

IMG: Seeing as feeling

Joe Prisk

An exegesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Art and Design (MA&D)

2013

School of Art and Design

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	6
1.1	Clearing the field of signs	8
1.2	The potential of sensation	13
1.3	The problem of translation	15
1.4	Painting Approaches	18
1.5	Conclusion	20
2	BIBLIOGRAPHY	21
3	ARTWORKS	22
4	APPENDIX	31

List of Figures

All illustrations are of works by myself.

Figure 1:	img_99, Acrylic on Canvas, 350 x 400mm, August 2013.....	9
Figure 2:	img_051, Acrylic on Panel, 297 x 350mm, July 2013	10
Figure 3:	Untitled, Acrylic on Paper, 297 x 350mm, August 2012	11
Figure 4:	img_084, Acrylic on Canvas, 350 x 400mm, April 2013	14
Figure 5:	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas, 350 x 400mm, Aug 2013	16
Figure 6:	img_89, Acrylic on Canvas, 300 x 350mm, Aug 2013.....	17
Figure 7:	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas, 350x400mm, May 2013	18
Figure 8:	img_204, Acrylic on Linen, 350 x 400mm, April 2013	22
Figure 9:	img_756, Acrylic on Linen, 350 x 400mm, April 2013	22
Figure 10	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas, 200 x 250mm June 2012	23
Figure 11	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas 350 x 400mm, Aug 2012	23
Figure 12	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas 350 x 400mm, Aug 2012	24
Figure 13	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas 300 x 350mm, Aug 2012	24
Figure 14	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas 350 x 400mm, Nov 2012	25
Figure 15	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas 300 x 350mm, Nov 2012	25
Figure 16	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas 300 x 350mm, Nov 2012	26
Figure 17	Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas 350 x 400mm, Nov 2012	26
Figure 18	img_114, Acrylic on Panel, 297 x 350mm, June 2013	27
Figure 19	img_134, Acrylic on Panel, 297 x 350mm, July 2013	27
Figure 20	Untitled, Acrylic on Paper, 297 x 350mm, Aug 2013	28
Figure 21	Untitled, Acrylic on Paper, 297 x 350mm, Aug 2013	28
Figure 22	img_734, Acrylic on Panel, 297 x 350mm, Aug 2013	29
Figure 23	Untitled, Acrylic on Linen, 300 x 350mm, Aug 2013	29
Figure 24	img_224, Acrylic on Panel, 297 x 350mm, Aug 2013	30
Figure 25	img_448, Acrylic on Panel, 297 x 350mm, Aug 2013	30
Figure 26	img_1220, Acrylic on Panel, 297 x 350mm, Aug 2013	31
Figure 27	img_6647, Acrylic on Canvas, 600 x 700mm, October 2013.....	34
Figure 28	img_3596, Acrylic on Canvas, 600 x 700mm, October 2013.....	35
Figure 29	img_6677, Acrylic on Canvas, 600 x 700mm, October 2013.....	36
Figure 30	img_6686, Acrylic on Canvas, 600 x 700mm, October 2013.....	37
Figure 31	img_6690, Acrylic on Canvas, 600 x 700mm, October 2013.....	38
Figure 32	img_6696, Acrylic on Canvas, 600 x 700mm, October 2013.....	39

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.

Signed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Prisk". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J' and 'P'.

8 October 2013

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my supervisors Andy Thomson, Fiona Amundsen and Ian Jervis for their continual support and encouragement. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Kelsey Stankovich, my parents and fellow studio colleagues.

Abstract

IMG: seeing as feeling, explores painting for its capacity to act directly on our nervous system. With a focus on eluding attachments of text, narrative and generalizing concept, this project aims to facilitate an encounter in which the paintings are primarily experienced as images. In making these images, the roles of artist and spectator are interchanged in order to clear the accretion of signs that flood into the reading. Cleared of signification, the work opens up the potential for the spectator to encounter the images unmediated through their previous experience.

1 INTRODUCTION

This project explores possibilities for creating paintings that manage to elude the attachments of text, narrative and generalizing concept so we encounter them as images first and foremost. We therefore experience the 'image-ness' of the work. One of the first issues for this project is how to reconfigure the signs that are readily attached to elements of painting. This is a challenge because images are always seemingly in the service of some other thing, purpose, narrative, utility or past image held in memory.

Colours for example, all have strong associations, and these associations may vary from person to person. Most of us will instinctively think about what such a selection of colours mean or what they could be referring to when encountering them in art. For example a certain combination of orange and brown (for me) instantly triggers an impression of the 70s, while other people will have their own readings this colour association. In a similar vein, as soon as I paint what could appear to be a shadow an immediate sense of three-dimensional representation invades the painting. Such signs are part of the extensive array of signs that attach meaning throughout the painting process. These signs are so pervasive that they appear without the artist's intention. Sign associations are usually culturally determined and to completely escape them is impossible. Accordingly as the artist, I could never predict what viewers may bring to their encounter with my work. I need to switch in and out of 'making and looking', switching between thinking as artist and viewing as spectator to digest the meaning or common signs evoked within a painting.

Within this document I discuss the problem of translating the artwork by conceptualising it. If I attempt to describe these images I would be at conflict with what these paintings set out to do, as it is my intention that these paintings should resist conceptualisation. Through this essay, there is an implicit assumption that the painting can be described in terms of signs. However my practice tries to avoid thinking about painting in terms of signs, or other indexical codes. I resort to the use of signs for pragmatic purposes. Their use is to enable other aspects of the images to emerge, thus providing a point of interest in the image. That serves to extend the time of encounter so people can slowly reflect on the image and also allow time for the image to do its work on us. These are 'slow images' as they deliberately withhold and provoke sufficient interest to sustain a period of slow release. In this exegesis images used really need to be encountered as originals, therefore images within this document should be treated as mere reproductions with the allowance for the inherent problems and limitations of reproduction.

Throughout this exegesis I regard the image from a semiotic perspective as being abstracted from the field of signs of which it would be constituted. From this perspective I am looking at the image as asignifying i.e., not yet signified or attached to signs. However I see how problematic this may be, as everything in our mind exists as a sign or collections of memories. For that reason, the image can never escape being read as a sign. Rather, the approach suggested is that my images are less than and more than a sign—it goes beneath or beyond signification.

When looking at images we may experience an intense moment, a raw feeling or state of affect directly evoked by the images. It could be that these images exist as signs of feeling. This analysis highlights the encounter between artwork and spectator as a ‘felt’ sensation. Affects filter through in a state where images impinge immediately upon the nervous system through sensation¹. It is a dynamic mode of looking that spectators find themselves in—where thoughts are negotiated and renegotiated based on the rhythms grasped through the work—seeing through feeling.

When encountering a work, signification will always permeate and connect the image with signs. This is the habit of our utilitarian way of thinking of the world, where singular experiences are attached to general concepts (or concepts are extracted from our experience of the everyday). We go through this process in order to learn (from experience) and to create general terms in order to communicate. Signification has its purpose here in explaining and understanding. Conversely, painting is first and foremost about images and these images are primarily experienced through sensation. As a spectator we are always looking for something more, trying to find the meaning in the images. The aim for these paintings is to return to the primacy of felt experience.

Attempting to escape signification might be a quixotic venture as it is seemingly impossible, but I suggest that newness will not only stem from terms from the past, but that it will also ignite a feeling; a new relation with the artwork. Signification is always in reference to some other thing, and this other thing must have preceded its use. A sign always refers to something that already exists (For example, a sign for string must refer to a pre-existing understanding of string). Therefore signs are always looking back on the past. My ambition is to create a new experience and enable one to see things freshly despite always looking through a filter of past experience. This newness, is unknown to me at the start of the painting process. The trouble with this is, even if I were to come up with something new while painting, how would I know if it was new if I hadn’t already found a means to experience it? I am not attempting to solve this rhetorical question, but my practice of painting attempts to push past this problem and create a new experience.

¹ Deleuze, G. (2004). Painting and Sensation in *Francis Bacon: The Logic Of Sensation*. (p. 31) Continuum International Publishing

In some cases interweaved in the presented images, are figurative elements; these have been used to give the spectator including myself while painting some sense of connection with the painting. By embedding signification within the image, the spectator is able to arrive quite quickly to a state of resolution. 'Here is something that makes you feel at home', some echo of the past that has a familiarity to it, while other experiences of the images that are unfamiliar have time to emerge. In other words, they provide a texture that allows the spectator to linger while looking without actively searching for some conceptual foothold. For example, in Figure 1 the viewer might recognise the small marks that are dispersed across the canvas as particles, or droplets of water. Once engaged the viewer might be able to depart from reading this sign and enter the internal rhythms of the painting where other elements may begin to emerge. The placement of the particle-form that appears to be on the surface of the mauve ground would seem to contradict the spectators reading as a progression of marks. The build up of paint exists as a removal device rather than an addition thus creating a paradox between depiction and the processes within the work, as the blooming of colour filters up into focus, with the greyness giving way to an overwhelming sense of red and blue.

In the last section of this document (1.4) titled Painting Approaches, reflections are provided on the process that brought these works into being. Through the painting process the aim is to get into a 'state of flow'. In this state the image emerges on the canvas through a series of feedback relationships, which require a reliance on intuition and decisions made at a subconscious level. In the manifestation of the image, each successive mark influences the next. This process gives no precedence to any atavistic element but the images result from the process of 'thinking through making'. This practice-based process (research in its own conditions) results in the construction of new images.

1.1 CLEARING THE FIELD OF SIGNS

While painting, the artist has to continually reflect on the artwork throughout its creation. For example, looking for signs or triggers of interpretive readings that crop up in the work. In abstract painting there is a continual engagement with the signs that emerge, as spectators or observers will always be searching for some meaning in the work. Signs are pervasive, at times so dominant that it is hard to read the image as anything other than its inherited sign. Here is an example of the dialogue that could occur throughout the painting process:

As artist, I paint a black line

As spectator, I see a silhouette of a pen, the character for the number one as well as the symbol for 'I'

As artist, I paint a grey field

As spectator, I see a concrete wall

As artist, I paint a circle

As spectator, I see a symbol for zero, a circle or a hole



Figure 1

While painting, the aim is to clear out the accretion of signs that form within the image. As demonstrated above, even the most simple of studio gestures is easily assigned a series of signs. Within the painting process the artist has to step out of the action of painting and assume the role of spectator. This detachment is necessary in order to imagine what might be thought if the work was encountered as a fresh dialogue. Colours are not used to render signs but to provide saturation and intensity. For example, I as artist while creating Figure 2 may paint a yellow mark thereby masking the dark blue field of colour. By utilizing a series of asignifying nonrepresentational marks, an attempt is made to escape from any direct link to signs. The action of mark-making could be seen as a process of posing questions. On reflection, the choice of a combination of the yellow and the shape that the mark forms, the sign of a 'rubber ducky' emerges. This sign is so confounding that whenever the spectator looks at this image, despite the random succession of marks, one cannot help but see this sign. However,

even though the images are created by means of asignifying marks these signs continue to emerge and affix meaning to the gestures that take form within the work.

This project suggests to a means to digress away from contextualisation to allow opportunities for sensation to emerge and re-emerge. It is not possible to completely escape attachment of language when painting; we seemingly create associations out of everything. As spectator I always instinctively respond to the image with some textual analysis, exploring potential terms, even though the images seem distantly removed from the 'thing' in question. In some of the works, the images enable a break from the direct reference to signs. By obscuring signs within an image, attention shifts from the images specific communicative intent to more open sensory experience. Skewing any sense of sign-certainty within the encounter is an important aspect of the work. It allows the viewer to avoid creating meaning and just 'be' with the experience of the image.



Figure 2

Figure 2: img_051, Acrylic on Panel, 297 x 350, July 2013

The first mark made when starting a painting, tends to evoke preconceived interpretations or signs. This initial mark could be read as a sign through the use of a particular width of brush, the particular direction in which it is angled, or even the scale of the mark in relation to the canvas. Minute actions are on the brink of inherited sign value. For example, in Figure 3 intrinsic to a singular green mark that has been painted on to a sheet of paper is the interpretation of that mark as symbolic of an inherited sign. That green mark could be seen as a rubber band, a number eight or other representational sign. In another case a horizontal mark bisecting a canvas, entering and exiting at either side of the picture plane, may evoke a horizon. These types of gestures have led the viewer to make interpretations.

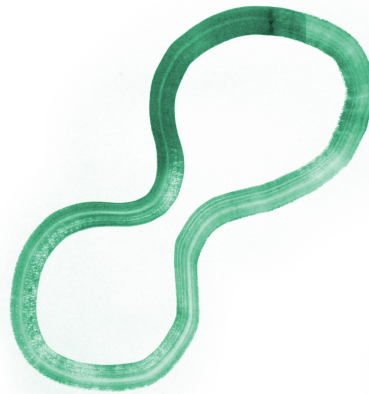


Figure 3

When deciding on which colours to use while painting, I seek out those colours that do not have a strongly suggested sign association. The colours used in my work have been selected because they do not elicit associative certainty². Primary colours are avoided as they are imbued with signification. For example when selecting a blue, I purposefully avoid those shades that are used for typical renditions of the sea. The colours of the sea are so familiar within painted images that the colour-meaning overrides the possibility for an unmediated experience of the work. If a particular sign is so strongly evoked, I endeavour to dissolve it. This clearing of inferred meaning from the image is an important aspect of my work. In the example of the sea blue colour pallet, I might add orange or yellow to a sea-blue to dispel any certainty of association. The addition of such foreign elements takes the work away from the

Figure 3: Untitled, Acrylic on Paper, 297 x 350, August 2012

² This could only ever be an approximation as this sign function arrives in the work from learned associations; therefore they are unique to each spectator and relatively impossible for the artist to control.

obvious intention. Each step in the painting process is taken with a certain relation to the mark that preceded it, launching the work into an exploration of the unknown.

Presented with a series of nonsignifying and nonrepresentational lines and colours, such images leave us with no alternative other than to experience the pictorial relationships that reside on the canvas surface. This effect can eventually fail, as the spectator may perceive elements within the images as they relate to concepts, connecting the sensations to previously conceived concepts. There is no stopping this influx of signs. So, rather than completely clearing the images of signs, the images attempt to delay this signification process allowing the viewer time to be suspended in sensation.

The paintings not only challenge the viewers expectations of an arising signification by suspending them in a state of sensation, they also evoke connections with other objects and ideas both worldly and unworldly. Paradoxically, and counter to this process of clearing the signs the paintings, we enable our intuitive processes to make connections to past images as a productive element of the encounter. On the one hand, the aim is to slow down the rationalization of the image by extending that moment of initial suspension and on the other hand, foster signs that come flooding in to make connections between a number of seemingly disparate elements. Images that demand constant evaluation and re-evaluation describe arts' ability to go beyond representation. Freed from the constraints of meaning, images give direction to an individual's appraisal. In the book *The Logic of Sensation*, Gilles Deleuze provides a term for the spectators changing interpretations of an artwork over time:

Beneath the successive apprehension of arts, there is a kind of logical synthesis that requires a purely aesthetic comprehension of the unit of measure... Because the measure is subjectively determined, it is subject to constant evaluation and reevaluation, and is therefore in *constant variation*. The unit of measure varies in each case depending on the thing to be perceived, just as the thing to be perceived depends on the chosen unit. I may evaluate a tree in relation to the human body, but at night I may evaluate the rising moon in terms of a coin held at close range. From the viewpoint of aesthetic comprehension, I am continually in the process of changing my unit of measure according to my perceptions.³

Images aren't easy to relate to and so rather than defining the image, the work that comes from this project sets out to facilitate a reciprocal exchange between image and viewer, the "grasping of a rhythm"⁴ as Deleuze calls it.

One-way of thinking about 'rhythmical' images is that they are comprised of affects and percepts. The affects and percepts account for the image's ineffable sensations, or the 'imageness' of images. "Percepts are no longer perceptions [as] they are independent of a

³ Smith, D. W. (2012) Deleuze on Bacon: Three Conceptual Trajectories in The Logic of Sensation In Deleuze, G. (2004). *Francis Bacon: The Logic Of Sensation*. (pp. 26) Continuum International Publishing

⁴Ibid.

state of those who experience them.”⁵ These percepts exist independently from the content in which the spectator experiences them and “[a]ffects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them.”⁶ These affects are the means by which art is embodied and then materialised in terms of lines and colours. These affects are of the world but not directly linked to the world. Utilizing the percepts and affects of the real world, rhythmical images collate elements from the ocular field. Devoid of direct reference these images manifest on more general terms. One is no longer limited by seeing form or matter, but responds to the forces, densities and intensities in the artwork.⁷

1.2 THE POTENTIAL OF SENSATION

When creating the work I envision the spectator absorbing the images projections. At that moment of initial encounter the particular complexities of sensation become established within the spectators anima, enriching and altering their experience of the work. This state of ‘seeing as feeling’ has nothing to do with signification rather it is more a state of awareness. Within that state the viewer is effected by the intensities and movements produced by the work.

Sensation is more than the appearance of the work; it is a reciprocal interaction between an awareness of external objects and the physiological act of seeing. Rather, it is a synthesis of these two aspects. “It is Being-in-the-World, as the phenomenologists say: at one and the same time I become in the sensation and something happens through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other.”⁸ This unity between spectator and artwork facilitates a moment in which the spectator is able to enter the painting—in both a reflective and receptive state. Here the viewer is able to experience the affects and percepts that emerge through the image encounter.

⁵ Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1994). Percept Affect and Concept in *What is philosophy?* (pp. 163-201) New York: Columbia University Press.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Smith, D. W. (2012) Deleuze on Bacon: Three Conceptual Trajectories in The Login of Sensation In Deleuze, G. (2004). *Francis Bacon: The Logic Of Sensation*. (pp. 21) Continuum International Publishing

⁸ Deleuze, G. (2004). Painting and Sensation in *Francis Bacon: The Logic Of Sensation*. (pp. 31) Continuum International Publishing



Figure 4

Within Figure 4 there are multiplicity of image relationships among these relationships:

In the top right hand corner the image appears to be opening out.

The saturating yellowness seeps into all areas of the image, impacting the hue of its neighbouring colours.

Couplings of different tones of grey mingle in the space in front of the seeping yellow ground.

The drifting colour between yellow and grey emerges from the weave.

Two grey patches both dissolve and bloom as they meet.

Both the navy blue and the darkened grey scud across the yellow spheres.

1.3 THE PROBLEM OF TRANSLATION

How do we describe the feeling of viewing a new work? A similar problem of translation would arise when attempting to describe our experience of scent. Although there are a number of terms to describe the complexity of smell (or vision), in some instances it seems as though there is an arbitrary gap between the actual sensation of smell (or sight) and our translation of that sensory experience. Our linguistic description of the experience will never be complete; it will only be a simulation. In trying to translate images into words we miss the very thing that is so fundamental. The challenge with describing art is that it exists as experience beyond the bounds of signification. It exists as affects and percepts, elements that are irreducible to linguistic code.

In choosing the title for each work I devised a structure of using a series of numbers. This decision is pertinent to the project as naming always incurs some translation. The title simply must be there as a reference and exists only as a placeholder for archival purposes. My intention in using numbers is to avoid undermining the image by giving it a name. The numbers were chosen at random to align them with the integrity of the image's inherent differences. For example, when looking at numbers 2,4,6,8... a clear pattern is observed. By randomising each number any relationship between titles within a body of work becomes dynamic and uncertain.

If thought about in terms of language, interpretation will always fall short of capturing the intensive nature of experience. Codification is always less than the actual experience. Translation always involves a loss in this case because it never really encapsulates the image, as it is a representation of the image. By always trying to translate the image we've forgotten what the image is. By looking for its sign-value we miss the sensations that are native to its experiential nature. For example, when listening to music some listeners will completely disregard the lyrics, enjoying only the sound. Music enables us to enjoy rhythms and the ambition is the same with images of this work with the aim being for them to be experienced as rhythms. This is where the spectator is able to feel something new in their encounter with the image, experiencing a new rhythm of the image. This is also a process of enrichment of experience. Not only does the spectator's personal interpretation flood into the image but also the image itself becomes a sign for future encounters.

My concern is not with eventual translation of the images, but in delaying that translation. As translations are always a version of the image as it fits into the codified language of signs. Signs are thought of here as being names, tags or triggers in order to bring up a mental picture of the thing in question. Before we can develop a sign there must be a reference to the thing either tangible or virtual, which preceded it. These triggers, or references may enrich or build on our prior knowledge, but they are always attached to some thought preceding the present moment. How is the spectator able to experience something new when interpreting works through triggers of the past?



Figure 5

Figure 5, is an example of a painting that attempts to confound interpretation. For example if the spectator tries to describe the colours of the work, the description will fall short when describing the colour. At first impression, it may seem that the image shows a painting that is grey, but if the spectator spends more time looking at the image it begins to unfold as a part-red and part-blue-grey. In this interpretation, there is clearly no one dominant colour.

In some cases a rudimentary set of signs dispersed over the surface is enough to satisfy our search for a concept for the work. For example, the differences between a glossy or matt sheen are so common to our sense of sight that they cannot be attributed to any one thing. Glossy sheens may trigger associations with white-ware, car enamel, glass, plastic and many other items. Such a rudimentary or basic sign is one that is so universal it almost blends into the background, thus yielding to the composition because they do not claim singular sign-status for the image. These rudimentary signs bring forth the nonsignifying content of the image, drawing attention to the lines and colours of the image.

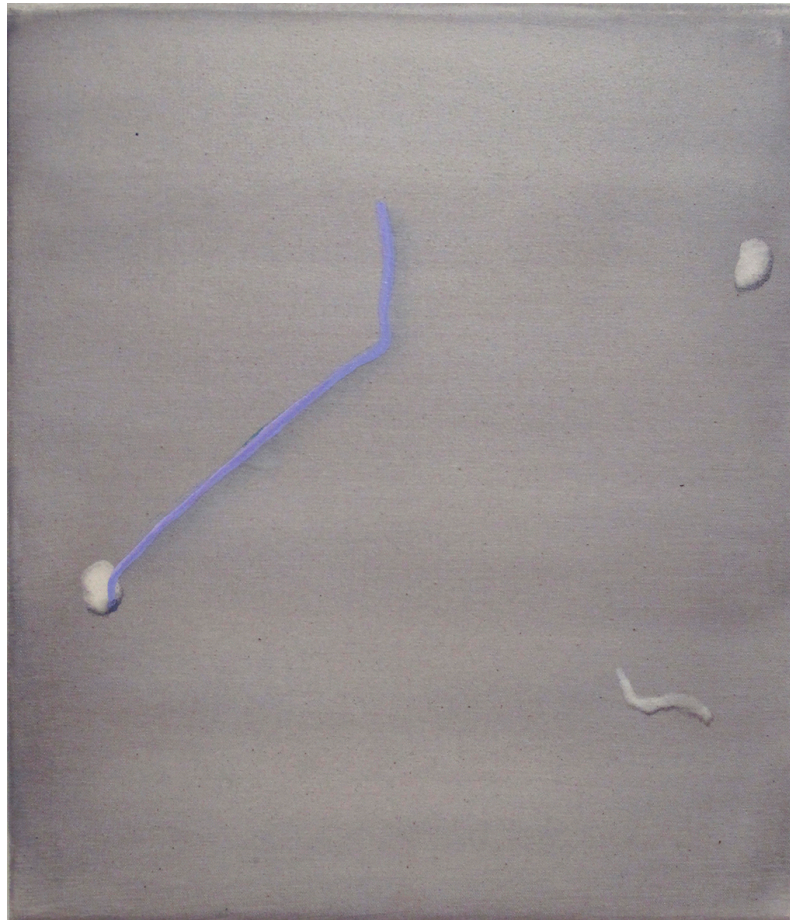


Figure 6

In Figure 6 the work negotiates figuration and abstraction. Here, lines begin to emerge as reference to something else. Within this image the purple line begins to look as though it sits on top of the picture plane, the effect being indicative of a sense of space. In some parts of these images, painted aspects look as though they could emerge as some thing of this world, but this reading is quickly confused by the inconsistency between other painted aspects of the image. Borrowing techniques usually used to depict objects, namely passages of paint, portions of the images take on a partial sign-function. In Figure 6 space is one example of an ambiguous sign that has been used. As I cannot evade the code of signs, the signs invisibly guide the spectator a state of resolution more quickly. These signs operate as positions of reference and steady the spectator within the image thus helping to bring the spectator back to the surface and locate the image. The eye is prevented from searching for 'the thing' in question.

As a result of subtle shifts in tonal value (the degree of darkness/lightness) there are instances of haptic vision when the sense of touch overwhelms our sense of sight⁹. Within this complex hand-eye relation, our sense of object-space floods in via vision. The image appears to move from the surface of the picture plane, presenting the image above the surface.



Figure 7

1.4 PAINTING APPROACHES

The images that result from this project are independent of any model or procedure. They emerge during the process of making. Within the procession of lines and colours, the process is dictating whether the image requires or inhibits further action. To successfully influence the perception of the observer there must be a filter, or some other basis for influence in the creative process that determines the success of a mark. Observation therefore is contingent on the marks residing on top of the surface. This process cannot be put into clearly defined terms.

⁹ Smith, D. W. (2012) Deleuze on Bacon: Three Conceptual Trajectories in The Login of Sensation In Deleuze, G. (2004). *Francis Bacon: The Logic Of Sensation*. (pp. 26) Continuum International Publishing

Figure 7: Untitled, Acrylic on Canvas, 350x400 May 2013

Within this decision-influencing process, intuition is relied on. Decisions are based on an amalgamation of prior thoughts around marks that have succeeded or failed in the past.

There isn't a prerequisite idea for these images; instead they come about through a process of improvisation. It could be said that these images capture a sort of hesitancy, in which things are tested out, painted over, and tried again. The resulting images are not stand-ins for anything other than the material trace. There is no real point of completion that the images strive towards. With some images retaining marks may appear as unfinished, the images being a trace of their construction. Deciding when the work is finished is a continual negotiation within the working process. As layers build up and more and more lines manifest the canvas surface, the options for where the image could go might seem unlimited, but if the image is to stay in continuity with the initial marks these options do become limited.

While I am within the creative process, I am constantly experimenting, trying to come up with a new direction for the work to follow on from. By achieving a state of flow, which could be thought of as a highly focused state where spontaneous actions take precedence over thought-out actions, I escape from being directed towards the images final form. The aim through flow is to try and create something new. The premise here is important that there is nothing for the work to be measured against; therefore the drive for progression within the image comes out of the image itself.

Within this flow-like state actions become synonymous with mark making. The brush becomes an extension of my hand, feeling the colours and allowing the painting to take me wherever it wants to go allowing the shifts in visual relations that take place when making the image coalesce and emerge. In placing the first mark on the canvas I pose myself a problem. From then on in, the painting is about answering this problem with potential solutions. The problem itself is not a conceptual problem, and I am not really looking for an answer. Rather, the problem is actually a solution to another problem, namely not knowing how to continue painting without being on the inside of the painting process. Through this process I am able to respond to the image, progressing it into the unknown.

The state of flow is a self-forgetful period of concentration. In this state it is as if the image arises of its own accord. "The diagram is an operative set of asignifying non-representative lines and zones' and, line-strokes and colour patches."¹⁰ Here random occurrences are ontologically constitutive of art (and not an accident that befalls it). It is in this sense that art can never be wholly predetermined or worked out in advance but must involve this productive encounter with chaos. By working back into the paint moving it around and changing it I navigate away from habitual process—I release the direct line from intention to production. Through the practical method of painting a very thin coat of liquid paint, I am able to extend the working time of the paint, allowing more alterations. Thinking while making becomes a threatening

¹⁰ O'Sullivan, S. (2006). *Art encounters Deleuze and Guattari: thought beyond representation*. (pp. 62) New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

undercurrent. The longer I work within this state of flow there is a higher chance for the images to evolve.

Within the painting process I wish to break down the gap between thought and action. The problem that I face when in a state of flow is that the images could end up in chaos. Through the random occurrences that emerge, I am able to escape intention, hoping to achieve something new. This 'newness' could only come from the process of making as I could never come up with something unknown if it had already been preceded by thought. Thought is always in relation to other thoughts and I don't want these newer images to be connected to previous images.

1.5 CONCLUSION

This project focuses on the experiential nature of images, highlighting the capacity for images to evoke sensations. In viewing images, spectators might think that once the image has been viewed it will stay the same as it was in its first viewing, but what this assumption overlooks is the potential for new connections to be made with the images. Within each image-encounter we bring to the viewing a bundle of associations that connect with the image. Images are not static but dynamic; on each viewing we create a new rhythm. While viewing, spectators are involved in an encounter with sensations that act directly on the nervous system. "If painting has nothing to narrate and no story to tell, something is happening all the same, which defines the functioning of the painting."¹¹

The work will always become codified, as spectators will always try to attach language to visual elements or experiences; but as a painter this evolution of the paintings is not my concern even if it is subsequently something that I also do as spectator. My concern is with the immediacy of the encounter with an image as it emerges through painting it. Through conceptualisation we always fall short of capturing the image's ineffable sensations. Confusing the relationship by way of signs is an approach that is utilized throughout this project as it causes the spectator to return to the primacy of the image and upon entering the painting, feeling the sensations.

In the making a given art work, the artist undergoes an intuitive process responding to their senses. Likewise, when encountering an artwork the viewer simultaneously thinks and feels. As an artist my interest is the sensations produced by the work. The point is that this 'image-ness' that I am interested in is a sensory experience. Affects, percepts and sensations are subject to translation and deconstruction, but as a painter I am not interested in this. The created images influence the act of viewing, nudging the spectator to pass interpretation over to the indeterminate sensations that are produced through the work, suspending the spectator in a state of sensation.

¹¹ Deleuze, G. (2004). *Athleticism in Francis Bacon: The Logic Of Sensation*. (pp. 9) Continuum International Publishing

2 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1994). *What is philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, G. (2004). *Francis Bacon: The Logic Of Sensation*. Continuum International Publishing

O'Sullivan, S. (2006). *Art encounters Deleuze and Guattari: thought beyond representation*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Dumbadze, A., & Hudson, S. (2012). *Contemporary Art: 1989 to the Present*: Wiley.

Dziewior, Y., & Hamburg, K. i. (2004). *Formalismus: moderne Kunst, heute*: Hatje Cantz.

Lind, M. (2013). *Abstraction*: Mit Press.

Stewart, S. (1993). *On longing: narratives of the miniature, the gigantic, the souvenir, the collection*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Lyotard, J. F., & McKeon, R. (1984). *Driftworks*: Semiotext(e).

Murray, C. (2003). *Key writers on art: the twentieth century*. London: Routledge.

Nickas, B. (2009). *Painting Abstract: New Elements in Abstract Painting*: Phaidon Press.

Ritter Verlag, K. (1988). *Abstrakte Malerei aus Amerika und Europa Abstract Painting of America and Europe*: Galerie nächst St. Stephan, R. Schwarzwälder.

Krauss, R. E. (1993). *The Optical Unconscious*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Elkins, J. (1998). *On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*: Cambridge University Press.

Fogle, D., & Walker Art, C. (2001). *Painting at the edge of the world*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center.

Bois, Y. A., Krauss, R. E., & Centre Georges, P. (1997). *Formless: a user's guide*. New York: Zone Books.

Krauss, R. E. (1986). *The originality of the avant-garde and other modernist myths*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Bryson, N. (1990). *Looking at the overlooked: four essays on still life painting*. London: Reaktion Books.

Colebrook, C. (2002). *Understanding Deleuze*. Crows Nest, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin.

Deleuze, G. (1988). *Bergsonism*. New York: Zone Books.

Hardin, C. L. (1988). *Color for philosophers: unweaving the rainbow*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co.

3 ARTWORKS



Figure 8

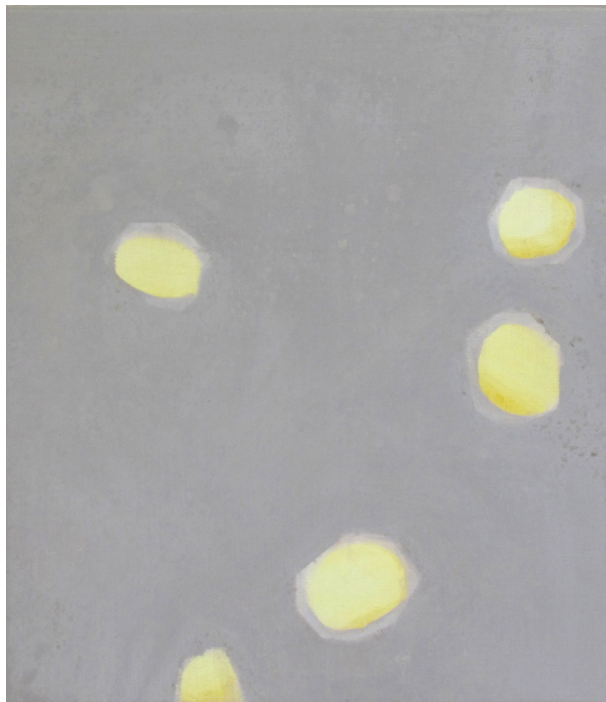


Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

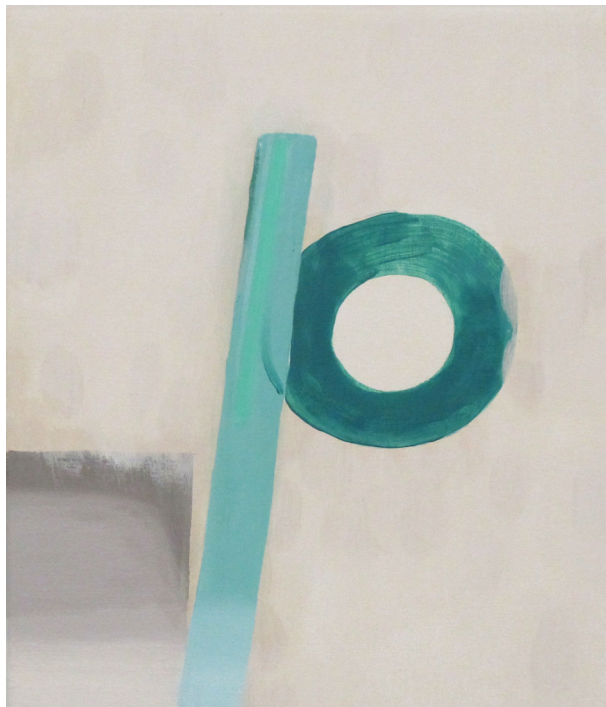


Figure 15



Figure 16

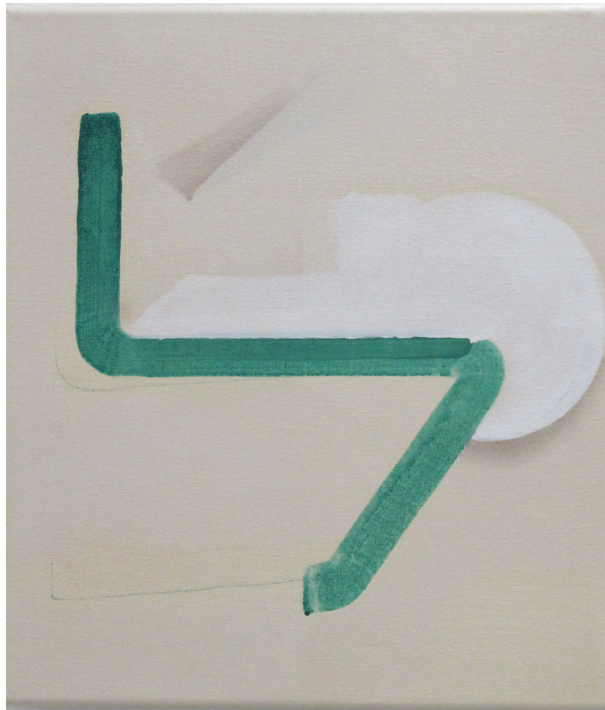


Figure 17



Figure 18

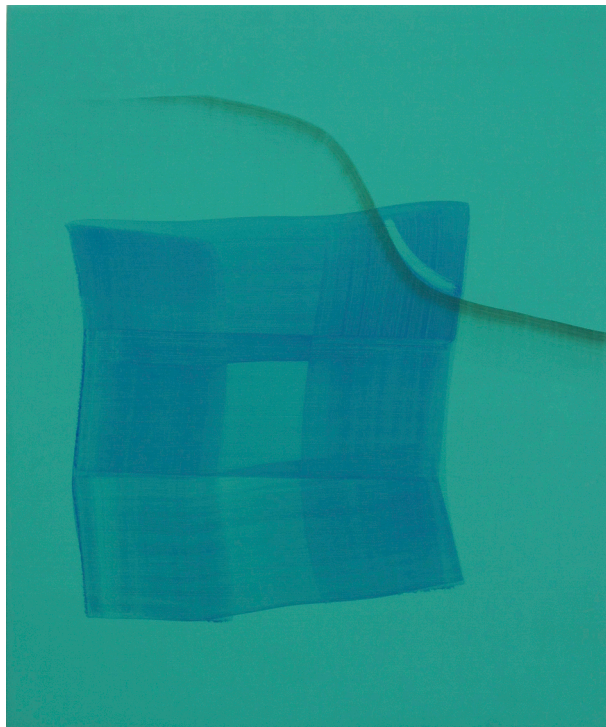


Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21



Figure 22



Figure 23

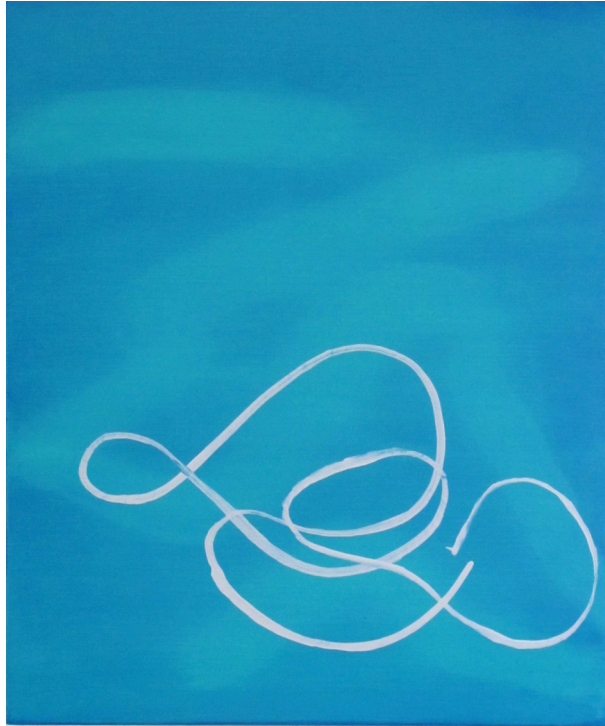


Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26

4 APPENDIX

The images that follow this appendix were taken of the final exhibition, in total there were eight works exhibited. The exhibition was held at St Paul St Gallery II from the 14th Nov-13 till the 16th. The paintings were all made within a four-month time span leading up to the exhibition. The works shown in the exhibition also included Figures 1 and 5, which are embedded within the exegesis.



Installation view



Installation view



Installation view

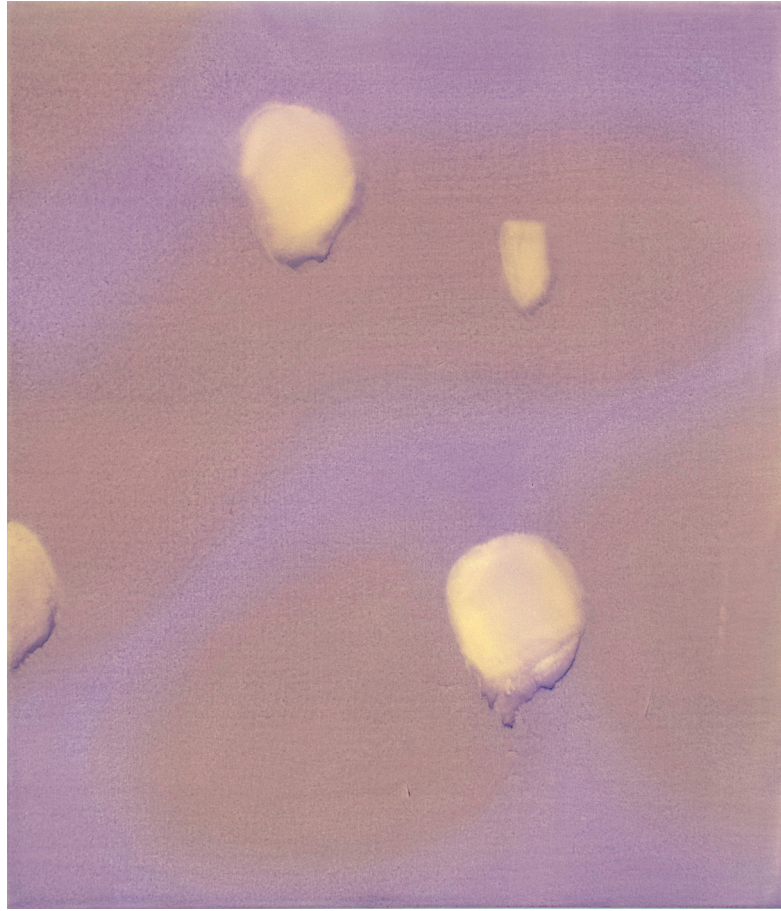


Figure 27

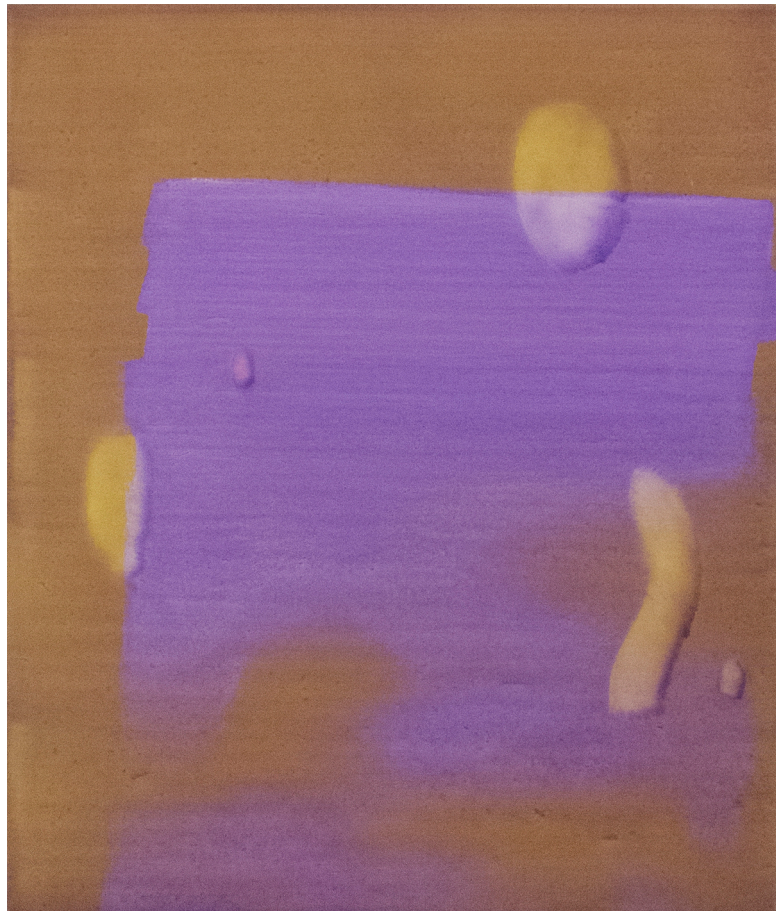


Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

