

Sensitive Bodies



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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of another degree or diploma or a university or institution of higher learning.

Date: 11 October 2019

Signature:

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Abstract

Sensitive Bodies is a practice-led research project investigating how a work of art emerges from the mediation between stimulus and response. It focuses on how the physical properties that are external to a *sensitive body* are activated and how painting can reveal this process. This project explores how the use of colour can uncover the different conditions in which the body experiences an affective response during the process of painting. This research aims to investigate the dynamic between the spatial-temporal relations within a process-driven aesthetic, where structural elements begin to materialise from the visual qualities of experience and materiality of paint. The book *Francis Bacon: Logic of Sensation* by French Philosopher Gilles Deleuze has been central in this research. It is through a Deleuzian filter of colour and sensation that I embark on this exploration.

Introduction

In her essay, *Deleuze and the Force of Colour*, the artist Megan Craig provides an investigation of Gilles Deleuze's interpretation of Francis Bacon's paintings. The core of Craig's exploration of Deleuze is of how colour and sensation can be processed by bodies that do not solely pertain to human bodies but every *body*. She writes:

The bodies Deleuze investigates are radically trans-figurable and resistant to description. Broadening the parameters of embodiment, he suggests that a body might be a place (a desert, an island, or a city), a single-celled organism (an amoeba), a work of art, an animal, a plant, or a human being. These are all bodies insofar as they are all dynamic creatures with distinctive life cycles, intensities, and needs.¹

This exegesis offers up a particular way of thinking about bodies and new ways of examining emerging sensibilities within a painting practice, from an artist and spectator's perspective. The embodiment of experience when painting, and while viewing a work of art, allude to the simultaneity of numerous bodies at work within a painting process. Correspondingly, the bodies in question refer to painterly elements such as lines, motifs, gestures and forms. I am exploring what it means to be subjected to the complexities of sensation; what it means to be susceptible to the forces in action before language, and how this can be revealed by colour through the act of painting.

Deleuze considers how Bacon's use of colour can evoke sensation. In this research, I will investigate how the imperceptibility of 'the force of colour' can be activated through painting. Philosopher Evan Thompson will provide a brief description of colour from a scientific perspective. Similarly, the artist Helio Oiticica expands on the dimensionalities of colour and its heterogeneity. The fluctuating tonal intensities of colour express the intimate relationship between time and space, as explored through notions of becoming, abstraction, duration and latency. This particular investigation of spatial-temporal relations between the figure and the ground, explore how movement can encourage new painting strategies. Mark Rothko's exploration of abstraction paves the way for an understanding of how a work of art can emerge from the visual qualities of experience and the different ways abstraction could operate. Further, I look at the artist Tomma Abts as she explores abstraction as encountered, as well as the art writer Jan Verwoert's explanation of temporal latency.

Painting methods used in this research are woven throughout the exegesis, with a strong emphasis on intuition. The gradual build-up of paint conveys the accretion of affective responses; these responses address a nonlinear way of experiencing time. The philosopher Henri Bergson provides a comprehensive explanation of intuition, as well as the doctoral thesis by artist Ian Jervis. The art theorist Simon O'Sullivan explains the concept of affect, and how this can open up another way of thinking about how bodies could collaborate for new possibilities to emerge. Constructing pictorial compositions, intuitively,

¹ Megan Craig, "Deleuze and the Force of Colour," *Philosophy Today* 35, (2010): 178, <http://www.megancraig.com/uploads/3/0/6/3/30630963/deleuzeandforceofcolorweb.pdf>.

can be seen from the paintings by Peter Shear and Erin Lawlor. Shear's affective responses to the materiality of paint demonstrate how the frequency and pace in which sensation begins to materialise can impart numerous ways of further manipulating the physical properties of paint.

A visual documentation of the artworks conducted in this research are provided to accompany this text. The artworks are presented in three parts. The first part comprises works the *Celestial Green* series; these works explore the multi-dimensionality of colour. The second part comprises works from the *Infected/Affected* series; these works explore the hybridity of bodies, and their potential to create new works of art. The third part comprises works exploring the materiality of paint. Examples of artworks by the artists in this study are specified. A list of figures with full details of each image are included at the front of this document.

I. Colour

This chapter critically examines my relationship to colour through a painting process. I will discuss the imperceptible forces that surround the body, and how, through affect, these forces can be absorbed producing a series of reactions as sensibilities begin to emerge. The aim is to investigate how colour can render visible the sensations that transpire from the materiality of paint. This investigation includes how the relationship between the physical properties of paint along with its application on the canvas, can open up new affect relations and ways of perceiving the world. I have made a connection between Bacon's use of colour, and how its multi-dimensionality can explain the different levels of sensation that are experienced during the process of painting.

I. I Imperception of Colour

From an ecological perspective, humans are trichromatic seeing the world through three different hues of red, blue and green. Some animals like rats are monochromatic, distinguishing spatial features in black and white, while bees perceive colour through ultraviolet vision. Colour then is subjective, relying on the perceiver to exist, but this can also be objectified through the act of painting. Evan Thompson states that the dimensionalities of colour "are properties of the world taken in relation to the perceiver."² So the question is, how can colour become activated through painting?

For Thompson, the perception of colour corresponds to the "features of physical objects that are external to the perceiver. In this view, we do not see the world directly, we see the world only in virtue of seeing sense-data, which are intermediate between us and the world."³ Our perception of the world exists only in relation to ourselves. Colour becomes activated and made to exist based on the way the perceiver processes visual information. In Simon O' Sullivan's book *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, he elaborates:

...the brain functions as an exchange system, receiving perceptions and producing reactions, and yet because of its complexity (there are a multiplicity of possible pathways through which the brain-body configuration can react) an interval is opened up between excitation and reaction.⁴

Painting, then, is a way of showing the interplay between the external forces that belong to the world, and the way this is processed by the body, likewise, how the internal forces of the body releases a rhythmical assemblage of percepts and memory. It becomes the event in which the unseen forces of becoming⁵, between the way colours are perceived and how they eventually become cognitively understood. A

² Evan Thompson, *Colour Vision: A Study in Cognitive Science and Philosophy of Perception*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 175

³ Ibid. 176

⁴ Simon O' Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 46

⁵ I am using the term becoming to describe the progression between stimulus and response which is also used by O'Sullivan to explain the connection between the artist and his surroundings.

creative practice then can mediate the separation between the intangibility of forces that surround us, into an encounter with something visible.

I. II Experience of Colour

This sub-chapter talks about colour as it emerges from the body and how it goes through different dimensions as a work of art slowly unfolds. In *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze examines Bacon's use of colour and categorises it in three dimensions; "colour-structure", "force" and "contour".⁶ Colour as structure refers to the colour fields that seem to dominate the surface or the colour that was used to paint the background. Though it appears that only one colour was applied, a closer examination proves a range of different colours, emerging and receding from the surface, activating the whole painting.

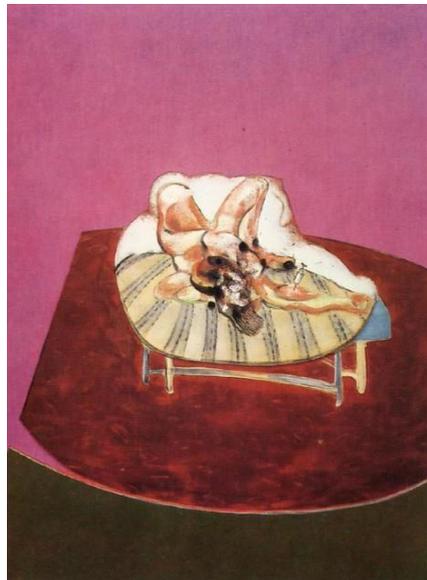


Figure 17

Rapidly applied gestures that create ruptures on the surface are referred to by Deleuze as forces, and colour-contouring as a reference to the objects that complement the human figure in Bacon's paintings. "Each spatial dimension corresponds to a different temporal dimension, Deleuze ultimately shows that Bacon's paintings, and the force of colour they unleash, scramble the distinction between space and time."⁸

My practice began from examining the different shades of grey, where a consistent monochromatic structure supports the emerging colours. This monochrome structure allowed for further exploration of a different set of visual relations and considered how subdued forms might interact with the sharper tones

⁶ Megan Craig, "Deleuze and the Force of Colour," *Philosophy Today* 35, 2010, 182, <http://www.meganraig.com/uploads/3/0/6/3/30630963/deleuzeandforceofcolorweb.pdf>.

⁷ Francis Bacon, *Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe*, Oil on canvas, 1980 x 1450 mm, 1963

⁸ Ibid. 183

appearing on occasion. The surface of the painting acts as a palette where colours are blended and made, informing the structural elements that are emerging during the painting process. An accumulation of affective responses are shown through the layering of colours, and the multiple intersection of forms show a non-hierarchical way of making judgements. The decision behind the use of colour and scale comes from an arbitrary viewpoint, revealing the complex ways that sensation can be received.

The second dimension, colour as force, can be witnessed through the marks that are less dominant than the colour-structure, and do not occupy the entire surface. For Bacon's paintings, these are the rapidly applied gestures which can be measured in the force of "a sneeze, of gravity, of sitting or turning."⁹ In my paintings, these forces can be identified from the subsequent layer, which is directly informed by the colour-structure. An immediate response was made from this process and can be seen as forms appear and disappear or deteriorate, which then creates a sense of movement. The different levels, or dimensions, of intensity from the experience of painting can be witnessed from the shifting tones and varied responses to the initial application of paint. The colour-force forces the colour-structure further from the surface, thus enabling more responses.



Figure 2¹⁰

The objects that accompany the human-like figures in Bacon's paintings are referred to by Deleuze as colour-contour. This provides support to the rest of the painting and activates the edges of the canvas. Objects such as the lightbulb as seen in Figure 2 catch the eye and illuminate the rest of the painting. In my paintings, the contouring can be revealed by the darker marks that appear from time to time. These lines do not physically dominate the surface as they present themselves in slight suggestive marks. Their

⁹ Ibid. 183

¹⁰ Francis Bacon, *Study from the Human Body: Man Turning On the Light*, oil and alkyd paint on canvas, 2006 x 1484mm, 1973

significance can be measured by the amount of contrast they give to the lighter tones of the painting, creating physical ruptures from which a response can be made. For example, in Figure 3, the dark-blue that appears on the right-hand side of the painting can provide emphasis. This accentuates the colour-relations that became visible, further indicating that a work of art is about to emerge.

Looking at my painting practice, the different dimensions that Deleuze identified seem to overlap in certain areas. For example, colour as contour, not only has the potential to illuminate or activate a surface but can also act as a force that can indicate movement. Looking at Figure 3, there is a darker tone that has the capacity to dominate the entire painting. It also borrows qualities from colour-forces, as it creates a physical tension between the monochromatic field and the abrupt gestures resting upon it. The experience of colour through the overlap of its different dimensions demonstrates the spatial-temporal relations of painting. The artist Helio Oiticica wrote in his essay, *Colour, Time and Structure* on the different ways time and space can interact. He refers to the different dimensionalities of a work of art as “an infinite dimension not in the sense that the work might dissolve *ad infinitum*, but in the sense of its being unlimited, in the non-particularity that exists.”¹¹ The mediation of time, colour and space, shows the sequence of events that lead to the emergence of a work of art. This also indicates “man’s internal, existential relationship with the world, that characterizes time in the artwork.”¹² As I continue to paint, I witness the change that occurs within the structural elements of painting. This change opens up a discussion regarding my existential relationship with the world; the ongoing affective relations with my environment.

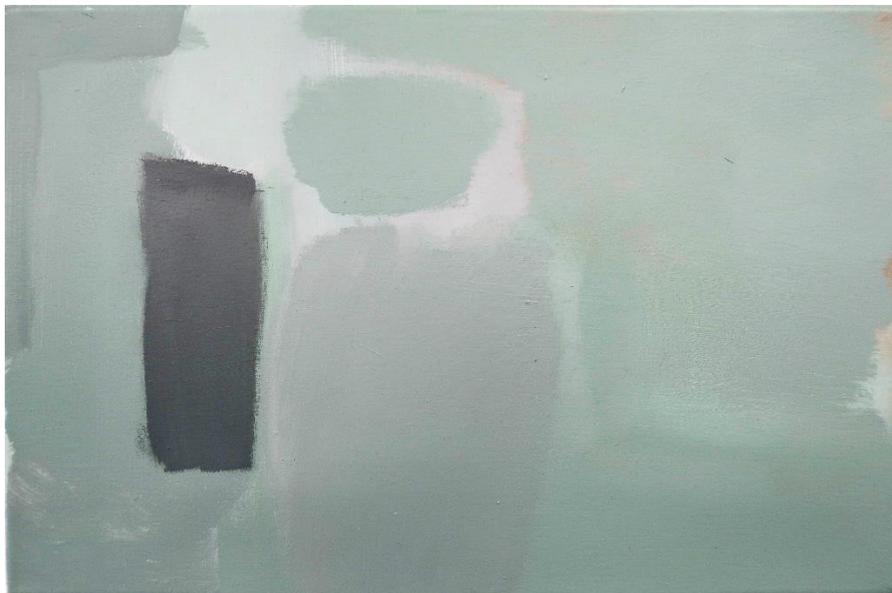


Figure 3¹³

¹¹ Helio Oiticica, “Colour, Time and Structure,” in *Abstraction: Documents of Contemporary Art*, Whitechapel Gallery (London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press, 2013), 76

¹² Ibid. 76

¹³ Andrea Bolima, From the *Celestial Green Series*, acrylic on canvas, 350 x 400mm, 2019



Figure 4¹⁴



Figure 5¹⁵

¹⁴ Andrea Bolima, From the *Celestial Green Series*, acrylic on canvas, 330 x 240mm, 2019

¹⁵ Andrea Bolima, From the *Celestial Green Series*, acrylic on canvas, 330 x 240mm, 2019

II. Becoming and Abstraction

The discussion around perception and experience of colour lead me to explore the concept of becoming. I began to investigate further the phase between stimulus and response, and the transformation of one affective state to another, through notions of abstraction. Abstraction, in this research, is a concept that not only addresses the simplification of forms by further deconstructing the depiction of people, landscapes and objects through grids, gestures and colour-fields; abstraction also considers the experience when viewing a work of art. I examine the abstract forces that take part in this process, through the art critic Jan Verwoert, as well as the artists Tomma Abts and Mark Rothko.

In his essay, *The Beauty and Politics of Latency: On the Work of Tomma Abts*, the paintings of Abts become the basis for Verwoert's investigation of abstraction against the fast-paced circulation of information, and he – Verwoert – explains that the “experience of abstraction interrupts the circulation of data.”¹⁶ This data pertains to the way visual information can be immediately received through different systems such as social media, and the *agency*, that enables one “to actualize your potential on the spot, anywhere, anytime.”¹⁷ Following this concept, I became particularly interested in the idea of how abstraction in painting allows for the emergence of possibilities and strategies through the interference of visual information within a painting practice. I have made a connection between breaking the flow of visual information, and the interruption that occurs in the transformation of one affected state of the body to another.

Looking at Figure 6, the painting *Wjbe* by Tomma Abts, several visual interruptions can be seen from the physical disruption of the painting itself. Verwoert explains that Abts's abstraction breaks away from the



Figure 6¹⁸

¹⁶ Jan Verwoert, “The Beauty and Politics of Latency: On the Work of Tomma Abts” in *Tomma Abts*, (New York: Phaidon Press, 2008), 92.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Tomma Abts, *Wjbe*, acrylic and oil on canvas, two parts 4767.58 x 360.68mm, 2014

urgency of recognizing an image right away, the gestalt, and instead asks viewers to have a closer look.¹⁹ The first encounter of the work suggests a structural placement of grids, mostly comprised of straight and assertive lines. A second encounter proves moments of doubt as these lines begin to curve in two parts, the top left and bottom right. The seemingly determinate structures become ambiguous as the burnt orange lines converge with the salmon pink structure receding from both sides of the painting. The ambiguity of these structures reveals the overlap of temporal dimensions as one can no longer comprehend which line was painted first. It is not only the abstract experience of viewing a work of art that, according to Verwoert, creates a potential for reflection, but also in the abstract experience of making.

Within my painting practice, there is also a surge of visual information that happens in the layering process, from the way pre-existing structures have been laid out on the surface of the canvas, and from the way these provisional forms interact with emerging forms. The rupturing of the sequence of events was needed for me to create a response based on pre-existing structures. I consider unsuccessful structural elements as forms that have the least interaction with the rest of the painting. These areas are either painted with a darker colour which ends up dominating the painting, and other times colours that are too light such that they can hardly be seen. A series of non-affective responses are made as I attempt to find the balance between these colour and affect relations. This method continues until the flow of visually ineffective gestures is interrupted, and a work of art emerges from this process.



Figure 7²⁰

Abts' exploration of abstraction lead me to explore other forms of abstraction in painting. I investigated Mark Rothko's works from 1948, that is, around the time he stopped producing surrealist and figurative works, but prior to the period in which he painted large but simplistic structures of different colours. In these particular works, I am interested in how his cloud-like forms were achieved, and the various ways in which this application of paint parallels my painting practice. Rothko's paintings can offer an exploration into the reactionary process to the physical properties of paint, instead of a direct response to an event outside of the painting process. For example, in Figure 7, the interplay between the dimensions of colour

¹⁹ Ibid. 94

²⁰ Mark Rothko, *Untitled*, oil on canvas, (unknown dimensions), 1948

can be witnessed through appreciating the different shades of pink surrounding the solitary orange gesture and their individual, relational value to that gesture.

The concept of abstraction, in the making and the viewing, can encourage movement within a painting practice. Abts and Rothko explore the idea of how a work of art can develop by directly reacting to the physical properties of paint, as well as the physical rupturing of the structural elements that emerge from the act of painting. When viewing Rothko's cloud-like forms, a sense of abstraction can be achieved through the indeterminacy of the structural elements from an affective response to the materiality of paint. There are no direct associations to a specific object or place; there are only possibilities of what a form could be. Abts' exploration of abstraction, through the visual qualities of experience, can open up new affect relations and ways of receiving sensation. Verwoert elaborates that "the space of abstraction is an echo chamber in which each enunciation resonates with intuitions of the yet unthought and the presently forgotten."²¹ He reflects on abstraction as a concept that can show the realisations that are felt while painting, and how an indirect recognition of an image can evoke the latency of these sensations. The felt experience of abstraction allows for latent images to develop as sensibilities begin to emerge. This consideration of latent images brings me to my next chapter: Duration and Latency. There, I expand on the movement within the emerging forms and mediation between colour relations.



Figure 8²²

²¹ Ibid. 93

²² Mark Rothko, *Untitled*, oil on canvas, (unknown dimensions), 1948



Figure 9²³



Figure 10²⁴



Figure 11²⁵

²³ Andrea Bolima, From the *Infected/ Affected Series*, oil on canvas, 550 x 600mm, 2019

²⁴ Andrea Bolima, From the *Infected/ Affected Series*, oil on canvas, 550 x 600mm, 2019

²⁵ Andrea Bolima, From the *Infected/ Affected Series*, oil on canvas, 1600 x 1100mm, 2019

III. Duration and Latency

This chapter investigates the durational experience of the processual act of painting through the relationship between the figure and the ground. The notion of duration explains the movement in regard to the process of becoming of every aspect of the work. I am interested in how this process can demonstrate changing affect relations through the mediation of pre-existing structural elements and emerging forms. This can be further examined in the series of works titled *Infected/Affected*. Each of the works from the series demonstrate an individual tonal time signature that can be seen from the different ways the forms intensify. The varied intensities of tone from each of the works further indicate the complex ways that sensation can be received while painting. This can also be explained by Verwoert, as he unpacks the concept of temporal latency, where a work of art “reaches out both to that which is not yet and to that which is no longer quite present in the mind’s eye.”²⁶ The infection of bodies, as forms grow and multiply, carry with them qualities from previous painting compositions.



Figure 12²⁷

Within this process, there is always a search for a sense of tonal balance, brought about through the interaction between light and dark. In this research, I am referring to the term balance to describe the mediation between colour, time and space. For instance, in Figure 12, the surface of the canvas began with an uneven application of yellow paint which created a few opaque areas, and some more transparent parts. The aim is to create forms that resemble a similarity to the yellow background, as a way to maintain the affective response that was initially experienced. This is because there were latent forms from this provisional layer that require more time and space in order to become fully developed, and can only be attained in the process of making. Verwoert writes, “the deeply existential emotions we experience are

²⁶ Jan Verwoert, “The Beauty and Politics of Latency: On the Work of Tomma Abts” in *Tomma Abts*, (New York: Phaidon Press, 2008), 93

²⁷ Andrea Bolima, From the *Infected/Affected Series*, oil on canvas, 600 x 550mm, 2019

feelings that slowly evolve over time and therefore exist mostly in a peculiar state of latency, always somehow tangible but never readily graspable.”²⁸ The rate at which the complexity of sensation is received as I continue to paint can be seen from the gradual unfolding of an image. The latency of responses from sensation are evident from the way forms slowly intensify and, at times, deteriorate. As a result, the works of art appear to palpitate, as each of the forms attempt to mediate the figure and ground relations.

Time, in this research, is understood as an active quality rather than a fixed element; this can be seen from the throbbing of forms, in which they can further indicate a sensitive body’s durational experience. Each structure is always and already in a state of becoming, as they are affected and infected by each other.

There is a strong sense of movement from the way the forms are continually emerging and receding. The paintings appear to be in a constant state of flux because our perception of the world is always changing: we are always moving; we are always becoming. We are always moving; we are always becoming.

O’Sullivan writes that “our world consists of moments of becoming, the mingling of bodies, the meeting of forces, a constant interpenetration and interconnection of all phenomena.”²⁹ The convergence of the figure and the ground alludes to the constant mingling and mediation of percepts and affects. O’Sullivan expands, that “percepts can be understood as the non-human landscapes of nature; as that which deterritorialises the human. Affects can also be understood as the non-human becomings of man”.³⁰ The infection of forms indicate the interconnection of percepts and affects between landscape and man; time and space; figure and ground; and of sensitive bodies that are reactive to each other.

²⁸ Ibid. 95

²⁹ Simon O’ Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 56

³⁰ Ibid. 55

IV. Intuition

The acts of mediating, negotiating and making connections have been made evident in this research. This lead me to explore how intuition as a method can be used to further examine the forces of becoming, and I look at the French philosopher Henri Bergson and doctoral thesis by Ian Jervis as they provide an explanation of intuition. In Bergson's essay *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, he defines intuition as the counterpart to analysis, stating that intuition is

...the kind of *intellectual sympathy* by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible. Analysis, on the contrary, is the operation which reduces the object to elements already known, that is, to elements common both to it and other objects.³¹

In this research, sensitive bodies allow oneself to be placed within the painting, in a sense that I place myself in the durational experience of painting so that a work of art can emerge. To have a sensitive body is to become fully aware and reactive, which can easily garner an immediate response to stimuli. An intuitive painting process indicates the heterogeneity of time, that is, of the overlap of temporal dimensions, evident in the convergence of structures and infection of forms. My approach to painting works closely with the immediacy derived from the experience of painting itself. The fluidity of paint and the sense of movement it creates, addresses the flow that is present within the body, instead of an analytical process which indicates representation rather than sensation. The immediate judgements taken in the process of painting reveal the affective response from the physical properties of paint that can evoke sensations of painting.

Intuition, then, is a way of attaining knowledge based on what it is, to understand what it could also be. An artist's primary concern is in sustaining the vitality of their practice by continuously inventing painting methods, and this can be achieved by an intuitive painting process that allows for possibilities to open up. Through the method of intuition, I am able to place myself in the trajectory of the process so that I can acknowledge the movement and development of my practice. Deleuze provides an explanation for Bergson's notion of intuition in his book *Bergsonism*, saying that "intuition is rather the movement by which we emerge from our own duration, by which we make use of our own duration to affirm and immediately to recognize the existence of other durations."³² In my painting practice, the convergence of temporal dimensions, namely the colour-structure, colour-contour and colour-forces, shows that an

³¹ Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. T.E. Hulme, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 7, 1912), <https://www.questia.com/read/11967724/an-introduction-to-metaphysics>

³² Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson & Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 33

understanding of a one-dimensional element paves the way for knowledge of other dimensions, that create more painting strategies. I emerge from my own duration as I continue to generate works of art.



Figure 13³³

Opening up possibilities through intuition can be further explained through the artist Peter Shear's paintings, as he explores how a work of art can emerge from what the materiality of paint can offer. Like Abt's process paintings and the visual qualities from Rothko's experience of painting, Shear's mark-making also demonstrates an intuitive decision-making that can be revealed by how forms are made from a layering process. The spontaneity of gestures reveal the immediate judgements which are based on affective responses from the felt experience of the actual painting. The act of painting, then, becomes an event that is acknowledged shown by the realisations from the texture of paint and colour relations. Shear provides us with a narrative that explains this process thus,

It's become increasingly important to leave behind an image to which no concrete meaning can be attached, only possibility. I'll put some things down, have a look, paint around them and paint them out. There are all these intuitive, oblique strategies improvised to bring me possibly to a place where I can make a really great mistake and then things can get going. I'm not as interested in the hand of an artist as I am the eye; the ability to remain sufficiently present while painting in order to recognize that (suddenly!) a composition is done, regardless of preconceived notions.³⁴

The exploration of the materiality of paint, how the thickness is achieved from the layering process, the pace in which the paint dries, along with the interaction with the surface of the canvas enables us to see what else can be done with the physical properties of paint in order for possibilities to open. Shear mentions elements of surprise and mistakes that intuitively bring him to a place in which non-affective

³³ Peter Shear. *Cameo*, acrylic on canvas, 254 x 203.2mm, 2017

³⁴ Valerie Brennan, "Studio Critical: Peter Shear," *A behind the scenes approach to contemporary painting* (blog), 19 November 2011, <https://studiocritical.blogspot.com/2011/11/peter-shear.html>.

responses, habits and preconceived notions can be physically ruptured, to maintain the duration of painting, ultimately sustaining the vitality of one's practice. Thus, the act of painting can place oneself in its durational course, intuitively, so that a work of art can emerge.

Looking at my practice, the process begins with an adaptable strategy, through a non-linear and non-systematic approach, which can be witnessed from the arbitrary selection of colour, scale and dimension. These responses are made within the duration of painting, as sensations from painting, Jervis' doctoral theses, *Painting of Time: Duration, Emergence, Sensation* provides an investigation of temporal relations within a painting process and elaborates from Bergson's concept of intuition. He states that a "painting happens within the incongruent realities of heterogeneous duration and homogeneous space. Emergence happens in duration."³⁵ The emergence of a work of art can be made possible through intuition, as a way to distinguish the ready-mades from reality, which in this case is the movement away from narratives and clichés, into something open and provisional, progressing more towards the sensation of painting.

The mediation of forces in my research, namely, the physical properties that are external to the body and how it enters and becomes processed by the body, reveal how intuition can be used as a method in a painting process. A work of art emerges from the creation of forces that are *becoming*, in a sense that they are heading towards the same direction. Jervis expands, "there are not two worlds of the sensible and the intelligible but two movements, or more precisely, two directions of one and the same movement"³⁶.

There is not one *body* but several *bodies* that are progressing within a movement that allows for a work of art to emerge. "Hence Bergson's two directions of one and the same movement, spirit and matter, two times in the same duration (movement): past and present, co-existing in the same duration, one beneath the other and not after the other. Present and past form the same world."³⁷ The forces that are outside of the body such as the perception of colour, co-exist in the same duration as the percepts and affects from which the body is composed from. The perception and experience of colour come from the same world, which can be revealed from the connections between light to dark, the push and pull of forms and the intersection of spatial-temporal relations. "The painter, in Bergson's depiction, is exemplary as the one who, in freedom, lives the differentiations of heterogeneous states, abandoning the measure of things in time."³⁸

³⁵ Ian Jervis, "Painting of Time: Duration, Emergence, Sensation," (Exegesis, Auckland University of Technology, 2014), 133, <https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/handle/10292/9020>

³⁶ Ibid. 12

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid. 14



Figure 14³⁹



Figure 15⁴⁰

³⁹ Andrea Bolima, *black screen*, acrylic on canvas, 350 x 400mm, 2019

⁴⁰ Andrea Bolima, *a tone meant*, acrylic on canvas, 350 x 400mm, 2019

V. Affect and Sensation

Gestures which are a direct result of methodical planning offer a rehearsed manifestation of events as it shows a step-by-step formula for achieving a final resolution. This process moves away from the essence of painting and a way to combat this is to introduce elements of spontaneity. The mediation between elements of chance and carefully considered forms keeps the painting process open and provides a temporal critique on the provisional nature of structures. This chapter examines how affect and sensation can further encourage movement in painting, and to open up possibilities. Movement, in the sense of the combination of bodies within a duration creates another body or set of bodies; from these a response can be made as a work of art slowly unfolds. In order to explain notions of affect and sensation, I examine the paintings by artist Erin Lawlor, as her practice describes how sensation can operate in a painting process.

O'Sullivan states that affect is “the body’s passage from one state of affection to another.”⁴¹ The properties that are external to the body, specifically, bodies that operate on a different duration, can be activated through affect, so that more durations can be created. A painting practice progresses when the different intuitive decisions, through an affective response, that continue to emerge during the process begin to co-exist in the same duration. Affect “names the risings and fallings – the becomings – of my own body, especially when it encounters another body.”⁴² A work of art emerges as colours encounter each other in a painting process, and similarly when the different layers of colour have reached a unified set of visual relations. This visual information can be further manipulated.

The artist Erin Lawlor explores the idea behind how a work of art, in its state of becoming, can reveal notions of sensations, and how an affective response to paint can indicate the different intensities of the experience of painting, ultimately revealing a part of her duration. In Lawlor’s paintings, structures are formed through the evident brush strokes, as every gesture encounters another gesture. This process shows the physical relationship of the body to the canvas, also demonstrating how every temporal dimension of a painting process interacts with each spatial dimension. Art gallerist Andrew Jensen writes, “the proximity she offers us is akin to a kind of chromatic MRI of the body of paint. Each gesture seems to fold upon another with varying degrees of ferment. The looping trajectory of the broad brushstroke insinuates depth.”⁴³ The gradual change in colour from the sweeping motion of paint shows the flow of time and of its duration. There is a sense of intimacy achieved by the drapery of forms, through the unfolding structures and build-up of paint. A series of affective responses from the folding and unfolding

⁴¹ Simon O’ Sullivan, *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 41

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Andrew Jensen, “Foxjensen & Foxjensen McCrory: Erin Lawlor,” Jensen Gallery, 13 September 2019, <https://www.jensengallery.com/erin-lawlor/>.

of forms are made as a new set of visual relations are formed, and varied plans and decisions continue to formulate.

Sensation, then, brings me to the moment of painting itself, placing me in the duration of my painting practice. The responses I make, affectively, take place during the painting process not independently from it; the stimulus is paint and the response is painting. In my practice, elements of chance, spontaneity, accidents and deliberate planning are not separate from each other, but operate in a particular duration from the affective responses to the sensation of painting. There is not one plan in a painting process, but a series of undertakings, as I respond to each emerging form. The mediation between spontaneity and deliberate planning, through the process of layering, further indicates the heterogeneity of time.

Therefore, careful considerations can be measured by the responses that are received affectively, and the authenticity of the work of art comes from acknowledging the durational experience of painting.

Judgements based on past experiences are responses that pertain only to a singular body, which limits the development of possibilities.



Figure 16⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Erin Lawlor, *Shape Shifter (Day)*, oil on canvas, 1800 x 1300 mm, 2018

VI. Conclusion

This study has shown how painting can uncover our susceptibility to the forces that surround us. The complex ways of receiving sensation create an entry point for experiencing the complexity of external forces, their impact and their intangibility. My exploration of painting ties together the theoretical concerns by Deleuze, Craig, O'Sullivan, Verwoert and Jervis. Craig's research on the body's sensitivity to forces further explains Deleuze's logic behind colour and sensation. O' Sullivan's concept of affect clarifies the movement between stimulus and response, and Verwoert's painterly reflections express notions of latency and abstraction. Further research could expand on Thompson's philosophical and scientific discussions on colour vision. This research has shown how painting can encourage new ways of thinking about how to behave towards other types of bodies: the unfamiliar and the invisible.

Investigating the multiplicity of bodies through their sensitised and reactive state, instead of placing each one of them in a single category, allows for more possibilities. While this project clearly illustrates the intricacy of sensation, when it begins to materialise through painting, new works of art can be made with additional ways of how to further unveil the imperceptibility of sensation. The difficulty in discerning the intensity of sensation is what fuels me, despite other methods of painting.

The overarching concern of this research is how a sensitive body can detect the subtleties from the varied intensities of sensation and appreciate its nuances. It focuses on what causes a work of art to emerge, whether through the activation of colour, evoking movement or uncovering complex sensations. The work of art in question is always in its state of emergence and pertains to either an image, new affect relations or emerging sensibilities. Further research could expand on Bergson's temporal explorations, through duration, and how his method of intuition can determine when the processual act of painting can come to an end. Likewise, the exploration behind the mediation of forces and breaking habitual patterns of painting raise questions on the authenticity of expression of a work of art. A new question now emerges, how might the felt experiences of sensation, prior to painting, differ from the work of art that resulted from the affective encounter. Examining the concept of painting as an experiential undertaking of pictorial compositions provides further inquiry into the congruency of stimulus and response. My practice now continues from these revelations, as I paint to further understand my perception of colour, sensation and its relationship to the world.

Sensitive Bodies

Masters of Visual Arts

AD19 Festival, Auckland University of Technology, 2019

WM Building, St. Paul Street Gallery, Auckland

Studio Art Supplies Art Award for Postgraduate Studies

The exhibition comprised of six paintings in Gallery One, St Paul Street Gallery. The chosen works bring together an entire year of practice-led and studio-based research, exploring an affective-intuitive-emergent mode of working. The paintings vary in size that shows the intuitive responses made from the emerging affect relations of the materiality of paint. Each of the work was based on how the colours, along with its tonal value, communicate with each other. The paintings were completed in different timeframes but were brought together for their similarity in tone and measured pace of gestures. There are rapidly applied gestures that recede into the background revealing the different levels of intensities from the process of painting.



Figure17⁴⁵

⁴⁵ AD19 Festival, WM Building, Gallery One, St Paul Street Gallery



Figure 18⁴⁶



Figure 19⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Andrea Bolima, *untitled*, oil on canvas, 550 x 600mm, 2019

⁴⁷ Andrea Bolima, *untitled*, oil on canvas, 550 x 600mm, 2019



Figure 20⁴⁸

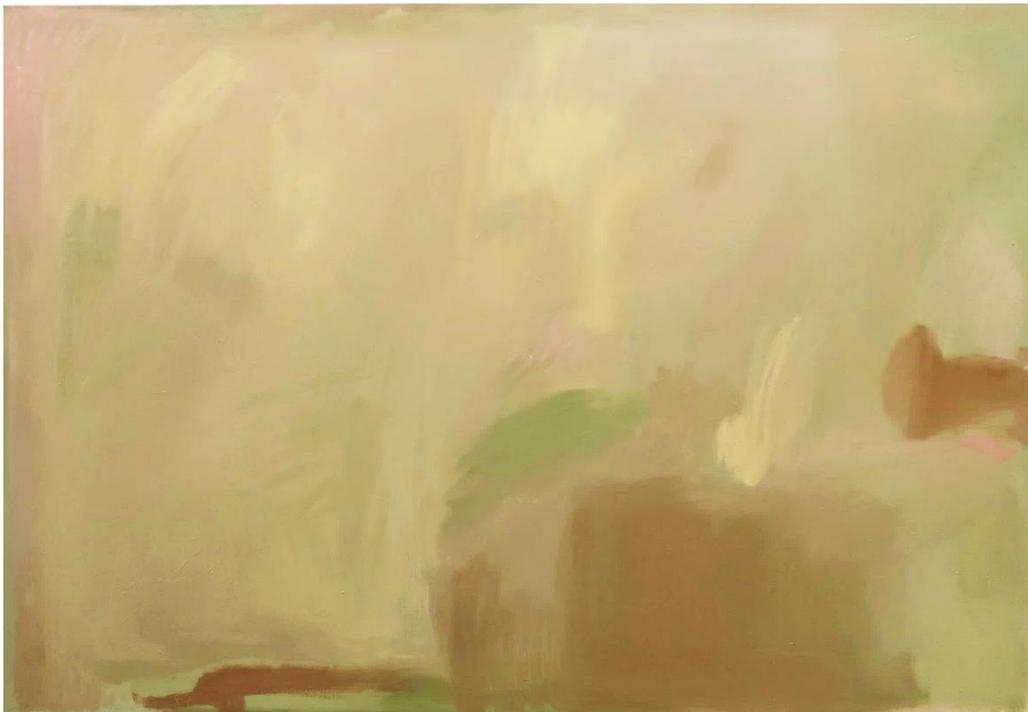


Figure 21⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Andrea Bolima, *untitled*, oil on canvas, 350 x 400mm, 2019

⁴⁹ Andrea Bolima, *untitled*, oil on canvas, 1100 x 1600mm, 2019

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