CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE PAINTING

CLAIR JOY

GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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ABSTRACT

This thesis will look at the concept of contemporary landscape painting as well as examples of artists whose work could be described as landscape painting in a contemporary context. I will be using different models (both theoretical and artistic) from those associated with the history of landscape painting to look at what contemporary landscape painting might now be. My purpose is twofold: to argue that the concept of landscape has been redefined and as a result landscape painting has new ways of being thought about, and to establish a context for my own practice.

I look at the idea of space-time to investigate how it defines place and as a result redefines landscape painting in a contemporary context. As a way of doing this I look at montage and at maps/mapping, both as ideas and as ways of working. Differing approaches and mediums as 'producing' spaces, rather than an emphasis on depicted visual characteristics (of buildings or the rural for instance), is also discussed as a concept that relates to contemporary landscape painting. Paintings can have a diverse materiality that may embody and refer to our experience of place. Paintings may also engage the 'discursive site' of landscape, reflecting the questions and issues related to shifting conceptual understandings of 'landscape'.

I look at the work of three established artists that may be seen as establishing new contexts in which to see contemporary landscape paintings. These artists are Robert Smithson, Alighiero Boetti and Eugenio Dittborn. Examples of artists who connect with concepts of space-time as unexpected and unpredictable, or use the co-existence of different 'spaces' in their methods of making and in their subject matter, are described as contemporary landscape painters. I have selected the artists Julie Mehretu, Sarah Morris, Angela de la Cruz, Neil Jenney, Nigel Cooke and Keith Tyson.

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INTRODUCTION

This text takes as its primary concern the ways that changing ideas of space and time are intertwined with ideas about landscape. It applies some contemporary ideas about space-time to form a new definition of contemporary landscape painting. I look at a wide range of references in order to explore how landscape painting can be thought about differently in the present.

I am looking at possibilities for how landscape painting can be understood to invoke an inter-relatedness, a sense of productive unpredictability and/or the recognition and experiencing of multiple activities and approaches in relation to landscape. An inclusion of, and attention to, space-time brings the element of performance and agency to contemporary landscape paintings. Concepts of landscape have shifted alongside a general cultural move towards understandings that are oriented towards flexibility and mobility. A consideration of the move from the static to the mobile has taken place in philosophy and has influenced approaches to political agency not only in art but in spheres such as geography and urban planning. Credence has been given in new ways to the unpredictable; the effect of surprise and of chance conjunctions in re-thinking the ways that political change can happen. I am bringing a consideration of these shifts to an idea of landscape painting.

The impetus for this investigation has come about through looking at the work of contemporary artists, work that has made me think about landscape painting, and then relating that to my own work. The work of these artists does not necessarily have the imagery that has been associated with historical landscape painting (rural views or an emphasis on images of nature), but has other characteristics that currently define landscape painting. The artists that I have selected for this investigation are Sarah Morris, Julie Mehretu, Angela de la Cruz, Keith Tyson, Neil Jenney and Nigel Cooke.

The word landscape has many different possible meanings. It may mean the countryside, the rural part of our environment. It may also mean the images or representations related to the countryside or the rural part of our environment. Landscape in this sense is something we are able to see or touch or hear; it is related not only to what artists make but to what architects or planners make and construct. Landscape painting is often associated with the depiction of the more open space of the countryside and with depictions of the natural world. When the word landscape is used, these associations linger. However, landscape is now thought about in expanded terms and painting is no longer the first medium considered when thinking about landscape in contemporary art. Landscape is often thought about as an interaction or encounter with our environment rather than an image of it. Media that reflect and consist of time and movement are considered more appropriate than the medium (painting) historically associated with landscape (the genre of art). Landscape includes media such as video or film, if not an actual interaction. These media are thought to be better able to reflect the literal and conceptual time and space that constitutes the 'landscape', the environment we interact with.

Although painting is an old medium, it is affected by the developments of technology. Continuing changes in technology change our landscape, providing images of, or information about, things or places that cannot be seen with eyesight alone. Image-making as well as scientific technology has and does provide new ways of thinking about landscape. In addition, new types of images have also been developed as a result of the expansion of communication brought about by computers and the internet, radically changing concepts of distance, time and space as well as mobility, influencing and becoming part of the definition of landscape. Contemporary artists work with these new media and techniques to provide new images and new ways of thinking about the subject and this has an impact on painting as well.

Why would we want to think about landscape painting now? Is there something about painting that means it is able to bring different dimensions, other viewpoints to ideas about landscape? Do concepts of landscape open up new possibilities for painting? These are questions that are of interest to me. Environmental issues, nature, space, the rural and the urban are of concern and interest (and can be considered in relation to landscape), but these issues have mostly been discussed in other spheres such as architecture (and landscape architecture), urban planning, ecological initiatives and politics. They have been taken up in other forms of art making, such as land art and public art, which have been able to respond and participate in these other spheres in ways that have seemed more direct or appropriate. The implications that these landscape concerns might have, how new ways of thinking about them might *change* a form of representation – painting – associated with landscape is not tackled (if not dismissed as irrelevant).

In this text a number of key terms are used: in particular, time-space and verb. I am aiming to show that, because of the many and complex interpretations of the relationship between time and space, an idea of landscape as a verb has to be brought to any contemporary consideration of landscape painting. Concepts of time-space include and invoke the idea of landscape as verb through the characteristics of engagement, change, etc.

The changing relationship between concepts of space and time has a long history and current understandings are explored briefly here. In contemporary philosophical and geographical thought, space and time are not separate entities but interconnected and mutually defining. Configurations of space and time are unpredictable because they are always changing in ways that are difficult to anticipate. This unpredictable configuration is how the concept of 'place' is now understood. Because of the associations between ideas of landscape and place, I am proposing that landscape must also reflect these new understandings. I am looking at

some of the possibilities of how landscape painting can be understood to invoke an inter-relatedness, a sense of activity or unpredictability.

It is W.J.T. Mitchell, in the introduction to his book *Landscape and Power*, who introduces the idea and aims to change landscape from a noun (the static images of land and countryside that he equates with imperialist ambitions) to a verb. Landscape as a verb is the medium we are immersed in, our social climate, or environment that is always changing as circumstances are always changing in relation to each other.

> The aim…is to change 'landscape' from a noun to a verb. It asks that we think of landscape, not as an object to be seen or a text to be read, but as a process by which social and subjective identities are formed.[1]

Mitchell writes about landscape as an engagement with social and cultural milieux. An idea of landscape as verb, when thought about in relation to painting and brought to the practice of painting (although this is reversing the direction of thought that Mitchell initiates), destabilises what is accepted as painting's capabilities and connects painting with wide cultural concerns in different ways. This is the aim of this text, to take an idea of landscape as verb and to connect it with a practice (painting) that has not been associated with the processes and ongoing change that Mitchell calls for as 'landscape'.

It is not an investigation into nature, and the different issues and questions that arise when we think of nature, that I am considering directly here as landscape. I am investigating landscape as a way that artists think about, or include space-time, in their work and specifically work that can be related to painting. However, because developments in thought about space and its relationship to time have their foundations in science and scientific thought about nature, thinking about landscape in this way (as

space-time) does not exclude considerations of nature and the environment.

The word that landscape derives from originally refers to a measurement of space associated with the vernacular as much as a depiction of land.

> ...*landscape* was merely a vernacular or peasant term describing a cluster of small, temporary, crudely measured spaces which frequently changed hands and even changed in shape and size... It was a term current only in small villages. The aristocratic concept of space [ownership and control of land] was entirely different.[2]

This historical basis for the word landscape shows the long connection and interweaving between an idea of landscape and a concept of space. This early example of landscape as space is based on use, closer to contemporary ideas about space than ideas of abstract space that have predominated in other periods or in aesthetics. The spatial understanding of landscape (rural and urban) has been explored in different ways at different times.

A relationship with the countryside, from the perspective of how the English countryside and agricultural life has been portrayed in literature, has been written about by Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* (1973).[3] His analysis continues to be important in terms of how we conceive of 'the country' and its relationship to the urban centres that it is connected to. Williams was looking at how literature reflected the attitudes and understandings of the times through its changing portrayal of city and 'country' (creating a model for the interpretation of historical landscape images in painting as well). He hoped that, in looking closely at these examples, it would be possible to find new solutions to the political

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[1] W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 1.
[2] John Brinkerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984) p. 149.
[3] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus Ltd., 1973)

problems posed by the differences and inequalities between country and city. The way that this relationship was portrayed was of significance because it showed the other oppositions and divisions that country and city stood for – between different kinds of labour and their inequalities, for instance. Through his interpretation of literature, he articulated the inter-dependence of the economies of the city and the country in a way that made this relationship clearly political:

> The exploitation of man and of nature, which takes place in the country, is realized and concentrated in the city. But also, the profits of other kinds of exploitation – the accumulating wealth of the merchant, the lawyer, the court favorite – come to penetrate the city...[4]

The relationship between the 'country' and the city, in Williams' account, comes to stand for the exploitation of rural workers and the widespread repercussions of that exploitation including the accumulation of wealth in the city. While Williams was writing about English literature from 1600 onwards, his writing draws attention to the relationships that have developed between contemporary urban centres and what constitutes 'the countryside' now. The intertwining relationships between urban centres and countryside that Williams wrote about has been transposed onto a global stage rather than being defined by one country. In addition to the economic and political ties between city and country in Williams' account, the relationship between 'city' and 'country' reflects and expresses a wide range of other issues which still have relevance. The city

> ... in the eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries [is associated] with the mob and the masses, [in the] nineteenth and twentieth century [it is associated] with mobility and isolation.[5]

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[4] Ibid., p. 48.
[5] Ibid., p. 290.

Williams writes about the relationship between the country and the city as paradigmatic, as producing economic and political conditions as well as being a reflection of them.

Robert Smithson's site and non-site works have been seen in part as a relationship between urban centres and rural peripheries. He also explored the marginal nature of suburbia. His interest in the dialectical, contradictory character of the picturesque is related to his interest in the 'decentred centre' of the suburbs, marginal spaces of industrial/ post-industrial cities. His focus on ruins and 'degraded' material also relates to his view of the suburban, 'the horizontal' (rather than the vertical) associated with ruins and decay as well as the picturesque. The picturesque in Smithson's work has implications for a different approach to art through its relationship to his ideas about the use of peripheral context as well as the different, sometimes conflicting uses and interpretations of places and sites. Suburbia is often seen as a degraded or unrealised utopia, a forgotten dream of an idyllic combination of urban and rural. Suburbia was the type of site that Smithson could utilise in his work.

> Smithson, in 'A Sedimentation of Mind', urges the artist to seek out the desert, either literally or metaphorically: "The desert is less 'nature' than a concept, a place that swallows up boundaries." [6]

While the idea of suburbia is not developed as an independent concern, it is related to the idea/role of the picturesque which is a strand that runs through this text.

Henri Lefebvre, the French Marxist sociologist, writing in the 1970s, theorised social relations in terms of the urban. He saw the space of the city as productive of social relations and interactions. Lefebvre's analysis of space takes it away from associations it might have with countryside,

concentrating on an analysis of the urban, and writes about it as an active determining force of political and social life.

> A revolution that does not produce a new space has not realized its full potential...A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space.[7]

Lefebvre saw the spatial and the everyday as both all important and theoretically unaccounted for in a progressive understanding of social struggle, changing the way that 'place, location, locality, landscape, environment, home, city, region, territory, and geography' are conceptualised and experienced.[8] Lefebvre's work established in a new way the spatial factors determining social and political relationships, interpreting urban space as political and changing a consideration of space from the rural to the urban. More recently, geographers such as Edward Soja as well as Doreen Massey have also re-thought the political implications of space. Soja writes

> ...space in itself may be primordially given, but the organisation, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience.[9]

Importantly for this thesis, Massey argues that a truly political understanding of space must include time, must be space-time.

> It is this crucial characteristic of 'the spatial' [its juxtaposition, its happenstance arrangement-in-relation-to-each-other, of previously unconnected narratives/temporalities; its openness and its condition

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[6] Gary Shapiro, *Earthwards: Robert Smithson and Art after Babel* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995) p. 208.
[7] Henri Lefebvre, 'Plan of the Present Work' in *The Production of Space*, 1974, Donald Nicholson-Smith, trans. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991) p. 54.
[8] Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) p. 1.
[9] Ibid., pp. 79–80.

> of always being made] which constitutes it as one of the vital moments in the production of those dislocations which are necessary to the existence of the political (and indeed the temporal). [10]

The urban *is* a configuration of space-time, an engagement that cannot be entirely pre-determined. It is in this possibility of the unexpected that change and political openness is possible. Space-time is a product of politics and its 'production of space'.

When a consideration of space-time is called landscape, how do rural spaces, the urban or nature then figure in art that we call landscape? Is the use of imagery related to historical landscape significant in any way? Edward Soja, writing about the concept of Thirdspace, which he defined, says

> My objective in *Thirdspace* can be simply stated. It is to encourage you to think differently about the meanings and significance of space and those related concepts that compose and comprise the inherent *spatiality of human life*: place, location, locality, landscape, environment, home, city, region, territory, and geography.[11]

Maps and mapping have been associated with both the relationship between description and actions and with the development of a spatial understanding of socio-political relations. Frederic Jameson is associated with the conceptualisation of the spatial character of the postmodern. He uses the term 'cognitive mapping' from Kevin Lynch's book *The Image of the City*. However, he gives it his own interpretation, as the finding in visual form, a way of bringing together the 'here and now of immediate perception and the imaginative...sense of the city as an absent totality'.[12]

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[10] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London, Thousand Oaks, California, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005) p. 39.
[11] Op. cit., Soja, p. 1.
[12] Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991) p. 415.

He compares this idea of cognitive mapping to 'the *Imaginary* representation of the subject's relationship to his or her *Real* conditions of existence.'[13] 'Mapping' is used here as a spatial metaphor or model, like the city, for a conceptualising of the position that an individual occupies in the wider socio-political sphere. At the same time it acts as an image of the beliefs and aims held as a way of encountering and acting in relation to those socio-political conditions. Jameson himself writes that a map itself is not what he means by cognitive mapping, despite being an irresistible image. The way that Charles Harrison (in chapter one) describes the relationship between effect and effectiveness in landscape painting might be seen to operate in similar ways. Mapping is an idea that is explored in several ways in this text in relation to contemporary landscape painting.

As the countryside and the urban environment constantly shifts, so do our understandings of the context and history of those relationships. Perhaps it is possible to see the relationship between country and city in new ways, as particular spacio-temporal relations, and think of this as landscape. It is my assertion that new understandings of space-time and place now play a part in expectations of what landscape is and therefore what landscape painting might be. I have tackled the idea of contemporary landscape painting to develop concepts of painting to respond to the questions that landscape poses.

My own work brings together depicted spaces as well as different ways of working. My paintings often have more than one viewpoint, implying different positions and moments. They are also at a scale that involves physical engagement. The paintings bring together multiple simultaneous depictions of our environment as well as responding to what we experience around us.

A relationship to other places in a global world takes place at the same time as we experience our immediate environment. We are aware of other

[13] Ibid., p. 415. Jameson is using Althusser's description of ideology as a model.

places that are distant, but that are also connected. Tourist and leisure destinations are consumed at an ever-increasing rate. At the same time, immediate experience is influenced and changed by events that take place elsewhere, as well as global, political and economic policy.

I use imagery associated with stereotypical landscape such as postcards in conjunction and contrasted with imagery of the ephemerality and unpredictable movement of clouds and/or where the materiality of the paint and the brush marks are clearly visible. Other works use images of cities and create a fluctuating relationship between the image (which shows the lights and layout of the city) and the background or surface. In the works on paper, the surface is made-up of individual brushmarks that have a methodical but accumulated unpredictable quality that both alters and creates the image by leaving small areas of bare paper which represent the city lights. Because of their unfixed edges, these works have a different relationship with the physical space they are in and with the viewer. They occupy, in an apparent and active way, the same space as the viewer, their corners and edges curling in and drawing attention to their quite fragile but object-like character. The background in some of the larger oil paintings has a different role than would usually be expected, interacting with the city lights independently (or as a different space) rather than as confirming the image.

In 'Notes on the Index, Part 2' (1977), Rosalind Krauss compares what she defines as two different types of abstract painting.[14] She notes the increased prevalence of a type of painting that responds 'photographically' to the situation that it is installed within. She describes this 'photographic' relationship as one that, like photography, bears a direct indexical relationship to, or actual imprint of its subject. She contrasts this with the work of an artist like Ellsworth Kelly whose abstract work is made up of divisions and sections (of colour, of areas of paint within panels and of different panels) of internal relationships. More recently, painting that is

photographic in the way that she describes does not seem to be have the same kind of notable visibility. (Painting that is installation-based does have some resonances of this photographic model though in its relationship and reaction to the environment that it is in.) The way that she describes (in 1977) the divisions and displacements of Kelly's work has perhaps deliberate echoes in Stephen Melville's more recent writing about painting. Melville describes internal divisions and displacements as a fundamentally positive aspect of painting practice and reads them as being connectors, pointing to the relationships that painting has with its context and other practices – similar perhaps only to Krauss' description of the photographic, indexical nature of the paintings she describes in their reference to connection with the physical. However, I am suggesting that Melville's model of the spatio-temporal connectivity of painting practice is more closely related to the emphasis of this text than the photographic model based on direct correspondence proposed by Krauss.

None of the artists I have chosen to describe as landscape painters in chapter four have an overt relationship with photography (with the exception of Sarah Morris). However, I have chosen precursors to seeing their work as landscape painting that use photography in a very active way and as defining of their practice (Smithson), or as an element of their work, part of a practice that is not singular but made up a number of different mediums and approaches (Boetti and Dittborn). I believe that these artists' exploration and use of photography in their practices have made new experiences and models of landscape possible. I am exploring these practices here in relation to space-time and a 'real' that is social but they also allowed for, and allow, other new possibilities. Their practices made it possible for an interpretation of paintings, such as Stephen Melville's (which, as one aspect of his interpretation, sees painting as temporally connected, through division and displacement, with other mediums)

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[14] Rosalind Krauss, 'Notes on the Index, Part 2' in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1985) pp. 210–219.

> ...painting's primacy is itself limited; it knows as part of its condition, a part of its withdrawal, that it is an art of a medium among other arts or mediums. The moment of its primacy is thus also the moment of the primacy of the dispersion of the arts, a dispersion that we can also think of... as the coming into visibility of a system of the arts.[15]

to be seen in relation to Peter Osborne's consideration of the spatialisation of contemporary art.

> Attention to the architectural mediations of the field of contemporary art teaches that the network of relations between materialisations...*constructs* the 'space' of each work.[16]

In my own work I use photographic sources to try to build a picture of the world that is not visible to us but that we try to piece together for ourselves from the information (not necessarily visual) that is available to us. Often we do not know what remote places look like, either from experience or even from images. Images do not necessarily tell us what we are interested in and they do not usually tell us about the relationship between places. However, photographic images provide useful references. The materiality of my paintings, the paint itself, is a contrast to the remoteness or unknown-ness of the places that the images are of. The painted surface introduces the element of touch. Recent work brings together more than one urban photographic image. I am not attempting to present a unified image. Rather than being interchangeable, these works suggest connections between places, that a place is more than one place, that it is multiple. There is also a sense of unpredictability about how these images will digitally connect, and thus how they connect in other ways. They do not have a 'photographic' relationship to the conglomerate places

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[15] Stephen Melville, 'What was Postminimalism?' in Dana Arnold and Margaret Iverson eds., *Art and Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003) p.169.
[16] Peter Osborne, 'Where is the Work of Art?: Contemporary Art, Spatialisation and Urban Form' in Edward Wittaker and Alex Landrum eds., *Nonsite to Celebration Park: Essays on Art and the Politics of Space* (Bath Spa: Bath Spa University Press, 2007) p. 29.

depicted, as their connection to a real is not highlighted. They are shown together with paintings based on photographs that I took of the surface of water (in this group of paintings, the Thames), a 'real'. These paintings are details and show a dense amount of specific information, the light reflecting on the surface of the water varying from painting to painting with the time of day and the weather conditions. They show the changing opacity of the water and how much of what is below the surface is visible as well as the way that the movement of the water changes the surface. The surface of the painting and the surface of the water emphasise the idea of a connection and therefore not only are based on photographic images but operate more 'photographically'. Because of the scale of the paintings, attention is drawn to the physical interaction of the viewer as well as to the surface (of the painting and the water) and touch. They have a different scale of attention, much less of the look of stereotypical images than the city images where there is no direct experience of the city referred to. Rather than negating of each other, I hope that the 'clash' of these different approaches, brought together, is a spur to question or think differently about place, a positive attempt to think in painting in different ways about a multi-faceted subject. The complex spatiality of our experience is referred to through the jumps of scale and time in the different elements, paintings shown together that use images based on different sources (postcards, photographs) and which draw attention to their different material manifestations.

In this text, I have brought together different ways of approaching the idea of contemporary landscape painting as a way of exploring an area of interest to me and which informs my practice as an artist.

In chapter one, as a way of developing a context for this investigation, I have brought together writings that consider some different approaches to art making that relate to the interpretation of paintings and the subject of landscape. These writings range widely, beginning with Charles Harrison's discussion of Impressionist landscape paintings and how the material, physical character of these paintings, in conjunction with the images used,

can be utilised to define and understand the role of landscape differently. I touch on Erwin Panofsky's essay 'Perspective as Symbolic Form' as a way of drawing attention to the long history of changing representations and understandings of space in art. I also briefly look at some more contemporary writings (Norman Bryson and Yve-Alain Bois) that discuss ways that these representations may activate different interpretations. I end the chapter looking at the writing of Miwon Kwon and James Meyer, not on painting, but on site, as a more recent area of thought and art making that changes a consideration of landscape. Artists also have explored this interpretation of landscape both in work that physically and conceptually engages with their social milieu, and by making work in situ (urban and rural landscape). W.J.T. Mitchell points to this when he writes that he would like to change 'landscape' from a noun to a verb. Finally, I look at Stephen Melville's exploration of painting and the 'space' that is integral to it.

In chapter two I look at the concept of space-time that emerges in relation to, and superceding, ideas about space. I am suggesting that this these ideas are what define contemporary landscape and as a result contemporary landscape painting. Raymond Williams' analysis of English literature from the 1600s refers to the 'country'. He makes a connection between country and city and establishes a mutually defining political relationship between them. I also refer to Henri Lefebvre who initiated and established an analysis of 'space' that is as defining of political relationships as history. His analysis was integrally tied to a consideration of the urban, and centres on the political implications and the possibilities of urban space. I look at his writing briefly as well as the more recent writing of the contemporary geographer Doreen Massey who draws out the political implications of space-time in her book *for space*. As an extension of this discussion of space-time, I look briefly at a selection of writings on maps and mapping. Svetlana Alpers makes an art historical connection between painting and mapping in seventeen century northern Europe. I look at Michel de Certeau's discussion of *tours* and *itineraries* in the city and James Corner's writing on new concepts of maps and the

resulting maps used by urban planners. In addition, as another approach to space-time, I look at Eisenstein's approach to montage. I look at maps, mapping and montage as ways of approaching the interface between ideas about space-time, and how they might be made manifest as a source for art making.

In the first two chapters I have endeavoured to give a survey or backdrop of relevant ideas and texts to my subject. This backdrop is intended to give an overview of some of the arguments that I believe are relevant to the subject of contemporary landscape painting. Chapter one acknowledges the consideration of the spatial in painting from a historical perspective. In the second chapter this survey or backdrop gives an indication of the field of thinking that exists about spatio-temporal complexity that I believe contemporary landscape painting practices respond to. In both chapters, this has meant that there are sometimes contradictory or antagonistic positions presented together. This is the situation that painting is challenged by and responds to. These simultaneous outlooks and positions, as well as historical precedents, make up the context that the contemporary artist is in and reacts to, sometimes putting things together in ways that are not expected. These are materials that may be used to construct work. The presentation of a wide variety of positions or arguments, in a 'collage-like' way, is intended to find new routes through these sources, as a way of opening the subject up.

In chapter three, in order to look at the work of the contemporary artists I have selected, and to re-think landscape painting in relation to their work in the final chapter, I have decided to look at the work of three artistic precursors. I have selected artists that are not painters: Robert Smithson, Alighiero e Boetti and Eugenio Dittborn are art historical figures that I have used as a foil, a way of establishing new approaches, against which to consider the work of the contemporary artists. Smithson, Boetti and Dittborn have destabilised established ways of approaching art and their approaches and modes of working can be seen as different to painting but illuminating and opening up new possibilities for the contemporary artists

discussed here. Each of these 'earlier' artists, working at different time scales and in different contexts, approached their work from different perspectives and in different ways. They used processes of dismantling (physically and conceptually) and reassembling in unexpected ways to make their work. Their work may be seen to have productive roots for approaches that are configured in a new context by the contemporary artists. These connections are not meant to be seen predominantly as historical, but are meant to be seen in terms of the ideas that are put forward and their particular material manifestations.

I have taken these artists as precursors because they are not initially thought of as painters and so offer different challenges and possible rewards when thinking about their practices in relation to painting. A painter such as Jackson Pollock may seem to be a more obvious or suitable choice because of the spatio-temporal relationship between artist and the canvas which determines the method of making and the character of his paintings – the painting being a trace of this spatio-temporal relationship. However, in selecting precursors, I have restricted myself to artists whose work uses a multiplicity of mediums as a development/reflection of their spatial character (although, in common with Jackson Pollock, they also have an awareness of the body being enmeshed within a consideration of the spatio-temporal). Who, in addition, are part of, or can be seen in relation to, the conceptually performative practices of the 1960s and 70s. These practices have had profound effects, influencing approaches to art as well as providing new models for experience but painting has often been seen to be outside of these influences. As a result, Jackson Pollock, an influential and relevant artist to the subject of landscape painting has not been discussed in any depth here (although would be a valuable addition in further developments of this text). Likewise, the possibility of discussing abstract painting in relation to and *as* landscape painting has not been developed. This is in part related to the fact that phenomenology has not been highlighted, given a central position in this text as determining and defining landscape painting, although the role of the body in producing the spatio-temporal relations

discussed is a bedrock, an assumed given, to my investigations. I hope that this is apparent in my discussion of the urban and the everyday as an integral part of/ in relation to landscape painting.

Phenomenology offers a way of approaching the experiential relationship to time and space that understands it at one level as an outcome of the body's interaction with and inhabitation of the environment and place that it engages with. While a bodily relationship to the visible, physical environment is an extremely important part of a spatio-temporal consideration of landscape, I have concentrated on an approach that is more about a landscape understood as processes and events made up of different concepts, different materialisations, different perspectives colliding and intertwining. This approach or emphasis has the possibility of jolting a different reaction into recognition, one that is experienced by specific individuals (as concentrated on in phenomenology) but oriented to a collective and social understanding.

In chapter four I look at the work of artists that I have defined as contemporary landscape painters and that I consider to be part of the context that I myself am working in. The contemporary artists discussed in this text approach their work in very different ways and would not necessarily see their work as related to each other or necessarily even connected directly to an idea of landscape. I have attempted to show their varying approaches as some of the different ways that landscape could be rethought in relation to painting. I have also selected these works because they present exciting possibilities in relation to the questions that are asked in this text about what landscape painting might now be. Julie Mehretu's work overlays drawings of particular architectural structures from different places in the world. She brings different global locations together as a spatial layering. Sarah Morris' practice extends between mediums, painting and film, to make uneasy conjunctions of urban imagery. Angela de la Cruz's works operate as both painting and sculpture (3-dimensionality), interacting with the spaces they are located in and emphasising the physical relationship they (and viewers) have to each

other and to these locations. Keith Tyson has developed a system by which he is able to make work based on unpredictable instructions formulated by what he terms the Art Machine. Neil Jenney's work uses traditional landscape imagery, painted in a cartoony style and animated by their individual painted titles. Nigel Cooke also uses imagery associated with traditional landscape painting but so alters the scales and identities of different elements of the painting that the resulting disorientation evokes an anxiety about the environment. All these artists play with the 'conventions' that are associated with landscape painting (perspective, nature, the rural, the urban) in their construction of new kinds of landscape paintings.

While I have referred to a wide range of sources and ways of thinking about landscape, there are some themes that have been indicated but not developed. I have not, as mentioned earlier, gone into the role of phenomenology, or the relationship between landscape painting and abstraction. Another approach to presenting contemporary landscape painters would bring together painters that used or saw imagery associated with landscape in new ways (as I have done in this text) alongside painters that have abandoned the image altogether (and are seen as landscape painters). When and if I took this approach, Jackson Pollock would be an inclusion. Looking at concepts of nature in relation to contemporary landscape painting is an area of interest that has not yet been developed by me. Neither have I looked at romantic or sublime landscapes. In my attention to the agency of the spatio-temporal character of landscape, it is the themes of multiple temporalities, approaches and positions that has been a consistent focus running through this text, as is the attention to the relationship between places/sites. I have concentrated on landscape as encompassing a diversity of material, experiential and conceptual perspectives.

I bring all these approaches and views together in order to articulate a contemporary 'field' of landscape painting. It is my assertion that the new understandings of space-time and place, which play a part in expectations

of what landscape can be, can be seen to show contemporary paintings involved with space, place, scale, juxtaposition, in a light whereby they contribute to these ongoing debates.

CHAPTER 1
PAINTING MODELS

Why look at landscape painting? Landscape is a genre that connects with or addresses issues of space and place, and space and place are areas of intense conceptual interest in contemporary discourse. This chapter looks at some of the recent literature that discusses painting and landscape in ways that can be applied to new ideas about landscape painting. Architects, planners and artists using photography, film and sculpture have all worked with ideas about landscape. Is there a way that contemporary landscape painting can now reflect on contemporary ideas of landscape in all their complexity? Do different ways of understanding landscape, or what landscape might be, allow for new approaches to making and thinking about painting?

I will be looking at several perspectives on art making, three specifically about painting, written within the last twenty years, by Charles Harrison, Norman Bryson and Stephen Melville. James Meyer and Miwon Kwon re-evaluate site-specificity, both writing about a related model from compatible but different perspectives. These models can be used in a consideration of contemporary landscape painting. Together they give an overview of the field of landscape as it might be applied or seen in relation to painting. Charles Harrison's essay 'The Effects of Landscape' (in W.J.T. Mitchell's book *Landscape and Power*) looks at the interface between Impressionism and Modernism and the implications as well as the questions that arise for landscape painting.[1] Norman Bryson, in his essay 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation', although not discussing landscape painting specifically, approaches painting from a semiological viewpoint, looking at painting practice that sees itself as mimetically oriented and

[1] Charles Harrison, 'The Effects of Landscape' in W.J.T. Mitchell ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) pp. 203–239.

painting that sees itself as language-based.[2] In their essays 'The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity' and 'One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity', James Meyer and Miwon Kwon re-evaluate the site-specific work which emerged as performance-based practices and Land Art in the 1960s and 70s – work that was particularly seen in opposition to Modernist painting.[3] Much of the work that they discuss responded directly to specific sites, questioning the relevance/efficacy of representations (and by implication representations of place and land as manifested in landscape painting). Stephen Melville in his essay 'As Painting', in a new context, considers the self-reflexive space that painting opens up and the implications of painting's surface in ways that may be applied to this consideration of contemporary landscape painting.[4]

PAINTING AS TEXT

Perspective as Symbolic Form

In 1925 the art historian Erwin Panofsky, in his essay 'Perspective as Symbolic Form' laid out the iconographic approach to the interpretation of painting, sculpture and architecture.[5] Rather than seeing images as having specific unchanging meanings, such as a lamb representing God in religious paintings, Panofsky developed a way of interpreting representations that were specific to the understandings that were prevalent at a certain time and in a certain place.

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[2] Norman Bryson, 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation' in Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, Keith Moxley eds. *Visual Theory: painting and interpretation* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991)

[3] James Meyer, 'The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity' in Erika Suderburg ed., *Space Site Intervention: Situating Installation Art* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) and Miwon Kwon, 'One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity' in Erika Suderburg ed., *Space Site Intervention: Situating Installation Art* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)

[4] Sephen Melville, 'Counting/As/Painting' in *As Painting: Division and Displacement* (Columbus, Ohio: Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University/Cambridge Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 2001)

[5] Erwin Panofsky, 'Perspective as Symbolic Form', 1927, trans. Christopher S. Wood, (New York: Zone Books, 1991) [originally published as 'Die Perspektive als "Symbolische Form"' in the Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1924–25 (Leipzig & Berlin, 1927) pp. 258–330.]

> [T]he iconographic [iconological] approach consciously sought to conceptualise pictures as encoded texts to be deciphered by those cognisant of the culture in which they were produced.[6]

In particular, the way that *space* was represented in different ways at different times could be seen through the iconographic [iconological] approach. Panofsky directed his attention to the system of perspective but opened up the idea that space is represented differently at different historical moments and in different cultures, having both specific and latent meanings that 'symbolise' attitudes towards representations as well as everyday experiences at a particular place and time. I am interested in how ideas about space are made manifest in painting and how, as our understandings of space change, it connects with and /or changes ideas of landscape painting.

The iconographic approach to painting has since been prevalent. The art historian Michael Baxandall has more recently also written about how works of art, paintings (as well as sculptures or poems), tell us something about the world, the culture, they were made within.[7] Writing about fifteenth century Italy (in ways that can be utilised when thinking about current art practices), he suggests that the form of paintings made at that time were determined by the way their audience was able to recognise meaning based on experience outside the painting. He makes a connection between the 'style' of paintings and social history, the 'style' of painting reflecting the circumstances in which they are made. He suggests that common forms of knowledge and competencies in daily life were employed by the audience to interact with the painting (or sculpture, etc.) and this was a demand that was made of artworks.[8] Panofsky and

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[6] Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels eds., *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) p. 2.

[7] Michael Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth century Italy: a primer in the social history of pictorial style* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972)

[8] Baxandall is writing about a period when commissions and patronage determined the production of artworks, having a major influence on the work. Similar demands can be made of the production of artworks now. Although patrons and collectors do not for the most part now commission works with specific subject matter, a collector's taste may be

Baxandall make the argument for a particular way of looking at artworks. They show the opportunities for the artist to draw on the milieu that he /she is working in and for the intended viewer to be a participant both latently in the mind of the artist and actively in bringing their time /place-specific interpretations to the work of art. The painter

> ...is likely to use those skills his society esteems highly. The painter responds to this; his public's visual capacity must be his medium. Whatever his own specialized professional skills, he is himself a member of the society he works for and shares its visual experience and habit.[9]

Both Panofsky and Baxandall point to the reading of works of art as being historically specific and part of a network of understandings and demands shared by the artist and his/her milieu.[10] They accentuate the visual capacities (although not exclusively) of the work of art's audience, while contemporary painting may have more unpredictable outcomes, and make more obvious connections between visual and conceptual capacities. However, do the ways that Panofsky and Baxandall developed for looking at historical works of art help us when considering contemporary works? Panofsky set an important historical precedent for considering depicted space as a reflection of the time the work was made (although not necessarily fully recognised at the time). This text looks at how contemporary landscape painting that has a spatio-temporal emphasis is the product of /reflects the current moment.

Semiology and Visual Interpretation

Norman Bryson writes about contemporary painting practice, taking a semiological position in relation to painting (Panofsky and Baxandall can

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influential in terms of work that is made and exhibited, as are the prevalent interests that circulate within an artistic community.

[9] Op. cit. Baxandall, p. 40.

[10] This might also apply to the shifts that are made in works of art that seem new, ahead of their time. These 'unpredictable' changes might also be a product of their time.

also be seen to do this in relation to historical painting), describing painting as a system, a flow of signs. He writes that

> ...[t]he semiological perspective questions [the] mimetic model by giving emphasis to the term sign rather than perception.[11]

Seeing the idea (that comes from art historical interpretation) of painting as a system of signs with shared meanings, gives the artist the opportunity to use (consciously and unconsciously) these shared meanings. It changes the perception, the isolated subjective expression of the artist to a reflection of attitudes and competencies in the larger social sphere (with individual possibilities and nuances). Lessening the idea of the role of the artist's interpretation of their observation of the visible and invisible world for instance, it emphasises the artist's use of the meanings shared by artist and audience, the social. Not necessarily a rejection of a relationship with the 'real', the phenomenological could also be seen in terms of a shared meaning. The artist's exploration or interpretation of the visible, non-visible, social world is seen as dependant on shared competencies, influencing both the maker and relying on the viewer's abilities to interpret, using the tools available at the time, to bring meaning to the work. Methods of using materials may equally be understood to have the time and culture-specific meanings that images do. A sign, in relation to painting, is not an image on its own or a particular material but a particular configuration of the two. Cézanne's building up of an image of the world using extremely concentrated fragments of colour can be seen to reflect scientific research and to draw on changing understandings of the world in more abstract, philosophical terms.

A semiotic approach sees the viewer as an active part of the process of making the work. The work of art is attached to its social milieu through its conversation with other images, other works made at the time, current concerns and knowledge as well as activities that are engaged in. At the

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[11] Op cit., Bryson, 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation', p. 62.

same time, there is the possibility that the work of art can be understood as changing with the audience rather than fixed in interpretation. Bryson proposes an understanding of contemporary painting that echoes Baxandall's description of historical works of art.

> It is, rather, an ability which presupposes competence within the social, that is, socially constructed, codes of recognition.[12]

Recognition connects individuals in a group with common references. This is different from a commonly held image of the landscape painter. An image of the painter, *en plein air*, in a direct personal and unique relationship with the landscape is a powerful image of the activity, if a cliché. Although we do think of highly influential artists like Cézanne and Van Gogh as working in isolation and without consideration of their peers, they may have been responding to influences as yet unformulated in a formal way in their social milieu. Cézanne is considered to have been 'ahead of his time'. However he may have been responding to influences that later become recognised as emergent currents in art as well as new scientific understandings. Paintings are part of a continuous interchange (recognitions as well as misrecognitions) between images and meanings.

Bryson ends his essay by suggesting that the work of art both reflects the historical moment of its making but also works in

> the development of cultural attitudes and therefore as an agent of cultural change...[13]

giving painting an active role, not just reflecting external influences but participating in and also potentially exceeding the particular moment of its making. This is the emphasis of contemporary landscape painting. There is the potential for artists to bring meanings together in unpredictable

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[12] Ibid., p. 65.
[13] Ibid., p.72.

ways, producing new readings, based on competencies (latent as well as acknowledged) and knowledge shared with their audience.

Painting as Model

The contemporary critic and art historian Yve-Alain Bois also writes about semiotic 'models of painting', concentrating on the material qualities of paint that may also be understood and theorised as expressing debates and positions.[14] Bois looks at abstract paintings made in the 1940s, 50s and 60s, developing the perceptive model, the technical model, the symbolic model and the strategic model to interpret these works. The models are not based on imagery but on different relations between figure and ground, gesture and areas of paint, layers of paint, the vertical or horizontal plane that the canvas refers to and the strategic use of contemporary debate. All of which have different theoretical and philosophical implications.

> There is...the formulation of a question raised by the work of art within a historically determined framework, and the search for a theoretical model to which one might compare the work's operations and with which one might engage with them.[15]

Bois is arguing for the possibility of paintings being understood as theoretical propositions. He is arguing for a visual, painterly posing of theoretical propositions, giving painting an active role through the interpretation of their material qualities and manifestation. Their physical makeup can be read, as have meanings, in ways particular to the times in which they were made. Not that paintings are illustrations of theory but, that in their engagement with the material character of painting, they open up questions for the viewer to react and respond to. For example, Bois writes about Barnett Newman's work

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[14] Yve-Alain Bois, 'Painting as Model' in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990)
[15] Ibid., p. 245.

> ...what matters is Newman's constant dictum that if it is the meaning of his art that is his essential concern, this meaning does not lie in anything prior to its embodiment in a painting.[16]...
> Like all previous paintings by Newman, *Onement I* is concerned with the myth of origin, but for the first time this myth is told in the present tense. And this present tense is not that of the historical narrative, but an attempt to address the spectator directly, immediately, as an 'I' to a 'You', and not with the distance of the third person that is characteristic of fiction. It is thus that *Onement I* fulfills the goal Newman set for his works, that of giving a 'sense of place' to its beholder.[17]

THE EFFECTS OF LANDSCAPE

The relationship between French Impressionism and Modernism, is the impetus for introducing the concepts of effect and effectiveness in landscape painting by Charles Harrison. He writes

> It is the contention of this essay that inquiry into landscape as a modern genre helps to locate the dialectic between 'effect' and 'effectiveness, not only to the etiology of Modernism, but also as pertinent to the formations of the Postmodern.[18]

Effect and effectiveness are ways of thinking about what paintings can *do* and Harrison suggests that questions about effect and effectiveness emerge from the relationship between painterly technique and the depiction of deep space in Impressionist landscape painting. In Impressionist painting this relationship was different from other, earlier (associated with English), landscape paintings where the depiction of open space, was visually in the background.

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[16] Ibid., p. 190.
[17] Ibid., p. 193.
[18] Op. cit., Harrison, 'The Effects of Landscape', p. 211.

Harrison discusses the relationship and contrast between materials and image in Impressionist paintings. It is in a different relationship between the effects of the paint and what is depicted, originating with Impressionism, that Harrison suggests that 18th century readings, such as those of Gainsborough, were disrupted and as a result there was a new potential for landscape painting. Harrison proposes that in the lessening of the role of depiction, or image, and the deep space associated with perspectival views (a moving away from the 'effectiveness' or clarity of imagery of landscape pictures), there is at the same time an increased possibility of a critical position taking place. This is not the abandonment of the imagery of landscape but a problematisation of the relationship between the method of painting and the image, making the 'space' of the painting active in a way that asks questions. Potential is found in the problematisation of the imagery; the material manifestation of a painting could be in dialogue with the image, could question the image in new ways. Harrison's discussion of Impressionist painting shows the painting-specific potential for a disruptive edginess in the relationship between ways of making, the material qualities of painting and imagery. He implies that this disruptive edginess can be seen to allude to the difficult and unseen machinations of 'real relations', political realities that are not necessarily apparent in the image alone. While the intention in Impressionist landscape paintings may be a celebratory use of material, this material character can both be interpreted differently and used effectively. Harrison gives an overt political reading to the material manifestation of image that he argues can be seen to develop from Impressionist landscape painting.

If we apply Harrison's proposition to concrete examples, in Monet's paintings of Giverney (*The Japanese Bridge*, c. 1923–25, for example), the materiality of the paint questions the apparent simple naturalness of what is portrayed, almost overpowering or overwhelming the image. It occupies the same space as we do. The physicality of the paint has a direct sensory relationship with the viewer and implies a related relationship with the

Claude Monet, *The Japanese Bridge*, 1899, Oil on canvas, 89.2 x 93.3 cm.
Philadelphia Museum of Art.

landscape. The landscape is an intimate, cultivated garden in these works. It implies a relationship that was oriented to pleasure through this intimacy and the implied activities that would take place here. However, the effect can be slightly overwhelming, there is an uneasiness in the way that the paint overtakes, is excessive, a perhaps unacknowledged ambivalence about the creation of these private idyllic havens. The 'real relations' that paintings like this symbolised are ones that result in and reflect a bourgeois enjoyment of outdoor leisure in parks and gardens. Harrison suggests that the paintings allude to a latent unease about how this leisure is created and the effects that it has.

Gardens and landscaping can be seen as informing an interpretation of Impressionist paintings.

> Private gardens, meanwhile, rapidly acquired a new imagery, which mirrored even as it also sanctioned new bourgeois values....The prime value expressed by these new private gardens was ownership...as well as a desire for privacy and security....These ambitions of the nineteenth-century private garden are perhaps given their most eloquent expression in Impressionist paintings, which show gardens designed to allow all members of a family to congregate, but also with local spots where some solitariness was possible. These private gardens were spaces where, hidden from full public scrutiny, the newly privileged could indulge their wishes and fantasies. To fence off and set apart some space of land as a garden constitutes not only a third nature, but a world where the owner may see him /herself as partaking in tradition, now reinvented for consumption [fantasy?] by either one single person or by a very small group.[19]

[19] John Dixon Hunt, 'The Garden as Cultural Object' in *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1991) p. 29.

Harrison's formulation of the effect and effectiveness of Impressionist landscape painting gives us some scope to develop an idea of what contemporary landscape painting might be able to do based on an analysis of the material effects of the paint and its determining of, and relationship with, the space depicted. His reading gives an imperative to finding new meanings and metaphors in the qualities of paint, and the surface created by its application. But

> [t]o inquire adequately into the powers of landscape painting, we will need to explore and to re-examine critically the kinds of metaphors for which the genre has historically given rise – among them metaphors of integration and dislocation, of presence and absence.[20]

These discussions are precisely those that would emerge in a discussion of our changing perspectives of landscape in a wider sphere, such as Bron Szerszynski and John Urry's investigation of visual citizenship.

Visual Citizenship

An acknowledgment of competencies, as well as differences in competencies, in the recognition of particular landscape images is important, in addition to the re-evaluation of what constitutes landscape images. Recognition is not necessarily universal, as Szerszynski and Urry's recent research points out. Personal associations and familiarity with the particular characteristics of surroundings are a strong force in our interpretations of landscape. (These associations and familiarity have been manipulated of course and are most commonly thought of in relation to the rise of Nazism. Formation and re-iteration of identity through association with the land and images of the land can have nationalist and racist resonances and have been used for political ends.) There is a subtle but important difference between these personal associations and Szerszynski and Urry's research into the relationship between the visual

[20] Op cit. Harrison p. 231.

and citizenship. They describe a lack of uniformity in the formation of identity through association with the landscape characteristics of surroundings. Personal associations can be recognised as being historically specific and part of a network of understandings and demands, but they can also vary. Different lifestyles and different social and economic backgrounds can vary associations and interpretations. A recognition of these differences works against the possibility of galvanising nationalism and its utilisation. Landscape images understood as metaphors, as marketing, as nostalgia, as provocation can be used effectively to address an intended audience (and different magnitudes of audience).

Szerszynski and Urry write about contemporary citizenship:

> ...under conditions of globalisation and liquid mobility, citizens develop an increased visual, aesthetic literacy that enables them critically to decode the layers of meaning and intention within visual communications...people's visual sense is transformed, as they become able to recognise, compare and contrast the visual characteristics of different places. The language of landscape character is a language of mobility, whether physical, or imaginative or virtual. It is not just that such mobility is necessary if one is to develop the capacity to be visually literate or reflexive about landscape. It is also that landscape talk is itself an expression of the life-world of mobile groups, including the environmental characteristics of different places. To talk of the visual is, in part, a way of justifying why one has chosen to live in a particular place, or chosen not to leave, or why one has visited that particular place. But for those who have little or no sense of their own agency in such things, talk of landscape characteristics has limited social

> purchase. The development of visual citizenship thus creates new, complex dilemmas within societies of liquid mobility.[21]

This description acknowledges that there are many differences in 'visual citizenship', even for those within a limited geographical area. An awareness of landscape images (both rural and urban), a recognition of landscape, not only represents mobility but is an example of particular competencies. It is not only that landscape images are understood differently at one time than they are at another, but that different experience, knowledge and expectations make landscape available to people in different ways. There are real correspondences between this description of citizenship and the way that Michael Baxandall describes the relationship based on recognition and competencies that exists between a painting and its audience. However Szerszynski and Urry make the point that there is not necessarily a uniform complex of competencies that make landscape readable in the same way by everyone at one given time, that the audience is not just defined by historical moment. The question or challenge remains as to how painting is able to explore and 'to re-examine critically the kinds of metaphors for which the genre has historically given rise'. Landscape touches on complicated questions such as that of visual citizenship, nationalism, how the internet connects different parts of the world or only appears to, etc.

Harrison proposes that Impressionist landscape painting is a paradox; both its material nature and the depiction of space co-exist, but in a problematic way, and it is in this difficult relationship that there is potential for unexpected friction. The resulting new readings are created by the possibilities of a separation held in suspension, or, discontinuity between the two. He is proposing that the relationship between effect and effectiveness developed in Impressionist painting is potentially a painting-specific form of questioning. He is suggesting that the meanings that the

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[21] Bron Szerszynski & John Urry, 'Visual Citizenship' in cat. Cityscape><Landscapesymposium, Laurie Short ed. (Carlisle: Cumbria College of Art & Design, 2001) p115.

relationships within Impressionist painting have, relationships between surface and depth, material and image are metaphors for relationships outside the painting, they stand in for relationships in the world and make us think and act differently. These relationships include how our connection to the land, to nature, to the place that is depicted, to where we are, is structured by social, political and economic parameters. He is suggesting these relationships can be seen in unfamiliar ways, can be questioned or criticised in painting, and that the roots for this possibility lie in what might be considered one of the most unlikely (uncritical) periods of landscape painting. The material effects of painting have different possibilities than the ephemerality of the photographic image for instance (although photographs also may play with the relationships between surface detail and panoramic depth as in the work of Edward Burtynsky).

> Since it is only through labour that the signs of painting appear on canvas, painting is in itself a locus of mobility in the field of signification, a process which may be presented, by the conventions of the tradition, under the guise of static form, but which in the first place is work on and through material signs...[22]

We now encounter images that are produced (through technological means) where neither the viewer nor the image-maker has control over an understanding of how mathematical and technological information applied to visual data will determine and effect the final image. The immediacy and 'presentness' of the paint (as observed in Impressionist painting) holds different possibilities in relation to the image, including a reference to the actual bodily making of it, than some of the more technologically developed images that are part of our contemporary experience of 'landscape'.

Thomas Crow in his book *Modern Art in the Common Culture* also discusses the importance of the relationship of Impressionist painting to

Modernism.[23] Harrison and Crow, both normally critics and writers in the realm of contemporary art, are unusual in their rigorous theoretical consideration of Impressionism in relation to contemporary art practices. Crow describes it slightly differently, seeing the play of visual effects of Impressionism as emphasising a seamlessness with the subject matter of many of the paintings – the leisure activities (often taking place outdoors) of the emergent French middle class. The lack of horizon and the paint effects that seemingly continue past the edges of the painting are associated with spectacle. This play of visual effects, a sense of free play and choice, he argues can be seen to mirror the relationship to the commodity that was emerging at that time.

> The aesthetic itself became identified with habits of enjoyment and release produced quite concretely within the existing apparatus of commercial entertainment and tourism – even, and perhaps most of all, when art appeared entirely withdrawn into its own sphere, its own sensibility, its own medium.[24]

The viewer enjoyed in pictures of his/her surroundings and changing light, an image that could be associated with, be a reflection of the phenomena and mobility of his /her wider environment. The very apparent marks and areas of colour of the paintwork could be seen to reflect a private world of associations and aesthetic choice as well as the wide variety of individual choices that were presented and newly available to the consumer. The depicted landscape (sometimes constructed as in Monet's garden) could be seen in these terms.

This has a correspondence with the way that Harrison calls for the interpretation of the relationship between surface and depicted space. Harrison and Crow point to this relationship as having its root in 'real

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[22] Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd.,) pp. 170–171.
[23] Thomas Crow, 'Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts', in *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996)
[24] Ibid., p.13.

relations' outside of the painting. The economic and social times that the work was made is reflected in the fluctuating spatial relationship between material manifestation and image, surface and depth.

LANDSCAPE AS VERB

The word that landscape originally derives from refers to a measurement of space associated with the vernacular, and with use, as much as with a depiction of land. Understandings of space and place play a part in expectations of what landscape is now and therefore what landscape painting might become. Landscape's origin as an understanding of a type of space, related to use, is interesting in relation to a spatio-temporal consideration of contemporary landscape painting. Landscape has often meant 'countryside', associated with agricultural life and the natural world, as well as a place of leisure for city dwellers, the more open space of the countryside. It sometimes has nostalgic associations, such as a desire to return to an imagined simpler, more 'natural' life and times. As the countryside and the urban environment constantly shift in relation to each other, so our understandings of the implications of those relationships and landscape has come to mean many new things related to current changes. It might be a metaphor for relations within the socio-political sphere, using its implicit connections with the urban and the global. Or, an overlooked or small detail sometimes tells us something about the interrelation and interdependency between 'country' and city. (For instance, as in a non-painting example, there is evidence that bee numbers are dwindling and that this may in part be the result of mobile phone frequencies (used in high concentration in urban centres).) Continuing changes in technology change our landscape as well as becoming part of the definition of landscape. (New technology has recorded changes to the levels of water currents in the Atlantic Ocean initiating speculation about the continued influence of the Gulf Stream on Britain as the polar ice caps melt. Anticipation of a changing climate brought about by a lessening of the warming influence of the Gulf Stream, changes attitudes to the landscape as well as potentially changing the landscape itself.) The changes that

technology makes possible open up new concepts as well as physical and visual landscapes that provide a challenge for landscape painting.

Landscape and Power

When he selected the essays for *Landscape and Power*, the art historian W.J.T. Mitchell was one of the few contemporary art historians who had broached the subject of landscape in art after Kenneth Clark's *Landscape in Art*.[25] [26] Mitchell argued in his own essay 'Imperial Landscape' and the introduction to *Landscape and Power* that the genre of landscape should be seen as having a more political edge than had recently been acknowledged in an art context. Rather than pleasing images of the countryside he argued that landscape representations have been a reflection of the imperial ambitions of the countries where landscape painting has been developed. Seventeenth and eighteenth century landscape painting from the Netherlands and Britain are prime examples.[27] Mitchell claimed that the development of the genre, the way that paintings described and depicted landscape and space, emerged from an imperialist ambition to acquire land /space through exploration and subjugation. Therefore landscape painting was a form of art that was tied to a particularly oppressive history and has no justifiable potential in the present. Mitchell saw historical landscape representations as colluding with the imperialist aims of the political forces at play at the times that they were made in. This is in contrast to the way that Raymond Williams approached the subject. Williams saw landscape references in literature as illuminating, and was able to show the potential of (literary) representations and their analysis to find progressive ways forward in the quest to address inequality and suffering.[28] However, it is also certainly apparent, if we look at the number of portraits that include land as a backdrop and prop in eighteenth century English paintings that there is a strong connection between them and an appreciation of the value of

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[25] W.J.T. Mitchell ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
[26] Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art (London: John Murray, 1949).
[27] Op. cit., Mitchell, Introduction, *Landscape and Power*, p. 5.

ownership of land. An example of the kind of painting that Mitchell might be referring to would be Thomas Gainsborough's *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews* (c. 1748), the much cited image where the depicted landscape is presented by both the painter and 'the Andrews' for admiration and with pride.[29] The land is shown beautifully spreading back to the horizon, sheep grazing, wheat growing, crops and flocks managed and attended to by unseen workers. The owners' positioning and their expressions in the painting play the role of gesturing to the landscape. The painting makes the Andrews' position in the world palpable, not just because of the period depicted, the history of land ownership and the class system of the time, but it is made apparent in the way that the painting is constructed and made. (Gainsborough has made it so clear to see their attitude to the land /landscape that it is tempting to read an ambivalence in his depiction even though he played a part in the creation of images that reflected and advertised the lives of his well off patrons.)

Some ways of depicting space, such as views from above, prospects, are associated with actual or desired control and domination, as Mitchell implies. This interpretation continues today in relation to technology that allows aerial and satellite views. A situation of informational dominance is created and this technology is developed and used by economically powerful countries. As this information is usually used to advantage in military situations, it might be seen as a continuation of the imperial ambitions that Mitchell writes about. Does Mitchell's interpretation of landscape painting lose its ability to define the genre when 'imperial' ambitions may take place in a different way? That is, when economic occupation takes place without literally physically taking over new territory.[30] The aims of technology may diverge from 'landscape' to a greater degree in the present.

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[28] John Barrell, in *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, describes viewing Constable's paintings in ways comparable to Williams' complex literary interpretations.
[29] Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews*, c. 1748, Oil on canvas, 69.8 x 119.4 cm., National Gallery, London.
[30] Although the invasion of Iraq, for instance, can be seen as an attempt to acquire resources by taking control of physical space, economic dominance is probably the most common form of acquiring space. This often does not require literal occupation or

Capitalist exploitation (Williams' relationship between country and city and Mitchell's imperialism) has and does take place on a global scale but there is a growing realisation that alongside economic and political consequences, there are environmental ones. New imperatives to see nature (associated with 'countryside') differently or to have a different relationship to it are seen to be an extension of a questioning of capitalist exploitation. Williams maintained that while we are oriented to global urban centres, rural areas, areas of the world involved in agriculture for example still have importance, if not increasing importance. Are there ways of representing landscape that reflect these new relationships to nature? That might, for instance, look at the political and environmental repercussions of *these* power relations? Mitchell argued that the history of imperialism (although he concentrates on the acquisition of land) is still an inherent part of the concept of landscape and contemporary landscape representations. However, he is ultimately making this claim about landscape representations in order to make an argument for landscape as something other than representation.

In the introduction to *Landscape and Power*, Mitchell proposes *changing* 'landscape', from a noun to a verb. He suggests landscape works as cultural practice, it *does* something rather than it 'is' or 'means' something.[31] Mitchell means cultural practice as socially-based and evolving from /in interactions between people, institutions and shared spaces. He is proposing that this is a more active, more invested relationship than an accepting relationship to what he sees as the consolidated authority of self-contained objects such as paintings seen within an art historical context. He writes:

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acquisition of land – it is a different relationship to space. Rather than discovering and conquering new territories, wealthy countries can make financial arrangements or loans between themselves and developing countries and negotiate disadvantageous trade agreements. This is also a way of acquiring products that require space to be produced without actually physically occupying the space. It often creates an increased gap between production costs and the price that will be paid for produce or goods – a larger profit margin or space.

[31] Op. cit., Mitchell, p. 1.

Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr. and Mrs, Andrews*, 1727–1788, Oil on canvas, 69.8 x 119.4 cm. The National Gallery, London.

> ...landscape is a dynamic medium, in which we 'live and move and have our being'...landscape circulates as a medium of exchange, a site of visual appropriation, a focus for the formation of identity.[32]

I understand Mitchell to mean 'medium' in a similar way to the way that Edward Soja uses the word when he writes about spatiality as being

> ...simultaneously a social product (or outcome) and a shaping force (or medium) in social life.[33]

Mitchell makes a connection between landscape and spatiality, seen as an active force, a 'shaping force', part of 'cultural and economic practices' that effect and determine our relations with our environment, our milieu.[34] This is a different approach to landscape that can be seen reflected in artistic practices of the 1960s and 70s that engaged with social processes and practices (such as the work of Mierle Laderman Ukeles for instance).

Harrison and Bryson develop arguments for painting as having an active role to play in showing us new ways of seeing and thinking about ourselves and the culture that we are part of. Mitchell writes about what landscape is, its activeness, with us as part of it, different from the activeness that painting may achieve through the unexpected shifts in understanding and perception that may be provoked. His writing implicitly asks us to think about how painting can construct a provocative response to our environment, can respond to an environment that is in itself active. He takes the position that representation, painting, is not able to respond adequately to an environment that is not what we *see* around us but the forces at play in forming us – landscape as social space. I am using Mitchell here because I would like to show that while painting does not (often) overtly engage directly, physically with these social forces, it is able to respond to them.

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[32] Ibid., p. 2.
[33] Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1989) p.7.

Mitchell contrasts his view of landscape with an art historical perspective by writing that what is commonly considered landscape, depicted in paintings, 'naturalizes a cultural and social construction'. His view is that the culture and society that a landscape painting is made in is naturalised rather than re-evaluated in its representation. Landscape historically involves the viewer in a pre-determined relationship to the 'sight or site' that it depicts and that this in part stems from the dynamics of the historical commissioning of paintings as well as their ownership. This is a negative view of the iconographic approach that doesn't acknowledge the potential of paintings to surprise or question. As a result, the representation of landscape is understood to disempower the viewer by making an acceptance of the 'sight or site' a given. This is a position on landscape representation that sees it as locking the viewer into a pre-determined ideological position. It doesn't allow for the possibility of painting creating new ways of understanding, in the way that Charles Harrison's analysis of landscape painting does. It also doesn't acknowledge the cultural change that Norman Bryson believes is possible for painting to enact. (Or for that matter, the ambiguity of Gainsborough's *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews*. The 'landscape' in this painting is perhaps naturalised as property, but it is done so obviously to contemporary eyes (perhaps because of what has been written about it by John Berger and others) that as a result, that naturalisation is in some way undermined.)[35]

Mitchell interprets what landscape is, a 'verb' rather than a noun, differently than both Baxandall (where the viewer is invested in the image rather than constrained in some way by it) and Charles Harrison (where the viewer is invoked by the work and who must be present in order for painting to have effectiveness).[36] Mitchell concentrates on the dimension of physical 'process' in his interpretation and development of landscape (not painting). He writes about process rather than recognition or outcome.

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[34] Op. cit., Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, p. 2.
[35] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC Publications) 1972.
[36] Neither the landscape, nor its context, nor the viewer, are ever static.

He takes us to a spatial and temporal version of landscape, something that is continuously changing. It is a fluid process. Mitchell describes the kind of temporal landscape that he means when he writes:

> Thus, landscape always greets us as space, as environment, as that within which 'we' (figured as 'the figures' in the landscape) find – or lose – ourselves. What we have done and are doing to our environment, what the environment in turn does to us, how we naturalize what we do to each other, and how these 'doings' are enacted in the media of representation we call 'landscape'.[37]

Mitchell is writing about landscape as our spatial environment and how it is an active force in our formation as social beings. This is related but different to the ability to travel and understand the visual nuances of our 'landscape' in contrast to other landscapes in different places as in Szerszynski and Urry's description. Landscape as a circulating medium implies that landscape is part of us rather than viewed or conquered by us, that landscape is part of the activities that we culturally produce and that we are culturally produced by. It is ideology as well as physical interactions. Mitchell proposes that our expectations (landscape as noun) can be thought of in new ways that include process and change (landscape as verb) and that landscape can have new and challenging uses. I am using this thesis as a way of thinking about how paintings may address these new uses, thereby changing what landscape painting is and what it does.

The Functional Site and One Place After Another

James Meyer, in his essay 'The Functional Site; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity' and Miwon Kwon in her essay 'One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity' are some of the most recent among many notable authors addressing the concept of site.[38] They look at changes to

[37] Op cit., Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, p. 2.
[38] Claire Bishop and Michael Petry among others.

how site-specificity has been perceived and developed by art practices in the last fifteen years.

Meyer uses the term functional in contrast to the idea of a literal site, a specific place.[39] He writes about a shift away from a direct phenomenological relationship to a physical site in site-specific and inter-active art works. By a 'functional site' he means that, it is through a narrative or chain of meanings, that the site becomes articulated for us. This 'working' within and between different meanings, for Meyer, replaces a phenomenological relationship to place or one based on physical interaction (but can also be seen to be related to W.J.T. Mitchell's concept of landscape).

Meyer traces the trajectory away from the self-referentiality and desired self-containment of Modernism to Minimalist works as a backdrop to considering site-specific work. Minimalist works were seen as 'theatrical' by the critic Michael Fried because of the attention they drew to the movement, the presence, of the viewer within the space, 'the environment', of the gallery. The performance work, happenings and conceptual art of the 1960s and 70s also reacted against Modernist works. They had both an overt relationship to the social space they took place in, as well as making references to political and social issues from a wide context outside the parameters defined for avant-garde, Modernist art, by Clement Greenberg. Once the self-contained art object was rejected and seen to be part of an exclusionary network of meanings and relations, feminist and conceptual artists began to make work that reacted against and questioned these meanings and relations. These parameters and conventions were 'deconstructed'. Attention was given to both the role of the spectator, and the exhibition space, in interpretation, effect, and meaning. Work that looked at not only the physical nature of the space but the relationships between the viewer – their relationship and position

[39] Literal site is Joseph Kosuth's term. Joseph Kosuth, '1975', *Art after Philosophy and After: Collected Writings 1966–1990*, Gabriel Guercio ed. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1991) p. 134.

within the institution (in its different manifestations) – and the way that the institution operated were made by Conceptual artists such as Michael Asher and Daniel Buren. This further developed into an institutional critique of museums, collectors and the commercial art world, by the artist Hans Haacke for example, and was later written about by the critic Douglas Crimp.[40] Once a questioning of the space and the institution took place, other types of spaces became legitimate locations for siting artworks, and for a dialogue and understanding of the relationship to their specific location to take place. It is in relation to this history that Meyer investigates current 'site-specific' art.

Early site specific work was often made with a phenomenological relationship to the actual physical site in mind, in a deliberate move away from the institutional siting of artworks in galleries and museums. It was developed partly as a reaction to the commodity culture of self-contained art objects and contemporary site-specific work also often has this aim. Miwon Kwon uses the term 'discursive site' to describe contemporary site-specific work. She extends her discussion of site to include a reflection on the agility of the critical abilities of the practices she considers and whether this agility questions or reflects the nomadism of capital.[41] Both Meyer and Kwon compare older ways of working with more recent work that acknowledges that

> ...place [can] not be purely experienced (like the literal site of minimalism or Richard Serra) but [is] itself a social and discursive entity.[42]

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[40] Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993)

[41] The 'functional sites' and 'discursive sites' that artists have developed in reaction to site specific work look at and question the institutions, places and spaces that they refer to. Raymond Williams found that his exploration of the country and the city was a way of approaching the problem of capitalism. Functional and discursive sites take on board the multiplicity of factors that make up place including the workings and the manifestations of capitalism inherent in site. Thomas Crow suggests, as do James Meyer and Miwon Kwon implicitly, that it is only through a critique that can be read clearly in the work that it is possible to break free of a reading of the allegorical (theorised in similar ways to functional and discursive sites) that returns it to commodification.

[42] Op. cit., Meyer, 'The Functional Site...' p. 29.

Meyer defines the functional site in ways that overlap with Mitchell's social definition of landscape.

> ...the functional site [in contrast to other kinds of site-specific work] may or may not incorporate a physical place. It certainly does not privilege this place. Instead, it is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and textual filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist's above all). It is an information site, a palimpsest of text, photographs, and video recordings, physical places, and things: an allegorical site, to recall Craig Owens's term, aptly coined to describe Robert Smithson's polymathic model whose vectored and discursive notion of 'place' opposes Serra's phenomenological model.[43]

This is a reference to Owens' essay 'The Allegorical Impulse' in which Owens makes a connection between allegory and postmodern practice, the allegorical 'impulse to upset stylistic norms, to redefine conceptual categories.'[44]

> Advanced by Craig Owens, this model might be taken to mark a further dissolution of the sign: from its indexical grounding in the presence of the body or the site to its allegorical dispersal as a play of signifiers...
> Owens insists that the textuality of postmodernist art disrupts the autonomy of modernist art.[45] [46]

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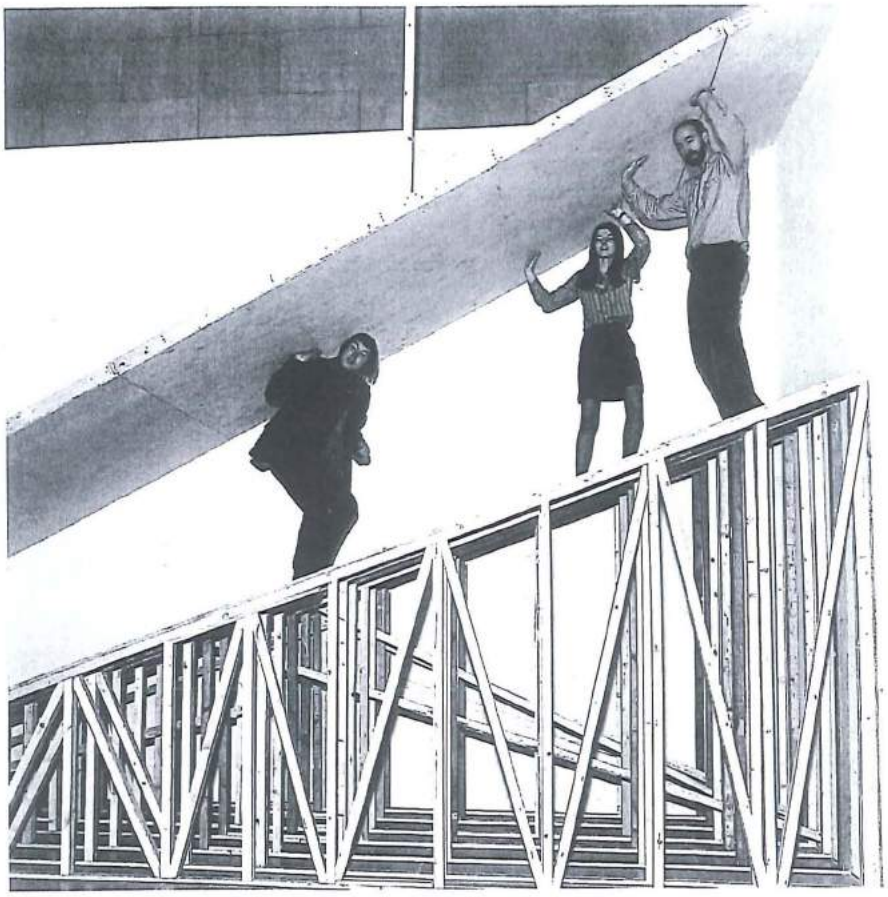
[43] Ibid., p.25.
[44] Hal Foster, 'The Passion of the Sign' in *Return of the Real* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996) p. 86.
[45] Ibid., p. 88.
[46] ...At this point, then, the stake of postmodernism is still avant-gardist (that is, the allegorical mode is held to disrupt or to exceed the symbolic mode). Not yet in view are the historical preconditions, economic processes, and political ramifications of postmodernism ...he does not reflect on the forces that influence these deconstructions; they remain at the obscure level of artistic impulses. Ibid., p.88.



Top: Robert Morris, Installation view, Tate Gallery, 1971.
Below: Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Homeless Vehicle*, 1987–88.

How does the debate about site which began with earthworks, and works by artists like Robert Smithson and Richard Serra, which continued with performance and site specific work, and which is developed now in new explorations of sites, change or alter our understanding of what landscape painting might be? Textuality, as developed by Craig Owens in relation to Robert Smithson's work, brings with it readings associated with temporality and postmodernism's desire for political agency (although some recent readings bring with it questions of commodification and spectacle).

Meyer's and Kwon's writing testifies to the way that art practices related to site or place are being re-evaluated. They, in their individual analyses, are approaching the subject from the position of looking at the history of site-specific work. However, the questions that they ask should be considered and have implications for other practices such as painting that have 'place' as their subject. Meyer and Kwon propose that place is understood and described [inter-] textually rather than in terms of physical space in contemporary site-specific work and related debates. There is also the possibility of considering painting as a (limited) discursive site, a place in this sense. Painting may have an embodiment, but it may also use and connect to other references – to its own history as well as to other discourses. Painting may be considered as site and as assemblage.

As Painting

Stephen Melville's essay for the exhibition catalogue for *As Painting: Division and Displacement* can be seen in the light of the different approaches that I have selected above. Melville (the co-curator along with Philip Armstrong and Laura Lisbon) writes about the premise for *As Painting*, that integral to the identity of painting is a contact and communication with other practices and the 'field' of practices within which it is enmeshed.

> This general idea – that a medium must be thought of in terms that actively link its internal possibilities to a larger system to which it belongs – is crucial to *As Painting*.[47]

This premise is developed by Melville through an idea of painting seen in relation to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's view that vision itself has within our understanding of it, a 'fold', 'chiasmus' or space.

> ...a kind of crossing, fold, or as Merleau-Ponty calls it, 'chiasmus'. This opening, a version of Heidegger's 'clearing', is the world's giving itself over to articulation, the making, then, of its differences; it is the thought within which we find ourselves and which makes possible what we call our thinking, the form of which it must also ultimately determine.[48]

Melville is looking at complex ideas about language in relation to painting. He suggests that painting, like Merleau-Ponty's idea of vision, has implicit within it a gap, and that as a result that painting itself is a form of language.

> ...surface as itself having the structure of a limit, of being that place in which visibility and invisibility discover themselves as one another's inner lining, thus surface as itself a kind of event, a tension sustained and held open by an outside it touches everywhere but that has no thinkable existence apart from that touch.[49]

Based in the phenomenological, like the attitude to site that Meyers and Kwon question, Melville connects the space implicit in the language of painting with the surface of painting from a philosophical basis rather than from assemblage. Painting physically and conceptually opens up to relationships outside itself (is 'everywhere hinged'), making it possible to

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[47] Melville, 'Counting/As/Painting', p. 17.
[48] Ibid., p. 6–7.

diagrammatically relate painting to the discursive (functional) sites that Meyers/Kwon discuss. Landscape painting has an historic relationship with representations of, and ideas, about space and place. When Melville points to the space, 'the chiasmus', that Merleau-Ponty writes about as the space of painting, can this space be seen in landscape terms? Melville writes about this space as opening up possibilities for engagement/ relation. He writes about this as defining painting's character as a result of the conceptualisation of its surface. The surface of painting that is about touch and materiality as a point of connection rather than separation.

> ...an attempt to mark within a practice the limit that belongs to its objectivity and not simply its nominal definition; it marks painting as, let's say, all edges, everywhere hinged, both to itself and to what it adjoins, making itself out of such relations.[50]

If painting is thought about in terms of the methods used to construct the surface of painting, the 'touch', then painting can be thought of in terms of both the bodily interactions with the surface and how the surface works metaphorically to draw attention to the idea of the body. In many spheres, such as philosophy and geography, place is now understood to be an outcome, at least in part, of a bodily relationship to a particular place. This is integral to the interactions and unpredictableness that makes up and defines an idea of space and place written about by the geographer Doreen Massey and the philosophy historian Edward S. Casey for instance.

Melville's *As Painting* catalogue essay provides a useful tool for thinking about painting now and a position from which to think about landscape painting in particular. Some of the artists he selects for his exhibition, including Robert Smithson for one, push the boundaries of what might normally be seen as painting in ways that have some correspondence with

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[49] Ibid., p. 23.
[50] Ibid., p. 21.

what is presented here as contemporary landscape painting.[51] Melville asks what counts as painting (for his exhibition) and we can ask the same question about landscape painting. The context for *his* re-evaluation or investigation of painting is minimalism, as it is for the re-evaluation of site-specific work made by Meyer and Kwon. My slightly more recent context for the questioning of painting is performative artistic practices that engage with conditions outside the gallery space (discussed by Meyer and Kwon amongst others), and a formulation of the idea of event related to place – a shift from minimalism to something not necessarily object-based. How does painting (and not just painting but landscape painting) respond to this, *our* milieu, in a way that 'counts' as Melville asks? This is the question posed by this thesis.

> If painting finds itself most fully only where it is most deeply in question, it is just here that one might expect to find whatever measuring of discovery of itself painting is capable of. It is this work of measuring or discovery that determines what counts as painting.[52]

Landscape painting has been, and is, in question. The performative and non-object-based orientation of art making has moved away from painting and meant that it has not been a major participant in the art conversation. However, contemporary landscape paintings can be understood as reflecting the competencies and the knowledge of the audience that they are for. These competencies are now directed toward landscape's discursive character, they encompass visual, physical and conceptual landscapes. We now think of 'place...itself [as] a social and discursive entity'[53] and landscape painting as being enacted within a 'discursive notion of place'. Landscape painting takes as its subject matter, through considerations of space-time, our relationship to place, the new

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[51] In addition to artists one thinks of as painters such as Polly Apfelbaum, Imi Knoebel and Gerhard Richter other, perhaps surprising, artists included are André Cadere and James Welling.
[52] Op. cit., Melville, p. 3.
[53] Op cit., Meyer, The Functional Site, p. 29.

technological and conceptual landscape that we encounter, as well as social practices, ways of producing meaning, and ways that landscape is controlled. These ways of thinking about landscape may not only call for new possibilities for landscape paintings, they may also call for new competencies in their audience.

Landscape painting may now include many things other than images of land; in fact landscape painting may not contain 'landscape' imagery – images of the rural or images of nature. In the past, images of land would be looked at for particular reasons – to show the pride of ownership and wealth, to visually describe particular places, to show places that were being discovered, to use land as a metaphor for an historical interpretation, or to show details of nature. Landscape paintings may still refer to these issues and may call upon these historical references. But now we think about landscape differently, what else might painting 'do'. Perhaps now, rather than 'landscape painting' we need to think about 'landscape' and 'painting', that the two terms might be firstly uncoupled and then brought back together again. We need to think about what landscape can be and we also need to think about what painting can be in relation to it and as part of it. The issues of landscape may now be seen in conjunction with painting but not as a genre seamlessly connected to the landscape paintings of the past. Contemporary landscape paintings should instead be understood as 'sites' where the references they are comprised of, and how they are made, their 'effect' and figuration provide for new meanings.

CHAPTER 2
SPACE–TIME / EVENT

> It may be that we can develop representations that within them encode the forces and movement of time, not an image added to movement but a sense of dynamic space-time.[1]

The question of space, in an art context, has long been associated with the practice of painting. Erwin Panofsky wrote his essay 'Perspective and Symbolic Form' (1924–25) proposing that each period in history has a way of representing space that reflects the understandings and beliefs of that time.[2] The connection between painting and representation prompts this association. When he wrote about the system of perspective, he was writing about it as it was demonstrated and used in Renaissance paintings and images where it was a system particularly appropriate for flat surfaces enhancing the sense of depth of the image. A perspectival system of representation, and a description of reality, are still associated, or sometimes understood as the same thing. Even earlier than Panofsky's essay, Gotthold Lessing's *Laocoon* argued that painting was an art form that dealt with the representation of bodies in space and therefore space was the provenance of painting.[3] Lessing was writing about, as well as advocating for, the differences between painting (rather than sculpture) and poetry, re-iterating the ancient separation between the two:

> The similarity and harmony of the two arts, Poetry and Painting, had been frequently and copiously discussed; but Lessing reversed the medal, and investigated the inherent dissimilarity, and showed that

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[1] Mike Crang, 'Rhythms of the City: Temporalised space and motion', in eds. Jon May and Nigel Thrift, *timespace: geographies of temporality* (London and New York; Routledge, 2001) pp. 206-207.
[2] Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, 1927, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 1991) [originally published as 'Die Perspektive als "Symbolische Form"' in the Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1924–25 (Leipzig & Berlin, 1927) pp. 258–330.
[3] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon*, 1766, trans. with preface and notes Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Phillimore (London: Mssrs. Macmillan, 1874).

> this dissimilarity was founded upon laws particular to each art, and which often compelled the one to tread a different path from the other... The painter employs figures and colours in space, the poet articulates sounds in time.[4]

This historical debate still has resonances in contemporary discussion about painting. The debate about the relationship /differences between painting and media that more overtly involve the element of time has always had a political dimension. Because painting was associated with space and nature rather than culture it was lesser, diminishing claims made for its ability to represent the world.[5]

However, as has been extensively explored, questions of space and time could not and can not be completely separated by isolating them from each other, the question of space is inextricably entwined with ideas about time. As W.J.T. Mitchell describes it in relation to the differences between different mediums, painting and poetry or other

> ...the interesting problem is to comprehend a particular spatial-temporal construction, not to label it as temporal *or* spatial.[6]

It is a reconfiguration of this historical view, that paintings are concerned with figures in space, 'figures and colours in space' that is being considered here. Both painting (historically), and landscape (painting) are associated with space. By repositioning landscape painting so that it engages with a more contemporary 'spatiality', the realm of spatial politics, what is being considered here is an altered idea of landscape painting. Making this connection between historical understandings of what painting was able to do and current interpretations of spatiality means that images

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[4] Rt. Hon, Sir Robert Phillimore, preface to Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon*, 1766, trans. with preface and notes Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Phillimore (London: Mssrs. Macmillan, 1874) p. 18.
[5] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986) p. 43.
[6] Ibid., p. 103.

and forms associated with the history of landscape painting will not necessarily be considered.

Space-Time

What connections can be made between landscape painting and investigations into concepts of space? Henri Lefebvre, the French Marxist philosopher and sociologist, at one time involved with the Situationist movement, writing extensively and particularly during the 1970s, developed ideas about the relationship between the urban milieu and what he called the production of space. One of the seminal political theorists to rethink and redefine space, and writing about it as determining of our social and political makeup, he developed his ideas about space and its political manifestations in relation to a theorisation of the city. He saw the social space of the city separately but entwined with theoretical understandings of abstract space. He wrote that without a lived experience (our own everyday knowledge) of space, we are bound to project the properties of social space onto abstract, mathematical and philosophical concepts of space. He was committed to lived experience because he believed that the essential dimension of lived experience was that it also allowed for the development of utopian possibilities and change. For Lefebvre, social space allows the contradictions of life within capitalism to be apparent. These contradictions and their relationship defined his theory of the urban which he wrote about in *The Production of Space* as well as his other books.[7] He advocated for the idea of the city as *oeuvre*,

> The logic of the market has reduced these urban qualities to exchange and suppressed the city as *oeuvre*. In order to understand the nature of the contradiction we have to delve into the dialectical movement between form and content, thought and reality...In modern society simultaneity intensifies and the capacity to meet and gather together have become stronger. The pace of communications has accelerated to the point of becoming quasi-

> instantaneous. At the same time, dispersal, which must be understood in relation to simultaneity, as form, also increases such that the division of labour, social segregation and material and spiritual separations are pushed to the extreme.[8]

Lefebvre believed that

> ...citizenship should aim to create a different social life, a more direct democracy, and a civil society based not on abstraction but on space and time as they are lived.[9]

Lefebvre developed a complex model of co-existing, multiple spaces, where three types of space together produce social space. These three spaces have been described, paraphrasing Lefebvre, as spatial practice (physical space and lived experience), representations of space (mental space/concepts) and representational space (imaginative engagement),[10] or, physical space (nature), mental space (formal abstractions about space) and social space (the space of human action and conflict and 'sensory phenomenon')[11]. He identified the significance of the interaction of many conceptual and physical spaces that make up our environment (seen as space) which in turn reflects not only urban experience but a global world, determining of our extended position in the society that we live. However, it was not only the multi-faceted character of space that he wrote about, it was the nature of space as a relationship with time.

> Space is nothing but the inscription of time in the world, spaces are the realizations, inscriptions in the simultaneity of the external world of a series of times, the rhythms of the city, the rhythms of urban

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[7] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Donald Nicholson-Smith trans. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991 (in french 1974)).
[8] Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, selected, translated and introduced by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) p. 20.
[9] Ibid., p. 33.
[10] Op cit., Crang, p. 201
[11] Andy Merrifield, 'Henri Lefebvre: A Socialist in Space' in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, eds., *thinking space* (Routledge: London and New York, 2000) p. 171.

> population...the city will only be rethought and reconstructed on its current ruins when we have properly understood the city is the deployment of time.[12]

The relationship of time and space for Lefebvre could be seen in terms of the relationship between the temporality of the city, the everyday, and the space of globalization, opening onto the world.[13]

> ...his outline of a theory of rhythms clearly suggests a multitude of directions in which we could develop an analysis of time and space, from the positioning of the body to the nature of changes in the world brought about by the changing rhythms of capitalism in relation to the body, nature and the planet.[14]

Lefebvre establishes the city as the model for the relationship between space and time, a particular spatial-temporal construction that 'translates socially and philosophically Einsteinian notions of space-time relativity'.[15] Space and time are understood to be integral to each other, mutually forming, their relationship understood by Lefebvre in terms of the interrelationships that take place in the urban situation extending outwards to the global. He re-theorised the city as constituted of different temporalities. The social relations, as well as multiple processes and activities (such as the rearing and educating of children) that take place in the urban situation are what produce space as formulated by Lefebvre. He established that the production of urban space-time is characteristic of particular modes of production and forms of social organisation and created the precedent for understanding space-time as reflecting the social and political configurations of its moment. At the same time, he believed that the space-time of the city presented utopian possibilities through the unpredictable change that may take place. Contemporary

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[12] Lefebvre quoted by Mike Crang. Op cit., Crang, p. 190.
[13] Op cit., Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, p. 49.
[14] Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas Introduction, Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, Ibid., p. 49.
[15] Ibid., p. 32.

social geographers (Doreen Massey and Mike Crang among others) have extended and redefined this relationship to space and the city since the conceptualisations that Lefebvre developed in his writings.

The concept of space-time as an event is described by Mike Crang as being unpredictable and as changing us, as does practicing place described by Doreen Massey. Theories about an idea of event that come from scientific and philosophical thought have also been used to consider and utilise the unpredictability of urban space-time as generative.

Place

The role of representation in our understanding of space – urban or rural – has been questioned and found inadequate by Doreen Massey among others. It is her stated aim to preserve the political potential of 'space' and this means, for her, disconnecting space from approaches where it is configured as static representation. As a way of achieving this aim, her writing questions and ultimately attempts to undermine representations of space, and in particular maps (as she comes from a geographical perspective). She writes that seeing space as a surface (as in a map) doesn't account for different histories (time) and the relationship between space and time that must be accounted for; that it is not possible to think about space separately from time. A unifying effect can take place in maps where different places are seen simply as placed on the same surface with no relation to lived experience/ social space/ spatial practice. As an alternative to space as a unifying surface for measurement, she refers to and develops the idea of place, 'practiced place' where different histories, different time-scales, different ambitions etc. are all taking place together (in the city). Massey asks how we would conceive time and space differently if we thought of them as space-time, as a meeting up of histories and temporalities. In contrast to an historicist interpretation of the linear development of social change, Massey sees the spatial (like Lefebvre) as integral to the possibility of social change. Space-time becomes place when, she writes

> [p]lace change[s] us...through the *practicing* of place, the negotiation of intersecting trajectories; place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us.[16]

This negotiation of the 'throwntogetherness' that takes place in the city, the unexpected and conflicting trajectories of people living together, defines this social space as politics. Space has political ramifications when it takes on board the unpredictable and multiple change that is its character. Space-time becomes politics. Politics as she describes it, is the negotiation of immediate experience, occurrences and understandings rather than policy decisions made by parties in government based on abstract ideology. This awareness, openness to accommodation and change that takes place everyday 'on the street' is what makes space politically active and progressive in Massey's interpretation. She brings something of the idea of 'festival' (from Lefebvre's writings and analysis) to the concept of the unpredictable, perhaps unexpected, urban experience. The city, in the interactions that take place there and the responses that they provoke, provides ways of thinking about space differently.

Massey also writes about our less familiar encounters with nature and the rural in similar ways, taking questions of space back to earlier associations made between space and landscape.

> The 'countryside'...can be deterritorialising of the imagination too.[17]

She calls this deterritorialisation a kind of 'event'. We might imagine the differing scales, visibility and time-spans of trajectories in the countryside as no less unpredictable and complicated than imagining the multiple differing needs and uses of urban space.

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[16] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London, Thousand Oaks, California, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005) p. 154.
[17] Ibid., p. 160.

> ...[R]e-imagining countryside/Nature is more challenging still than responding to the changing spatiality (customarily figured as predominantly human) of the urban.[18]

The geographer Mike Crang also develops and describes the relationship between time and space using a Lefebvrian perspective, writing about the relationship between the city and space-time, temporalised space and motion in his essay 'Rhythms of the City'.[19] Crang bases his description on seeing activity (that takes place in the city) as creating time-space (calling this an 'event') in contrast to seeing time-space as a frame within which activity occurs. Crang describes events, as not discrete objects or happenings but as having a temporal structure including a just-pastness as well as a nearly-nowness. This is seen as a threefold structure, where, for instance, a person's present can only be made sense of in terms of a future and past, and the present becomes an expanded field. He asks us to think about how objects and subjects come to shape each other not just *in* time and space but *through defining* space and time. Crang describes this as a temporalised space which sees time-space as activity, as an event which is /has unpredictable outcomes.

Event

Einstein's 'Special Theory of Relativity' (1905), and its profound impact on both science and philosophy, was part of a completely changed understanding of the relationship between time and space and was the impetus for a modern rethinking of this relationship in many different disciplines and spheres. The architectural and design writer Sanford Kwinter writes:

> This is why it has been possible to oppose a classical or Euclidean 'regime of narrative', in which time forms a substratum distributing and developing forms in space, to a modern – Riemannian, Einsteinian, Minkowskian – 'regime of the event', which substitutes

[18] Ibid., p. 160.

> a 'space-time' consistency in place of a substratum, yet maintains the true and irreducible materiality of nature through the concept of the milieu (field). The opposition of space and time is possible, in fact, only within the (neo-) classical model, whereas the opposition constructed here concerns precisely the essential attribute of time – its capacity to make possible, or introduce, change (i.e. difference)...a principle immanent to phenomena that can account for variation, diversity and change... from within. The first knows duration through development in *Time*, while the second, precisely because it is home to the 'event', knows it only through 'the untimely', that is, the sudden (catastrophic, singular, originless) and unexpected.[20] [21]

Theories of the event from both philosophy and from science explore the generative character of the unpredictableness of the event from different positions but see its possibilities for change as a positive force. These interpretations have also generated political readings of event 'as a principle [of]... variation, diversity, and change'.[22]

Kwinter's description, embedded in scientific interpretation, of the relationship of time and space leading to the occurrence of events has affinities with Massey's definition of politics based on the unpredictable character of urban space-time. Mike Crang actually uses the term 'event' to describe urban space-time. However, the concept of space-time or event has not often been discussed in relation to painting as painting does not lend itself easily to these interpretations. Perhaps, in relation to painting, space-time and event has to be seen in terms of an idea of change or transformation. Norman Bryson, as described in chapter one,

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[19] Op cit., Crang, pp. 187–207.
[20] Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time: Toward a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2001) p. 170.
[21] Einstein's theory of relativity echoed observations that Darwin made in the biological sciences. In recognizing the surprising, unpredictable and mobile force of time on the emergence and development of the multitude of forms of life, Darwin brings the concept of the event to the sciences.' Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution and the Untimely* (Durham, North Carolina and London: Duke University Press, 2004) p. 8.
[22] Op cit., Kwinter, *Architectures of Time*, p. 170.

describes the unexpected changes in understanding for instance, that paintings can make possible, can provoke. Kwinter writes about objects that are developed, used in ways that transform or change the world around them in unpredictable ways (such as the loudspeaker that allowed for the communication with large groups of people congregated together). He also describes the formation, the forms, of snowflakes, the result of unique configurations of processes. Paintings might also be seen to operate like tools, creating the conditions or conceptual space for unpredictable events (or interpretations) to take place (although not with the same direct and wide socio-economic impact as the objects that Kwinter describes). The way that event is described by him is interesting in relation to the material character of a 'milieu'.

> The event... is thus both an embracing and an excavation of a milieu. The milieu in turn is carved by the event and bears its shape. Every event is defined and exhausted by the production of a new milieu; it is a forcing to the surface of once virtual relations that have now become actual. This is because the event has two sides...on the one hand, it belongs to the undetermined, the chaotic, and the temporal, that is, it is a singularity; on the other, it seizes and constellates as much material as possible, it is worldly, spatializing, and persists in its being.'[23]

This description of 'event' has parallels with the contradictions of landscape painting. Landscape as space-time can be seen as sometimes 'undetermined, chaotic and temporal'; landscape painting's materiality makes landscape painting have a particular and contradictory character. Landscape painting may reflect concepts of space-time or provoke new interpretations as a result of its forms. Painting does not (often) participate in social space in a way that is directly comparable with the unpredictable trajectories that Massey describes as encounters in urban space.

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[23] Ibid., p. 168.

However, the question of what the material and conceptual options for landscape painting are is one which this thesis attempts to explore.

Against this backdrop, the challenge of contemporary landscape painting is that

> ...place is an event, a matter of *taking place*.[24]

The philosophy historian Edward S. Casey has written extensively about the long history of the idea and understanding of place as well as its relationship to space. He also sees place as a constellation of relations, 'an event, a matter of taking place' that takes place in different ways and in many different places. Casey makes the connection between a bodily relationship to place and the idea that relations and processes are what determine place when he describes the influence of the relatively recent philosophers Deleuze and Guattari.

> ...the extreme sensitivity of Deleuze and Guattari to issues of concrete implacement, that is, their conviction that *where something is situated* has everything to do with *how it is structured*.[25]
> ...a particular place...becomes a nonlimited locality...an infinite succession of local operations.[26]

Painting has historically, in different ways, been associated with space. But space is no longer understood as separate or isolated from time. Space-time has been theorised in relation to the city (by Crang, Massey etc.) and in relation to architecture by Sanford Kwinter. The idea of one unified space (the universe) has been superceded by the idea of multiple spaces, processes and experiences that make up 'place'. How does this affect how painting and landscape paintings in particular are manifest? What are the landscape paintings that acknowledge the production of

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[24] Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997) p. 339.
[25] Ibid., p. 302.

space-time or event, that acknowledge the idea of place? Paintings occupy a different position than the kind of events described by science. However, if space-time is a multi-temporal, experiential (often considered urban) occurrence, then a redefinition of 'landscape' painting is called for, it is necessary to see it in terms of space-time and an idea of 'event'.

Unpredictability and change are integral to the concept of 'event' as well as to 'practicing place'. Edward Casey articulates the multiple character of 'place'. These qualities of unpredictability and change are manifest in painting through, for instance, processes that involve chance, or through unpredictable relations between formal elements and images, shifting or destabilising the meanings that we expect of imagery. Different speeds of paint application reflect temporalities of a specific material nature and could be thought of as metaphorically pointing to the different speeds and character of temporalities that form space-time. Different, multiple, spaces, or a lack of a coherent picture space also points to this, and the artists described in chapter four of this text use this spatial complexity. Imagery (of the rural, urban, or nature) associated with landscape, presented in ways that provoke material, formal or semiotic 'events' that take place in 'paintings' are able to point to and reflect the complex relationships that make up place. I propose that the concepts /models of montage and mapping /maps are significant at this time when thinking about space-time and painting.

The question, to be asked of individual works, is whether painting is a technology that has been superceded, or, is its material character of use/ interest when thinking about space-time and landscape. What would be lost by not having landscape painting? Using the criteria established here, new trajectories, new mediums, would be found to explore the idea of landscape and space-time. However, painting does, in relation to technology and even photography have particular material possibilities. There is the often in-built level of uncertainty, the risky element involved in

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[26] Ibid., p. 305.

whether a painting will work, which in many painting practices cannot be predicted in advance. Rather than thinking about how painting might match up to conceptualisations of landscape that do not invoke the static medium, it is of interest to me to think about what painting might bring to concepts emerging from ideas of space-time.

MONTAGE

> The portfolio brings to mind Dziga Vertov's documentary montages, and suggests that certain still photographs are related to the dialectics of film.[27]

Collage (associated with the use of diverse materials often connected with the everyday, such as newspaper) develops the possibility and the forms of non-unified picture space using different visual images and signs in conjunction with each other. Collage creates a composite image where different elements and images co-exist visually and through their co-existence either produce a conceptual connection or disjuncture (or both). Modern painting in general has more often been thought of in relation to collage, sometimes incorporating elements of collage, or even becoming collage, such as in the Cubist works of Picasso and Braque. However, contemporary landscape painting can also be considered in relation to montage.

Montage, associated with film, has developed similar effects but it is also able to utilise the mechanical potential of the film camera, its choreographed as well as its unexpected effects. Collage insists on the juxtaposition and relationships between objects rather than their singular presence and develops a basis for examining juxtapositions and relationships in different ways.

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[27] Robert Smithson, *The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996) p. 160.

> The breakdown of institutional categories of art and life that was threatened by the use of collage – i.e. because collage introduced heterogeneous, non-art matter to the field of the aesthetic or insinuated a non-exclusive material basis for all formal or semiotic constructs ...As William Rubin has noted, *papier collé* affirms the unity of the medium, but collage involves a category threatening mélange of genres, a form of passage between entities.[28]

Collage uses the potential of its use of different materials (references to the everyday, and to the specific uses of materials) while filmic montage uses and takes up the possibilities of its different mechanical effects which bring together different movements and connect with questions of space and time. While not directly applicable, considering montage can open up different ways of thinking about painting and how painting might be seen /change in relation to the question of space-time.

The idea of montage is associated with and was developed extensively by the film director Sergei Eisenstein in the 1920s. His investigation of montage gave it a role in changing cinema through developing the implications of bringing together and juxtaposing fragments of imagery so that they create an *effect* in the viewer. Montage, as Eisenstein conceived it, was a way of working within cinema to develop its political possibilities through revealing underlying tensions and meanings in fragments, in sequences of visual images. His filmmaking was a development of the possibilities of the medium. By approaching film in this way he also developed medium-specific political implications. Eisenstein aimed to achieve this in the relationship between images, in the way that they were composed to lead the viewer to react to, and understand, the collision between film fragments as a dialectical process leading to change.[29]

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[28] David LeHardy Sweet, *Savage Sight/Constructed Noise: Poetic Adaptions of Painterly Techniques in the French and American Avant-Gardes*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina, Department of Romance Languages, 2003) pp.105–106.

Eisenstein writes of the dialectical nature of film in his essay 'A Dialectical Approach to Film Form' (1949):

> So, montage is conflict. As the basis of every art is conflict (an "imagist" transformation of the dialectical principle).[30]

And,

> I also regard the inception of new concepts and viewpoints in the conflict between customary conception and particular representation – as a dynamization of the 'traditional view' into a new one.[31]

Each fragment (section) takes on meaning through its context and position in conjunction with other fragments (sections).[32] Fragments accrue meaning in the reaction that is produced by their combinations. It is their contextualisation and their relationships that make fragments important and it is through these relationships that they are able to achieve the goals of the director. More than the composition of montage, it was the product, the effect that was constructed by montage that concerned Eisenstein when he wrote

> The juxtaposition of two fragments resembles their product more than it does their sum.[33]

Eisenstein was developing new ways to think about what it was possible to do in cinema and what the role of his effects of imagery were in this different kind of cinema. He held an anti-naturalistic position, not

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[29] This also reflected the political analysis of history as dialectical materialism developed by Karl Marx and Frederich Engels where struggles between opposing forces based on class or economic need, for example, articulate historical processes.
[30] Eisenstein, Sergei, *Film Form, Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1949) p. 38
[31] Ibid. pp. 46–47.
[32] Fragments in this context meaning sections of film (with the possibility of fragments from real time).
[33] Ibid., p. 35.

attempting to reflect a naturalistic world but to engineer a synthetic one that would reflect his ideas and in order that these ideas would bring about social change. Working in this way reflected the belief that new meanings and change comes about through association (produced by montage), by conceptual shifts made through the presentation of imagery selected by the director to have particular effects. The element of surprise or re-evaluation constructed by the director through the imagery, in order to bring about social change, is the aim of Eisenstein's montage.[34]

Eisenstein's compositions, with their aim to change expectations can also be seen in relation to the terms that Norman Bryson uses when he describes the 'collisions of discursive forms' that takes place in painting, their unexpected shifts in form and meaning. Bryson's description of the 'work' of painting (as discussed in chapter one) in his essay 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation' has overlaps with the dialectical aims of Eisenstein's montage.

> ...the essential point is that its juxtaposition of Odalisque and Prostitute [Manet's Olympia], or Géricault's elision of the social fixity of the portrait with the social placelessness of the insane, these collisions of discursive forms occur within the social formation: not as echoes or duplicates of prior events in the social base that are then expressed, limpidly, without distortion, on the surface of the canvas; but as signifying work, the effortful and unprecedented pulling away of discursive forms, away from their normal locations and into this painting, this image.[35]

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[34] Eisenstein's purpose was to make films that would evoke emotions in the viewer and work as a way of disseminating information, telling history. The film October (1927) tells the story of the October Revolution but uses very fast moving footage and collisions of imagery such as the scene when the Russian army fires on the Bolshevik demonstrators and disperses the crowd. Repeated close-ups of the guns firing, interspersed with images of the demonstrators running, gives a sense of the speed and the violence of this incident and its impact. The purpose that dialectical montage has is to produce an effect: this is its most important concern.

Rather than reflecting 'prior events' that take place in the social sphere, Bryson is underlining the work that takes place within painting itself.

> By concentrating on the way in which the work of art 'reflects' the life of its times, the pre-occupation with 'intention' fails to recognise the function of the work of art in the development of cultural attitudes and therefore as an agent of social change.[36]

The particular way that elements of imagery and materials are brought together in paintings produce change in our understanding or attitudes. Effects are produced as a result of the particular manifestation within each individual painting. Bryson's examples make clear that the collisions in imagery that take place in the paintings he describes are not exclusively the juxtaposed imagery (that Eisenstein uses in his films). Collisions can also take place between different readings of the same image, opening up the additional possibility of these collisions taking place in a non-fragmented picture space, in 'naturalistic' space. However, Bryson gives us the opportunity to see the 'collisions of discursive forms', the 'signifying work' of painting as operating within the social in comparable ways to Eisenstein's use of montage in film.

> The painter assumes the society's codes of recognition, and performs his or her activity within their constraints, but the codes permit the elaboration of new combinations of the sign, further evolution in the discursive formation. The result of painting's signifying *work*, these are then recirculated into society as fresh and renewing currents of discourse. [37]

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[35] Norman Bryson, 'Semiology and Visual Interpretation' in Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, Keith Moxley eds. *Visual Theory: painting and interpretation* (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), pp. 70–71.
[36] Ibid., p. 72. '...the act of recognition that painting galvanises is a production, rather than a perception, of meaning. Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983) p. xiii.
[37] Op cit., Bryson, *Semiology*, p. 70.

Through his reading of the way that images, seen as signs, can achieve unexpected effects, Bryson's interpretation allows us to compare and make connections at one level between painting and montage in film, a correspondence between montage and the transformative process of discourse in painting. Painting also participates in seeing things differently, has the possibility of being an agent of social change. A montage 'effect' takes place when paintings provoke their meanings and readings through the visual and discursive collisions of imagery.

If we think of the idea of montage, it helps open up a consideration of painting to an understanding of space-time. Eisenstein brought the political discourses of dialectics to the cinematic language he was developing through montage. In addition, he thought about the possibilities that cinema and the moving image have in relation to the depiction of 'space'.

> In the article 'Montage and Architecture', written in the late thirties as a part of the uncompleted work on montage, Eisenstein sets out this position, contrasting two 'paths' of the spatial eye: the cinematic where a spectator follows an imaginary line among a series of objects, through the sight as well as in the mind – 'diverse positions passing in front of an immobile spectator' – and the architectural, where 'the spectator moved through a series of carefully disposed phenomena which he observed in order with his visual sense'. In this transition from real to imaginary movement, architecture is film's predecessor. 'Where painting remained incapable of fixing the total representation of an object in its full multi-dimensionality..."only the film camera has solved the problem of doing this on a flat surface'.[38]

Eisenstein, as described by the architectural theorist, Anthony Vidler, is saying that in relation to montage, 'the spatial eye: the cinematic' ('cinematic spatial eye') can be seen in relation to, has its roots in, the

experience of moving through real space, the architectural. Montage calls upon this history of the relationship between space, time and architecture.

Filmic montage, in addition, or simultaneously, to its political motivations, also engages with the debate about the relationship between time and space. Eisenstein brings a desire for political change to the relationship between time and space that he develops in cinema. Montage signals movement through its underlying reference to bodily movement through architecture in addition to the ability of the medium of film to bring together multiple simultaneous moments and the different inter-relationship between time and space that movement implies. The relationship between the time and space constructed through images and conceived in this way, was understood by Eisenstein as being a way of producing change.

Perhaps surprisingly, Eisenstein developed his writing about montage using many examples from the history of painting to demonstrate and illustrate his argument. The 'generalisation' needed to encapsulate the essence of the action that he writes about in relation to the montage composition is described in terms of graphic images. He uses examples from the history of painting to elucidate the graphic effects that he is aiming for. He writes:

> The quotation from Cézanne is especially relevant to cinematic composition, for ... the process of the figurative disposition of the concrete elements of reality is truly inseparable from the simultaneous compositional structuring by their outlines of the frame's inner contours.[39]

While Eisenstein's fundamental concern is with the ways of seeing and understanding that are developed through film, the development of

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[38] Vidler, Anthony *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusettes: MIT Press, 2000) p. 119.
[39] Sergei Eisenstein, 'Montage, 1937' in *Selected Works, vol. 2, Towards a Theory of Montage*, Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, eds., Michael Glenny trans. (London: BFI Publishing, 1991) p. 30.

montage in film alters our perception of painting. Fragments of imagery are no longer seen only in terms of the destabilisations (and juxtapositions) the use of different materials can achieve in collage. They are seen in terms of the development of the idea of montage as multiple, simultaneous layers. If montage operates within the 'cell' of a film frame, it should be possible to apply its concepts to static images (such as paintings) as Eisenstein himself writes of Cézanne's work.[40]

While Eisenstein had particular outcomes of his effects in mind, effects may have unpredictable outcomes. Gilles Deleuze's writing on montage takes us in a different direction. His writing on the unpredictable effects and the ensuing implications of montage in film have been widely taken up in an art context. However, they bring with them the underlying political aims of Eisentein's initial theorisation and work with montage.

Seeing forms of art, and in particular cinema, as having the possibility to transform philosophy, Deleuze connects montage in cinema with his concept of the movement-image (a different philosophic understanding of time).[41]

> The movement-image presents 'mobile sections' – or movement in itself. Montage cuts and connects one flow of movement alongside another, but does not present these two movements from the single point of view of some ordering observer...montage collects points of movement as change or alteration.[42]

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[40] Deleuze differentiates and supports Eisenstein's approach from that of D.W.Griffith (the 'American school' precursor, director of *Intolerance* (1916)) for example:
Eisenstein criticises Griffith for having a thoroughly empirical conception of the organism, without a law of genesis or development – for having conceived of its unity in a completely extrinsic way as a unity of collection, the gathering together of juxtaposed parts, and not as a unity of production, a cell which produces its own parts by division, differentiation: for having interpreted opposition as an accident and not as the internal motive force by which the divided unity forms a new unity on another level. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam trans. (London: The Althone Press, 1986 (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1983)) pp. 32–33.
[41] Ibid., glossary: movement-image: the acentred set [*ensemble*] of variable elements which act and react on each other.

Montage, the pulling together of images and sounds into different, new configurations and orderings allows us to understand time differently than a linear progression from one moment to another. Montage in cinema is able to pull together different movements, speeds and unexpected moments that allow us to question our presumptions about how time is ordered and how time and space interact. It brings with it an idea of multiple trajectories, the unexpected and the importance and impact they can have in relation to the use of visual imagery. Deleuze describes this by writing:

> ...in the final analysis, the screen, as frame of frames, gives a common standard of measurement to things which do not have one – long shots of countryside and close-ups of the face, an astronomical system and a single drop of water – parts which do not have the same denominator of distance, relief or light. In all these senses the frame ensures a deterritorialisation of the image.[43]

Deleuze looks to cinema and the camera as forms and ways of making that allow him to re-conceptualise time, through an exploration of the idea of simultaneous different movements. The differing effects enabled by the camera and constructed by montage disrupts the viewer's expectations (of a single unified viewing subject and its associations with experience for example). While Eisenstein concentrates on the aims of the director, Deleuze theorises the possibilities that the technology of film opens up in different ways.

> Montage is composition, the assemblage [agencément] of movement-images as constituting an indirect image of time.[44]

Deleuze describes this ability to see things differently in cinema, this new development as 'the whole', 'the image of time'.

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[42] Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) pg. 44.
[43] Op. cit, Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, pp. 14–15.
[44] Op cit., Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 30.

> Montage is the determination of the whole...by means of continuities, cutting and false continuities...Montage is the operation which bears on the movement-images to release the whole from them, that is, the image of time.[45]

Painting can show us different speeds of time indirectly but it is rarely able to show us different rhythms of time or the divergence of time, in time. Although film, like painting, refers to time and place indirectly, it is able to refer to it indirectly using parallel, varying rhythms and divergences of time.

Deleuze's discussion of montage points to the relationship between time and space as the discourse that montage opens up. When thinking about spatial practice[46] or space-time in relation to painting, concepts of time and movement that have been developed through the development of the concept of montage in film are a useful and integral part of the discussion.

> Cinema itself is a new practice of images and signs, whose theory philosophy must produce as conceptual practice.[47]

Deleuze writes that, in the encounter with 'new' practices, philosophy must generate new conceptual forms. In the encounter with new mediums/ practices, and subsequently with new theories generated by philosophy as a result of philosophy's encounter with them, practices such as painting also have to produce a response and new conceptual forms. Landscape painting may use the development of the 'film form' of montage to connect

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[45] Ibid., p. 29. 'Time is imaged indirectly as the whole that produces all these different and incommensurable movements. Movement does not take place *within* time, because time is no longer some already given whole. Rather, time as the force of movement, is always open and becoming in different ways.' ... 'We would then get a sense of time as a whole of differing series of becomings beyond our organising point of view. The art of montage presents these mobile sections. Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 2002) pp. 44–45.

[46] As written about by Michel de Certeau for example.

[47] Deleuze, Gilles, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and R. Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1989) p. 280.

to discourses that inform our view of landscape as social and temporal. Contemporary landscape painting may try to find and take up the possibilities of interpretation of space-time that the model of montage in film establishes.

The way that Deleuze develops ideas of montage connect directly to ideas about space-time developed by geographers such as Doreen Massey. Montage uses within film multiple time and space trajectories that Massey also uses to define the space-time of the urban (as well as the rural).

The idea of montage brings movement to the idea of time, in painting this is associated with either the incorporation of moving images or through the 'change' that can take place through an idea of event.

MAPS

The Art of Describing

In her book *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, Svetlana Alpers discusses the relationship and connections between maps and paintings as images at a moment in history when both maps and landscape paintings were being developed.[48] She sets a precedent for looking at these two related forms of representation together and for seeing the active role that they are able to perform.

> For at a time when maps were considered to be a kind of picture and when pictures challenged texts as a central way of understanding the world, the distinction was not firm. What should be of interest to students of maps and of pictures is not where the line was drawn between them, but precisely the nature of their overlap, the basis of their resemblance. Let us therefore consider the historical and pictorial conditions under which this mapping–picture relationship took place.[49]

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[48] Alpers, Svetlana, 'The Mapping Impulse in Dutch Art', *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983)
[49] Ibid., p. 126.

Although Alpers is discussing the relationship between maps and pictures in a particular art historical context, a 'mapping–picture relationship' has equivalents, helps to think about landscape paintings in a new contemporary context. It shows us how mapping models open up landscape images to possibilities to participate /to contribute to actively engaging and 'producing' space.

Maps described the world in new ways in Northern European and Dutch painting of the period that Alpers discusses. A connection between history (time), in the sense of description, and the exploration of space, as new territory /places, was made.

> We have seen that the notion of description was instrumental in tying geography to pictures and the development of new modes of images.[50]

This was 'graphic description', based on what was experienced and seen rather than the 'rhetorical persuasion' of Italian paintings that sought to describe historical events through new compositions or uses of different imagery in pictures.[51] Vermeer's *The Art of Painting* (c. 1666–67), with its image of a large map dominating the scene, is the spur for Svetlana Alpers' discussion of the role of mapping at this time when history painting – the mediation of tradition and significant historical events – was considered *the* subject for painting. The development of rhetoric as well as interpretation in history painting was different than the sense of 'reportage' or the attempt to record accurate information shown in maps. History painting, as it was known, was about the individual artist's interpretation or rhetorical style, making it different from other versions of the same story. In contrast, 'the realm of natural knowledge, the new testimony of the eye challenged the traditional authority of history'.[52] This different kind of

[50] Ibid., p. 159.
[51] Ibid., p. 136.
[52] Ibid., p. 159.

Johannes Vermeer, *Art of Painting*, c. 1666–67, Oil on canvas, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

approach, using different kinds of information, was equivalent to a new form of technology or to the change in perspective gained from new knowledge; maps belonged to a 'new order'. Knowledge and information about the world, based on science and exploration, was greatly sought after at this time and maps had a positive role in the accumulation of this information. This connection with science and exploration rather than interpretation of history shifted authority and knowledge; it meant that different people accumulated, processed and controlled information and that, as a result, different information and interpretations were sought. This role for maps has resonances with some contemporary ideas about maps (mapping), based on the writings of Deleuze and Guattari for example, that see them (it) as preparing the way for new ways of seeing and acting.

Maps reflected the discovery of new places and territory but they also made different worldviews possible. Maps were seen to have the capacity to show things that were otherwise invisible except through travel. Or, in other words, they were seen to make visible in ways similar to the changes in viewing possibilities that something as concrete as a microscope provided. In seventeenth century northern Europe, maps were also able to convey valuable information that might be of strategic importance. The mobile phone camera might be a contemporary equivalent with its possibilities for communication and dissemination of information that up until its use has not been available to be seen. The internet in particular influences contemporary artists, opens up new worlds, in ways comparable to the kind of impact that travel and science had on image makers at the time that Alpers discusses.

Alpers argues that visual description is a form of history in its accumulation of information (a different relationship to time), rather than the depiction of historical events.

> ...an enriched description of place [map] rather than the drama of human events [history painting]' was of great interest to Dutch painters of this time.[53]

In seventeenth century Northern Europe, maps exemplified how images were being developed and inscribed on surfaces in new ways.

> ...In spite of the Renaissance revolution in painting, northern mapmakers and artists persisted in conceiving of a picture as a surface on which to set forth or inscribe the world rather than as a stage for significant human actions.[54]

The Italian Renaissance image used Albertian perspective ('viewer at a certain distance, looking through a framed window to a putative substitute world'[55]). The Ptolomiac distance-point perspective ('picture as a flat working surface, unframed, on which the world is inscribed'[56]) was used both in maps as well as determining the format of landscape images in the Netherlands.

> ...[The Northern Europeans] made additive works that could not be taken in from a single viewing point. Theirs was not a window on the Italian model of art but rather, like a map, a surface on which is laid out an assemblage of the world.[57]

The discussion of the development of maps in seventeenth century Holland is significant both because of the role of description in them and their connection to assemblage.[58] The construction through a 'flatbed' or visual assemblage technique and role of description in these early maps and paintings can be useful when thinking about the work of contemporary

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[53] Ibid. p. 161.
[54] Ibid. p. 137.
[55] Ibid. p. 138.
[56] Ibid. p. 138.
[57] Ibid. p. 122. This description has some similarities to ideas about montage.
[58] In a contemporary context the connection between description and inscription, its associations with touch and the surface of painting is of interest in relation to mapping.

artists. The use of maps and assemblage often refers to 'actions' or multiple simultaneous positions or trajectories[59] in the use of a format associated with the horizontal (map) rather than the vertical (window), and, the associated

> 'methodologies for documenting behaviour...[as well as by extension a] radical redefinition of sculpture' (as in the works of On Kawara).[60]

Edward Casey's consideration of the relationship between maps and landscape paintings from a philosophical perspective is relevant: rather than looking at work produced at a certain historical place and time, he looks at ideas about place.[61] In contrast to Doreen Massey, Casey does not rule representation out. As he describes it, the idea of 'placing' in landscape paintings has connotations: the sense of action, similar to those of assemblage and description used by Northern European landscape painters and mapmakers rather than an emphasis on the stasis of perspectival possibilities of representation. He differentiates between ideas of putting and placing.

> We have seen that whereas *vorstellen* in its Kantian acceptance (i.e., as a disposable mental representation) assumes the sense of 'put', as in 'to put or set before', *darstellen* draws on the action of placing – as in the 'placing before' of a theatrical production that presents itself to an audience, as in a proscenium. Hence the potential of *darstellen* as a model for artistic creation...
> ...we *place* the ingredients of a landscape painting onto the dis-play of its surface, a place-of-exhibition...landscape painting possesses [the] feature of *play*...[62]

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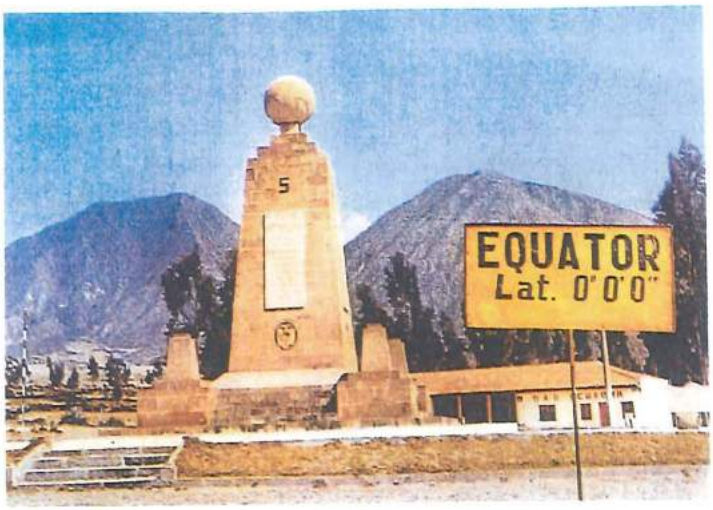
[59] In their use of distance point techniques, maps used different simultaneous positions as the surface of the sphere of the earth is projected onto a plane.
[60] Peter Wollen, *Paris Manhattan: Writings on Art* (London and New York: Verso, 2004) pp. 152–153.
[61] Edward S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002)
[62] Ibid., p. 249.



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uito, Ecuador.

Mr. Kasper König
65 East Broadway,
New York, N. Y. 10002
U. S. A.
Correo Aereo
E-10355

FOZ DO IGUAÇU
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I GOT UP AT
7.57 A.M.
On Kawara
Diplomata Hotel S.A.
Avenida Brasil, 1040
Foz do Iguaçu,
Panana-Brasil

PARANA-CARL. FOTOGRAFIA JOSÉ KALKSTEIN Fº
Mr. Kasper König
65 East Broadway,
New York, N. Y. 1000
U. S. A.
VIA AEREA

On Kawara, *I Got Up At*, 1968–79, Postcards, rubber stamped text, 10 x 15 cm. each.

Michel De Certeau

The social and cultural historian Michel de Certeau re-conceptualised the way that urban place and space is negotiated by individuals. He explored how the 'ordinary man', in the encounter and engagement with other urban dwellers, might and does turn the urban situation to 'his' benefit, finding detours around the ways that he /she is regulated in his encounter with the city. De Certeau is exploring the idea of resistance and does so by finding a way to open up how we might negotiate and embrace an idea of 'interruption'.[63] It is through resistance that the 'ordinary man' is given a sense of agency in 'his' relationship with power, which de Certeau saw as manifest in the structure and overview of the city.[64] This resistance could take the form of and acknowledge interruption, the negotiation that takes place in the city to make an acceptance of the 'sense of others' possible. Space (as he calls it) is the complex relationship and intertwining of aims and trajectories that takes place in the city where so many different people with different aims, ambitions, possibilities are altogether.

> Just as signifying practices, which concern the ways of putting language into effect, were taken into consideration after linguistic systems had been investigated, today spatializing practices are attracting attention now that the codes and taxonomies of the spatial order have been examined. Our investigation belongs to this 'second' moment of the analysis, which moves from structures to actions. But in this vast ensemble, I shall consider only narrative actions; this will allow us to specify a few elementary forms of practices organizing space: the bipolar distinction between 'map' and 'itinerary'...[65]

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[63] Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and its Other* (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1995)

[64] Alternatively, John Macarthur sees aerial views as having potential to subvert power structures when the viewer of the aerial view is the ordinary person rather than the 'king'. John Macarthur, *The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007)

[65] Michel de Certeau, 'Spatial Stories' in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984) p. 116.

De Certeau, in his investigation into how 'practices' organise [produce] space, uses maps as metaphors for social and cultural dynamics, seeing the scientific bases of actual maps as limiting rather than opening up of new possibilities, reflecting problematic uses of power. He writes from a perspective that sees geographical maps' scientific basis in measurement as disconnecting them from the journeys and expeditions that were the original impetus and reason to make the maps. Geographical maps (more recent than the ones that Alpers writes about), for de Certeau, are 'proper places in which to *exhibit the products* of knowledge, form tables of *legible* results' showing us an imposed order that needs to be questioned.[66] [67] He uses the idea of geographical maps to focus on constraining mechanisms in society. He contrasts this with what he calls 'everyday stories'. Everyday stories, itineraries, are the daily ways of negotiating and circumnavigating imposing physical or social constraints and that, as a result, empower the 'ordinary man'. (Recently, maps have been conceptualised in ways more closely related to itineraries.) They reflect a kind of freedom – enunciation (the ways of negotiating and circumnavigating) brings the stories of what happens, and what can happen, in spaces to life. The idea of description (enunciation) being tied to the articulation of space is one that de Certeau develops in relation to the ways that contemporary urban space is used and shared.

De Certeau's terminology, 'maps' and 'tours (itineraries)' refer to the two different ways of describing. One is oriented toward seeing and describes things and places (maps). The other is oriented toward acting and describes actions (tours/ itineraries).

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[66] Ibid., p. 121.

[67] Sina Hajafi and Jeff Kastner, in their article 'The Wall and the Eye' in Cabinet magazine, discuss the valuable information that is made apparent to us when we look at a map of the West Bank and the Isreali building and planning that has been going on. An evaluation of the implications of building projects and settlement planning apparent in a map but not apparent from the ground enables some kind of resistance to an imposing order. De Certeau's discussion of maps and itineraries does not address the value that the information in a map may give us. He is not literally talking about maps as objects and images though. He is addressing the constraining impact of planning policy for instance. What he calls 'maps' might perhaps be something like a law. Cabinet magazine, New York, Issue 16, Winter 2004. [my downloaded copy: Issue 9, Winter 2002/03, downloaded February 25, 2003.]

> How are acting and seeing coordinated in this realm of ordinary language in which the former is so obviously dominant? The question ultimately concerns the basis of the everyday narrations, the relation between the itinerary (a discursive series of operations) and the map (a plane projection totalizing observations), that is, between two symbolic and anthropological languages of space.[68]

De Certeau uses the idea of maps but identifies 'maps' as having two possible roles. It is in the shift that emphasises descriptions of actions and activity over description based on seeing that his area of investigation and interest is located. De Certeau changes maps from visual images to narratives of itineraries or actions – a different 'language of space'. It is in the relationship between description and narrative – a sequence of actions described in language that de Certeau sees the formulation of spatial 'events'. Can this differentiation, emphasis on actions and activity, be brought to operate in visual images? He writes,

> ...in this organization the story plays a decisive role. It describes to be sure. But 'every description is more than a fixation,' it is a 'culturally creative act'. It even has distributive power and performative force (it does what it says) when an ensemble of circumstances is brought together, then it founds spaces.[69]

Story implies a unifying narrative rather than the discontinuities that describe place in the way that Doreen Massey describes or the disparate elements of montage. But through the founding of 'spaces' (his terminology fits more closely with what writers on space have more recently called place), De Certeau gives an overt political perspective to his consideration of maps and itineraries. He is utilising an idea of description as a proactive force, as does Alpers. Alpers writes about description being history linked to images in new ways; de Certeau writes

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[68] Op cit. De Certeau, p. 119.

about the political possibilities linked to the ways that 'description' can generate the element of unpredictableness, what cannot be pinned down and the possibility of resistance through the particular, individual interpretation.

> One can cite as examples of 'strategies'... operations [that] require an accumulated financial, symbolic and/ or scientific 'capital', together with a corresponding measure of security and stability...'Tactics' on the other hand, correspond to...operations (or counter-operations) of 'diversion'. They are characterised for Certeau by insecurity, ephemerality and a high degree of mobility...To tactics, as it were, the nocturnal stealth of the poacher; to strategies the infernal glare of surveillance.[70]

De Certeau is much more interested in spaces than places.[71] He writes 'A place [space] is ... an instantaneous configuration of positions' and implies stability and control. While space [place] takes

> ...into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements.[72]

Space (meaning place) described in this way has similarities to the way that montage is described.

> ...space is a practiced place...space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it

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[69] Op cit. De Certeau, p. 123.
[70] James Corner, 'The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention' in Denis Cosgrove, ed., *Mappings* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999) p. 162.
[71] More recently, writers such as Doreen Massey have reversed the use of terms space and place as de Certeau uses them so that space refers to abstract space and place takes 'into consideration...'
[72] Op cit. De Certeau, p. 117.

function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.[73]

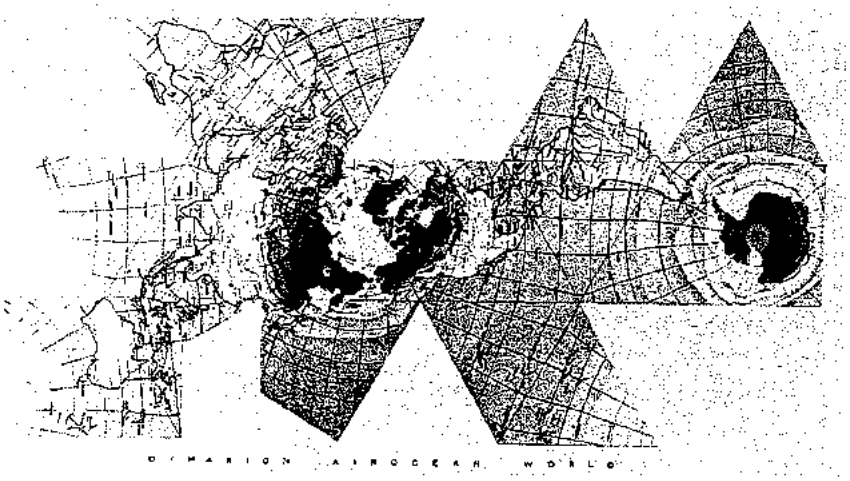
There are echoes of Lefebvre's analysis of urban space here but described in ways that have particular affinities with visual images and textual narratives. De Certeau's writing brings an idea of maps (and the associations that maps may have, with landscape painting for instance) into spatial politics, the contemporary debate about how 'space' positions us and plays a role in how we are defined. He writes about space being generated, the result of the activities that produce it. His writing emphasises a creative, guerilla-like approach to the use and negotiation of urban space.

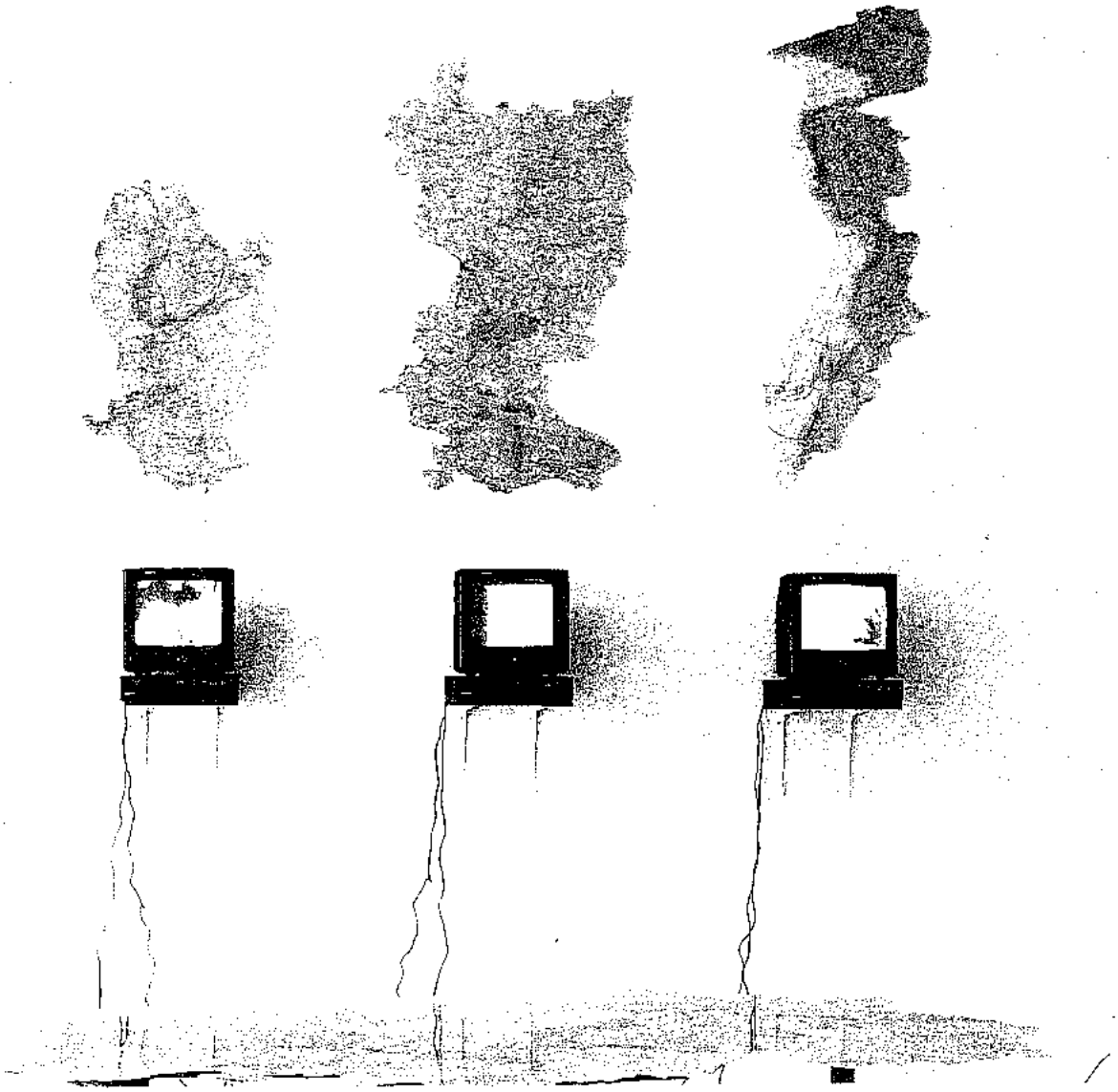
Maps and mapping are part of the way that we represent and understand the relationship between time and space that we now understand our landscape to be, as well as being part of a history of landscape representation. Mapping can also be thought of more abstractly, as unexpected connections and leaps, as opening up connections between ideas (and images) that have been locked into specific places (in the sense that de Certeau uses that word). Maps and mapping being a process of change.

Mapping

Rather than observations that *have* taken place – descriptions – mapping has recently been understood as the possibility of provoking and generating new perceptions. Rather than recording pre-existing phenomena, mapping can become the generator for not only understanding but using, for example, urban space differently, pointing to and generating new possibilities rather than describing things as they are. Writers such as James Corner, Denis Cosgrove, and Simon O'Sullivan

[73] Ibid., p. 117.





Top: R. Buckminster Fuller and Shoji Sadso, *Dymaxion Airocean World Map*, 1954.
Below: Peter Fend, detail of *Ocean Earth: Europa*, 1991, Maps, board, Plexiglas, television monitors, dimensions variable.

approach maps in new ways influenced by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's reconceptualisation of maps and diagrams.

> 'We must ask whether the diagram remains operative in the sense that Deleuze–Bacon use the term? Does it allow ...another world, to emerge?[74]
> ...offering a resistance to the present in the form of its imagined communities and prototype subjectivities. ...involve a 'diamgramming of becoming', the invention of new modes of existence. A minor art in this sense summons its audience into being.[75]

James Corner, in his essay 'The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique and Invention' writes:

> For the landscape architect and urban planner, maps are sites for the imaging and projecting of alternative worlds. Thus maps are in-between the virtual and the real... In this regard, maps have very little to do with representations as depiction. After all, maps look nothing like their subject, not only because they present all parts at once, with an immediacy unavailable to the grounded individual. But more than this, the function of maps is not to depict but to enable, to precipitate a set of effects in time. Thus, mappings do not represent geographies or ideas; rather they *effect* their actualisation.[76]

Rather than the recording of places and things seen, undertaken as part of a journey, or, the negotiation of the constraints of urban space, or, the attempt to symbolise the 'Real conditions of existence', the mappings that James Corner describes look to the future. This idea of mapping might apply to any object or concept that 'enable[d], to precipitate a set of effects in time' but it is an approach of particular interest when thinking about

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[74] Simon O'Sullivan, Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006) p. 65.
[75] Ibid., p. 74–75.

contemporary landscape painting because of the long connections between maps, mapping and landscape paintings and because it brings to painting the question and the possibility of the active role maps can play. Landscape paintings almost call for this different way of thinking about them in relation to mapping in similar ways that Deleuze and Guattari's idea of 'diagrams' anticipate new viewers. Corner approaches the question of mapping from the perspective of urban planning. He particularly focuses on potential new interactions in space between different constituencies, groups of people that occupy urban space simultaneously. This type of mapping could be seen as being more of a 'prompt' to action as it provokes or allows for observations and actions that have not yet taken place. Even in comparison to the making active of itineraries in de Certeau work, whose writing focuses on describing what *has* happened, writers such as Corner focus on what *could* happen.

Corner describes four types of mapping processes developed by contemporary architectural practices that reflect these new approaches. He distinguishes them by describing them, using Guattarian/Deleuzian terms, as taking the form of 'drift', 'layering', 'gameboard', and 'rhizome'. Could these approaches provide models for paintings (to effect change) as well?

'Drift' type maps refer to Situationist maps, '...the contingent, the ephemeral, the vague, fugitive eventfulness of spatial experience becomes foregrounded in place of the dominant, ocular gaze.'[77] Individual and idiosyncratic reactions and '...an ambition to contest and destabilise any fixed, dominant image of the city by incorporating the nomadic, transitive and shifting character of urban experience into spatial representation' is what characterises these maps.[78]

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[76] Op. cit., Corner, p. 225.
[77] Ibid., p. 233.
[78] Ibid., p. 233.

'Layering' type maps '...constructs a radically new fiction out of old facts'[79] through deterritorialisation 'so as to remove any fixed or stable reading.'[80] Corner compares this type of 'map' to the floor of a gymnasium, a stratified amalgam of relationships between parts, where the markings for different games are laid one on top of the other, the whole image 'a complex fabric, without centre, hierarchy or single organising principle'.[81] (An understanding of the layers would only be achieved through a recognition of the individual games and their rules.)

'Gameboard' type maps 'are conceived as shared working surfaces upon which various competing constituencies are invited to meet to work out their differences.'[82] This type of mapping may use drift and layering techniques, multiple processes of urbanization choreographed in relation to evolving and open-ended spatial formations.

Finally, Corner describes 'Rhizome' type mapping as calling on concepts such as the 'plane of consistency' written about by Deleuze and Guattari describing surface as both inclusive and structuring, with a uniformity but also potentially endless options for change. '[T]he techniques and modes of representation must be both multiple and flexible...several different graphic and notational systems have to come into play...Rather than limiting reality, the rhizomatic map opens reality up to a host of new and alternative possibilities...where multiple and independent layers are incorporated as a synthetic composite.[83]

In the context of urban planning, such as Corner describes, although very changed in format, objects still recognisable as maps are used. These forms of mapping describe and open up different ways of interacting with urban space to give that understanding and interaction a visible form. However, as a concept, maps and mapping no longer need to look like

[79] Ibid., p. 239.
[80] Ibid., p. 238.
[81] Ibid., p. 235.
[82] Ibid., pp. 239–240.
[83] Ibid., pp. 244–245.

maps to maintain a connection with current ideas about maps /mapping (as well as their latent history). I am suggesting that contemporary landscape painting can use the history of its connection to maps /mapping, that these connections are a model for opening up new ways of thinking about, experiencing and seeing landscape paintings that connect with an idea of 'verb' rather than 'noun'.

Svetlana Alpers gives us an historical context where mapping practices are developed simultaneously with, and have co-relations with, landscape paintings, both using their surface as a way of assembling elements. Michel de Certeau, evolved a new way of thinking about space (along with Henri Lefebvre among others), making connections between maps as representations of space, ways of ordering, and how our relationship to space is a reflection of the way that we are socially constructed and constrained. He contrasted this with an attitude that finds ways of subverting an imposed order through the actions that take place in, and change, urban space. James Corner also writes about maps being active participants in a process of changing urban space.[84]

Maps may be seen as the representation of information (with associated dilemmas) but alternatively they may influence the formation and understanding of place as well as how places are experienced and used. While images of landscape can have personal associations, or can come from outside sources such as the media, maps have different associations – plans, locating oneself, definition of territory and identity through particular locations. New conceptualisations of maps give new approaches and potential meanings to these associations. Existing in-between the representation of a place and the negotiation of that place that opens possibilities up, the idea of maps (although Doreen Massey would not agree) potentially give more overtly, political dimensions to representations of place and space. They allow us, encourage us, to ask different kinds of questions. Some contemporary theorists such as Corner see maps being

[84] As does Denis Cosgrove in the introduction to *Mappings*.

able to have concrete effects, in our relationship to urban space. Mapping also invites (allows for) different resolutions to these spatial questions in painting.

Simon O'Sullivan brings a consideration of maps specifically to an interaction with art practices, proposing that another way of thinking about maps is to think of them as more

> to do with experimentation...actively creat[ing] the terrain it maps.[85]

Like the maps that James Corner describes, this idea of a 'map' (which might be an artwork) anticipates and creates possibilities rather than describing pre-existing circumstances or understandings, and could potentially be an artwork. James Corner is describing maps as a way of using visual images to think in the realm of urban planning and architecture and our experience of the city. This attitude and aspiration is seen also in the realm of art by O'Sullivan when he describes the impact of Deleuze and Guattari's writings on the possibilities for art practice. He describes rhizomatic connections, creative connections (mappings) and their transformative effects in art practice. This idea of a 'map' and mapping process takes the form of unpredictableness and unexpectedness as a mode of development, a way of working. This opens up new ways of thinking that in turn changes ways of making.

> Art practice as a form of cartography then, the creative mapping of our connections and potentialities, a mapping that pays attention to regions of intensity (the distribution of effects) and to trajectories of future becomings, as well as to those already delineated continents of representation and signification. [86]

Maps or diagrams of cities, as the landscape architect James Corner describes them, do provide models of spatialising that allow for and

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[85] Op cit., O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari*, p. 35.

acknowledge unpredictability. They are useful models for thinking about contemporary landscape painting in the context of space-time, and its unpredictable qualities.

[86] Ibid., p. 36

CHAPTER 3
NEW MODELS

The artists Robert Smithson, Alighiero e Boetti and Eugenio Dittborn's work can be seen as proposing ideas about space and its relationship to time that widen the understanding of what landscape is. Smithson's work is seen as engaged with ideas about the allegorical and its relationship to time and space. His use of physical matter such as earth and stone pushed considerations of time and space into the geological. Alighiero Boetti explores a different philosophical understanding of space-time emerging from scientific ideas about nature. Rather than re-assessing the relationship between a gallery context and unexpected and remote sites, Boetti re-asserts the value of the frame, the space of the picture. He brings in the influence of other cultures and what materials are possible for painting. Eugenio Dittborn's work also engages with time and space but in geographical terms, and their political repercussions. He not only activates painting conceptually but makes painting's physical makeup active, makes it work physically to ask questions about what it can do. His work makes connections with contemporary ideas about mapping. These three artists work in ways, and at a time, that shift[ed] the parameters of art making. There are aspects of their work to think about in relation to the concerns of painting that I am considering here.

ROBERT SMITHSON

Space and representations of space

Robert Smithson's work constitutes of a series of arguments designed to address themes that arose in a period (the early 1970s) that saw significant and substantial shifts in thinking about landscape – the relationship between the natural and built landscape and their relationship to 'the representation we call landscape'.[1] The kind of landscape that Smithson took as his subject and the materials he used exceeded more

pleasing associations or references to social history made with landscape representations. His work dealt with the roughness and physicality of landscape (rather than beauty in the traditional sense), with industrial wastelands and with hugely different scales in time as well as space. Smithson's work acted as a destabilising, deeply questioning force, even now creating an imperative to see beyond restricted, 'safe' conditions of any practice.

These differing concerns, including the idea of geological time and the space of the universe as a parameter for art, were written about extensively by Smithson himself.

> The magnitude of geological change is still with us, just as it was millions of years ago. Olmsted, a great artist who contended with such magnitudes, sets an example which throws a whole new light on the nature of American art.[2]

In his photographic work *Sand-Box Monument* (1967), part of his *Monuments of Passaic*, he brings the idea of entropy as the general movement toward loss of energy in the universe to bear on his photographic documentation of a sandbox. He describes different coloured sand being mixed together over time and the impossibility of separating the different colours again as an example of the 'irreversibility of eternity'.[3] Not only does he introduce a whole different scale to issues of time and space, he destabilises the established criteria used to evaluate and understand artworks. Putting his art works that use everyday objects in space in conjunction with geological time creates a huge discrepancy or destabilisation.[4] The completely different scale of this relationship draws

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[1] W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) p. 2.
[2] Robert Smithson, 'Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape' (1973), in *Robert Smithson, The Collected Writings*, Jack Flam ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles University of California Press, 1996) p. 170.
[3] Ibid., p. 74.
[4] In his article 'Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space' (1966) Smithson playfully explored some examples from art and literature of works that destabilised ideas about time and space.

attention to the minor role of the human in relation to geological time and the space of the universe.

The ability of digital technology to shift and change scales, to bring together disparate times and spaces, has as a result the destabilising or bypassing of a subject viewing position and has been compared to the exploration of the 'entropic fading of space' and history, stasis, by Smithson.[5]

> Smithson's tactical and disruptive introduction of 'extreme past and future' potentially destabilises both historicism and its complement, posthistoricism. Smithson's purpose was, with the limited means available to him as an artist, to break into and shatter the pervasive and all dominating rule of the spectacle, to reflect or deflect vision...[6]

Perspective as a system of representation was seen by Smithson to be an inadequate reflection of the new experiences of scientific discovery and the recognition of, for example, the physiological and psychic bases of vision. One way that he showed this in his work was by *playing* with perspective, making simple drawings of step-like forms, including lines of perspective that extended back to a singular vanishing point. These drawings were then used as a basis for sculptures that mimicked perspective lines but with humour in the translation from the drawn object to the three-dimensional form (for example, the drawings for, and sculptures *Pointless Vanishing Point*, *Leaning Strata* and *Shift*, 1968). This group of Smithson's sculptures present an humourously awkward translation between two and three-dimensional space. They demonstrate how perspective, a system devised to represent three-dimensional space, when literally transcribed into three-dimensional space, does something very different than when it is on a two-dimensional surface. These works

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[5] Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2000) p. 246.
[6] Ibid., p. 250.

establish a precedent for more complex works which he pursues later, developing a relationship between wall-based representations and sculptural work. They test Smithson's audience's ability to recognise the way that he unsettles socially accepted and constructed codes.

In his quest to undermine the systems of representation that had developed during the Renaissance, and the humanistic values and assumptions associated with it, Smithson saw the potential of using the knowledge of mineralogy that he had acquired visiting quarries and museums to collect rocks and look at rock formations. He used the phenomenon of enantiomorphs for example that exist within crystal formations as the basis of one of his works, *Enantiomorphic Chamber* (1964), questioning how certain forms of representation place the viewer in relation to the world – at the centre of it. Smithson saw the human in relation to geological time and space, as part of a much larger system of which human life is just one small part, where the significance of the human is diminished. Jennifer L. Roberts, in her essay 'Landscapes of Indifference' describes why the term enantiomorphic became a principle that Smithson was able to use extensively in his work.

> Enantiomorphs belong to a special class of symmetry that is actually closer to a dissymmetry: 'the mirror image of [the crystal is] not superimposable upon the crystal itself. Although the forms are identical in all other respects, one form is nevertheless irreducible to the other – like the left and right hands, the glove for one of which cannot fit the other. As tantalizingly similar as they may appear, enantiomorphs cannot be reconciled. This dissymmetry is often referred to as a screw assymetry, and it implies a temporal as well as a spatial irreducibility. Two enantiomorphic forms cannot be brought into alignment except through passage in four dimensions – through, as it were, a turn of the screw...thus the two sides of an enantiomorph cannot be resolved or made identical in a moment of

perceptual gestalt; an enantiomorphic reflection harbours within itself an irreducible spatio-temporal gap.[7]

Made of mirrors that created in their reflections crystalline-looking structures and spaces, *Enantiomorphic Chamber* showed the gap between habitual ways of understanding vision and 'actuality' as well as the systems of representation based upon these understandings. Smithson made this work (two cage or window-like wall-based objects) based on diagrams of how stereoscopes work. Usually in stereoscopes, two images are placed side by side in the expectation that, when looked at from a certain distance, the images can be brought together as one three-dimensional image by the mechanism of the eye. But, because Smithson used mirrors rather than two images, the mirrors reflected each other in a way that did not allow a unitary image or subject position to emerge.[8] [9]

The 'irreducible gap' of enantiomorphs, explored by Smithson in *Enantiomorphic Chamber* that ties space and time together through their mutual interdependence can also be seen to relate to and be a motivation in Smithson's interest in ruins and allegory. The critic Craig Owens, when writing about Robert Smithson's work, concentrated on this relationship

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[7] Roberts, Jennifer L., 'The Taste of Time: Salt and *Spiral Jetty*' in cat. *Robert Smithson*, (organised by Eugenie Tsai with Cornelia Butler), The Museum of Contempory Art, Los Angeles, 2004, The Dallas Museum of Art, 2005, Whitney Museum of Art, 2005, texts by Alexander Alberro, Suzaan Boettger, Mark Linder, Ann Reynolds, Jennifer L. Roberts, Moira Roth (interview with Robert Smithson), Richard Sieburth and Robert A. Sobieszek, p. 554.

[8] Smithson's statements about temporality in relation to reflective and crystalline imagery were also developed in his works Ultramoderne (1967) and Yucatan Mirror Displacements (1969).

[9] Although Smithson is making an artistic point rather than a scientific one, as Hubert Damisch makes clear when he writes, in a different context, about perspective. 'If the image provided us by the painter must be referred to the image inscribed at the back of the eye, then linear perspective, based as it is on planar projection, should be regarded as erroneous or arbitrary... such reference to the image on the retina is absurd insofar as it is based on the supposition that it is not the object but rather the image of it formed at the back of the eye that is given to perception, and that painting has no claim to truth unless it manages to duplicate this, so participating in this fantasy. If such were true, as Gombrich has pointed out, we would be justified in demanding that the painted image be upside down in imitation of the one of the retina. Hubert Damisch, *The Origin of Perspective*, originally published in French (Paris: Flammarion, 1987) trans. John Goodman (MIT Press, 1994), p. 6.

between time and space.[10] This relationship has wide repercussions beyond Smithson's work and it continues to drive debates about politics, geography (see, for example, Edward Soja and Doreen Massey) in addition to art historical interpretation.

> ... spatial relations are simultaneously the condition and the expression of relations between individuals acting in history, whether real or imagined.[11]

The way that Owens wrote about allegory (revitalising a term that was associated with painting as much as with literature) can be seen as contributing to that debate. Owens reminds us that temporality has historically been seen in terms of narrative – poetry and prose. Objects that occupy three-dimensional space were seen as static. It is through the 'eruption' of language into visual practices that took place in conceptual art during the 1960s and 70s that Owens turns to, in order to describe and define the nature of Smithson's work and its relationship to allegory. The eruption of language meant not just the use of text in artworks but the use of structures associated with language and temporality and the crossing of borders between types of works.

> Thus allegory marks the dissolution of the boundaries between the arts; by proposing the interchangeability of the verbal and the visual, the integrity of both is compromised. This is why it is an aesthetic "error", but also why it appears, at present, as the organizing principle of advanced aesthetic practice.[12]

Works, such as *Spiral Jetty*, in their relationship to the environs that they were situated in, have an allegorical character through their shifting relationship to their site and sometimes gradual re-absorption into it.

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[10] Craig Owens, 'Earthwords' and 'The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of the Postmodern' Part 1 and 2, in *October*, 12 (1980) pps. 67–79 and *October*, 13 (1980) pps. 59–80.
[11] Op cit., Damisch, The Origin of Perspective, pp. 13–14.
[12] Op cit., Owens, 'Earthwords' p. 48.

Smithson's use of abandoned and industrial sites in general could be seen in this way, as ruins. The relationship between the static and temporal in Smithson's work (both in his use of the changing physical relationship of his works to their site as well as in his use of many different mediums), seen by Owens as allegorical, is associated with and defines postmodern art as seen by Owens. James Meyer and Miwon Kwon, as discussed earlier, take this as initiating a concept of contemporary artwork as discursive, a text, and as a defining precedent in their discussion of contemporary site-specific work.

Smithson's interest in the dissolution of separation between the arts (and then use of it in his own work) can be seen in his description of the different material available for an exhibition about the landscape garden designer Frederick Law Olmsted at the Whitney Museum (1972).

> The maps, photographs, and documents in catalogue form and recently on exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art are as much a part of Olmsted's art as the art itself. The catalogue's illustrative portfolio by William Alex and an informative text by Elizabeth Barlow make one aware of the ongoing development of Central Park as a dialectical landscape. Here the documentary power of the photograph discloses a succession of changing land masses within the park's limits. The notion of the park as a static entity is questioned by the camera's eye. The portfolio brings to mind Dziga Vertov's documentary montages, and suggests that certain still photographs are related to the dialectics of film.[13]

The Picturesque

The dissolution of boundaries between the arts, their interplay, is also a factor when thinking about the picturesque. Smithson was interested in the picturesque as reflecting the opposing forces at play in nature and in the landscape – a dialectical understanding of the picturesque.

> The authentic artist cannot turn his back on the contradictions that inhabit our landscape.[14]

Smithson used the contradictions that he perceived existing in the landscape, preconceptions and conditions that made up the landscape, as a kind of montage, using what he understood as the dialectical nature of the picturesque.[15] He worked with the pre-existing conflicting elements of the 'landscape' to highlight contradictions and to construct new ways of relating to and understanding landscape.

> Olmsted's parks...remain carriers of the unexpected and of contradiction on all levels of human activity, be it social, political, or natural.[16]

In his article 'Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape', written for Artforum (February, 1973), Smithson advocates for the importance of Frederick Law Olmsted's work in planning Central Park, New York. Olmsted looked to the English picturesque landscape designers Uvedale Price and William Gilpin as models. Olmsted's work was unique in his understanding and use of the prevailing conditions, the ruggedness of the terrain rather than taking the opportunity to obliterate perhaps awkward natural detail in favour of a more formal park with 'smooth' edges.

Smithson use of the picturesque in his own work can be seen when he gives his response to the conditions that exist in Central Park, writing:

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[13] Op cit., Smithson, 'Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape', Writings, p. 160.
[14] Ibid., p. 164.
[15] 'Picturesque: ...revenge of the anti-idealist. A mode of making and perceiving space, invented by Chinese gardeners in the sixteenth century, which insists on the juxtapositions and relationships between objects rather than their singular presence.' John Macarthur, *The Picturesque: Architecture, Disgust and Other Irregularities* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007) p. 231.
[16] Op cit., Smithson, 'Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape', Writings, p. 160.

> Further down, the spillway becomes a brook choked with mud and tin cans. The mud then spews under the Gapstow Bridge to become a muddy slough that inundates a good part of The Pond, leaving the rest of The Pond aswirl with oil slicks, sludge, and dixie cups. Maintenance on The Pond seems long overdue. The mud should be dredged out. This maintenance operation could be treated in terms of art, as a "mud extraction sculpture". A documentary treatment with the aid of film or photographs would turn the maintenance into a physical dialectic. The mud could be deposited on a site in the city that needs 'fill'. The transportation of mud would be followed from point of extraction to point of deposition. A consciousness of mud and the realms of sedimentation is necessary in order to understand the landscape as it exists.[17]

This description of a mud extraction sculpture reminds us of Smithson's belief that 'the magnitude of geological change is still with us'.[18] It illustrates his engagement with the picturesque as conflicting physical processes in a landscape as well as an engagement between the prevailing 'natural' conditions and the social processes that interact with these conditions. When Smithson writes about the picturesque he relates to Olmsted's use of Price and Gilpin's formulation of the picturesque as 'related to chance and change in the material order of nature'[19] (an event?). But he also sees the picturesque landscape as a dialectic of multiple forces and methods, 'a way of seeing things in a manifold of relations, not as isolated objects'.[20]

> The picturesque, far from being an inner movement of the mind, is based on real land; it precedes the mind in its material external existence. We cannot take a one-sided view of the landscape within

[17] Ibid., p. 170.
[18] Ibid., p. 170.
[19] Ibid., p. 160.

> this dialectic. A park can no longer be seen as a 'thing-in-itself', but rather as a process of ongoing relationships existing in a physical region – the park becomes a 'thing-for-us'. ...Price, Gilpin, and Olmsted are forerunners of a dialectical materialism applied to the physical landscape. Dialectics of this type are a way of seeing things in a manifold of relations, not as isolated objects. Nature for the dialectician is *indifferent* to any formal ideal. [21]

In his adoption of the picturesque as a principle for his work, he is aware that criticisms can be made of earth artists and their use of the picturesque when they can be seen to damage the landscape rather than to celebrate it as 'environmental' artists might. *Island of Broken Glass* (1969), and the controversy that it caused was a prime example of this. For this project he planned to cover a small island off the coast of British Columbia near Vancouver with shards of broken green glass which would reflect light like the sea but gradually break down into sand. The project was stopped by environmentalists who did not appreciate the long term plan for the project and saw only that, in the short term, dangerous glass (or American waste) was going to cover part of the landscape. Smithson disagreed with this attitude and argued that the picturesque acknowledges the 'physical landscape' creating a dialectical relationship between the location and its multiple interpretations. Would there be a more receptive audience now for the uncomfortable collision of materials and references that Smithson used, would this work be seen as thought provoking rather than threatening?

Other historical examples of a development of the picturesque that can be seen in relation to Smithson's work include the work of artist, critic and writer John Ruskin (1819–1900). He identified the picturesque as related to the possibilities of social change. His interest in the picturesque was rooted in the viewing of landscape based on taking elements of the landscape, details in sequence, by moving through it, and by

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[20] Ibid., p. 160.

accumulation, 'the traveler's progressive perception' rather than the impactful, instant image of the sublime.[22]

> The pleasures of pursuit... related to ...the difficulty of putting together fragments that do not immediately suggest a whole...this kind of mental and visual pleasure'... [is also dependent on movement through and in relation to the landscape (real or image)...] ...and is characteristic of three genres or kinds of art mentioned in his [Hogarth's] examples... allegorical, or emblematic art (not very highly regarded) and two new and rather popular, if 'lower' artforms, the comic novel and the landscape garden.[23]

The viewing of the landscape in this way, in order to build up a picture, was associated by Ruskin with a particular kind of traveler. This was an experience that was available to the 'ordinary' viewer, the middle-class traveler exploring land formations and scenery rather than the exceptional landscape of the romantic or sublime experienced by the artist. The emphasis is on the individual's observation and understanding, their own accumulation of information to inform the 'outlook' that they were developing, rather than being a pre-formed picture that had authority or was already formulated by an authority. The viewer was able to construct an image that was made up of accumulated fragments based on their experience and interpretation. Ruskin developed an idea of the picturesque in relation to painting but connections can be made between Ruskin's picturesque and Smithson's idiosyncratic, multi-material sculptural interpretation. Smithson can be seen to bring together different aspects of the picturesque (or simultaneously uses different ideas of the

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[21] Ibid., p. 160.
[22] Elizabeth K. Helsinger, *Ruskin and the Art of the Beholder* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982) p. 67. This building up progressively, based on moving through a landscape has resonances in the more recent writings of Michel de Certeau. He writes about the contrast between the impactful view of the city seen from above, taken in in one view, and the experience of the city built up, not a single image, by those moving about on the ground. De Certeau was advocating for a different kind of experience than that of one impactful overview, one that was associated with and belonged to 'the man in the street'.
[23] Ibid., p. 83.

picturesque), and develops the picturesque through ideas to do with conflict and change. He also explores ordinariness – the suburban, rather than the grand /sublime representations of exceptional places. What effect is desired by the dialectic of the picturesque in Smithson's work? Eisenstein had particular effects in mind when using dialectical montage. Smithson, in a less overtly political way, saw the positioning of the viewer in forms of perspectival representation, nevertheless as having political implications. He wanted to destabilise the viewer's position, see it differently, with the possibility of inherent change implied by his use of references to the geological, and multiple, rather than a single, spatial system or form.

Smithson's work is a precursor, seminal, to seeing 'sites' and space as being the result of the 'practices' that take place in them. These two 'spatial' aspects of Smithson's work, the changing 'position' of the viewer (both literally in terms of scale, as well as his questioning of perspective) and his development /exploration of the dialectical multi-occupation of sites open up the possibilities of social change in Smithson's work.

The use of multiple mediums can be seen, as described by Peter Osborne when writing about the architectural aspects of Smithson's (as well as Gordon Matta-Clark and Dan Graham's) work, as *constructing* the space of the work of art.[24]

> Attention to the architectural mediations of the field of contemporary art teaches that the network of relations between materialisations (and the ultimate indifference in the ontological significance of different types of materialisation – 'plan'/'object') constructs the 'space' of each work. Hence we may derive the maxim: *To each work its own spatiality – singular in its temporal instantiations and*

[24] Osborne, Peter, 'Where is the Work of Art?: Contemporary Art, Spatiatisation and Urban Form' in Wittaker, Edward and Landrum, Alex, eds. *Nonsite to Celebration Park: Essays on Art and the Politics of Space* (Bath: Bath Spa University, 2007)

relations, but social and conceptual in its elements and structures of relations...[25]

The space of perspectival representation, challenged by Smithson, is superceded by focus on one that is constructed by a multiplicity of mediums, seen by Craig Owens as reflecting the spatio-temporal, allegorical character of Smithson's work and more recently by Peter Osborne as art's architectural spatial character.[26] The production of space developed and theorised by Lefebvre, its relationship to the urban and the connection between the urban and architecture, through the practices of artists such as Robert Smithson, opens up the consideration of multiple materialisations of contemporary landscape painting.

Sites and Non-sites

The materials and forms that Smithson used changed the understanding of the way that landscapes could be represented, as well as their relationship with the place of exhibition and the artwork's site. When he brought raw materials of landscape (earth, sand, boulders...) into the gallery space – making a statement about the connections between artwork and context, representation and the real – he questioned the understanding of what landscape was, decontextualising materials from their 'natural' context, making them strange in the gallery space. He used fragments to build up webs of references as well as constructing working processes that led to the breakdown or dispersal of structures or materials. Rather than the usual tools or traditional materials of the artist, Smithson's site and nonsite works use the industrial processes and machinery used in building and mining for the extraction of natural resources as an element of his work. Nonsite works that were not made up of trays of geological 'samples' might instead be made up of materials scattered directly on the floor like a building or excavation project alongside photographic material, maps, drawings, etc. This led, in some works to a sense of dispersal and

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[25] Ibid., p. 29.

[26] 'More generally, architecture stands for *a material organisation of social space in the present* at both conceptual and practical levels.' Ibid., p. 19.

sprawl, the entropic, and that there was no edge or boundary to the work – their horizontal emphasis additionally having associations with action rather than looking.

The relationship between the nonsite and site is often seen as standing in for the relationship between city and 'county': the nonsite located in the gallery space in an urban centre, the site in a location such as the suburban fringes or the 'wilderness' of the midwest. The relationship between city and landscape here is seen as reflecting and engaging in social relations, site and nonsite constituting each other, as do city and country. Smithson challenged the aesthetics of landscape, he opened up what it might be in terms of location and materials, as well as challenging landscape ideas in their spatial complexity.

Smithson specifically selected and traveled to overlooked or relatively unexplored places, concentrating on places that reflected what might be seen as the less attractive aspects of the capitalist relationship between country (or outskirts) and city, and brought back samples and sketches. His gallery space nonsites are seen as representations of the 'sites', as three-dimensional texts, as well as having the effect of being the documentation of the engagement with that particular site. Documentation took the form of both the physical samples and remains of interactions including photographs, drawings etc. Smithson (as well as other artists working in the same artistic milieu) initiated and partook in new ways for art to be explored and developed.[27]

> Smithson explained that he considered his Nonsites alternatives to the pictorial tradition and described his work in terms of a shift to the production and construction of 'logical pictures': 'By drawing a diagram, a ground plan of a house, a street plan to the location of a site, or a topological map, one draws a logical two dimensional

> picture.' A logical picture differs from a natural or realistic picture in that it rarely looks like the thing it stands in for. It is a two-dimensional *analogy or metaphor* – A is Z. The Nonsite extends this application of technique into the third dimension and can be understood as a reconfigured 'window' that is sited (and seen) both vertically and horizontally, more a map than a picture, more material than visual, more diagrammatic than pictorial, and as architectural as it is sculptural.[28]

Smithson identified the nonsite as a 'network of signs...discovered as you go along – that is as a text'.[29] These works have been seen in relation to the collage of Cubism which 'juxtaposed and superimposing separate registers of meaning within the visual field'.[30] Cubist collage here understood as both referring to a real (the site) and interaction with it by using fragments of the real (such as rock samples in this case) but also referring to the real through the use and interaction of the different fragments as language. A building up of relationships between parts takes place, a multiplicity, and as a result the element of time. Smithson challenged the Modernist partitioning of art into separate disciples of painting, sculpture etc.[31] As Hal Foster points out (responding to Craig Owens writing about Smithson), the principle (that the visual was static and the verbal temporal) was based on ideas with a linguistic orientation. It was this principle that made distinctions between the arts (and by extension Modernism) possible.[32] Seeing the work of art as a text to be read, or as composed of fragments, introduces the temporal previously

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[27] Such as Gordon Matta-Clark or Tony Smith for instance. Artists such as Joseph Beuys, whose work was often the remains of a performance or occurrence, could also be seen as engaged in this new way for art.

[28] Cat. Mark Linder, 'Towards "A New Type of Building": Robert Smithson's Architectural Criticism' in *Robert Smithson*, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Dallas Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, 2004–2005, p. 193.

[29] Craig Owens, 'Earthwords' in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992) p. 41.

[30] '...it is not the seamless web of the mimetic prospect, carried to its ultimate degree of finesse by Turner, but the collage practice of the Cubists, juxtaposed and superimposing separate registers of meaning within the visual field. Stephen Bann, 'The Map as Index of the Real: Land Art and the Authentication of Travel' *Imago Mundi*, no. 46, British Library, London, 1994, p. 14.

[31] Each with its own strict parameters as in the writing of Clement Greenberg.

associated with literary language and by implication questioned Modernism. Developing the possibilities of work that crossed between different mediums and concerns was associated with the liberating potential of postmodernism.

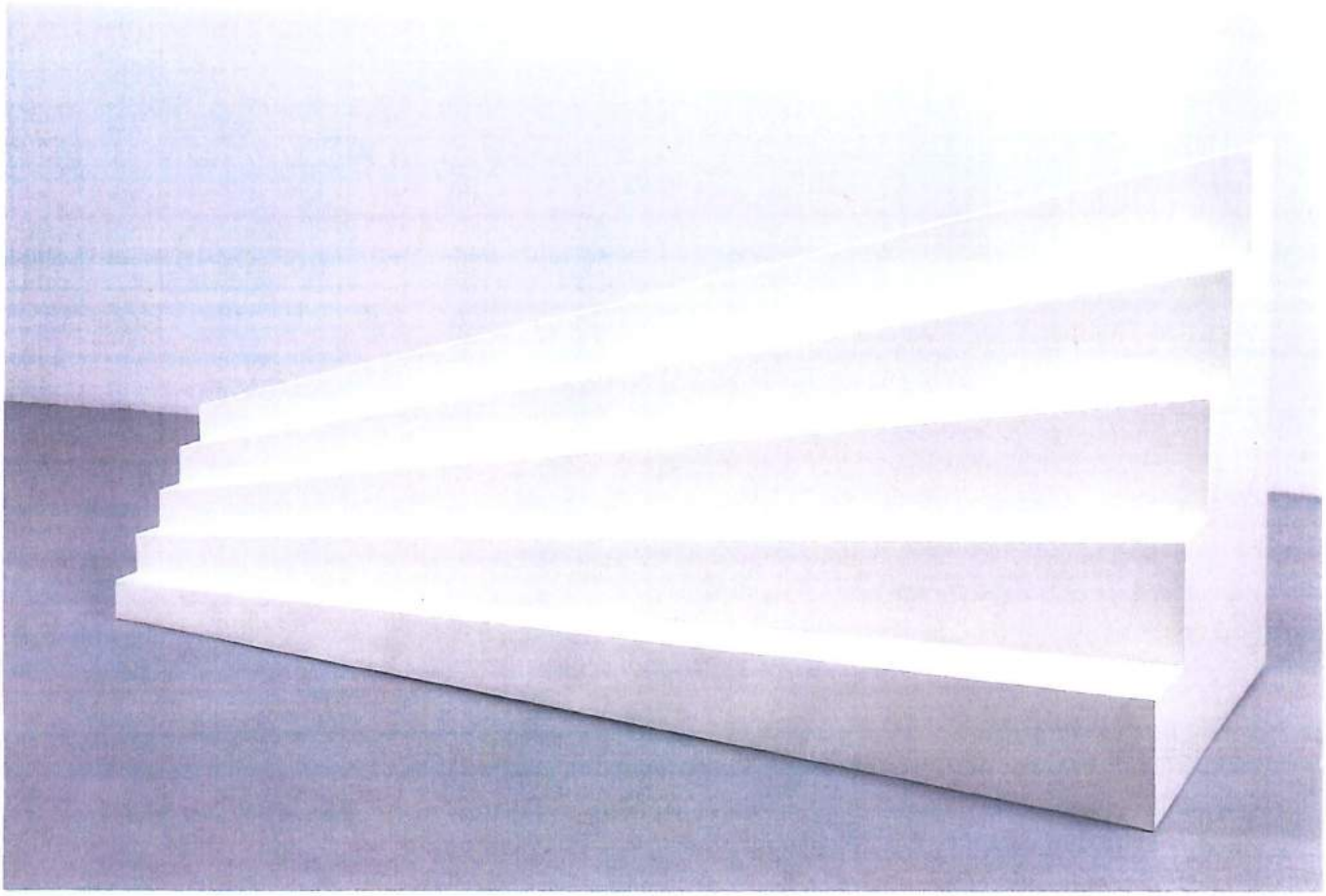
Craig Owens wrote about Smithson's work in terms of this crossing of boundaries/mediums. '[A]llegory implicates the two poles, spatial and temporal'.[33] Smithson's picturesque encompasses more than one category of understanding landscape and thus it is in the crossing of these boundaries that it comes into being. Smithson's practice could be seen in terms of an inter-relationship between, as well as different scales of, time and space, and upsetting the hard lines that had defined different disciplines. These are useful overlaps with the way that place (and landscape) are now thought about.

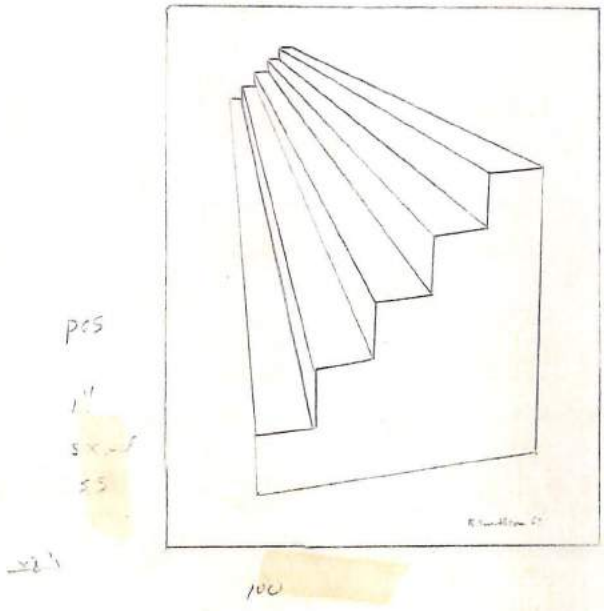
What does Smithson's work free painting up to do? Smithson's work acts like a hinge. Much of the work made at the time that Smithson was working was made as a revolt against painting, arguing that painting was redundant or, worse, an actively negative, elitist force. We can't turn to Smithson to find validity for painting but it is worth considering the new ways of thinking and understanding landscape that he strategically opened up, the implications for contemporary artistic practices and how what he established might be used in new ways. Smithson did engage with landscape, the rural outdoors. He is thought of as an 'earth artist' and did bring the complex re-evaluations of art practice that were taking place at that time to the genre of landscape. He brought to landscape (and the suburban) the 'spatial' concerns that were being found in, and applied to, considerations of the urban. In effect urbanising the landscape. It is in this crossing of boundaries that Smithson's work feeds into contemporary landscape painting, that it engages with debates about space and its manifestation in the social.

> ...the way in which their [Graham, Smithson, Matta-Clark] respective experimental relations to architecture led to a fluid multiplicity of forms or materialisation of works that produces a form of artistic spatiality beyond, yet nonetheless still tied to, 'objects': a spatiality defined by relations between practices, materials and forms...[34]

Paintings and artworks can be signs, signifiers with specific lifetimes, but with the capacity to be put in new contexts and for their meanings to change. I am suggesting that landscape painting adopts, or accrues new meanings through practices such as Robert Smithson's. The idea of landscape calls for changes in landscape painting and as a result it is changed by practices that are not immediately associated with it.

[33] Op cit., Owens, 'Earthwords' p. 49.
[34] Op cit., Osborne p. 19.





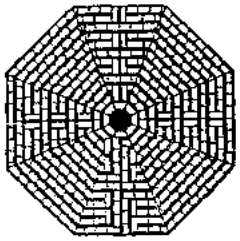
Top: Robert Smithson,
Pointless Vanishing Point, 1967.
Below: Robert Smithson, *Untitled*
(Drawing for *Pointless Vanishing Point*), 1967.

Robert Smithson, Aerial view of *Spiral Jetty*, 1970, Great Salt Lake, Utah, 2003.

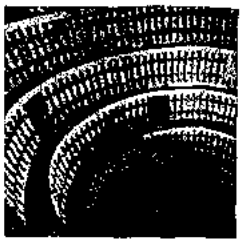
Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space

For many artists the universe is expanding; for some it is contracting.

By
ROBERT SMITHSON

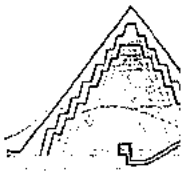


1 The Amiens Labyrinth (France)



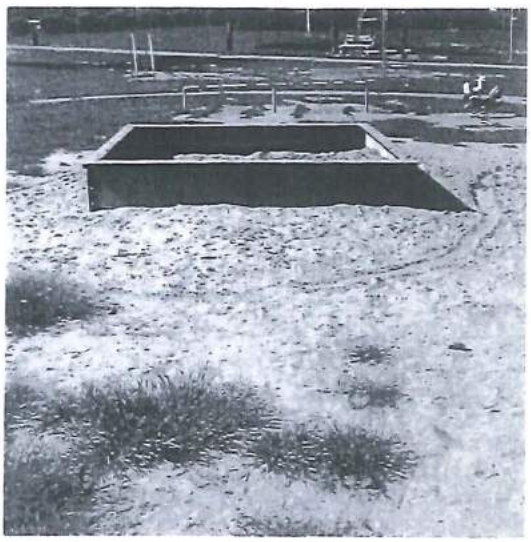
2 Built for Fabricus University of Padua

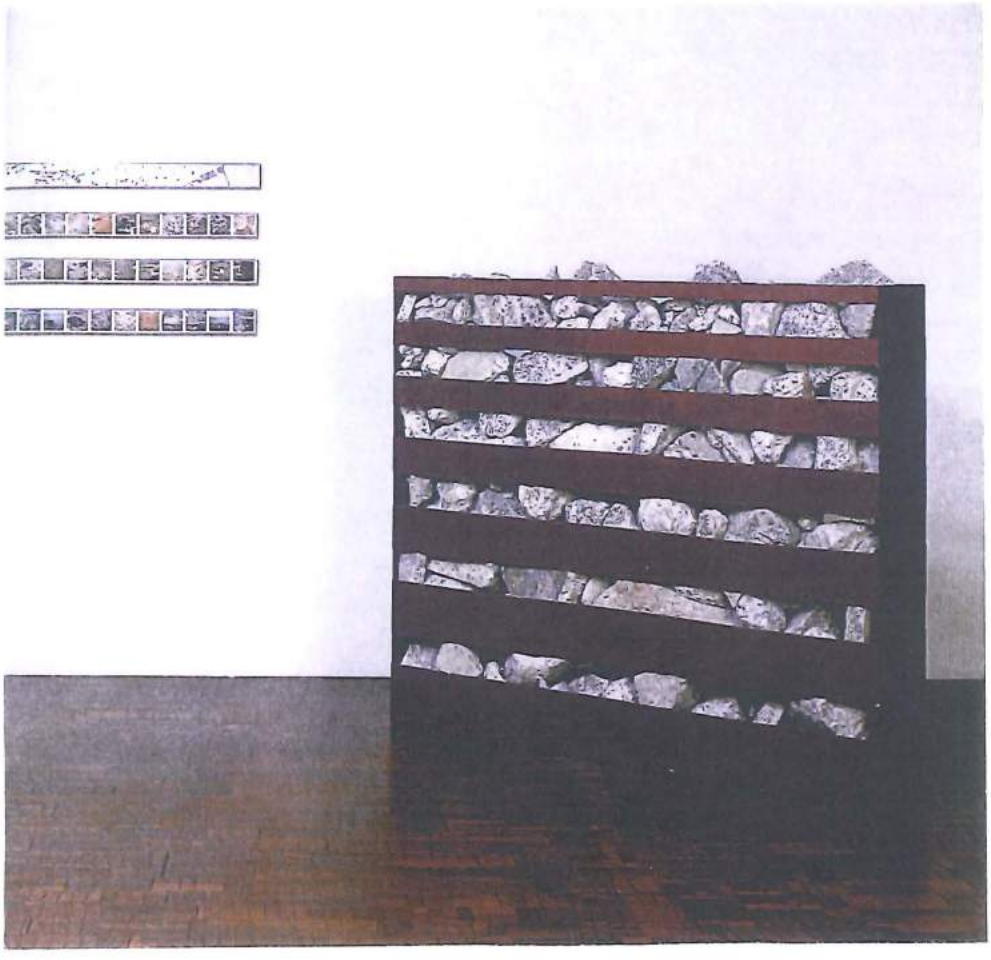
A ROUND FOUR BLOCKS of print I shall postulate four ultramundane margins that shall contain indeterminate information as well as reproduced reproductions. The first obstacle shall be a labyrinth[1], through which the mind will pass in an instant, thus eliminating the spatial problem. The next encounter is an abysmal anatomy theatre[2]. Quickly the mind will pass over this dizzying height. Here the pages of time are paper thin, even when it comes to a pyramid[3]. The center of this pyramid is everywhere and nowhere. From this center one may see the Tower of Babel[4], Kepler's universe[5], or a building by the architect Ledoux[6]. To formulate a general theory of this inconceivable system would not solve its symmetrical perplexities. Ready to



3 The Pyramid of

Top: Robert Smithson, *Central Park, Gaptow Bridge with mud slough*, 1972, Photograph.
Below: Robert Smithson, *Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space*, Article and layout, Arts Magazine, November, 1966.





Top left: Robert Smithson, *Monuments of Passaic: The Fountain Monument, Side View*, 1967, Photograph. Top right: Robert Smithson, *Monuments of Passaic: The Sand-Box Monument (also called The Desert*), 1967, Photograph.
Below: Robert Smithson, *Nonsite: Line of Wreckage, Bayonne, New Jersey*, 1968, Mixed media.

ALIGHIERO E BOETTI

Alighiero e Boetti felt that his work had affinities with the writings of scientist and philosopher A.N. Whitehead and Whitehead's concept of 'process (in place of reality)' and of 'events (in place of things)'.[35] Boetti explored the relationship between order and flux by subjecting his material to a disordering process, as well as exploring the relationship between mathematical systems and nature.

Boetti's early works from the late 1960s were more sculptural than painterly and were connected to conceptual concerns that were of interest to the artistic community (based in Turin) that he was part of. He was concerned with looking at everyday materials and objects differently, seeing them as having artistic and philosophical potential. In his later work, Boetti makes objects that relate to painting, questioning and moving painting into a different place through bringing his exploration of 'process' and 'event' to 'painting'.

Perhaps unexpectedly, in addition to his interest in process and event, Boetti believed in the power and importance of the image, the icon.

> Alighiero confided the secret to me. In every time and place...the essential thing in art was the flat, two dimensional image: photo or ex-voto, calendar, calligraphy or mandala, whether extravagant or simple, eternal or fragile, a chosen icon.[36]

According to Annemarie Sauzeau, Boetti's first wife and sometimes artistic collaborator, Boetti considered himself a painter. His work sets a precedent for thinking differently about what painting might be. While he often did make 'flat, two dimensional images', his work is not painting in conventional terms. For instance, he made works that were fabricated by others; he believed being a painter didn't necessarily involve being the

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[35] Annemarie Sauzeau, *Alighiero e Boetti, Shaman/Showman* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2001) p. 185.
[36] Ibid., p. 22

maker of the object. For Boetti, being a painter was a process that both involved other people and other parts of the world, as well as materials that are not traditionally considered painting materials.

Near the end of his life, Boetti corresponded with and exhibited with the artist Frédéric Bruly Bouabré whose work consists of drawings with drawn frames on playing cards. The sheer number of these works and the way that each individual one consists of an image, with the word that describes the image below, means that they are seen as though they are attempting to record all the words in a language. Boetti described the connections between the two artists' work and how Bruly Bouabré's work was significant for him. He saw the individually painted playing cards that Bruly Bouabré makes as a game for describing the world and for communicating with it – a double function. The work was both an image, a way of describing the world, and a form of interaction with others.

Boetti was also interested in the frames around each of Bruly Bouabré's cards which Boetti compared to the walls of a house, once the walls are built it allows for the space of the house. The frame creates a blank and neutral space

> ...around the central image in order to make it more precious and in order to better define what is inside and what is outside.[37]

This is how he saw the positive role that the frame of painting played which he related to architecture and architectural space. Boetti's work may also be seen to operate in this way. Each work is self-contained, has its own integral identity but is seen as part of a larger 'game of cards', a process which both describes and communicates with the world – a language that uses representations as well as physical and conceptual interaction.

Boetti's well known work – the embroidered maps – open up different areas of interpretation from other forms of maps. We learn a sense of distance, through process, that encompasses both a simultaneity and a distinction between different places in the world. Boetti uses pre-existing maps as a template and alters how we read and interpret them. In his version, the apparent selective information that we are presented with is the interaction of the colours and schema signifying the national flags of each country depicted at the moment that the map was made. Each of Boetti's maps is based on a school map, traced out and given to an embroiderer in Afghanistan who used the images of national flags to 'colour in' the corresponding countries. Over time, the changes to the national borders each national flag fills in and shows, portrays a changing political world. Sometimes the angle at which we see the map is altered – rather than looking at the plan from a position near the equator, our viewing position is below the equater, reminding us how the maps that we use distort so that the northern hemisphere is shown larger than it is. The interpretation (the 'hand' of the maker) of the concentrations of colours, the positioning on the ground and the background colour all vary the overall effect hugely. The technical means of making Boetti's images changes them from being what is seen as information presented in the clearest way (as it is for the school map), to commissioning craftspeople to undertake large-scale embroidery projects. The maps are no longer presented as transparent information when they are presented in this way. While the maps show us an image of places in the world, it is not the map itself but the *process* of his work that describes his relationship to the places pictured.

The Thousand Longest Rivers in the World, the book and embroidery project that Boetti and Annemarie Sauzeau undertook together, records the lengths, in descending order, of the thousand longest rivers in the world. Their conclusion, as a result of their research, was that all scientific notions (the characteristics of the rivers such as their length) are bounded

[37] Cat. *Worlds Envisioned: Alighiero e Boetti, Frédéric Bruly Bouabré*, Dia Centre for the

and determined by political understandings. The changes recorded in the embroidered maps over time also point to this. The geographical world changes because of political developments and allegiances in addition to, and sometimes more significantly, than physical changes. Boetti makes

> ...complex conceptual works which connect different communities previously unaware of each other through complex quotidian processes involving geography, politics, economy, time.[38]

The use of maps in Boetti's works differs substantially from the way that maps are used in the work of artists such as Douglas Huebler or Dennis Oppenheim who were also exploring the role that maps might play in their work. However, it was the scientific look of them, the lack of the artist's touch, the apparent appeal to hard facts, contrasted with expressive potential, that were motivations for the use of maps in their work. Although they do not make direct reference to political events in the way that Boetti does, all of these artists use maps in order to change our concept of art.

Other works by Boetti, based on words and non-descriptive phrases (*The Six Senses*, 1973, for example), evoke a strong sense of the natural world. The commas that Boetti uses as a code for deciphering the words and text that the works refer to are like stars in the sky. Other works that use words and commas in this way look like rippling water, the surface of bark or rock, even though the artist limited the materials to everyday, standard blue, black, red or green biro ink. In these works Boetti makes text into a landscape based on process and again made in collaboration with others (other people actually made the work, determining the densities of the biro marks and giving a particularity to individual works whose form was determined by Boetti). Through this process he made images of landscape that Annemarie Sauzeau saw in relation to Yves Klein's and Piero Manzoni's work, in that they

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Arts, New York, 1994–95, p.97.
[38] Cat. Francesco Clemente interviewed by Louise Neri, *Alighiero e Boetti*, Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2001, p.88.

> ...create their own (infinite) reality ...[rather than a] subservient relationship to reality.[39]

Instead of the elemental colour or materiality of Klein and Manzoni's 'paintings' though, a different 'infinite reality' or landscape image emerges in Boetti's work, one much more connected to the everyday through the processes that he uses to determine and fabricate the work.

In the installation view of Boetti's 1968 exhibition at Galleria De Nieubourg, Milan, we look down at several works that are emerging from what looks like the bed of a dried-up river – a carpet of pebbles and small stones. From this 'riverbed' emerges objects that are made of everyday materials – pre-cut bits of wood and pre-cut industrially produced paper doilies. These are grouped together or piled in ways that echo minimalist strategies but, within the context of the riverbed, make shapes that might be diagrams of different forms of proliferation and extension (growth) – processes that take place in nature. Likewise, Boetti's piece, *Lampada annuale*, 1966, that alights once a year at an unpredictable moment, has the irregularity of random events in nature rather than the regular timetable of work or trains. Using man-made materials, Boetti alludes to the processes and unpredictable occurrences in time that take place in nature. If landscape refers to the processes and different scales that take place *in nature* then 'landscape' is understood in different ways and is opened up to being different things, it is no longer exclusively an image of what we might see.

> What we discern is the specific character of a place through a period of time. This is what I mean by an "event".[40]

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[39] Cat. Paola Morsiani, 'Alighiero e Boetti: Halving to Double', in *When 1 is 2: The Art of Alighiero e Boetti* (Houston, Texas: Contemporary art Museum, 2002) p. 12.
[40] Alfred North Whitehead, *The Concept of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926) p. 52.

> The theory which Whitehead proposed was that the ultimate facts with which science deals are 'events': the ultimate facts of nature in terms of which all physical and biological explanation must be expressed, are events connected by their spatio-temporal relations. Nature as it is given for sense-awareness is not constituted by simply located bits of matter...The immediate fact for awareness is the whole occurrence of nature. It is nature as an event present to sense-awareness, and essentially passing. There is no holding nature still and looking at it.[41]

Whitehead developed a theory of multiple space-time systems based on observations made possible with new technology. He argued that objects may be operating in different space-time systems simultaneously. An object may operate/be in different space-time systems not only at different moments of its history but at the same moment.

> The classical scientific materialism that saw a notion of the simultaneous instant throughout nature had to be rethought to accommodate different notions [and kinds] of temporality.[42]... There has been a tendency to give an extreme subjectivist interpretation to this new docterine. I mean that the relativity of space and time has been construed as though it were dependent on the choice of the observer.[43]

Rather than understanding the configuration of each simultaneous instant as being linked to the subjective position of the observer (or viewer), simultaneous instants co-exist in different notions of temporality – different meanings of the simultaneous instant for different strands of temporality. The possibility of a unique subject position is therefore decentered, meaning that not only is it *not* possible to perceive the relationship

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[41] Ivor Leclerc, *Whitehead's Metaphysics* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958) p. 9.
[42] Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929) p. 148.
[43] Ibid., pp. 148–149.

between time and objects, but that the experience of time and objects cannot be understood in any unified way.

> What we must now ask of philosophy is to give us an interpretation of the status in nature of space and time, so that the possibility of alternative meanings is preserved.[44]

Boetti plays with and disrupts our notions of time. Each year he would have a customised watch made and rather than having the hours of the day dividing the clock into easily readable quarters (12, 3, 6, 9), there were the numbers of the calendar year (1, 9, 8, 0). We are able to 'read' the time still but an unexpected scale of time measurement has been superimposed onto what we expect. Similarly, each year Boetti created a New Year 'card', a semi-transparent palimpsest, a year number made up of overlapping numbers from the day and month pages of a paper desk calendar. By destabilising how time is understoood in relation to the objects that Boetti makes, he questions the relationship between objects and time (and space and time) in ways that can be related to Whitehead's re-evaluation of their relationship in nature.

While Whitehead's theories were developed in relation to nature, Boetti's connected his interest in different cultures, in chance and in synchronicity to scientific ideas about multiple time-space systems. Boetti believed that unconscious knowledge exists in a space/time continuum, making it possible to experience and perceive parallel events simultaneously in the conscious and unconscious mind. Furthermore, that they can collide in synchronicitous situations, or perhaps be related to intuition. This is a capacity that is tied to human intervention and involvement in contrast to events that happen in nature, that are not tied to human presence. Boetti also developed an idea that meditative thought can be seen to acknowledge and encompass the contemplation of other times and places, while speculative (conjectural thought, based on theory or practical

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[44] Ibid., p. 149.

knowledge) thought would be associated with present time. A combination of the two forms of thought could be brought together in relation to and as a reflection of his ideas of synchronicity.

> Whitehead's docterine, in his own statement, is 'that "existence" (in any of its senses) cannot be abstracted from "process". The notions of "process" and "existence" presuppose each other'[45]...
> 'Process', in its fundamental sense, is this 'process of becoming' of an actual entity: *its* existence (i.e. being) is constituted by *its* 'process' (i.e. 'becoming'). Actual existence, the existence of actual entities, is *constituted by* their 'acting'.[46]

This is an idea that can be seen in relation to more contemporary ideas about urban space and how it is a product of the processes that take place there. Boetti sets up structures or frameworks for his work where the 'process' of these works' coming into existence is unpredictable. This takes place at the level of the literal accumulation of material – the individual stitches of embroidery and colours of thread to make the object, and the way that they are brought together in the object. There is slippage in the gaps between the decisions made by different people who are part of the process. These works are also unusual in the way that they are produced, in their use, of a global system associated with commerce. Boetti's work can be seen in terms of the process of becoming, the idea that place 'becomes' through the practices that take place there, and in this case it is a global place.

Norman Rosenthal suggests that there is a democracy to Boetti's work in its use of accessible subject matter and his working together with other people in the production of the work. He writes that Boetti's work may continue the legacy of Joseph Beuys' social sculpture.[47]

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[45] Op cit., Leclerc, *Whitehead's Metaphysics*, p. 69.
[46] Ibid., p. 70.

> In inventing his motifs based on *Maps*, language and signs, it seems to me that Alighiero Boetti consciously or unconsciously felt it a moral imperative as an artist to cut loose from the framework of little Europe. He accepted the Eurasian challenge of Beuys to bring together in creative dialogue western and eastern systems of logic, mathematics and pattern making, as well as ideas about education and belief systems.[48]

However, Boetti's works might also be seen as exploitative, using the inexpensive labour and traditional skills available to him because his collaborators were outside of the cultural milieu and economic circumstances that would make them equals – seen as co-makers rather than technicians. While Boetti avoided the 'cult of personality' associated with the commercial art world, he was enmeshed in questions about the 'space' of global inter /exchange. His work draws attention to the complex issues involved and allows for different interpretations.[49] Boetti's frequent use of references to games suggests that his perception was that collaboration and interaction was taking place rather than exploitation.

Several of Boetti's works point to a relationship between order and disorder and many of these works explore this through text. Many of the text pieces that he made were composed in squares – the orderliness of the positioning of the letters in the square combined with the disorder, the reordering of their position from their usual linear readings. Other text pieces, such as the ballpoint pen works, also play with overlapping systems of order and disorder – the 'order' of the system or code and the disorder of the undulating, unpredictable surface that is the background (or

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[47] Cat. Norman Rosenthal, 'Recognizing Alighiero, Recognizing Boetti', in *Alighiero e Boetti*, Gagosian Gallery, New York, 2001, p. 5.
[48] Ibid., p. 7.
[49] Nicholas Bourriaud has more recently taken a position that can be seen in similar terms. 'Nowadays, the word "art" seems to be no more than a semantic leftover of this [the art historical] narrative, whose more accurate definition would read as follows: Art is an activity consisting in producing relationships with the world with the help of signs, forms, actions and objects.' Nicolas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics (Paris: les presses de réel, in French 1998, in English, 2002) p. 107.

the surrounding 'space' that Boetti describes) for the 'text'.[50] These works destabilise normative conventions of thinking about time through the ways that we read and write, create narrative.

Mathematical permutations and perfect numbers were also developed into textile designs that Boetti collaborated on with Afghani weavers and embroiderers. He was influenced in his designs for these textiles by 'magic charms (or squares) from the first centuries of Christianity. These compositions were described as 'interwoven' because they were structured by warp and weft.'[51] This gave a rationale for the works being literally woven but also gave a structure in which to disorder or scramble the letters of the words that were incorporated.

What Whitehead establishes is that from a scientific and philosophical position, order and disorder are both offshoots of the relationship between space and time. Contemporary philosophers and writers such as Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Elizabeth Grosz have developed the idea of 'event' as integral to their outlook, significant both in terms of an understanding of time-space relations but also in terms of change and its possibilities.[52]

> Events are ruptures, nicks, which flow from causal connections in the past but which, in their unique combinations and consequences, generate unpredictability and effect sometimes subtle but wide-

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[50] 'A good picture should work on different levels...Thirdly, and lastly, the most hidden and difficult dimension to explain. It is as if, while writing a word in black on white paper, one could succeed in making visible the white form that the black writing determines around it. It is something that normally is not grasped. Those are the three levels in the work of art. They correspond to the three levels of knowledge according to the esoteric docterine of the Sufi. The third, far beyond subjectivity, is rarely reached.' Alighiero e Boetti in op cit. Sauzeau, *Shaman/Showman*, p. 132.

[51] Ibid., p. 117.

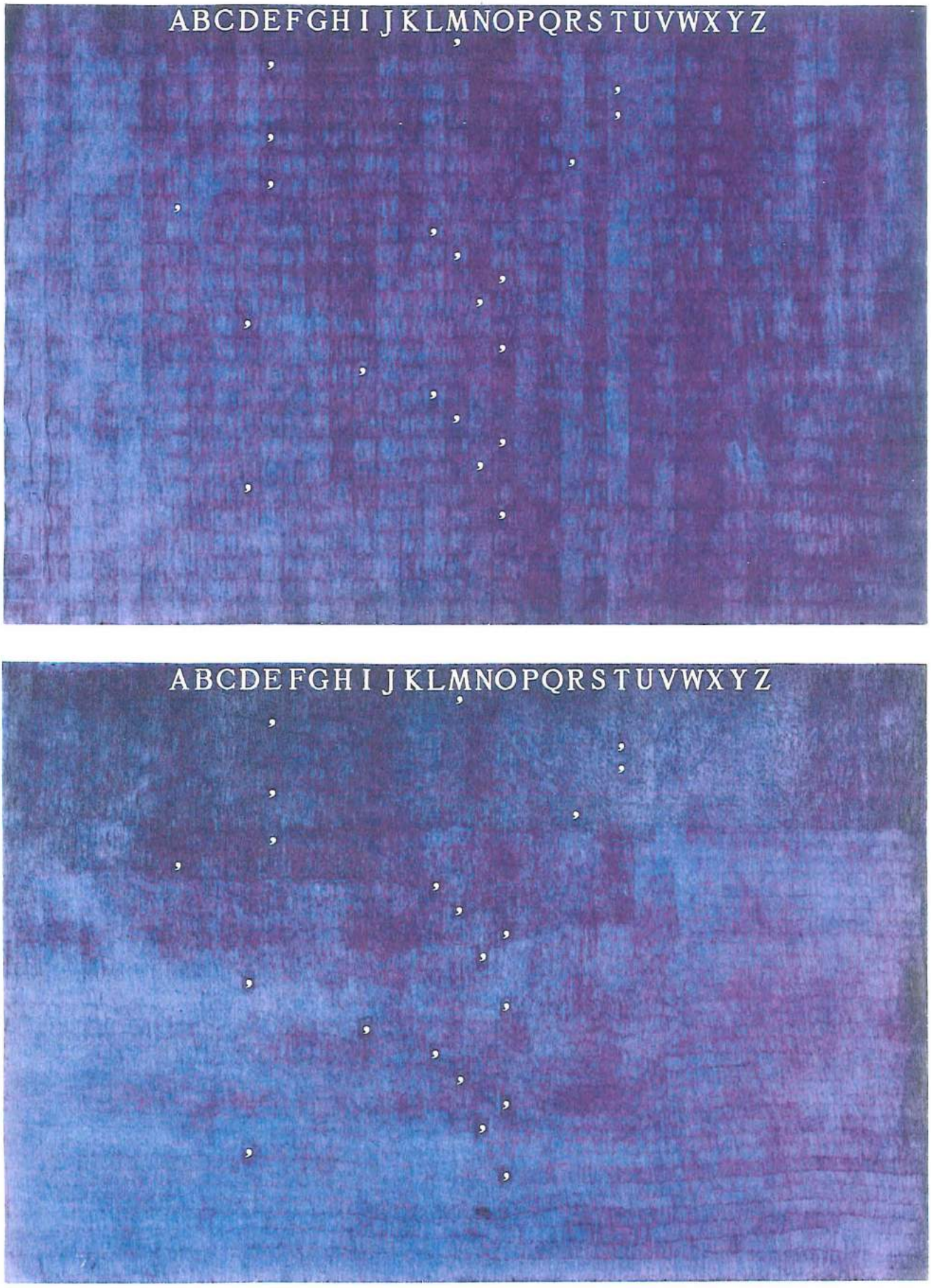
[52] 'In A Thousand Plateaus Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari refer to life's production of "lines of flight", where mutations and differences produce not just the progression of history but disruptions, breaks, new beginnings and "monstrous' births. This is also the event: Not another moment within time, but something that allows time to take off on a new path.' Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002) p. 57.

> ranging, unforeseeable transformations in the present and future. Events erupt onto the systems which claim to contain them.[53]

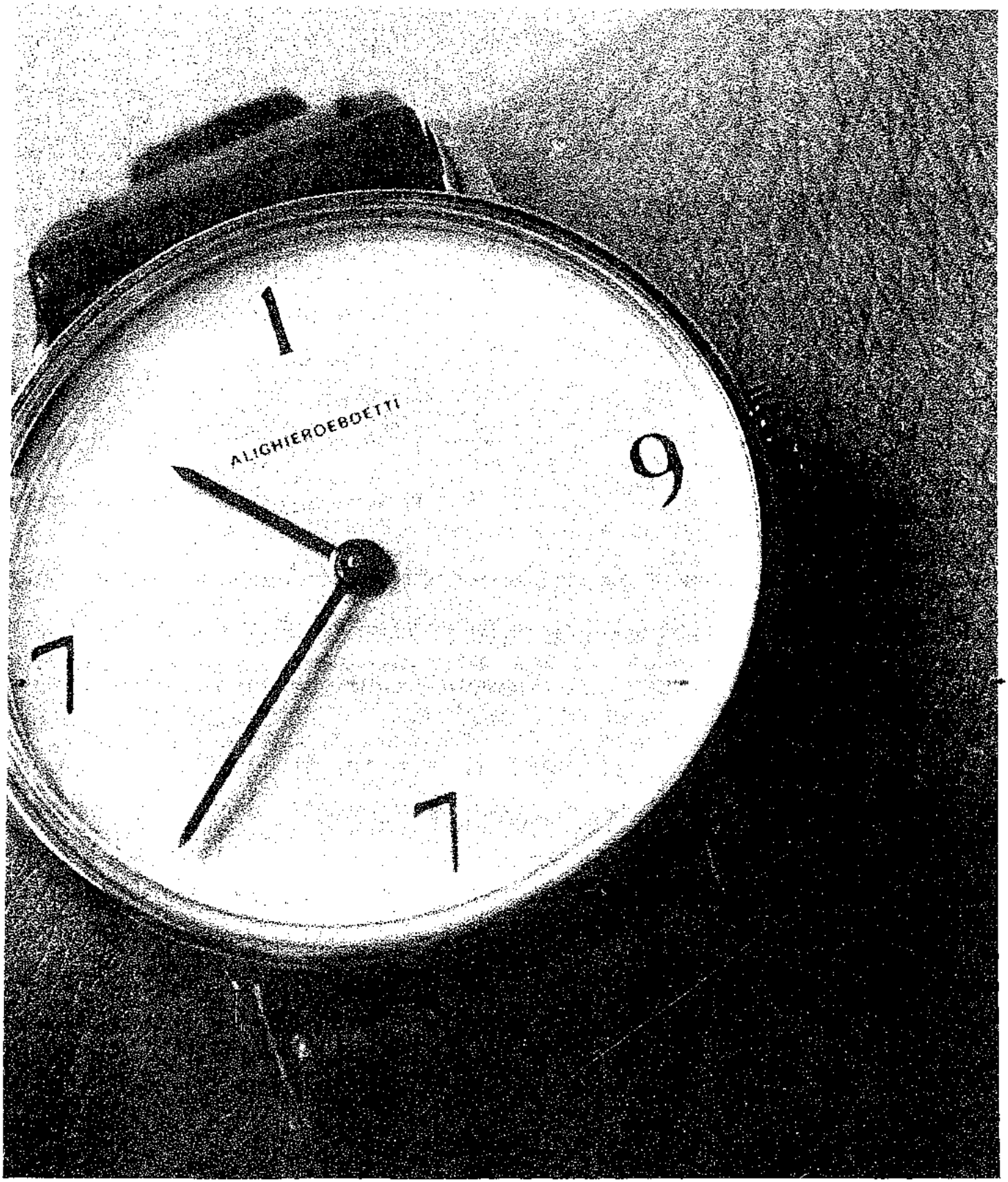
Drawing on scientific research, such as Whitehead's, their emphasis is on the unpredictable and its possibilities for change. These are also often the aims of artists using montage and mapping. Boetti approaches these ideas through his use of order and disorder.

In Smithson's work, it is 'nature' that is scattered, that is the model for disorder and entropy. Boetti looked to other cultures and found an understanding of nature that had resonances with the scientific/ philosophical interpretations of A.N. Whitehead. Boetti found different ways of thinking about order and disorder in the other cultures that he researched, where, for example, natural phenomena were explained by means of numerical diagrams. Boetti brought other cultures and ways of working (working with others as well as different techniques of working) inside the frame that he wrote about in relation to Frédéric Bruly Bouabré's work. He did this through process, bringing the 'outside' 'inside', the frame operating as a connection rather than a separation from its context and from the everyday. Boetti gives the artwork the space to both represent the world and to propose a way of engaging with it.

[53] Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2004) p. 8.

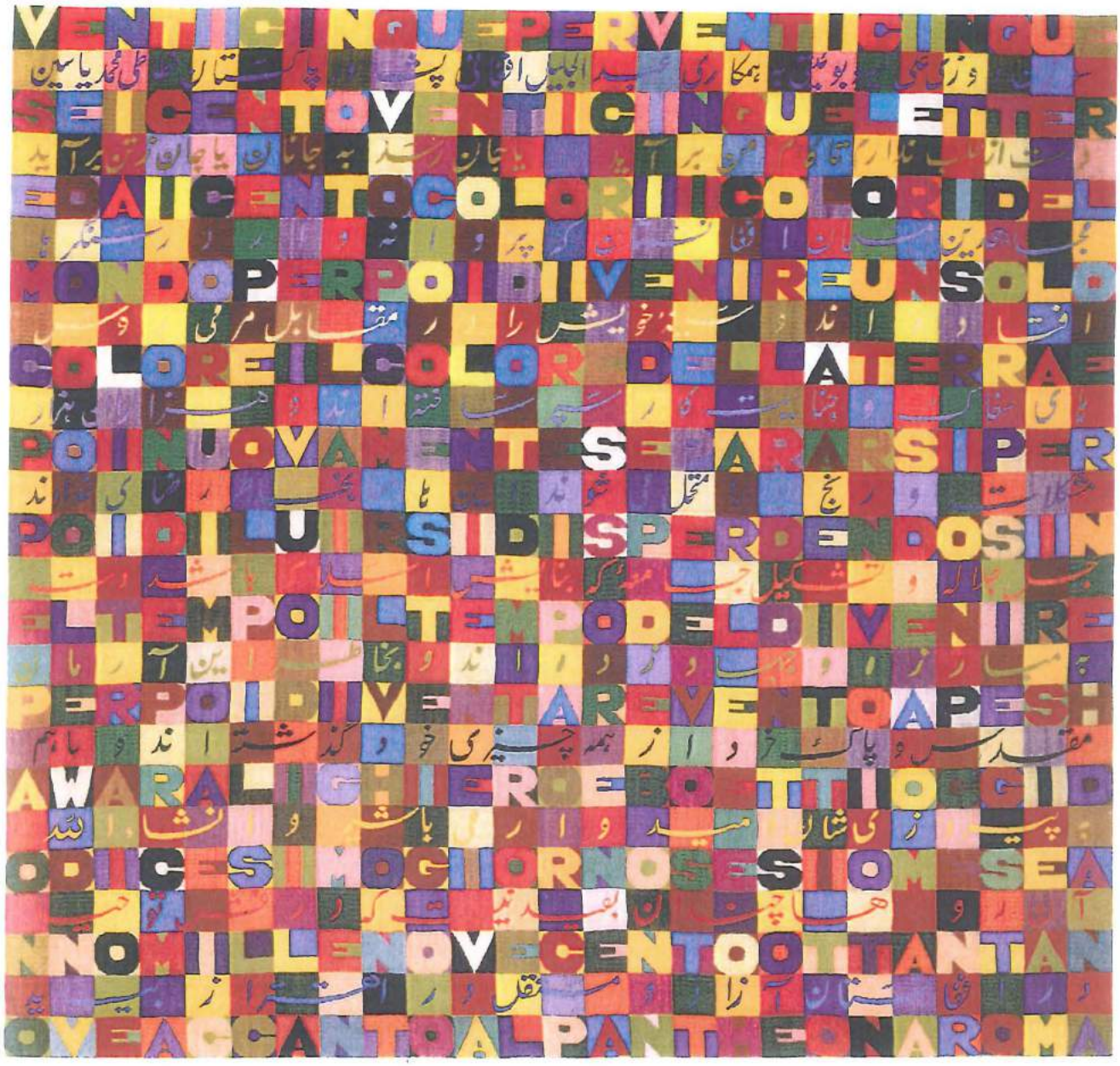


Alighiero e Boetti, *Mettere al Mondo il Mondo* (To Give Birth to the World), 1972–73, Blue ballpoint pen on paper, 2 elements, 158 x 242 cm. each.



Alighiero e Boetti, *Watch*, 1977.

Top: Alighiero e Boetti, *Mappa*, 1984, Embroidery, 114 x 166 cm.
Below: Alighiero e Boetti, *Mappa*, 1983, Embroidery, 116 x 172 cm.



Alighiero e Boetti, *Untitled (Far Quadrare Tutto)*, 1978, Embroidery, 107 x 113 cm.

EUGENIO DITTBORN

The activation of painting's engagement with actual and social spaces, opens up landscape readings in Eugenio Dittborn's paintings. It is a social and political world that Dittborn is depicting as landscape, using the structural, spatial, character of how he puts parts together in his paintings. The Chilean political situation that Dittborn found himself working in was a repressive regime where both artists and activists were at risk. It is from this position that he re-invigorates ways of thinking about landscape, depicting a particular place in new ways, exploring a particular space of difference as landscape.

Landscape is often equated with pictures but what kind of picture? These questions arise not only because Dittborn uses unstretched 'canvases' (made from a synthetic unwoven fabric) and a technique of pasting or sewing different images together, but because Dittborn incorporates travel into how his paintings function. He makes travel part of the painting, the process of getting from one place to another is one of the materials that he uses. Not only a material, he says

> [t]he travelling is ... the political element of my paintings.[54]

What he calls his *Airmail Paintings*, travel because they are oriented toward

> ...overcoming/producing the distance between...*two* specific sites: that of the sender and that of the receiver...[55]

It is in this relationship, the traversing of space and the passing of time, the overcoming of distance through travel undertaken and the production of distance in the awareness created by his work, that Dittborn develops the political orientation of his work.

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[54] Cat. Guy Brett, Sean Cubitt, Roberto Merino, Gonzalo Munoz, Nelly Richard, Adriana Valdés, *Mapa: The Airmail Paintings of Eugenio Dittborn, 1984–1992*, ICA, London and Witte de With, Rotterdam, 1993 and 1994, p. 20.

The work of travelling that these paintings do is as important and crucial as their role in the gallery. The way that we understand and think about these works in a gallery context is influenced by the knowledge that they have been made, have adapted, to their task of travelling through the post and are materially presented so that we cannot avoid this knowledge.

These paintings have a physical similarity to printed maps, sharing a common folded structure, and it is this structure that enables them to become an easily transportable size; to be folded into large envelopes that are sent through the post. Through this folded structure they make apparent what it is that the paintings do (travel through the post), and as a result, point to all the thoughts that that travel implies. In relation to these works, travel invokes thoughts of distant lands, the unknown, escape.[56]

However, these works also share with mapping the attitude that sees the activity of mapping as

> 'visualising, conceptualising, recording, representing and creating spaces graphically'.[57]... '[through] processes of mapping rather than ...maps as finished objects'.[58]

The processes of mapping in his work open up questions about how the relationship between different places in the world is formulated and developed.

Dittborn's work engages with the idea and the reality of distance. He uses the inherent space and time of distance to make his work show some of the effects of distance that effect him personally and that effect a concept

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[55] Ibid., p. 25.
[56] Other artworks travel as well of course but the process of travelling and its possible implications are invisible.
[57] Denis Cosgrove, 'Introduction: Mapping Meaning' in Denis Cosgrove, ed., *Mappings* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999) p. 1.
[58] Ibid., p. 1.

of a geographical world. Space and time articulate (describe) distance and have political repercussions.

> In [Dittborn's painting], place is utterly permeable, a punctual arrival always ready to depart. Place is already a matter of distance, in which space and time are inextricable.[59]

His work's traveling, and their connecting of the places that they travel to, activates connections as well as questioning preconceptions about the relationships between different parts of the globe.

The physically disjointed character of Dittborn's work, the fact that it is divided into sections by its folds and that many different 'bits', individual images on separate surfaces are attached to the base surface, points to the *lack* of connection between parts of the work /world; a disrupted narrative. In the journeys between places that these paintings make, a narrative is formulated through the departure, travelling and arrival at their destination(s). Dittborn draws attention to a disrupted or broken narrative though.

> Narrative is ... a practice that produces reality and subjectivity, a "worlding" of the collective Imaginary, which is not exactly a map, but rather linked to the kind of dense mental representation constitutive of the imageability and legibility of space.[60]

The geographical position of Chile and its spatial relationship to other parts of the world is determined both by its distance from the economic and political centres of Europe and North America as well as by the political situation of the early 1970s that saw the diplomatic separation of Chile. This goes some way to explaining the significance of Dittborn's use of mapping and spatial references. How Chile was (and is) positioned in

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[59] Cat. Sean Cubitt, 'Dispersed Visions: "About Place"' in About Place, *Recent Art of the Americas*, Art Institute of Chicago, 1995.

relation to other artistic as well as economic and political centres is key to our understanding and relationship to his work. Dittborn shifts and changes the spatial representations associated with or expected of a map of Chile as a way of opening up the possibilities of 'social and political action to change the world'.[61] He engages with the problems of places that are not directly experienced, but that are part of the 'landscape'; we are confronted with the 'distressedness' of his paintings simultaneously with our lack of understanding /knowing the place called Chile.

Dittborn's paintings engage with two kinds of space – the physical space that the paintings traverse in their travels to different parts of the globe as well as the space between the images that are scattered across their surfaces. The second space, of images across the surface, is not just the literal space between images (or between the writing and images) on the surface of his work. It is also the space created by the disparities between how we react and understand these different images. These relationships create and leave a space to traverse, to travel through, as the eye meanders between images and text making leaps between disjointed imagery, involving the viewer through the (dis)connections that they make. While Dittborn discards the stretched surface of painting, he keeps the surface in an altered form. It is on this surface that his scattered images and text are displayed. The viewer must actively participate in the construction of relationships between fragments of images, how they go (or not) together.

Dittborn brings together individual elements within the structure of his work to present what is a particular place, or a situation, that is clearly Chile. It is possible to see Dittborn's work in terms of the interpretation of mapping that sees the two dimensional surface as having the potential to 'stage' a scenario, an 'actuality or desire' and that this surface may play an active role in the development of plans or actions. Edward S. Casey writes about

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[60] Berndt Clavier, *John Barth and Postmodernism: Spatiality, Travel, Montage* (Lund: Media Tryck, Lund University, 2003) p. 118.

the surface of landscape paintings and maps as places of presentation, of activity, rather than representation –

> ...the places of the world, are presented and not merely represented in paintings and maps [62]

Dittborn's paintings are an active explanation and exploration, the presentation of an idea (and a place) rather than a representation of 'the real'. Dittborn's *Airmail Paintings* engage the viewer with the shifting space of relationships between the local and the global in unexpected ways. His work, in its travel, articulates and opens up questions about how a global space (and a global art world) can be conceived. He mobilises the scale of 'the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny'.[63] His works, in their interaction with global space and time as well as the viewer, attempt to, or strive for the possibility to, draw attention to the historical circumstances and the sometimes unknown existence of the political situation in Chile, as well as Chile's world position. As described in an earlier chapter, geographer Doreen Massey makes the proposition that both space and history (or time) are open and that an openness of space brings with it a concomitant possibility for openness of history and as a result, for 'radical democracy'.[64] The openness of space and history that allows for radical democracy that Massey writes about, the acceptance of the principle that anything is possible, underlines the political importance of circumstances under which democracy is possible. The way that Dittborn's work is made, its openness and changeability is significant as an underlying principle in Dittborn's attempt to understand, re-think and present Chile in a different way and to open up, think about new possibilities.

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[61] Edward Soja, *Thirdspace: Jouneys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) p. 46.
[62] Edward S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 248.
[63] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London, Thousand Oaks, California, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005)
[64] Ibid., p. 11.

The travel that Dittborn's map-like paintings undertake is like a form of dissemination of information with a purpose and a subversive attitude, like flyposting, rather than a gathering together of information. They *perform* through their travelling; travel is an intrinsic part of their identity as well as being a structural element of them. Sending a painting through the post like a letter means that it has to have an economy of means. In addition to being surprising, the works are accommodating and versatile and this opens up possibilities for interpretation of the use and meaning of the works. In relation to the political environment they were made in we can understand the makeshift, travel 'arrangements' of Dittborn's work. Physically, these are light works, aware of their weight in order to be more mobile. Travel allows communication. A 'letter' creates a relationship between the places that it travels to at the same time that it acknowledges that the distance between locations must be traversed. A letter can have a sense of direct personal connection and a sense of urgency and Dittborn's paintings have this. They have a quality of being stripped down to the minimum, like a message or a note made from whatever is to hand and 'smuggled' out. Or, that under difficult circumstances a way has been found to communicate a message, that it was hard to find a way of sending it. Like the images of footsteps, snails or rafts contained in the painting *Airmail Painting No. 74* these 'messages' seem to have a basic-ness to them, a lack of communication technology used, perhaps to show that it has been unavailable. All these physical characteristics are part of how these map /paintings perform, drawing the viewer in to participate in an understanding of what they are about. They give a sense of the 'real' of living in Chile, but indirectly (avoiding the censor's gaze?).

The use of the historical, anthropological photos incorporated into the surface of the work comment on the need to speak indirectly about injustice and the 'disappearance' of people. Not only do they allude to the unjust treatment of indigenous peoples by the first European explorers and settlers, these images, by proxy, are reminders of the disposability of anyone in a repressive or corrupt regime such as that of the military Junta of 1970s Chile. The way that these paintings are made engage the viewer

actively to say something about and give a sense of Chile. Their passage through the post becomes part of a whole mediation on closeness and distance, on 'periphery' and 'centre', on contact and abyss.[65] The idea of distance is highlighted and defines the relationship between what is being depicted and the viewer in these works. The viewer is caught up in questions about distance and difference.

The envelopes that contain the folded segments of the paintings are an integral part of the work. While each painting takes the same folded form, the way they are made is open to variation across the body of his work in both the number of panels that make up each work and in the combination of images that are used. The envelopes are a record of the journey that has been made and are exhibited alongside the unfolded paintings/maps. These paintings are different than paintings that are meant to occupy a stable position and location. They are transformed through their journey and become more like paintings that are the residue of an 'action' such as Yves Klein's *Anthropometries.*[66] They *become* the paintings that they are through the travel that they undertake – they both come into existence and are transformed in this way. We look at them differently knowing that they have traveled in the way that they have. Attention is drawn to what those journeys connote and make the viewer reflect upon: the space of distances, the historical time used to speak about the present.

In addition to the images of indigenous peoples, these paintings display other groups of reproduced photographic images of faces – police photographs of petty thieves and criminals that have been reproduced in Chilean detective magazines (and then reproduced again by Dittborn). In a painting such as *Airmail Painting No. 78: The 7th History of the Human Face (The Scenery of the Sky)*, 1990, the photographs of the petty

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[65] Cat. Guy Brett, with texts by the artists and Lu Menezes and Paolo Venancio Filho, *Transcontinental: Nine Latin American Artists* (London and New York: Verso in association with Ikon Gallery, Birmingham and Cornerhouse Gallery, Manchester, 1990) p. 6.

[66] Where Klein asked female models to move across the surface of canvases laid on the ground after having paint applied to their naked bodies. Their movements left traces of paint which comprised the paintings, the 'residue' of their actions.

criminals are juxtaposed with reproductions of children's drawings of faces. The contrast between the two types of images is extreme. The photographs show people beaten down by circumstances, in a state of acquiescence. They have come to a kind of end and have been placed in a system of classification. The children's drawings of faces give a sense of the beginning of things, about exploration of the world and what a face can be and by extension what a person can be, an exploration of identity. The two types of images placed side by side create a yawning gap between very different feelings and reactions. They seem irreconcilable, creating a contrast between confinement and innocence: it is difficult to react to both types of images at the same time. Juxtaposition of images does not always have this type of montage effect.[67] Often a combination of images is used to build up a sense of interactions that say more than a single image. Dittborn's configurations of images create a sense of profound distance in their differences. Once again he uses distance to speak about the differences between people in time and place.

Dittborn deliberately calls his works 'paintings', positioning his work within a tradition that his work fits within uncomfortably. He constructs his paintings using collage. The distinction between collage and construction, debated and argued by the Russian Constructivists, has resonances in contemporary discussions of mapping and can be applied to Dittborn's work. Constructivists (such as Aleksandr Rodchenko and Vavara Stepanova) believed that their artistic work had direct relations with the design of objects that would generate new processes and reflect new

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[67] The artist David Salle who also uses disparate images across the surface of his paintings is a contemporary example of an artist that asks us about how we read different kinds of discontinuous imagery. His work has been perceived as being related to the ideas of simulacra developed by Jean Baudrillard in which an equivalence and exchange between images, referring to nothing outside themselves, can be seen to reflect the loss of the 'real' value of production and wealth that takes place in capitalism. Images interact with each other in his work but, despite changes in scale and style, do not attempt to refer to a 'real' in the sense of depiction. They reflect a world that is a play of exchangeable, reproducible and equivalent images rather than using the meanings that the images might have to construct new meaning. His use of images is not generally interpreted in the same way that techniques of montage and photomontage are understood to undermine the political implications of a unified image or that by 'destroy[ing] the mystique attached to the concept of the unique work of art, [photomontage] was truly a 'mass' art form'.

tasks and new audiences for their use. Their drawings and objects, using materials related to industrial production, had a purpose and would be judged in relation to their effectiveness in relation to that purpose rather than in aesthetic terms (or rather the aesthetic terms were different). They believed that the distinction between construction and other artistic practices had profound implications – that constructivist practices were part of a revolution and that their work contributed to the aims of that revolution. Intensely debated was the issue of whether collage was related to the construction of objects in the real world and had a role to play in suggesting different ways of building and perceiving a new, socialist world. Some forms of maps are seen as archeological displays of fragments 'simply array[ing] its extracts as a muted archaeology' (Doreen Massey) while other interpretations see maps in relation to performative possibilities (James Corner) in their representations.[68] Dittborn's paintings use collage techniques with constructivist aims, bringing fragments together to actively construct connections between disconnected images, drawing on a history of collage seen as having political possibilities, reflecting as well as making his work active in constructing social space, a space-time landscape.

Dittborn's work can also be seen as having direct connections with the 'constructivist' (applying constructivist principles in a new political situation) work of Helio Oiticica and Lygia Clark. Rather than the design of utilitarian and aesthetically pleasing furniture or clothing, Oiticica's *Parangoles* and Clark's sculptures are artworks that are to be used, they are utilitarian objects but in an art context. In the case of Oiticica's works, they are to be used to draw attention to the spontaneous decisions of the wearer, who would engage with the physical character of the object while also being engaged with the character and pace of everyday life. Or, with Clark's sculptures, to create situations where 'viewers' interact with the work, where the physical and psychological interactions between viewers are engaged.

(Christina Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven, Connecticut and London: Yale University Press, 1983) p. 186.
[68] Op cit., Corner, *Mapping*, p. 236.

> The cape is not an object but a searching process – it is not a finished object and its spatial sense in not definite. It is more a constructive nucleus, laid open to the spectator's participation, which is the vital thing...Its structure is unveiled through the direct bodily action of the spectator.[69]

Both Oiticica's and Clark's work reflected changes in the political situation in Brazil at the time that they were working, new aspirations and desires for emancipation that would also be reflected in personal relationships. Dittborn uses related strategies to make his complex space-time landscape paintings/maps.

The apparentness of how Dittborn's Airmail Paintings are put together draws attention to the conceptual landscape they present as well as the physical (world) landscape through which they travel. His work uses the crossover between collage and construction to speak about a global landscape, opening up an awareness, new ways of thinking and acting in relation to it and as part of it.

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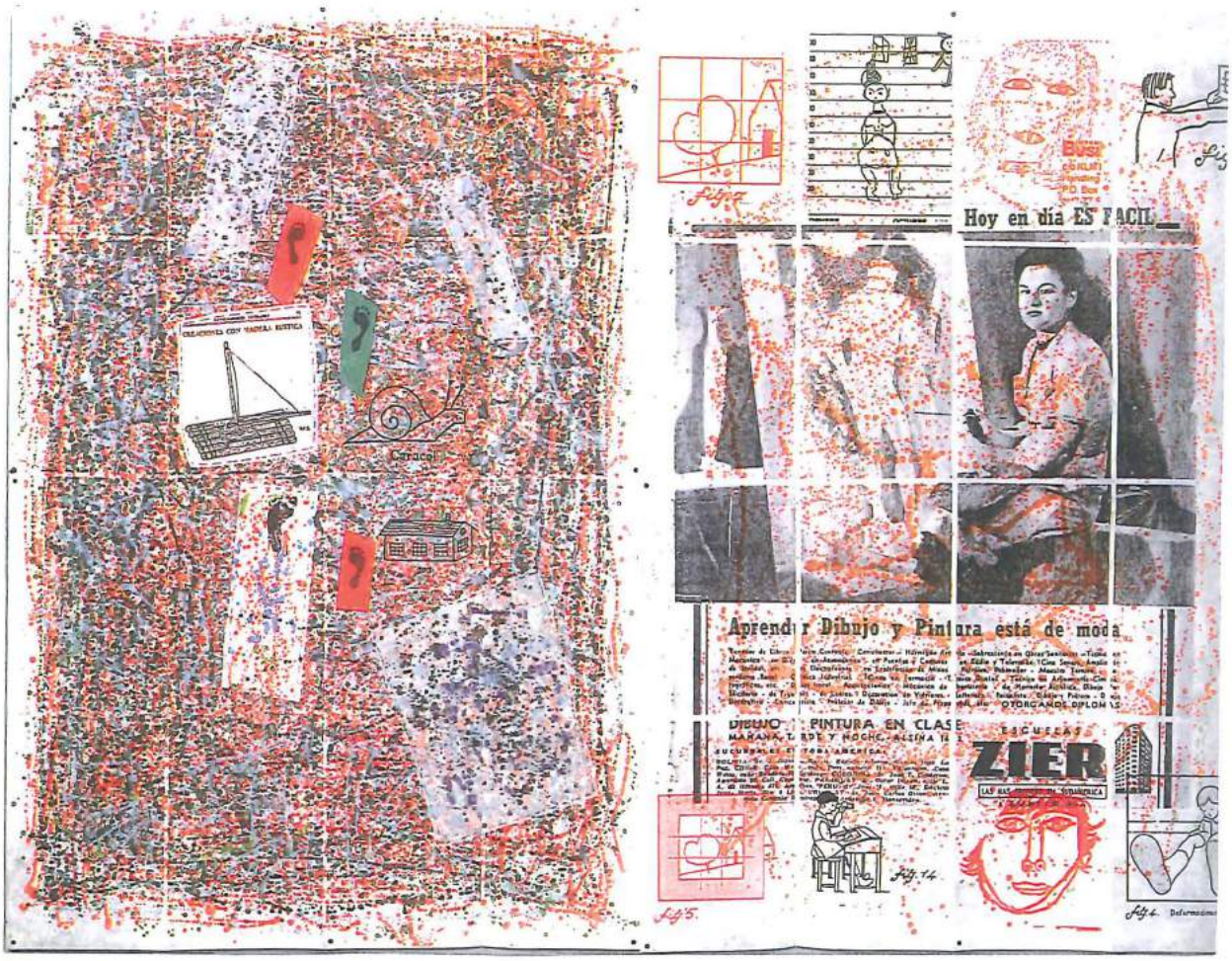
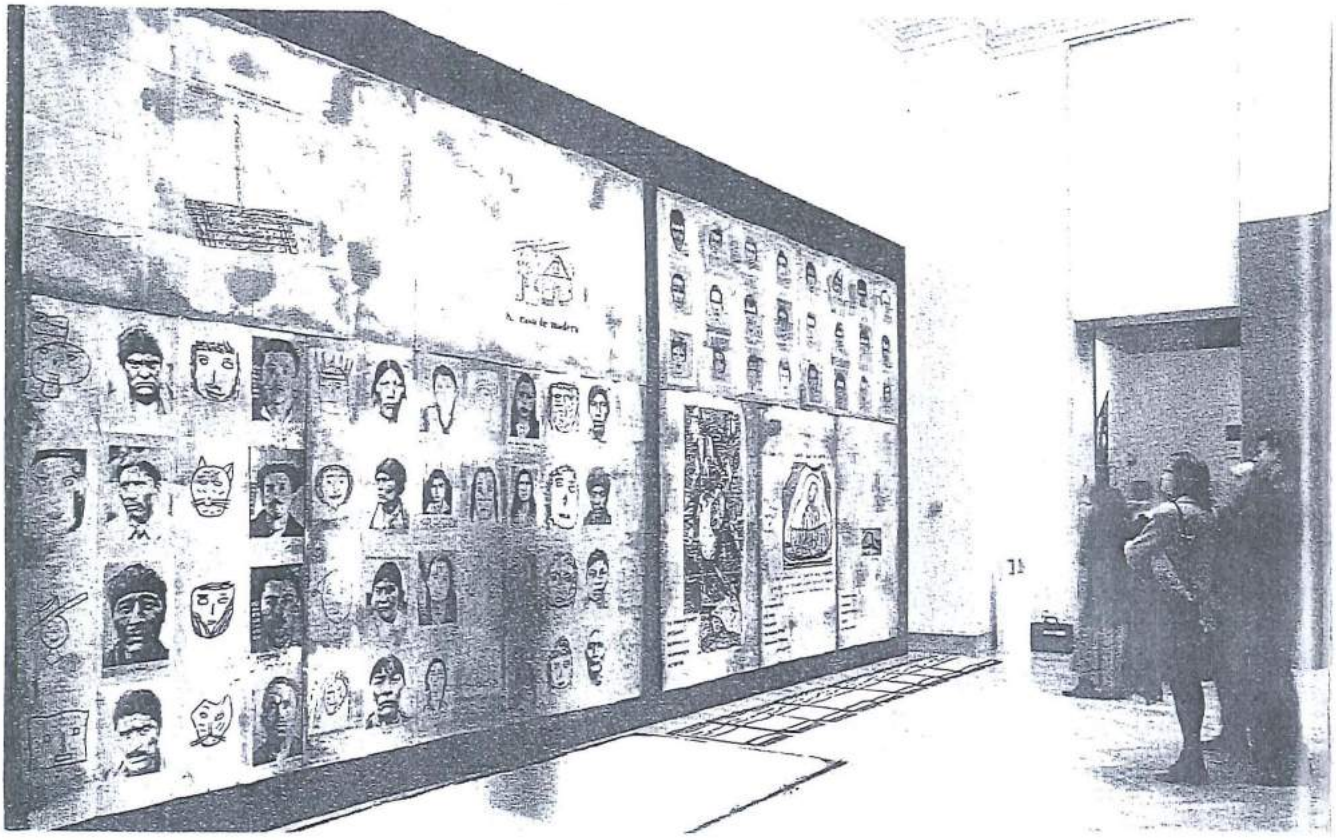
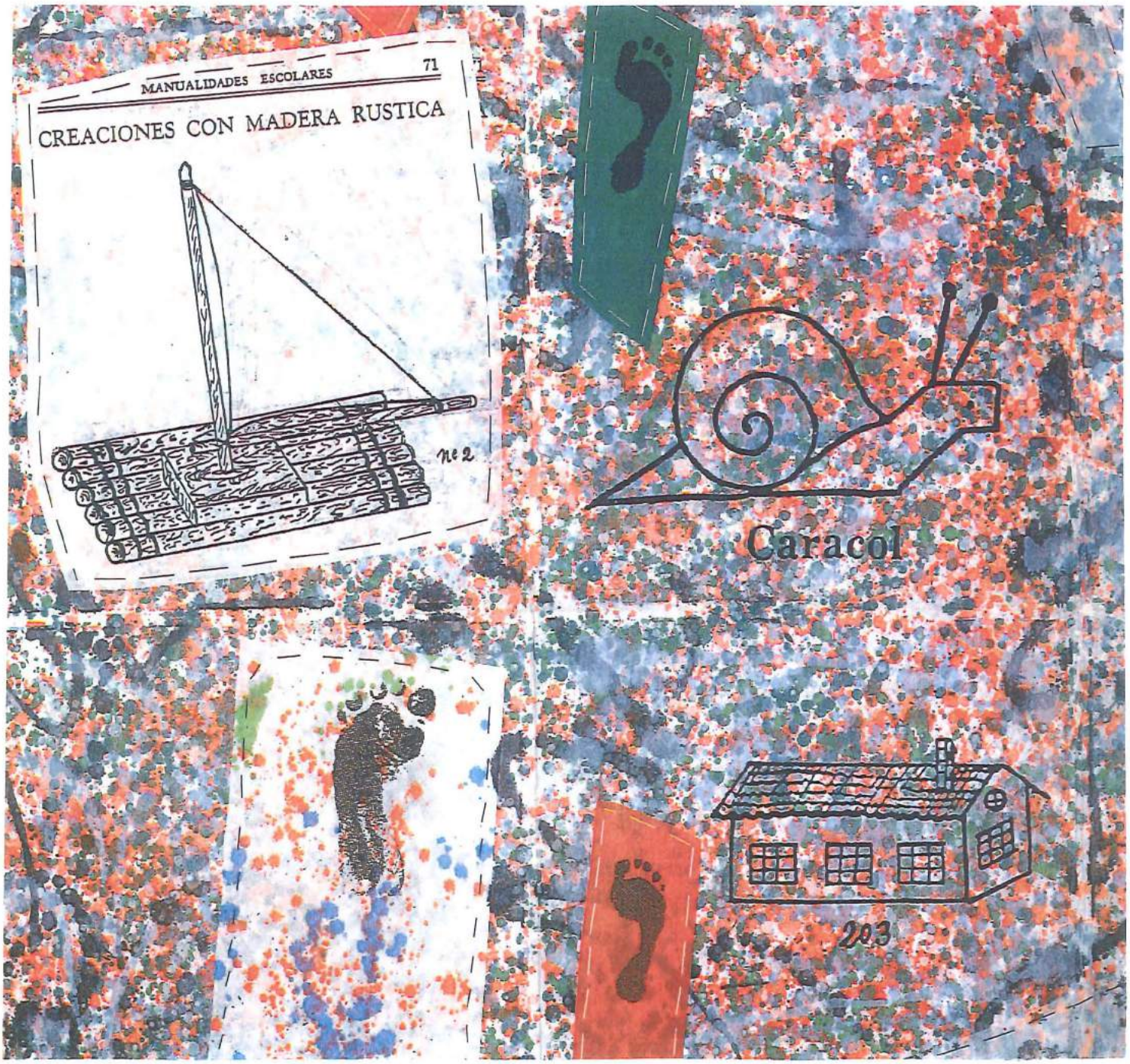
[69] Cat. Helio Oiticica, *Eden*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1969.





Top: Eugenio Dittborn, *Airmail Painting No. 74: The Gloom in the Valley*, 1989, Paint, stitching and photosilkscreen on 2 sections of non-woven fabric, 210 x 28 cm.

Below: Eugenio Dittborn, Installation view, *Airmail Painting No. 95* with drawing inscribed in salt and the 10 envelopes in which the work traveled from Santiago de Chile to the Koninklijk Museum, Antwerp.



Eugenio Dittborn, detail of *Airmail Painting No. 74*, 1989.

Eugenio Dittborn, detail of *Airmail Painting No. 78: The 7th History of the Human Face (The Scenery of the Sky)*, 1990, Paint, stitching, charcoal and photosilkscreen on 2 sections of non-woven fabric, 215 x 280 cm.

la casa, the letter, the house,
la casa, the letter, the house,
la casa, the letter, the house,

CHAPTER 4
CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE PAINTERS

Recent scientific and philosophical interpretations in addition to new developments in technology as well as global politics change the perception and thus character of place(s) and space-time. An attention to place(s) and space-time as the criteria used to define landscape painting means that some artists can be seen as landscape painters even though that is not their intention. Equally it might be possible to see contemporary landscape painting in relation to historical landscape painting in different ways. The following artists make work that I am approaching in the context of landscape painting as explored in this text. They can be seen in the light of an engagement that fits with the way that ideas of space-time have developed and that relate to landscape.

Julie Mehretu

By layering individual, visually delicate, drawings of details and types of architecture from different historical times and places from around the globe, Julie Mehretu creates composite images that can be seen as reflecting a relationship between 'country and the city'. Also, as an accumulation of images, in the simultaneity of seeing them together in her work, they do not refer to one space or time. There is no 'archeology' to the connections between these images – in the sense that these connections can't be read as having historical meaning. They imply the time and space needed to travel between places, through the absence of space and time. Amphitheatres, for instance, point to a physical space that is articulated through its function, and to the Roman and Greek historical periods that they were made in. But they, and other buildings such as the Parthenon, and what they symbolise, are no longer separated by geographical space or historical time from the White House in Mehretu's work. Geography and history no longer hold sway. The drawings disconnect the historical knowledge that we bring to the individual architectural structures and imply different flows through a global world.

The co-existence and heterogeneity of the spaces /places in Mehretu's work suggests their interaction as simultaneously utopian and arbitrary, a reminder of the contradictory nature of imagery and information that is made possible on the internet.

Mehretu scatters the drawings of buildings seen from different viewpoints across the surface of her work. However, the individual drawings are also orchestrated into an abstract shape or flow which altogether creates a new image that gives a sense of energy or movement. The viewer is pulled in because the placing of the accumulated images creates an immense visual space, seeming to suggest the sublime. *The Seven Acts of Mercy*, 2004, is composed so that a dizzying sense of depth leads to a single point, thus exaggerating the perspectival system used to place the individual images and drawing attention to the work's singular viewpoint. The overall image takes the form of what looks like a room, a stage or stadium, into which the viewer looks.

Mehretu uses the graphic language of maps. While not literally maps, their diagrammatic look, and the architectural drawing technique used, gives the impression of information that might be used to understand how the different depicted spaces interrelate, how things work. Mehretu's delicate drawings of architecture are changed, overlaid and eroded, through a multiplicity of references loaded one on top of the other. The specificity of each reference is lost in the overall effect. Mehretu is attempting to create one solution to the problem of representing, she is

> ...re-enacting...the process by which [the contemporary urban landscape comes] into being.[1]

Her drawings can be understood as creating the effect of

[1] Laura Hoptman, 'Crosstown Traffic', *Frieze*, issue 54, Sept. – Oct. 2000, p. 107.

> ...the contemporary city [as] simultaneously in evolution and devolution; always changing but never coalescing into a whole.[2]

The urban landscape comes into being through a multiplicity of shifting processes and functions. Mehretu's work can be seen in relation to these processes, constructing an image that implies the multiple activities and functions by which the contemporary urban landscape is made through her technique of accumulation and overlay. However, her work does not look like cities, so that when she says that she is re-enacting this process the viewer becomes more aware of the way that 'forces' are shown, the positioning and ways of making marks in addition to the layering of images, obscuring them or clarifying them.

> Lauri Firstenberg: Does this gesture of superimposition of various urban schemes underscore the homogeneity and interchangeability of global geographies or their differences?
> Julie Mehretu: The mechanics of capitalization seem to be constructing a homogenous landscape. However, the various determining local responses to these similar places are especially interesting to me – the forces of individual identity and culture in response to and contributing to the forces of a Mc-World.[3]

However, her work has an apparent similarity to the possibility of 'the homogeneity and interchangeability of global geographies'. As a result her work is positioned at the interface of being an active counter to the leveling attitude to the global associated with 'the forces of a Mc-World' while using the same techniques (of interchange between undifferentiated global references) in visual form. When she says she is interested in the various determining local responses, looking at her work it seems that Mehretu is suggesting that the sense of being able to move the drawings of locations around, shifting them, their lack of apparent fixedness, implies an

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[2] Ibid., p. 105.
[3] Lauri Firstenberg, 'Painting Platform in NY: Matthew Ritchie, Julie Kehretu, Barnaby Furnas', *Flash Art*, Nov/Dec 2002, p. 72.

empowerment on behalf of the viewer. It is a question of the ability to re-position rather than change entirely. Mehretu is attempting to achieve an interruption or subversion of that (Mcdonald's type) homogeneity in her work. She says that the small marks that move across the surfaces of some of her early works are 'agents', they are active participants in the dynamic interplay of parts that make up the surface. They swarm across and through the drawings and shapes that Mehretu has articulated and displayed there, creating flows of movement and activity. The 'agents' weave through the spaces and structures, interacting with them but also breaking up the clear spaces that the architecture delineates. The agents more recently take the forms of different types of symbols, the kind that appear on maps, each one standing in for something, having a role. They interact with each other, standing separately, being overlaid or erased like players in social and political games. In addition to the flows of agents through the works, more recently, fluid lines, that remind the viewer of natural forces – wind, fire, clouds – also play a role in the work. These 'flows' through the spaces she draws suggest an euphoric sense of freedom and optimism that connects an idea of movement with change.

Mehretu's work brings Michel de Certeau's writing to mind. He writes about the ability of the 'common man' to work with social structures and the space of the city in ways that shift his/her relationship to it from one of being controlled and determined by it to one where a degree of empowerment is possible. It is in this sense that I understand the affinity that Mehretu feels with the socially subversive agenda, the utopian impulse, of Carravaggio, what she calls her 'language of resistance'.[4]

However, Mehretu, like de Certeau, does not address herself

[4] Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson, 'Julie Mehretu: Found Rumblings of the Divine', *Parkett 76*, 2006, p. 26. 'Her belief in the possibility of change remains strong, as is evidenced by 'Seven Acts of Mercy', 2004, which takes its title from a work of the same name painted by Caravaggio in 1607.'...''Mehretu's abstract representations of the triumph of good can be seen as a call to action.' Ibid., p. 30.

> ...to questions of comprehensive social reform. [De Certeau's books] cannot and do not claim to provide us in themselves with a self-sufficient framework for political action. They set out instead to contribute in a necessarily partial way to the opening of new symbolic and conceptual spaces.[5]

Her use of multiple images of different spaces is reminiscent of de Certeau's discussion of the stories that the walker, 'the common man', creates on his/her journey through the city. He alters and 'customises' his journey as a result of his associations and personal experience as well as the understandings of the socially and politically determined environment that he engages with. Mehretu's journey and references are global, an expanded space of interaction. There is a tension in her work (as in de Certeau's ideas) between the possibility of the alteration and appropriation of architectural 'spaces' that she explores and, the constraining overall structure. Mehretu's use of architectural imagery is a reflection on actions and the social spaces that they determine and take place in. She uses architecture as a metaphor for forms of social interaction and control but also plays with how it is possible to circumnavigate, or get around the predetermined routes defined by architecture.

> I am really interested in re-questioning the expressionistic aspects of painting. Not from the traditional center of the expressionistic gesture. I am questioning how mark-making can be a recording of an experience or attitude. Can mark-making be an activist proposition?[6]

The interaction of the body with the canvas, in the work of Jackson Pollock (such as *One*, 1950) for instance, is seen as having disruptive and destabilising effects. The unpredictable nature of Pollock's engagement, the unpredictable character of his gestures, can be seen as an activist

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[5] Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and its Other* (Cambridge and Oxford: Polity Press, 1995) p. 159. Ahearne is writing about de Certeau.
[6] Op. cit., Firstenberg, 'Painting Platform in NY', p. 72.

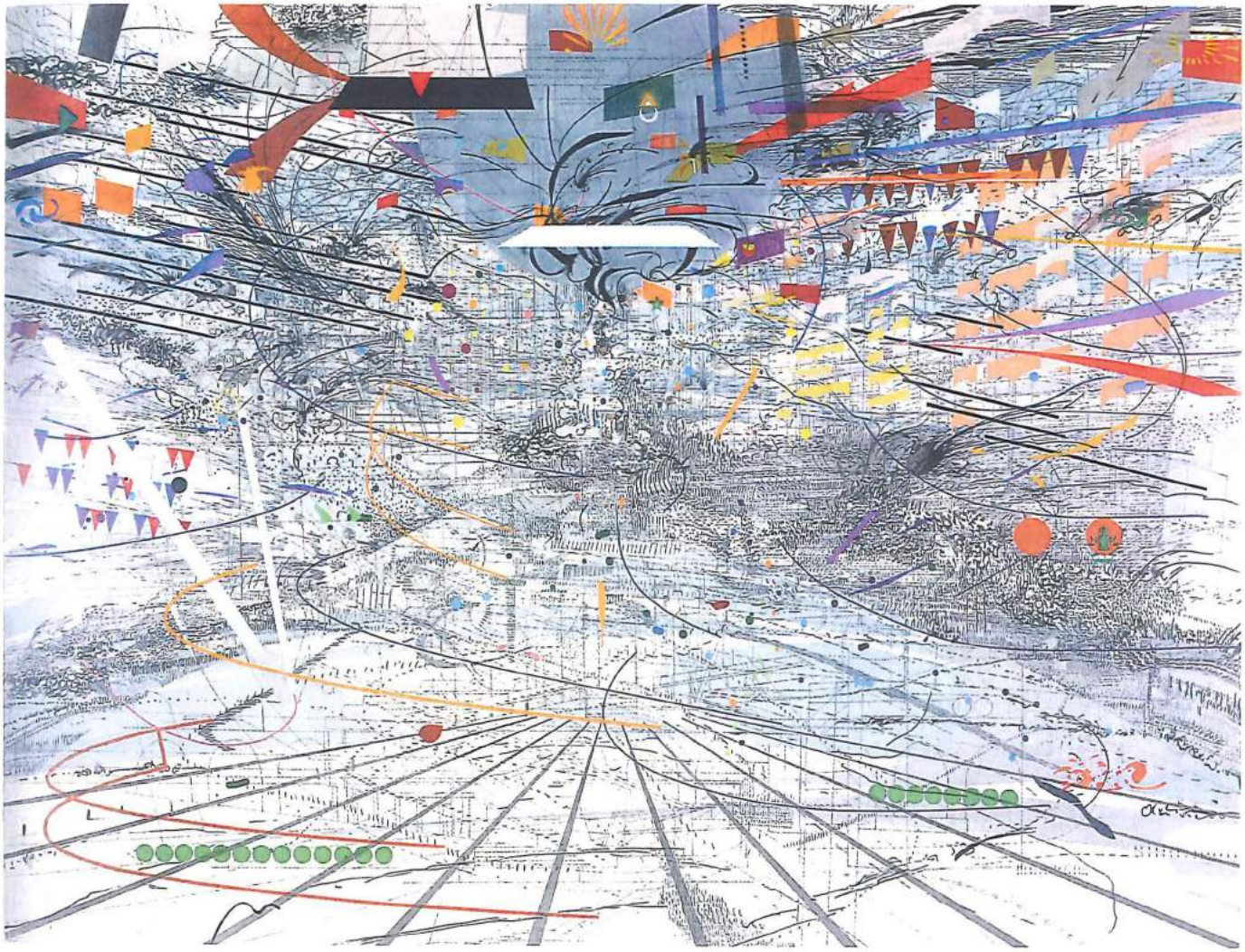
proposition in that it questions the prevailing parameters of the artwork. The structures and hierarchies of established ideas of composition and alignment of the canvas are disregarded. Bodily interaction with the canvas is one way that 'the traditional center of the expressionist gesture' can be used in a destabilising way, what could be seen as an activist mode. The engagement of the body's movements and gestures with the canvas, as in Pollock's work, is understood to be the result of his physical interaction rather than a depiction of it.

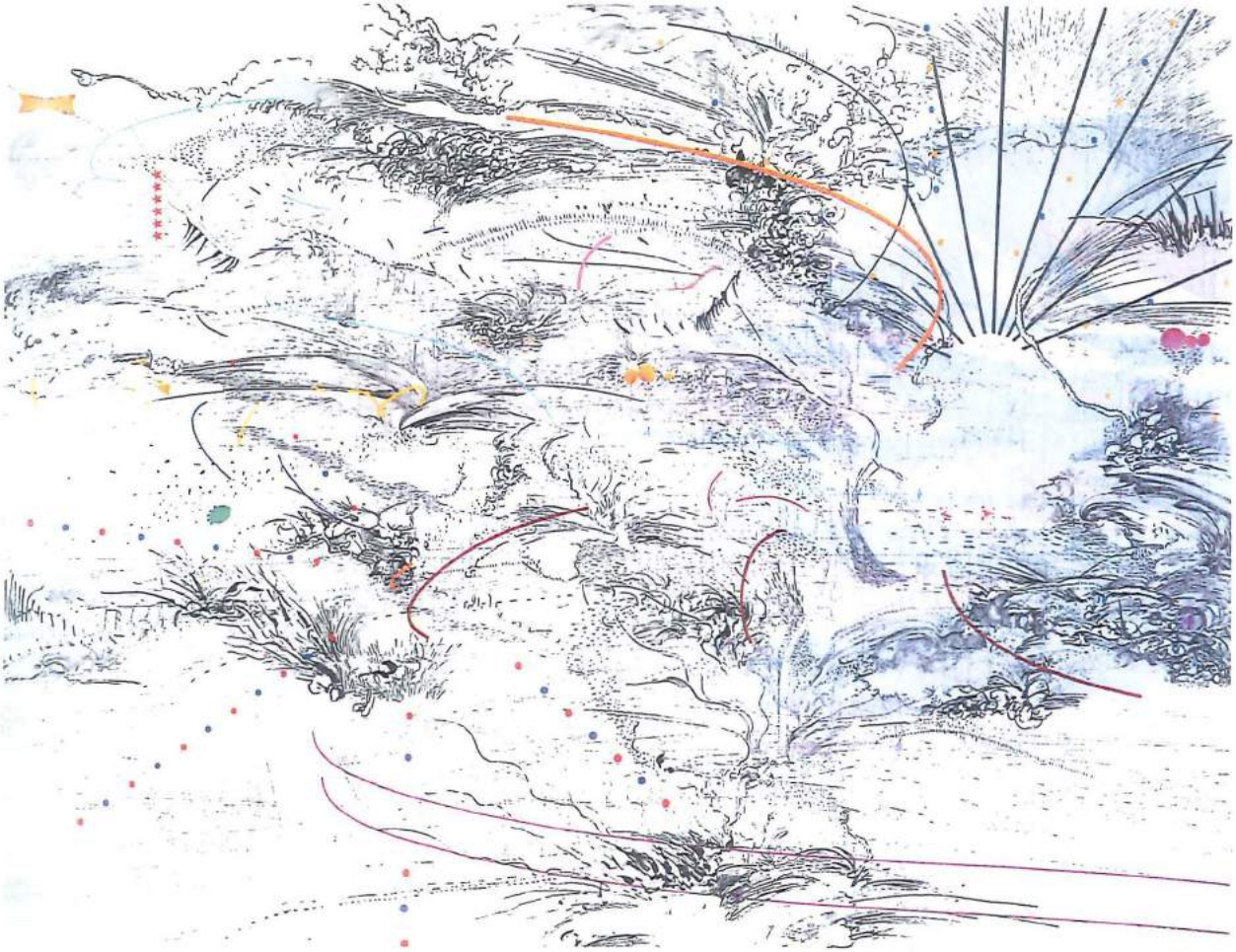
Graffiti is also mark making with an activist aim, and thought to be recording the presence of those that might otherwise be invisible or unconsidered. However, Mehretu's mark making is neither expressionist, a record of bodily interaction, nor graffiti-like. Her marks are part of a diagram of interaction with architectural space. The activist role of Mehretu's 'agents' (the most overt element of mark making in her work) might be in their description of 'what to do', performing a mapping role, showing possible interactions, much like a map can describe how to do things, to get from one place to another.

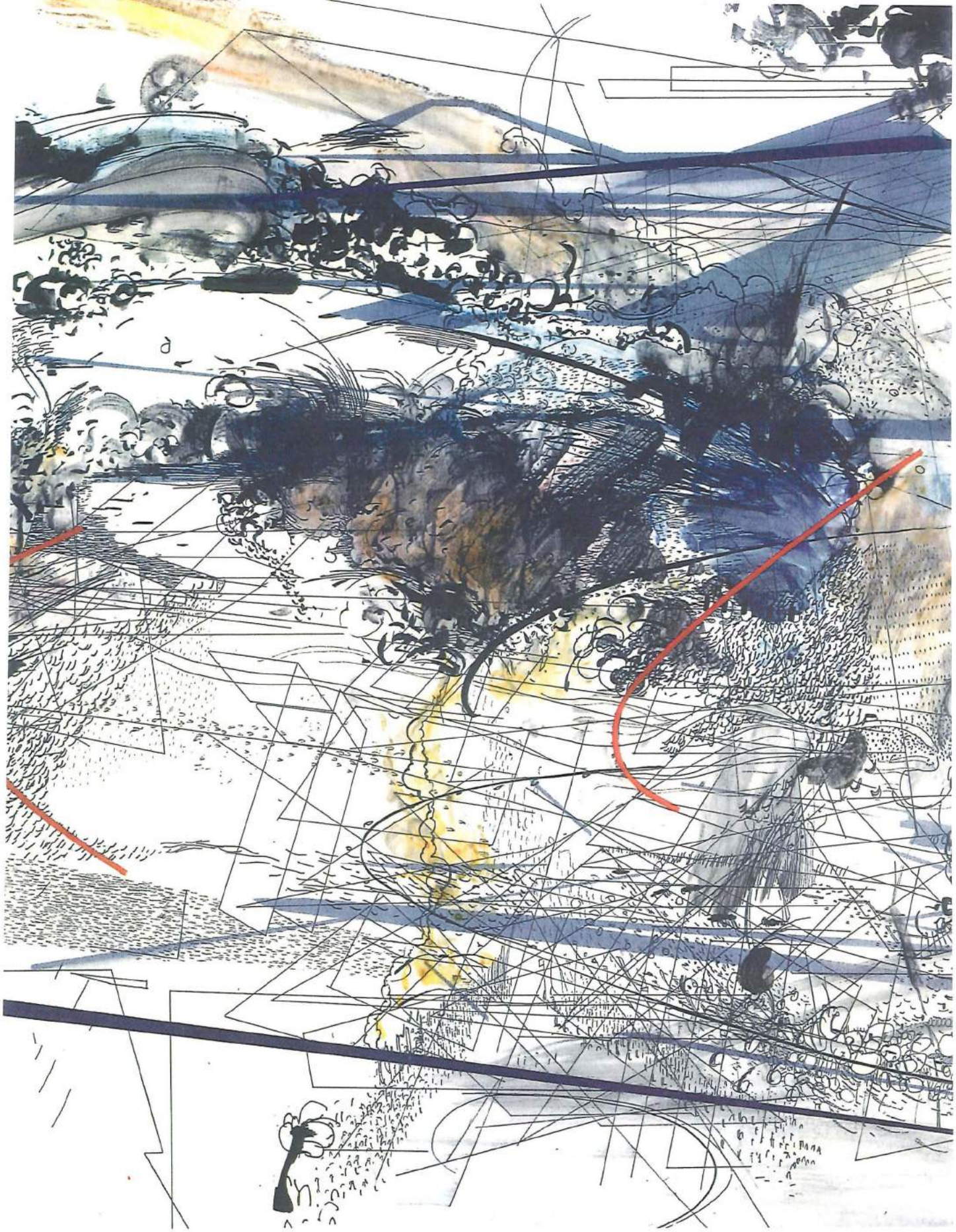
Connections between different places in the world are complex and unstable and the political repercussions of these connections are discussed more and more in terms of their effect on the environment. Mehretu's use of shapes and lines that are reminiscent of clouds and waves and grasses (even though they look like they are referring to art history, a Durer etching or a Van Gogh drawing) seems to reinforce an underlying connection with world 'environmental' issues literally. She perhaps draws on interpretations of nature as liberatory, as breaking free of cultural constraints, as mobile rather than static when she uses this imagery. She gives the viewer an interpretation of the relationship between 'country and city' that uses global references and vast shifts in scale between the image of a single tuft of grass and an architectural structure that has significant historical and geographical resonances.

Rather than a dichotomy between nature and culture, simultaneous references to nature and the urban might imply the idea of healthy and organic development of a city. While Mehretu might not want to endorse a potentially sinister idea of a natural, 'good' development, her diagrammatic, spatial drawings seem to be an attempt at understanding how a place, a global one that includes both city and country, 'works'. Imagery such as clouds, smoke or waves of grass can also be seen as referring to unpredictability or random change. While these references may point to a new way of thinking about how things *work*, their use of the 'natural' seems at odds with the multiplicity and overload of her architectural images. Clouds and grasses change form in relation to the conditions they are in – prevailing winds, weather systems, soil conditions, rain. Is Mehretu making a connection between these images of natural processes and the ways that we experience and are influenced by architectural form? Is she questioning the more static functions and controlled spaces of the architectural drawings by implying that it is possible to alter interactions through and in them, incorporating the element of time and change into her images? Mehretu may be making a connection, through her references to nature, to the unpredictable space written about by Deleuze and Guattari as nomadic and 'smooth', in contrast to the 'striated' space of the perspectival images of buildings that are associated with directing /control of movement and control of interpretation /meaning. In presenting a combination of contrasting global architectural images that are free-floating, along with images of natural formations that depend on their specific local locations, Mehretu is presenting a new landscape that incorporates both contemporary country and city. One that involves co-existing contradictions and paradoxes together with an awareness of the need for action.

This page: Julie Mehretu, *Looking Back to a Bright New Future*, 2003, Ink and synthetic polymer painting on canvas, 241.3 x 302.3 cm.
Next page: Top: Julie Mehretu, *Congress*, 2003, Ink and acrylic on canvas, 178 x 260 cm. Below: Julie Mehretu, *Immanence*, 2004, Ink and acrylic on canvas, 183 x 244 cm.







Julie Mehretu, detail of *Transcending the New International*, 2003, Ink and acrylic on canvas, 107 x 237 cm.

Sarah Morris

Sarah Morris' paintings and films take cities and their 'contradictory spaces' as their subject matter. She makes series of paintings depicting (up until recently) highrise buildings in American cities, basing each group of paintings on the glass facades of the buildings in the one city. For each group of paintings, there is a film that corresponds in subject matter to the selected cities but is a contrast to the glass facades. Each city has a cultural resonance or is significant in some way: the seat of government or a connection to the entertainment and leisure industries, for instance. The films are made up of short segments of 'action' that build up in conjunction with formally similar, structured, repetitive background music. The films depict a repetitive temporality and the music reflects this repetitiveness.[7] The images of the facades of buildings that make up the paintings are built up, composed through repeated geometric shapes and colours.

Repetition is apparent in both paintings and films as a central formal element. The repetition of the window shapes of the buildings in the paintings, the small sections of the films that build up the whole and the repeated notes and sequences of notes that make up the musical score can be read in several ways. They can be read as related to routines and mechanisation, as well as to the everyday. Both the repetition of the shapes of paint and the repetition within the music give a sense of accumulation. While this accumulation might be seen as giving us a linear view of time, as one self-contained moment following another, it also gives a sense of multiplicity, an accumulation or a crowd. Movement and change is implied through the repetitious and rippling sound of the music and the shifting, rippling colour shifts of the paintings. In their building up of short glimpses of the life of the city, the films refer to the everyday.

There is no overt political or social agenda for Morris' work. The initial effect is of glamour and a desire for high impact, in its scale and use of colour. However there are suggestions of a more questioning position in

[7] The music is specially composed for these films by the artist Liam Gillick.

the particular references that she uses. Morris' use of some imagery, such as corporate buildings, is bound to be seen as problematic at some level (Smithson saw this kind of monolithic, repetitive architecture as the architecture of entropy, bland and empty objects of commercial life). She uses this imagery in conjunction with references to serial music (Philip Glass for instance) as well as to films such as Dziga Vertov's film *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), made in the wake of the Russian Revolution. Both serial music, such as Glass', and Vertov's filmmaking techniques were groundbreaking explorations of the mediums in their time. Her simultaneous use of different forms and mediums gives us a different, unfamiliar, representation of contemporary urban landscape. She combines the static medium of painting with the moving, time-based medium of film. The relationship she develops between her two bodies of work, always shown together, doesn't allow either one to settle. Her work is made up of a time-space relationship that uses contradictory spaces and I am suggesting that it is this conjunction, along with its references to the urban, that makes it an example of contemporary landscape painting.

Her films create a place where images, sound, information are overlapping in time. While looking at the films, a sense of the place they are depicting is built up. *Los Angeles* (2004), for example, is built up through many details of what goes on there, the 'everyday' of cosmetic surgery, auditions etc. rather than by creating a sense of what the city as a whole looks like. Vertov's film *Man with a Movie Camera* seems to be directly referred to in its accumulation of details of the city rather than the developing of a narrative. The vigorous and pulsating score of *Man with a Movie Camera* is also reflected in the score for Morris' film. The repetitive character of the music and the fragments of imagery that are brought together for the film evoke a system without hierarchy, where every part is of equal importance in building up the whole. However, Morris' complex picture of Los Angeles, built through sections of activity accompanied by the pulsating music is conflicted, has a more interior, melancholic or jaded, dimly lit energy. She seems to be implying that we need to understand the film to understand the paintings (or vice versa) but there is not an obvious way to do this.

The 'space' of Morris' work reflects what can be seen as the 'contradictory spaces' of the urban. The composite image of the city that builds up between the mediums presents us with complex spatial images of a place that exists between approaches to it. While the fragments of film are interesting and sometimes surprising, when shown with the paintings based on the same city (as they always are), an implied critique, or stumbling block to our reaction to the film is introduced. There is a disjuncture between the paintings and films and yet they are connected by Morris through their subject matter. While other artists use multiple mediums, the consistency and attention to this relationship in Morris' work is reminiscent of the structure that Robert Smithson developed between his sites and non-sites. Morris' connections between painting and film are not as expansive as Smithson's were when he brought remote physical sites into contact with the gallery-based non-sites, but she does bring together different ways of attending to the multiple (abstract and lived) spaces of the city.

The accompanying paintings in *Los Angeles*, such as *Bonaventure*, use references to the architecture, tower blocks and skyscrapers of the city through their diagrammatic structures.[8] These structures often include the 'reflections' of adjacent buildings overlaying another grid-like structure over the buildings Morris paints as multi-faceted prismatic, maze-like surface which is reminiscent of geometric abstraction or systems-based work. The sense of refraction and reflecting back onto itself re-iterates the repetitive pattern of the grid which she has painted so that it disappears off the edges of the canvas, implying that it extends outwards into the surrounding space. The 'hardness' of these paintings, their glossiness without any trace of the handmade, her use the language of corporate 'emotions', allow us to see these paintings as demonstrating an ambivalence about the corporate facades that she depicts. At the same

[8] Presumably a humourous reference to Frederic Jameson's analysis of this building in relation to postmodernist space, it also suggests that that space is the subject of her work.

time, the way that the paintings imply extension into the surrounding space that the audience occupies implies interaction with and integration of the viewer. The pleasure that Morris seems to have in depicting the quirky glamour and popular culture references shown in her films are brought into relation with the seamlessness of the flatly painted, glossy and brightly coloured, Pop-ish, regimented facades and visa versa. While attention is drawn to a complex web of interactions, there doesn't seem to be a way of taking action or having a sense of agency.

Morris' paintings seem to use the associations of highrise corporate buildings as a template to point to the constraining forces of high finance. Early paintings used the surface of the grid of highrise buildings and their reflections of other like buildings to structure the space of the paintings. The films are fluid, seductive, sometimes humourous while the paintings are static and, despite their bright colours, often seem serious, confining or restricting. This space has had a simple game-like quality which in more recent paintings has developed into twisting prism-like spaces. Most recently, the surface refers to the imagined space, the structure of folded orgami shapes that would be made if the lines of the painting were used as folding points. Morris' two strands of work inform as well as destabilise each other. They can be seen in relation to Henri Lefebvre's abstract and lived spaces, developed as a way of investigating the existing and potential 'production of space'. The relationship between Morris' different strands of work is structured as a question about the 'contradictory spaces' of urban life making apparent how they work together, that capitalism creates in complex urban interactions. Morris' paintings and films, through their simultaneous differences and interconnectedness, show an equation between the abstract decision-making process that ensures profit and the ways that the processes and the types of lifestyle choices in a place like Los Angeles are lived.

> I am interested in placing myself in [those types of]... contradictory situations. Without it I don't' think you can make interesting art.[9]

Morris' work, using different media, has deliberately put the viewer in an uncomfortable position, in order to provoke questions about the implications of the references that she uses. The relationship between the paintings and the films construct a different idea of painting, one that can be seen as landscape painting. They are an example of an expanded painting practice that connects with other mediums and, as landscape paintings they engage with the urban in complex ways. The use of architectural imagery often points to art's desire for 'socio-spatial effectivity' and 'its aspiration to effect change'. However, in her use of reflective surfaces in the paintings and the attention to glamour in the film, *Los Angeles* sometimes seems to use the imagery of the city as an exploration of identity rather than as a way of calling for direct action.[10] The viewer is called upon to acknowledge the intertwining of the individual and the multiple socio-spatial conditions that are presented.

Morris' city subjects, like Los Angeles, make up discreet bodies of work and she focuses on each one separately. There is little sense of a utopian impulse here. Although they are seductive to begin with, a sense of unease develops as the contradictory spaces make themselves apparent as irresolvable. The films can be seen as depicting the complex negotiations of power that take place at the level of the everyday (in a very high-powered environment) and the paintings both depict a powerful image and relations that are locked in place. The use of related but different ways of approaching the subject suggests a question, but also indicates that these relations are irresolvable is some way, the multi-layered nature, the different 'angles', of the 'problem' not allowing a 'solution'. Morris' use of

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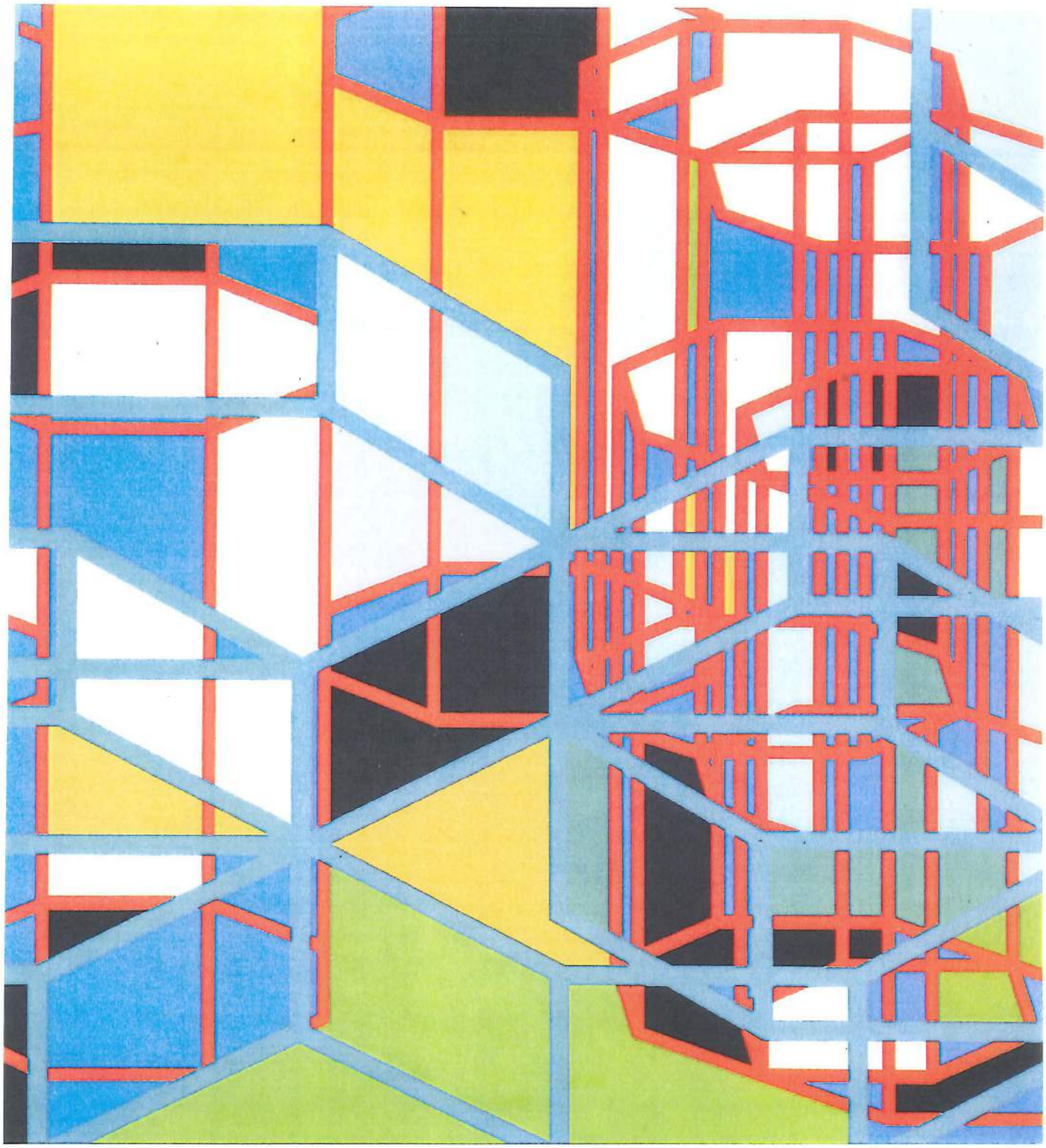
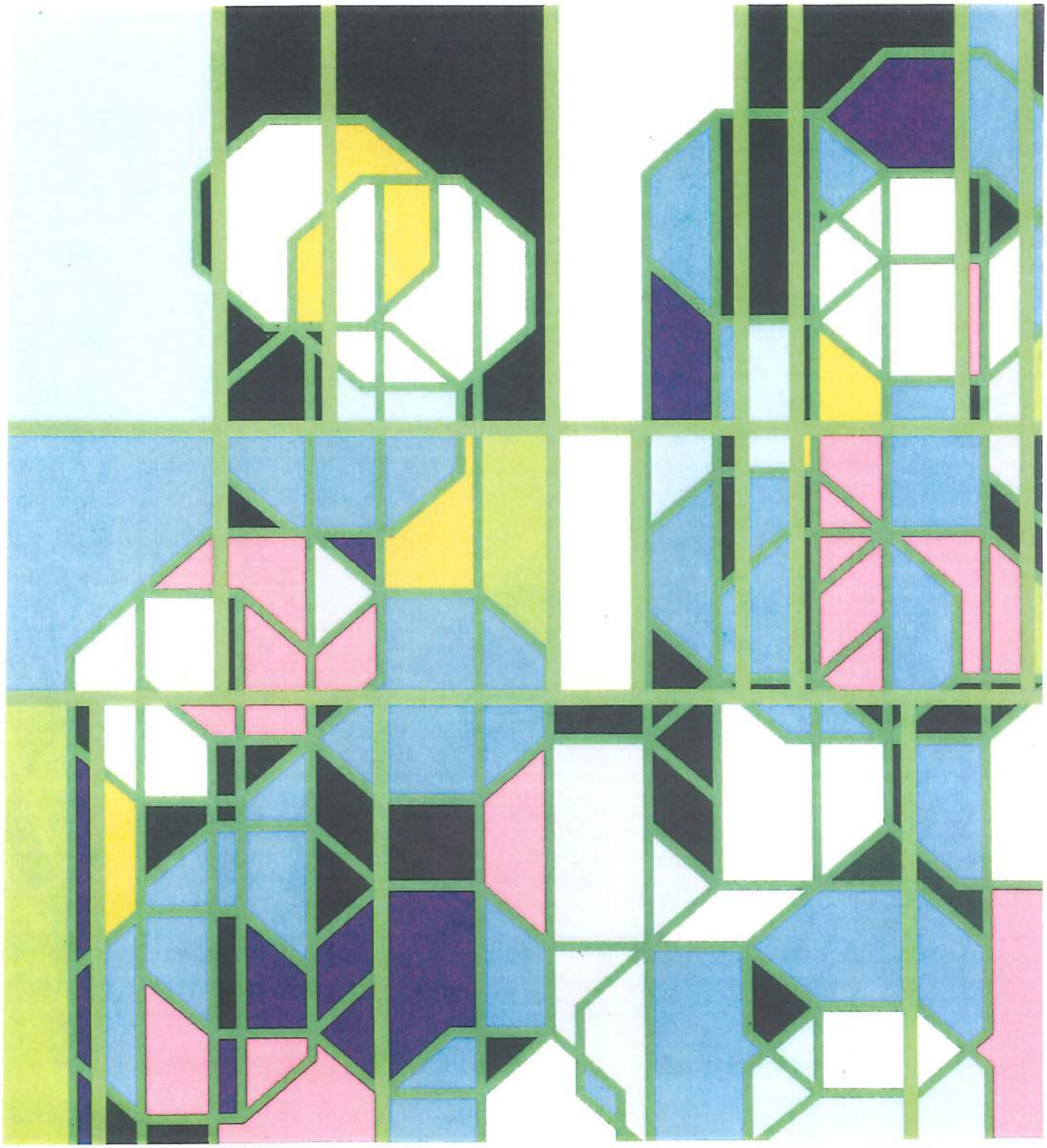
[9] Cat. Sarah Morris, *Lesser Panda*, White Cube Gallery, London, 2008 p. 22.
[10] 'The architectural aspect of contemporary art is thus that of its socio-spatial effectivity. It represents art's social being in the world, its aspiration to effect change.' Peter Osborne, 'Where is the Work of Art?: Contemporary Art, Spatialisation and Urban Form' in *Nonsite to Celebration Park: Essays on Art and the Politics of Space*, Edward Wittaker and Alex Landrum, eds. (Bath Spa: Bath Spa University Press, 2007) p. 19.

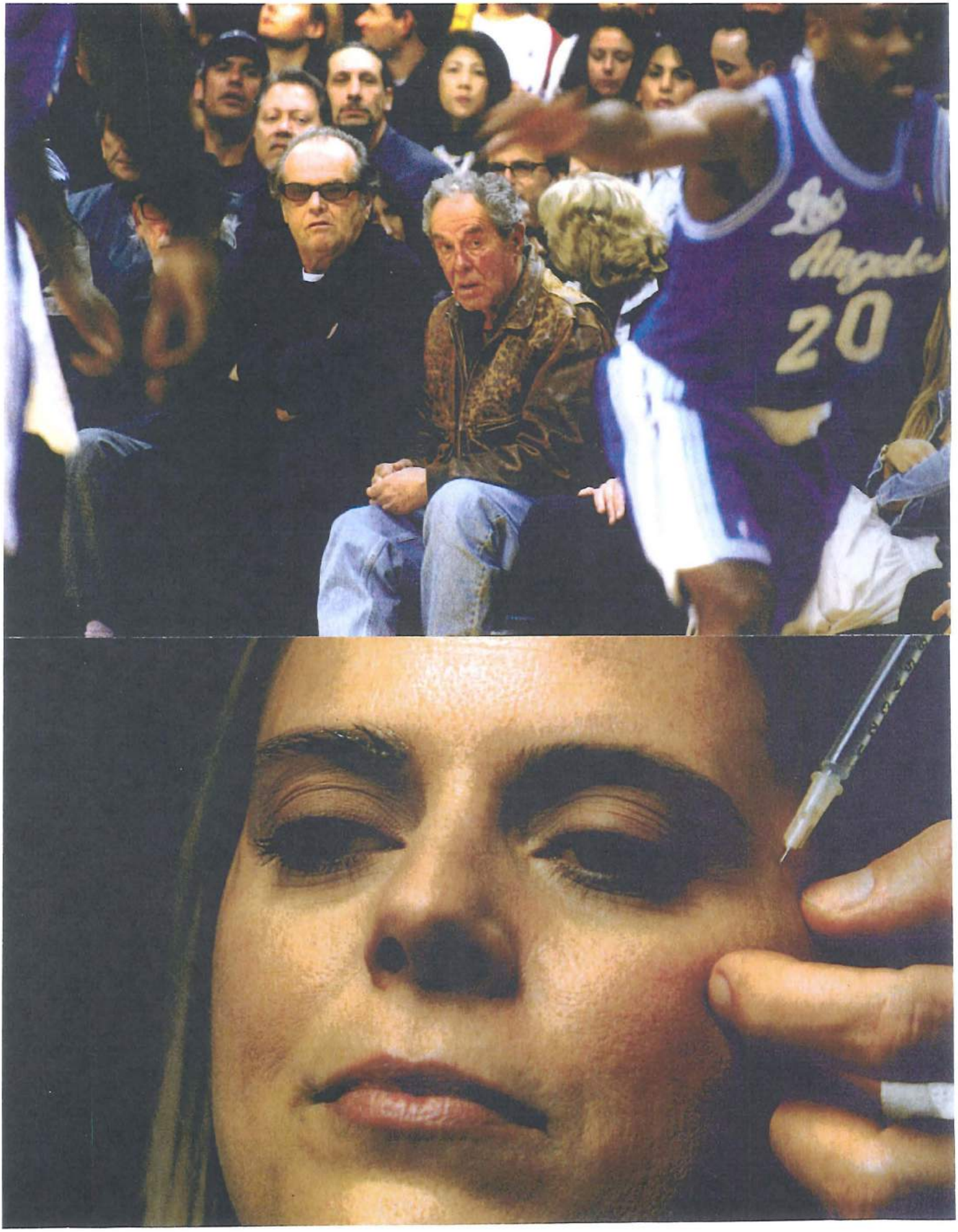
different mediums to propose an urban landscape made up of different spaces produces an uncomfortable and questioning place.



Sarah Morris, *Bonaventure (Los Angeles)*, 2004, Household gloss on canvas, 214 x 214 cm.



Sarah Morris, *Wells Fargo (Los Angeles)*, 2004, Household gloss on canvas, 289 x 289 cm.



Sarah Morris, details from *Los Angeles*, 2004, 35 mm / DVD, Duration: 25 mins. 5 seconds.

Angela de la Cruz

Angela de la Cruz's paintings push into three-dimensional space – her work crosses boundaries between painting and sculpture and shows the relationship between the body and place in painting in new ways. Rather than a flat image on the wall, her 'paintings' start to break free and interact with the space around them. In her work, nothing can be guaranteed to stay in its place or play the role we expect. There is slippage in her work's identity. The stretcher frame will not necessarily hold up the canvas, the painting will not necessarily occupy a position on the wall and the stretched surface may have come free of its moorings. The surface of the paintings are often thick and encrusted. They have become 'calloused', and look like they have experienced friction and are toughened by it, or, that they have needed a weather-protective coating. The surface is assertively present. It is apparent that the work is the residue of what has happened to it, that time is marked through the physical qualities that the work has. De la Cruz's work can also be seen as a gesture, a documentation of things that have happened. Their configuration is often the result of being altered in some way, of being made to 'do' something, like bend. However, the use of paint on canvas, despite being altered, adapted and used in unfamiliar ways, is the starting point for these works.

The paintings have a body orientation, a bodilyness, a sense that they stand in for the body or reflect simple movements or feelings of a body in space, emphasising them and making them significant. Because of their lack of perfection, they also seem to have a fallability that connects them with the vulnerability of the body. They create a place in their interaction with the space they occupy – they construct simple landscapes through their 'bodily' interaction with where they are, performing their relationship with their surrounding space. They interact with the space they occupy but their form also diagrammatically shows how that interaction takes place. By being representations in this way, they disrupt the usual representational space of painting. An image is made but it is an image in sculptural space rather than a depiction on a flat surface. So, while the paintings seem to make gestures, perform in this theatrical sense, they

also interact with space and time by reflecting the process of the interaction of the body of the artist and the painting. The paintings are the result of this interaction.[11]

De la Cruz's work maintains a well-tuned, half way position. It is mostly not off the wall but not on the wall either. It pulls between what painting is able to do when it is a 'picture' and what it is additionally able to do if it physically activates the space around it in more sculptural ways.

De la Cruz maintains a differently coloured painted frame around her monochromatic painted surfaces.

> To me it reaffirms the picture's identity. Without a border the monochrome would be an object...The border sets the limits of what I imagine to be its surface and once made, allows me the freedom to let the painting go where it wants.... In this case it is the white border... that reaffirms ... justifies the space's new pictorial autonomy.[12]

In de la Cruz' work, painting spills into other ways of art making and yet is still called painting, the frame keeps what the possibilities and the idea of what a picture is open within a mesh of other approaches and other kinds of predominantly more sculptural practices. The frame gives the idea of a picture while the work (as a whole) extends beyond the frame. This intermediate zone of the frame is utilised in a positive way to keep these different strands simultaneously in motion together.

Stephen Melville's essay for the exhibition catalogue for *As Painting* (not including Angela de la Cruz) suggests that painting as an activity has implicit within it this movement between parts, is a multiplicity. He writes:

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[11] De la Cruz' work might be seen in terms of Helio Oiticica's work. His paintings became separated from the wall, taking them into the sculptural realm and the everyday.

- Matter thinks. 'Thinks' here evidently means 'makes a difference', so the proposition is that matter gives itself over to difference or to a process of difference.
- This process must be grounded in matter opening itself to sense through some interruption of its apparent absolute continuity with itself, the ground of thought is something like a cut or a fold, a moment of delay or excess, in which substance refigures itself as relation.
- Because thought taken this way is above all articulation, matter is not conceivable apart from language and the structures of difference to which it gives particularly compelling expression. There is no perception and so no visibility not structurally worked by invisibility, blindness, reserve.[13]

The idea of substance as relation can be seen to have political implications: it means that interruption and relation, and by implication, the accommodation of others as well as multiple viewpoints, is an integral element of this philosophy of painting. Angela de la Cruz' work seems to acknowledge this understanding of painting in its interaction with its surrounding space. In some paintings, which include a frame around 'monochome' paintings (doubly re-iterating the surface) attention is drawn to what is inside and outside the frame.

In her work the canvas sags and melts looking almost like disheveled clothing or bits of burnt plastic. The stretcher bars are exposed and broken – the artist has been rough, rather than reverential, with her materials. There is something geological about these works, sagging and accumulating, tipping over like landforms or mudslides. Although the artist has control over her materials, it reminds us of the forces of nature which we have some effect on but have little control over. Although this takes place in the space of the gallery, what might be seen as the processes of

[12] Cat. *Angela de la Cruz*, Espacio Anexo, MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporanea de Vigo, Vigo, Spain, 2004, p. 65.
[13] Cat. Stephen Melville, 'Counting/As/Painting' in *As Painting: Division and Displacement* (Columbus, Ohio: Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University/Cambridge Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 2001) p. 8.

dishevelment or disarray, the elemental references, might also suggest the larger environment.

Because of the ways that de la Cruz's works engage with the spaces that they are exhibited in, they ask us to see the relationship between her work and the gallery or context differently. Her work subtly implies connections and meanings that extend beyond the work. By moving beyond the self-contained frame of her paintings, they point to the social and political world that surrounds the gallery or institution. While Minimalist works referenced the repetitious nature of industrial processes, as well as the inherent qualities of materials not associated with art, De la Cruz's work connects to the surrounding social and political world but also creates a theatrical space.[14] A theatrical arena in the sense that the viewer feels that the conditions for a very individual kind of performance is or has taken place. Her works seem to be active and unpredictable, to take on the role of a stand-up comic or an actor, performing in a humourous way for the audience.

References to the body predominate in de la Cruz' work. The paintings seem to have a personality, or at least the painting becomes personified through its physical gesture and demeanour. Sometimes the canvas acts like a prop or accessory – hanging like a cloth or scarf draped over the shoulder of the painting as in *Ready to Wear (Large/Red)* (1999). While these descriptions may seem frivolous, they make a connection between her work and the way that the body activates space, creating place. These works are between things – between painting and sculpture, between painting and the architecture of the space they inhabit and between references such as fabric and landscape. The canvas of *Ready to Wear* is attached to the stretcher on the left-hand side but hanging off the stretcher in loose folds on the right-hand side, exposing the stretcher frame like a window partially obscured by a curtain. The unusualness of de la Cruz'

[14] Minimalist works were considered theatrical by the critic Michael Fried because of the relationship they created with their immediate surroundings. However, Fried's reference to theatricality and the way that it brought performance into play was a criticism.

work lies in part in her distance from more overt and obvious (in a positive sense) activities and artistic actions.[15] She maintains the coherence, and therefore tension, of her references and the material nature of painting to make associations with activities not usually associated with painting. This gives her work a very personal and unusual quality. It is very simplified, almost diagrammatic. It is often funny and conveys pathos with the minimum of means.

> De la Cruz' paintings promote the idea of a sensuous, direct and familiar contact with the world around us, as opposed to the rarified abstractions of the modernist canon.[16]

Edward S. Casey writes about the philosophical changes in ideas about space and place since Plato and Aristotle. Developments in thinking about science, politics and sexuality have meant that place has been differently conceived of at different times.

> ...place presents itself in its rebarbative, particularity. One has no choice but to deal with what is *in place*, or *at place*: that is, what is *at stake there*. Regarding the particular place one is already in, one cannot speculate, much less levitate or miraculate, freely; one has to cope with the exacting demands of being just there, with all its finite historicity and special qualities. (In this regard, place is more closely allied with nonchronometric time: the time of urgency and deadline, the time that delimits rather than extends. Just as lived time seems ever to be running out, to be 'closing time', so place always possesses its delimiting boundaries.) [17]

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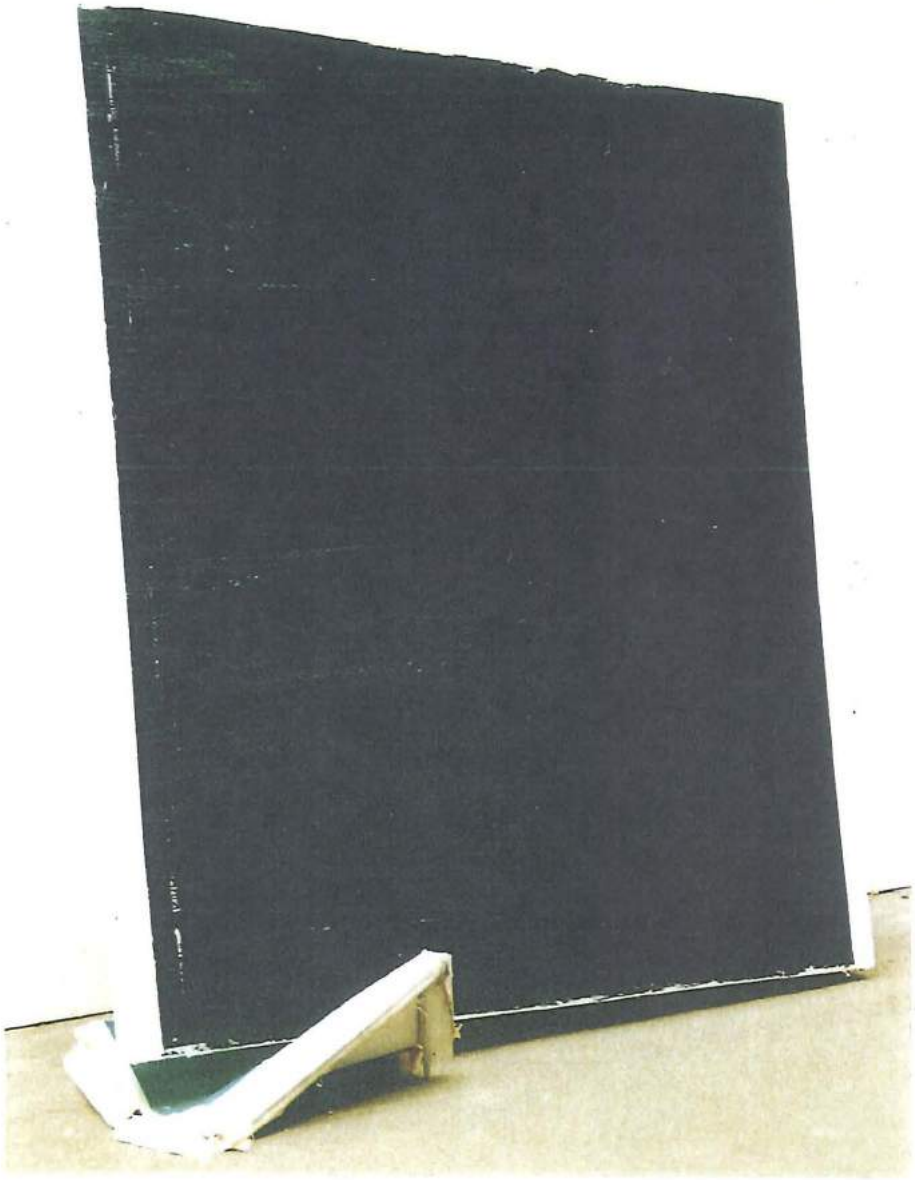
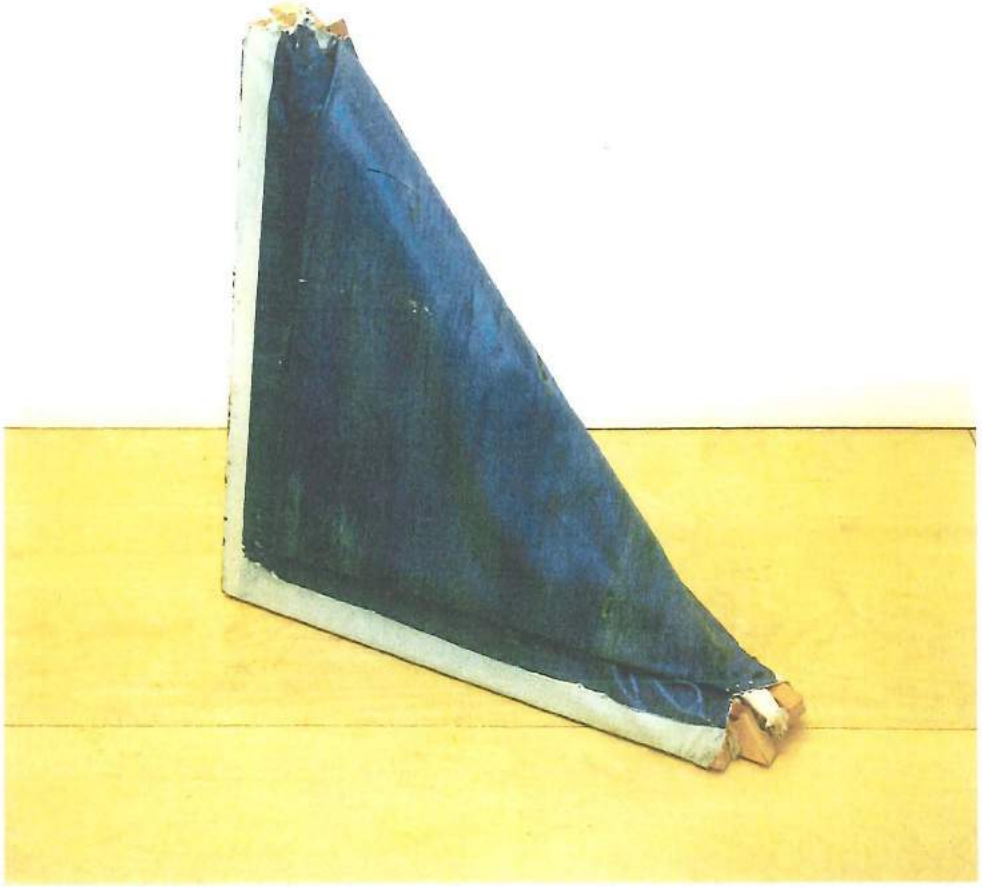
[15] In the work of Richard Long, his work *is* his body moving through the landscape, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, uses her body as part of her work to make a political point through an intervention in the social sphere.
[16] Cat. Katya García-Anton, 'The Pleasures of Down Below' in *Angela de la Cruz*, Anthony Wilkinson Gallery, London, 2001, p. 5.
[17] Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997) p. 338.

It is in this sense that de la Cruz's work might be considered contemporary landscape painting. Her work brings the viewer to a limited and specific place based on the body and emanating from it. While her work does not represent a particular place in terms of an image, it takes place in a particular place and in a particular way.

Angela de la Cruz, *Ready to Wear (Large/Red)*, 1999, Oil on canvas, 200 x 180 cm.



Angela de la Cruz, *Bully*, 1998, Oil on canvas, Oil on canvas (2 parts), 220 x 220 cm. and 50 x 50 cm.



Top: Angela de la Cruz,
Sky Folded, 1997,
Oil on canvas, 73 x 8 x 50 cm.
Below: Angela de la Cruz,
Camouflage Painting, 1998,
Oil on canvas, 180 x 150.5 cm.

Keith Tyson

Keith Tyson's work can be seen as based in the inter-relationship between the artist/viewer, nature and systems that connect them. Tyson's recent body of *Nature Paintings* is potentially an endless series of work. Made of swirls of different-coloured paint running together much like the 'marbled' paper found in Italian stationary and bookbinding, this group of paintings, while looking very painterly connects with conceptual painting (and sculptural) traditions and processes like that of Sol Lewitt (although not predominantly seen as a painter) and Gerhard Richter. Tyson also brings a formulaic and programmatic approach to his work that can then be interpreted in terms of the processes of nature (even at the sub-atomic and genetic level). Not only endless proliferation but unexpected spontaneous change in nature is connected to growth and survival (in the context or system that it takes place). In Tyson's paintings, it echoes nature's processes but does not picture them, a different kind of landscape painting that can be seen in terms of nature. Tyson explores the idea of the artist setting up a situation where work is made (within certain parameters) that is random and unpredictable. This structure can be seen in relation to both nature and technology but also to the ideas of space-time that are being considered here as landscape.

In 1999 Keith Tyson made *Urban Event Horizon*.[18] Taking the form of both an outdoor installation and a group of *Studio Wall Drawings*, this work more obviously addresses ideas about space-time and urban space in particular. The 'drawings' consist of drawn layers of references to information about the city and its functions as well as its architecture. The drawings are put together without any particular structure, everything is piled in randomly as though Tyson is attempting to pull together or make sense, through his drawings, of all the various information needed for an understanding of the multi-faceted character of the city. The resulting slightly chaotic drawings are like an attempt to explain all this information.

The viewer is referred to the real but unseen connections between stratas of the workings of the urban.

The sculptural element of this work consists of transforming the façade of one of the city's buildings into a circuit board type structure. Cables, which give the appearance of wires transmitting information from a command station, spread from a box-like form and 'into' different points in the walls of the surrounding brick building. A tube coming up from underneath the cobbled street, into a temporary-looking steel structure that looks like it has been left by workers, gives the sense that there are attachments, or, connections being made between areas in the city, linking their different activities. While this particular installation of Tyson's work has a simplistic, almost hand-made theatre prop quality, it makes the viewer connect in their minds all the unseen workings and possible effects of interactions that take place behind the scenes of the city with other works by Tyson. Other works utilise structures that in-build unpredictability as well as ideas of feedback but *Urban Event Horizon*, while not as successful a work, does connect Tyson's approach to a consideration of the city. While Tyson can be seen to construct structures for making work that rely on the collaboration of the artist with machines, systems or technology, these 'collaborative' efforts (that make unpredictable results) bring together references that seem to invoke both the urban and nature. His work brings in the idea of nature, which has not been the overt subject of any of the contemporary artists discussed so far, in relation to landscape and space-time. His working processes and his approach to his work encompass ideas related to the concerns of nature and space-time.

> ...to 'imitate nature in her manner of operation', rather than copying appearances, to continue, and to continue to continue.[19]

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[18] As part of the city-wide exhibition 'Over the Edges' in Ghent curated by Jan Hoet and Giacinto Di Pietrantonio.
[19] Cat. Jeremy Millar, 'The Sonic Kit' in *Keith Tyson*, Delfina, London, 1999, unpaginated.

His approach shows itself most clearly in the relationship between Tyson and the 'Art Machine' that Tyson has developed.[20] The Art Machine is a computer program that formulates and gives instructions to Tyson about how to create the next artwork of this type. Tyson then responds by undertaking to produce the work, putting different materials, objects, imagery, specified by The Art Machine, together. There is no discernable visual logic to the way the elements are being brought together in these works. Unrelated elements are pushed together. The viewer is then asked to accept their relationship as a result of the overall concept of the work. The idea of a discreet body of work, investigating common issues, is overturned. The possibilities that the Art Machine is able to come up with are potentially endless.

Time-space in nature is explored by the philosophers A.N. Whitehead, Kate Soper and Bruno Latour amongst others. Bruno Latour writes about 'political ecology', the bringing together of human and non-human in the '*cosmos* to be built.' [21]

> ...it will still be necessary to represent the associations of humans and nonhumans through an explicit procedure, in order to decide what collects them and what unifies them in one future common world.[22]

Tyson plays with ideas to do with his decision-making process. Although working with a machine is different than the idea of working with the non-human in nature, Tyson has constructed a working relationship with the Art

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[20] Keith Tyson's 'Art Machine Iteration' for the realisation of which he commissioned a computer programme 'calculating' instructions to be interpreted by the artist. 'Recursive CPK Gameboard no. 1 (Central Processing Knot)' is, so to speak, the portable version of the series which makes it possible to create an infinite number of sculptural configurations in different locations.' Cat. *The Larson Effect: Progressive Feedback in Contemporary Art*, Casino Luxembourg, Forum d'Art Contemporain, Luxembourg and O.K. Centrum Für Gegenwartskunst, Linz, 2001–2002, p. 163.
[21] Bruno Latour, *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, Catherine Porter, trans. (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2004) p. 41.
[22] Ibid., p. 41.

Machine that seem points to future collaborations between humans and technology (where humans may have the role of nature in the future).

In the catalogue for the exhibition *The Larsen Effect* Keith Tyson's work is seen as similar to the 'feedback' phenomenon that takes place in live music when the microphone 'feeds back' sound to the speakers.[23] New sounds are made by original sounds and feedback combined. Relationships (some predictable, some unpredictable) are built up between musical elements over time, and in the process the elements that go together are changed. These relationships, while not focussing specifically on desirable political outcomes, provide a formal model for the way that different components can interact in unpredictable and productive ways.

> ...characterised by the allocation, combination and superimposition of existing systems which coincidentally react to each other and thus create a new system....the Larsen Effect...an auto-oscillation causing two systems or conditions to interact, thus creating a third condition.[24]

This model is one of interaction and potential conversation, setting up a structure with variable (not always predictable) results. Tyson's work, in relation to ideas of feedback, constructs 'feedback' in the interaction between different spheres and areas of knowledge.

> Hence, the sum total of successful relations between a living being and its environment (i.e. the relations which enable the fulfillment of needs and self-realisation) accounts for satisfactory individual realities for human beings. What does all this mean for art?[25]

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[23] Op cit., *The Larson Effect.*
[24] Ibid., p. 191.
[25] Cat. Franz Xaver Baier, 'Life in Intermediary Space: On Connections and Interactions which are at work without us Fully Grasping Them' in *The Larson Effect: Progressive*

This description of the feedback phenomenon parallels some of the ways that landscape has previously been described, in terms of 'environment' which 'accounts for...individual realities for human beings'. When the artist is responding to unpredictable information fed to him by the Art Machine, his work points to the kind of interactive relationship we have with our environment. Tyson's work is performing at the level of metaphor rather than specifically engaging with particular situations or dilemmas, engaging in specific ways with 'human beings, animals, plants, things, processes, civilisations, religions and their mutual interactions'. However interaction is an integral element of his work.[26]

At one level this work is not really involving the viewer and audience; the audience is observing Tyson 'perform' in this work, responding to constantly changing conditions and demands presented by the unpredictable instructions given by the (non-human) Art Machine. The audience has to make sense of this activity and decide whether to see the objects made on their own terms or as part of a larger concept. The artist is working with what can be seen as chance relationships. The viewer has no way to evaluate which work is better than any other as they cannot really be evaluated individually but are part of a process.

When the structure of the working process is clear to us, we see a connection between these sculptural works and Tyson's paintings, the *Studio Wall Drawings* (1997–2007). These have a similar working structure in that they participate in the thrown togetherness of visual material. The drawings are the record of random, disparate thoughts generated by the artist, just put down together in the drawings as they come to mind – the thrown togetherness of the visual material is accepted, it is the working material.[27] [28]

Feedback in Contemporary Art, Casino Luxembourg, Forum d'Art Contemporain, Luxembourg and O.K. Centrum Für Gegenwartskunst, Linz, 2001-2002, p. 38.

[26] Ibid., p. 38.

[27] Of course, Tyson is also the initiator of the Art Machine works in that he thought of the Art Machine and developed its program but he does not have control over individual instructions.

The information and imagery in Tyson's work can be seen as a response to the bombardment of information that both surrounds us and is our 'environment'. His paintings are like a layering of knowledge about many different things, compressed together without any sense of 'how' they conceptually go together, outside of the formal structure that Tyson has established. Like the Art Machine, blasting elements together to see what happens when they interact, these works throw drawings of thoughts together and let them take their own form.

> The effect of Tyson's work is thus oddly ambivalent: on the one hand their chaotic fragmentation seems to say that the world really is more unfathomable and chaotic than before; on the other hand, Tyson's very obsession with recombining the systems of the world and making them interpenetrate can give the impression that new and unforseen patterns are nevertheless emerging from the primal soup of the information society.[29]

Tyson uses montage techniques to bring questions about nature into a consideration of contemporary landscape painting.[30]

> It seems as if Large Field Array mixes different models for describing the world....I am asking how one form can go next to another form as the consequence of these invisible forces. Scientifically speaking, a sculpture [or painting] is an interference

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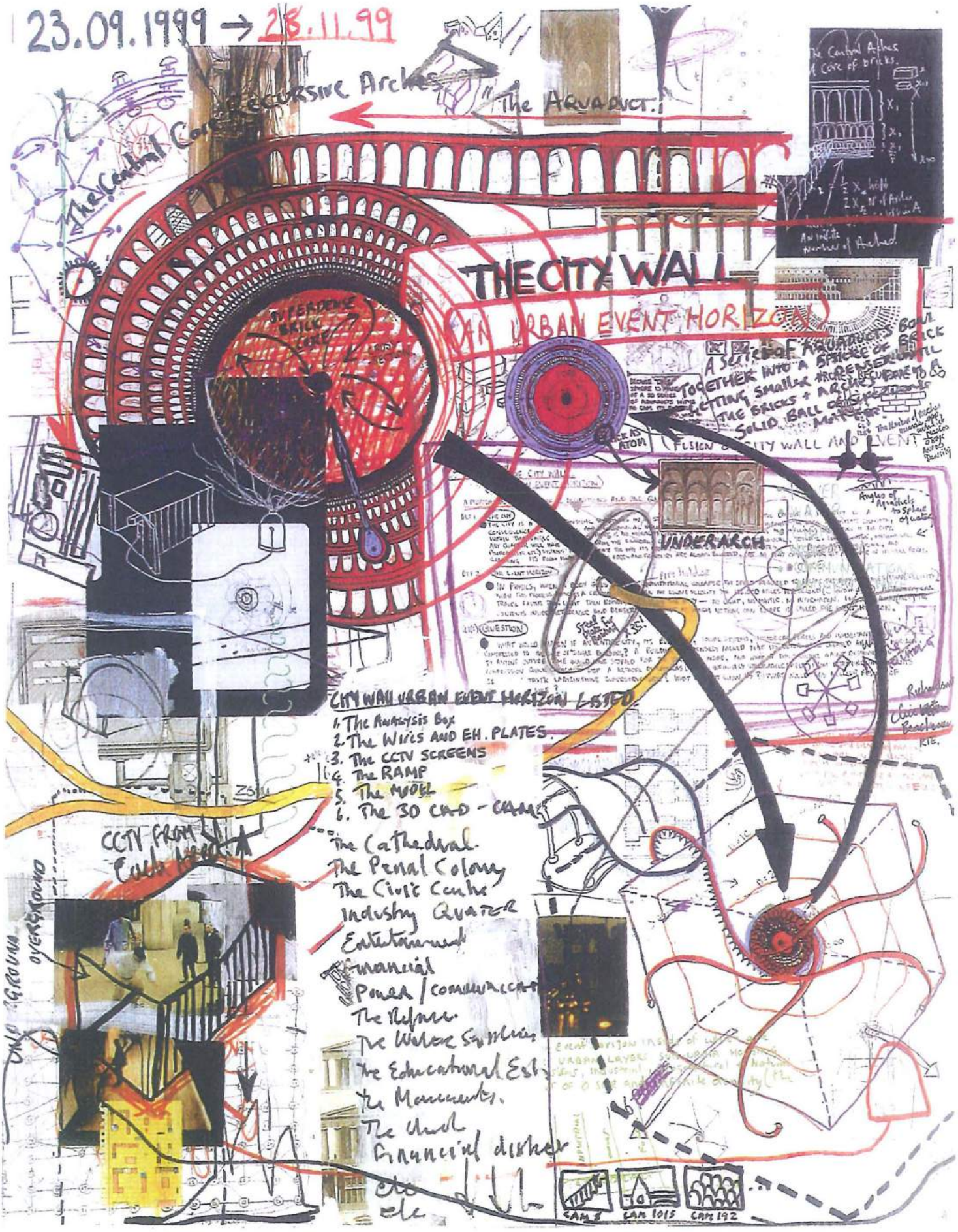
[28] These paintings have visual correspondences with some of the work of the painter Sigmar Polke which may be the result of both artists' use of randomness as a technique for making paintings.
[29] Cat. Jacob Wamberg, 'Supercollider', op cit. *Large Field Array*, p. 10.
[30] 'So, montage is conflict' ... 'I also regard the inception of new concepts and viewpoints in the conflict between customary conception and particular representation – as a dynamization of the 'traditional view' into a new one.' Eisenstein, Sergei, *Film Form, Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1949) p. 38, pp 46-47.

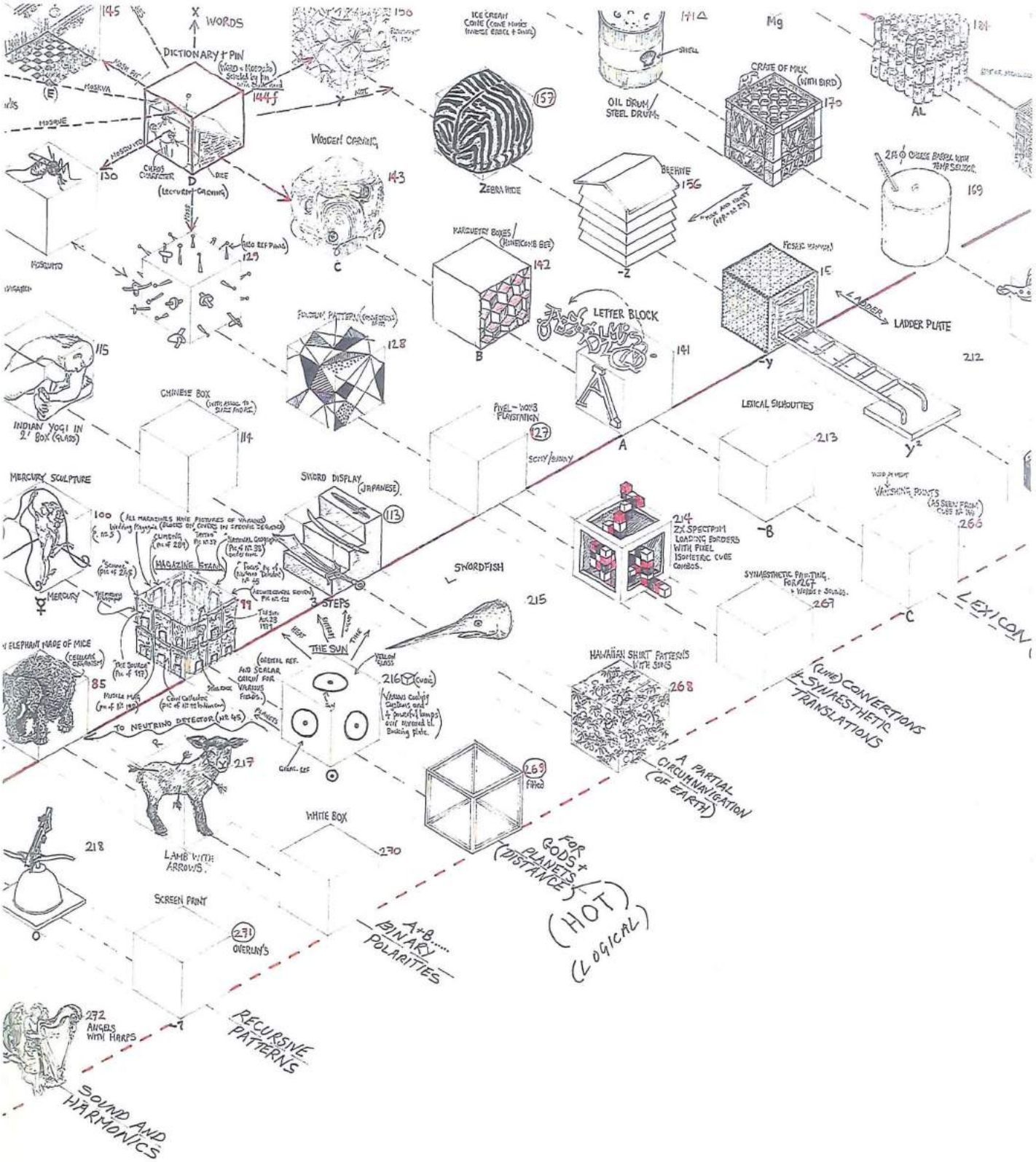
pattern of both laws of physical and quantam forces, but also of art history and other kinds of forces.[31]

[31] Cat. Dominic van den Boogerd, 'The Wu Way', interview with Keith Tyson, op cit., *Large Field Array*, p. 18.

Keith Tyson, *Nature Painting*, 2005–06, Mixed media on aluminum or mirror, 61 x 61 cm.



Keith Tyson, *An Urban Event Horizon*, 1999, Studio Wall drawing.



Keith Tyson, *Large Field Array*, 2007, Drawing.

Top: Keith Tyson, *Art Machine Iteration: 'Bay City Pop-Colossus, Bulemic Still Life with Melons'*, 1996, Fibreglass resin, rubber, snowboard, tripod, bathroom scales, popcorn machine, popcorn, 213 x 183 x 183 cm. approx. overall dimensions.
Below: Keith Tyson, *The City Wall (Urban Event Horizon)*, Schuukenstraat–Nodenaysteeg, 2000.

Nigel Cooke

Nigel Cooke uses ideas that have been developed in both scientific realms and in philosophy to feed into his images that are made representing our world or environment. He constructs models of the multiple dimensions of time-space. Surprisingly, as part of engaging with his multi-faceted subject matter, Cooke uses a very delicate and focused technique of painting that seems antiquated in contrast to the world presented. The execution of his imagery, in its minute detail and craftsmanship, invoke paintings from the history of art, to times when the making of paintings involved considerable time as well as devotion. References and imagery that are familiar are changed in ways that are not immediately understandable because of this slow, labourious method of painting. He uses shifts in scale and disjointed narratives in his works to construct a landscape image that opens up ideas about both time and space. Cooke's paintings, because of the encounters that take place in them, make us think differently about landscape but, unlike the other artists discussed in this chapter, his work maintains many traditional landscape painting formats. Putting different scales together in one image that ostensibly depicts a naturalistic space, draws our attention to the different strata, 'trajectories' (visual, processes of nature, conceptual, political) of how we might conceive a landscape, how a 'landscape' might come to be/ be put together.

Often in Cooke's work, a flat backdrop squeezes a sliver of land between the front surface of the painting and the depicted depth of the picture. A thin panorama of land lies at the bottom of the painting, the detail picked out minutely, reminiscent of a Ruisdail painting or a Durer etching. The difference between the backdrop and the sliver of 'land' however creates the impression of a vast space, at the same time drawing attention to the surface of the painting, its physical characteristics. This format, where the land is squeezed almost claustrophobically into a narrow ledge, at the same time teetering on the edge of the canvas, appears to be a way of developing a sense of foreboding. The sense of (perhaps ecological) disaster and ruin is also described by what appears to be rubble and debris strewn across the landscape or derelict urban corner. The grey light

that pervades the paintings, and the images of graffiti that have been daubed onto the landscape, give these paintings a 'heavy metal' aesthetic. Tiny heads resting on the ground don't notice or mind that they are severed from their bodies. They seem to be involved in the, perhaps drug-induced, huge shifts in scale that are taking place within the picture.

In *Nightfall* (2005), many different landscape references are brought together but assembled in unexpected ways. As well as being a banana, the moon is enormous, and relaxing on the horizon line. The cigarette burns, where the banana moon has stubbed his cigarette out on the background to the stage that is his landscape, are reverse stars in the night sky. The banana moon's cigarette is not only an object but has a life of its own – war wounded and smoking as well, sharing a slim pillar of smoke with the moon, the smoke rising up like a distant fire in the landscape. Different styles co-exist within the landscape here, each one playing a role, differentiating strands in the image or story, rather than making the point that different styles are equal and co-exist. On the horizon are loosely drawn images (different than the cartoonish drawings of the moon and the cigarette) of leaves and vegetation in a completely different scale. Cooke works within the landscape genre – his paintings are images of landscapes – but the landscape that is constructed is an uneasy one, made up of vastly different scales and virtuoso visual, imaginative connections.

The different scales and orders of images brought together by Cooke suggest the possibility, or challenge, of a world of varying parts and fragments. In *Nightfall* this is a constructed world where the viewer is drawn into the painting by (in addition to the microscopic scale of elements of the painting which have to be seen close up) and through pursuing the visual and conceptual possibilities, the connections between imagery and ways of painting. The space of the painting conforms to the landscape conventions of horizon line and open vista, at the same time we are aware that this 'landscape' isn't based on observation. Cooke uses landscape imagery to construct almost an assemblage landscape painting, one

where disparate elements are brought together in ways that echo naturalistic space but which really are the accumulation of associations and visual possibilities. The unexpectedness of the different ways of painting and the virtuoso jumps between references allows the viewer to read differently into the landscape associations, historical references, causes and effects.

Theories from Quantum Mechanics show us that the presence of an observer changes a system, the same system becomes something different when the observer is changed, altering the idea and the possibility of objective knowledge. (Whitehead also writes about different simultaneous time trajectories, as discussed in chapter three). Suhail Malik has written about Cooke's work and initially puts forward the Everett-DeWitt theory as a way of looking at Cooke's work. Through the 'probabilities of what could be observed over time'[32] it is possible to attain different information at different times, information that describes seemingly different, unconnected worlds ('all possible worlds are equally real but are equally incommensurable to one another')[33]. It is possible to see this as a scientific explanation for the possibility of different worlds co-existing at the same moment, as they do at the level of different scales, in Cooke's work.

The ability of digital technology to manipulate images, to shift and change scale (and destabilise a subject viewing position), bringing together disparate times and spaces, has been compared to the simultaneous use of references by Robert Smithson to the 'pre-historic' and the 'post-historic', undermining concepts of space and time.[34] [35] Nigel Cooke's paintings can also be seen to use this change in scale (that both painting

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[32] Suhail Malik, 'On the Composstibility of Painting' in *Nigel Cooke, Paintings 01–06* (London: Koenig Books, 2006), p. 24.
[33] Ibid., p. 29.
[34] Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The MIT Press, 2000) p. 246.
[35] In his article'Quasi-Infinities and the Waning of Space' (1966) Smithson playfully explored some examples from art and literature of works that destabilised ideas about time and space.

and the digital make possible). Cooke's work seems to have affinities with the entropic 'fading of space' and the 'indifference' of landscape that Smithson explored.

> ...once you take the model of multiple temporalities and multiple viewpoints on a system, then absolute categories like complete redundancy [of painting in the context of time-based media] become mere stages in a process that spirals inward. And these can of course be reversed by a change in the position of observation.[36]

However, this way of looking at Cooke's painting, while referring to 'multiple temporalities and multiple viewpoints', relies on the viewer's interpretation.

> Cooke's universal painting-function supports the integrating power of the observer.[37]

Rather than a world that functions in different unconnected ways at the same time (using scientific models from Quantum Mechanics), Malik goes on to argue that Cooke's paintings may be seen using a different model. Rather than remaining separate, the viewer brings together all the different elements of Cooke's paintings (as Cooke does to make them). The visual connections that Cooke makes represent different realised possibilities, opening up the idea of an abundance of different possibilities. As a result, Malik proposes that Leibniz' theory of monadism better describes a logic that may be applied to Cooke's work.[38] This is a different way of understanding how Cooke's landscapes, images of the world, might be formulated. The space of the painting is made up of 'possibilities', combinations of references and images that are a question of *selection*,

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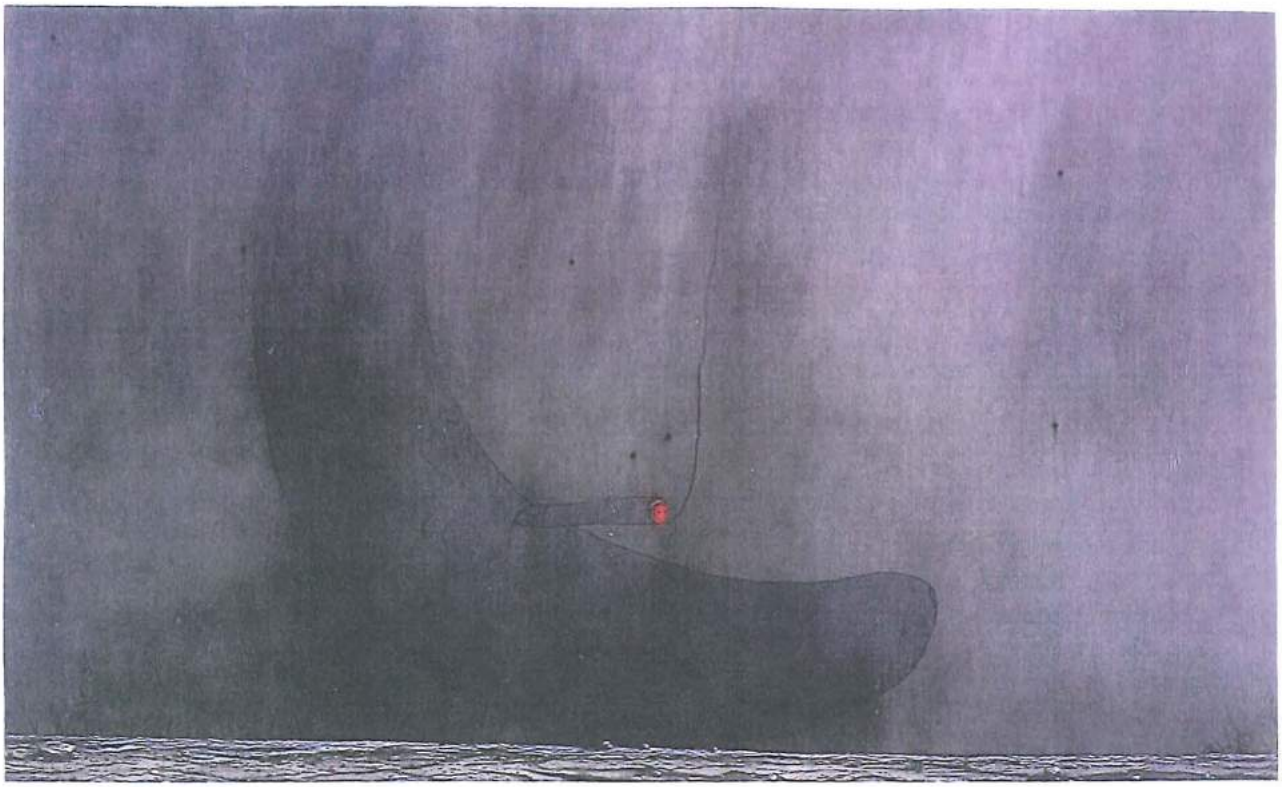
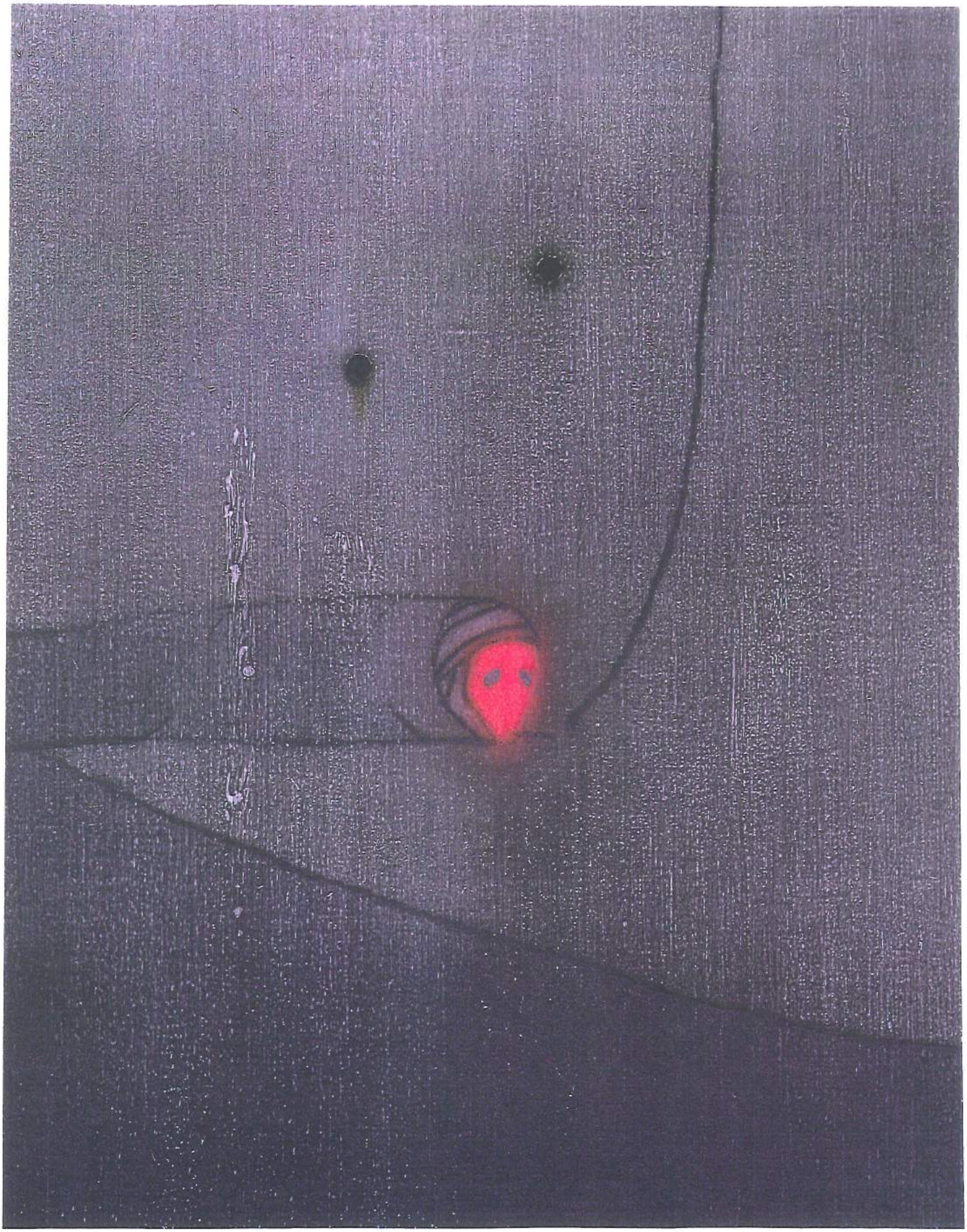
[36] Op cit., *Nigel Cooke, Paintings 01–06*, Nigel Cooke interview, p. 21
[37] Ibid., p. 27.
[38] 'A monad [for Leibniz] was the reality represented by a complete concept, containing within itself all the predicates of the subject of which it was the concept; these predicates were related by sufficient reasons into a vast single network of explanation. A monad, having all these properties within itself, was self-sufficient and did not need to relate to or be influenced by any other monad.' New World Encyclopedia (downloaded July 29 2009).

they are realised possibilities referring to a world of multiple, potentially infinite, possibilities.

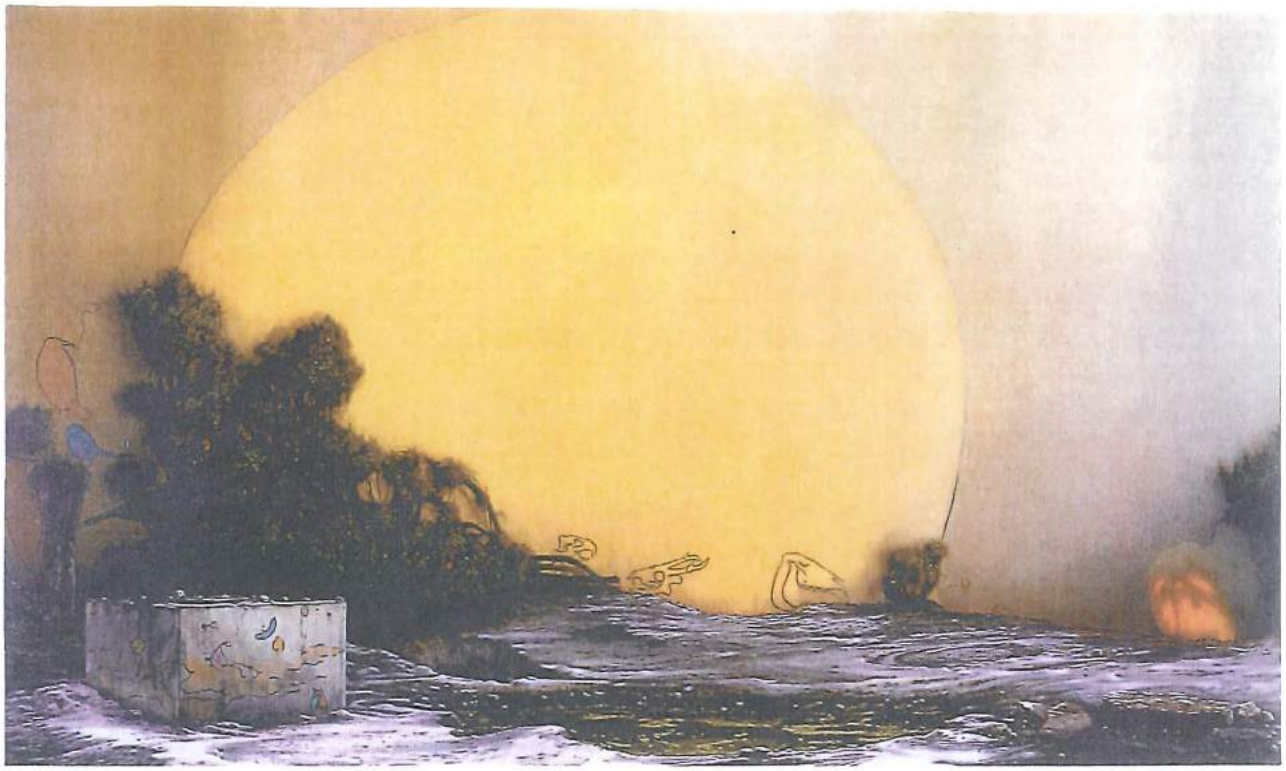
Referring to Leibniz' theory of monadism allows us to see the 'possibilities' of Cooke's work within a framework that changes these possibilities to a productiveness. This imaginary 'world', that points to the possibility of many possibilities, different connections and references, can also be thought about in relation to ideas of real space-time put forward by Doreen Massey when she writes about the complex inter-relations that take place in the urban, for instance. While not describing a particular place, Cooke's paintings do show us a landscape that is composed in ways that reflect the reality of different time and space trajectories. His paintings show fictional unpredictable encounters that can be seen as landscapes that are reflections of the accretion of possibilities, as well as models for real, unpredictable encounters.



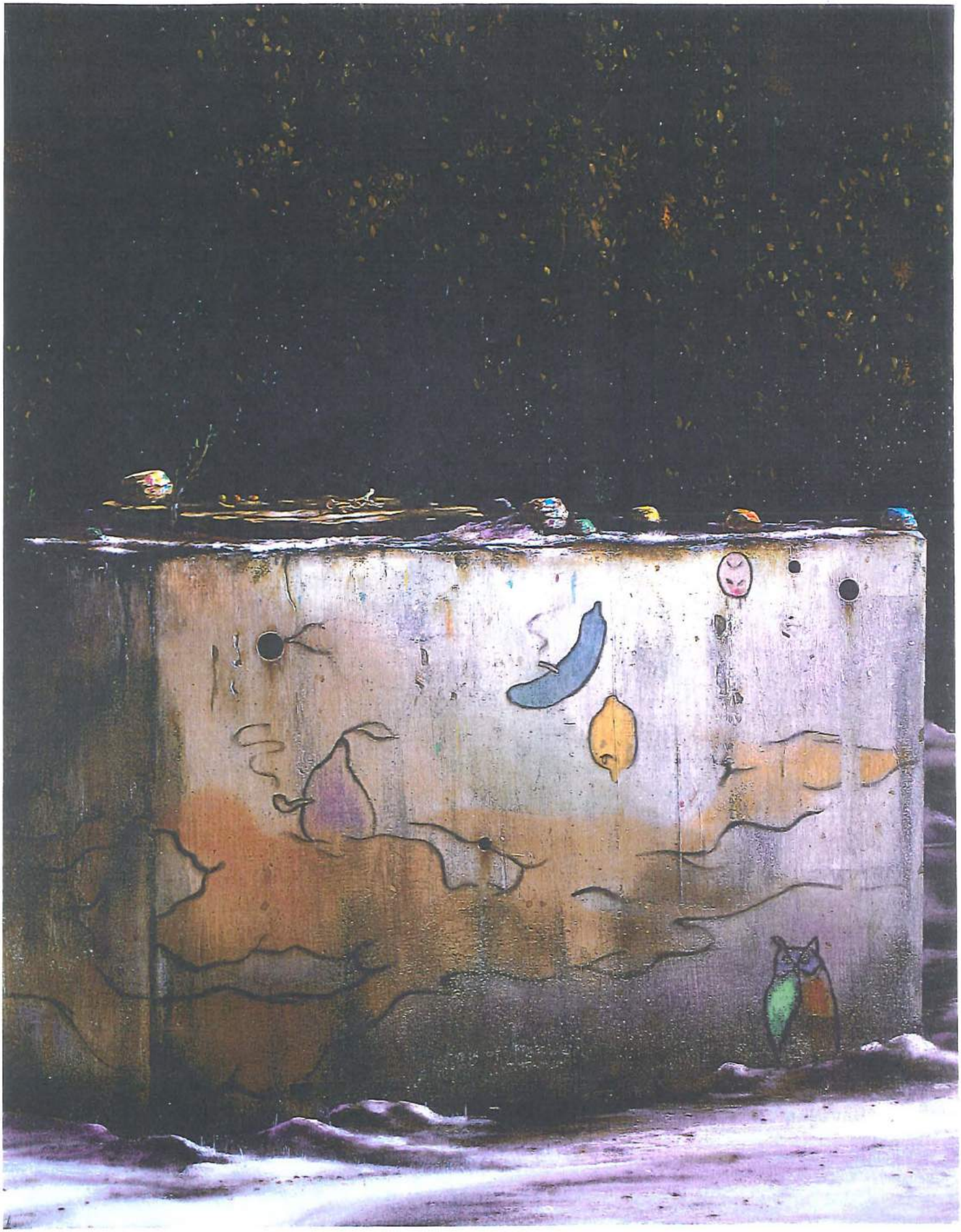
Nigel Cooke, *Nightfall*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 220 x 370 cm.



Nigel Cooke, detail of *Nightfall*, 2005.



Nigel Cooke, *Morning is Broken*, 2004, Oil on canvas, 220 x 370 cm.



Nigel Cooke, detail of *Morning is Broken*, 2004.

Neil Jenney

Neil Jenney explores the space-time that connects the language of landscape imagery with the material and text elements of his work. Jenney's paintings often use images that are of the 'outdoors' – sky, trees, grass. However, he uses the subject matter in unconventional ways. He does this in two ways, through the way that the painted image and the title (which is included as part of the painted image) interact and through the way that he paints. His early paintings, from the late 1960s, often take the format of a brushy background of one colour, with one or two simplified objects or figures painted on this ground. The brushy, built-up surfaces have a seemingly casual or arbitrary approach in comparison to the careful, labour-intensive techniques that are associated with describing landscape with fidelity or with feeling. The brush marks have a style of their own and a self-contained coherence, they don't seem to refer specifically to what is depicted. In Jenney's paintings there is a dislocation between the image and the way it is depicted that emphasises that it is not naturalistic space, or the 'idyll' of landscape that is being depicted, or static relationships being examined. He is playing with the space of the picture through this disjuncture between the object portrayed and the means by which it is portrayed as well as introducing time.

The titles give very open and multiple meanings to the images. Jenney's diagrammatic painting of a fence in a field, something you associate with the countryside, becomes something different when its painted version has the title *Here and There* (1969). It is no longer the depiction of a particular object in a particular place but becomes many different things. It is a boundary, a visual short form for describing different locations (in one location, the painting) as well as having the possibility of other meanings and implications (a sense of things being scattered as well as possibly referring to a larger, global sphere). It draws on ideas about boundaries and is a depiction of the separation between locations (or groups) on a local or global scale using a 'playful' illustration of landscape to generate ideas about space, place and identity. Seen in this way, Jenney's generalised way of painting is not about depicting a particular place but it

is about dynamics and interactions that are difficult to find an image for. His paintings are diagrammatic, they do not describe detail but use imagery as a kind of shorthand. The interactions that they describe take place on a scale that is not visible with eyesight or are just not something visual. They may be a relationship between people for instance. Jenney humourously makes these interactions visible. His paintings could be seen to operate in ways comparable to Frederic Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping – where an image is formed in the mind that corresponds to an understanding of the wider forces that determine the place of the individual. Landscape imagery provides Jenney with a way of making a picture for himself (and his paintings' viewers) using a spatio-temporal correlate, a landscape, of the larger issues that are of importance to him. He pictorially describes these issues very anecdotally but they have an unexpected effect. They don't announce that they can be understood at more profound levels than their brushy, brightly coloured paintwork is associated with but they can be.

Through the relationship between text and image that Jenney develops in these paintings, a configuration of time and space that is unpredicatable is constructed. Or rather, the time and space of the image can be seen in multiple ways when seen in conjunction with the title. The images that are his paintings change from being static to having a narrative, images of objects in space take on a temporality as well as a sociality and the implication of politics. The relationship that Jenney makes between image and title, not only makes the image more 'iconic', gives it more importance, it develops a sense of cause and effect within the image and the depicted space. For instance, the cursively painted image of the painting *Forest and Lumber* (1969) is of a forest which is divided. About half the trees are standing and half are felled. All the trees, which are sketchily painted, almost symbols for trees, are the same and are grouped together but because of an action that has taken place – the action that takes place in the title – the trees are completely different from each other. Our understanding of the image is changed by the accompanying text. About half of the trees are part of a forest and the other half are on the way to

becoming lumber. The standing and felled trees have completely different trajectories in terms of what will happen to them and the use that they will be put to. This change in identity has been described to the viewer in the relationship between the static image and the title, where the relationship between the words describes a more extreme difference than the image. Looking at the image is changed through the simple relationship between a few words in the title.

The playful relationship between space and time explored in Jenney's earlier works is a counterpoint to more recent work that has a very different look. Heavy frames isolate the carefully painted image from the exhibition space and the viewer. At the same time, the image has a vulnerability, also accentuated by the frame, which can be seen to enclose or have a protective capacity. These more recent works are landscapes in more traditional terms and have an overt message of environmental concern. Images of clouds and trees are carefully painted in these works and have a naïve, slightly 'folkish', quality that is at odds with their post-nuclear glow. The frames separate the viewer from the 'simplicity' of these landscapes and give a sense of foreboding or threat. The viewer is excluded from a scene, which, although difficult to see, seems to have an alluring freshness and innocence. These images feed into questions about the nature of our relationship to nature as well as about potential loss in relation to our natural environment. *Window #6* (1971–76) plays with the idea of paintings as representations approximating windows on the world. This window is not window shaped though, destroying the equivalence and also the transparency that might be attempted in a naturalistic painting. While the imagery of trees and a cloud appeals to a sense of transparency, contiguity with 'reality' that might be desired, the objectness of the painting stops this from happening. One painting sits on a ledge (which can be seen as a plinth), making it into an alter-like form. Jenney can be seen to be playing with the conventions of painting in a number of different ways. He is developing a different kind of landscape painting, the words that he uses in conjunction with the images demonstrate the space-time that is constructed by the languages used in his work.

Landscape, even at a simple level, is associated with openness and with horizons.

> There is no perception and so no visibility that is not also a work of articulation...[39]

Stephen Melville writes about the opening that language constructs, and sees this in the materiality of painting itself. His attention to the surface of painting could also be seen in relation to ideas about boundaries and horizons of landscape painting. Melville's idea of openness and connection to other mediums seems to bring back the idea of a horizon, not a literal depicted horizon, one that is integral to the idea of painting that he is putting forward and internal to the work (rather than referring to an external visible reality). The reference to and use of surfaces and surfaces that can be seen as horizons, points to the meanings that can be brought to these points of contact. These references include the relationship with others in an everyday context (the negotiation of interruption, the openness to others that de Certeau's writing can be seen in terms of[40]), the relationship to nature or the 'non-human', as well as the relationship to other people who seem different because outside immediate experience or locale.

> Realism for Jenney, thus lies not in any form of stylistic mimeticism but in the calculus of relationships – hence, its idealism.[41]

It is in the relationships of language, the unusual space-time that he constructs, and the references to landscape rather than the depiction of it that Jenney constructs a new kind of landscape painting.

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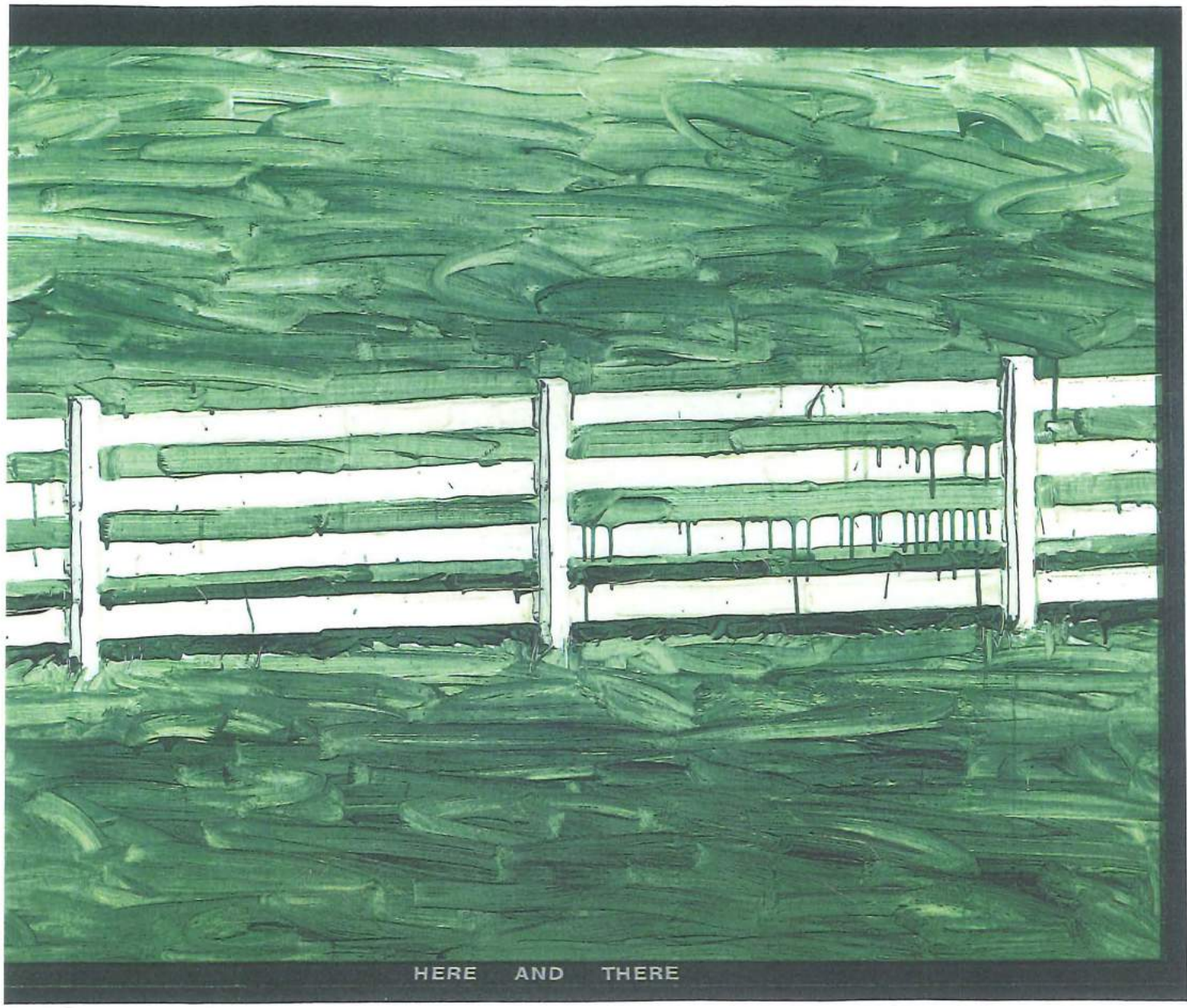
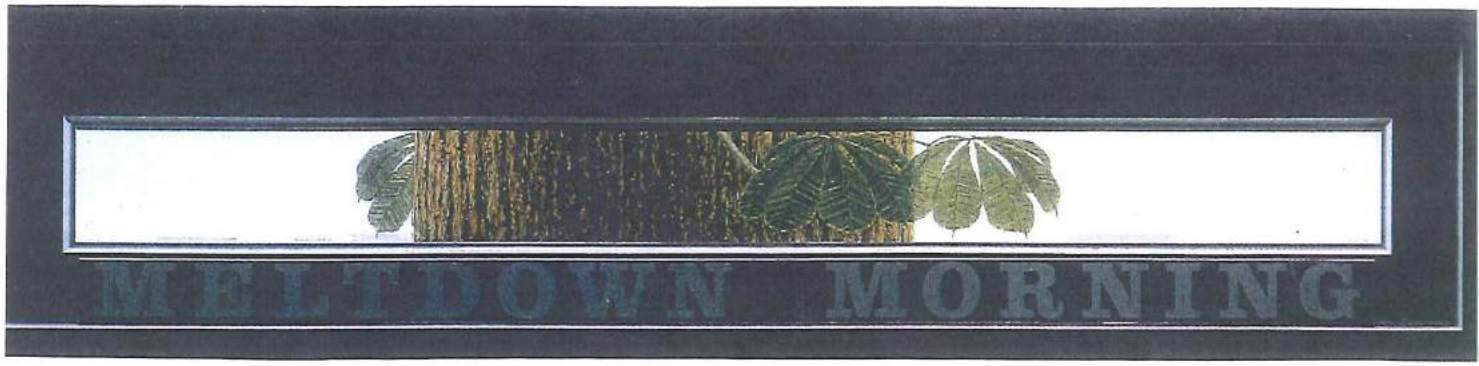
[39] Op cit., Melville, 'Counting/As/Painting', p. 8.
[40] Op cit. Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau*.
[41] Cat. Lynne Cooke, in *Terra Incognita*, Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen, 1998, p. 102–103.



Neil Jenney, *Here and There*, 1969, Acrylic on canvas with painted wood frame, 148.5 x 199.5 cm.

Neil Jenney, *Forest and Lumber*, 1969, Acrylic on canvas with painted wood frame, 147.5 x 173 cm.



Top: Neil Jenney, *Melt Down Morning*, 1975, Oil on panel, 65 x 286 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art.
Below: Neil Jenney, *Window #6*, 1971/76. Oil on panel, 101 x 146 cm.

CONCLUSION

Do concepts of landscape open up new possibilities for painting?
Is there something about painting that means that it is able to bring different dimensions, other viewpoints to ideas about landscape?
Why would we want to think about landscape painting now?

Changing concepts of landscape question landscape painting and ask that it is re-thought. Or rather, as I am arguing, changing concepts of landscape have opened up new possibilities for landscape painting, as landscape encompasses new perspectives that have little to do with the 'view' of the countryside that has been thought of as landscape painting in the past. While images of landscapes (now mostly photographic) are often enjoyed for their beauty or as a record of an experience, and video /film is associated with the concept of landscape, landscape painting is now not such a known quantity. I have approached the question of what it is by looking at the idea of space-time as it can be related to painting practice.

Painting involves its history (of landscape as well as other approaches), the materiality that is associated with the surface of painting (which sometimes means the dislocation between material and surface) as well as the conceptual understandings that have been formulated in relation to painting. The kind of spaces that landscape painting constructs and refers to, which I am proposing means the kinds of space-times that it is able to construct and refer to, are sometimes paradoxical and sometimes have to be seen in terms of what their awkwardness (or inadequacy) offers.

It is of interest to me to think about landscape painting in new ways, in new circumstances. There are paintings being made that can be seen to try to encompass ideas about space-time and they do that in particular ways that are specific to painting, that come up with painting-specific answers to the questions posed, and which as a result add something unique to the

conversation. They add something thought provoking in a peripheral, unpredictable way, perhaps because the medium is *not* the obvious tool /medium to use.

The criticism that is often directed towards historical landscape paintings is that images of landscape are often seen as natural, without implicit ideology. One of the most evocative historical accounts of this dynamic at play is John Barrell's description, in *The Dark Side of the Landscape*, of the tended land in Constable's paintings reflecting the labour of the workers who remain unseen in the image. The look of the land, the landscape being shown in the painting is a result of their work, and is tied up with the working conditions that they laboured under. These conditions are 'naturalised' in the painting by the way that the landscape is portrayed as given. We think of the countryside, as depicted in Constable's landscapes, as looking like this, without any intervention. It is through this depiction that an interaction with nature is shown. The look of these landscape paintings is also thought to show the aspirations and values of those that owned the land, those who commissioned or viewed the paintings. The views portrayed are thought to show an ease with wealth and power, connecting the way of portraying the landscape with the exploitation of workers, hiding social relationships that are unequal and exploitative, and with attitudes to nature that distance it. While this reaction to landscape images is valuable and has had important and constructive outcomes, there is now the opportunity to think about landscape painting in different ways. For instance, interactions with nature might be thought of differently and these relationships could be explored.

Raymond Williams is an important figure in the shift to new ways of thinking about landscape. He analysed political inequalities by looking at the way that they were represented through the relationship between country and city in literature. His writing brings both a political reading to images of country and city but also sees country and city as being latent or implicit (if not explicit) in each other. He analysed this relationship and how it has been seen as both political and changing over time. This political

interpretation of the relationship between country and city extends to the spatial analysis of the urban that stemmed from their relationship. This thesis, looking at the implications of the spatial in its conjunction with landscape, considers references to both country and city as possible landscapes.

Analyses of space have been more focussed on, and have been developed in relation to the urban and to the wider global world. Henri Lefebvre theorised these new understandings of the complexity of space in relation to the urban. He saw the urban as 'producing space', existing spatial relations that were already in place as well as the potential to change these existing spatial relations and their social repercussions. Lefebvre recognised the generative nature of urban space, and saw this developing from an acknowledgment of the contradictions that exist in society and social relations. While he saw the constraining effects of space, he also saw the urban as 'oeuvre',

> ...participation and use, an experimental utopia based upon the image and the imaginary, constantly subjected to critique and referring to a problematic derived from the real.[1]

Lefebvre developed the idea of the 'production of space', looking at particular conditions, including contradictions, that produced space and seeing the responsibility of those wanting to change things for the better, with a social conscience, to produce new forms of space.

> *The Production of Space* seeks to 'detonate' everything here. For Lefebvre sees fragmentation and conceptual dislocation as serving distinctly ideological purposes. Separation ensures consent, perpetuates misunderstanding...reproduces the status quo. By bringing these different modalities of space together within a single theory...Lefebvre seeks to *expose* and *decode* space, and thereby

> empower socialists everywhere in their analysis of, and struggle against, an urbanizing modern capitalism.[2]

Lefebvre's work is a base for contemporary considerations of landscape. He is one of the most significant theorists to define and explore the political importance of space, seeing that considerations of space have important social implications and also bring with them the potential for social change.

Not only has the urban been the locus of analyses of spatial social relations and the production of space, it has also been seen in terms of the inter-relationship of space and time that has defined some of the concerns of social geography. The relationship between space and time that has emerged as a driving force in many spheres of knowledge is what I am focussing on as defining the changing concept of landscape in this text. Both the urban, and its relationship to the countryside, are central to this focus on space-time and landscape. While the subject of landscape and landscape painting can be approached in different ways, this is my particular interest.

Although I have concentrated on the relationship between spatial issues and landscape, landscape of course has been and is thought of in relation to, if not *as*, nature as well. Landscape is often thought of as representations of the rural and the natural world. There is a connection between landscape and nature in this text as concepts of space-time that have been derived and developed from the scientific investigations of nature (in the writing of Alfred North Whitehead for instance) are seminal in current understands of space-time. Bruno Latour's more recent writing about nature develops his idea of political ecology – 'bringing the political

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[1] Henri Lefebvre , *Writings on Cities*, selected, translated and introduced by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) p. 15.
[2] Andy Merrifield, 'Henri Lefebvre: A Socialist in Space' in Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, eds., *thinking space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) p. 171.

quality of the natural order into the foreground'.[3] He writes about the cosmos as the 'common world' (of human and non-human). Seen in this way, that nature is a participant in the 'cosmos' that human and non-human occupy /share (not a construct or the unknown), it is possible to see the political importance of the 'spatial' in the last decades being extended to the 'cosmos' that includes nature in new ways. When Edward Soja writes:

> Part of the story of the submergence of space in early 20th century social theory is probably related to the explicit theoretical rejection of environmental causality and all physical or external explanations of social processes and the formation of human consciousness. Society and history were being separated from nature and naively given environments to bestow upon them what might be termed a relative autonomy of the social from the spatial...'[4]

it can be seen as substantially different from Latour's aim of creating a new 'cosmos', a common world of human and non-human.

> ...it will still be necessary to *represent* [advocate for] the associations of humans and nonhumans through an explicit procedure, in order to decide what collects them and what unifies them in one future common world.[5]

Recently, environmental awareness is more urgent and more prevalent, making recycling and an aesthetic related to the provisional and handmade more sought after in many spheres including fashion and business. The new aesthetic, driven by an increased consciousness about being locally focussed and minimising waste and global footprints, has changed or revived an aesthetic that reflects different political ambitions

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[3] Bruno Latour, trans. Catherine Porter, *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 2004) p. 28.
[4] Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989) p. 35.

and more environmental concerns and desires. Kate Soper, for one, has argued that while an unproblematic appreciation of the beauty of nature is complicated, it can reflect a general desire to make a relationship with nature that is environmentally aware and productive of a better shared world.[6] These current investigations into the political and environmental implications of nature also reflect a change in relation to considerations of landscape, now looked at through theories of space and space-time.

The work described in this text makes clear that landscape is not 'natural' in the sense of being accepted and unquestioned. The selected works put forward different ways of approaching the subject for interpretation and evaluation. For instance, Keith Tyson's work, using constructed configurations of chance makes work that brings up questions about proliferation and genetic change. He is responding to the circumstances created by The Art Machine, the unpredictable circumstances that he then works with. What reaction does this work construct as a result? It creates an anxiety about the limits or boundaries of what is being produced. There is excessive production which, while it can be seen as comparable with the processes of nature, also creates an anxiety about excessive production that is associated with technology and excessive consumer production, and their effects on the environment.

In this text I have suggested that montage, and mapping, are two ways of thinking about how paintings are able to engage with ideas to do with the nature of landscape understood as space-time. Connections take place through the bringing together of different imagery that Eisenstein explored in his films and that Deleuze wrote about in relation to the different points of view that the movie camera makes possible in cinema. Montage is associated with bringing about a change in perception through the bringing together of imagery in unexpected ways and through bringing different

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[5] Op cit., Latour, The Politics of Nature, p. 41.
[6] Kate Soper, 'Privileged Gazes and Ordinary Affectations: Reflections on the Politics of Landscape and the Scope of the Nature Aesthetic' in Mark Dorrian and Gillian Rose, eds. *Deterritorialisations...Revisioning Landscape and Politics* (London and New York: Black Dog Publishing, 2003)

points of view together simultaneously. Space-time has effects that bring about change as well as being the multi-faceted, temporal, present moment which is suggested by connections to montage.

Recently, the idea of maps and mapping have been rethought, in Deleuze and Guattari's writings for one, where the idea of a map is re-conceptualised as a leap in thought that opens up new ways of thinking.[7] Mapping is now understood as an action, a verb (an event) rather than referring to an object and it is these new ways of thinking and understanding maps and mapping that I use in a re-consideration of landscape painting. Mapping is put forward as another way that a material form of the space-time that is landscape can be conceived and explored.

When landscape is thought of in spatial terms, it is thought of as a multiplicity of different trajectories, different times, spaces and activities occurring simultaneously. Robert Smithson is not an artist who comes immediately to mind when thinking about landscape painting. However, his work can be seen as opening up considerations of space-time as social and multiple in an art context and as being a questioning force in relation to painting. Alighiero e Boetti's work sets new parameters for contemporary landscape painting in his use of processes associated with industrial production and craft, as well his opening up of the authorship of his work that involved working with other people. His encounter with Afghanistan, a different kind of working *en plein air*, formed a base for his work. Eugenio Dittborn's work opens up ideas of distance and travel, their connections with communication and their political implications, as subjects for contemporary landscape painting as well as re-thinking what the form of a painting can be and what it can do. The surface of his painting in itself refers to landscape debates, the type of material used as well as the portability of the work, how it 'connects' with the different surfaces (locations) that it travels to.

The works by contemporary artists described here include practices, references and materials not necessarily included in previous concepts of landscape painting.

> Where Hegel takes the surface of painting to divide us from its content, we take division to be the essential fact of that surface as a surface. ...an attempt to mark within a practice the limit that belongs to its objectivity and not simply its nominal definition; it marks painting as, let's say, all edges, everywhere hinged, both to itself and to what it adjoins, making itself out of such relations.[8]

Stephen Melville acknowledges both a self-consciousness in the philosophical nature of painting and an inevitable interaction with context and other materials. Melville writes about the surface of painting, its connection with 'what it adjoins' and the acting out of these relations as a defining element of the conception of painting. At the same time, in the context of this thesis, these relations are being related to space-time and the use of horizons and 'limits' associated with landscape.

Rather than a depiction of space, or a depiction of an 'outside', Melville explores a space that is inherent in the work, which is constructed in the work, and which has the potential to be multiple. Some of the artists discussed here construct this multiple space by extending beyond the canvas. I am suggesting that the concept of painting practice that Melville constructs can be seen to have parallels with landscape discourse and is useful in the context of this discussion of landscape painting.

Seen in this way, painting's integral relationship to its material character constructs an idea of place that is about an opening up of a space within the 'language' of painting. If painting is thought about in terms of the

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[7] Simon O'Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006) p. 35.
[8] Cat. Stephen Melville, 'Counting/As/Painting' in *As Painting: Division and Displacement* (Columbus, Ohio: Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University/Cambridge Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press, 2001) pg. 21.

methods used to construct the surface of painting, the 'touch', then painting can be thought of in terms of both the bodily interactions with the surface and how the surface works metaphorically to draw attention to the idea of the body. Edward Casey explores the connections with the philosophical consideration of place as related to the body as well as event.

When thinking about landscape painting, it has been common to think of images, representations of place(s) or space. If landscape painting *has* considered place(s) and/or space, then a precedent has been set for contemporary landscape painters to also engage with new understandings (philosophical, political...) of place(s) and space in their work.

In this text I have been interested in thinking about landscape in relation to space-time and, in particular in relation to the city. I have considered the idea of unpredictableness. Whitehead's spatio-temporal basis of nature, which gives rise to philosophical shifts that are applied to a political and geographical idea of place, has been conceptualised in relation to the urban. An idea of 'event' is integrally connected to our encounter with and understanding of place. I have explored this through some of the material ways that painting can embrace the question of space-time and the unpredictable quality of events, looking at montage and 'maps' as examples.

An event in this context is understood as an unpredictable configuration that makes and 'takes place' allowing for new ways of seeing things, a lack of fixedness, the possibility for change, even 'radical democracy'. The geographer Doreen Massey, as previously described, writes about encounters within the urban situation in this way – claiming that an awareness of multiple intersecting 'paths' (simultaneous uses and /or inhabitations) are needed in order to apprehend, from a geographical perspective, the philosophical and political makeup of any 'place'. Unpredictableness is inherent in these encounters and connections. Images, representations, she argues, are difficult to bring together with

ideas about the urban and how it functions. In the attempt to find visual expressions of these dynamics, Massey uses the example of information as an image of weather, the weather understood as being different simultaneously in different places.

> The coeval existence of a multiplicity of conditions: that is the gift of space. Space is the sphere of the possibility of the existence of plurality, of the co-existence of difference.[9]

Melville opens up the 'space' of painting (using what I am interpreting as landscape 'tools') to define painting as a surface, inherently connected to other ways of working and what adjoins it (I understand this to mean conceptually as well as physically). If space is 'the possibility of plurality, the co-existence of difference', painting (landscape painting) is re-interpretable. Place understood as event is physical, conceptual and visual. 'Events' may also take place in the re-ordering and the re-configuration of the ways that landscape is understood through the languages of painting. I am aiming in this text to destabilise ideas about landscape painting, and as a result, to discover for myself some of the options and possibilities that contemporary landscape painting offers. Landscape painting may have a re-vitalised role to play in the future in our appreciation of the beauty of nature, the interaction between human and non-human, and our openness to new ways of thinking about how interactions take place in the city and on a global scale.

Other mediums have been used to explore these areas of interest and do so reliably and with the allure that photography or film has, but with sometimes predictable results. Painting not only brings to these areas of interest its own material possibilities and conceptual history but its inappropriateness may also be an important factor. Perhaps painting may now be thought of in the way that the movie camera has been, used to show and consider issues of space-time in unexpected and hence fruitful

ways. Rather than asking what painting can do that other mediums might be able to do better, it makes more sense to look at paintings and ask what they show if looked at as landscape paintings. For my selection of artists I have chosen works where there is an emphasis on space-time and place. As an artist, looking at other artists' work like this shows me different options and ways to approach seeing my own work (already made) as well as influencing how I will make things in the future.

The spatio-temporal construction of the works made by artists included in this thesis is of primary significance. The works that I have selected for the final chapter bring up questions of space-time and place as an outcome, an extension of, and superceding, ideas about space. These works engage with ideas about space-time by using their form, 'hinged, both to itself and to what it adjoins, to make itself out of such relations'.[10] The connection between ideas of place (the event of place) and ideas about painting provides the possibility for seeing landscape painting as 'producing' new forms of 'space' (ideas of space-time) and provides a new vitality and relevance for the contribution that paintings can make to contemporary landscape discourses.

[9] Tate Gallery, *Olafur Eliasson: The Weather Project* (London, Tate Publishing, 2003) pp. 113–114.
[10] Op cit., Melville, As Painting, p. 21.

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