its representational purpose.

Benjamin’s definition of aura is contentious and varied throughout his published work. Initially, and as mentioned in the introduction of this PhD, Benjamin first mentioned the term aura in his early writings that were gathered in *On Hashish*: a collection of essays written between 1927 and 1934. In that writing Benjamin understood aura as a particularly intrinsic attribute of art; an indiscernible but present quality that linked people to fellow people and objects. According to these early writings of Benjamin, ‘aura appears in all things, not just in certain kinds of things, as

people imagine'.[186] To elaborate in a less mystical sense, Benjamin revisited aura theory in his essay, *A Short History of Photography* (1931).[187] This writing mentions aura as uniqueness in the human subject or an object, which is liquidated by reproductive means such as photography. 'The prizing of the object from its shell, the destruction of its aura is the mark that the sense of the sameness of things in the world has grown to such an extent that by means of reproduction even the unique is made to yield up its uniqueness.'[188]

In writing 'the prizing of an object from its shell', Benjamin is discussing the context in which an object is seen: its 'shell' being in the real world, and its detachment being that object reproduced via photography. This will be explained shortly in visual reference to early photographs discussed by Benjamin. Further to this and within his essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936), Benjamin elaborates on the idea of aura. This was done in specific relationship to the technological development of photography and its use as an artistic medium; however, there are broader implications for Benjamin's discussion of aura that will be raised below in relationship to contemporary art practice across a variety of media including painting, sculpture, installation, participation, sound and video art.

Australian philosopher Andrew Benjamin, in his collection of writings, *Walter Benjamin and Art* (2005) includes the essay of British philosopher Diarmuid Costello titled *Aura, Face, Photography: Re-Reading Benjamin Today* (2005), which states: 'For Benjamin, the fundamental issue is not that an 'aura' may be predicated of some objects (paintings) but not others (photographs), but that a fundamental category of experience, memory, and perception permeating human possibilities of encountering the world, other persons and works of art more generally is in the process of fading away'.[189] It is through detachment from real physicality and experience that Benjamin fears is a disintegration of the inherent aura of art as he described in *On Hashish*.

---

[186] W. Benjamin, *On Hashish*, Harvard University Press, USA, 2006, pg. 58.
[187] W. Benjamin, *A Short History of Photography*, Oxford University Press, London, 1972.
[188] W. Benjamin, ibid, pg. 21.
[189] A. Benjamin, ed. *Walter Benjamin and Art,* Continuum Publishing, London, 2005, pg. 165.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s Benjamin was bearing witness to increasing industrial and technological developments, which opened a range of concerns not just in the context of art, but also society at large. Concerns of the time involved increasing human detachment from nature itself alongside human interaction. Benjamin saw the development of photography as an indicator of society's detachment from reality and was questioning what this meant both for art as well as general human experience.

Lyotard writes in relation to Benjamin's specific focus on the advancements of photographic equipment: 'loss of aura is the negative aspect of the hardware involved in producing the machine that produces the photograph. The amateur has to choose a subject, but the look is controlled by the manufacturer'.[190] This suggests that with technological advancement, there is less sensory human engagement with the subject of the artist's creative endeavour: a suggestion that implies aura as being linked to human sensibilities and interaction. To provide examples of the role of photography in the diminishment of aura, within *A Short History of Photography*, Benjamin utilises Scottish painter David Octavius Hill's practice to discuss the origins of photography and early photograph's inherent 'aura' that would be lost in subsequent technological advancement.

In the mid 19th Century, Octavius Hill formed *Hill & Adamson Studio* with Scottish engineer and photographer Robert Adamson, which became responsible for pioneering advancements in the photographic medium. An early portrait photograph from Hill and Adamson Studio is *Mrs Elizabeth (Johnstone) Hall, Newhaven Fishwife* 1843 – 1846 (Fig. 43).

[190] S. Morley, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Sublime*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2010, pg. 132.

Fig. 43

Benjamin discusses this photograph as containing an 'auratic' dimension by virtue of the subject and the practice of photography at that time. During the early photographic period, the subject of the photograph ('the sitter') would have to stay in position for 60-90 seconds while the camera burnt what was seen through the lens directly onto a photographic plate. If the sitter moved, it would blur the image being recorded by the camera. This form of photography, where the positive image is burned onto a plate did not produce a negative piece of film meaning that the photograph itself, or daguerreotype as they are known, was an original product unable to be reproduced. Benjamin states: 'In Hill's Newhaven Fishwife, her eyes cast down in such indolent, seductive modesty, there remains something that goes beyond testimony to the photographer's art, something that cannot be silenced, that fills you with an unruly desire to know what her name was, the woman who was alive there, who even now is still real and will never consent to being wholly absorbed in 'art'.'[191]

These daguerreotypes, as original 'one off' pieces, retain a sense of authenticity or uniqueness in their non-reproducible quality and originality. It was in the technological advancements of the late 19th Century that Benjamin focused on photography as being initially responsible for diminishing an 'aura' because of reproduction technologies and the increasing speed of photographic practice itself. However, it will be argued that the use of photography has (now) long-

[191] W. Benjamin, 1972, pg. 7.

been, in its immediacy and representational capability, a powerful artistic medium. Evidence of this can be seen in the use of photography for recording and consequently archiving important historical moments and human experiences. The use of the medium by documentarians, photojournalists, activists and artists[192] proposes that through its use, representation in a direct and un-ambiguous sense can be achieved. The discussion here of blaming photography for the diminishing authenticity or 'aura' of art is purely for the purpose of outlining the historic establishment of 'aura theory' by Benjamin, which would later become a field of broader artistic theoretical enquiry. Through technological development, photography became more accessible, affordable and easy for the sitter. This happened by burning an image directly on film, which could register the subject faster than a photographic plate: bringing down the exposure speed of a single photograph to several seconds rather than 1 – 1.5 minutes. This turned photography, instead of being a specialist artistic practice, into a commercialised medium. Rather than photographers carefully choosing their subjects or sitters, portrait photography became a contrived arrangement of sitters, backdrops, props and costumes that would be produced in casual succession for anyone with the money to be photographed. An example that rests in between this advancement of photography and the (as Benjamin describes it) 'testimonial' essence of early photography is an unknown photographer's portrait of Bohemian literary figure *Franz Kafka* 1887 (Fig. 44).

Fig. 44

[192] As will soon be discussed.

Benjamin describes this photograph as 'a supremely touching portrayal of his [Kafka's] 'poor, brief childhood'. It was probably made in one of those nineteenth-century studios whose draperies and palm trees, tapestries and easels, placed them somewhere between a torture chamber and a throne room.'[193] Despite Benjamin's distain for the setting and forced elements of this photograph, in a sense, it transcended the direction photography was taking because of the intrigue within Kafka's face. British literary theorist Carolin Duttlinger in her essay *Walter Benjamin and the Aura of Photography* (2008) states:

> 'Kafka's image betrays a tension between the general and the particular—in this case, between the formulaic setting and the melancholy expressiveness of the sitter's gaze. Against the suffocating conventionality of the photographic backdrop, the boy's eyes stand out through their excessive, uncontainable emotion. It is this detail, rather than the surrounding scene, which attracts the viewer's attention, triggering an empathetic response in Benjamin—who describes the picture as 'deeply moving'.'[194]

Instead of daguerreotypes, as compelling, authentic and original objects; photography's commodification and advancement results in Benjamin assessing the resulting portrait to find its essential intrigue. In the case of Kafka's portrait, it is within the gaze of Kafka himself, which is in spite of his surroundings and the 'staging' of the image. It is this direction that photography was taking, which prompted Benjamin to investigate what this meant for the authenticity of art and whether the aura, or essence of creative representation was being lost in an 'age of mechanical reproduction.'

Beyond this early theorisation of aura, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* offers Benjamin's first succinct definition of aura as recognised now in the theoretical field of art-based-research where he stated 'what is aura, actually? A strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close the object may be. While resting on a summer's noon, to trace a

[193] M.W. Jennings, H. Eiland & G. Smith, eds. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume Two, Part Two,* Harvard University Press, 2005, pg. 800.
[194] C. Duttlinger, *Imaginary Encounters: Walter Benjamin and the Aura of Photography*, *Poetics Today 29:1*, Oxford, 2008, pg. 88-89.

range of mountains on the horizon, or a branch which casts its shadow on the observer, until the moment or the hour become part of their appearance – this is what it means to breathe the aura of those mountains, that branch.'[195] Benjamin's description of aura identifies it as something beyond physicality: a sense of 'distance' and circumstantial time, or an untouchable quality, regardless of an observer's proximity to object or phenomena.

Discussion of this definition of 'aura' is assisted by German artist Gerhard Richter: a seminal figure to 'post-war art' and contemporary art practice at large. Richter was born in 1932 and spent his childhood years inside Nazi occupied East Germany and his adolescence in the war-torn remains of its defeat has addressed the horror of the Holocaust for decades within his work. His writing on 'aura theory' infers 'it is no accident that Benjamin employs the word *Gespinst* (weave) in his definition of aura, a German word close to *Gespenst* (ghost or spectre) - simultaneously inscribe it in and remove it from the logic of technical and cultural reproduction'.[196] This comment confirms the difficulty in solidifying the concept of aura and its definition, both linking it to logic or objective qualities as well as its removal from such things via merits of mysticism or circumstantial, indefinable emotive functions. This duality can be seen in work such as Richter's *Birkenau* 2014 (Fig. 45), which has a specific representational goal or 'objective quality' outlined in the title of the work while also presenting an 'indefinable emotive quality' in the work's chaotic abstraction and gestural painting style. This painting is one of a set of four canvases that are responsive to four photographs taken by the Sonderkommando guards of crematorium V within the Auschwitz II (Birkenau) extermination camp 1944 (Fig. 46).

[195] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Prism Key Press, 2010, pg. 17.
[196] L. Patt, ed. *Benjamin's Blind Spot: Walter Benjamin and the Premature Death of Aura*, The Institute of Cultural Inquiry, 2001, USA, pg. 28.

Fig. 45

Fig. 46

Within this painting Richter approaches post-Holocaust representation via an intentional removal from conventional representational methods such as the depiction of figures, landmarks or landscapes. In a style of abstraction, it is within the title of the work as well as the history of Richter himself that imbues this work with a sense of the Birkenau camp. In knowing its title and the artist's background, the artwork portrays a sense of violent chaos or even a painful confusion via the chosen colour pallet, and the painting method of distinctive, harsh crosshatched slices through the paint, which act as either a veil hiding the inhumane behind a ghostly blur, or as a demarcation of abstracted violence played out on the surface of the canvas. The essence of this painting is by association with its title and the artist: without those elements, its intended meaning is arguably lost.

Australian curator and writer Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow writes about Richter's *Birkenau* series: 'Closely connected to the plea to remember is the responsibility to draw lessons valuable to the future. The paintings themselves convey this difficult process through their layering and their signs of an interwoven tension between revealing and concealing: wounds, scars, trenches and pits. The past is scratched open. Skins are overlaid. It is as if we are struggling with a process of endless repetition and return.'[197] This indicates that the meaning or essence of the work finds

[197] C. Saines, *Gerhard Richter: The Life of Images*, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, 2018, Queensland, pg. 57.

foundation in its production and the process in which it was made: a gestural, expressive array of movements recorded by the paint on the canvas.

This abstract detachment from the photographic influence of the painting echoes Richter's distanced portrayal of the Birkenau camp. To put it in Benjamin's terms, the *Birkenau* paintings offer insight into a 'weave of space and time' between a photograph 'then and there' of crematorium V in Birkenau, and its painterly depiction near 70 years later. It is this that will be argued within this chapter as an aura that is intrinsic to the topical influence, production methods and intention of artwork itself. It is also this 'essence' of Richter's *Birkenau* paintings that Benjamin argues is lacking within media such as photography and subsequently allows this concept of aura to be applied to broader artistic practices such as painting.

In an argument against Benjamin's condemnation of photography as an affective medium, its development and capacity for capturing the realism of a moment should be stated because its use in contemporary culture and art, although unforeseen by Benjamin at the time, has been profound and continually effective in depicting sensitive history and experience, harsh realities and atrocity. As an example, American photographer Nan Goldin's *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* 1985 (Fig. 47) is an autobiographical slide-show exhibition and photo-book documenting Goldin's life in New York from 1979-1985. The photographs taken by Goldin feature her friends, colleagues and lovers involved with the music, art, hard drug and sexual sub-cultures of New York City at the time.

Fig. 47

Originally presented in 1985 as an exhibition, the photographs were displayed as a slide show to music that was important to the photographic subjects. This included tracks by Velvet Underground, Nina Simone and Screamin' Jay Hawkins alongside others. The following year the photographs were published as an 'artist book'. In discussing the project in the artist book Goldin states 'I want to show exactly what my world looks like, without glamorisation, without glorification. This is not a bleak world but one in which there is an awareness of pain, a quality of introspection'.[198] For instance, the image referenced above (Fig. 47) shows Goldin's face a week after being beaten by her then former partner. Goldin's photographs offer a rare and candid invitation into the raw and gritty sub-cultural world she was surrounded by and inhabited. The work bears witness to experiences of ecstasy, romance and love along with pain, loss, addiction and danger.

Another example of the contemporary use of photography, and in the field of photojournalism is the work of South African photojournalist Kevin Carter when he captured a moment during the *1993 famine in Sudan* 1993 (Fig. 48).

Fig. 48

Depicting an emaciated child being watched by a vulture, this photograph received that year's Pulitzer Prize for photojournalism: America's most prestigious award for his field. Shortly after Carter took the photograph, the *New York Times* published the image, which consequently reverberated around the Western world. As well as providing insight into the horrible living conditions of those in Sudan 'his image

[198] N. Goldin, M. Heiferman, M. Holborn & S. Fletcher, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependancy*, Aperture Publishers, New York, 1989, pg. 6.

quickly became a wrenching case study in the debate over when photographers should intervene'.[199] Under both scrutiny and praise for his work Carter died by suicide several months after taking this photograph. In part, his suicide note read: 'I am haunted by the vivid memories of killings and corpses and anger and pain'.[200]

This is an example of photography's ability to directly depict an atrocious situation that can then resonate with a wider population, as well as having the ability to affect those producing and viewing it. It is likely that Benjamin could not foresee what photography could become as a medium. The process of photography at the time (when Benjamin was condemning it) forced the photographer to 'stage' a scene or assemble the subject of the image. The rarity and expense of the medium at this time should also be considered in contrast with Benjamin's disdain for it. The portability, immediacy and potential of the medium as in Carter's image (above) and in the creative use of photography in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries could not have been predicted in the time of Benjamin's early writing.

American writer Jennifer Hansen Glucklich's book *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation* 2014 argues for Benjamin's definition of aura, stating that Benjamin 'defines the power of authentic presence, or 'aura', as the 'unique existence' of a work of art 'at the place where it happens to be.' The aura, in short, is an object's 'presence in time and space', and it emerges based on the fact that the object exists in an original, singular state'.[201] Glucklich is suggesting that it is in the uniqueness of a work of art that a sense of authenticity and affect happens. A work's presentation and influence alongside an experiential 'distance' as Benjamin describes it, are what establish its auratic ability. In the case of art, this would be the experience of both the artist in the designing/production of the work, and the individual viewer in the presence of a completed work. To provide an artistic example is American artist-architect Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* 1982 (Fig. 49 & Fig. 50). This permanent memorial is located in Washington D.C. as two 75.21-metre-long granite wall faces meeting at an angle so that one end of the work is

[199] B. Goldberger, ed. *100 Photographs The Most Influential Images of all Time*, Liberty Street of Time inc Books, New York, 2015, pg. 152.
[200] B. Goldberger, ed. ibid, pg. 152.
[201] J. Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation*, Rutgers University Press, 2014, USA, pg. 124-125.

pointing toward the Washington Monument and the other is pointing toward the Lincoln Memorial. On the highly polished granite surface are the inscribed names of each of the 58,318 American servicemembers who lost their lives in the Vietnam conflict (1955-1975).

Fig. 49

Fig. 50

With the memorial tapering from 200mm high at each point up to 3.1 metres high where the two walls meet, it is designed to appear as a wound cut into the earth. Due to the surface of the walls, viewers are able to see their reflection while reading the inscribed names. This design choice symbolically brings the past and the present together, offering an opportunity for visitors to connect, via their reflection, with the impact of this conflict in relationship to their own identity connected to the name of a lost family member or friend. Lin's design was chosen out of over 1400 submissions for an 'open-call' to design and build America's first major Vietnam War memorial. American veteran and literary theorist James Reston Junior wrote *A Rift in the Earth*: a book detailing every aspect of Lin's memorial. In the book Reston references Paul Spreiregen who headed the committee that decided on Lin's memorial design over all other submissions. Reston states 'the very simplicity and transcendence of entry #1026 [Lin's submitted design] reminded him [Spreiregen] of what the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery had once said: 'Perfection is finally attained not when there is no longer anything to add, but there is no longer anything to take away'.'[202]

[202] J. Reston Jr, *A Rift in the Earth: Art Memory and the Fight for a Vietnam War Memorial*, Arcade Publishing, New York, 2017, pg. 50-51.

The decision for Lin's design was steeped in controversy, as she was a third-year undergraduate architecture student at the time: an inexperienced artist with little practical and logistical experience. Adding to the controversy was Lin's Asian heritage, which was a source of backlash and racist hatred, particularly because of the war her memorial was addressing. Regarding Benjamin's concept of aura, it is work such as Lin's memorial that places viewers in direct relational engagement with the work. This means that in the experience of visiting the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, an individualised experience is provided in both the metaphorical and physical reflective quality of the work, which is to say that in the relational blurring between viewer and artwork, an 'aura' is present. Through Benjamin's definition, aura becomes a term for what is a kind of aesthetic experience, that is, a mode of experience that is described as transcending our everyday ways of engaging with the world: an experience that is solely linked to the place and time in which a person engages with an object, person or moment.

To provide another artistic example of this in the context of discussing photography (and its contemporary use) is the work of French artist Christian Boltanski. His practice spans sculpture, installation art, painting, filmmaking and photography but he is most renowned for his installation-based photographic works such as *Grosse Hamburger Strasse* 2012 (Fig. 51).

Fig. 51

Often focused on collective memory and its representation, Boltanski adjusts the perceptive qualities of photography to introduce the viewer to a new mode of

engaging with old documentary photographs. *Grosse Hamburger Strasse* is the reformatting of a particular photograph that influenced various installations of Boltanski. The photograph, originally from 1939 (Fig. 52), is of a group of children from the former Jewish school in Grosse Hamburger Strasse, Berlin.

Fig. 52

It is unconfirmed but likely, due to statistics regarding the Jewish community of late-1930s Berlin, that the majority of the children in this picture were killed during WWII. For *Grosse Hamburger Strasse,* Boltanski isolated and enlarged several of these children's faces to become individual portraits of those whose fate is uncertain but likely grim. **'**Boltanski repeatedly uses the same photograph, manipulating it in medium and expression, each time finding a different artistic language. The portraits are mementos of other people's lives, saturated with history, and witnesses to cultural memories. By using them in his artwork, Boltanski speaks through the personalities of the pictured, memorialising their fates.'[203] This prompts the viewer to consider the historical context of what is presented in a modified and personalised sense: via a 'face to face' style interaction, considering the innocent victims and atrocity of the referenced time and place.

Inside the book *Boltanski: Souls from Place to Place* (2017) Italian philosopher Frederico Vercellone writes on Boltanski's use of the photograph, 'they reawaken the souls that ask to be assigned to a different history. With this step, two edges of the

[203] N. Azzarello, *Christian Boltanski: Grosse Hamburger Strasse at Kewenig* (2013), accessed 18/08/2018, https://www.designboom.com/art/christian-boltanskis-grosse-hamburger-strasse-at-kewenig-10-19-2013/

tragic gap that separates history from individual lives are joined back together, at least post hoc. Through this path, the public space is profoundly renewed. In doing so, we advance the fate of images.'[204] This use of photography and its auratic capability is what was described earlier as the arguably unforeseeable potential of photography from the perspective of Benjamin. According to Rochlitz, 'everything indicates that the aura is not the most artistic aspect of a work of art. It is, rather, an affective charge received from the context or the time; it can be a sense of scandal or catastrophe.'[205]

It is through a viewer's relational engagement with a work that determines its aura or perceived intrigue. This means that the 'atmosphere' of affective dimension of a work is dependent on how the viewer engages with it: whether they have existing relationships or experiences that run parallel with the theme of the work, or choose to sympathise or empathise with what it represents. It is these emotive responses that are the direct result of the artwork's inherent aura. For example, the public memorial/artwork *Shoes on the Danube Bank* 2005 (Fig. 53) by Hungarian film director Can Togay and Hungarian sculptor Gyula Pauer is on permanent display on the bank of the Danube River in Budapest.

Fig. 53

This memorial/artwork commemorates the lives taken by *Arrow Cross Militiamen* (a Nazi led militia in Hungary during WWII), where they lined up civilians along the

[204] D. Eccher, ed. *Boltanski: Souls, From Place to Place*, Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2017, pg. 79.
[205] R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin*, Guilford Publications, USA, 1995, pg. 166.

river bank, ordered them to remove their shoes and step toward the edge before shooting them so their bodies fell directly in the river. The 60 pairs of sculpted iron shoes now line this riverbank as a permanent display in remembrance of 3,500 people who were killed in this way by the Arrow Cross between 1944 and 1945. The relatable quality of this work and its eerie simplicity engages an auratic sense that can be clearly linked to the exact event it portrays alongside the void of those who once occupied the shoes. Similarly, and in relation to artefacts of traumatic history rather than artworks, displays in Holocaust museums utilise this relatable quality and sense of aura to portray horrific human experience and atrocity. An example is the permanent display at the preserved Auschwitz I concentration camp of shoes taken from Jews upon arrival at Auschwitz circa.1947 (Fig. 54).

Fig. 54

This display gives perspective to the sheer mass of people who were detained in the Auschwitz camps via a discarded item of clothing (a shoe) that is considered to be a basic necessity for most. As such, it is in the amalgamation of such relatable objects and their inherent 'negative presentation' that a direct avenue for empathic response and victim consideration is offered. Linking the theorisation of aura between art and artefact Glucklich states: 'Despite obvious differences, art objects and Holocaust artefacts share essential characteristics that justify extending the concept of the aura from the former to the latter: in both cases the aura arises from the object's unique presence in time and place and fulfils ritual functions'.[206] These ritual functions are based on acts of remembering and commemorating loss, where the aura of both art

[206] J. Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, pg. 125.

and artefact relating to particular historical events or human experiences is established by the previously mentioned relational engagement between object and observer.

Similar to Benjamin's aura and to aid in this discussion of viewer-to-artwork relational engagement is the concept of 'punctum' by French philosopher Roland Barthes. In Barthes' book *Camera Lucina*[207] (1980), he introduced the term 'punctum' while discussing the medium of photography. In partnership with another term, 'stundium', which relates to the overall 'study' of an image, or rather a scientific assessment of all component parts of an image; 'punctum', according to Barthes, simultaneously relates to the word 'puncture' and 'punctuate.' 'Punctum' references a personalised affective dimension of an image that punctures the viewer emotionally. Barthes states: 'it is this element [punctum] which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me'.[208] In continuing to theorise this metaphysical effect: 'A photograph's punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)'.[209] In this metaphor of piercing the viewer, Barthes is referring to an 'accident', where a particular element of an image directly relates to the viewer's own experience or memory: a relatable quality that connects them to the presentation in an unexpected, individualised way. Later in *Camera Lucinda*, Barthes develops the concept of punctum further: 'This new punctum, which is no longer of form but of intensity, is Time, the lacerating emphasis of the noeme (that has been), its pure representation'.[210] Likened to 'aura', which Benjamin describes as 'a strange weave of space and time'. 'punctum' is a detail or quality that captures an authentic moment: the moment of the photograph or representation itself and also a later moment between the viewer and the image or artwork.

Although Barthes discussed punctum as an inherent quality to photography whereas Benjamin argued that aura diminished due to the medium, the essence of the two concepts run parallel. The punctum is then the viewer considering what Barthes states as the 'noeme' (that which has been), in the moment that they are engaged with the

[207] R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Vintage Books, London, 2000.
[208] R. Barthes, ibid, pg. 26.
[209] R. Barthes, ibid pg. 27.
[210] R. Barthes, ibid, pg. 96.

presentation. As punctum relates to affecting detail in a representation,[211] aura relates to an atmospheric affective dimension. This delineation between emotionally puncturing details (punctum) and a broadly affecting atmosphere (aura) establishes 'aura theory', more so than 'studium and punctum', as an effective means to discuss the overarching emotional effects of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork. This is because aura is broadly definitive of artwork-to-viewer emotive effects, whereas punctum is more specific to fine details and individualised experience.

It is through the relationship between a person and an artwork that aura can appear to elicit the emotional response of the viewer bearing witness or interacting with either art or artefact. Glucklich continues that 'the aura of an artefact does not exist without the individual who perceives it and who experiences, in response, something meaningful – the aura emerges in this way from real, concrete conditions of presentation and spectatorship and is neither magical nor mysterious'.[212] This suggests that instead of a 'magical or mysterious' association of aura to an object, aura is the relationship between object and spectator or artwork and viewer. It is in the context of what the presentation represents alongside the viewer's perception of the represented topic that determines an individualised and circumstantial 'aura' to be in effect.

Beyond the initial mysticism of Benjamin's theory of aura, it can assist with describing affecting qualities that are initiated by an emotional response to something linked with a particular place, people or experience. It is within this frame that the argument stands to introduce new terminology that specifically relates to the aura or affective dimension of work that 'presents the unpresentable'. Where artwork, such as the examples throughout this thesis, is representative of inconceivable and traumatic history, events and human experiences, its subsequent aura is related directly to what it is trying to represent. The emotional response to such work is therefore in consideration of terrible human experience or atrocity and is disturbing in its nature. With work that represents and constitutes emotions of sadness, mourning, anger, disdain and disbelief, this thesis aims to establish the term 'aura of atrocity' as a

[211] This will be further explained shortly.
[212] J. Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, pg. 120.

specific descriptor for the aura of artwork that relates to the previously discussed theories of the sublime: artwork that aesthetically represents traumatic experience and events such as the Holocaust. An example of horror directly depicted through an artwork is British artist Leslie Cole's *One of the Death Pits, Belsen SS Guards Collecting Bodies* 1945 (Fig. 55).

Fig. 55

Cole was commissioned as a 'war artist' during the latter years of WWII. During his service between 1942 and 1946, Cole travelled to various conflict sites in order to document and represent what he witnessed. In 1945, Cole was present for the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany, which prompted a series of works including the Belsen death pit painting (above). The work depicts SS guards having to pile dead bodies into a mass grave close to the concentration camp while being watched by the British 11th Armoured Division who liberated the camp. This work is an example of atrocity or the 'unpresentable', presented via direct witnessing and artistic means. As is the case for 'the sublime', where aesthetics are linked to ultimately 'un-presentable' topics, 'aura' is linked to an array of emotive functions. In the event of incomprehensible catastrophe and their artistic, totalistic representational limits, an 'aura of atrocity' is an emotive quality, felt by the viewer in relation to witnessing the 'un-presentable.' Referring back to the linked theory of Barthes, there is the 'studium' of a representation, which are the representation's component parts of historical context and meaning, presented in a sublime aesthetic; and then the 'punctum', which emerges as a kind of relatable detail of the representation.

American literary theorist Nancy M Shawcross's book *Roland Barthes on Photography: The Critical Tradition in Perspective*[213] investigates Barthes' conceptualisation of 'studium and punctum' stating 'a photograph's punctum (that 'accident which pricks' one in a photograph) can revive an image from the visual overload that makes us not 'see' it anymore'.[214] In assessing this theory and expanding from specifically referencing photography to a broader ideal of representation: the punctum, as a product of the overall representation and like that of 'aura', transcends the incomprehensible totality or 'visual overload' as Shawcross states, to be an affecting, puncturing quality of viewer engagement. Shawcross continues: 'If one does not understand or respond to the cultural context (the 'studium' of the photograph), the lacerating detail and the photograph's [or representation's] potential for pathos remain obscured: without a frame or setting, there is nothing to be exceeded, nothing to be pierced [no punctum]'.[215] Similar to that of an aura, punctum is made possible in the context of the broader implications of a representation. In the overwhelming totality of post Holocaust/traumatic representation, the broad implications of the representation exceed comprehension, which then elicits a contemplative experience between artwork and viewer within the sublime 'negative presentation', and in consideration of totality and atrocity that cannot be grasped.

In considering an event such as the Holocaust, it is overwhelmingly the case that for the viewer, in the face of a post-traumatic/Holocaust representation, that they experience a disturbing and uncomfortable range of emotions due to empathic tendencies and relationism. This means that in the interaction between artwork and viewer, their application of what is presented to them is relationally applied to what they have personally experienced or understand within the portrayal. An example is English artist Henry Moore's *Grey Tube Shelter* 1940 (Fig. 56) drawing that depicts a scene within an underground station, where civilians took cover during a WWII air raid on Camden, England.

[213] N.M. Shawcross, *Roland Barthes on Photography: The Critical Tradition in Perspective*, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 1997.
[214] N.M. Shawcross, ibid, pg. 84.
[215] N.M. Shawcross, ibid, pg. 84.

Fig. 56

Moore was amongst those civilians taking shelter, which prompted this drawing (and several more making them a thematic series) from lived experience and memory. The 'shelter drawings' established Moore as an official British 'war artist' and are interpreted as symbolising the resilience of British people during the war. In relation to an emotive quality or 'aura' produced by such work, Australian art dealer Rex Irwin discussed Moore's series during an interview conducted specifically for this PhD research. When asked what artwork he recalled as being particularly emotionally affective Rex stated 'one of the few times I have been moved to tears by a work of art was seeing an exhibition of Henry Moore's Shelter Drawings at the British Museum. Much of the effect was no doubt received memory adding to my childhood experience just after the war. I still find these images deeply moving.'[216] It is through a sense of relationism that Irwin found profound affect in viewing Moore's work. To give context to Irwin's lived experience, he briefly discussed his childhood within the interview: 'As a child of an English army background I spent 18 months from Christmas 1945 in Germany, so some of my earliest childhood memories are of the devastation caused by war and my friendships with German children of my own age 4-6 years, as well as my safe middle-class upbringing'.[217]

[216] Written interview answer by Rex Irwin, who participated in an official written interview project undertaken specifically for this PhD research. USQ Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154. Interview answers are included in the appendix of this thesis.
[217] R. Irwin, ibid.

Based in relationism and empathetic response, the aura of post-Holocaust/traumatic representations positions viewers in a space of contemplation and consideration of experiences that are not necessarily their own but are considered in the terms of broader human history and lived experience. This institutes a transcendental quality that goes beyond aesthetics and physicality, to position the viewer in an emotional state fostered by the wider implications of what is presented to them.

To briefly refer back to the philosophy of Burke: 'In his Philosophical Enquiry Burke registers 'sympathy', or what we would now call 'empathy', as an important part of the mechanics of terror that generate the sublime. It is by 'sympathy' that we are 'put in the place of another'.'[218] Through this tendency of people to empathise, or to consider the experiences of others in the context of their own life, artworks that address traumatic human experience and involve the previously discussed 'negative presentation', becomes occupied by the observer's empathic and imaginative capacity.

To elaborate by referring back to the theoretical discussion in Chapter 4 regarding the sublime, it is within the Kantian 'imaginative discourse' than an aura is produced. This is to say that with post Holocaust/traumatic artwork registering the 'unpresentable' aesthetic category of the sublime, it is in what is un-presented that the viewer fills their imagination. For instance, having the totality of the Holocaust to be beyond a single artwork's aesthetic capability, the viewer, in considering the broader implications of such work, is engaged in imaginative discourse that suggests toward that totality. In this viewer's engagement between self and artwork is an affective dimension of their contemplation beyond what is directly presented. In the event of post Holocaust/traumatic representation, this affective dimension or rather the work's aura of atrocity is in the artwork proposing contemplation of incomprehensible and disturbingly affecting events and/or experiences.

To further explain; where art represents events such as the Holocaust, it is not just through aesthetic ambiguity, which is unavoidable due to the totalistic

[218] C. Battersby, 2007, pg. 25.

representational limits of such history, but also the aura[219] of such depictions that can make the artwork effective in its representational goals. The history can be presented (although with considered limitations) in an aesthetic sense, but it is via connotation with traumatic experience that the work inherits an aura of atrocity that places viewers in a contemplative, empathetic position: an impassioned state charged by emotions relating to atrocious events and experience. This can be experienced strongly, in reference to the affect of Moore's shelter drawings on Rex Irwin, by a direct linkage of personal lived experience and memory to a post-traumatic work of art. This affect, to again draw on the theory of Barthes is an example of 'punctum:' a direct and specific linkage between viewer and artwork that acts like an emotional, metaphorical piercing. Similarly, but perhaps not as immediately, this affect can be achieved in a detached viewer or artist who may not have excessively traumatic lived experience to draw from, but can instead be affected in the consideration of what has been experienced by others in contrast to their life that has been free of such extreme experience.

To conclude, in the instance of post Holocaust/traumatic representation, discussing the affective dimension and relationship between artwork and viewer investigates whether such works serve their representational goals. In this chapter, the historic and developmental arc of 'aura theory' (primarily by Benjamin) was discussed in order to establish it as a central theoretical field of enquiry. Through this, the 'aura' of an artwork finds definition in its uniqueness or authenticity. This is due to the fact that the artwork is representative of a particular time, place, person or experience. 'Aura' is then deterministic of a relational engagement between viewer and artwork, where the viewer's personal experience, empathic tendencies and capacity for contemplation governs a sense of experiential-based aura that transcends the work's purely aesthetic, or modernist autonomy.

In reference to earlier theorisation of 'the sublime' and the totalistic 'un-presentability' of post-traumatic experience, it is in the Kantian 'negative presentation' that viewers utilise imaginative discourse to extrapolate from a post

[219] 'Aura' that is prompted by the visual elements of the artwork alongside its influence and meaning.

Holocaust/traumatic representation. It is in that extrapolation that an experience is formed directly between viewer and artwork, where they apply their own experience and sensibilities to the work while imagining the broader qualities and referencing of the artwork itself. In discussing this, the effectiveness of a post-traumatic/Holocaust representation was considered from the emotive response it can elicit, which is initiated by an aura of atrocity or affective dimension of the presented work.

The term 'aura of atrocity' was established specifically for the artistic field discussed in this thesis. Its application was motivated by the need to identify an affective dimension that is unique to artwork based on incomprehensible and atrocious human experience. In identifying this term, this chapter is suggesting that the effect of post Holocaust/traumatic artwork is its own category of 'viewer-to-artwork' experience; that is to say the viewer bearing witness to the presentation and its connotations. This is because such artwork presents a suggestion toward vast and recurring traumatic, and ultimately disturbing effects. The 'aura of atrocity' is testament to perpetuated and experienced atrocity being artistically memorialised or represented after-the-fact. To put it simply, the representation of distinctively atrocious events like the Holocaust constitutes an equally distinctive, or at least a relative, emotional experience between viewer and artwork.

These theoretical concerns and developments coordinate with the previous chapters in order to investigate the focus of this PhD research, which is based on the ongoing role, responsibility and relevance of artwork grounded in incomprehensible or traumatic human experience. Examining this research focus area has involved the necessary historic/memory-based research as initial influence for such artwork, which raises questions of representability in relation to incomprehensible and traumatic events and human experience. Through these questions of representability, 'the sublime' offers a theoretical aesthetic category, where the aestheticisation of such events and experiences poses an inherent 'negative presentation'. This is to say that with totalistic representational limits, an artwork can only suggest, aesthetically, toward the totality of the depicted event or experience.

In considering these representational questions and what post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork aesthetically suggests toward, the 'negative presentation' enables 'imaginative discourse' in the viewer, therefore positioning them to consider the totality of events such as the Holocaust in the presence of representational artwork. In the case of post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork, the viewer's experience and consideration produces an aura of atrocity as the work specifically triggers emotive functions associated with the depicted event and/or experience. With these theoretical fields and establishments, the thesis will now discuss seminal historical and contemporary visual art examples that holistically engage with these concepts in order to respond, represent and memorialise traumatic experience and atrocious human capability. These artistic examples will be discussed in order to further identify how this theoretical debate is translated into artistic practice, while also contextually positioning and solidifying the practical component of this PhD research in the post-Holocaust artwork field.

Chapter 7

Artists' Response: Seminal Outcomes in the Visual Field

> 'The Holocaust has become an archetype of hate and destruction, one that will probably continue to be treated in art as long as these dangers exist.'[220]

This chapter will discuss a range of artists and their respective artworks that are key examples of practically contextualising the main theoretical fields addressed in this thesis involving representation of atrocity and trauma, 'the sublime' and 'aura theory'. Within these broad fields are representational problems and limits (at least in a totalistic sense), 'the sublime' as an aesthetic category relating to traumatic history and human experience, and an 'aura of atrocity' as an affective dimension between viewer and artwork when it relates to such history and experience. These concepts are apparent within these particular artists' work because of their association with traumatic history, memories and, in many cases, incomprehensible human experience. The artworks investigated in this chapter will span painting, sculpture, installation, participation, new media and performance art in order to offer examples of studio-based outcomes from seminal artists engaged in the field of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation, which harmonise the primary theoretical fields previously discussed in the thesis.

Fig. 57

[220] M. Bohm-Duchen, ed. *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, 1995, pg. 75.

To begin, this chapter will discuss examples of artworks that are, in many respects, comparable to the practice-led research outcomes of this PhD study discussed in Chapter 1. In relation to the development, production and completion of the *Deathgate* ceramic installation artwork 2015-18 (Fig. 57), the following artistic examples utilise similar studio approaches and conceptual considerations in their own individual development, construction and presentations. These similarities include elements such as: a level of aesthetic ambiguity in order to cautiously invite the viewer to engage with the meaning or history of the work; or an absolute reliance on the concept of 'the multiple' to create art that represents broad-reaching traumatic events. The similar elements between each of the following artistic examples and the studio research project of the PhD will be addressed in this chapter before overarching similarities will be elaborated upon.

In relation to the studio research, artistic examples allow for the positioning and contextualisation of a project such as *Deathgate* in the broader visual field of memorial works, post-Holocaust/traumatic representations and 'war art'. This PhD (and included philosophical/theoretical research) is primarily concerned with visual art outcomes, both historic and contemporary, which aim to illuminate the broad field of continuing attempts to address extreme human experience and ability. Examples with close links to the studio research of the PhD include the work of Chinese artist Ai Weiwei with his large-scale installations predominantly inspired by Chinese history, socio-cultural politics and education. One example is *Remembering* 2009 (Fig. 58), which follows a conceptual through-line of his practice that is concerned with both memorialisation and remembrance, alongside a commitment to protesting against the Chinese government. This work consisted of 9000 children's backpacks displayed along the front of the *Haus der Kunst* in Munich, Germany.

Fig. 58

Using the various colours of the backpacks, Weiwei spelt out in Chinese lettering, 'She lived happily for seven years in this world': words that were spoken by the mother of one of the victims this work is representing: an earthquake that devastated a large number of schools within the Chinese province of Sichuan in 2008, and was consequently covered up by the Chinese government. The covering up was in order to avoid investigation into the cheap and poorly built structures of these schools, which did not meet standard building regulations in order for the government to save money. Regarding this work, Weiwei stated:

> 'The idea to use backpacks came from my visit to Sichuan after the earthquake in May 2008. During the earthquake many schools collapsed. Thousands of young students lost their lives, and you could see bags and study material everywhere. Then you realize individual life, media, and the lives of the students are serving very different purposes. The lives of the students disappeared within the state propaganda, and very soon everybody will forget everything.'[221]

Another response to the Sichuan earthquake disaster by Weiwei is *Straight* 2008-2013 (Fig. 59), which was created after Weiwei was incarcerated for 81 days in an undisclosed location by the Chinese government. His imprisonment was apparently warranted as punishment for his 'citizen investigation' that was focused on exposing

[221] Transcribed from an interview for Ai Weiwei's retrospective show, *So Sorry*, October 2009 to January 2010, Munich, Germany.

the truth about the unnecessary, tragic loss of over 5000 children's lives covered up by governmental decisions related to the earthquake.[222]

Fig. 59

'*Straight*' comprises of 150 tonnes of steel rebar, which is a building material designed to assist with the structural integrity and reinforcement of buildings. The steel used for this work was all salvaged from the actual widespread wreckage in the aftermath of the earthquake. When salvaged, the rebar was bent and deformed, so Weiwei and his studio team commenced the task of straightening, by hand, each steel rod back to its original shape. The straightening or 'making right' of the steel rebar acts as a metaphor to the intent of Weiwei in his pursuit to hold the government accountable, and honour those lost in the tragedy. When complete, the straightened rebar was installed as a large-scale, undulating field as if it were a precarious landscape of some kind.

Also engaged with installation-based art that is influenced by traumatic experience is the work of previously discussed Christian Boltanski. Boltanski often addresses the topic of death via the broad questioning of mortality and inevitability. Several of his pieces directly address the Holocaust as an event, such as *A Memorial to Nothing* 2010 (Fig. 60) featuring 50 tonnes of clothes spread and piled across the floor of the Grand Palais in Paris, with multiple speakers simultaneously playing the heartbeats of 15,000 people. This immersive installation is reminiscent of the Nazi collections of Jewish clothing taken from prisoners as they entered concentration camps throughout

[222] The true number is still unknown and likely in excess of this estimate.

Europe. The 15,000 heartbeats echo throughout the space, representing life both past and present.

Fig. 60

Boltanski's use of 'the multiple' and scale, like that of Weiwei and the studio research of this PhD, allow for viewers to be positioned in a constructed environment of overwhelming and consuming proportions. This use of 'the multiple', where collections of objects that share appearance or inherent symbolic value are presented together, is an aesthetic saturation. The sheer weight or scale of the work and the repetitive nature of what is presented offers a space that challenges viewers' ability to internally differentiate or calculate exactly what is in front of them, therefore providing an immersive, affective and even overwhelming atmosphere or artwork-to-viewer experience. The combination of what this work references and the experiential atmosphere it provides for viewers is what can be described as an 'aura of atrocity' insofar as the work, through engaging multiple senses, references 'loss of life' on a massive scale.

Boltanski's method of simultaneously addressing multiple human senses is an exercise in creating an orchestrated environment for the viewer to experience. This feature of the work explores the potential affect of completely immersing the viewer, experientially, in thoughts relating to the meaning of the work. American art historian and critic, James Elkins, through a discussion of 'materiality' in contemporary art, has investigated the impact of addressing multiple senses through art where 'works of

visual art are so often also textual, olfactory, tactile, or auditory. Synesthesia, empathy and sympathy, immersion, performance, and embodied encounters are now central to the art experience.'[223] Elkins continues; 'Art history is no longer an archivist's or iconographer's paradise, driven by textual sources: it has become attentive to the physical *stuff,* the presence, the material of the artwork, its bulk, its human scale, and even its 'base materiality'.'[224]

The studio research outcome of the PhD shares similar artistic considerations to that of Weiwei and Boltanski's installation work. Scale and 'the multiple' are utilised as a means for acknowledging the enormity of the event it addresses, but also the vast amount of victimised and affected people. This use of large-scale also demands a viewer's attention because of its imposition on how the particular space (gallery or otherwise) is experienced in symbiosis between viewer and the work, and the work and its location. The material choice and process employed for these works also echo considered elements behind the practice-led element of this PhD research. The referenced work uses base materiality and laborious process to subversively reference its historic influence, while introducing various avenues for metaphorical interpretation. These examples, alongside the studio research element of this study, are instances of attempting to 'present the unpresentable' or harness a 'sublime effect'. Further to the high level of material-based consideration within the majority of Weiwei and Boltanski's work; they utilise emotionally 'loaded' materials to address specific memories or events. For example: using empty children's backpacks to represent dead children. There is a potency and emotional force to these works' chosen materials, which is an important factor in their potential to affect the viewer and host an associated 'aura of atrocity'.

Further to discussing artistic examples that address traumatic experiences, but with an emphasis on personal memory, is the work of Cuban-born American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres who used 'the multiple' as a form of translating and representing his own trauma and experience. Gonzalez-Torres employed viewer participation in many

[223] J. Elkins, *On Some Limits of Materiality in Art History* (December 2008), Das Magazin des Instituts für, accessed 28/04/2017, http://www.academia.edu/168260/On_Some_Limits_of_Materiality_in_Art_History
[224] J. Elkins, ibid.

of his works such as *Untiled (Portrait of Ross in L.A)* 1991 (Fig. 61), which, when initially installed is a 175-pound pile of candy.

Fig. 61

Viewers are encouraged to take pieces of candy as a way of presenting the pile's reduction in weight 'as metaphor' to Gonzalez-Torres' partner, Ross Laycock's deteriorating health while fighting the AIDS virus. Once a 175-pound man, Laycock's withering condition eventually took his life just like the pile of candy withers from its original state through cause (people taking the candy) and physical effect (the reduced weight of only the wrappers left behind like an eroding body): the candy wrapper is metaphorically symbolic of as emptied skin. This action, although ambiguous in nature, is an intensive experience when considering what it represents. Allowing the viewers' participation to be as simple as taking candy, offers an accessible experience to the gallery visitor. This action affords the opportunity to contemplate the trauma, memory and grief of the artist as well as the physiological reality of the experience it is based on. Similar to that of Boltanski's *A Memorial to Nothing*, this piece engages multiple senses of the viewer. By feeling as though they are part of the work (via participation), the ability for the piece to affect is increased through elements of touch and taste. It is primarily this work that influenced the *One Drop of Blood* (2013) artwork described in the studio research chapter, which invited viewers to take porcelain white blood cell imitations away from a large pile to emulate the effects of chemotherapy on a patient's white blood cell count.

Another example of work that experientially links artwork to viewer is German artists Esther Shalev-Gerz and Jochen Gerz's *The Monument Against Fascism* 1986 (Fig. 62). In the city of Hamburg, Germany a permanent monument was constructed to counter the rise of Neo-Fascism in the city. Gertz's piece involved a 12-metre-high column coated in lead with an attached metal pencil that the public were encouraged to use to sign their name on the monument. This was for the purpose of people stating, for themselves and the broader public, a gesture of solidarity against the rise of Neo-Fascist ideals and agendas.

Fig. 62

Fig. 63

In discussing the work, the artists stated 'we invite the citizens of Hamburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12-metre-high lead column, it [*The Monument Against Fascism* 1986 (Fig. 63)] will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely and the site of the Hamburg monument against fascism will be empty. In the long run, it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice.'[225] As the inscribed names became too dense to read, the column was sunk further into the ground, making previously inscribed names a memory and offering room for more public interaction. The monument as it is today is flush with the ground, displaying the top of the column, which features a plaque describing what once stood. The disappearance of the column itself, made possible by public involvement, is a subversive, metaphorical reference to the burial of rising Neo-Fascist ideas in the hope of a future that is void of such viewpoints.

[225] E. Shalev-Gerz, *The Monument Against Fascism* (1986), accessed 12/02/2018, http://www.shalev-gerz.net/?portfolio=monument-against-fascism

Less subversive or aesthetically ambiguous than the previously mentioned pieces, are artworks that employ objects or imagery that are more confrontational and literal for the viewer. One example of this is the work of Australian sculptor Alex Seton who addresses tragedy and traumatic experience via visual-based installations of his sculpted work. His piece, *Somebody Died Trying to Have a Life Like Mine* 2014 (Fig. 64) memorialises the lives of 28 unknown people who died at sea seeking asylum in Australia, and whose lifejackets washed ashore on the Cocos Islands in May of 2013. Seton carved each of the 28 lifejackets from solid marble, and in his words 'the work asks, what is this darkness in our national character that means we do not readily extend good faith and protection to those who claim asylum?'[226]

Fig. 64

This work depicts the May 2013 scene that wasn't recorded photographically, but was reported in national newspapers and spurred federal investigation into the origin of the lifejackets, with speculation at the time leaning toward an asylum-seeking vessel that had crashed shortly before the lifejackets were washed ashore. With the lack of photographic evidence, Seton's work becomes the symbolic record of this event, where his literal and realistic recreations, in their materiality,[227] suggest toward ideas of preciousness and weight, while also producing an environment that directly links to an imaginable and traumatic series of experiences. Relating to this 'literal display'

[226] N. Azzarello, *Alex Seton Memorializes Asylum Seekers With 28 Marble Life Jackets* (March, 2014), accessed 26/07/2017, https://www.designboom.com/art/alex-seton-carves-28-marble-lifejackets-03-17-2014/

[227] Marble being utilised and regarded as a 'fine art' material for centuries.

(and referencing the 'viewer' as the 'beholder'), American art critic Michael Fried states 'the experience of literalist art is of an object in a situation – one that, virtually by definition, includes the beholder'.[228] This means that the representation of a real moment in time directly offers the viewer an image or situational environment that engages a sense of actually being there, triggering their capacity for compassion or empathy.[229] In Fried's terms, this proposes an intrinsic link between art and its viewer, which is to say that the experience of the viewer is dictated by the meaning of the work and their relational engagement with it. Referencing the same topic as Seton's lifejackets is a field of practice that is concerned with current conflicts and the resulting global refugee crisis.

As a way to examine active contemporary art practice that is based in representing traumatic and incomprehensible human experience, this chapter will also investigate some seminal recent works in this field. This involves artistic responses to what is currently the largest civilian displacement since WWII due to the ongoing Middle Eastern conflicts, both domestic and international. With millions of people currently fleeing war and persecution in their home-countries,[230] there is an unprecedented number of civilians seeking asylum, with many Western countries responding to the crisis in a variety of ways: some such as Hungary, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey, are closing borders entirely, and others are welcoming and housing asylum seekers such as Switzerland, Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom.[231] The governmental and societal reactions to this crisis vary in both extremes of compassion and apathy. This has prompted the creation of artwork ranging across all media in response to this global issue. Artwork is, and has been made by artists such as Ai Weiwei, Australian artist Ben Quilty and Irish conceptual documentary photographer Richard Mosse; all of whom represent the experience of those seeking asylum for several reasons including an attempt to dispel sentiments of fear that are being promoted by various governments regarding asylum seekers, to directly present the traumatic experiences of those displaced, or to simply humanise those seeking asylum in the hope of societal

[228] M. Fried, *Art and objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, University of Chicago Press, USA, 1998, pg. 153.
[229] 'Compassion and empathy' not in Fried's terms, but in the context of the overall thesis study.
[230] At the time of writing.
[231] Again, as is the case while writing this in late 2018.

change regarding broad ‘out of sight, out of mind’ attitudes in non-directly-affected countries.

As is the case for the previously mentioned work of Seton, the lifejacket has become an iconic symbol in the current refugee crisis. As an object, it is recognised as a marker for the experience of those displaced. It is an item worn out of dangerous concern and is universally recognised as something that represents life and its preservation as well as a symbol of peril and chaos. Quilty has recognised this through his painting *High Tide Mark* 2016 (Fig. 65).

Fig. 65

This painting is part of his response to visiting Greece, Serbia, and Lebanon, where each country received a high concentration of asylum seekers. During his visit, Quilty observed and met those seeking asylum as an exercise to better understand the experience of directly affected people and to personally witness the refugee crisis. According to the National Gallery of Victoria, (NGV), which acquired this work in 2016 ‘on a beach in Lesbos, Quilty observed a ‘high tide mark’ of bright orange life jackets, discarded by Syrian asylum seekers as they reached the shore after making the perilous journey across open ocean from Turkey. In Quilty’s words, the vest symbolises the ‘ocean of humans that have moved across those waters’, themselves

dislocated and dispersed like the cast-off jackets.'[232] From this visit, Quilty painted several canvases with images; scenes or symbols that he felt somewhat encompassed, broadly spoke of, or represented the experience of those displaced.

Similarly utilising the iconography and symbolic resonance of the lifejacket in representing this ongoing crisis is an untitled work by Ai Weiwei. The installation involved wrapping the pillars of *Konzerthaus* ('concert house') Berlin 2016 (Fig. 66) with 14,000 lifejackets the artist retrieved from the shores of Lesbos in the Greek Islands.

Fig. 66

This work was made to coincide with the 2016 opening of the Berlin International Film Festival and was intended by Weiwei, through the use of scale and spectacle, to show the enormity of the crisis itself and give a visual presentation of the unpresentable; the sheer number of people that have been, and continue to be displaced. In the centre of this installation was a large, inflatable, empty life raft, which featured a banner that read '#SafePassage'. The text links to Weiwei's ongoing social media campaigns, which plea for better governmental action regarding the treatment of asylum seekers. The life raft of Weiwei has since been re-worked for his piece *Law of the Journey* 2018 (Fig. 67). This work features a 200-foot inflatable life raft containing 300 inflatable human figures depicting an accentuated version of what Weiwei witnessed while visiting places like Lebanon, where he saw the continued arrival of displaced people.

[232] NGV, *High Tide Mark, Ben Quilty* (2016), accessed 14/09/17, http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/122147/

Fig. 67

As a final reference to these current examples of artists representing the refugee crisis is the work of Richard Mosse and his work *Incoming* 2016 (Fig. 68), a three panel, large-scale video that encompasses the peripheral vision of a viewer when sitting in front of the middle screen. The video incorporates each screen separately and occasionally all at once with footage featuring asylum seekers and military personnel who are 'on the front-line' of the refugee crisis in places like Lesbos.

Fig. 68

The camera used for the footage is a long-distance thermal imaging camera that depicts temperature in black and white. This type of camera is manufactured primarily as border surveillance weapons technology and is synonymous with the targeting systems of weaponised drones and long-range missiles. Mosse captured 'everyday' moments of those seeking asylum such as children playing, men and women praying, people riding in cars or travelling on boats. None of the footage is violent in any sense and humanises the subjects by watching regular activity. Among that footage are also

scenes of fighter jets taking off and armed guards standing at their posts. It is through those snippets of footage and the aesthetic of the thermal imaging that a sense of danger is implied. The work interrogates how asylum seekers have been targeted and how they are seen within the Western countries they are fleeing toward. In an interview about the work Mosse stated 'it attempts to engage and confront the ways in which we in the West, and our governments, represent – and therefore regard – the refugee'.[233] What an artwork like Mosse's does is humanise the refugee by showing their plight and everyday experience while challenging how they are perceived in the West via the sinister and military-based lens of thermal imaging, which asks why they are considered by many as an 'enemy'.

In contrast to works that subversively impose a sense of violence through implication of traumatic experience, the following will discuss works that directly depict violence, like that of Goya's *The Disasters of War* series discussed in Chapter 4, in order to address particular events, experiences or themes. This differs from the aesthetic approach employed in the practical component of the PhD and the artistic examples so far, but is important to reference in assessing the post-Holocaust/traumatic representational field because it has and is utilised effectively in visually portraying instances of traumatic history, events and human experience. The paintings of American artist Leon Golub such as *Interrogation II* 1980-81 (Fig. 69) depict torture and interrogation scenes as a response to ongoing human rights violations in El Salvador and Central America throughout the late 1970's and 1980's. This was due to a civil war between the Salvadorian military-led government of the time and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), which was a coalition of various left-wing groups.

[233] A. Downey & A. Pardo, *Richard Mosse*, Barbican, London, 2017, pg. 34.

Fig. 69

The scenes painted by Golub, where the perpetrators of the inhumane acts are often smiling and looking back at the viewer, give the witness of the work a sense of complicity in the violence. A level of discomfort and anger is inherent in such imagery, which is strategically depicted by the artist in the hope of radical awareness, change and action. Golub has stated that:

> 'I have pictured some of the events and some of the kinds of experiences that undercut our current world pictures, that is to say the effects of power and domination, the uses of interrogation to control dissidence or opposition, how such behaviours effect the consciousness and psychic responses of victimizers and victims and also to indicate some of the public and private behavioural gestures of men acting out real time reactive scenarios'.[234]

Similarly, Columbian artist Fernando Botero's *Abu Ghraib 46* 2005 (Fig. 70) is one of a series of paintings and drawings responding to the revelatory photographs that surfaced in 2003 of American soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners in the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad (Fig. 71).

[234] H.U. Obrist, ed. *Leon Golub: Do Paintings Bite?* Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern, 1997, pg. 31.

Fig. 70

Fig. 71

Botero in discussing this series states 'the whole world and myself were very shocked that the Americans were torturing prisoners in the same prison as the tyrant they came to remove. The United States presents itself as a defender of human rights and of course as an artist I was very shocked with this and angry. The more I read, the more I was motivated.'[235] The entire series comprised 87 drawings and paintings in intuitive response to the news as it was released. Regarding how he started the series, Botero said 'I was on a plane and I took a pencil and paper and started drawing. Then I got to my studio and continued with oil paintings. I studied all the material I could. It didn't make sense to copy, I was just trying to visualize what was really happening there.' [236] Instead of artistically recreating the photograph's themselves, Botero contributed further visual imagery to the horrors perpetrated in the Abu Ghraib prison, therefore providing additional aesthetic reference for the public to become aware of what had happened.

Another example of the depiction of violence and detailing atrocity is the artwork of Brazilian artist Adriana Varejão. In her work, she has often interrogated Brazil's colonial history as a violent, contentious series of events that involved conflict between countries such as Portugal, Spain, France and the Netherlands, who were trying to occupy the land to the detriment of the indigenous population. Work such as *Carpet-Style Tilework in Live Flesh* 1999 (Fig. 72) expresses this history by

[235] K. Baker, Abu Ghraib's Horrific Images Drove Artist Fernando Botero into Action (January, 2007), accessed 15/08/2018, https://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Abu-Ghraib-s-horrific-images-drove-artist-2620953.php
[236] K. Baker, ibid.

presenting Brazilian-culturally symbolic tile work being torn from a wall to reveal a grotesque, violent under layer of gore and flesh.

Fig. 72

This relief painting metaphorically expresses the underlying, and in many cases hidden nature of particular cultures' violent history and formation. It is an indicator that, for Brazil, human atrocities established the foundation for what currently exists in terms of socio-cultural recognition. American Director of Dallas Contemporary Art Museum Peter Doreshenko writes on Varejão's work 'the 'interior' of her canvases often ruptures violently out onto their smooth, cunningly painted, illusionistic surfaces, suggesting a subversion of the glossy pretences of history'.[237]

Fig. 73

[237] V. Breuvart, ed, *Vitamin P: New Perspectives in Painting*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2002, pg. 336.

Correspondingly but less specifically to particular histories and/or experiences is *Karma III – Battlefield* 2005 (Fig. 73) by Chinese sculptor Johnson Tsang. This ceramic work features a range of weapons spliced with organs that have been violently torn apart. Through this, Tsang references the purpose of manufactured weaponry in an attempt to confront viewers about the glorification of war and firearms against the reality of the cause and effect of these weapons used and experienced by humans. On his blog and regarding this piece, Tsang writes that 'the work expresses the idea that the concept of blood for blood will only intensify the hatred and extend it to eternity. In fact, those who kill in the battlefield are at the same time the victims.'[238] In discussing this mode of violent post-traumatic representation, and in direct relationship to the Holocaust and WWII itself is the work of German artists Joseph Beuys and Anselm Kiefer. Both Beuys and Kiefer present relatable, yet provocative objects responding directly to the Holocaust and their own country's (Germany) ill-spoken history.

Joseph Beuys presents confronting, post-WWII sculptures from the perspective of direct experience with the history itself. Born in Germany in 1921, Beuys' teenage and young-adult years were spent under national occupation by Nazi ideology. In Canadian art critic and writer Allan Antliff's book, *Joseph Beuys* 2014, Antliff states that 'there is no evidence that the Beuys family was enthusiastic about Hitler's rise to power, but when the Nazi regime was established in 1933, they, like many others, accepted it. Their son, on the other hand, had no choice: from the age of eleven his education and world outlook were shaped by Nazi ideology.'[239]

After completing school in 1940, when war had been declared on Nazi Germany and conscription to the German military was seemingly mandatory, Beuys volunteered for the air force. He was trained as a radio operator before being trained as a dive-bomber pilot. Beuys' military service included combat piloting, serving as a paratrooper, taking part in the German occupation of Italy and in the defence of Western Germany toward the end of the war. He was captured in 1945 and held in a prisoner-of-war camp before returning to his nation's ruins. In 1947 he began his career as an artist by

[238] J. Tsang, *Karma III: Battlefield* (July, 2013), accessed 08/09/2017, https://johnsontsang.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/karma-iii-battlefield/
[239] A. Antliff, *Joseph Beuys*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2014, pg. 7.

enrolling in the Düsseldorf Academy of Art in the recently defeated Germany.

This detailing of Beuys' background is important in giving context to his work, which incorporates elements of violence and shock from his direct life experience. An example of which is *Tramstop* 1976 (Fig. 74), consisting of a piece of tram rail, wooden boards and a pole capped with a life-size, seemingly sorrowful severed head. These objects can be read as both 'readymade' objects linked to concentration camps (via the piece of tram rail), and a metaphor of the victims being taken to the camps (via the sorrowful head (Fig. 75) referencing the collective memory of German involvement, the concentration camps themselves as well as the suffering of those who were victimised.

Fig. 74

Fig. 75

British art critic Jonathan Jones writes in The Guardian (AUS) about *Tramstop*'s presentation in the central hall of Karl Friedrick Schinkel's art gallery in the middle of Berlin: 'the knowledge that you were in a city bombed, burned and divided, and now finally rejoined, made the meaning of *Tramstop* inescapably German. Here was the rail, portentously east. Here was the anguished face of primal guilt.'[240] Jones continues, 'for me, *Tramstop* is about the Holocaust – much more resonantly than Eisenmann's Berlin memorial. And the reason it works is that it is generous in its symbolism and historical scope'.[241] This blatant and direct symbolism in reference to

[240] J. Jones, *Wounds of History* (January, 2005), The Guardian, accessed 26/09/2017, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/29/art.art
[241] J. Jones, ibid.

WWII is enforced by Beuys' life experience, offering meaning beyond the literalism of what is presented. This is less subtle, as Jones describes, than Eisenmann's memorial in Berlin, which will be discussed shortly and is an example to the effectiveness of direct modes, like that of Golub, Varejão and Tsang, in depicting, both physically and metaphorically, the violence of traumatic history and experience.

Anselm Kiefer, similar to that of Beuys, addresses the Holocaust from a German perspective and primarily does so through mixed media paintings. Kiefer is well known for directly addressing his country's dark history via ambiguous imagery and symbolism that both reference the victims of the Holocaust as well as the perpetrators. By using materials such as straw, dirt, iron, lead, silver and gold, Kiefer presents metaphors of human experience and spiritualism by encoding messages of transformation, permanence and fragility into his painting. In his book *Anselm Kiefer* 2013, American writer Matthew Biro writes about this multi-material use, 'these materials recall the alchemist's project of turning base matter, such as lead and earth, into iron, silver and (finally) gold: a metamorphosis that was understood to prefigure humanity's ultimate spiritual redemption'.[242] An example of these paintings by Kiefer is *Iron Path (Eisensteig)* 1986 (Fig. 76), which incorporates iron, straw, lead, silver and gold with paint.

Fig. 76

[242] M. Biro, *Anselm Kiefer*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2013, pg. 46.

Iron Path (Eisensteig) depicts a railroad, which, in its symbolism, is synonymous with the representation of the Holocaust as it was the railroad system that was used as the primary mode of prisoner transportation between and into the Nazi concentration/extermination camps. Regarding this work Biro states, '*Iron Path (Eisensteig)* can be viewed as portraying the Holocaust as an anonymous journey into death. In addition, the anonymity of the image, its refusal to depict the suffering of particular individuals, adds a powerful, tragic quality to the conception.'[243] The ambiguity or 'anonymity' of this depiction allows for the previously discussed Kantian 'negative presentation', where a degree of viewer interpretation is offered as an opportunity to engage with the history this piece represents on various levels. To elaborate, the railroad breaking into two directions in the background of the painting is symbolic of the direct experience of those victimised as well as being a broad metaphorical nod to notions of transition, optimism, journeying and the future. This is bolstered by Kiefer's use of the previously mentioned alchemic materials. Biro continues, 'Kiefer noted in 1990, 'We see train tracks somewhere, and think about Auschwitz.' Yet, despite this identification of railroads with the Holocaust, *Iron Path (Eisensteig)* can also be interpreted very differently as suggesting a simple journey of spiritual succession'.[244]

Alongside his paintings, Kiefer produced several Holocaust-related sculptural works such as *Breaking of the Vessels* 1990 (Fig. 77). This work features a large bookcase full of German and Jewish religious texts cast in lead. These books are mounted on precarious glass shelving, which is buckling and breaking under the pressure of the weight. As this work breaks, the floor is covered in broken glass, which, by design, addresses the memory of Jewish shopping districts where Nazis swept through breaking shop-front and synagogue windows.

[243] M. Biro, ibid, pg. 46.
[244] M. Biro, ibid, pg. 46.

Fig. 77

According to Biro, this work 'reverberates with disturbing contemporary associations, such as the Night of Broken Glass (Kristallnacht), the Nazi anti-Jewish pogrom that occurred in Germany and Austria on the 9th and 10th of November 1938'.[245] Kiefer's agency as a German citizen growing up in, but not directly involved with the events of WWII means he is addressing this history as an observer whose personal witnessing, nationality and obscured memory become part of the work. It thus gives the work an aura of atrocity by association with Kiefer's balance between personal connection and experience alongside his perspective being shaped by his young age at that time. With Kiefer's childhood as a German during the war, works such as this offer a rare perspective on the complexities of the Holocaust as an event and the breadth of experience and memory within such an event. As LaCapra states; 'Memory is a crucial source for history and has complicated relations to documentary sources. Even in its falsifications, repressions, displacements, and denials, memory may nonetheless be informative – not in terms of an accurate empirical representation of its object but in terms of that object's often anxiety-ridden reception and assimilation by both participants in events and those born later.'[246] Maintaining focus on 'negative presentation' is the work *Gas Chamber* 1986 (Fig. 78) by Belgian painter Luc

[245] M. Biro, ibid, pg. 50.
[246] D. LaCapra, *History and memory after Auschwitz*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1998, pg. 19.

Tuymans. Produced in situ during a visit, Tuymans painted the gas chamber of Dachau concentration camp: the first concentration camp opened in Germany.

Fig. 78

The emptiness echoed by Tuymans' near-monochromatic pallet, style and framing is the dominant force of this painting. The work becomes more about what isn't there than what is: an eerie remnant of many thousand deaths. British art critic, editor and author Michael Glover discusses the painterly representation of such a place: 'he has recorded it, and he has done so by paying attention, in the form of painted hintings to all that we cannot possibly see, which is, of course, everything that went on in this [gas chamber] and many others like it'.[247] In the 'negative presentation' of such a work, to imaginatively fill the void of such a minimalistic depiction, the viewer extrapolates beyond what is presented in the knowledge of what happened in the Nazi gas chambers. American arts journalist Dorothy Spears writing for the New York Times discusses Tuymans and this work: 'He knows massive, massive amounts about the subjects he paints. But once he has digested the research and settled on the assortment of images, he paints each work in a single sitting.'[248] Spears continues: 'It's almost as if he's compelled toward a traumatic site, then just as quickly repelled away from it'.[249]

[247] M. Glover, *Great Works: Gas Chamber (1986) by Luc Tuymans* (March, 2013), The Independent, accessed 24/11/2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/great-works/great-works-gas-chamber-1986-by-luc-tuymans-8515230.html
[248] D. Spears, *Putting the Wrongs of History in Paint* (February, 2010), The New York Times, accessed 24/11/2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/07/arts/design/07tuymans.html
[249] D. Spears, ibid.

Fig. 79

Addressing the same history but positioned in the field of memorialisation (location-based, permanent, public presentations) rather than the 'white wall gallery' mode of presentation is an ongoing, and growing example of post-Holocaust representation in Polish artist Lukasz Surowiec's *Berlin-Birkenau* 2011-12 (Fig. 79). This work involved the replanting of 320 trees, which were dug up from the area around the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, and planted in Berlin. This memorial brought living and breathing objects from land associated with suffering and death, to give them a new life and act as a 'living archive' to those who were killed. In an interview, Surowiec comments on the work 'in Birkenau, the trees are drinking the water from the ground made of ashes, and breathing the same air in which the smoke of burned bodies was floating. So, in a way those people are in the trees.'[250]

As mentioned, this work of Surowiec gestures toward art that is considered in the realm of 'memorial work'. To delineate between previously discussed artworks, memorials are often reliant on the location of the work because they are permanent displays in memoriam of a particular event, tragedy or atrocity that utilise the location of what transpired as a conceptual element in the work. Generally, memorial-based work is presented in an outdoor public space as a permanently accessible exhibit that is specific to a location rather than an artwork that can/has travelled to different venues or galleries. This means that the positioning of memorials is strategic,

[250] D. Miller, *Interview with Lukasz Surowiec* (March, 2012), Berlin Biennale, accessed 21/3/2017, http://blog.berlinbiennale.de/en/comments/an-interview-with-lukasz-surowiec-26719.html

important and considered because they are publicly accessible and are often occupying (and need to be considerate of) space that is associated with exceedingly traumatic events, experiences or history.

Another seminal Holocaust memorial work (that has been discussed previously in the thesis introduction and Chapter 3) is Peter Eisenman's *Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe* 2005 (Fig. 80) in Berlin, Germany. This memorial contains 2,711 concrete slabs (*steles*) arranged in a grid on a sloping field; the slabs vary in height from 0.2 metres to 4.8 metres.

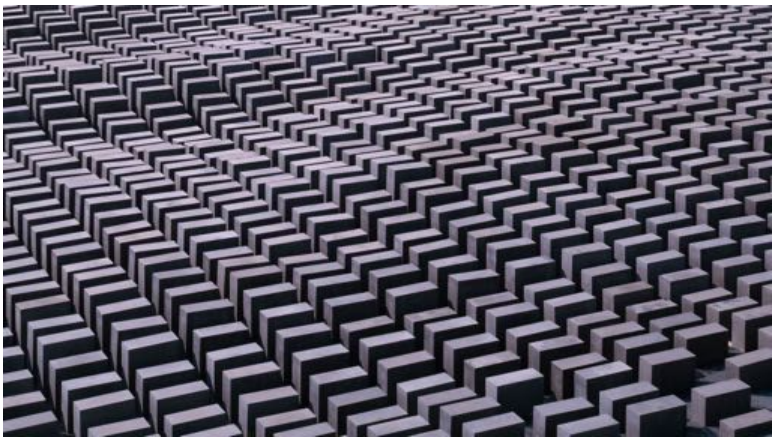

Fig. 80

In British writer Dan Stone's book: *The Historiography of the Holocaust* 2004*,* he writes, 'Peter Eisenman's memorial suggests that the field of steles will be an emotionally charged space'.[251] The work is representational of an organised system, which has lost touch with reason. It produces a confusing and unsettling experiential atmosphere for the visitor, which transports them into a position relatable to that of the Jews during the Holocaust. Stone continues, 'it echoed a cemetery, even as it implied that such emblems of individual mourning were inadequate to the task of remembering mass murder'.[252] The work being loosely reminiscent of a cemetery, as Stone describes, encourages viewer's impression to be associated with a place for masses of dead, but not be blatantly representative of it. Eisenman's memorial not only affects visitors through its formal design, but also the positioning of the work in

[251] D. Stone, *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, pg. 516.
[252] D. Stone, ibid, pg. 516.

the heart of Berlin, which, in itself, maintains a strong connection to the history and memory of the Holocaust. This places Eisenmann's memorial in walking distance to the SS Reich Main Security Office also known as the SS Headquarters for the Nazi regime, which is now the *Topographies of Terror Museum* dedicated to WWII history, and also in close proximity to Adolf Hitler's bunker where he spent the final weeks of WWII before his death by suicide.

Corresponding to permanently existing memorial works in Germany is the *Stolperstein project* 1992-now (Fig. 81 & Fig. 82) by German artist Gunter Demnig. The word 'Stolperstein' translates to 'stumbling stone' in English and refers to 10 x10cm concrete blocks, which each feature a brass plate inscribed with an individual Holocaust victim's details before being permanently embedded in the ground.

Fig. 81

Fig. 82

Originally, the Stolperstein were positioned in various cities and towns of Germany before the project reached to further European countries including Austria, France, Italy, Poland, Belgium and Norway. Now residing in 22 countries and comprising (as of March, 2018) of over 67,000 individual Stolpersteins; the project is the largest

decentralised memorial in the world. The inscription on each brass plate presents a victim's name, birthdate and death. For instance, the translation for the plate shown above (Fig. 81) reads:

Here lived Alice Kozower
Born 1934
Deported 1943
Theresienstadt
Murdered in Auschwitz

Each Stolperstein is strategically located to link a particular individual's plate to their previous (before WWII) residence or place of work. Many are installed in groups directly outside the front door of resident housing to reference where a family once lived. In discussing Eisenman's Holocaust memorial and the *Stolperstein project*, Demnig states; 'the monument in Berlin is abstract and centrally located. But if the stone is in front of your house, you're confronted. People start talking. To think about six million victims is abstract, but to think about a murdered family is concrete'.[253] As this project of Demnig geographically spreads, the public memorialisation of the Holocaust expands further than any other existing memorial work, offering far-reaching contemplative potential and affect. The nature of the stumbling stones, as the name suggests, often facilitates chance-based encounters between object and viewer. This makes the vast area affected by Holocaust history powerfully visible in public space.

Fig. 83

[253] L. Gilman, *Memory Blocks* (October, 2007), Smithsonian Magazine, accessed 23/10/2017, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/memory-blocks-173123976/

Drawing similarities between Eisenman's memorial is *Nameless Library* 2000 (Fig. 83) by Rachel Whiteread. Resembling a mausoleum, this work is a centralised memorial in the Austrian capital, Vienna, and is dedicated to the 65,000 Austrian victims of the Holocaust. This work is a concrete structure representing an 'inverted library' where on close inspection, the outside of the structure features a recurring depiction of the open end of a book, as if the spines of the books were all facing inward. It also features doors with no handles or hinges, making entry/exit impossible. The structure is broadly intended to represent a multitude of untold, and permanently inaccessible stories as a means to honour those Austrians lost during the Holocaust.

In Canadian literary theorist Rebecca Comay's essay, *Memory Block: Rachel Whiteread's Holocaust Memorial in Vienna* (2003), she writes, 'Whiteread's project would be virtually the first explicit Austrian memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust… and effectively the first official acknowledgement of Austrian complicity in the genocide'.[254] In its base form and materiality, the stark simplicity of this memorial allows it to both speak on behalf of the previously mentioned metaphor of 'untold stories' but also of an overarching rigid, uniform structure that is suggestive of a mausoleum: a tomb built for the purpose of housing and honouring the deceased. Comay continues by describing the structure itself as 'reminiscent of the serial forms of minimalist sculpture and evocative too, perhaps, of the abstractly statistical nature of the deaths being commemorated'.[255] It is within the quiet or minimalistic nature of this work that such interpretations can be incited. This is because its starkness allows an opening for imaginative discourse, where the viewer applies their own meaning or metaphorical symbolism via the work's ambiguity. Without speaking directly to individual experiences or presenting any notion of violence, Whiteread's memorial offers a range of contemplative options to viewers via elements such as what inverted books metaphorically mean, what a sealed, inescapable room represents and what the structure, in its base form, is referencing. Overall the artwork is about honouring and memorialising the citizens of Vienna who were lost in the Holocaust, depicting their life stories as irreversibly sealed from being told.

[254] S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, eds. *Image and Remembrance Representation and the Holocaust*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2003, pg. 251.
[255] Ibid, pg. 252.

A recent addition to the field of large-scale, permanent memorial works is the *September 11 Memorial and Museum* 2011 (Fig. 84) built where the Twin Towers fell on September 11, 2001. Opened on the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, the memorial site and museum are built precisely where the World Trade Centre was positioned. Using the architectural footprint of the towers themselves, the names of the 2,983 people who were killed on site are cut into steel plates that form a barrier for two square waterfalls that cascade into a pool and void in the centre of each tower site. At night, the victims' names are illuminated from underneath, while bars of light shine through the perimeter of each waterfall toward the sky. These upward-facing lights present a luminous remnant of where the towers once stood (Fig. 85).

Fig. 84

Fig. 85

Designed by Israeli-American architect Michael Arad, American landscape architect Peter Walker and Jewish Polish-American architect Daniel Liebeskind, their design statement labelled the memorial as 'large voids, open and visible reminders of the

absence'.[256] Titled *Reflecting Absence*, the memorial itself was selected out of 5,200 designs put forward during an 'open-call' for a 9/11 memorial. The selection jury's statement on the winning design states that *Reflecting Absence* 'fulfils most eloquently the daunting but absolutely necessary demands of this memorial. In its powerful, yet simple articulation of the footprints of the Twin Towers, '*Reflecting Absence*' has made the voids left by the destruction the primary symbols of our loss'.[257] The memorial on the surface also leads to an underground museum housing relics, information and artworks relating to the attacks on the Twin Towers. 'The 9/11 memorial's opening on the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001, fulfilled an essential element of the collective promise to honor and remember those who were killed. The 9/11 Memorial Museum, which was developed simultaneously with the memorial, fulfils the other half of that promise: telling the authoritative history of 9/11, documenting its precursors, and exploring its ongoing implications.'[258]

These memorial-based works are developed and constructed in intensive consideration of their location. They stand as examples of works that have been made under deliberation of being as accessible as possible due to their permanence and prominence. The simplicity and subversive nature of what these memorials depict is evidence that location is an important factor in the reception of such artwork. It is these memorials that reduce the strength of the work to core elements of materiality, scale, aesthetic ambiguity and location. These elements are important to the studio research element of the PhD because although *Deathgate* is a transportable artwork, memorials such as those discussed previously influence its materiality, scale and aesthetic ambiguity.

Moving to a partly literary and non-conventional approach to the depiction of the Holocaust is American writer, Art Spiegelman's comic, *Maus* 1978-1991 (Fig. 86). This comic depicts Spiegelman interviewing his father as a Polish Jew who survived Auschwitz during WWII (a real occurrence between the author and his father). Characters in his graphic novel are depicted as animals, with Jews represented as

[256] A. Blais & L. Rasic, *A Place of Remembrance Official Book of the National September 11 Memorial*, National Geographic Society, Washington D.C, 2015, pg. 139.
[257] A. Blais & L. Rasic, ibid, pg. 146.
[258] A. Blais & L. Rasic, ibid, pg. 219.

mice, Nazis as cats, and Germans as pigs. This comic has received multiple literary awards alongside critical acclaim, including reviews from theorists previously discussed in this thesis such as Naomi Mandel in *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust and Slavery in America*, and Dominick LaCapra in *History and Memory After Auschwitz*. LaCapra writes that 'through *Maus,* Spiegelman works out a multifaceted and layered memory of the past that is continually questioned and riven by contemporary concerns, thus raising the question of the extent to which past and present are inextricably interwoven through belated effects and partial recognitions'.[259] Spiegelman's slightly detached recount and depiction of the Holocaust is an effective example of post-Holocaust representation from a partially removed perspective.

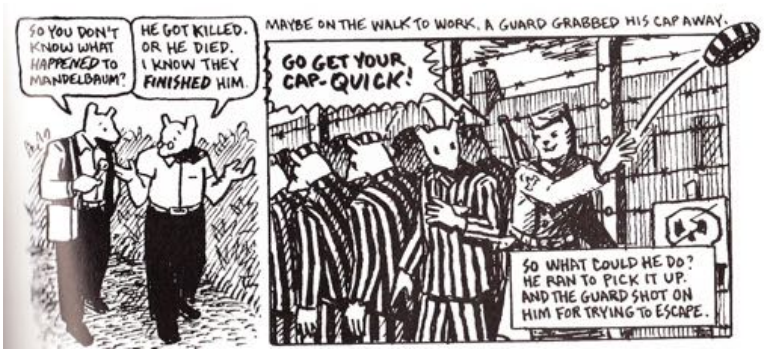

Fig. 86

Evident throughout the graphic novel is Spiegelman's own internal struggle in representing his Father's experience. *Maus* is continually transparent about the problematics and complexities of post-Holocaust representation via Spiegelman's regularly intertwined personal dialogue, which addresses his feelings of inadequacy in properly recounting his father's story and accurately depicting his experience. In the graphic novel, Spiegelman consistently addresses his personal deliberations involving the creation of work related to such a traumatic event. His character can be seen in one frame talking to his wife regarding the book (Fig. 87); 'I feel so inadequate trying to reconstruct a reality that was worse than my darkest dreams… There's so much I'll never be able to understand or visualize. I mean, reality is too complex for comics. So

[259] D. LaCapra, 1998, pg. 154.

much has to be left out or distorted.'[260] Again in conversation with the character of his psychiatrist, 'some part of me doesn't want to draw or think about Auschwitz. I can't visualize it clearly, and can't begin to imagine what it felt like'.[261]

Fig. 87

As displayed by *Maus*, the dilemmas of post-Holocaust representation are challenging and complex, although, as has been argued via theorists such as LaCapra, 'critically tested memory may appear as the necessary starting point for all symbolic activity, even though it is continually threatened by lapses, holes, and distortions'.[262] What LaCapra refers to as 'critically tested memory' is certain memories that have influenced the creation of critical or formal outcomes, whether they be visual art, literature or otherwise. The memory is critically tested in its revised and depicted state rather than within the mind of whom the memories belong. In mentioning that memory is susceptible to 'lapses, holes and distortions' is to recognise the changing and fallible nature of memory. However, at their essence, they are based in undeniable lived experience of particular events. LaCapra is stating that despite this inherent nature of memory, it remains symbolically important in depicting or memorialising events and experiences.

[260] A. Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus*, Pantheon Books, USA, 1980, pg. 176.
[261] A. Spiegelman, ibid, pg. 205.
[262] D. LaCapra, 1998, pg. 182.

To conclude, this chapter discussed a range of artists and their respective artworks that act as examples of the theoretical fields addressed in this thesis. The artistic examples have incorporated the visual representation of traumatic historic events and memory, alongside concepts of 'presenting the unpresentable' and the affective dimension, or an 'aura of atrocity' that is present within work addressing events such as the Holocaust and the experiences within them. The artworks that have been investigated represent a variety of approaches in post-Holocaust/traumatic representation, where events of extreme human capability or incomprehensible experience are a catalyst for the production of visual-based outcomes. Parallel to these artistic examples being representative of the theoretical research, is their comparative value to the studio research of the PhD. It is through the exploration of these works and their reception by viewers and critics that has assisted in informing the studio outcome in the ongoing field of investigation. This is both via the ability to contextualise the *Deathgate* project in the broader field of contemporary art, while also recognising the effective utilisation of the theoretical enquiries in this thesis regarding seminal visual outcomes, and how they could be applied to the practical component of this PhD research.

In approaching the visual representation of incomprehensible and traumatic events and human experiences; metaphor, subversive ambiguity, experiential viewer interaction and violence have each been discussed to provide a summary of various effective aesthetic approaches to post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork. In the face of such events and experiences posing representational limits, at least in a totalistic sense, visual depictions can only suggest toward the totality of what is represented. Presenting objects or imagery that are metaphorically symbolic or subversively indicative of what is represented can do this. For example, using a lifejacket to reference the current refugee crisis and its victims, using school backpacks to reference children or using stones to reference permanent reminders of individual lives. Alongside this are artworks that experientially involve the viewer in order to activate the work's conceptual and representational goals. The viewer becoming participant provides an individualised, contemplative atmosphere for the participant to engage with the work and its meaning. Other approaches involve directly depicting scenes of violence and perpetuated atrocity in order to illuminate and contribute to the

visual field in raising awareness about certain events. Through the examples discussed, there is proof that post-Holocaust/traumatic representation is continual and relevant to both historic and current events. This is because it provides an immediate visual and/or experiential opportunity for viewers to become a contemplative agent, and to broadly and/or specifically shed light on the extremes of human behaviour and ability while motivating remembrance, compassion and vigilance against injustice and hatred.

The research in this chapter, and the artistic examples throughout, are in order to elucidate the current field of post-Holocaust/traumatic visual representation. This is to propose that as an ongoing area of artistic practice, with current focus on events such the refugee crisis alongside the continued representation of previous atrocities; terminology and discourse require assessment and development. This chapter has provided visual-art-based references that utilise the previous theoretical debate of representability, memory-theory, 'the sublime' as aesthetic category and 'aura theory.[263] The exemplified artistic works argue for the current relevance of the field, and contextually position the practical element of the PhD in the aesthetic and conceptual category that it belongs to: Post- Holocaust/traumatic art, or rather, art after atrocity.

[263] All of which were discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Art After Atrocity

> 'Fiction cannot recite the numbing numbers, but it can be that witness, that memory. A storyteller can attempt to tell the human tale, can make a galaxy out of the chaos, can point to the fact that some people survived even as most people died. And can remind us that the swallows still sing around the smokestacks.'[264]

This PhD thesis has investigated how to effectively incorporate traumatic human experience and memory, particularly exemplified through events of war, in the production of artwork. The theoretical and studio research enquiries have primarily focused on the Holocaust and its subsequent visual representation, which have been discussed through the lens of representability, memory, 'the sublime', and 'aura theory' in the context of visual art. In a broader sense, the thesis has discussed the topic of visual representation, where traumatic and seemingly incomprehensible human experience is a catalyst for the creation of artwork, and where the Holocaust has been repeatedly used as the prime example in this discussion.

The focus on the Holocaust and its subsequent visual representation is motivated by its prominence and current position in history, where very few first-hand survivors of the event remain. Consequently, the responsibilities to remembering and depicting the event are entering a new mode of theorisation. Alongside this, the practical component of the PhD is focused on the Holocaust because of a profound personal affect visiting the Auschwitz camps had at the beginning of the research, which consequently determined the production of a three-year-long single artwork in response (*Deathgate*). The aims of this research project have been to contribute new knowledge and create new terminology to further the theoretical and practical fields surrounding how art can effectively address traumatic history and events. This theoretical study has been produced in parallel with the studio research element (or 'creative works component') of the PhD. The studio research, which was entirely focused on the production of the *Deathgate* ceramic installation artwork (or

[264] J. Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, Trumpet Club Publishing, New York, 1991, pg. 168.

'*Deathgate* project'), has been produced in an environment where the theoretical research informed many decisions regarding the completed, physical work.

The research undertaken for the thesis has implemented a response to three foundational theoretical enquiries, those being representability via Adorno's suggestion that there can be 'no poetry [art] after Auschwitz', Lyotard's theorisation regarding the sublime as an aesthetic category for 'presenting the unpresentable', and Benjamin's theory concerning the transcendental qualities and affective dimension of art via 'aura theory'. In particular relation to the investigation of Benjamin's 'aura theory', a priority of this thesis has been to evaluate and develop existing 'aura theory' as a means to establish and position the new term 'aura of atrocity'[265] within the field of art theory. The establishment of the term 'aura of atrocity' is for the purpose of extending the ongoing discourse of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation and memorial-based artwork, or rather, work that is primarily concerned with the representation of broadly affecting and traumatic history/experiences. To establish a previously non-existent term, which specifically describes the affective dimension[266] and qualities of such artwork is intended to assist in the continued discussion of a field that is in constant motion and change due to ongoing events and atrocities, as well as the changing nature of recollecting and remembering historic events such as the Holocaust. That 'changing nature' is largely due to what will soon be the non-existence of any first-hand survivors of that particular event, meaning that the responsibilities for its ongoing representation and recollection is currently being passed to those who are further removed from the experience.

Referring back to the three foundational theoretical focus areas of Adorno, Lyotard and Benjamin, the PhD research has broadly argued for the necessary, ongoing and important role of visual art in relation to the continued representation, relevance, discussion and legacy of historical events such as the Holocaust. Visual art's importance in this endeavour is due to its accessibility and freedom from both written and spoken language barriers. The representation of such events via imagery or

[265] 'Aura of atrocity' is an original term coined through research undertaken for this thesis.
[266] This 'affective dimension' can also be described as the viewer-to-artwork relationship.

objects is not entirely reliant on lexical understanding, meaning that artwork, in many cases, can be read across communicatively limiting boundaries, which makes it an important resource in representation, recollection and memorialisation.

Since the original inference by Adorno that to 'write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric', the discussion of post-traumatic and particularly post-Holocaust representation has been rigorous and complex. As has been discussed in the thesis, this 'no poetry after Auschwitz' suggestion of Adorno (which was later retracted) acted as a significant theoretical marker in the discussion of what the possibilities and responsibilities of art are in the recollection, memorialisation and representation of traumatic historic events. People such as Lyotard, through concepts of 'the sublime' or 'presenting the unpresentable', further theorise this question as to how anyone, in an aesthetic sense, can represent such barbarity. With sublimity being closely linked as an aesthetic category of incomprehensibility; 'the sublime' allowed the research to further investigate approaches in artistic representation of events and experiences beyond understanding. Beyond these approaches, the investigation turned toward 'aura theory', as established by Benjamin, who used the word 'aura' to reference the transcendental qualities of art, or rather, the affective characteristics of artwork and the experience of the viewer in the presence of said work.

Through consideration of the previous focus areas of history, memory and 'the sublime', the theoretical research established a new strain of existing 'aura theory' by introducing the term 'aura of atrocity' into the broader discourse of art theory. This term is established and defined as the affective dimension of work that is entirely representative of traumatic/incomprehensible human experience; likely leaving the viewer in an uncomfortable or disturbed state due to the influence and representational attempt of the work. These focus areas have involved subsequent theoretical research and critical writing on the historic and contemporary role of both 'personal and collective memory theory' alongside the concepts of 'aura and the sublime' all of which have been focused through the lens of visual art (with artwork examples throughout).

The research has drawn from theorists, philosophers, writers, critics and artists associated with and around these fields of research to create a platform for the proposition of contemporary visual engagement with these issues. All these research areas in conjunction with the original research of the collated interviews, which have been incorporated throughout the writing and can each be read in their entirety as appendices to this thesis, have all been utilised in exploring the creation, presentation and affective dimension of art based on atrocities and incomprehensible human experience. All of the theoretical research maintains a critical and reflective relationship with the studio research via informed consideration of every decision regarding what is made within the studio.

Each chapter of this thesis dealt with specific, foundational issues to the field of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation. These issues involve discussing the practice-based outcomes or studio artwork element of the research, which is underpinned by dedicated theoretical fields. Those fields include historical and memory based research and how they influence representability and creative outcomes; the field of 'the sublime' as a theoretical and philosophical framework for discussing the aestheticisation of exceedingly traumatic human experience, and finally, the field of 'aura theory' as a means to discuss the affective dimension of such representational artwork or its transcendental qualities, which determine how an artwork affects a viewer or how the work facilitates an emotional response in a viewer-to-artwork interaction. These fields encompass what is involved in a post-Holocaust/traumatic representation, which includes researching/establishing the primary influence, the developmental and practical representational requirements, the aesthetic considerations and approaches behind production, and the eventual interaction and expectation of viewers engaging with the completed work.

Chapter 1: Studio Research focused on the studio research and creative works component of the PhD. This involved the development and construction of the ceramic installation artwork, *Deathgate.* Detailing this studio research project in the first chapter of the thesis was for the purpose of the major studio outcome being considered in relation to the theoretical research developed throughout the remaining thesis chapters. The *Deathgate* project stands as Queensland's first large-scale

Holocaust memorial work featuring an individually handmade ceramic 'stone' for each detainee of the Auschwitz network of concentration camps: 1.3 million people/pieces. Many of the major decisions regarding the work were informed by the theoretical investigation of this thesis. These decisions include aesthetic choices as well as installation and documentation methods. Chapter 1 contextualised the *Deathgate* project via comparative examples of projects that have been undertaken by myself in continuing studio-based research since 2012. That studio-based research has been focused on the representation of traumatic/sensitive memory through visual art, as well as an interest in the role of memorialisation through visual outcomes.

The *Deathgate* project is entirely comprised of 'high fired' (meaning that each piece is permanent/no longer able to break down) clay material. The historic and cultural relevance of clay alongside its connotations to preciousness and fragility is a primary reason for its use as the single material for the artwork. When soft, the clay is extremely responsive to touch. It is malleable and records fine gestures such as the impression of a fingerprint. As mentioned, when the clay is fired, it hardens to a point comparable to stone: an irreversible process that consequently immortalises any gestural marks as a permanent feature. This ability of the material enables the creation of objects that appear simplistic or may ordinarily go unnoticed, but upon closer inspection, feature 'marks of the maker', which suggest a level of personalised attention.

By placing a fingerprint into 1.3 million clay objects that are made to resemble stones, the *Deathgate* project presents an individualised piece for each of the detainees of the Auschwitz concentration/extermination camps and is exhibited in a manner that imitates a railway line, which is ordinarily covered and surrounded by stones like that of the ceramic objects. When exhibited, *Deathgate* presents two parallel lengths of these ceramic 'stones', giving a direct visual reference to the staggering amount of deaths against those who survived. One length containing 1.1 million 'stones', and the other containing 200,000 (1.1 million deaths against 200,000 survivors). The installation is intended to alter the viewers' perception of the event of the Holocaust via a potentially confrontational presentation of physical objects representing this statistic. The work offers this ratio in a tangible sense and consequently enables a physical experience for the viewer in witnessing and inspecting the work. This is

intended to gently (without depicted violence or shock) provide a space for contemplative reflection on the physical reality of what the work represents.

The development, production and exhibition of the *Deathgate* project remained considerate of the theoretical research areas outlined in this thesis (those being representability, historical research, 'memory theory', 'the sublime' and 'aura theory'). To elaborate: elements of personal memory were blended with historic details regarding the Holocaust as the initial inspiration for the *Deathgate* project. The reductive and simplistic exercise of placing a fingerprint into small clay objects, as a process, was considerate of the 'unrepresentable' as a notion of 'sublime theory'. This crude symbolism of each detainee of the Auschwitz camps is intended to recognise and succumb to the totalistic 'unrepresentability' of those who were there. By proximity to such traumatic and sensitive history, concepts of 'aura' or the transcendental capabilities of artwork are apparent. To display something that is solely representative of a catastrophic atrocity, as argued, an 'aura of atrocity' is present: an atmosphere that attempts to engage a viewer's capacity for empathy and consider experience that is beyond comprehension.

Following Chapter 1: *Studio Research* was Chapter 2*: Literature Review*, which involved a comprehensive summary of all the major text and reference material used in the thesis. This chapter began with the foremost seminal theoretical writers such as Adorno, Lyotard, Benjamin, Kant, Bennett, Mandel, Rochlitz and Nichanian, who have been foundational in the development of this thesis. It was important to discuss these pivotal philosophical and theoretical documents because they offer the framework for the current theoretical fields that have been engaged in this thesis. As the literature review progressed, the summarised materials were followed by secondary literature[267] before finishing with writing and reference material that has been useful but is considered to be on the periphery of the main theoretical focus areas of the study. The literature review stands as a resource in establishing theoretical framework before further development in the following thesis chapters.

[267] 'Secondary literature' refers to published literature that is within the theoretical field being investigated, but not in its entirety. For example, British writer Joan Gibbons' book, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance,* which contains a single chapter of particular relevance to the thesis research (*Chapter 4: Post-memory, 'The Ones Born Afterwards*), while the remainder of the book is not *as* aligned theoretically.

As a result of the literature review, the research fields were scrutinised for foundational texts that offered a historical underpinning to contemporary engagement with the theories utilised for this thesis. Examples include using Adorno in the discussion of representability, history and memory (particularly pertinent to the event of the Holocaust); Burke and Kant in the discussion of 'the sublime' as an aesthetic category; and Benjamin in discussing viewer-to-artwork relationships and introducing the concept of 'aura theory'. In these foundations of theoretical enquiry, a chronological trail can be drawn to current engagement with these topics, which, in the case of the reviewed literature, means that texts were assessed because they referentially developed from these initial thinkers and philosophers. In assessing both the origin of theories appropriate to this research and chronologically moving toward their current use in literature, the research is able to perpetuate this motion forward, or rather, contextualise current, contemporary artwork as well as the original studio outcome specific to the PhD research in the field of post-Holocaust/traumatic visual art as it is today.

Running parallel to the aims of the studio research and literature review, the major theoretical investigation undertaken in Chapter 3: *History and Memory*, engaged with Holocaust history, particularly focusing on the experience of directly affected people, asking the question: how can lived experience be visually represented through artwork? The 'history and memory' chapter discussed representability and built primarily from Adorno's 'no poetry after Auschwitz' declaration because this was a precursor in the opening discussion of the problematic aspects surrounding post-Holocaust representation. Theorists such as Naomi Mandel, Jill Bennett and Dominick LaCapra were investigated, as they were collectively seminal figures in the development of writing about the incorporation of memory and history into the production of visual art. The discussion in Chapter 3 primarily investigated the history and memory associated with traumatic events such as the Holocaust. This enquiry served to consider the human experience and breadth of effects/affects in the wake of such an event so that their subsequent visual representation can be in consideration of both direct experience and the 'facts' of the history itself.

Investigating the direct experience and historical record of that particular time allowed for increased perspective regarding the enormous range of human experiences and consequential memories (both individual and collective). The writing was then able to discuss how (primarily through concepts of 'memory theory' as an established field dedicated to the incorporation of memory and real human experience into visual art) the memory of such events/experiences can be translated, documented represented and honoured, while advocating for visual art as a vital tool in this endeavour. Through this, visual arts effectiveness is recognised because of its ambiguous ability, via both imagery and physical objects, to broadly speak and address human experience that cannot be contained by any means; at least in its totality. Because of the breadth and recurring effects/affects of historical events such as the Holocaust, its representation in any sense of entirety is impossible. The ambiguous and interpretive nature of the artworks discussed in this thesis offer an example of such events being presented in a manner that allows the viewer to extrapolate or imagine beyond the inherently limited representation in front of them. This consequently positions the viewer to consider the broader nature or 'unpresented' aspect of the artwork.

To expound, the limitations and difficulties faced by art in post-traumatic representation is inherent and unavoidable because of how utterly complex and vast the range of experiences are within events such as the Holocaust. This is not just considering those directly affected but also the recurring affect on future generations alongside broad societal, cultural, political and economical effects. As previously stated, an event like the Holocaust cannot be contained or wholly represented, which must be recognised and utilised in the production of 'representative' artwork. This means that from the particular perspective of visual art, every element and decision of an attempted post-traumatic representation should consider the 'barbarity', as Adorno put it, because it involves a deeper consideration and justification of things such as material choice, employed processes, aesthetic decisions, presentation methods and documentation.

Referring back to the *Deathgate* project discussed in Chapter 1, recognition of these limitations is largely because the artwork is representative of such a limited

experience of visiting the preserved camps as they are today. This is partnered by the minimalistic/reductive aesthetic forms made to symbolise each detainee (ceramic 'stones'). This visit to Auschwitz was the deciding factor for many of the elements present in the completed *Deathgate* installation artwork. For example, the work's presentation as a reminiscent comparison to the railway leading through the gates of Auschwitz II (Birkenau) is because of the personal impact this railway line had, while visiting the preserved site. Alongside this, the work's focus on scale above most other elements is because of the overwhelming size of the network of Auschwitz camps observed during this visit. The relevance of the 'stones' is to specifically mimic the railway itself, while also recognising their metaphorical symbology and cultural significance as objects that are placed on gravesites (a Jewish tradition first noticed at Auschwitz II to signify permanence and legacy). By creating work that was representative of a personal experience in visiting Auschwitz, the aim was to recognise these limitations and allow the work to (personally) act in primary response to this isolated visit.

Chapter 3 reinforced the point being made in the thesis that representing broadly affecting and multi-layered events where the lived experience of an enormous amount of people is varied and complex; no amount of work can possibly represent the lived experience of each individual (who have directly experienced and been affected by the event), especially as many of their stories have faded and distorted through time. This leaves artistic outcomes to speak on behalf of an estimated understanding of collective experience via those who are able to share individual stories, which is also accompanied by statistical information left in the wake of such events. The research of memory theory within visual culture explains the inevitable limitations and problems involved with their visual representation, while establishing strategies for artists in an attempt to make post-traumatic, memory-based artwork.

Regarding the studio research, these strategies culminated in the decision to base major elements of the *Deathgate* project on the previously discussed personal memory of visiting the site that the work is based on. With Chapter 3 discussing the representational limits, at least in totality, of traumatic human experience from the perspective of its broader historical positioning and the complexities of associated

memories, Chapter 4 looked further into these 'representational limits' and what they impose on the field of aesthetics and art-making itself. Utilising the established field of 'the sublime', which is engaged in the theorisation of aestheticising or visually condensing what is in excess of being entirely represented. To explain, 'the sublime', in its various iterations throughout history is engaged in discussing the aesthetics of excess; whether that is excessive beauty (such as trying to paint the beauty of a sunset over a sweeping landscape) or in representing human experience/horror that is beyond comprehension (such as making an artwork based on the experiences of those victimised during the Holocaust). 'The sublime' is a field that debates, aesthetically, the 'presentation of the unpresentable', or the representational limits of the artwork discussed and assessed throughout this thesis. This aesthetic-based enquiry of representational limits identified the focus of Chapter 4 because it offers art-practice-based answers to the question of representation in the face of traumatic history and memory.

Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable* explored theories of 'the sublime', which were established by Edmund Burke in the 18th Century and led to developments by philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, who likened the presence of 'the sublime' to a moment where the mind is 'attempting to image what it cannot'. This suggestion that the sublime links with incomprehensibility, prevails through work associated with events such as the Holocaust. Further theorisation of the sublime, and in more specified relation to the discussion of visual art, was subsequently made via the literature of writers such as Jean-Francois Lyotard, Christine Battersby and Paul Crowther because collectively they discuss the theorisation of 'the sublime' in a contemporary sense, which focused its descriptive quality on the 'presentation of the unpresentable', or the depiction of what is beyond standard comprehension regarding traumatic, terrible and painful human experience.

The terror and tragedy of events such as the Holocaust translates through representational artwork (such as the works discussed within this thesis) and allows the work to be a source of a sublime effect by virtue of the work's association to incomprehensible and 'un-representable' experience. The expansive, varied and incomprehensible nature of what is experienced through events such as war is where a

direct association with the sublime, as an aesthetic category, can be drawn. The incomprehensibility of the event implies that, as discussed in Chapter 3, its representation is problematic because of the broad, varied and recurring effects/affects left in its wake. In the discussion of 'the sublime' being present in work associated with absolute atrocity, Jean-Francois Lyotard's writing became an important point of reference because he was a pioneering force in modern suggestions that 'the sublime' can be characterised as 'presenting the unpresentable' in relation to traumatic/horrific experience.

Ideas of 'un-representability' broadly highlight the difficulty, problematics and ethical dilemmas of representing memory and tragedy based on widely incomprehensible human experience. Lyotard himself accepts that the unpresentable can be presented, at least in some aestheticised form. This notion of the 'unpresentable' heeds to the historic and memory-based limitations discussed in Chapter 3, where the barbaric and tragic nature of an event (including acts of persecution, human cruelty, torture and mass murder) introduces unavoidable, totalistic limitations in their visual representation. These limitations are due to the vast and complicated array of experiences within events that affect and traumatise large groups of people, which also have recurring societal effects. The sublime or 'unpresentable' is further recognition, in a specifically aesthetic sense, of the complexities and broad reaching consequences of certain events and experiences. Discussing the sublime is integral to the investigation of effective memorialisation and its ongoing role in contemporary society as well as what can be seen in the outcomes of the studio research because it recognises the core problems and difficulties in addressing sensitive and traumatic history, which are that it cannot be wholly represented or aestheticised, so an element of aesthetic ambiguity is an inevitable component in any post-traumatic/Holocaust representation.

Chapter 4, in investigating aestheticisation, focused on furthering the discussion of representational limits, and found that it is through 'the sublime' and within the imaginative discourse of the viewer that viewer engagement with certain traumatic histories or experiences can be reached. Within the Kantian 'negative presentation', which essentially describes what is (imaginatively) 'not presented' rather than what is

physically presented, is where art finds an aesthetic answer to the problems of representability outlined in Chapters 3 and 4. Through some extent of aesthetic ambiguity, the viewer is required to engage their imagination to extrapolate or 'fill the gaps' of what is presented to them. It is in the imagination of the viewer that any sense of totality can be grasped: a sublime effect where the viewer's attempt at grasping this totality is because the artwork suggests it via partially representational means or aesthetic ambiguity. In finding this aesthetic answer and examining the 'imaginative discourse' of the viewer, the thesis moved from discussing the aesthetics of the artwork itself and how it can effectively address history such as the Holocaust, to the experience of the viewer in the presence of post-Holocaust/trauma related artwork. Chapter 5 subsequently investigated the affective dimension and viewer experience of the visual art field that is in focus.

Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity* comprised a primary goal of the written thesis: establishing new theoretical terminology within the broader discourse of the post-Holocaust/traumatic visual art field. This terminology is directly related to 'affect' and how viewers are positioned to experience particular artwork. In Chapter 5, this goal built from the foundational 'aura theory' established by Walter Benjamin and was later expanded by writers such as John McCole and Rainer Rochlitz. Benjamin discussed 'aura' in relation to the transcendental qualities of an artwork or object: a particular 'presence', which directly affects the viewer. This 'aura' or transient quality is commonly associated with the 'uniqueness' or 'authenticity' of a work of art. Benjamin identifies 'aura' as something beyond physicality: a sense of 'distance' or an untouchable quality, regardless of an observer's proximity to something.

Framed by the concept of 'aura', Chapter 5 investigated the viewers' experience of artwork. This experience considers the previously discussed incorporation of history, memory and the conscious recognition of representational limits or 'the un-representable' (as theorised, aesthetically, through 'the sublime') within a particular artwork. It is via an artwork's association with these things, which are linked to human experience, that creates an 'aura', or an 'atmosphere' as described by McCole, that consequently affects the viewer in their relational engagement with the work. In the scope of this thesis, the visual art examples have been chosen because they

represent and are focused on atrocious, sensitive historic events and incomprehensible human experience, particularly relating to the Holocaust and its subsequent visual representation. When artwork is solely representative of history and experience that is atrocious in nature, Chapter 5 identified a new term, 'aura of atrocity', to describe the affective dimension of art under the post-Holocaust/traumatic banner.

As an intervention in existing aura theory, which is non-specific to a particular affect or emotional response by the viewer, an 'aura of atrocity' identifies the overwhelmingly prominent, disturbing experience of a viewer who is bearing witness or experiencing artwork based on events such as the Holocaust. This term is not related to a spiritual experience or existence of any kind. Instead, it describes the relational engagement and expected experience of someone viewing work based on perpetrated atrocity.

The overwhelmingly common ability for humans to empathise or feel a sense of compassion means that when faced with artwork relating to traumatic history and experience; we consider ourselves within the depicted event or experience. The discomfort of this empathetic response or affect of work relating to things like the Holocaust is what has been defined as an 'aura of atrocity'. It is a transcendental quality: non-tangible but seemingly present. The positioning of this term is intended for application to the broader field of memorials and 'war art', as well as any artwork that addresses traumatic history, memory or human experience. This is to assist in the changing and ongoing discourse of the affective dimension of such artwork, where viewers are positioned in a contemplative state because of the transcendental or emotive affect of post-Holocaust/traumatic related artworks.

As the final chapter of the thesis, Chapter 6: *Artists' Response* details a range of artists whose work is seminal in the field of post-Holocaust/traumatic representation, but also the fields of memorialisation and 'war art'. Achieved via reviews, critiques and the writing of seminal artists (for the focus of this PhD research) spanning the fields of painting, sculpture, installation, sound, video, participation, graphic novel, poetry and performance; Chapter 6 allowed for a comparative conceptual investigation between the studio outcomes of the seminal artists chosen, and the

practice-led outcomes of the PhD, all with the consideration of the major theoretical enquiry within Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of the thesis.

As the research (both theoretical and practical) is concerned with visual art outcomes; the works chosen throughout the thesis and within Chapter 6 offer examples to the embodiment of the major theoretical focus of the PhD research. That theoretical focus surrounds the representational limits, at least in totality, of art based on events such as the Holocaust, where history and memory-based research provides influence, concepts of 'the sublime' offer aesthetic and practice-based strategies, and 'aura theory' discusses the affective dimension or relationship between viewer and post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork.

This thesis has involved a comprehensive investigation into the incorporation of history and memory in the production of artwork, where concepts of 'the sublime' or 'presenting the unpresentable' and 'aura theory' allow for the range of necessary considerations that must be made when attempting to create artwork in the wake of incomprehensible or traumatic human experience. Detailing those theories consequently allowed for the establishment of not-yet-existing, original terminology (an 'aura of atrocity') in order to assist in the greater discourse of this field of research. This theoretical investigation has been developed in parallel with intensive studio research, where all of the investigated theoretical and philosophical implications of post-traumatic artwork were incorporated into the major elements of the *Deathgate* project: Queensland's first large-scale Holocaust memorial artwork.

The overall outcomes of the study and contribution to the field have included a comprehensive, current analysis of the role of memorialisation and memory-based representation through art. Alongside this is the establishment and positioning of new terminology relating to traumatic memory, sensitive history and post-Holocaust representation through art. This included an engagement with investigation, critique and discussion of seminal global figures within the field of research, and an original body of work via studio research (the 'creative works component' of the PhD) aiming to memorialise the Holocaust and its victims.

Both in the theoretical and practice-based outcomes, the research has proven that the post-Holocaust/traumatic visual field is continuing to engage both with historic and current world events as a means to evoke ideas of remembrance and memorialisation, while also standing in positions of protest, solidarity and vigilance against hate and injustice. With so few first-hand Holocaust survivors left, the specific role of Holocaust representation is transforming like never before. This research discusses current engagement and visual representation of the Holocaust in consideration of it moving into a new mode of history, which is to say, moving away from direct, lived experience. This means that assessing, discussing and contributing[268] to the current field of post-Holocaust artwork is addressing what this new mode of historical distance means for its visual representation. In addressing this, the research argues that its memorialisation and representation remain important not just because the effects of this event fundamentally changed the course of the 20th Century, but also because denial continues to exist in the form of neo-Nazi and alt-right groups, while the sentiments/policies that made something like the Holocaust possible continue to societally manifest.

The theoretical analysis, developments (via new terminology), and artistic examples throughout this thesis; accompanied by the practice-based contribution to the field, have been produced, chosen and discussed to provide an examination of the field in its current state. The state of the field is continually changing as traumatic events and atrocities continue to manifest globally, while the responsibilities of representing previous events such as the Holocaust enter new modes of remembrance beyond direct lived experience. It is at this crux point of few remaining first-hand Holocaust survivors that this study focused on the Holocaust and its subsequent visual representation. Beyond lived experience, post-Holocaust visual representation has been questioned in terms of how, aesthetically, it can be presented, and what historical, memory-based underpinnings does such representation require when the artist has not experienced the depicted event. The answer to this is harnessing the inherent representational limitations and the resulting 'negative presentation' in such interpretations, which allows viewers to extrapolate beyond what is presented and consider the totality of the event itself. In the case of *Deathgate*, this is achieved

[268] Both theoretically through the writing and physically with *Deathgate.*

through the ambiguous and metaphorically symbolic objects of ‘stones’ that reference each individual detainee of Auschwitz. The approaches to post-Holocaust/traumatic visual representation can also be applied beyond the prime example of the Holocaust to other instances of incomprehensible human experience, trauma and atrocity. This is done to provide ongoing engagement in regard to the discussion, writing and production of post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork as a field that continues to perceptually change, as is the nature of history, memory and art respectively.

The original term created for this PhD ‘aura of atrocity’ has been shown to engage with particular types of artwork that are catalysed by incomprehensible human experience and events of immediate and recurring trauma. In establishing this term, the field of post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork is propelled forward in the circumstance of its theoretical engagement. As artwork that is produced for the purpose of memorialisation, remembrance and contemplative response, the discussion of how such work affects those who view it is among its most important elements. Alongside historic and memory-based influence and accuracy, and the sublime aestheticisation of that history and memory; theorising what such work produces in terms of emotional affect and relational engagement is integral to assessing the purpose of post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork.

An aura of atrocity describes and theorises whether such artwork succeeds in its representational goals, which is to say that if an artwork produces an emotive and affecting ‘aura of atrocity’, it has presented, aesthetically, a space where viewers, through an individualized reading, consider events such as the Holocaust in their totality. Establishing this term in the broader discourse of art theory is accompanied by the practical component of the PhD, informed by the theoretical research, resulting in Queensland’s first large scale Holocaust memorial artwork, *Deathgate*: an artwork reflecting on limited but nonetheless affecting personal experience, and produced at a time when the task of post-Holocaust representation into moving into a new mode of responsibility beyond direct lived experience.

The thesis has investigated how to effectively address (through visual art) events of war and traumatic memory, with particular focus on the Holocaust and its subsequent

visual representation. This has involved the examination of representability, historiography, memory, memorialization, remembrance, 'the sublime' as aesthetic category and Benjamin's concept of aura in the context of visual art. Through the research, the new term 'aura of atrocity' has been established and positioned, which is directly associated to artwork with implications of traumatic memory and extreme, seemingly incomprehensible human capability and experience. In establishing this term, the thesis aids in the discussion of post-Holocaust/traumatic artwork as a continual field of visual engagement, which persists in the context of contemporary art practice. The investigation, both in its written and practical outcomes, has demonstrated the historical, and continually changing function, necessity for, and ongoing role of memorialization and the importance of visual art in relation to the continued representation, legacy and relevance of historical events such as the Holocaust.

Through critical analysis and interviews with artists, theorists, historians, philosophers, writers and curators: the research provides a current, detailed analysis of traumatic, memory based visual representation and effective memorialization, and its purpose in contemporary society. It also confirms the important role and association of memory to the representation of horrific experience, and how this effects the creation, presentation and affecting qualities of art based on perpetrated atrocities and near incomprehensible human experience (*Art After Atrocity*).

References

[1] R.M. Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet,* Random House Publishing, New York, pg. 52-53.
[2] Each is explained more extensively throughout Chapters 3, 4 & 5.
[3] The term *Aura of atrocity* is further explained in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity.*
[4] Further explained in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[5] '*Aura of atrocity*' is an original term established through the research undertaken for this thesis.
[6] Undertaken as research specifically for the PhD.
[7] '*Aura of atrocity*' further explained in *Chapter 5: An Aura of Atrocity.*
[8] T. Adorno, *Prisms*, MIT Press, USA, 1982.
[9] T. Adorno, ibid, pg. 34.
[10] J. Bennett, *Empathic Vision, Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Stamford University Press, California, 2005.
[11] T. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, Great Britain, 1966.
[12] By the previously mentioned Lyotard, Mandel and Bennett, but also by later discussed theorists such as Jacques Ranciere and Hal Foster.
[13] Further explained in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity.*
[14] Further explained at length in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[15] Discussed at length in Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*
[16] By reductive forms and techniques as well as a minimalist method of presenting the work, which will all be explained in detail in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[17] Later discussed in Chapter 1: *Studio Research*
[18] Discussed at length in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[19] Discussed at length in Chapter 1: *Studio Research*.
[20] Explained at length in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*
[21] Explained at length in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity.*
[22] Discussed in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[23] J. Bennett, 2005, pg. 5.
[24] This is the concern raised by Adorno and discussed in Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*
[25] J. Bennett, 2005, pg. 4.
[26] This will be further explained in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[27] D. LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1998.
[28] D. LaCapra, ibid, pg. 183.
[29] D. LaCapra, ibid, pg. 182.
[30] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hackett Publishing Company, USA, 1996, pg. 97.
[31] C. Battersby, *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference*, Routledge Publishing, New York, 2007.
[32] C. Battersby, ibid, pg. 24.

[33] P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime, the Avant-garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard*, New Formations Number 7, 1989.
[34] P. Crowther, ibid, pg. 72.
[35] That 'poetry [art] after Auschwitz is barbaric'.
[36] J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, USA, 1979.
[37] J.F. Lyotard, ibid, pg. 78.
[38] Further discussed in *Chapter 4: Presenting the Unpresentable.*
[39] In Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*
[40] In Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable.*
[41] R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin,* Guilford Publications, USA, 1995.
[42] J. McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*, Cornell University Press, London, 1993.
[43] All of which were written many years before his death and found later.
[44] W. Benjamin, *On Hashish*, Harvard University Press, USA, 2006.
[45] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Prism Key Press, 2010.
[46] W. Benjamin, ibid, pg. 17.
[47] Discussed at length in Chapter 1: *Studio Research.*
[48] J. McCole, 1993, pg. 3.
[49] An *'Aura of Atrocity'*
[50] As is the focus of Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*
[51] This will be discussed in Chapter1: *Studio Research*.
[52] A term invented through the original research of this PhD.
[53] Discussed in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*
[54] P. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, Vintage publishing, New York, 1989, pg. 199.
[55] All of these projects will be discussed in detail in this chapter.
[56] In Chapters 3, 4 & 5.
[57] Written interview questions answered by Ana de Leon, who participated in an official written interview project undertaken specifically for this PhD research. USQ Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154.
[58] Slip-casting is a mass-production technique, which involves a plaster mould of an original object. The plaster mould is repeatedly filled with clay slip or liquid clay that dries within the mould before being taken out to then refill. This process allows for ongoing production/replication of the same clay object.
[59] This will be further explained shortly.
[60] A highly regarded and sought-after porcelain recipe that is no longer manufactured and therefore a rare commodity.
[61] An endurance-based form of performance art, where a certain period of time is an important conceptual element to the artwork.
[62] Of making the objects themselves: one every 40 seconds.

[63] Including *R U OK Day* among others.
[64] These elements of 'time and labour' will be discussed at length, in reference to *Deathgate*, in this chapter.
[65] Both of which are further discussed shortly.
[66] 'Firing' will be further explained within this chapter.
[67] R.F. Leo & S. Marietti, ed. *Semiotics and Philosophy in Charles Sanders Peirce,* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, United Kingdom, 2006.
[68] J. Hoopes, ed. *Peirce on Signs*, The University of North Carolina Press, London, 1991.
[69] M. Jamieson, *New Tribute to Holocaust Victims Opens at AWM Canberra* (December, 2016), accessed 5/10/2018, https://www.sbs.com.au/news/new-tribute-to-holocaust-victims-opens-at-awm-in-canberra
[70] Within the *Goods Shed* in Toowoomba, *Deathgate* totals 325 square metres of utilised floor space.
[71] Discussed in detail in Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable.*
[72] Discussed in detail in Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*
[73] Discussed in the thesis introduction.
[74] T. Adorno, *Prisms*, MIT Press, USA, 1982, pg. 34.
[75] Many of which are discussed in this thesis such as LaCapra, Ranciere, Mandel, Bennet and Ray.
[76] Jean-Francois Lyotard's theory is addressed in Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable*.
[77] Discussed in the thesis introduction.
[78] J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, USA, pg. 64.
[79] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Prism Key Press, USA, 2010, pg. 42.
[80] W. Benjamin, ibid, pg. 19.
[81] W. Benjamin, ibid, pg. 14.
[82] J. Bennett, 2005, pg. 5.
[83] J. Bennett, ibid, pg. 23.
[84] All of which are discussed in Chapter 4: Presenting the Unpresentable.
[85] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hackett Publishing Company, USA, 1996, pg. 97.
[86] P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime, The Avant-garde, and the Postmodern: A Critique of Lyotard*, New Formations Number 7, 1989.
[87] P. Crowther, ibid, pg. 72.
[88] Both of these projects are discussed in Chapter 4: *Presenting the Unpresentable.*
[89] Discussed in the thesis introduction.
[90] D. LaCapra, 1998, pg. 183.
[91] A. Benjamin, ed. *Walter Benjamin and Art*, Continuum Publishing, London, 2005, pg. 2.
[92] R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin,* Guilford Publications, USA, 1995, pg. 48.

[93] Mentioned in the thesis introduction.
[94] Discussed throughout this thesis.
[95] J. Ranciere, *The Future of the Image*, Verso, London, 2007, pg. 111.
[96] J. Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Verso, London, 2009, pg. 83.
[97] J. Ranciere, ibid, pg. 89.
[98] N. Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America*, University of Virginia Press, USA, 2006, pg. 31.
[99] J.S. Librett, ed. *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1993, pg. 215.
[100] J. Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation*, Rutgers University Press, USA, 2014, pg. 125.
[101] M. Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion*, Columbia University Press, USA, 2009, pg. 101.
[102] M. Blanchlot, *The Writing of Disaster*, University of Nebraska Press, USA, 1995, pg. 82.
[103] S. Clift, *Committing the Future to Memory: History, Experience, Trauma*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2014, pg. 172-200.
[104] S. Clift, ibid, pg. 193.
[105] S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, ed, *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2003, pg. 6.
[106] S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, ed. ibid, pg. 79-96.
[107] S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, ed. ibid, pg. 251-271.
[108] J. Gibbons, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance,* I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, London, 2007, pg. 147.
[109] J. Gibbons, ibid, pg. 73-95.
[110] J. Gibbons, ibid, pg. 75.
[111] D. LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2001, pg. 113.
[112] P. Levi, *If This is a Man – The Truce*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1979, pg. 9.
[113] R. Chow, *Entanglements or Transmedial Thinking About Capture*, Duke University Press, London, 2012, pg. 85.
[114] L. Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer and Art After Auschwitz*, The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, 1999, pg. 2.
[115] Discussed in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity*.
[116] Discussed in Chapter 5: *An Aura of Atrocity*.
[117] A. Blais & L. Rasic, *A Place of Remembrance: Official Book of the National September 11 Memorial*, National Geographic Society, Washington D.C, 2015, pg. 5.
[118] Several examples of this current work are within this thesis.
[119] G. Clark & J. Pagliaro, ed. *Shards, Garth Clark on Ceramic Art*, CAF: Ceramic Arts Foundation & DAP: Distributed Art Publications, England, 2003, pg. XIV.
[120] S. Morley, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: The Sublime,* White Chapel Gallery & MIT Press, UK, 2010, (foreword) pg. 5.

[121] J. Chicago, *Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light*, Viking Penguin & Penguin Books, USA, 1993, pg. 85.
[122] Both 'the sublime' and 'aura theory' are discussed at length in Chapter 4 and 5.
[123] Most of which will be discussed in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*
[124] Discussed and debated further in this chapter.
[125] B. Lang, *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics*, The Jon Hopkins University Press, USA, 2000, pg. 70.
[126] (excerpt from Mein Kampf within) S. Gigliotti & B. Lang, *The Holocaust: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2005, pg. 77.
[127] S. Gigliotti & B. Lang, ibid, pg. 80.
[128] Or an imagined, contemplative sensation of the event in its totality, which is discussed via concepts of 'the sublime' in the following chapter.
[129] D. LaCapra, *History and memory after Auschwitz*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1998, pg. 19.
[130] O. Bartov, *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementations, Aftermath,* Routledge Publishing, New York, 2000, pg. 235.
[131] Written interview answer by Anika Deleon, who participated in an official written interview project undertaken specifically for this PhD research. USQ Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154. Interview answers are included in the appendix of this thesis.
[132] O. Bartov, 2000, pg. 251.
[133] P. Levi, *If This is a Man*, The Orion Press, New York, 1959, pg., pg. 66.
[134] M. Blanchot, *The Writing of Disaster*, University of Nebraska Press, USA, 1995, pg., pg. 82.
[135] M. Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2009, pg. 110.
[136] That 'to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric'.
[137] As documented in the introduction of this thesis.
[138] As documented in the introduction of this thesis.
[139] J. Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Verso, London, 2009, pg. 90.
[140] R.S. Landau*,* 1994, pg. 142.
[141] That reality being that the event can't be represented in its entirety.
[142] E. Mills, *Cornelia Parker's Poppies at the Whitworth* (February, 2015), accessed 30/09/2018, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/cornelia-parker-poppies
[143] O. Bartov. 2000, pg. 251.
[144] Particularly when considering the totality of the represented event.
[145] Eisenman's work is discussed further in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*
[146] Whiteread's work is further discussed in Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*
[147] S. Clift, *Committing the Future to Memory, History, Experience, Trauma*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2014, pg. 198.
[148] N. Hodges, ed. *Art and Design: The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*, Academy Group Ltd, Cambridge, 1995, pg. 71.
[149] A term by Lyotard, which is later explained in this chapter.

[150] As discussed in Chapter 3: *History and Memory.*

[151] The delineation between affect and effect is a contentious field. For the purpose of this thesis and in basic terms, affect applies to what is internal, emotive and human; effect applies to what is external, tangible and environmental.

[152] Aesthetics as a field relates to the visual elements of an artwork, or rather the elements that the viewer is engaged by.

[153] J. Ranciere, *The Future of the Image,* Verso, London, 2007, pg. 111.

[154] Ranciere, Lyotard and others.

[155] S.H. Monk, *The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-century England*, University of Michigan Press, USA, 1960, pg. 233.

[156] Researching and discussing seminal artistic examples, which is the primary focus of Chapter 6: *Artists' Response.*

[157] E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautifu*l, N. Hailes Publisher, London, pg. 142.

[158] The aesthetic qualities of a work of art enabling an emotional experience for the viewer.

[159] R. Li & S. Tan, *The Journal of Australian Ceramics Vol 57 No 1*, The Australian Ceramics Association, Australia, 2018, pg. 22.

[160] R. Li & S. Tan, ibid, pg. 22.

[161] Which is further discussed shortly.

[162] T.M. Costelloe, ed. *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, USA, 2012, pg. I.

[163] N. Hodges, ed. 1995, pg. 11.

[164] Discussed shortly.

[165] P. Crowther, 1989, pg. 67.

[166] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hackett Publishing Company, USA, 1996, pg. 97.

[167] N. Hodges, ed. 1995, pg. 35.

[168] S. Morley, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Sublime*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2010, pg. 134.

[169] S. Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso Publishing, New York, 1989, pg. 203.

[170] M. Bohm-Duchen, ed. *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, 1995, pg. 147.

[171] M. Bohm-Duchen, ed. ibid, pg. 147.

[172] A. Sooke, *Goya's Disasters of War: The Truth About War Laid Bare* (July, 2014) accessed 06/07/2018, http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140717-the-greatest-war-art-ever

[173] G.V. Hensbergen, *Guernica: The Biography of a Twentieth-Century Icon*, Bloomsbury Publishing, Great Britain, 2004, pg. 4.

[174] Written interview answer by Sandy Pottinger, who participated in an official written interview project undertaken specifically for this PhD research. USQ

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154. Interview answers are included in the appendix of this thesis.

[175] T.M. Costelloe, ed, *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012, pg. 120.

[176] *Deathgate* involves a single handmade ceramic 'stone' for each detainee of the Auschwitz camps.

[177] T.M. Costelloe, ed. 2012, pg. 121.

[178] *National Vietnam Veterans Arts Museum*, 2007-2018, accessed 01/09/2018, http://www.artinasia.com/institutionsDetail.php?catID=0&galleryID=1225

[179] G. Ray, *Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan, USA, 2005, pg. 65.

[180] P. Cummins & T. Piper, *Poppies: Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, IWM Publishers, London, 2018, pg. 8.

[181] J. McCole, 1993, pg. 6.

[182] Particularly the theorisation of 'the sublime' within and beyond the postmodern era, where its application broadened to an aesthetic category related to traumatic and inconceivable human experience and suffering. This was discussed in the previous chapter.

[183] The history and theoretical basis for 'aura theory' will be explained in this chapter.

[184] B. Lang, *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics*, The Jon Hopkins University Press, USA, 2000, pg. 56.

[185] To later discuss its application to contemporary art practice.

[186] W. Benjamin, *On Hashish*, Harvard University Press, USA, 2006, pg. 58.

[187] W. Benjamin, *A Short History of Photography*, Oxford University Press, London, 1972.

[188] W. Benjamin, ibid, pg. 21.

[189] A. Benjamin, ed. *Walter Benjamin and Art,* Continuum Publishing, London, 2005, pg. 165.

[190] S. Morley, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Sublime*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2010, pg. 132.

[191] W. Benjamin, 1972, pg. 7.

[192] As will soon be discussed.

[193] M.W. Jennings, H. Eiland & G. Smith, eds. *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, Volume Two, Part Two,* Harvard University Press, 2005, pg. 800.

[194] C. Duttlinger, *Imaginary Encounters: Walter Benjamin and the Aura of Photography*, *Poetics Today 29:1*, Oxford, 2008, pg. 88-89.

[195] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Prism Key Press, 2010, pg. 17.

[196] L. Patt, ed. *Benjamin's Blind Spot: Walter Benjamin and the Premature Death of Aura*, The Institute of Cultural Inquiry, 2001, USA, pg. 28.

[197] C. Saines, *Gerhard Richter: The Life of Images*, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, 2018, Queensland, pg. 57.

[198] N. Goldin, M. Heiferman, M. Holborn & S. Fletcher, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependancy*, Aperture Publishers, New York, 1989, pg. 6.
[199] B. Goldberger, ed. *100 Photographs The Most Influential Images of all Time*, Liberty Street of Time inc Books, New York, 2015, pg. 152.
[200] B. Goldberger, ed. ibid, pg. 152.
[201] J. Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation*, Rutgers University Press, 2014, USA, pg. 124-125.
[202] J. Reston Jr, *A Rift in the Earth: Art Memory and the Fight for a Vietnam War Memorial*, Arcade Publishing, New York, 2017, pg. 50-51.
[203] N. Azzarello, *Christian Boltanski: Grosse Hamburger Strasse at Kewenig* (2013), accessed 18/08/2018, https://www.designboom.com/art/christian-boltanskis-grosse-hamburger-strasse-at-kewenig-10-19-2013/
[204] D. Eccher, ed. *Boltanski: Souls, From Place to Place*, Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2017, pg. 79.
[205] R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin*, Guilford Publications, USA, 1995, pg. 166.
[206] J. Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, pg. 125.
[207] R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, Vintage Books, London, 2000.
[208] R. Barthes, ibid, pg. 26.
[209] R. Barthes, ibid pg. 27.
[210] R. Barthes, ibid, pg. 96.
[211] This will be further explained shortly.
[212] J. Hansen-Glucklich, 2014, pg. 120.
[213] N.M. Shawcross, *Roland Barthes on Photography: The Critical Tradition in Perspective*, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 1997.
[214] N.M. Shawcross, ibid, pg. 84.
[215] N.M. Shawcross, ibid, pg. 84.
[216] Written interview answer by Rex Irwin, who participated in an official written interview project undertaken specifically for this PhD research. USQ Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154. Interview answers are included in the appendix of this thesis.
[217] R. Irwin, ibid.
[218] C. Battersby, 2007, pg. 25.
[219] 'Aura' that is prompted by the visual elements of the artwork alongside its influence and meaning.
[220] M. Bohm-Duchen, ed. *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, 1995, pg. 75.
[221] Transcribed from an interview for Ai Weiwei's retrospective show, *So Sorry*, October 2009 to January 2010, Munich, Germany.
[222] The true number is still unknown and likely in excess of this estimate.
[223] J. Elkins, *On Some Limits of Materiality in Art History* (December 2008), Das

Magazin des Instituts für, accessed 28/04/2017, http://www.academia.edu/168260/On_Some_Limits_of_Materiality_in_Art_History

[224] J. Elkins, ibid.

[225] E. Shalev-Gerz, *The Monument Against Fascism* (1986), accessed 12/02/2018, http://www.shalev-gerz.net/?portfolio=monument-against-fascism

[226] N. Azzarello, *Alex Seton Memorializes Asylum Seekers With 28 Marble Life Jackets* (March, 2014), accessed 26/07/2017, https://www.designboom.com/art/alex-seton-carves-28-marble-lifejackets-03-17-2014/

[227] Marble being utilised and regarded as a 'fine art' material for centuries.

[228] M. Fried, *Art and objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, University of Chicago Press, USA, 1998, pg. 153.

[229] 'Compassion and empathy' not in Fried's terms, but in the context of the overall thesis study.

[230] At the time of writing.

[231] Again, as is the case while writing this in late 2018.

[232] NGV, *High Tide Mark, Ben Quilty* (2016), accessed 14/09/17, http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/122147/

[233] A. Downey & A. Pardo, *Richard Mosse*, Barbican, London, 2017, pg. 34.

[234] H.U. Obrist, ed. *Leon Golub: Do Paintings Bite?* Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern, 1997, pg. 31.

[235] K. Baker, Abu Ghraib's Horrific Images Drove Artist Fernando Botero into Action (January, 2007), accessed 15/08/2018, https://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Abu-Ghraib-s-horrific-images-drove-artist-2620953.php

[236] K. Baker, ibid.

[237] V. Breuvart, ed, *Vitamin P: New Perspectives in Painting*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2002, pg. 336.

[238] J. Tsang, *Karma III: Battlefield* (July, 2013), accessed 08/09/2017, https://johnsontsang.wordpress.com/2013/07/29/karma-iii-battlefield/

[239] A. Antliff, *Joseph Beuys*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2014, pg. 7.

[240] J. Jones, *Wounds of History* (January, 2005), The Guardian, accessed 26/09/2017, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/29/art.art

[241] J. Jones, ibid.

[242] M. Biro, *Anselm Kiefer*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2013, pg. 46.

[243] M. Biro, ibid, pg. 46.

[244] M. Biro, ibid, pg. 46.

[245] M. Biro, ibid, pg. 50.

[246] D. LaCapra, *History and memory after Auschwitz*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1998, pg. 19.

[247] M. Glover, *Great Works: Gas Chamber (1986) by Luc Tuymans* (March, 2013), The Independent, accessed 24/11/2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-

entertainment/art/great-works/great-works-gas-chamber-1986-by-luc-tuymans-8515230.html

[248] D. Spears, *Putting the Wrongs of History in Paint* (February, 2010), The New York Times, accessed 24/11/2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/07/arts/design/07tuymans.html

[249] D. Spears, ibid.

[250] D. Miller, *Interview with Lukasz Surowiec* (March, 2012), Berlin Biennale, accessed 21/3/2017, http://blog.berlinbiennale.de/en/comments/an-interview-with-lukasz-surowiec-26719.html

[251] D. Stone, *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, pg. 516.

[252] D. Stone, ibid, pg. 516.

[253] L. Gilman, *Memory Blocks* (October, 2007), Smithsonian Magazine, accessed 23/10/2017, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/memory-blocks-173123976/

[254] S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, eds. *Image and Remembrance Representation and the Holocaust*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2003, pg. 251.

[255] Ibid, pg. 252.

[256] A. Blais & L. Rasic, *A Place of Remembrance Official Book of the National September 11 Memorial*, National Geographic Society, Washington D.C, 2015, pg. 139.

[257] A. Blais & L. Rasic, ibid, pg. 146.

[258] A. Blais & L. Rasic, ibid, pg. 219.

[259] D. LaCapra, 1998, pg. 154.

[260] A. Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus*, Pantheon Books, USA, 1980, pg. 176.

[261] A. Spiegelman, ibid, pg. 205.

[262] D. LaCapra, 1998, pg. 182.

[263] All of which were discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

[264] J. Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, Trumpet Club Publishing, New York, 1991, pg. 168.

[265] 'Aura of atrocity' is an original term coined through research undertaken for this thesis.

[266] This 'affective dimension' can also be described as the viewer-to-artwork relationship.

[267] 'Secondary literature' refers to published literature that is within the theoretical field being investigated, but not in its entirety. For example, British writer Joan Gibbons' book, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance,* which contains a single chapter of particular relevance to the thesis research (*Chapter 4: Post-memory, 'The Ones Born Afterwards*), while the remainder of the book is not *as* aligned theoretically.

[268] Both theoretically through the writing and physically with *Deathgate.*

Bibliography

T. Adorno, *Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1959),* Stanford University Press, California, 2001.

T. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, Great Britain, 1966.

T. Adorno, *Prisms*, MIT Press, USA, 1982.

G. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, Zone Books, New York, 2002.

D. Amigoni, P. Barlow & C. Trodd, ed. *Victorian Culture and the Idea of the Grotesque*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, England, 1999.

A. Antliff, *Joseph Beuys*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2014.

R. Barthes, *Camera Lucinda*, Vintage Books, London, 2000.

R. Barthes, *Critical Essays*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1972.

O. Bartov, *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementations, Aftermath,* Routledge Publishing, New York, 2000.

C. Battersby, *The Sublime: Terror and Human Difference*, Routledge Publishing, New York, 2007.

Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1989.

G. Bayer & O. Kobrynskyy, ed. *Holocaust Cinema in the Twenty-First Century*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2015.

D. Beech, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Beauty*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2019.

A.C. Bell, *Clay: Contemporary Ceramic Artisans*, Thames & Hudson, Melbourne, 2016.

W. Benjamin, *On Hashish*, Harvard University Press, USA, 2006.

W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Prism Key Press, USA, 2010.

A. Benjamin, ed. *Walter Benjamin and Art*, Continuum Publishing, London, 2005.

J. Bennett, *Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art*, Stamford University Press, California, 2005.

T. Benyei, *The Edges of Trauma: Explorations in Visual Art and Literature*, Cambridge Scholars Press, United Kingdom, 2014.

W. Beshty, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Ethics*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2015.

J. Bird, *Leon Golub: Echoes of the Real*, Reakteon Books, London, 2000.

M. Biro, *Anselm Kiefer*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2013.

A. Blais & L. Rasic, *A Place of Remembrance: Official Book of the National September 11 Memorial*, National Geographic Society, Washington D.C, 2015.

M. Blanchlot, *The Writing of Disaster*, University of Nebraska Press, USA, 1995.

M. Bohm-Duchen, ed. *After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, 1995.

M. Boon & G. Levine, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Practice*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2018.

V. Breuvart, ed, *Vitamin P: New Perspectives in Painting*, Phaidon Press, USA, 2002.

C.R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony,* The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 2003.

E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautifu*l, N. Hailes Publisher, London, 2017.

P. Burrin, *Nazi Anti-Semitism: From Prejudice to the Holocaust*, The New Press, New York, 2005.

A. Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays,* Vintage Books, New York, 1991.

J. Chicago, *Holocaust Project: From Darkness Into Light*, Viking Penguin & Penguin Books, USA, 1993.

R. Chow, *Entanglements or Transmedial Thinking About Capture*, Duke University Press, London, 2012.

G. Clark & J. Pagliaro, ed. *Shards, Garth Clark on Ceramic Art*, CAF: Ceramic Arts Foundation & DAP: Distributed Art Publications, England, 2003.

S. Clift, *Committing the Future to Memory: History, Experience, Trauma*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2014.

A.F. Collins, M.A. Conway, S.E. Gathercole & P.E. Morris, ed. *Theories of Memory: 1st Edition*, Psychology Press, Hove UK, 1995.

T.M. Costelloe, ed. *The Sublime: From Antiquity to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2012.

P. Crowther & N. Hodges, ed. *Art and Design: The Contemporary Sublime: Sensibilities of Transcendence and Shock*, Academy Group Publishing Ltd, Cambridge, 1995.

P. Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: The Avant-garde, and the Postmodern, A Critique of Lyotard*, New Formations Number 7, 1989.

P. Cummins & T. Piper, *Poppies: Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*, IWM Publishers, London, 2018.

P.M.A. Cywinski, *Auschwitz Birkenau: The Place Where You Are Standing,* Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Oswiecim, 2016.

L. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews: 1933-45*, Penguin Books, New York, 1975.

R.T. Dean & H. Smith, *Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2009.

B. Dillon, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Ruins*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2011.

A. Downey & A. Pardo, *Richard Mosse*, Barbican, London, 2017.

D. Dwork, *Holocaust: A History*, Norton Publishers, New York, 2003.

T. Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin*, Verso Publishing, London, 1981.

D. Ebony & F. Botero, *Botero: Abu Ghraib*, Pretsel Publishing, Michigan, 2006.

D. Eccher, ed. *Boltanski: Souls, From Place to Place*, Silvana Editoriale, Milan, 2017.

L. Elderton & R. Morrill, ed. *Vitamin C: Clay + Ceramic in Contemporary Art*, Phaidon Press, London, 2017.

T. Ensink & C. Sauer, ed. *The Art of Commemoratio:n Fifty Years after the Warsaw Uprising*, *Vol 7*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Philadelphia, 2003.

S. Farmer, *Going Visual: Holocaust Representation and Historical Method*, American History Review Vol. 115, Issue 1, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010.

I. Farr, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Memory*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2012.

H. Flanzbaum, *The Trace of Trauma: Third-Generation Holocaust Survivors*, Phi Kappa, Phi Forum Vol. 92 Issue 1, 2012.

H. Foster, *The Return of the Real*, The MIT Press, London 1996.

M. Fried, *Art and objecthood: Essays and Reviews*, University of Chicago Press, USA, 1998.

J. Gibbons, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance,* I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, London, 2007.

S. Gigliotti & B. Lang, *The Holocaust: A Reader*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, 2005.

D. Glenwick, *Reflections on the Holocaust*, Phi Kappa Phi Forum Vol. 92 Issue 1, 2012.

B. Goldberger, ed. *100 Photographs The Most Influential Images of all Time*, Liberty Street of Time inc Books, New York, 2015.

N. Goldin, M. Heiferman, M. Holborn & S. Fletcher, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependancy*, Aperture publishers, New York, 1989.

L. Golub & N. Spero, *War and Memory*, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, 1994.

A. Groom, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Time*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2013.

J. Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation,* Rutgers University Press, London, 2014.

T. Harrod, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Craft*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2018.

A. Hitler & R. Manheim, *Mein Kampf*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1999.

E. Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History, and the Legacy of the Holocaust*, Public Affairs Publishing New York, 2004.

J. Hoopes, ed. *Peirce on Signs*, The University of North Carolina Press, London, 1991.

S. Hornstein & F. Jacobowitz, ed. *Image and Remembrance: Representation and the Holocaust*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2003.

S. Hornstein, L. Levitt & L.J. Silberstein, ed. *Impossible Images: Contemporary Art After the Holocaust*, New York University Press, New York, 2003.

A. Hudek, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: The Object*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2014.

M.A. Hutton, *Testimony from the Nazi Camps: French Women's Voices*, Routledge Publishing, New York, 2005.

D. Judd, *Complete Writings 1959-1975,* The Judd Foundation, New York, 2015.

I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Hackett Publishing Company, USA, 1996.

J. Knowlton & T. Cates, *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit: The Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust,* Humanities Press, USA, 1993.

D. LaCapra, *History and memory after Auschwitz*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1998.

D. LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma*, Cornell University Press, London, 1996.

D. LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2014.

R.S. Landau*, The Nazi Holocaust*, Ivan R. Dee, Chicago 1994.

B. Lang, *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics*, The Jon Hopkins University Press, USA, 2000.

P. Lange-Berndt, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Materiality*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2015.

L. Le-Feuvre, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Failure*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2010.

R.F. Leo & S. Marietti, ed. *Semiotics and Philosophy in Charles Sanders Peirce,* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, United Kingdom, 2006.

E. Leslie, *Modern European Thinkers: Walter Benjamin Overpowering Conformism*, Pluto Press, London, 2000.

P. Levi, *If This is a Man – The Truce*, Penguin Books, Great Britain, 1979.

P. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, Vintage publishing, New York, 1989.

N. Levin, *The Holocaust: The Destruction of European Jewry 1933-1945*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1968.

R. Leys, *From Guilt to Shame: Auschwitz and After*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2007.

R. Leys, *Trauma a Genealogy*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000.

J.S. Librett, ed. *Of the Sublime: Presence in Question*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1993.

R. Linn, *Escaping Auschwitz: A Culture of Forgetting*, Cornell University Press, London, 2004.

D. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust; The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*, Plume Printing, New York, 1994.

P. Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010.

H. Luckett, *The Grotesque: Ornamental Prints from the British Museum*, The South Bank Centre, London, 1995.

J.F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, University of Minnesota Press, USA, 1984.

N. Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust and Slavery in America,* University of Virginia Press, USA, 2006.

T. Marlow & A. Locke, ed. *Ai Weiwei*, Royal Academy Publications, London, 2015.

J. McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition*, Cornell University Press, London, 1993.

T. McDonough, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Boredom*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2017.

S. McNiff, *Art Based Research, Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples and Issues,* SAGE Publications, USA, 2008.

K. Messham-Muir, *Double War: Shaun Gladwell: Visual Culture and the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq,* Thames & Hudson Publishing, Melbourne, 2015.

S. Milton, *In Fitting Memory: The Art and Politics of Holocaust Memorials,* Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1991.

J.R & H.B Mitchell, *The Holocaust: Readings & Interpretations,* McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, USA, 2001.

S. Morley, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Sublime*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2010.

T. Morris, *New Wave Clay: Ceramic Design, Art and Architecture*, Frame Publishers, Amsterdam, 2018.

S.W. Murray, ed. *Understanding Atrocities: Remembering, Representing and Teaching Genocide*, University of Calgary Press, Canada, 2017.

M. Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion*, Columbia University Press, USA, 2009.

H.U. Obrist, ed. *Leon Golub: Do Paintings Bite?,* Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern, 1997.

M. O'Neill, ed. *Adorno, Culture and Feminism*, Sage Publications, London, 1999.

G. Perry, *The Descent of Man,* Penguin Books, United Kingdom, 2016.

D.I. Popescu & T. Schult, ed. *The Holocaust and its Contexts: Revisiting Holocaust Representation in the Post-Witness Era*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke UK, 2015.

J.M. Rabate, ed. *Writing the Image After Roland Barthes*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1997.

J. Ranciere, *On the Shores of Politics*, Verso, London, 1995.

J. Ranciere, *The Emancipated Spectator*, Verso, London, 2009.

J. Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, Bloomsbury Academics, London, 2014.

G. Ray, *Terror and the Sublime in Art and Critical Theory*, Palgrave Macmillan, USA, 2005.

G. Ray, L. Beckmann & P. Nisbit, *Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy*, D.A.P. Ringling Museum, New York, 2001.

C.A. Reed & G. Short*, Issues in Holocaust Education*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, England, 2004.

G. Reitlinger, *The Final Solution*, Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd, Great Britain, 1971.

J. Reston Jr, *A Rift in the Earth: Art, Memory and the Fight for a Vietnam War Memorial*, Arcade Publishing, New York, 2017.

R.M. Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet,* Random House Publishing, New York, pg. 52-53.

R. Rochlitz, *The Disenchantment of Art: The Philosophy of Walter Benjamin,* Guilford Publications, USA, 1995.

N. Rosenthal, *Apocalypse: Beauty and Horror in Contemporary* Art, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2000.

Z.J. Ryn & W. Sulowicz, ed. *Auschwitz Survivors: Clinical-Psychiatric Studies*, Goldruk Publishing, Krakow, 2005.

C. Saines, ed. *Gerhard Richter: The Life of Images*, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Queensland, 2018.

L. Saltzman, *Anselm Kiefer and Art After Auschwitz*, The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, 1999.

N.M. Shawcross, *Roland Barthes on Photography: The Critical Tradition in Perspective*, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, 1997.

S. Sheehan, *The Holocaust: The Death Camps*, Hodder Wayland Publishing, Great Britain, 2000.

A. Sieradzka, *Forbidden Art: Illegal Works by Concentration Camp Prisoners*, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Poland, 2012.

F. Sigler, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Work*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2017.

D. Silverman, ed. *Qualitative Research: Theory Method and Practice, 2nd Edition,* SAGE Publications, London, 2004.

J.D. Smith, *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology* (book review), Canadian Journal of History, Vol. 48, Issue 2, 2013.

K. Smith, H U Obrist & B Fibicher, ed. *Ai Weiwei*, Phaidon Press, New York, 2009.

A. Spiegelman, *The Complete Maus*, Pantheon Books, USA, 1980.

S. Spieker, ed. *Documents of Contemporary Art: Destruction*, Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, London, 2017.

K. Stiles & P. Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, University of California Press, London, 1996.

D. Stone, *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004.

D. Stone, *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2012.

L. Webster, *Ben Quilty: After Afghanistan*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2013.

E. Wiesel, *Night,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux Publishing, New York, 2012.

J. Yolen, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, Trumpet Club Publishing, New York, 1991.

J.E. Young, ed. *The Art of Memory Holocaust Memorials in History*, Prestel-Verlag, New York, 1994.

S Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso Publishing, New York, 1989.

Web Resources

N. Azzarello, *Alex Seton Memorializes Asylum Seekers With 28 Marble Life Jackets* (March, 2014), accessed 26/07/2017, https://www.designboom.com/art/alex-seton-carves-28-marble-lifejackets-03-17-2014/

N. Azzarello, *Christian Boltanski: Grosse Hamburger Strasse at Kewenig* (2013), accessed 18/08/2018, https://www.designboom.com/art/christian-boltanskis-grosse-hamburger-strasse-at-kewenig-10-19-2013/

K. Baker, Abu Ghraib's Horrific Images Drove Artist Fernando Botero into Action (January, 2007), accessed 15/08/2018, https://www.sfgate.com/entertainment/article/Abu-Ghraib-s-horrific-images-drove-artist-2620953.php

J. Elkins, *On Some Limits of Materiality in Art History* (December 2008), Das Magazin des Instituts für, accessed 28/04/2017, http://www.academia.edu/168260/On_Some_Limits_of_Materiality_in_Art_History

L. Gilman, *Memory Blocks* (October, 2007), Smithsonian Magazine, accessed 23/10/2017, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/memory-blocks-173123976/

M. Glover, *Great Works: Gas Chamber (1986) by Luc Tuymans* (March, 2013), The Independent, accessed 24/11/2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/great-works/great-works-gas-chamber-1986-by-luc-tuymans-8515230.html

M. Jamieson, *New Tribute to Holocaust Victims Opens at AWM Canberra* (December, 2016), accessed 5/10/2018, https://www.sbs.com.au/news/new-tribute-to-holocaust-victims-opens-at-awm-in-canberra

J. Jones, *Wounds of History* (January, 2005), The Guardian, accessed 26/09/2017, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2005/jan/29/art.art

E. Mills, *Cornelia Parker's Poppies at the Whitworth* (February, 2015), accessed 30/09/2018, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/cornelia-parker-poppies

National Vietnam Veterans Arts Museum, 2007-2018, accessed 01/09/2018, http://www.artinasia.com/institutionsDetail.php?catID=0&galleryID=1225

NGV, *High Tide Mark, Ben Quilty* (2016), accessed 14/09/17, http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/122147/

E. Shalev-Gerz, *The Monument Against Fascism* (1986), accessed 12/02/2018, http://www.shalev-gerz.net/?portfolio=monument-against-fascism

A. Sooke, *Goya's Disasters of War: The Truth About War Laid Bare* (July, 2014) accessed 06/07/2018, http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20140717-the-greatest-war-art-ever

D. Spears, *Putting the Wrongs of History in Paint* (February, 2010), The New York Times, accessed 24/11/2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/07/arts/design/07tuymans.html

Appendices

The following appendices compile written interviews conducted as original research for the PhD.

Project details (working title while the interviews were conducted):
Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA154
Art After Loss: Aestheticized memory, Auratic Capability and Affect Through Post-Holocaust Representation (interview questions).

Research Team Contact Details:
Principle Investigator:
Mr Daniel Elborne
Email: daniel.elborne@usq.edu.au
Telephone: (07) 4631 1205
Mobile: 0432 619 987

Supervisor:
Dr Kyle Jenkins
Email: kyle.jenkins@usq.edu.au
Telephone: (07) 4631 1117
Mobile: 0428 449261

Details given to interview participants:
Below are a series of questions relating to the PhD research project: *Art After Loss: Aestheticized memory, Auratic Capability and Affect Through Post-Holocaust Representation*.

You are not required to answer all of the following 29 questions. Please only answer the questions you feel are relevant or comfortable to you. The interview does not have to be completed in one sitting and can be undertaken at your leisure. The total time for completing the interview is expected to take 90 minutes.

Some of the following questions address topics or war and sensitive historical events such as the Holocaust. If at any time you feel psychological/emotional distress, you can cease involvement in the interview immediately.

Sometimes thinking about the topics raised in the interview can create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this immediately, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support.

Appendix A: Written Interview with Holocaust survivor, Ana de Leon.

1. What is your art practice primarily concerned with (e.g. painting, ceramics, installation, writing etc)?

N/A

2. Why do you choose to produce work within that field of arts practice (regarding question 1)?

N/A

3. How important is your choice of material/medium in relation to what your work addresses?

N/A

4. Are there any particular artists/writers/groups (etc.) that inform (or have informed) your art practice?

N/A

5. Do you consider the experience of 'the viewer' when developing/creating/presenting your work?

N/A

6. How important are the concepts of time and labor in the creation of your work?

N/A

7. How important is the title and/or artist statement for your work?

N/A

8. Does your birthplace; personal history and memory (of these) play a significant role in what you create?

N/A

9. (To potentially elaborate on question 8) Where does the concept of collective memory (a collection of individual, personal memories relating to a singular event that affected many people) sit within your studio practice?

N/A

10. When exhibiting, does the work itself sustain and translate your intentions, or do you also rely on the environment/space the work is presented in?

N/A

11. Do you consider the location of an artwork important to its affecting qualities?

N/A

12. Regarding artwork about location-based memory (memories relating to something that happened in a particular place) or artwork specifically made to memorialize an event, do you believe it is more effective in a permanent, geographically relevant location or as an artwork that can travel (be presented in various locations)?

N/A

13. What do you feel is the purpose of memorializing events of the past?

We preserve memories of people or events 'lest we forget'. It allows us to remember past mistakes and move forward.

14. Do you feel as though the role of memorialization has changed/is changing?

The role is probably not changing but, with passing of time, some people are getting more cynical. However, the occurrence of some ultra-right-wing organizations and groups in different countries reinforces the need for memorialization of events significant for a nation.

15. What do you think of when reading the term "war art?"

I think war art depicts various scenes of war through creative means.

16. What do you consider the purpose of art that relates to/documents war?

The purpose of any art depends upon the motivation of the artist: to create a historical record, a statement of his/her personal beliefs or provide political commentary about broader community values. War art may celebrate courage, record a famous battle, mourn the loss of lives, admonish the foolishness of war, glorify the noble sacrifice of those going to war, or protest against government sending young men to their death.

17. What do you consider to be the role of art in the representation of the Holocaust?

The mission statement from Sydney's Jewish Museum puts it better than I ever could:

"Commemorate the lives of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators, honour the Survivors and pay tribute to the Righteous Among the Nations. Ensure … that
the Holocaust and its uniqueness in history is never forgotten and that it is recognised as a crime against humanity with contemporary and universal significance".

18. Do you feel as though only certain people should make artwork about the Holocaust and whatever your answer, why?

Anyone is free to make art, whether about the Holocaust or any other subject. Society will then judge whether the artwork in question has merit from the perspective of technique, execution, message or viewpoint.

19. What would you consider the most important considerations an artist should make when creating work about the Holocaust?

Art is one person's creative response to an aspect of the world – it is an attempt to draw attention to it, to interpret it, to comment on it. The most important consideration? It really depends upon what the artist is trying to achieve.

20. What do you consider the most problematic aspects of creating work about broad reaching/affecting trauma, memory and/or history (such as the Holocaust)?

Again, I refer to my previous answer (Q19). It depends upon the artist's creative vision.

21. What do you consider the most effective way/s for art to represent traumatic/tragic/horrific events, memories and experience?

I don't know what may be the most effective way, but I would like to think it would be with a lot of sensitivity, empathy and consideration about imparting lessons for the future.

22. Regarding work about memory, war and sensitive historical events; what artwork have you personally seen that affected you most and how did it achieve this?

N/A

23. How would you explain the concept of 'aura' in relation to visual art?

N/A

24. Do you believe that art has transcendental qualities that can profoundly affect viewers?

N/A

25. (If you answered "yes" to question 24) Do you believe these transcendental qualities of an artwork can be dictated, manufactured and/or controlled by the maker?

N/A

26. What aspects/elements of an artwork are most important in making you truly emotionally affected (e.g. sound, video, violence, particular materials, scale etc.)?

N/A

27. How do you gauge the success of an artwork (either your own or others')?

There is no single way: it could be commercial success, how much publicity it attracts, an invitation to show at the biennale, how much of a reaction it arouses in those who consume it or whether the artist is satisfied that he/she has achieved their creative vision.

28. Do you feel as though your work has changed, become more complex or focused over the course of your career?

N/A

29. What are you currently working on?

N/A

Appendix B: Written Interview with Art Dealer, Rex Irwin.

1. What is your art practice primarily concerned with (e.g. painting, ceramics, installation, writing etc)?

I am an art dealer dealing mostly in Australian modern paintings and sculpture but specialising in European drawings and prints, particularly the German Expressionists, the London School, Henry Moore and Picasso drawings and prints.

2. Why do you choose to produce work within that field of arts practice (regarding question 1)?

I live in Australia and I am fascinated by the German Expressionists particularly their use of the wood block printing technique.

3. How important is your choice of material/medium in relation to what your work addresses?

Vital, it is that on which my reputation is based.

4. Are there any particular artists/writers/groups (etc.) that inform (or have informed) your art practice?

Before my interest in the German Expressionists I exhibited and worked with the British artists, Lucian Freud, Frank Auerbach and Leon Kossoff, whose German Jewish background is directly related to the Die Brucke and the Blaue Reiter artists.

5. Do you consider the experience of 'the viewer' when developing/creating/presenting your work?

No

6. How important are the concepts of time and labor in the creation of your work?

Not at all important, neither the artist nor the dealer is a tradesman, paid by the hour. My interest is solely on the work created.

7. How important is the title and/or artist statement for your work?

Not very important.

8. Does your birthplace; personal history and memory (of these) play a significant role in what you create?

Yes. As a child of an English army background I spent 18 months from Christmas 1945 in Germany, so some of my earliest childhood
memories are of the devastation caused by war and my friendships with German children of my own age 4-6 years, as well as my safe middle-class upbringing.

9. (To potentially elaborate on question 8) Where does the concept of collective memory (a collection of individual, personal memories relating to a singular event that affected many people) sit within your studio practice?

We travelled across Holland and Germany to reach Hanover by train and army lorry. I have no idea how long this journey took but I have memories of looking out of the back of the lorry and seeing towns and cities of bombed out buildings made up of the walls and gable ends which stood like great gothic cathedrals but I am sure that I would have put this in such terms at the time, if asked. Sometimes I worry that some of these are received, false memories, created by movies or documentaries I have seen after the fact.

10. When exhibiting, does the work itself sustain and translate your intentions, or do you also rely on the environment/space the work is presented in?

Mostly the work and to a lesser degree the space.

11. Do you consider the location of an artwork important to its affecting qualities?

Yes but only to some degree.

12. Regarding artwork about location-based memory (memories relating to something that happened in a particular place) or artwork specifically made to memorialize an event, do you believe it is more effective in a permanent, geographically relevant location or as an artwork that can travel (be presented in various locations)?

If the work has integrity and merit I believe it will survive the move and be able to convince an audience of its authority in even the most unlikely places, galleries or situations.

13. What do you feel is the purpose of memorializing events of the past?

The events of the past are really the building blocks of the future, great victories, great events, great beauties remembered lift our spirits and will often help us to realise that despite the passing of time the same emotions that stirred the artist to create such works are within us. The same goes for images of disaster and cruelty, Goya's Disasters of War can still be seen on our television screens every night and are as devastating to the viewer as they ever were. The joy of Breuguel the Elder, the horror of Dante and Hieronymus Bosch still have the power to delight as well as to shock.

14. Do you feel as though the role of memorialization has changed/is changing?

Inevitably as the generation that experienced the event changes the medium of delivering the memory changes too but not necessarily for the worse.

15. What do you think of when reading the term "war art?"

I am mostly cynical as it is really post-war art, done after the fact. The new 'war art', is the evening news.

16. What do you consider the purpose of art that relates to/documents war?

I think it is extremely important, as it is often cathartic for the artist, Georg Grosz , Henry Moore, Siegfried Sassoon et al, and survives to inform future generations, Robert Cappa and the Magnum photographers. We need to remember past horrors because they may help us to stop such horror in the future but they do not seem to be doing so at the moment.

17. What do you consider to be the role of art in the representation of the Holocaust?

Art made in the camps at the time, not after the fact, or art made by survivors after the fact is probably both cathartic as well as didactic and probably not made as art but as reportage. Art made after the fact by a third party, not a survivor, is the reworking of an event and is therefore probably made to memorialise the Holocaust as either history or fiction and can be extremely important.

18. Do you feel as though only certain people should make artwork about the Holocaust and whatever your answer, why?

Art made after the fact can be made by anyone as long as they do not try to pass it off as their first-hand experience, just as a white a actor should be able to play Othello, he is acting and as an artist is inventing. Invention is not Holy Writ nor ethnically exclusive and art is about invention. So, I do not think the discussion or memorialising of the Holocaust should be victim specific.

19. What would you consider the most important considerations an artist should make when creating work about the Holocaust?

Not to lie, not to be sentimental and to use the same intellectual rigour as he would when creating any other work of art.

20. What do you consider the most problematic aspects of creating work about broad reaching/affecting trauma, memory and/or history (such as the Holocaust)?

One of the most problematic aspects is to ignore the politics of the day and to remember that this event did not take place in a vacuum, such horrors were being perpetrated elsewhere, Stalinist Russia for instance, which in no way justifies what happened. But context is important.

21. What do you consider the most effective way/s for art to represent traumatic/tragic/horrific events, memories and experience?

The same way as it represents anything else, with care and thoughtfulness and honesty and without sentimentality.

22. Regarding work about memory, war and sensitive historical events; what artwork have you personally seen that affected you most and how did it achieve this?

One of the few times I have been moved to tears by a work of art was seeing an exhibition of Henry Moore's Shelter Drawings at the British Museum. Much of the effect was no doubt received memory adding to my childhood experience just after the war. I still find these images deeply moving.

23. How would you explain the concept of ‘aura’ in relation to visual art?

With great difficulty, perhaps the viewer imbues a work of art with ‘aura’ for any number of reasons, as much as the artist may have tried to achieve ‘aura’.

24. Do you believe that art has transcendental qualities that can profoundly affect viewers?

Yes, some art, some viewers.

25. (If you answered “yes” to question 24) Do you believe these transcendental qualities of an artwork can be dictated, manufactured and/or controlled by the maker?

They can be attempted but will not necessarily succeed.

26. What aspects/elements of an artwork are most important in making you truly emotionally affected (e.g. sound, video, violence, particular materials, scale etc.)?

The intellect of the artist.

27. How do you gauge the success of an artwork (either your own or others’)?

If it stimulates me to engage with it more than a few times.

28. Do you feel as though your work has changed, become more complex or focused over the course of your career?

Yes

29. What are you currently working on?

Retirement.

Appendix C: Written Interview with Artist, Ursula Haynes.

1. What is your art practice primarily concerned with (e.g. painting, ceramics, installation, writing etc)?

Sculpture.

2. Why do you choose to produce work within that field of arts practice (regarding question 1)?

It has been my visual language in which I can express myself most deeply – all my life.

3. How important is your choice of material/medium in relation to what your work addresses?

Extremely important. I use only "noble materials" and natural – clay, bronze, wood, marble and other stone.

4. Are there any particular artists/writers/groups (etc.) that inform (or have informed) your art practice?

Henry Moore (my mentor), William Zorach, Marito Masini, Noguchi, Emelio Bouro.

5. Do you consider the experience of 'the viewer' when developing/creating/presenting your work?

Not really, I expect and hope that the viewer will get the message or make up their own tension.

6. How important are the concepts of time and labor in the creation of your work?

I never think about it – once into a new work I just go on until it is finished.

7. How important is the title and/or artist statement for your work?

Not very – I want the work to speak for itself – not justified in words.

8. Does your birthplace; personal history and memory (of these) play a significant role in what you create?

Yes – all of these as I was born in 1932 and lived through the second world war and many changes.

9. (To potentially elaborate on question 8) Where does the concept of collective memory (a collection of individual, personal memories relating to a singular event that affected many people) sit within your studio practice?

Hardly ever relevant to my work.

10. When exhibiting, does the work itself sustain and translate your intentions, or do you also rely on the environment/space the work is presented in?

Large sculpture needs space around it but the work sustains wherever it is.

11. Do you consider the location of an artwork important to its affecting qualities?

Yes.

12. Regarding artwork about location-based memory (memories relating to something that happened in a particular place) or artwork specifically made to memorialize an event, do you believe it is more effective in a permanent, geographically relevant location or as an artwork that can travel (be presented in various locations)?

It so depends on the event which is being memorialized.

13. What do you feel is the purpose of memorializing events of the past?

So that the event will never be forgotten.

14. Do you feel as though the role of memorialization has changed/is changing?

Yes, because in conceptual art it can be of prime importance.

15. What do you think of when reading the term "war art?"

I think of artists in World War II. I drew with one, Will Ogilvey – Canadian, South African.

16. What do you consider the purpose of art that relates to/documents war?

It helps to remember.

17. What do you consider to be the role of art in the representation of the Holocaust?

Anyway in which the world is forced to face this horror is vital for all time – that it never happens again.

18. Do you feel as though only certain people should make artwork about the Holocaust and whatever your answer, why?

No! Everyone has the right to express their feelings!

19. What would you consider the most important considerations an artist should make when creating work about the Holocaust?

To trace it in a sensitive way ensuring that no feeling of resentment or hatred is provoked.

20. What do you consider the most problematic aspects of creating work about broad reaching/affecting trauma, memory and/or history (such as the Holocaust)?

As in 19.

21. What do you consider the most effective way/s for art to represent traumatic/tragic/horrific events, memories and experience?

Is there one? Anything that shocks the viewer is valid.

22. Regarding work about memory, war and sensitive historical events; what artwork have you personally seen that affected you most and how did it achieve this?

Sant'Anna, Tuscany, A tower full of bones of victims slaughtered in the village by the Nazi's.

23. How would you explain the concept of 'aura' in relation to visual art?

Henry Moore's Warrior with Shield.

24. Do you believe that art has transcendental qualities that can profoundly affect viewers?

Yes.

25. (If you answered "yes" to question 24) Do you believe these transcendental qualities of an artwork can be dictated, manufactured and/or controlled by the maker?

No.

26. What aspects/elements of an artwork are most important in making you truly emotionally affected (e.g. sound, video, violence, particular materials, scale etc.)?

The composition and its component parts.

27. How do you gauge the success of an artwork (either your own or others')?

If it seems to "talk" to viewers and provoke emotion.

28. Do you feel as though your work has changed, become more complex or focused over the course of your career?

I certainly hope so!

29. What are you currently working on?

A series of tree/personalities abstracted depicting old people's will to survive despite the physical handicaps – 'Almond Trees Dancing in the Mistral.'

Appendix D: Written Interview with Sculptor, Susan Bahary.

1. What is your art practice primarily concerned with (e.g. painting, ceramics, installation, writing etc)?

Sculpture: representational and abstract in bronze, fine art acrylic and stainless steel. Limited edition works and monumental work usually honoring the deeds and sacrifices of our military and their animals in the US and abroad.

2. Why do you choose to produce work within that field of arts practice (regarding question 1)?

It is my favorite form of art expression and I love animals

3. How important is your choice of material/medium in relation to what your work addresses?

I think for monumental work a lasting medium is essential especially when exposed to the elements. I also can get great detail and expression when working in clay and then casting in bronze. I can also create limited editions so more people can enjoy/see them and it also helps keep me in business and able to continue my work, to be able to sell more than one casting. The fine art acrylic is more ethereal which is suited for indoors only but allows for images and effects within the sculpture itself and a great variety of emotion can be expressed through it due to its interplay with light.

4. Are there any particular artists/writers/groups (etc.) that inform (or have informed) your art practice?

I have been inspired by Rodin, Michelangelo and Henry Moore as well as by aunt, a portrait sculptor primarily, with a wide range.

5. Do you consider the experience of 'the viewer' when developing/creating/presenting your work?

Yes, I hope that I can help them feel and see what I want them to see, particularly regarding an emotion of expression through the form of an animal or human's gesture, face and body.

6. How important are the concepts of time and labor in the creation of your work?

I do work very hard at it and continue until I am sure I have given it all I have to give.

7. How important is the title and/or artist statement for your work?

I think the title can be important and helpful, but that the art should get the message across sufficiently without a title. I think that ultimately the viewer should be allowed to receive his or her own meaning from the work without a title, but that the title helps the viewer understand what the artist had in mind.

8. Does your birthplace; personal history and memory (of these) play a significant role in what you create?

No. I think it is more who I am inside, as a person, and that person has been there from childhood; I am now just more evolved, but my heart remains the same. I think that if I had more time to sculpt freely and not with the restraints of making a living and raising a family, I would be more experimental in my work and its subject matter. I hope that I will be able to explore that more in the future, but I still have more to say/do in the focus main focus of my art.

9. (To potentially elaborate on question 8) Where does the concept of collective memory (a collection of individual, personal memories relating to a singular event that affected many people) sit within your studio practice?

Since I always loved dogs and showed, trained, bred and judged them starting in my teens years, that greatly influenced the work I do today. It enabled me to understand the animal/human bond and to understand the technical aspects of various breeds of dogs based on a standard of perfection laid out by the American Kennel Club. I also had an innate feeling and an "eye" for these physical and emotional characteristics of these animals that made it challenging and rewarding to capture in my art, especially to those who are most knowledgeable in the field. This then led to learning about horses in a similar way and then sculpting them. While I see a nobility in all animals, horses usually made for a better vehicle to express wider emotions of the human experience in some of my sculptures, due to their majestic appearance and size; such as my "Arabian Heart" sculpture about love.

10. When exhibiting, does the work itself sustain and translate your intentions, or do you also rely on the environment/space the work is presented in?

I think the work itself largely does because at time I have been very limited by the setting, such as putting a tent, table and rug out at a horse show outdoors. Yet people could still focus on the work. When given the time and energy etc, I chose to make the best presentation possible, which I do think helped. For example, I exhibited at large horse shows indoors with an elaborate booth with sculptures on attractive pedestals and some of them on slowly rotating pedestals, music in the background,

effective lighting and a teal backdrop to set off both the bronze and acrylic works equally well. I also preferred a large enough space to allow people to move freely as I sat at a table or sofa at the side. I allowed a space for viewers to sit and speak about the work with me. We would speak about the work and their connection to it and I would answer any questions related to their ability to purchase.

11. Do you consider the location of an artwork important to its affecting qualities?

I think the work should stand strongly on it's own wherever it is, bit there is no doubt that the location can add much weight and intensity to the meaning and beauty of the work. For example, a monument to military animals located at a Veteran's Park adds much to the meaning of the work. Or the same monument at a National Museum adds more importance to the work, so that the viewer will take the subject and the artist more seriously, than if it was at a small local park, for example.

12. Regarding artwork about location-based memory (memories relating to something that happened in a particular place) or artwork specifically made to memorialize an event, do you believe it is more effective in a permanent, geographically relevant location or as an artwork that can travel (be presented in various locations)?

I think that it is ideal to have it located at least in an actual place where an event took place if possible, but this is not easy to do and always with a plaque explaining the historical importance. I found it wise when I created an edition of 9 castings of our country's first official war dog monument, "Always Faithful". The first casting was unveiled at the Pentagon and dedicated at the Marine Corps Naval Base on Guam at the War Dog Cemetery, on the very island where so many dogs and Marines served and died. However, additional castings in special Veterinary Schools and Museums, made it possible for more people to see the work on the mainland of our country and to better spread the knowledge of the deeds and sacrifices the monument represented. Also, with the War on Terror, the general public due to security concerns can now not see these military bases with monuments anymore. I also think such an art work is fine to put on traveling exhibit for the same reasons. The same work became part of our country's first War Animals exhibit several years ago at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans, LA. This allowed my single work to be seen a larger, wider context than what it was originally designed for, and it was complimented by it.

13. What do you feel is the purpose of memorializing events of the past?

I think it is to help generations going forward to: remember, honor, be educated and educate, be a lasting record, be thought-provoking, inspiring, emotionally-moving and to help prevent a repetition of such an event in the case of a bad event.

14. Do you feel as though the role of memorialization has changed/is changing?

In our country in the last year or so it has changed drastically as monument that are seen as politically incorrect and/or not in keeping with today's values, are being taken down and being placed in more obscure locations, depending upon the local public's and politician's view. In general, I feel there is a slight increase in abstract art and a decrease of the more classical and representational art being accepted and wanted.

15. What do you think of when reading the term "war art?"

I think first of sculpture; of everything that represents war, including all soldiers and their animals and their equipment. That can include representational figures of more abstract representational art or plaques and walls with names and or images on them (such as the Vietnam Wall in DC). Of course, I know there are many detailed paintings that are important records of wars past, before the camera, as well as abstract art that is usually anti-war and can be graffiti spray-painted on a wall.

16. What do you consider the purpose of art that relates to/documents war?

In what I do, it is to honor the deeds and sacrifices of the military both human and animal who have served. It is also to educate, appreciate and to elicit compassion for the subject. It is a place to grieve and to fell proud and inspired-often at the same time. For other war art that I see, it is also often created to be a record of a battle, subject matter, conquest, and most often a way to honor lives lost.

17. What do you consider to be the role of art in the representation of the Holocaust?

I think it is to move people emotionally, educate them on the subject and especially generations going forward, so that they will never forget and allow those atrocities to occur anywhere on earth again. I think it is difficult, because being too graphic in an art piece could shut people down and turn them away and so there must be a careful handling of this, which I think you have done in your monument Dan. I think that Holocaust survivor's accounts are an important part of this.

18. Do you feel as though only certain people should make artwork about the Holocaust and whatever your answer, why?

No-Anyone with their heart in the right place, with the desire and compassion should do it. This is not only about a certain group(s)-it is about the state of humanity. If it can happen to one group it can happen to them again and it can also happen to other

groups. In some ways, it makes a greater statement when a non-Jew does it. I say this being a Jew. It is obviously close to the heart of Jews since they have family members who were lost, but it is refreshing and powerful when a non-Jew does it and sets that good example for other non-Jews. It has inspired me as a Jew that you are doing what you are doing, as a non-Jew.

19. What would you consider the most important considerations an artist should make when creating work about the Holocaust?

To not trivialize it and to base it in knowledge. To create compassion in the viewer and make the facts "available" as to what happened so that it possibly can be prevented in the future. To make it palatable enough as a general art form, aside from more facts that can be given for those who want to delve deeper, so that the viewer takes it in and does not turn away from it. I think consulting with clergy of reform and orthodox backgrounds knowledgeable in this area, as well as any holocaust survivors and their children is wise to see what their point of view is. My children have spoken with holocaust survivors because they want their story to live on when they are gone. They want to honor those who died and don't want to see this happen again, yet they know it is possible. I think an art form that creates empathy and shows people that it could have been them too is very effective. That is one reason I like your train track walk. It is subtle, yet powerful.

20. What do you consider the most problematic aspects of creating work about broad reaching/affecting trauma, memory and/or history (such as the Holocaust)?

As mentioned above, not to turn people off so much that the art can't reach them. Yet not to hide the horrid/true facts. This is a hard balance, but there are ways.

21. What do you consider the most effective way/s for art to represent traumatic/tragic/horrific events, memories and experience?

To move people emotionally so that a subtle art form can have a strong effect, as you have done in your monument. So they are not turned off but rather moved internally in a way that makes them know this event needs to be remembered and never repeated. So it can become personal to them, Jew or non-Jew.(we know that gays and others were also targets). I think to hear the stories from survivors and also hear the positive stories about the non-Jews who saved them at their own peril, so that we can be left with hope.

22. Regarding work about memory, war and sensitive historical events; what artwork have you personally seen that affected you most and how did it achieve this?

I loved the Vietnam Wall in DC for its simplicity, innovative and simple approach for the time, and mostly for the ability for people to touch the names of their loved ones. I also was very touched and influenced by the stunning stone sculpture of the Lion of Lucerne, in Lucerne, Switzerland. The use of the lion (an innocent animal) and it's expressive face moved me greatly. It is also an example of how a location can add to the whole work, because as it is a masterpiece in and of itself, in my opinion, it is so beautifully designed the way it is carved into the wall and surrounded by the beauty of the water below. I also love the sculpture by Felix De Weldon of the Iwo Jima monument in the DC area of the 4 Marines in action holding up the flag. It tells the story with great detail and action and represents what they were fighting for though the flag raising: our country. By the way, I was purposely seated at a wedding with the artist many years ago when he was in his mid-nineties. Super smart man who he earned many degrees. He had to make a smaller version aboard a ship with very little time. Sadly, much of what he said I could not hear because of the loud band playing! Always something!

23. How would you explain the concept of 'aura' in relation to visual art?

I know auras exist because I was taught to see them as a college student and still can see them. Anyone can learn. I don't know if this is quite what you mean but I can say that all objects have them and they change colors around people as people feel different emotions. When I create a work of art I put all the best intention and love I can into it and ask the universe/God to help me create the true feeling of my subject and I try to be the vehicle to capture that. I feel that that is what happens when I am in the right zone.

24. Do you believe that art has transcendental qualities that can profoundly affect viewers?

YES for the reason I mentioned above. I think that the energy we put in can be seen and felt by many viewers. Not everyone is tuned in. I have had people tell me that they feel my work feels alive. While this is a lot of hard technical work too, I believe it is also the intentionality/energy I mentioned above, that helps create that. It is certainly my hope. I also know that the sheer creation of it visually and its meaning can be very powerful and once someone experiences art it cannot be unexperienced.(that is a word I just made up!).

25. (If you answered “yes” to question 24) Do you believe these transcendental qualities of an artwork can be dictated, manufactured and/or controlled by the maker?

YES I think that the physical creation can be a profound experience but as mentioned before the intention and honesty of the work can also be felt and be transcendental for the viewer.

26. What aspects/elements of an artwork are most important in making you truly emotionally affected (e.g. sound, video, violence, particular materials, scale etc.)?

I think the meaning plus the visual impact. Size can make it more intense for sure, but is not a requirement. I think the use of each and every sense can help make an artwork very powerful as one may see in installations, videos, film etc..My choice was to stay with sculpture but I did go to the best film school in the country and love film and see its ability to be a powerful change maker.

27. How do you gauge the success of an artwork (either your own or others’)?

By representing an emotion and/or subject in the most accurate, honest and beautiful way that can move the viewer in a positive way. I prefer using beauty as a tool, as I feel there is enough ugliness in the world.

28. Do you feel as though your work has changed, become more complex or focused over the course of your career?

It has remained focused and has developed, become more complex and expanded more and more. I started with one breed of dog, then different breeds, then horses, then other animals and human form. I have also done and am currently doing abstract stainless-steel public art for apartment projects in the Bay Area.

29. What are you currently working on?

I am starting to sketch a monument-first of its kind of a FEMALE soldier and her war dog. Women are not often represented in monuments. My next proposed National Service Animals Monument project that I am trying to get a location and funding for, would be the largest by far, and the culmination of all my work to date.

Appendix E: Written Interview with Artist, Arts Writer, Curator and former lecturer in Visual Arts, Sandy Pottinger.

1. What is your art practice primarily concerned with (e.g. painting, ceramics, installation, writing etc)?

My practice is primarily concerned with painting although writing, whether my own, or words by others, is integral to how I relate to the world, and assimilate colour, shape, and sound as an expressive means of interpreting imagery.

2. Why do you choose to produce work within that field of arts practice (regarding question 1)?

The medium of paint is succulent and sensuous. I can smooth it on canvas or board with a brush, I can trowel it on, throw it, use my hands, rags, sponges.
It is physical and tactile and it can interpret gestures that are emotionally laden, or austerely analytical. It allows me to translate music, sound, abstract thought, and the poetic into colour and shape.

3. How important is your choice of material/medium in relation to what your work addresses?

The fluidity of paint enables movement as a response to sound to wash over the surfaces in gestural responses that are both abstract and expressive. Sound becomes colour and shape to me and paint is a versatile and flexible way of expressing those connections. Colour is an essential part of my work whether in its purest primary form or nuanced through mixing in secondary and tertiary tonal hues, thus paint is my ideal medium of choice.

4. Are there any particular artists/writers/groups (etc.) that inform (or have informed) your art practice?

The American Abstract Expressionists, Gerhard Richter, Frank Auerbach, Joan Mitchell, David Rankin, Anselm Kiefer, Luc Tuymans, Frank Lloyd Wright, Corbusier, Rilke, Auden, Eliot are but a few of the many eclectic, diverse, and inspirational individuals in my book of heroes.

5. Do you consider the experience of 'the viewer' when developing/creating/presenting your work?

The viewer as 'witness' is an important part of the artwork as the viewer, by seeing the art object, brings it into existence. The viewer is present as the third entity in a triangle formed by the artist, the artwork, and the viewer. It is a relationship that

invites access, but at the same times allows distance and space to create a place in which to consider, commune, question, appreciate, and ultimately understand.

6. How important are the concepts of time and labor in the creation of your work?

In my particular practice time taken to read, to think, to listen, especially to music, ambient sound, or noise, are as important and time consuming as the galvanized action of turning those feelings, responses, and visions into concrete form. The actual painting may take five minutes, an hour, a day, a week, a month and then more time agonizing, and re-evaluating. Time becomes be open-ended, and labour intense, whether it is in bursts or balanced and prolonged.

7. How important is the title and/or artist statement for your work?

The title, and especially the artist statement, are both essential extensions of the work. They act as a bridge between the artwork and the viewer that facilitates access to the work, aids in demystifying the imagery, and offers a link to the ideas, theories, and rationale espoused by the artist, thus establishing the means for a visual dialogue.

8. Does your birthplace; personal history and memory (of these) play a significant role in what you create?

To a certain extent: yes. How I respond to the world, its scenery, sounds, colours, and shapes has been defined by who I am. I am the product of my upbringing; cultural heritage, and parental influences including their memories and backgrounds which have informed my own development and directed aspects of my own experience. As an only child who lived in her books and had imaginary friends to commune with I have lived a split life of fantasy and reality. I enjoy my own company, I relish silence as well as sound, and solitude has never been a lonely place as I live in my mind a lot! All these aspects have shaped my life and who I am, and thus have directed and informed my art practice.

9. (To potentially elaborate on question 8) Where does the concept of collective memory (a collection of individual, personal memories relating to a singular event that affected many people) sit within your studio practice?

My father served in New Guinea during World WarII. His stories of the New Guinea people, his “Fuzzy Wuzzy” angels, his descriptions of the countryside, the rain, the heat, the bursts of colour in flowers and parrots were part of my childhood. He spoke little about the Japanese soldiers who infiltrated the camp, the violent and horrifying death of friends, of holding his mate Jack’s stomach together while screaming for help. These stories were told in small grabs of history usually on Anzac Day. They all

form part of my memory bank and underpin solemn moments that produce paintings in Payne's Grey that are also responses to music such as Faure's Requiem

10. When exhibiting, does the work itself sustain and translate your intentions, or do you also rely on the environment/space the work is presented in?

The work has to stand alone and tell its story regardless of setting, however, that story, and the physical entity of the painting can be enhanced by the ambience of the exhibition space, the lighting design, and the work's placement within the exhibition context as a whole.

11. Do you consider the location of an artwork important to its affecting qualities?

The affecting qualities of an artwork can be refined and defined by the location as this can add focus to the subject and encourage a greater attention and engagement from the viewer.

12. Regarding artwork about location-based memory (memories relating to something that happened in a particular place) or artwork specifically made to memorialize an event, do you believe it is more effective in a permanent, geographically relevant location or as an artwork that can travel (be presented in various locations)?

Although an artwork may be about location-based memory, there should be something universal about it that speaks of the location but in perhaps abstract or symbolic terms that are about feelings, responses, historical knowledge and a need to make those feelings available to a broader community. Ideally, the work should travel to different venues allowing as many people as possible to connect with it and the message that it is carrying, It could then, perhaps, be situated in a specifically designated place (but not necessarily in the geographically relevant location) to become a permanent memorial.

13. What do you feel is the purpose of memorializing events of the past?

In commenting on this I cannot help but reference two phrases: 'Lest we forget' and 'we shall remember them'. While these words are associated with ceremonies pertaining to events in the First and Second World Wars, they have relevance to all wars and catastrophic events where human life has been sacrificed, human values brutalized, and the price paid for peace has been very high. Those who died were warm flesh and blood human beings, mothers, fathers, and children, many whose only "crime" was being born into a particular culture. Memorializing is not glorifying but acknowledging and respecting existence. Not necessarily dwelling on the circumstances but remembering the context, and honouring the human sacrifice because that is all part of our collective burden of memory.

14. Do you feel as though the role of memorialization has changed/is changing?

The role of memorialization is evolving. As events in history become more distant and those who experienced them first hand are aging and dying we are left with documented history, biographies, art, and poetry that tell stories of horror, bravery, mateship, loyalty, even humour. While the faces in photographs are real enough it is what they symbolize: courage, forbearance, patriotism, and human sacrifice that is being honoured, respected, and remembered. It is why there are capacity crowds at ANZAC Day services and new generations are learning something about their precious legacy.

15. What do you think of when reading the term "war art?"

I think of Goya's "The Third of May, 1808", I think of the Australian war artists Ivor Hele, Rick Amor, Wendy Sharpe. I think of George Lambert's "Charge of the Light Horse at Beersheba, 1917", I think of the often unnamed artists who created sculptures for war memorials and cemeteries throughout the world. Drama and pathos captured for eternity.

16. What do you consider the purpose of art that relates to/documents war?

"War art" offers a pictorial record; it documents events, but can also be a vehicle of propaganda as well as flattering individuals and 'show pony' generals, for example: Napoleon, Macarthur, and Patton. It can depict the horrors of war, (such as in Goya's "Third of May, 1808") and genuine bravery, but it can also sentimentalize circumstances. Art that relates to war tells a story about events and also their effects on society. It often puts a human face on bravery and courage under fire. It can be used as propaganda to bolster the morale of those back home. It is a visual history, a record of what happened sometimes translated through the filter of the individual artist. It shows the lives of men and women coping under extreme circumstances. It tells us (the public, the community, those at home and removed from imminent danger) about history as it happened.

17. What do you consider to be the role of art in the representation of the Holocaust?

It is about remembrance. It is about creating something symbolic that acknowledges human suffering, and the corruption of basic humanity, It is about putting this symbol, this creative statement in front of the public to ensure that the Shoah, the Holocaust, will not pass into history as a shocking event of the past, but that this atrocity committed by human beings against other human beings must never be forgotten. It also acknowledges that this degradation of the human spirit is possible and we, as survivors, must make sure it never happens again. It may also relate to guilt and blame, but likely emotions are still too raw for it to include forgiveness. It is about

believing in the potential of art to transform, or at least inform society. It should facilitate discussion

18. Do you feel as though only certain people should make artwork about the Holocaust and whatever your answer, why?

I feel that anyone who is driven to respond has a right to do so... because, sadly, our civilization owns the burnt sacrifice that was the Holocaust How we process the information about this event is personal. It may be shaped by conversations with parents, grandparents, or people we have met. It could be through documents, films, by visiting the sites of the gas infernos, by seeing memorials in cemeteries. The motivation may also be driven by an awareness of the corruption and death of humanity. If a person, as an artist, is so moved to want to create a statement about their response to what happened, no matter how distant the event, whether in time or geography, then that work, and perhaps any dialogue exchanged during its creation, becomes an act of "re-memorializing." It informs and becomes a catalyst for discussion, and thus a further means of ensuring remembrance. Whatever the reason for the reaction that can be translated into an artwork, it becomes a valid way of informing, and sharing thoughts and feelings with ordinary people.

19. What would you consider the most important considerations an artist should make when creating work about the Holocaust?

Be mindful of the broader picture: be aware of the events of history: the political context, the Nazi regime and the ability of one maniac to sway the opinions of a cohort of acolytes. To tread carefully in the interpretation of history, being always aware of the human factor, and the loss of identity. The creation of an artwork should respectfully communicate a message about suffering, sacrifice, corruption of power, and a sense of healing through knowledge, justice, hope, and redemption. Whether the imagery is stark and brutalized or subtly symbolic, it should evoke a way of remembering with dignity and sorrow. It is about remembering the lives and deaths of millions of individuals. It could be a dramatic, searing indictment, or a more subtle image of peace. Either way it is about making people aware, shaking complacency, and creating an aura in which memory and remembrance link the past, the present, and the future.

20. What do you consider the most problematic aspects of creating work about broad reaching/affecting trauma, memory and/or history (such as the Holocaust)?

Trying to assimilate cold harsh facts with the passionate drive to make people stop, listen, and think about the relevance of the past to the future. Trying to be objective in the face of shattering truths and trying to avoid being overly emotional. Trying to keep a little of me/you aside as a means of dealing with the day to day duties in the

process of the art making. Trying to balance a sense of guilt and blame and a lack of forgiveness with solemn respect and awareness of the depths of trauma. Juggling emotional fallout with a sense of empathy, and trying to understand or relate in some way to the horror that is not a personally lived experience. Explaining to viewers/audience/interested parties why the translation of my/your response to historical narratives, documentaries, biographies, survivor interviews, is important and significant and relevant in contemporary art practice.

21. What do you consider the most effective way/s for art to represent traumatic/tragic/horrific events, memories and experience?

I find that I am more moved by subtle, even simple imagery, whether in two or three dimensional form. A stark simplicity can be more graphic, more evocative than a dramatic, even ghoulish rendering of reality. For me it is important for the work to allow space for me as a viewer to discover and assess my own reactions. As a viewer I bring my own bag of relevancies to the artwork: memories, recollections, associations. Sometimes it is important not to be aware of the artist, because there are times when the artist gets in the way of the artwork instead of allowing the artwork, the essence of their creativity, to speak for itself. This is also where carefully composed didactics can fill a gap by providing an almost detached resumé of the facts

22. Regarding work about memory, war and sensitive historical events; what artwork have you personally seen that affected you most and how did it achieve this?

Seeing Goya's "Third of May" in The Prado was a truly moving experience. It depicts horror, hopelessness, and resignation as well as courage and a tragic bravado and still remains a stunningly composed painting. Picasso's "Guernica" was another work with profound effect. The muted palette suggesting monotone photographs adds to the graphic impact. Both works reduced me to tears. They are arguably the most dramatic anti-war images one can see. As with aspects of the Shoah, they depict ordinary people thrust into extraordinary and horrific circumstances. War memorials also contain some stark and moving reminders of human sacrifice. In the Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris many of the sculptures honouring victims of the Holocaust have a timeless, symbolic simplicity. Their articulate starkness demands reverence and private moments in which to contemplate human vulnerability, inhuman acts of aggression, the lack of a voice of reason, and to remember and acknowledge the sacrifice of victims who had no voice at all. Some truly challenging and disturbing works seen include those by Anselm Kiefer, Georg Baselitz, and Gerhard Richter. Here German artists process the horrors of history having grown up in a post war Germany in which collective memory was also about collective guilt. Another artist is French born Christian Boltanski whose installations were seen at the George Pompidou, Sydney Biennales, and the Sydney Festival. They tend to deal with horror

by association. His photographs of children and his huge pile of discarded clothing, for example, leave much to the viewer's imagination

23. How would you explain the concept of 'aura' in relation to visual art?

The basic dictionary meaning of 'aura' as 'a distinctive feeling or quality generated by a person, object, or place' has been usurped by Walter Benjamin in his now rather dated, (1936) but also remarkably relevant essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" written during the Nazi Regime of 1933-45. Benjamin theorizes that 'the aura' refers to an original artwork authenticated by its presence in time and space and not diminished by reproduction through the use of film. The sense of 'aura' is further compromised by the more advanced methods of reproduction available today. In this context it is worth looking at Derrida's notion of "trace" and Baudrillard's treatise on "simulacra". While Benjamin's ideas may call into question concepts of authenticity and originality, and criticize the notion of the de-aestheticization of an artwork, it also suggests that the role of art changes as it reflects the society in which it is created, and therefore in our age of technology it cannot be unaffected by that technology. It is what Krzysztof Ziarek (Western Sydney University) has referred to as the "electronic mutability of art"

24. Do you believe that art has transcendental qualities that can profoundly affect viewers?

If by taking the meaning of 'transcendental' as being able to elevate beyond the mundane to a more spiritual plane, then, Yes, art can do this and it can have profound emotional, psychic, and spiritual rapport with the viewer.

25. (If you answered "yes" to question 24) Do you believe these transcendental qualities of an artwork can be dictated, manufactured and/or controlled by the maker?

To a certain extent, yes, but the viewer also plays a part through personal association with the object and/or imagery. 'Dictated', 'controlled', even 'manufactured' are coercive terms and smack of 'interpretive bullying'. The artist often cedes 'control' because, as the instrument of the creation, they have liberated an artwork to become an entity that acts as a conduit between the artist's concept and its reception by the viewer. It would be interesting to relate this to Kant's ideas about the transcendental as pertaining to 'knowledge independent of experience' and in turn relating this to Question 18 in this document.

26. What aspects/elements of an artwork are most important in making you truly emotionally affected (e.g. sound, video, violence, particular materials, scale etc.)?

The use of colour and form in a painting. For an artwork to be truly affecting for me I need the artist not to tell the whole story but leave room for me to negotiate the work and find something that draws me to it. In three-dimensional works such as small scale sculptures or ceramic pieces, the surface textures, the patina of surface, the shape of the object can draw me in to the work. Making me want to touch it, hold it, caress it is good!

27. How do you gauge the success of an artwork (either your own or others')?

It works for me when I can't get enough of it, continually wanting to re-visit it...look at it from different positions, in different lighting situations. If I purchase, or keep a work, it is because each time I look at it I discover something new. It seems to be self-replenishing and something that can be lived with for a long time.

28. Do you feel as though your work has changed, become more complex or focused over the course of your career?

Interestingly, my thought processes, my cogitations have become more complex, more convoluted with the result that the paintings have become simpler in composition, the imagery spare, more gestural.

29. What are you currently working on?

I am working on a series about absence. This came about through the death of friends. It explores abandonment, anger, resentment, and grief. To counter these emotionally charged pieces I am also working on paintings based on shadows in the garden.