

# AFFECT IN ART EDUCATION: SPINOZA, DELEUZE AND GUATTARI AND THE EMERGING CREATIVE SUBJECT

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# ABSTRACT

This research explores the relationship between art pedagogy and art practices of the emerging creative subject in the art school studio. The significance of this research is in its contemplation of how art education “functions more as an idea of education” (Groys, 2009, p. 27). The “unspecificity” of art pedagogy enables students to utilise individual and personalised capabilities to create innovative, and novel methodologies and methods for the development of an art practice.

The “studio” is conceptualised as an environment for working/exploring/learning that is unfettered by the constraints of more traditional learning environments. In this milieu, the art school lecturer acts as incumbent and facilitator, holding the space and providing subtle direction. One of the core contributions of this study is in locating Baruch Spinoza’s concepts within art education (specifically the art critique), and its use of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s notion of rhizomatic thinking to substantiate methodologies and methods in art-making: where embracing an intuitive practice, and forgoing pre-conceived outcomes becomes essential to the unfolding of a student’s knowledge and ethical understanding. The emerging creative subject is positioned as generator, performer, witness, beneficiary and student within the art school studio milieu. I explore how the studio milieu enables learning through affective negotiation and response. These affective responses within the art encounter, in turn connect with new and expanding conceptual territories. This encompasses the generation and presentation of the artwork and the ensuing art critique. In this respect, I examine how new experience translates into knowledge, where percept, affect and concept interact to generate conceptual-contextual understanding for the student. I explore how studio facilitates such interactions, and how in the process normative hegemonies dissolve into a state of provisionality. This occurs because difference is continuously emerging in practice and in perception. The thesis utilises theories and philosophy of Spinoza, Deleuze, and Guattari to frame pedagogical processes, events and behaviours conducive to the processes of “becoming” of the subject within the context of the studio. It looks at the functionality, connectivity and productivity associated with studio life, highlighting

the importance of the body and mind working in unison as meaning is made from the art encounter. The recognition and appreciation of the body as intelligence has influenced a turn towards Spinozist theories and the affectual capability of the body in relation to art pedagogy and becoming-artist. The thesis explores how affective encounters provide opportunity for the development of ideas that not only belong to an art practice, but are also part of the processual acts belonging to subjectivity and individuation. I discuss the processes that may occur for the art student as dynamic experiences applicable to creative practice including: emergence, provisionality, contingency, tendency, change, and difference. This is encouraged by prompting ethical and empathic thinking through the conscious expansion of what Spinoza (1996) calls “inadequate ideas” into “more adequate ideas”. This thesis adopts a methodology that, like the processes occurring within the art school studio, draws on intuition and rhizomatic movement in conjunction with appetite to shape and forge the argument that affect is imperative to art education.

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## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Ingrid Boberg, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, 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 submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I Boberg.', with a stylized, cursive script.

Signed:

Date: 14 December 2017

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## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

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The university art school studio setting is significant in providing the art student with the opportunity and freedom to develop an art practice that supports them within the processual acts of individuation. Having worked as a practicing artist-lecturer in this setting for 30 years, I am able to view the potentiality of the art student as emerging creative subject through an idealised lens. In this thesis, the emerging creative subject is positioned as always and already engaging in affective relations with the studio milieu alongside their developing art practice. My engagement with the emerging creative subject and the art school studio milieu piqued an interest in seeking a philosophical understanding to explain the fluidity of the dynamic I was witnessing. I discovered a synergy between this milieu and the writings of Spinoza, Deleuze and Guattari. Drawing on these philosophers an argument is presented for the value of an art pedagogy operating within the university art school studio. An argument that may be particularly important for the future of university art education given the propensity of universities to relegate art school studio space in favour of more lucrative uses. This thesis then gives voice to the imperative of the university to retain the art school studio space to ensure that the concepts embedded within art pedagogy and the fluidity of the art school studio milieu are not lost.

The impetus for embarking on this study came from my interest in the articulation of the intuitive body-feeling that I can connect with while being in the company of highly affective images, objects, and spatial compositions, and how these feelings and their associated ideas are carried into my thinking and my life. Here, I not only mean everyday objects of recognition but also completed artworks that offer an “art encounter” (O’Sullivan, 2006) as well as the material and subject matter that could ultimately drive art ideas into pragmatic and readable forms. I was interested in how and why we select potential material for art-making purposes that reflects the seed of an initial idea, made obvious through its impact upon the body (as sensation) in a thought-provoking manner. Through pondering these individualised methods and processes, which are personally embedded in the processual acts of making art, I came to see art

pedagogy as distinct from other educational practices within a university setting. The subject within the art studio milieu carries out their art practice in concert with ‘other’, although individually created, and at the same time their artwork is subject to critique from the other. This process of art critique encourages students to engage in critical thinking and also in a particular form of inter-action with their peers. This means that the art school studio milieu is an environment that can be primed toward teaching students empathic action and thinking within ethically structured processes and developmental experiences situated in art pedagogy. Throughout this thesis I shift between calling the receiving body and mind, the body AND mind and the intelligent body. I use this terminology so as to promote the idea that the body has ideas, and that the body and the mind operate in unison; in parallel terms.

The form of this thesis is an attempt to follow the philosophical content through an iterative process as a way to capture the conceptual and experiential nature of art pedagogy. Each chapter introduces the reader to new concepts regarding art pedagogy, studio milieu and subjectivity. In doing so the writing of this thesis negotiates a pathway through a selection of Deleuze and Guattari’s theories, in particular an appreciation of smooth and striated space and how molar thinking can shift to molecular thinking. The positioning of these concepts within the art school studio ultimately leads to a Spinozan understanding of how inadequate ideas can become more adequate ideas through purposeful affective engagement with art. This includes the appreciation of different contextual knowledges as they unfold through the art critique. The thesis reterritorialises the art studio milieu as the site of sociality, educational exchange, ethical behaviour and individuation for the emerging creative subject. It culminates in a creative and innovative understanding of responsibilities in terms of the body, the studio and art pedagogy.

This thesis has a propensity for the slow reveal. It mimics art in this respect, through its gradual unfolding of meaning and thereby providing a contextual understanding as it forges a path to what ultimately forms a research question. This occurs through discussion and the positioning of theories regarding affect and body, place as context and activity as pedagogy. What unfolds is an awareness of the affecting and affected emerging creative subject, of the art studio as an experiential and affective environment and of the social and educational undertakings that take place for the emerging creative subject. I situate art pedagogy, the art school studio and the emerging creative subject as

interconnected and interactive components implicated within processual acts of individuation. This thesis also considers the affects and actions operating within creative practices and social mores for art students. When we encounter art or an aspect of an artwork and we are affected by the artwork, we call that ‘affect’. As we translate the affect or sensations, received by the receptive body, into verbal language we are able to also assimilate ideas connecting us through affect to the artwork.

These complex elements and processes are not only negotiated for formal educational practice, but are also active ingredients navigated within the processes associated with subjectivity. Theories and philosophical concepts regarding the transmission of affect have not only ignited my personal interest in this field, but have also helped form and inform the direction and purpose of the research. The insights gained through an understanding of these concepts serve as an intuitive diagrammatic representation that allows access to a series of otherwise invisible processual mechanisms active within the studio milieu. The dynamic of the studio environment and how it is involved in defining, cementing or contesting social and educational conditions for the art student has been a slowly percolating question throughout the duration of my teaching career. In more recent years this interest has been channeled into my research. This thesis brings into focus the transmission and reception of affect, and the force of bodies and matter, as vital adjuncts to the student-subject’s subjectivity and their movement from molar thinking to molecular thinking, within the context of art pedagogy. Molar thinking belongs to an established way of being in the world and molecular thinking is the taking on of new ideas and new frames of reference.

I think about the human subject of my thesis as an “emerging creative subject”. This term is used herein to highlight both the demands on the subject in their becoming part of a creative learning environment as well as a nod toward the transformative processes that occur for the subject, working within this particular milieu. However, first and foremost the subject needs to be understood as continually emerging – always in a state of becoming – as their ontogenesis takes place and the process of “individuation” occurs (Simondon, 1992). I use the concept of individuation herein as a way to think about the developing or maturing subject through particular processes of becoming. I would like you, the reader, to consider or better still imagine the subject as a being *in motion* — connecting, collecting, discarding or renewing, not only as a series of events but also as an active means by which the subject asserts “an absolutely specific existence (haecceity),

something that can lead to a proliferation of many new haecceities” (Simondon, 1992, p. 298). In other words, the continual becoming of the subject has no final or essential destination.

In the art school studio, the emerging creative subject moves within and between a personal and social context, a contemporary art context and a developing personal context. The complexity of identity recognition facing the subject within these distinctive contexts prompts me to think of the subject from many different perspectives. Hence I write about the subject as student, art student, subject-student, student-artist, student-critic and nascent artist as a way to include the nuanced sensibilities, sensitivities and dispositions of these identifying terms. I am interested in how art education can be supported and perhaps better prepared to understand the significance of studio-based learning and the role that art pedagogy plays within the processes of individuation; the process of human maturation; the becoming student-artist and the becoming-ethical creative subject.

In methodological terms Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) concept of “becoming” which functions as continual renewal, has supported my approach to the student-subject, my understanding of subjectivity and also the methodology through which I develop and nurture the ideas in this thesis. I abandoned (from the beginning) the necessity of a central question. My approach throughout the research/reading process and the unfolding of the thinking/writing process, have enabled questions of interest to be garnered along the way or to gradually unfold. This has occurred through enquiry into the various platforms of knowledge whereby my interest has been sparked and vital concepts highlighted. Hence the articulation of any question or problem only came to light once the ground had been determined and the context understood. Only then was I able to access a knowing that allowed me to formulate an answer which led me to what might be considered a question or problem. This knowing came about through utilising Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) rhizomatic processes, which liberated my thinking beyond linear logical structures and enabled more intuitive action to be nurtured and cultivated.

As a consequence of the conceptualising of occurrences and events, as well as the recognising of particular abstract concepts within corporeal and intellectual engagement, I have at times been able to *feel* myself in motion, for example as I shift

between striated space and smooth space. The recognition of such body AND mind functioning has occurred for me in many different situations within both academic and personal environments. These experiences have provided rich contextuality in my understanding of how abstract concepts can function in life. They have also highlighted the associative practices and processes, for example moving from molar thinking to molecular thinking, that is shared across domains. For instance, while the description and example of the (postqualitative) methodology I utilised in my research and the writing of this thesis, is the subject of Chapters 6 and 7, that methodology underpins the content of *every* chapter and how their theories, thoughts and stories manifest as content. Intuition as method is a way to think through ideas, consider matter, wrestle with writing and literally live the process of being open to serendipitous and rhizomatic discoveries and connections as they occur or appear.

## THE IN-FECT OF DELEUZE AND GUATTARI

Deleuze provides pertinent insights to the earlier thinking of Baruch Spinoza regarding affect and ethics, while Guattari helps to amplify the processes of movement between states. Their collaborative work on affect, becoming and molecular thinking has provided a strength to the purpose of this thesis as I situate in practices belonging to art pedagogy. The themes of their philosophy were infectious when first read and made their imprint well before they “in-fected” my understanding of the world of the art school studio. In this next section I outline the Deleuzo-Guattarian themes that occur and recur within the thesis so as to provide not only the philosophical meaning of the terms used but also to offer a brief but necessary context for the reader.

In their seminal text titled *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2004), Deleuze and Guattari continually return to the question of subjectivity, mapping through extensive discussion and acute articulation the ways in which we perform and are performed upon via social connection, external forces and governing bodies that empower and also disempower through encounters and cultural discourses. They draw attention to the practice of being human within this world, and the notion of “becoming”, becoming different, becoming other. Guattari (2006) explains not only the notion of becoming for the human being but also how it has its origin in the quality of desire:

Becoming [devinir]: this term relates to the economy of desire. Desire flows proceed by affects and becomings, independently of the fact that they can fold over onto persons, images and identifications or not. So an individual, anthropologically labelled masculine, can be traversed by multiple and apparently contradictory, becomings: becoming feminine can coexist with becoming a child, becoming an animal, becoming invisible, etc. (p. 416)

Educationalist theorist Inna Semetsky (2006) frames the process of becoming thus,

The subject-in-process, that is as becoming, is always placed between two multiplicities yet one term does not become the other; the becoming is something between the two, this something is called by Deleuze a pure affect. ... Becoming is affect by definition – we remember that affect defines the body’s capacity to exist and its power to act – and affect is beyond affection, similar to percept always exceeding a simple perception. ... Therefore becoming does not mean becoming the other, but becoming-other. (p. 6)

Deleuze and Guattari (2004) describe how we can be “thrown into” such a process:

We can be thrown into a becoming by anything at all, by the most unexpected, most insignificant of things. You don’t deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off. (p. 322)

The “majority” here is not numerical but based in power and the discourses that render a state of domination, as in the state of the “white male”. “There is no becoming man, because man is the molar entity par excellence, whereas becomings are molecular” (p. 322). This transformation, or shift in sensibility or recognition, is the mutating subject, the learning subject – educational processes in action within the body. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explore with great adroitness the concept of becoming throughout each chapter or plateau as each body of writing unfolds for the reader. The ways in which we are held to our bodies and the processes, desires, experiences and means by which we can escape our bodies (become a body without organs [BwO]) commonly reappear throughout the text providing much needed insight into what it is, to be human. Deleuze and Guattari, in their explanation of how to make oneself a BwO, suggest that “you can’t desire without making one” (p. 166). They add that “it is not a notion or a concept, it is a practice, a set of practices” and warn that their account of such practices “is not reassuring, because you can botch it, or it can be terrifying and lead you to your death” (p. 166). A body *with* organs is a body in order. It is an organising mechanism and hence the BwO is the body without the organism of organisation. To go beyond this organisational state is to transgress its limits and to seek alternative practices by which to realise “deterritorialisation”. This concept refers to the

physicality of our being in our body, in our organs, and speaks of our becoming molecular *outside* of our existing body, outside of the molar stratifications and strata of an organised and territorialised body.

This escape maps the significance of the governing political discourses, stratifications and segmentarities existing within paradigmatic diagrams/plans (of power) of any given field, as well as local and immediate contexts. Stratification is the organising process of strata. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) explain,

The principal strata binding human beings are the organism, significance and interpretation, and subjectification and subjection. These strata together are what separates us from the plane of consistency and the abstract machine, where there is no longer any regime of signs, where the line of flight effectuates its own potential positivity and deterritorialization its absolute power. The problem from this standpoint, is to tip the most favourable assemblage from its side facing the strata to its side facing the plane of consistency or the body without organs. (p. 148)

Deleuze and Guattari also point here to the difficulty of moving from molar thinking to molecular thinking, or shedding the habitual modes of being to form new compositions and new assemblages so as to experience the possibilities available within the plane of consistency — a possible plane without restriction. Segmentarity presents through differing types of coding as well as differing degrees of rigidity. For example, “primitive segmentarity” forms “a relatively supple line of interlaced codes and territorialities, ... in which the social space is constituted by territorial and lineal segmentations”. The overcoding production of “rigid lines” as in the “state apparatus ... brings about a dualist organization of segments, a concentricity of circles in resonance, ... reterritorialisation ... takes place in an ... overcoded geometrical space (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 245).

Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) enthralling discussion of deterritorialisation, reterritorialisation, lines of flight, planes of immanence, BwO and becoming other, convinces the reader, or at least this reader, not only of the existence of these affective dynamics as modes of being and modes of becoming but also their importance in the developing of subjectivities. They describe the plane of immanence as,

the uninterrupted continuum of the BwO, immanence, immanent limit. The BwO is the field of immanence of desire, the plane of consistency specific to desire (with desire defined as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it). (pp. 170–171)

Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation need to be explained in conjunction with the Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) concept of the rhizome. A rhizome moves and connects beyond its singularity and is nomadic and sporadic enabling multiple connections and attractions, not from a central governing body but through its own encapsulated thought and desire.

Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organised, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentarity lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. (p. 10)

This concept appeals to me because I recognise its subtle and grand actions occurring for students within the art school studio as they forge new frames of reference, engage in novel practices, and reorganise their guiding principles due to seeing the world differently — seeing the world as becoming-artist. Deleuze and Guattari explain and explore how bodies are rhizomatic; connect to other bodies; produce affect and are affected by each other; are machinic in kind with a deep-rooted desire to be connected to other machines; are constantly discovering novel affectual motivations and therefore cannot be fixed nor static. Deleuze and Guattari delete the binary from their thinking and provide a cohesive, inclusive and ethical form of knowing. They provide a means, or lens, by which we can pay attention differently to subjectivity, duration, the production of meaning and the production of self.

### ADDITIONAL THEORISTS WHO HAVE BEEN INVALUABLE

In casting my intentioned gaze on the art school studio as an assemblage and a site of subjectification, my writing has been primarily shaped by the adoption of a rhizomatic methodology and Deleuze and Guattari's seminal text *A Thousand Plateaus*. Alongside research into philosophical concepts for practical gains, I am grateful to those who have utilised these same concepts to develop and answer research questions regarding education, materiality and subjectivity. These writers are many in number, but those who have influenced me most include Brian Massumi, Gilbert Simondon, Jane Bennett, Theresa Brennan, Erin Manning, Simon O'Sullivan, Claire Colebrook, Bronwyn Davies and Elizabeth St. Pierre. The politics regarding affect, its associative practices and effects as revealed by these writers has helped me to appreciate how the emerging creative subject experiences maturation through individuating processual events while being immersed in the art school studio milieu. These writers have all contributed to

and reinforced my thinking of the art school studio as a dynamic and affectual space, a social and networking site inventing and sustaining its own discourse and exchange, a place of subjectification, a machine, an assemblage and finally, and most reluctantly, a part of the neoliberal university estate.

I propose that educational practices need to take better care and responsibility for how the art school studio functions as a powerful milieu, and actively impacts upon the subjectivities within its grasp. In this proposition the studio as milieu includes human and non-human affects engaged in myriad acts and processes as well as the connections, gestures and ruptures that are capable of shifting the sensibility and the focus of the student-subject in productive ways.

## OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

It is my desire to provide a slowly emerging contextual understanding of the art school studio theorised as a site for affective relations, sociality and art-making, as well as the distinct qualities embedded in art education. I am aspiring for an understanding to unfold for the reader that honours the way in which we come to a particular knowing through all of our senses. I explain philosophical concepts referred to within this thesis through stories which recall certain lived experiences occurring in everyday life. These experiences mimic the very interactions that occur within the art school studio and its dynamic milieu thereby making the nature of these experiences more accessible for the reader. As each chapter unfolds, stories and theories collude to map and narrate the significant concepts that are used to discuss transitions and transformations being realised and experienced by the art student as the emerging creative subject.

Chapter 2 begins an exploration of the art school studio through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) "assemblage". The studio is valued "as one of the most eloquent sites of inter-sensory encounter" (Robertson & Roy, 2017, p. 2) with its ability to bring disparate objects, ideas, and humans together in the name of art. I discuss in this chapter the studio environment and its propensity for rhizomatic movement, which is observable as bodies move by intuitive design rather than instructional motivation. Art students may have the ability to move about at will; to co-mingle, connect, observe, converse, and make friends. The lack of restrictions placed on conduct and students' movement in the studio is explored through the delicate correlation set up between the

curriculum expectations, the culture of art practice, and the desire for social connection and relaxation. The concept of assemblage becomes the motif in this chapter that connects the studio dynamic, an interactive artwork and a story about a weta that returns to touch the narrator's body in a supermarket aisle.

In Chapter 3, I take a brief look at the recent history of art schools in Australasia to background the changing status and practice of art education particularly within New Zealand, but also within the Western world. I particularly focus on the absorption of art schools into the neoliberal institutionalisation of university systems and structures. I discuss the erosion of the pertinent pedagogical structures, frameworks and facilitations that used to accommodate an extremely successful humanist education. I proceed to discuss the value of studio-based learning and the advantages for students of being engaged within the context of the studio milieu, its expanded functions and rewards, and the importance of maintaining such a pedagogy within the neoliberal condition. This chapter thus also explores and explains “smooth space” orientations and “striated space” orientations, as well as the benefits gained by recognising such registers and being able to move between the two. This movement and negotiation advantages the different types of “thinking and doing” skills that can be promoted through understanding such orientations. The art school studio is a venue for many different educational, professional and social activities and thus can be re-organised to accommodate the different configurations and orientations. The studio is flexible in its ability to conform to different affective structures. To appreciate the rhizomatic quality of the student's physical movement within and through the space of the studio, it is important to understand the nature of the studio and how it accommodates the spatial (architectural) and space (quality of) values as directives in human movement and feelings.

Chapter 4 contains the stand-alone vignette titled: *To the Island*, which explains the moving in and out of what Deleuze and Guattari (2004) call “smooth space and striated space”. This narration also incorporates the thought-filled locating of the triggers for such movement that may occur when mindful of such transactions. These same transactions are experienced in multiple situations, however are particularly noticeable in the art school studio environment.

Chapter 5 discusses the role art pedagogy plays in shifting thinking from molar modes to molecular modes. Once again using Spinoza's concept of affect as a key player, I discuss what art may do as an affectively active component of cognitive life in the art school studio and how the ensuing relation between affect and ideas provides a rich body AND mind connectivity in order to develop subjectivities.

Chapter 6 and 7 discuss the methods adopted in this thesis and articulate a methodology devoid of a driving question. This thesis is developed through methods that make use of poststructural and post-qualitative attitudes and practices. I have therefore not aimed for a narrowly defined methodology but rather a depth of understanding regarding art pedagogical contexts and the underlying forces, macro structures and micro instructions that powerfully intensify impetus to explore (learn) or not explore within given situations in the art school studio. These forces are akin to a subtext, readable through the body but not always openly or cognitively acknowledged by our thinking or speaking apparatus. Ideas, thoughts and reflections anecdotally gathered from art students provide insights into how the transmission of affect and the dynamics of matter operating within the studio environment may inform, undermine and promote aspects of educational practices. Although this research is not empirically based, it draws upon philosophical concepts and theories as well as experience, observation and the senses to consider how the art school studio environment encourages social and affective relations employed in the pursuit of an art education.

Operating through and with this kind of methodological means my research questions do not determine my method but rather evolve over the duration and period of writing. I have had to dismantle my assumptions regarding what research is and where its boundaries lie, as well as my assumptions regarding the shape and form of prospective outcomes. This Deleuzian rhizomatic and intuitive way of engaging with a territory (the unfolding material otherwise unseen) has established a new set of methods and consequently a new and different performing methodology. By re-thinking traditional methods of research, organising structures, research questions and literature reviews, I discovered a distinctive methodology, which is something other than strictly qualitative, and operates more as post-qualitative, in that it does not "assume ... the human is superior to and separate from the material – Self/Other, subject/object, and human/non-human" (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013, p. 630). The methodology I adopt guides direction and enquiry through the unfolding principles belonging more to the

territory of enquiry than a preconceived structure that logically answers the original set of questions. My methodology is an integral part of how I do most things, but it is especially apparent in my art practice, my pedagogy and in the writing of this thesis. This process included reading, collecting material, experiential learning and making connections. Everyday events such as making dinner and catching a ferry to an island (see vignette: *To the Island*) were seen through the lens of philosophical concepts being played out in the realm of pragmatics.

Chapter 8 highlights the importance of recognising the crossing of thresholds, and what this could mean for the art student. I include a story about a young girl, (see vignette: *To the Cockpit*) and make reference to an artwork that familiarises the reader with scenarios in which the crossing of boundaries and thresholds occur. Both of these scenarios position both the interloper and the protagonist as a means to understand the shifts that can be made as experience unfolds and forces are *felt*. In the crossing of boundaries and thresholds both physical and psychological transformations are inevitable.

Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 locate the emerging creative subject within the practical and experiential activities that are at the core of art pedagogy. These chapters together argue that an art education is one where the student-subject may be individuated within the context of practical educational activities that engage the body and the mind in ways that can pragmatically promote ethical thinking and considerate action. The subject's becoming emerges within an environment that stands as a highly complex and affective milieu, and which utilises the fluidity and porosity of the art studio's mandate as provocateur on one hand and the quietude of refuge on the other.

The studio as milieu with regard to affect and assemblage will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

# STUDIO AS MILIEU: AFFECT AND ASSEMBLAGE

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## INTRODUCTION

For affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel.

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 265)

The art school studio is a complex environment containing a multiplicity of active elements all the while promoting capacities that aid the individuating subject in very pragmatic ways: “The art school always offers itself as one of the most eloquent sites of inter-sensory encounter that functions as an exemplary, inextricable entwinement of materials, bodies and minds in action” (Robertson & Roy, 2017, p. 2). This thesis focuses on an *aspirational* as well as a *real* idea of the art school studio. It acknowledges that the art studio may not be an enriching environment for everyone. The thesis begins with an explanation of the art school studio because not only is it here that art ideas are developed, formalised and critiqued, but also because the “milieu” of the studio forms a vital context for the continually transforming subjectivities of the students and the art school lecturer whom oversees the pedagogy. The word “milieu” is used throughout the thesis in the sense that Massumi (2013) describes:

The word [milieu], often qualified by “associated”, is a favorite of both Simondon and Deleuze and Guattari for its double entendre in French. In French milieu means both “middle” and “surroundings.” To put the two meanings together without falling back into an inside/outside division that calls for a subject or object to found or regulate it, you have to conceive of a middle that wraps around, to self-surround, as it phases onward in the direction of the “more” of its formative openness. (p. xii)

To explore the studio milieu, I have used Deleuze’s and Guattari’s theories regarding affect and rhizome, as well as the concept of assemblage as they all inform my understanding of the active components, powers of attraction and connectivity

operating within the studio environment. This chapter looks at the nature of the art school studio as an assemblage rather than a designated work or learning space and situates the art student within the milieu of the assemblage of the studio. To explore the studio as milieu we need to understand it as an environment where embodied meaning takes place and subjectivities are formed. Johnson says, “We are born into the world as creatures of the flesh, and it is through our bodily perceptions, movements, emotions and feelings that meaning becomes possible and takes the form it does” (Johnson, 2007, p. viv). The human body and the environment are co-evolving aspects of every situation occurring within the art studio milieu. Here, there is much to perceive and contemplate because thinking and feeling operate together as a complex affectual engagement ultimately becoming habitual as students (and lecturers) engage their thinking body in acts of perception.

The studio is acknowledged as a space and an active resource where the directive for movement and perception is primarily initiated by the student’s experience of affect mediated through their desires and appetites. It is the student’s personal incentive and drive that initiates movement and action within the body, generating connectivity with and between other bodies. Connectivity in the art studio occurs through the rhizomatic dynamic of the configured human and their response to the non-human components necessary to art making. This enables an integrity to affect felt within the body, rather than the directive for practice arriving from an ‘external’ and authoritative structure or constraint of educational or historical convention.

The concepts operating within the art school studio milieu, may also be found within our everyday lives and our daily experiences can thus be used to understand and explore these concepts. This seamlessness, between life and art practice when it is apparent, encourages its own capabilities and brings a familiarity and comfort to the art school studio milieu. I illustrate this seamlessness by using vignettes of everyday experiences that bring an understanding to the philosophical concepts that form the foundation to this thesis. The writing of this thesis also reflects a similar porosity of boundaries where key concepts are addressed across several chapters as the content or argument demands.

Some of the acts, actions and events experienced within the studio are prevalent not only within the context of making art and being in an art studio, but are fundamental to art pedagogy. An example of this is the personal and social learning that takes place

around experiences of affect, both formally and incidentally within the art encounter. The art encounter is thus utilised as educational instrument and therefore becomes a key component within emerging subjectivities. Throughout this thesis I return to the art school studio in its many capacities. Ultimately my interest lies in the milieu of the studio and the impact it has on the emerging creative subject. Studio life and its affective experiences can be drawn upon as a scaffolding for the development and understanding of significant ideas and art concepts. In this chapter I discuss how these qualities operate as adjuncts to or initiators of molecularised, or open, thinking and its role within the becoming of subjectivities. An in-depth discussion on molecularity can be found in Chapter 4.

This chapter introduces the art school student as the emerging creative subject situated within the art school studio. I suggest that the studio is an environment where the art student can move rhizomatically<sup>1</sup>, taking advantage of affective engagement through planned connectivity as well as spontaneous encounters. This type of movement within the space of the studio, enables unplanned connections to be made not only with things, but also with other students: their ideas, thinking, processes and practices. In discussing the art school studio as an assemblage, I suggest that some of the qualities and exchanges operating within that assemblage can also be present within particular artworks, thereby arguing that the studio shares some functions, attractions and manifestations with art projects, products and events. My research focus forms a nexus between the emerging creative subject and the art school studio as a socially and psychologically active and appreciative space of discovery. The art school studio is a rhizomatic space that Deleuze and Guattari (2004) would consider a “de-centered network”, housing “de-regulated flows of energy and matter, ideas and actions” (Smith & Protevi, 2013, n.p.) where affect is key to action and paramount to movement.

## THE INCLUSION OF THE FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVE

In a discussion on the rhizome and the “vegetational image of such effusive systems” Jakub Zdebik (2012) notes, “Vegetation itself illustrates the profusion of information but also its non-hierarchical, heterogeneous juxtapositions – seen in Proust’s many asides, references and descriptive digressions” (p. 29). Within the context of writing this thesis, I

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 24 for a definition of “rhizome”.

decided to include personal narratives that could operate as digressions from the main body of text because they pitch, in their first-person voice, stories of lived experiences. The vignettes bring to the text a personal perspective of events that encompass transformative and educative processes discussed within the text. By writing about my own experience of an assemblage-in-the-making in *Becoming Weta* (see Chapter 4), I bring another dimension of affective experience to both the chapter and the thesis. Massumi (2015) says that affect is “a dimension of life — including of writing, including of reading — which directly carries a political valance” (p. vii). My aim is to provide, not only a *conceptual* account but also an *affective* account of the processes and events that punctuate art school studio life. Although I situate the emerging creative subject as they experience their becoming within an art school studio environment, I re-situate transformative processes within everyday occurrences. This brings about a movement between the registers of formal academic language and the spoken word, or the internalised language used in reflective mode. This difference of attitude and approach mimics the acts and events that make up the formal elements of an art education as they interrupt or form adjuncts to the more fluid aspects of studio life.

In *Becoming Weta*, I tell the story of a sudden encounter with an insect that creates a rupture within the everydayness of *being*. This story becomes the catalyst for a corporeal understanding that recollects Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “assemblage”. Through the initial affective encounter with the weta, and by thinking through the nature and force of attraction, connection and interdependence that was experienced at the time, I realised that a deterritorialisation and a reterritorialisation had taken place. I understood the event as one that shared certain aspects with Deleuze’s and Guattari’s (2004) assemblage of the wasp and the orchid<sup>2</sup>. My experiencing of the Weta, in *Becoming Weta*, and the corresponding block of sensations I *felt*, made possible an affective *body* understanding for me of some of the more complex concepts I was reading about. This story is not so much about the weta as about the similar kinds of affective ruptures — acts and events, transgressions and transmissions, repetitions, connections and implications — that happen within the art school studio. Throughout the thesis personal experiences via vignettes are utilised to acknowledge situational affect and its impact

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<sup>2</sup> Deleuze and Guattari use the attraction of the wasp and the orchid and how they utilise each other for their respective needs to illustrate the concept of assemblage. See p. 31 of this Chapter for further description.

upon the “mind-full” body. These experiences are considered as containing valuable corporeal understanding that encourages the body — mine or yours — to be present. The vignettes are my way of mapping transformative processes that are charged with affect and its power to action the “experiential state of the body” (Massumi, 2004, p. xvii). In this chapter affect is not only presented within a theoretical context but also acknowledged as *felt* within the ongoing-ness of our lives: working, playing, thinking and writing.

## THE ART SCHOOL STUDIO

The art school is “an institution which persistently concerns itself with transmitting—and making explicit—sensory knowledge” (Robertson & Roy, 2017, p. 2). Within the art school studio, objects and bodies are always and already actively transmitting affect and forming relations and/or compositions with other objects and bodies providing a never-ending series of relations and negotiations (Bennett, 2010; Brennan, 2004). “No sooner than we dive into composition than composition launches itself into a process of iteration offering a bounty of variations, thousands and thousands, on any and all behaviours or events” (Massumi, 2013, p. x).

Although the art school studio is shaped by its design and architectural elements, the interior space is commonly organised to house students (within a cohort) in small individual bays or spaces operating within the larger space. This provides personalised spaces for students while also enabling them to be part of the collective energy working within an ecology of practices (Stengers, 2005a). Massumi (2015) sees “affective intensity and an aesthetics of varying life potential as the elements of an ecology of practices of the symbiotic kind called for by Stengers, and before her by Guattari” (p. 70). The art school studio can quite quickly become home to those who inhabit it, however this achievement is not without the trials and tribulations attached to finding a source of comfort and a sense of belonging. The term “ecology of practices” is used to draw attention here to the personal attachments that all students have to their own line of practices, logic and cultural beliefs that they bring with them into the ecology of the art studio. Obligation to attachments and beliefs is what gives each student their sense of self. Upon entering the ecology of practices active within the art studio the obligations students have toward their personal ecology of practice must now collude or collide with the line of attachments or conventions that are emerging within the ecology of the art

studio. Stengers (2005a) uses the term “obligation” to “characterise what it is to know that you belong” (p. 190). The art school studio is an environment where students are given the license to take risks and explore the unknown: it is also an environment where value can emerge, change or diminish on a regular basis.

## THE ART SCHOOL LECTURER

Throughout this thesis the emerging creative subject is situated in the experiential world of the art school studio where I theorise they are susceptible to and implicated in affective forces, affective relations and embodied meaning. My interest lies in their susceptibility to such forces as well as the possibilities that flourish through their responsiveness to the dynamic of the studio milieu and the demands of art pedagogy. The dynamic of the studio milieu includes, with a variety of expression and to varying degrees, the teaching staff and the intrinsic manner through which they interact and form compositions with other bodies; the affective field of the studio. Conventionally the pedagogic focus is on the student as the emerging creative subject but it is important to acknowledge the art school lecturer as teacher, interloper, initiator or director of particular social and educational activities and events. The lecturer’s presence and value within the processual acts belonging to art pedagogy is intrinsic to the studio milieu. This is reflected in the personal, social and educational relations that emerge through the affective and cognitive connections that form between lecturer and students as conversations and embodied meaning unfolds. These conversations occur informally in ad hoc engagements when lecturers move through the art school studio environment. They also occur more formally within the art pedagogy as art encounter and art critique.

When art students are engaged in a formal studio art critique, the lecturer(s) who have initiated the process and are guiding the discussion, respond to the artwork through the same form of engagement as the students. They feel and look, they look and feel, they think and they speak. The lecturers often begin by role modelling the kinds of processes that take place upon encountering the artwork. This requires the lecturer to think about what the art encounter means and to articulate from their perspective the percept, affect and concept derived therefrom. Sometimes this sounds like the lecturer and ultimately the students verbalizing their thoughts out loud. This may occur as follows. *“When I first came into the room and approached the art work I felt drawn to the yellow form on the floor, and then I was immediately distracted by the similar shaped form adjacent to the yellow one. I couldn’t stop looking*

*at it — taking it in to the body. It felt compelling*". In this example the lecturer is describing a series of actions and internalised responses about the artwork. Such responses could help initiate a discussion, and encourage the students to form their own opinion to both the artwork and/or the discussion. The ensuing discussion may then discover a variety of affective and infective aspects regarding an engagement and experiencing of the artwork. This happens through both the contemplation of what is being discussed by the group as well as the propensity of the individual to *feel* the artwork and acknowledge how and why it is in composition with their receiving body. This process occurs for the lecturer(s) and students alike. When the lecturer(s) are *feeling* out the affective resonance and recognising the affective field forming a composition with their body, students are similarly feeling, interpreting and articulating the affective field understood through their personal lens or habitus. Lecturers and students negotiate and critique particular and meaningful aspects of the art encounter while expressing shared and disparate opinions relating thereto. There is no definitive meaning or one way to read the artwork. The critique is more about students becoming confident, and able to express their opinions and feelings about the work and to articulate their thoughts as ideas arrive during contemplation of the work. This is a chance for each student to point to, at least, the context by which they are engaging with the work. Often it is the lecturer(s) who set the pace for the critique and operate with particular strategies and criteria as a means to ensure that students can voice their thoughts and practise pertinent critiquing skills. Our bodies are always in renewable compositions with the artwork. The more we look and feel its qualities the more we notice something else that matters.

*The Art Critique*, is the first vignette of the thesis and was written as a means to situate and personalise the art lecturer as a component within the complex pedagogy that is art education.

## THE ART CRITIQUE

*The art critique begins, I hold my breath as I feel the sensations pertaining to the artwork, somewhere deep inside my body. These feelings become sensorial understandings that are not yet articulated through language but feelings that are intimately palpable and beckoning me towards an intuitive interpretation of meaning. I try and allay the small waves of anxiety welling within me in anticipation of what to voice about the artwork in question. Affect, transmitted*

*from the artwork and received through my intelligent body, is making itself understood as my thinking grapples with this experience. I do not want anyone to speak, not just yet, I want to hold all of the possible readings regarding this artwork at bay until I too can define the territory it fires within me. I am held within its embrace and enjoying its nuanced meaning as it is gently seeded into my thoughts. As one of the lecturers, I encourage the students to speak first which may give them agency within the overall reading of the artwork. This allows them to express the things they are interested in deciphering and may allude to their individual tendencies with regard to their affective understanding and vocal expression.*

*The students begin with description, but very quickly move beyond the immediate physicality of the work and enter into what this work, or aspects thereof, conjure for them. Always and already engaging their memories and the affects flowing from those memories are beginning to meld with their opinions and judgements. Opinions and judgements that differ according to individual habitus and molar thinking. Discussions ensue and I interject in a way that includes some of the quieter comments already spoken. These comments are then developed by the group and become alternative or different ways through which this work can be contextualised.*

*The discussion is lively and the student-artist is frantically taking notes so as to capture the spontaneous and considered gems that fall from engaged minds. By now the discussion has moved toward more conceptual concerns and is punctuated by the lecturers' opinions and readings of the artwork. The critique group becomes an affective body whereby the students' and lecturers' comments, mine included, dovetail and enrich each-other's understanding as the discussion deepens. I am mindful of including the less confident members of the group and direct questions their way or re-iterate something they have articulated. I do this to acknowledge that all comments are worthy and contribute towards discovering different ways of encountering the artwork. All comments help to provide a greater context for the reading of the work and collectively move our initial, perhaps simple inadequate ideas, toward more complex and more adequate ideas.*

*When the discussion slows and the critique group moves on to another artwork, I retract my thoughts in preparation for the next affective encounter. However, before*

*I do this I am mindful of the enrichment process. I reflect on how much I have just learned not only about the artwork in question but also about the individuals who have offered their opinions and disclosed their tendencies and paradigmatic thinking. I feel as if I know them better as a result of understanding their experience within the critique. It is in welcoming their words that my own critical thinking processes are expanded. A kind of synergy is forming between me and them; them and me, and I value how the critique brings with it new knowledge, articulated feelings and critical friends.*

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In this way, the art school lecturer is initially an integral part of the dance that occurs within the art school studio milieu, however ultimately he or she reterritorialises as the art student gains experiences and understanding of their own positioning and haecceity (thisness). This is as mentioned, the assertion of “an absolutely specific existence” (Simondon, 1992, p. 298), or the expressed individuality of the individuating subject. It is through the art student’s own process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation that they become not only an active but a knowing participant within the art encounter and therefore the art critique. Within these processes, the students are working to construct meaning and by doing so create new becomings. As we experience difference or experience an action, object or thing from a different or alternative perspective, we can begin to think differently about it. In this instance, we shift our thinking from our molar type thinking or our habitual mode of thinking to molecular thinking.

Here I want to clarify the relation between molar thinking and what is referred to as habitus. Bourdieu’s (1990) reference to “habitus” refers not only to the deeply ingrained habits, tendencies and embodied dispositions gained from life’s experiences, but also to the embodiment of cultural capital. Bourdieu describes cultural capital as the accrual of skills, behaviours and knowledge that we are able to access and that ultimately become engrained as part of our cultural competence.

In our engagement with molecular thinking our ideas relating to habitus are disrupted as we open our thought processes so as to take up something new; a different position in relation to the action, object or thing. When we can experience the action, object or thing differently, we have a different understanding of it and we are therefore in relation to it differently. We can find ourselves looking awry at something unfamiliar however

once we have established a new or different perspective or understood the context by which it exists, we can absorb its new contextual qualities into our thinking about it. This is a shift from molar thinking to molecular thinking. When molecular thinking is assimilated into our day to day practice, it can become habitual or part of our natural way of being and therefore embedded into our habitus.

## RHIZOMATIC MOVEMENT AND BECOMING

The art school studio is a platform upon which rhizomatic movement takes place. The movement of the students through and within the studio provides the possibility for each body to deconstruct and dismantle the more conventional hierarchies of movement established in traditional educational settings. The students move through the space of the studio as in a way that recalls Deleuze and Guattari (2004) concept of the rhizome which Felicity J. Coleman (2005) describes as

the connections that occur between the most disparate and the most similar of objects, places and people; the strange chains of events that link people: the feeling of ‘six degrees of separation’ the sense of ‘having been here before’ and assemblages of bodies. (n.p.)

Within a studio-based programme the majority of the students’ time spent in the studio and moving within it is self-organised, self-determined and self-directed. Movement and attention carried out within the studio is by nature created from a rhizomic source which has as its cause the individuals’ personal and often intuitive response to affective apprehensions. The actual movement is contingent on the power of each body to respond intuitively through their personalised tendencies to the matter and matters at hand. What is important here, with regard to the freedom of movement that the studio milieu suggests, is the way in which students encounter affect as a means of becoming. “A becoming is not a correspondence between relations, but neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or at the limit, an identification” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 262).

Within the context of the art studio, “to become” is to be shifted on one axis or another, which shifts the body AND thoughts, affect AND thinking, toward a different or nuanced understanding of the point, thing or event in question (becoming at one with). To become therefore means to experience a shift in the internal relations of affect held within the now becoming body. “To become is not progress or regress along a series. ... What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 262).

Becoming is the mode of being that is open to deterritorialisations, molarised thinking and lines of flight. Movement operating within a demarcated space is often contingent on fluid organic spatial arrangements to assist the capacity for rhizomatic connections and the experience of becoming.

The lack of restrictions and openness of the art school studio dynamic allows for an intuitive roaming and seeking that is required for each student to pursue the development of ideas, approaches and practical outcomes pertaining to their creative practice. This individualised interface of affects, action, reflection and production means that during the self-directed time in the studio art students do not operate through a collective intention, strategy or activity — unless they choose to work collaboratively. At the same time, however by being together in a particular space they are affecting and infecting each other through micro and macro transmissions of affect. Therefore, the movement (of students) occurring within the studio space is brought about through individual needs and appetites. Individual bodies map their own individual path or plan of action throughout each day, moving within the context of others' movements and affectivity, whereby connections can be made randomly, intuitively and intentionally. These connections are asserted through the students being within proximity of each other, recognising shared aspects or appetites for particular dynamics, visual language and processes operating in physical space, as well as through interactions promoted within a sociality.

The concept of the rhizome is important when attempting to understand these mechanisms and relations at play within the art school studio. Guattari (2006), positions rhizomatic systems in opposition to “arborescent diagrams”, which “proceed by successive hierarchies, from a central point” (p. 420). He explains that

rhizomatic or trellis systems can drift infinitely, establish transversal connections, without being circumscribed or closed off. The term “rhizome” has been borrowed from botany where it describes a system of subterranean stems among perennials that emit buds and adventive roots in their lower parts (For example: iris rhizomes.) (p. 420)

Rhizomatic movement or drift is more prevalent when bodies are free to roam: when the directive is personal and the whereabouts of position and/or placement belongs to an appetite rather than a command, common instruction, demarcation or structure. This type of movement promotes the kind of connectivity that reasons itself within the

affective realm. It can occupy a presence with the environment and engage a response to the impact of that same environment. Inna Semetsky (2006) discusses rhizomatic movement and the “dynamic process of knowing” in relation to an “open system”:

Metaphorically, the rhizome describes an open system of multiple interactions and connections on various disparate planes, with a view that there isn’t a single crossing point but rather a multiplicity of “transversal communications between different lines” (Deleuze and Guattari (1987), p. 11) This metaphor, ...in the context of philosophy of education, permits a shift of focus from the static body of knowledge to the dynamic process of knowing, with the latter’s having far reaching implications for education as a developing and generative practice. (p. xxi)

Within the context of the studio, the term “drift” and the idea of open systems suggest a loosening up of physical demarcations and timetabled segmentations. As art students shift from the more formal learning situations and events timetabled within the programme and merge back into their individual spaces — to set about thinking or making from a personal perspective — the processual map of the studio’s workings begins to marble and morph toward what Deleuze and Guattari (2004) would call “smooth space”. Movement within the studio is rhizomatic, spontaneous and responsive operating through a diverse field of affective, affected and affecting bodies that are both human and non-human. The manner by which things proceed within the studio — cutting across fields, opening to new connections — is not dependent on hierarchies and organisational structures. These movements, connections and multifaceted mechanisms cannot be reduced to linear processes or two-dimensional maps: they are naturally intuitive, chaotic and rhizomatic. The connectivity initiates and propels the dynamic of the studio milieu.

### THE CO-MINGLING OF BODIES

The art school studio’s shared communal space, online access, as well as the individual studios provides access to different types of social and educational activities. The commingling of bodies makes connection with others both possible and probable and provides students with a complex and dynamic set of social relations. Connection occurs through the expression of ideas; however, it also occurs through touching — brushing past someone, sitting next to someone or opposite them. It is visual, verbal and felt. All of these body connections create meaningful connections and body interactions, which bring to awareness the space between bodies. Art students often soften the boundaries between themselves and their fellow creative beings. This happens in a camaraderie

kind of fashion, building upon many shared experiences of observing each other in the studio and critiquing each other's work and discussing ideas in both formal and casual situations.

Art students primarily make work within a semi-public environment; they share their successes as well as their struggles, tears and frustrations. They hone their thoughts and ideas within the company of others. Through the art critique process, tutorials and discussions students can gain access to the inner workings of each other's art-making approaches and strategies. The often-tumultuous inner thoughts that belie a calm exterior can be shared. The witnessing of each other in motion and in emotion is prevalent. Art students bring all of their attributes to the process of making art. They utilise their thinking, their feelings and their cognitive and affective responses in deciphering not only their own work but also the work of their fellow students.

Art students spend a lot of time in the company of each other. As connections are made histories are shared and contextual knowledge about each other is exchanged. Intimate connections can be formed whereby the collegial relations are further contextualised by meaningful knowledge. Students' natural movement within the studio space involves a sense of touch. Touching objects, touching on ideas and touching each other. Touching can also be a meaningful look or a physical encounter. It can pass between bodies almost unnoticed or it can be exchanged, expanded upon, taken in and reciprocated. It is a dance, impromptu or choreographed. It is also sensory and can remain within the body's memory. "Touch is the act of reaching toward, of creating space-time through the worlding that occurs when bodies move" (Manning, 2007, p. xiv). This not only involves the physical touching of other bodies but also the touching that occurs when one is close to another body, allowing an intimacy that transcends the notion of a traditional learning space and embodies affective qualities and intensities where ideas are teased out and contexts considered. This also opens up sensory perception of the space between bodies. The concept and physical reality of touching builds affective capacity in a corporeal way for students, which enhances their ability to appreciate affect and its role within the studio and their intimate relations, as well as affect's role within the appreciation and critiquing of art in art education.

## ASSEMBLAGE

The art school studio is a space housing human bodies and non-human bodies where interaction, merging and negotiation occurs over various durations igniting possibilities for new propositions and new ways of thinking. This process not only sits at the base of studio experience, operating at micro and macro levels, but also creates the means by which new thought can be explored and new directions developed. This process is reliant on the affective body and the receptive mind working together through symbiotic communication, forming assemblages as the body mingles and merges, collecting and discarding the elements necessary for the student who is becoming interested in being the becoming-artist. Guattari (2006) uses the term “block” [*bloc*] as in a block of sensations, in relation to assemblage. “[The block is] not a question of an infantile complex, but the crystallization of systems of intensities that traverse psychogenic strata and are susceptible of operating through perceptive, cognitive, or affective systems of all kinds” (416).

### NATURE AS ASSEMBLAGE: THE WASP AND THE ORCHID

Deleuze and Guattari’s image of the wasp and the orchid is one that touches us visually and cognitively. This image is borrowed from the literary example of a similar coupling of a flower and a bumblebee in Marcel Proust’s *A la recherche du temps perdu* [*In Search of Lost Time*], published in 1913. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) use this same biological attraction found in nature to focus attention and expand understanding of the notion of assemblage in a manner that demonstrates the process of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation:

The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid’s reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. (p. 11)

The notion of parts and particles moving and transitioning from one state to another, “relative, always connected, caught up in one another” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 11) and symbiotic in nature not only performs a fundamental function of the assemblage but also sits at the heart of Deleuze and Guattari’s corpus. It is deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation; rhizomatic movement and connectivity; the shift from molar to molecular modes, it also draws distinctions between different states and modes of being that are utilised and reconfigured again and again throughout their texts.

These ideas belong to a fluid and intuitive connectivity that not only symbolize life itself, but also in the case of exploring possibilities for a pedagogy, the processes of subjectivation. These concepts therefore provide a useful lens through which to observe the dynamic of the studio itself. According to Zdebik (2012),

The line the wasp and the orchid cross in their coupling liberates them: it is a line with depth. But what is more interesting is that the function of the insect/plant coupling, transferred by Proust on to M. de Charlus and Jupien, is transferred again onto the concept of assemblage. So a biological function passes onto a heterogeneous disciplinary and material system: a philosophy. (p. 28)

Within the art studio we can see the evidence of similar transferences with biological functions and systems being used as a form of strategy, or methodology, or a series of processual acts that create organisational coherence as well as cause-and-effect propositions.

### ART SCHOOL STUDIO AS ASSEMBLAGE

This concept of assemblage, when utilised for thinking about the art school studio, provides a non-linear and non-hierarchical observational position that “brings together incommensurate objects of knowledge”, as well as the infiltration of “altogether different material realities” (Zdebik, 2012, p. 26). It enables the studio to be thought of as a cacophony of objects and tools: bodies, intentions and tendencies co-creating and intermingling, lying together, juxtaposed and liaising with and through movement and creative events. The studio, in this sense, becomes self-fulfilling and self-sustaining. In *Dialogues II*, Deleuze and Parnet (2007) explain the complex relations functioning within an assemblage:

It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes, reigns – different natures. Thus the assemblage’s only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a ‘sympathy’. (p. 69)

The notion of assemblage is “larger than structure, system, form, process etc.” (Guattari, 2006, p. 415), and yet it also manifests intimate and symbiotic functioning. It exhibits a porosity and connectivity that stretches beyond the immediate, and it is “always collective, which brings into play within us and outside us, populations, multiplicities, territories, becomings, affects, events” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 69).

Deleuze and Guattari (2004) state that “becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own; it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing,’ ‘being,’ ‘equaling,’ or ‘producing’” (p. 263). The ecology of practices (Stengers, 2005b) that manifests within the art school studio is an assemblage that provides the student cohort with access to complexities and relations which test, explore and consolidate abilities, capabilities and capacities as emerging creative beings. The studio, although we often see it as a finite space containing bodies, architectural features, furniture and things within its walls, also enjoys a greater movement as bodies intermingle and affective communication is shared within the space and a connectivity beyond the space through technological conduits to other technologies and virtual spaces. These technologies have their own form of materiality however they are not as obvious or easily articulated. In reference to New York-based writer Sam Lewitt’s observation of and consequent story about the New York Stock Exchange Euronext’s U.S. Liquidity Center in N.J., Courtney Fiske (2014) writes,

In the digital era, one familiar narrative goes, everything has turned into abstract dataflows, their immateriality symptomatic of deeper, more insidious networks of control that elude conceptual grasp. Yet, at a moment when materials are said to have evanesced into so much informational flux, here we have it: a fortress of computers and cooling systems, flanked by suburban sprawl. Materiality isn’t gone, Lewitt’s story reminds us: it’s just been made peripheral, harder to see. (Fiske, 2014, p. 100)

It is difficult for students in the studio to navigate the many different registers of materiality and ascertain not only their affective qualities, but also their power and their usefulness to the both educative and social endeavours. The students draw upon each other’s strengths and seek opinion, support and friendship. They form allegiances with those in kind. This occurs as much through an interest in particular aesthetic and cultural practices or concepts regarding contemporary art thinking as it is through gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality or geography. In other words, their context for relation broadens and different possibilities not only become apparent but are exercised.

Familiar and conventional connections are also made within the ecology of the studio, however rhizomatic connectivity that manifests through appetites and affective encounters makes known the compelling or gravitational forces at play. Students become interested in the things that create compositions within the body, which augment their ability to act rather than diminish it. When something feels good and is productive, the students are more inclined to return to it and value its form of

expression, thereby creating tendencies and contextual understandings that span both time and space. Barbara Fredrickson (2004) suggests that

joy, interest, contentment and love ... broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire: joy sparks the urge to play, interest sparks the urge to explore, contentment sparks the urge to savour and integrate, and love sparks a recurring cycle of each of these urges within safe, close relationships. (p. 1367).

New trajectories are formed and possibilities are created within the context of the studio, supported by connectivity and relations to and with other bodies: to and with other minds. As new trajectories are experienced new forms of thinking occur. Students move from molar thinking to molecular thinking. A move from the molar — to the molecular, is often preceded by an unfamiliar occurrence or rupture operating as affective experience. Regarding this rupture, this “affirmation of this new world”. O’Sullivan (2006) states, “Our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge disrupted. We are forced to thought” (p. 1). It is this position of being “forced to thought” when encountering art, as well as in the art studio learning environment where attempts and completions of art making emerge, that molecular thinking and a field of potential lines of flight are made possible.

The art school studio offers a rich tapestry of affectual transmissions directed to and from human and non-human bodies/objects that perform and write upon each other in a bid for acknowledgement (recognition) and/or encounter. Rhizomatic in nature, this affective activity, as O’Sullivan (2006) states, “announces a general principle of connectivity not just with other subjects and different signifying regimes, but also with other organic (and inorganic) compounds and forces” (p. 19). And here we can appreciate the affective and dynamic connectivity of compounds and forces existing within the studio naturally augmenting the possibilities of exchange and transformation. The art student’s movement between smooth and striated space within the art school studio environment, not only experienced as a means of scholarship but also within the repeated experience of the art encounter (as sensational learning), builds the ability to shift from molar to molecular thinking and experience lines of flight.

## CULTURAL AND AESTHETIC CONTEXTS

Students discovering and engaging in visual language learning as a means of expanding their knowledge and experience of art constructs and contexts are doing so from within

their personal, cultural and aesthetic habits which act as “filters of experience and the foundation of intuition and interpretation” (Pellegrino Aveni, 2004, p. 16). It is from this position context that learners reach out and meet new concepts, and grapple with new ways of thinking about and reading both their encountered world and their familiar world. Their appreciation and perceptual understanding of these worlds expands as they follow the pedagogic momentum and new experiences of visual language development through learning about affect, percept and concept development. However to achieve this the student must be able to shift their thinking from the molar, which is created through what Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) call the habitus or “the product of internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary” (p. 31). Ellwood (2011) observes that, “the molar reduces the range of connections beings can make with the world around them, diminishing their potential for difference and becoming-other. ... There is a rigid quality to molarised identity, which makes it difficult to change” (p. 964). The molecular, by contrast “refers to connections with others and objects at the micro level of interaction” (p. 964), and hence provides the subject with subtle, often sustaining, shifts in perception and thought.

The studio operates as a field, as does the art world in general. Bourdieu’s concept of “field” and “habitus” exist in relation to each other. For instance, fields may be considered as:

spaces of objective relations that are the site of a logic and a necessity that are specific and irreducible to those that regulate other fields. For instance, the artistic field, or the religious field, or the economic field all follow specific logics. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p.102)

According to Messner (2000), habitus “consists of a set of historical relations ‘deposited’ within individual bodies in the form of mental and corporeal schemata of perceptions, appreciation and action” (p. 16). The habitus is constantly being influenced by the rules of the field as it in turn influences the field and thus “contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world” (p. 16).

## ARTWORK AS ASSEMBLAGE

The studio as an assemblage connects and “creates relations between terms and objects of differing nature” (Zdebik, 2012, p. 26), and is able to “cross the lines between different types of disciplines” (p. 28). This occurs generally through individual activities and the collective activities abundant within the studio, however it also occurs within

practices through minor and affective gestures that transverse conventional hierarchies and structures, creating new and novel encounters, aesthetics and meanings.



Fig 2.1. Mark Schroder, *Motel Amnesia* 2013

An example of a cross-discipline practice is evident in New Zealand artist Mark Schroder's work titled *Motel Amnesia*, 2013 (Fig 2.1). Schroder's work invites the viewer to take a wander through a constructed life-scale environment. It is complete with odours, slippery surfaces and small enticing details. This artwork is included to illustrate not only the skill base of the artist in terms of construction and composition but also how thresholds (between things and disciplines) can be crossed and new molecularised thinking can be initiated as aesthetic and physical boundaries are renegotiated. We can see the utilisation of building skills and a provocative sensitivity to materiality, accumulation and space. This work includes an architectural skeletal structure, constructed and found and remade objects, debris, sawdust, dirt, cigarette butts (ceramic) and, amongst other alluring items, outdated machines and equipment (Fig 2.2).



Fig 2.2. Mark Schroder, detail from *Motel Amnesia* 2013

This artwork suggests the finished future structure on the one hand perfect and cerebral, and punches an affective lingering fear of the never-to-be finished or forgotten leftover. The assortment of materials is an assemblage that aesthetically utilises the connectivity between elements to contravene their familiar utility and signal new transgressions. This ultimately shifts the affective engagement directing new affective outcomes within and beyond the scope of the physical. The work becomes a living example of connectivity and assemblage as we meander through it and by recognising elements we can liberate them from their station — not too unlike Deleuze and Guattari’s wasp and the orchid.

Within the studio, the concept of assemblage operates through the physical and through perception as it delivers connection (body and mind) between individual elements. Together these elements have an effect that cannot be reached or manifested by the singular. Affect and percept brings into recognition the synergies between things and their power to impact upon the body AND mind.

In Schroder’s work, the (rudimentary) architectural structure standing as if waiting for completion is re-contextualising everything in its proximity, as does the redundant technology and the ceramic representation of discarded cigarette butts. The coupling of any two of the elements within the work also liberates them. Liberation occurs through the materiality of the juxtaposed elements as they reinsert each other into opposing and distinctive contexts exuding shocking and intense counter-affect. In this case the debris and its palpable texture and smell provide the architectural structure with a utopian future as it reaches for an opposing “other” or “future” (so as to move away from the detritus) and simultaneously this coupling offers the debris an affective present and distilled presence.

Whether we are looking at an artwork such as the one discussed above or the studio as a functioning multidisciplinary art-making space, both of these sites help their participants to make “connections across several modes of being” and “cross the lines between different types of disciplines” (Zdebik, 2012, p. 28). The art student, within an assemblage like the art studio, can become the explorer, the planner the risk-taker, the observer, the critic, the maker the friend and the artist. Within the studio, movement is fluid; the students define their own materials, working practice, organisational structures, timing and pace. They are autonomous and free to come and go as they please. They are responsible for developing their ideas and exploring the territory of

their thinking in the manner of their choosing. Students benchmark their own progress and expectations as they take ownership over their engagement with the programme and the development of their ideas, knowledge, attitude, and art practice.

The assemblage of the studio is connected to and partially driven by the micro assemblages existing within it (e.g. artworks, art practices, and social cliques). The studio is also functioning within the broader assemblage of the institution, which operates as a governing body asserting particular power relations within the constructs of fiscal and educational mandates. This positioning of the art studio within the institution of the university is a non-fit, and presents its own set of problems and challenges to be addressed.

The studio assemblage is always and already connected to “other” outside assemblages that share relational values and elements, organisational constructs, patterns and outcomes, including recreational hubs, libraries, art galleries as well as online professional and social networking sites. By looking at the studio as an assemblage, the ability for intuitive relation governed by rhizomatic movement and appetite leading to deterritorialisation and molecular thinking becomes clear. Although the concept of assemblage can be applied to many other spaces and situations, what is interesting here is that the art studio provides the ability for students to broaden and build their capacity to engage in the studio milieu on a daily basis. This occurs in ways that promote not only learning about art and all that that entails, but more importantly learning about each other’s ecologies and diverse understandings and practices.

## DETERRITORIALISATIONS WITHIN THE STUDIO

The studio can be seen as a large and complex machine producing intensities that are capable of reaching and impacting on other machines, multiplicities or assemblages. Within this context, we begin to understand that powerful connections can be formed from within the studio, where transmitted intensities provide relational texture, proximity, and a practice of caring about and for each other. These experiences and responsibilities create opportunity and impetus for further molecular movement and blocks of becoming. As Deleuze and Guattari observe.

The line or block of becoming that unites the wasp and the orchid produces a shared deterritorialisation: of the wasp, in that it becomes a liberated piece of the orchid’s

reproductive system, but also of the orchid, in that it becomes the object of an orgasm in the wasp, also liberated from its own reproduction. ( p. 324)

The wasp and the orchid provide an image of connectivity through attraction and to some degree proximity. They are two heterogeneous species, both inter-related and non-hierarchical, but purposeful to each other in ways that ignite lines of flight as they form and perform connection. The wasp and the orchid create a symbiotic relation; they are mutually important to one another. The deterritorialisation of the wasp and the orchid is similar to the making of an artwork where materials and artist are liberated for the development of art concepts and the ensuing artworks. This kind of liberation is contingent on the student being able to recognise the capabilities of the materials they are working with and are attracted to, and utilising those capabilities so as to develop the propositional ideas inherent within the initial attraction. Through these means students are deterritorialised and reterritorialised as they follow and explore their attractions within the art-making process, expanding their repertoire of possibility and making shifts from molar thinking to molecular thinking. This shift of thinking happens through affect-related modifications occurring throughout the developmental processes, culminating in the discovery of novel and pertinent distinctions that can lead to extraordinary shifts and recognitions. Here discoveries and distinctions are not just related to art concepts, formal qualities or installation but also relate to the capability of students making novel and pertinent distinctions about themselves as well. As Lorraine, (2005) explains, “A line of flight is a path mutation precipitated through the actualization of connections among bodies that were previously only implicit (or virtual) that releases new powers in the capacities of those bodies to act and respond” (p. 147). To experience a line of flight is to be taken beyond the ordinary or preconceived projected pathway and such a line often denies logic and time. It is where innovative thought is realised.

Students are an integral part of the mechanics of an educational assemblage, whereby they construct and form themselves symbiotically in relation with each other and the construct of the educational curriculum. Art students are also simultaneously affecting and being affected by relations and negotiations within the assemblage of the art school studio where things are always in-the-making. Throughout the duration of their years of study, art students experience not only the impact, but also the seduction, of events that liberate their thinking and expand their capacity for innovation, development and

production. Some events are organised as part of the formal learning structure, and other events happen randomly through more rhizomatic processes whereby students are advantaged by being present to the studio culture and its fecund and dynamic milieu.

It is through talking about and critiquing artwork that students learn to express the sensations they feel when in the company of art — the succinct ideas relating to their own art practice and offering their understandings, suggestions and opinions to others. These are often the means by which students come up against oppositional elements or constructs forcing further enquiry or debate. The conversations that students have with and about studio practice can be ongoing and can arise in multiple contexts. The studio provides a common ground where returns to previous art encounters and associated conversations are possible and where contemplation takes place. Art students' ability to ponder and talk about the things that matter to them in their art practice, such as material, strategies, methods, causation and affective capacity, is made possible because they are part of an aesthetically responsive studio-based community. These conversations, of course, also shape their thinking and their opinions so as to mature their ideas about art and themselves in particular ways.

## AFFECT AND SUBJECTIVITY

If I aim to write effectively about affect and subjectivity then I must first look to Spinoza, who “transforms our understanding of political subjectivity by developing a physics of bodies and a dynamic account of affective life in ways that attach both to the power to act” (Hardt & Negri, 2005, p. 194). Spinoza positions the governing of actions in relation to the intensities of passions joyous and sad) acknowledged through the body and life. According to Hardt & Negri (2005) he conceived of life as “a tapestry on which the singular passions weave a common capacity for transformation” (p. 194).

Cole & Masny (2012) argue that as passions intensify and affect is transmitted and received, that which is caught by the subject, or in this case the art student, will either “resonate or “interfere” with their personal dynamic (p. 1). “The relationship between the levels of intensity and qualification is not one of conformity or correspondence, but of resonance or interference, amplification or dampening” (p. 1). The body is individually positioned and responds accordingly to all aspects of *catching* and *feeling* affect, however it is also always dependent on other bodies that provide the source of the

affect, impacting therefore the tone of that which affects the body. All bodies move through their own specific relation to affect with regard to the capacity of their body and their body's selection of affective intensities through which they can relate and respond. "Affect is bound to becoming through the ways in which one may affect and be affected, which define a continuum of change that gets inside of what it means to exist in a situation" (p. 1).

### AFFECT: A RELATIONAL FIELD

When we transition, through affective experiences, from one state to another; that is "from one state of capacitation to a diminished or augmented state of capacitation" (Massumi, 2015, p. 48), we understand the transition as a felt experience. Massumi (2015) suggests that within transitions,

a distinction is asserted between two levels, one of which is feeling and the other capacitation or activation. But the distinction comes in the form of a connection. This separation-connection between feeling and activation situates the account between what we would normally think of as the self on the one hand and the body on the other, on the unrolling of an event that's a becoming of the two together. (p. 48)

This simultaneous action involving the intelligent body brings forth a response to the affect:

Affect theory does not reduce the mind to the body in the narrow, physical, it asserts that bodies think as they feel, on a level with their movements. This takes thinking out of the interiority of a psychological subject and pulls it directly in the world: on the co-motion of relational encounter. (p. 211)

Massumi (2015) continues: "Thinking through affect is not just reflecting on it, it is thought taking the plunge, consenting to ride the waves of affect on a crest of words, drenched to the conceptual bone in the fineness of spray" (p. vii). These words create an image of the small particles present in everyday life, in every relation, in every exchange, in every encounter, continually happening and not at all dependent on our awareness of their transmission to or from the body, in and out of the milieu. Springgay and Rotas (2015) note that "affect, according to Deleuze, is not contained in the body, nor attached to a recognisable form, rather it is a relational field; a force that activates becoming" (p. 552). The body is affected by the surrounding milieu, and appears to absorb its particles, but not only is affect in us we are also in it. Affect relations create transitions and transformations for the human being.

## AFFECT AS SOURCE OF IGNITION

The concept of affect, its transmission and reception is central to this thesis. Affect is the very source of ignition regarding intensities felt within the body and it is these intensities which lead the body (intelligent body) to action. Within art pedagogy affect is therefore central to communication, exhibition and education. Affect straddles the different registers “between the mind and the body, between actions and the passions” (Hardt, 2007, p. xi). The correspondence across this divide, or registers, includes “the mind’s power to think and the body’s power to act, and between the power to act and the power to be affected” (p. xi). With practise, the relay or correspondence between the body being affected and the thinking-feeling of affect can be both refined and expanded by building capacity for affect relations and drawing on contextualising knowledge, which procures relevant contexts for thought processes that carry ideas to fruition. Ideas form for art students during the reading of artwork or ascertaining the value of particular signs or elements within an artwork — in other words learning about what art is capable of — it is advantageous that the ideas at hand, their contexts and associated meanings can be massaged enough to be understood affectively and conceptually.

The art school studio is a microcosm of social life where all kinds of affective correspondences, exchanges, intensities and their associated responses take place, rendering it an ideal environment for the begetting of ideas and the exploration of contextual knowledge. The contextualising of visual language and noting shifts in meaning when small gestures are undertaken, ultimately can become common practice for art students who are actively exploring their own capacity to develop an artwork functioning beyond the initial idea. The studio encompasses many different forms of communication operating within social, educational, political and psychological frameworks — individually and collectively — as well as the incessant ability of art-in-the-making to affectively provide encounters and recognitions by capturing or seducing the observant and interested onlooker. To the human body the studio presents as a complex and dynamic milieu, packed with thinking bodies and feeling minds intent on developing new possible ways to process creative problems and bring about new propositions and possibilities. However, the manner of these personal and creative developments is neither smooth nor even they are contingent on the formation of affective compositions and the capacities therein.

Within the fabric of the studio, fissures and fractures exist where oppositional elements emerge within the compositional arrangement of affects. Ruptures are formed and resilience is called for. Ruptures can cut through the everyday activity and reroute thinking and action; they present a different or new perspective. Affect cues processual functioning, depending on where the intensity lies, augmenting or diminishing the capacity of the body to act (De Spinoza, 1996). Affect can support habitual responses and familiar ideas, or new and novel ways to proceed. Intensity of affect indelibly aligns or connects the body with that which *affects*. Associations and relations either collapse or expand as distinctions are made and tendencies formed, reformed, strengthened or diminished. The intensities are connective and continue to act, propel, or function well into a new dynamic or a new configuration. Intensities may also “converge on a plane of consistency assuring their selection” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 4). Once intensities are selected, they create a becoming and help form the complexity of future tendencies and future becomings. As a consequence of such a dynamic, the art school studio provides many opportunities and challenges. The affective dynamic within the studio milieu enhances the ability for each emerging creative subject to grow through the myriad experiences on offer.

Within the art school studio environment many different foci and associated activities are carried out with varying dispositions, tendencies and attitudes. Regardless of the focus or activity, immersion in the studio milieu suggests myriad possibilities for initiating affective transmission and reception, thereby potentially creating shifts in sensibility and changes in thinking and perception. Affect brings things together, sometimes spontaneously, making felt sensations things known in the body and through sensing and recognising the associated qualities value can be realised.

I present below the first of several vignettes included in this thesis; a short story about an encounter with a weta.<sup>3</sup> One of the key players here is affect and its capacity not only to drive action but also to return to the body through memory.

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<sup>3</sup> The weta (*Hemideina Thoracica*) is a large spiny-legged insect native to New Zealand. It has several varieties that differ in size and colour.

## BECOMING WETA

*Early one morning as I was tidying the back yard in my dressing gown, I returned to the house and was met at the back door by my partner who was making her way to the recycling bin to dispose of the empty bottles. I was concentrating and had my head down gazing at the ground, but still aware of her presence. When I looked up to greet her, her face was contorted, mouth open but mute as she stared at my shoulder — all words were trapped in her throat and gasping — pointing to my collarbone region at what I quickly realised was an insect-like blackness clinging to the soft white fabric that encased my neck. A weta which, in a nanosecond, was brushed to the ground as my feet propelled a trembling me inside the house to be safe from all harm. The thing that shocked my body most though was the thought of the weta stepping onto my collarbone with its spiky and hook-like legs clinging to my skin, digging in metaphorically and becoming a part of me. I shook and trembled for minutes — trying to remove the image of weta-touching from my body and ridding it from my mind.*

*Two days later I was in the supermarket shopping in the fridge section with my shopping basket already holding several items. I placed it firmly on the floor — when I heard a rustling sound, and out of the corner of my eye saw something move in the basket. I screamed and jumped back from the basket as if my life depended on this untimely retreat. I was immediately embarrassed realising that it was only my shopping list, thin and papery, shifting position amongst the groceries as I placed the basket on the floor. I had, in that moment returned to and was yet again experiencing myself from two days' prior, in the mode of becoming weta. Or perhaps it was the weta becoming me. I could again feel the weta on my collarbone and on my skin — all of my skin. This second weta, was more than imagined and less than real. This event, in its remembering of a fleeting, but significant, event once again affected my subjectivity and reconfigured the extended and connected social. It made the weta become a thought, a frightening thought within me and at the same time I become the weta, or rather I had taken a certain weta-ness into my body.*

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The surrounding aisle, a piece of paper and the few supermarket shoppers who had faltered at my scream had somehow become part of the second weta ensemble; by implication of their gaze these people had transgressed a threshold to connect with my

weta-ness from an external stronghold; the papery note sounding out its movement as a precursor to the curdling scream, and an innocent shopping basket. All the bodies were now assembling upon the plane of the invisible but remembered weta. All momentarily repositioned in an extraordinary way. This scenario created a rupture, forcing, a resetting of the diagram of relations within the field. It was an unexpected event and sat awkwardly but interestingly in the setting. Thresholds were crossed — boundaries and etiquette ignored. Whatever happened, it initiated reverberations everywhere, most of which I was unaware. Although I know the weta will reappear somewhere in a future dream, or my future real or virtual, it will always connect me through my body becoming weta to its history of narratives. The mappings suggested in this vignette about the weta are akin to the types of assemblages that form within the studio where the fabric between human and non-human material becomes very thin and bodies feel as if they have the ability to pass through, into or between domains. Robert Hurley (1988) observes that,

Deleuze opens us to the idea (which I take as a contribution to ecological thought) that the elements of the different individuals we compose may be nonhuman within us. What we are capable of may partake of the wolf, the river, the stone in the river. One wonders, finally whether Man is anything more than a territory, a set of boundaries, a limit on existence. (Hurley, 1988, p. iii)

All human bodies within the studio milieu are experiencing a becoming this, or a becoming that, contingent on affect transmitted and received from external sources, human and nonhuman, and mediated by internal processes of memory and tendencies. To a lesser or greater degree, the seductive imprint of a motif such as the wasp and orchid or the case of the above short story, the vulnerability and attention to the sound of the becoming weta — the confidence and angst of the becoming artist — will play out within the milieu of the studio on any given day, somehow affecting all in proximity. The suggestions for such occurrences seem random and unexpected, however they are just another level of organisational and relational activity within the studio milieu.

We may never fully understand the context from which these experiences of affect arise, however we do know that they soak in to the body from their external realms and become ideas — sometimes incomplete ideas that tug to be contextualised or made more complete. The art student is familiar with such ideas that lead them toward a new becoming, although not always cognisant of the processes or the function of selection taking place, but nevertheless often, after the event, a realisation regarding certain

differences or nuances occurs. Realisations regarding most things for art students seem to just appear, with a disregard for linear protocols or processes, and more through happenstance, fluid connectivity, intuition and rhizomatic behaviour.

I would like to take the opportunity here to return the reader to the explanation regarding the wasp and orchid's coupling and the weta incident. Both of these stories illustrate deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. This occurs within symbiotic relating between two or more bodies that are attracted in some way to each other. These events<sup>4</sup> are transformative processes that occur within an assemblage: indeed they are the hallmarks of an assemblage. Assemblages can be formed between two active organisms such as the wasp and the orchid and can also gather up surrounding bodies, matter and atmosphere. I have described the art school studio as a dynamic milieu functioning as an assemblage and rich with transmitted and received affect. I would now like to consider the movement associated with the constantly changing brigade of affective materiality that occupies the space of the studio and impacts upon the inhabitants.

## MATTER AND MATERIALITY

“To affect and be affected, is to be open to the world, to be active in it, and to be patient for its return activity” (Massumi, 2015, p. ix). Art students’ through observation and practise, experience the qualities of perceptive viewing and consequently become visually tuned to their immediate environment. They learn how to form relations with materials, images, objects, etc., so as to appreciate their affective qualities in conjunction with the visual, tactile or physical embodiments. The students become adept at engaging and experimenting with particular materials and explore how their ideas can be expressed through this means. The art studio is filled with stuff that, depending on your perspective, sits on a continuum between attractive and repulsive — active and passive. This materiality that takes up space within the studio either augments or diminishes the students’ power to act. The students are constantly negotiating physically, visually and psychologically an assortment of materials and things within their own personal studio space as well as the materials and things that belong to fellow students. This negotiation

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<sup>4</sup> I use the term “event” here because a deterritorialisation and a reterritorialisation is a complex set of transformative processes.

occurs through the engagement with visual values, touching, feeling, arranging and rearranging as they affectively get to know the materials they want to work with.

## TOUCHING

Artists and student-artists touch for aesthetic reasoning, semiotic capability and quality assessment. They touch objects, materials, surfaces, substances, paint brushes and cameras through which they realise their thinking and their ideas. Their touching is something in-the-making and what they touch makes them. Manning (2007) suggests that “the proposition is that touch — every act of reaching toward — enables the creation of worlds. This production is relational. I reach out to touch you in order to invent a relation that will, in turn, invent me” (p. xv).

How and what the body touches produces affect and either excites an interest in that relation or diminishes it. This is what I call the “eye-hand-sensory experience” of becoming or entering the artwork. Touching, in these ways is intuitive and not something that is repeatable, learned by rote or systematized; it lives within the relation of the moment. Movement as such, helps the student to be present to their immediate environment, creating an active relation with other bodies and things. It also creates the ability to sense the fluctuations created within the body, which is pertinent to thinking about things and other bodies as well as thinking about themselves as creative beings. In the art school studio, touching bodies map an affective space, yet they also map the space *between* bodies. This mapping of bodies through space-time, this touching and non-touching of bodies, causes a ripple effect of affect that builds momentum. This happens as if everything and everyone is touching and the space between becomes as palpable as the bodies themselves. This holds significance in an art studio since the way in which the students position themselves within the affectual space lends credence to their understanding of the materiality and the associated ideas that can develop, or make up their art practice.

## THE PONDERING OF MATTER

Barad (2003) and Bennett (2004) provoke reflections on “matter”. Everything material is hard and soft, cold and warm, active and still: it is the stuff of our world. It is the seething mass of materiality that pulls at our consciousness and teases our powers of perception overtly and subliminally – modelling the provocateur, or masquerading as shadow, perhaps forecasting or foreboding. It is at once complete and also in parts; it is

in your face and yet peripheral; it is the concrete and clay, the rocks, the walls and the floor, the chair and the plate – the vomit. One cannot separate matter from life. Matter is not inert, or lifeless, and certainly never passive. It is what we find ourselves in and surrounded by. It can belong to the natural world and the constructed world; it is conglomerate and particular. It is always in relation to other matter, to space and to time and inevitably to the hand and the eye that makes, touches, pulls, grasps and discards. By some accounts matter is active and alert, transmitting and receiving (see, e.g., Bennett, 2010). We are never at its beginning nor its end; we are always in its middle. We are plumped right into its very own set of actions, responses and occurrences. Some of the time we can make sense of its utility and know its functional meaning, and some of the time we can be hijacked by its menace or aesthetic, giving off a barely perceptible or loud and overt signal. We take in and let out, we appreciate and we ignore, we are in cahoots with and witness to, however we never consciously signed up for this sticky relationship, and often are left pondering while the power of matter moves around us and confirms our presence.

Barad (2003), writes about matter from the perspective and knowledge of a scientist who suggests that, although its representation is conditioned or conducted through discursive practices and discourses, its performance is always already in action:

Matter, like meaning, is not an individually articulated or static entity. Matter is not little bits of nature, or a blank slate, surface, or site passively awaiting signification; nor is it an uncontested ground for scientific, feminist, or Marxist theories. Matter is not a support, location, referent, or source of sustainability for discourse. Matter is not immutable or passive. It does not require the mark of an external force like culture or history to complete it. Matter is always already an ongoing historicity. (p. 821)

Barad draws upon Michel Foucault and Judith Butler to inform her articulations of matter and the representations by which we understand it. Matter is active. The art school studio is a stronghold of discursive practices that cannot be reduced to singular, linear or specific interactions. These practices act and perform in organic and intuitive ways primarily through encounter with bodies and things. These encounters (with bodies and things in the studio) are often translated through representational means. Barad (2003) states:

According to Foucault, discursive practices are the local sociohistorical material conditions that enable and constrain disciplinary knowledge practices such as speaking, writing, thinking, calculating, measuring, filtering, and concentrating. Discursive practices produce, rather than merely describe, the “subjects” and “objects” of knowledge

practices. On Foucault's account these "conditions" are immanent and historical rather than transcendental or phenomenological. That is, they are not conditions in the sense of transcendental, ahistorical, cross-cultural, abstract laws defining the possibilities of experience (Kant), but rather they are actual historically situated social conditions. (p. 819)

The situated social conditions, by which students read and translate the things that they encounter, can be understood, theorised and experienced as having cultural meaning popular belief, educational validity and peer acknowledgement. How they represent think, talk and write about their experiences of being in the world, reading about the world and thinking through their opinions of the world are contingent on the constraints and freedoms held within the discursive practices of the ecologies of practices to which they belong. At art school, through the delivery of the curriculum, the students experience events that can expand their capacity by clarifying their thinking and their response to that which they encounter.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I return to an idea from Massumi (2015) that was discussed earlier. He writes about the concept of "affect" as a way of finding the potential in "every present situation". He suggests that the complex "levels of organisation and tendencies at play" create a kind of "vagueness" that helps us define "where we might be able to go" and "what we might be able to do" (p. 2.). This idea, that a "vagueness" or "uncertainty" can function as a positive element within an educational setting and operate for the benefit of expanding boundaries and creating an "open threshold" (p. 2), is at the heart of art education.

Affect is a major contributor to the shaping of the art school studio milieu. The art school studio is an assemblage of elements, structures, bodies, relations and deterritorialisations that are contingent on the studio milieu in interdependent and co-dependent ways. The studio operates as a highly active multiplicity that promotes relations on many different levels simultaneously either "in co-operation with each other or at cross purposes" (Massumi, 2015, p. 2). Affect is primarily about change — bodies changing bodies, initiating intensities and tendencies — manifesting ethics and politics through these processes. These concepts when applied to the movement of bodies connecting through space-time continuums within the studio, adequately map a means

by which art students can invest in themselves (their appetite) and how they can develop ideas about their art practice. Affect “concerns the first stirrings of the political, flush with the felt intensities of life” (Massumi, 2015, p. ix). It positions the human body to act (or to not-act), propelling movement and thought, creating ideas and action. The power of affect impacts on the always, already developing subject; enhancing or diminishing every aspect of their being; every contribution to their *becoming*. Affect is at the core of all things and all movement. As art school students form relations with other bodies, human and non-human, within the context of making art and developing ideas, all *other* bodies are crucial to the student’s development, their identity and the process of individuation. Within each student’s proximity are other students manifesting or receiving intensities that either reduce or enhance their ability to act.

This means that on the face of it, there are shared desires, frustrations and celebrations amongst the cohort that help to form cohesive and supportive social and pedagogical practices. The studio milieu, at any given time, is testament to the feelings, emotions, productivity and organisational relations culminating from the students’ collective capacities. The affective and affected moving parts, seen and unseen are pushed and pulled within the space of the studio as affect dances amongst and between the assembled bodies.

Within the context of the studio affect needs to be seen not only as a key player but also as an ever-present pervasive element initiating and directing art-making and processes of individuation. Through the carefully mapped structures and protocols of art education students learn to appreciate affect and its myriad nuances; different explanations of sensations and their associated meanings; and thinking through feelings and ideas to gain access to concepts and identity. Students become adept at reading art through reading their own body, understanding visual language and sensing the material world. They learn to differentiate a thing of interest from other things, as well as appreciate the qualities and relationality of that same thing within its stated/situated environment or domain. To be able to do this, students need to extend their awareness so as to encompass other parallel or conjoining fields or domains that may reference or point to the very essence or attitude of the object; its affective qualities, resonances or composition. In extending this kind of awareness and gathering contextual knowledge or justifications regarding responses — for the purpose of contextualising and clarifying

ideas that culminate in meaningful understanding — conventional boundaries are often traversed.

As art students utilise their body knowing of affect and its relation to ideas and concept they inhabit new affective territories that builds their capacity to be affected and their capability to respond. Within art school and art events the students' critiquing skills are repeatedly utilised and an ability to recognise affective intensities is both felt and understood by the students. During this process the student's understanding of themselves as a viable and effective part of the community is also developed and understood. The studio milieu is an appropriate training ground within which to assert and receive a methodology that affectively situates processes of becoming with care, aesthetic integrity and exquisite economy. As this thesis demonstrates, there is much benefit gained from experiencing art, learning art languages (visual and verbal), being in the company of art and other artists, and being present to the expanded affectual experiences ignited through the encounter with art.

## CHAPTER 3

# ART EDUCATION: A DISTINCTIVE PEDAGOGY

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### INTRODUCTION

To think is to be inspired by our senses. I'm interested in how we can value our senses, articulate our feelings so as to understand the power of thought and the way we come to an idea, especially when engaging with works of art. Art students are subjected to aesthetic experiences through various means and for a variety of reasons, and as a result are becoming familiar with the relationship the body has to *how* and *what* it perceives, and *how* and *why* that perception creates meaning. Art school pedagogy relies on the different modes and orientations that function within the milieu inherent in art school studio life. As art students experience the shifts in thinking available to them through being in this environment, (e.g., the shift from molar thinking to molecular thinking), they are more likely to engage in risk-taking activity and the exploration of innovative action that can produce novel ideas and products. Without being immersed in an art studio milieu and being subjected to affective encounters through formal and casual studio events, art education would be sorely limited for the emerging creative subject. Art school pedagogy not only highlights the importance of studio-based education, but is also reliant on the educational relations that emerge through the negotiation of "smooth space" and "striated space" orientations, which is discussed in this chapter. Art education is a distinctive pedagogy which is not easy to understand nor to represent.

In the contemporary context, art education itself is no longer valued in its entirety and is slowly being eroded through fiscal decisions and short-sightedness by institutional and government strategists who lack knowledge and understanding of its inherent benefits to the individual student as well as the nation's cultural capital. I felt that I could not write this thesis without exploring this dilemma regarding the diminishing value of the arts in education today. This occurred to me particularly as I began to understand the theories and concepts that have uncovered for me precisely what art education can do. By

appreciating the processes and practices of student becoming-artists<sup>5</sup> through a Deleuzo-Guattarian lens, and by assimilating Spinoza's theories of affect, I have become cognisant of art education's unique qualities, its ethical value, the impact it has on the processes of individuation, and how it often advantages students in their personal dispositions. According to Robertson and Roy (2017), "Unlike many other students in higher education, [art students] are not so consciously oriented to texts, but instead to images, objects, or environments and to the characteristic processes and materials of their chosen specialism" (p. 2). Art education is especially relevant to the current generation of students because it can act as an antidote to the fast-moving anxious-inducing world and the alternative virtual realities that can encroach on them within that world. Art education, I would argue, focuses on physical things in the world and their affective manifestations.

This chapter begins with a glance back to the 1980s and 1990s when inappropriate and ill-matched mergers and amalgamations occurred between the majority of art schools and universities in Australasia. This section of the chapter provides some insights into the enormity of the transitions made by art schools, from being self-organised through innovative and creative means appropriate to art pedagogy to being relegated to the lower echelons of university hierarchical systems and structures, restricted by conventional academic regulations and traditions. These amalgamations have repositioned independent art colleges and private art schools within the institutional governance of polytechnics and universities. I also discuss the more recent difficulties art schools have had in gaining recognition and value for their distinctive pedagogy. If the relationship between the neoliberal institution and the art school were healthy and supportive, and if art education were valued within this context, there would be little need to map its recent history. However, this is not the case, and it is pertinent to point to the differences in methodology and pedagogy so as to position art pedagogy within an appropriate framework. One might assume that particular creative methodologies could have been adopted and further integrated into the neoliberal institution. However, this did not occur, and the lack of support for an understanding of studio-based education, and for an acknowledgement of the benefits of art education — not only for students but

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<sup>5</sup> I use the term "becoming-artist" as a way to suggest that the student is always and already becoming. According to Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy, there is no essential (artist) subject and therefore "becoming-artist" suggests a continual unfolding of the artist alongside the continual unfolding of the subject — the becoming subject.

also the community and the nation — renders art education vulnerable within the university context and at risk from having its beneficial characteristics eroded or lost to future generations.

Art schools are at risk of losing their studio spaces and their year-long, large-points-value papers, thereby losing the ability to provide students with affect-laden, assemblage-type experiences that can infiltrate over a long duration. This slow but deliberate percolation sits at the core of art-making and art education. Without a studio-based education and the ability for students to be immersed in the milieu of the studio as assemblage, the art school will become untenable and something that is altogether different from what we know it to be today. The troubling misunderstandings and undervaluing of art education are briefly described in this chapter, followed by a more in-depth description of the inherent qualities embedded within art education that promote understanding within art school studio environments. Art school experiences provide the possibility for connectivity through rhizomatic movement and a dynamic milieu through which the emerging creative subjects can realise their subjectivity.

This chapter then outlines Deleuze and Guattari's (2004) concept of smooth and striated space, which is used to position the art school studio as an environment where action and movement relate to its distinctive pedagogy. I write about the negotiated movement between smooth and striated space orientations, affect relations, intensities and rhizomatic movement, which shifts sensibilities and affective ideational understanding. These attributes of studio life bring about assemblage-type experiences and possibilities that create familiarities with, and adaptations to, the space orientations created within the studio as well as personal, individualised methodologies. This chapter also discusses the need for art students to use space and time in irregular or unconventional ways, and how this type of engagement helps develop ideas that are pertinent to contemporary art practice and streams of current philosophical thinking. In other words, the being-in and relating-to smooth and/or striated space becomes the impetus for moving differently and being able to explore new and novel modes and/or concepts. This learning, within an art school context, occurs within an environment that provides a fluid compositional terrain that is not only appropriate for art education but also necessary for establishing experiences of becoming-artist. This section also discusses the different registers and sensibilities pertaining to these orientations that aid the shift from molar to molecular thinking and the experiencing of 'lines of flight'.

## MERGERS AND SHOTGUN WEDDINGS<sup>6</sup>

Art education today sits within the precarious role of adhering to neoliberal directives regarding assumed efficiencies and fiscal priorities, whilst attempting to maintain a predominantly smooth space environment offering studio-based learning advantages. During the 1990's Britain, Australia and New Zealand to some degree, found their unique and autonomous private art schools and art colleges being amalgamated or merged to either help form new polytechnics, or to be re-housed inside much larger existing research universities. The term *shotgun wedding* is a very fitting term to describe the ill-managed and somewhat inappropriate amalgamations that happened between the universities on one hand and the private community colleges/art schools/academies on the other. Both parties were relatively ignorant of each other's mandate, especially in terms of pedagogy methodologies and methods, and content delivery styles. Buckley and Conomos (2009), in writing about amalgamations between universities and art colleges in Australia argue that "these amalgamations were really more akin to shotgun weddings than genuine mergers" and were often "poorly managed by the Australian Government, which provided no financial or logistical support, by the universities, which resented their closed world being occupied by these upstart colleges" (p. 4). This was also true in New Zealand for smaller autonomous art schools, which were subsumed into the university and polytechnic structures. Within those traditional and sometimes conservative halls of higher education there was, and in some cases, still is, a misunderstanding of how art education functions. Clark and Hulbert (2016) observe that,

since the 1980s, ...art schools have been integrated into the academy [university], and face increasing pressure to meet the institutional demands of being in a university. Some argue this changed status means the academy [university], with its research and pedagogic traditions, is actually straitjacketing creativity. (p. 36)

According to Chris Burden performance artist/professor who taught at the University of California, Los Angeles)

To be a good artist in the long term, you need to trust your own intuition and instincts, ...whereas academia is based on rational group-think. There is a magic and an alchemy to art, but academics are always suspicious of the guy who stirs the big black pot. (As cited in Thornton, 2008, p. 66)

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<sup>6</sup> The term "shotgun wedding" is been borrowed from Brad Buckley and John Conomos in their introduction to *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School: The Artist, the PhD and the Academy* (2009).

## LOSSES AND GAINS

Through these amalgamations the art schools gained necessary resources, prestige by association, financial scholarships for students, and research funding for staff. However, the art schools' intuitive and spontaneous events created for educational purposes before the amalgamations took place were challenged by the new requirements for accountability and standardisation. This loss of autonomy devalued the philosophical mandate and intention to be responsive to what was happening within contemporary art practices both culturally and politically. The ability of art schools to retain innovative and responsive pedagogy which sat at the core of art pedagogy became harder to sustain. Curriculum development became something that was answerable to a more striated structure and system of accountability both fiscally and vocationally. In most cases these amalgamations ignored "the continuing evolution of the ecosystem that is peculiar to the art school and the education of artists" (Buckley & Conomos, 2009, p. 4). Here, Buckley and Conomos are highlighting the unique milieu and the ability to deliver content and practice through year-long studio papers carrying high credit/point value, which are responsible for 50–75 per cent of the total credits/points per year of full-time study. These year-long papers require from students an enduring, sustained effort and responsibility to developmental processes belonging to their both their education and art practice. However, the strategies, structures and divisions of universities were and still are focused on industry-driven directives and consolidation of resources, rather than sharing philosophies, pedagogies and methodologies as a means by which to understand alternative educational strategies, methodologies and outcomes.

## STATUS WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE

Art education and its ensuing research platform are best not measured against traditional academic disciplines and their research platforms because these very different pedagogical cultures are in conflict. The stand-alone art schools and colleges in Australasia, prior to the amalgamations, had highly active research cultures. However, in many cases once the "marriages" took place, the collective creative research outputs of staff completing practice-led research were undervalued in government reporting systems and research structures in universities. Although this is being slowly addressed and attitudes revised, creative research practices and their associated methodologies, are still to some extent being misunderstood.

Historically, within the academic world, doctoral degrees have been seen as the ultimate professional achievement of the academic researcher. However in the contemporary art world the Master of Fine Art (MFA) was the terminal degree up until the late nineties, when universities in Australia, Britain and some European academies, began to offer doctoral degrees utilising practice-led research (Buckley & Conomos, 2009). In most institutions in Australasia practice-led research is now accredited with more equitable ranking and entitlements.

### EROSION OF THE UNIQUE STYLE OF ART EDUCATION

Despite the change in value and recognition of practice-led research, art school pedagogy, which is primarily centred on studio-based learning and smooth space orientations, is still being questioned and pressured to adapt to the striations and segmentarities of university structures. Universities demand conformity, consistency and accountability, valuing efficiency and economy over trust and creativity. This means unique educational situations, methodologies, spaces and relations are vulnerable to pressure as universities attempt to align and justify their expenditure.

Universities promote standardisation and regulation in the pursuit of excellence, which is more akin to a corporate mandate and social engineering than the pursuit of educating a nation. Readings (1966) argues that,

the discourse of excellence gains purchase precisely from the fact that the link between the University and the nation-state no longer holds in an era of globalization. The University thus shifts from being an ideological apparatus of the nation-state to being a relatively independent bureaucratic system. (p. 15)

By standardising the delivery of degrees, universities are satisfying their fiscal mandate but obscuring philosophical and pedagogical differences and nuances that drive innovative teaching platforms and practices. The fiscal regime is interpreted by the university as a need for equity rather than supporting diversity — common systems and consistency are maintained across faculties and schools rather than appropriate pedagogies being implemented for unique learning possibilities. Supporting art pedagogy, where the form and delivery follows educational intentions and functions as opposed to outcomes, means that the learning can cohere with intuition and the movement of the body toward intensities that can augment the body's ability to act. When the style of delivery is appropriate and the content and methods fit the educational intention, it is more likely that the experience of smooth space can prevail

and thinking can shift from a molar mode to molecular mode. This requires an understanding of the affective power relations occurring within the learning space and the implications for the receiving body. These alternative pedagogies deliver academic experience that considers the human being, the receiving body, rather than a one-size-fits-all type of regime. The neoliberal mandates modify and dilute the unique learning opportunities provided through art education eroding students' access to an education that prioritises the body AND mind parallelism and the processes utilised to reconnect feeling with thinking. Art education provides unique learning opportunities that promote not only feeling-thinking for art purposes but also for understanding of cultural diversity within the collegial and social context. It enables students to find different ways of thinking through the body and the mind with and for each other.

The neoliberal capitalist model, focused on business management regimes, is anathema to art school pedagogy and its holistic and durational sensibility that belongs to studio-based educational experiences. Buckley and Conomos (2009) observe, "A collapsing of art schools into smaller and smaller units within larger departments so that the art school culture or ecosystem is effectively diminished or diluted and then finally lost has been apparent across Australia" (p. 5). Although this is not yet so evident in New Zealand, there is a sense amongst tertiary art educators that this move by universities is a continuation of the shotgun wedding scenario, whereby the powerful governing body further colonises the smaller disenfranchised unit by reducing its space allocation, reducing the point size of studio-based papers and diminishing its value within the broader context of vocational learning.

### AMALGAMATIONS: USEFUL ASPECTS

In retrospect, the poor amalgamations between Australasian universities and art schools were not the ideal entrance into the hallowed grounds of academia. However, for some art schools it has been a self-styled advantage to be immersed in the stubborn and difficult terrain of the institution, so as to closely consider the particularity of art pedagogy and value its benefits in relation to the broader context of society, education and human relations. Although a small number of researchers in education, such as Brian Massumi, Inna Semetski, Erin Manning and Stephanie Springgay, acknowledge and publish the benefits of art's methodologies, these methodologies often remain separate from mainstream educational thinking and planning. Here, I would like to highlight the importance of redefining the processual qualities inherent in art-making

practices and the art encounter that play a significant role in students' growing awareness of the affects upon the body. When encountering art, including the ability to be transported and transformed through an encounter with art, affect plays a central role in the processual quality of individuation. I look to Baruch Spinoza's theories regarding affect and the capacity of the body, as well as Gilbert Simondon's theories regarding individuation, for support for my claim that art education within a studio context can manifest personal and heuristic growth for the emerging creative subject. I will say more about this in the ensuing chapters. Art education, through its unspecificity, is a remaining outpost where trust, resilience and affect regulation are put into practise and assimilated at a fundamental body level for students whereby tendencies are mediated and moderated and lines of flight are made possible.

### NEOLIBERAL BRANDING: SHORTCOMINGS

In its capacity for adaptation and appropriation the neoliberal university attempts to enlist values that are distant from its pre-occupation with finances. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) argue that

autonomy, spontaneity, rhizomorphous capacity, multitasking (in contrast to the narrow specialization of the old division of labour), conviviality, openness to others and novelty, availability, creativity, visionary intuition, sensitivity to differences, listening to lived experience and receptiveness to a whole range of experiences, being attracted to informality and the search for interpersonal contacts – these are taken directly from the repertoire of May 1968. (p. 97)

The qualities mentioned above by Boltanski and Chiapello are the very characteristics that universities use in their advertising and branding. However, in reality these same qualities seem to have disappeared as drivers of current university education. The enticements are surface images of conviviality and acceptance of difference, once again created for recruitment purposes so as to promote the idea that all students are valued equally. These stated characteristics and objectives of the neoliberal university operate as draw cards only. Behind the seductive advertising there exists a standardised delivery format that falls short of the many claims suggested through advertising campaigns. However, it is these very characteristics of “rhizomorphous capacity, multitasking ... conviviality, openness to others and novelty”, for instance, that are not only experienced through art-thinking and art education, but are an intrinsic part of art pedagogy. This is the very pedagogy that delivers on the advertised characteristics but is at risk of being eroded. The challenge art schools now face with regard to universities' mandates is the

impossible task of maintaining autonomy within the larger institution so as to continue to support “visionary intuition” and “sensitivity to differences”. Neoliberal institutions, by their very nature, hinder the advancement of art schools, and their rhizomorphous capacities and their ability to self-design and position their curriculum, content and methodologies as well as the manner by which these are delivered.

### THE PLACE OF THE ARTIST

Within the context of contemporary art practice and art education, the notions of probability and risk are valued and the artist is held up to be innovative and/or critical (Van Loon, 2002). To be able to comment on institutional and societal structures and practices (including aesthetics), artists must perceive of themselves as being somewhat separate from the observable “object”. If the artist, commentator, provocateur cannot stand apart from that which is being observed and critiqued, the voice is inevitably coming from within the institution. Likewise, if the pedagogy carried out within the art school is restricted by bureaucratic systems claiming excellence as a means of justifying standardisation (Readings, 1996) it would tamper with the integrity of the probability and risk factors (Van Loon, 2002) and the inherent need for failure to be a part of the process of creative practice. However, for art schools to financially survive in the current global economy, it seems imperative that they find a way to exist within larger financially stable research-oriented organisations.

### THE VULNERABLE EMERGING CREATIVE SUBJECT OF NEOLIBERALISM

Terms such as “slide”, “glide” and “flight” are sometimes used to define movement when we are discussing the subject within the context of moving from molar to molecular thinking and the discovery of lines of flight. These terms not only enable us to see/imagine the action and conditions of action, they also provide a corporeal understanding of the concepts to slide, to glide and to fly. Transformation is often subtle and becomings, minuscule or mighty, are always transformative. The task for the new art student is a formidable one as Davies and Gannon (2009) remind us: “The newly individualized, vulnerable subject of neoliberalism must avoid risk, and seek out safety and predictability thus taking up as their own desire the perpetuation of the suffocating striations of government” (p. 4). The onslaught of “suffocating striations” the “newly individualized” neoliberal subject encounters and the means by which this same subject has maintained equilibrium within this context, becomes diametrically opposed to the context of the art school where students are encouraged to becoming fully expressive

where risk-taking is applauded and encounters with the unknown encouraged. For art students to avoid such confusion about what to do and who to be loyal to they must work very hard to take responsibility for their own patch and what that entails. Art students stand to grow their understanding of themselves, whereby beliefs, appetites and tendencies can be aesthetically and critically considered, when art education is supported to do its job.

For art school students to be cognisant of the latent yet complex cultural and pedagogic values of the ideas they are working with, it is imperative that they take risks, operate with criticality, and are supported and encouraged at all turns of development and risk-taking activity in appropriate and responsive ways. Within the current cost-cutting climate, this is becoming more and more difficult to achieve. Although these conditions paint a rather uninhabitable environment within which art schools are expected to flourish, the achievements of such programmes perhaps speak for themselves. Art schools are encouraged by the success of their graduating students as they consistently create new and novel experiences upon exhibition for their contemporary art publics.

## ART EDUCATION

This section positions the emerging creative subject within the context of becoming-artist and suggests some of the ways the studio, as an organic and dynamic milieu, offers students the ability to experience both smooth and striated space orientations as purposeful and focused articulations of motivation. Art education is not specific and encompasses many different innovative and forward-thinking technologies alongside the revival of fundamental processes and practices. As Robertson and Roy (2017) observe, “The flux of art education is full of un/made and un/finished objects and narratives, where traditional skills and canons are perpetually reinvented and sustained; where ultra-specialised, sometimes obsolete, knowledges and hand skills are exercised, appropriated and assimilated” (p. 2). Artists and art students alike select from historical sources, the everyday and futuristic ideas as if they are a readymade smorgasbord of possibilities to be tested, invented or reinvented. Within an art studio an assortment of knowledges and skills will be present. Danvers (2003) argues that for creativity to thrive,

The learning environment has to encourage interactions between learners in which; action and reflection are carefully counterbalanced; open-ended periods of play and ‘blue-sky’ thinking alternate with goal oriented problem solving; ... critical thinking and robust debate co-exist with a supportive ‘space’ in which risk-taking, imaginative

exploration and productive failure are accepted as positive processes of learning and the development of meanings and interpretations is inseparable from material processes and production. (p. 52)

The art school studio and art pedagogy together promote the kinds of qualities that Danvers upholds as pertinent to creativity, however I would include here that within the material processes and production is the acknowledgement of the power of affect to initiate feelings and thinking in regard to creative possibilities and propositions.

## ENCOUNTER

First there is the encounter of art, then a taking in of that which we perceive, which initiates a sense or sensation, an affect that simultaneously reveals an idea or concept. The art encounter is often spoken about as an engagement with Percept / Affect / Concept which is a minimalised account of what actually takes place. Our experience of this process is rich with sensations as we find ourselves moving *toward* the artwork and extracting ourselves *from* the artwork. This seems to occur in a rhythmical embrace as we attempt to understand our feelings and our levels of attraction concerning the artwork and in particular what the affective and aesthetic attraction is suggesting within our capability; our body AND mind deciphering mechanism. To do this we need to acknowledge the form of the object /image in other words its formal qualities and the content, and how together they appeal to some kind of meaning making or concept. As we do this we find ourselves being changed not only by the encounter but more productively the ensuing relationship created with the force or power of the artwork and how that power reads itself upon us. Deleuze (2004) maintains that “thinking is not innate, but must be engendered” (p. 139). To this Bennett (2001) aptly responds: “Sense is the catalyst or midwife” that brings into being and births thought. Deleuze (2004) continues:

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. What is encouraged may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can *only* be sensed. (p. 139)

## DIFFERENCE-IN-ITSELF

Bennett (2001) states in support of Deleuze that “sense is the impetus or ground of thinking, and the impetus or ground of sense is this virtual field of ‘difference-in-itself’” (p. 33). She goes on to argue that “the virtual field is, [as] Deleuze insists, a material and

immanent one — it is all around us” (p. 53). The “virtual field” that Bennett references here is the Deleuzian “field of difference” impenetrable to the human eye although not to the human senses, and difficult to locate. However, the theory of its existence offers an extended edge to the topography of things that we encounter; a topography that is capable of mapping the known and the not-known; the concrete or actual and the virtual in terms of the ways in which we know about the things around us and the ways in which we are influenced by those things. This topological map which is capable of rendering the virtual and the actual could be understood as a mapping of different types of information both in the way in which it is transmitted — the intensity and the form of it — and the way in which it is received — the impact it has on us, the things which ignite and swerve our thinking. At one end of the spectrum we encounter distinctly physical matter and palpably felt transmitted affect, and at the other end of the spectrum we sense the immanent material of Deleuze’s field of difference. The field of difference sends out waves or signals containing nuances of difference that are slight and barely visible albeit under the watchful lens of the microscope of our sensual reasoning, shifting our senses and thereby altering our thoughts.

We are indeed susceptible to our immediate environment given its power to affect our body AND mind, and this susceptibility is even more acute within the art school studio where affective encounters are considered a very real part of the experience and the educational mandate. Art students often encounter the studio space as a series of sensations that can depict particular modes of being or ways of operating. Their response to the underlying organisational regimes or orientations will inform their affective bodies and impact upon their *modus operandi*. In this way students are somewhat beholden to, or impacted by all of the elements that form the milieu of the studio, including its physical structure, its temperature and sound, as well as the type of activity that is taking place. Its purpose and affective tone will all be players in shaping students’ feelings as they negotiate smooth and striated space.

### NEGOTIATING SMOOTH AND STRIATED SPACES

The university primarily operates through a striated space modality, yet it does so in a seamless way as if the logic of human performativity is striated and unquestionable. This is reflected through timetabling, room bookings, curriculum delivery and assessment procedures, all of which assume all taught papers have standard delivery styles, regulated time allocations, and can be delivered to maximise student numbers for cost

efficiency. On the contrary, the space of the art school studio is primarily smooth, nomadic, porous and changeable, allowing for spontaneous acts and intuitive initiatives to be born. It accommodates the expanded moves of individuals into unknown territory — relationally, materially, psychologically and socially — where thinking and creativity can follow the trajectory of a line of flight.

Students within the context of art studio-based education are expected to embrace change and adapt to what could be perceived as a new culture, a new way of reading visual language, deciphering meaning, and thinking about art and all its contexts. This occurs generally through immersion in the ecology of practices operating within the studio, and particularly through critiquing art by way of reading visual language and all of its affective attributes (Ellwood, 2011). Within such a space art students can also appreciate and negotiate the shifts between smooth and striated space orientations as the impetus occurs in relation to their *modus operandi* — their thinking and their art-making.

The studio, understood as assemblage, manifests affective recognitions and encounters, which in turn impact upon the receiving body, intensifying sensations and creating compositions that augment or diminish the ability of the body to act (De Spinoza, 1996). Art students may not be able to clearly articulate how or why these shifts occur, however by being immersed in the studio environment and engaged in the practice of encountering art and articulating affective responses to art, they can more readily access the transmission of affect and the ensuing compositional power it has within the body. Often students find it difficult to take their inspiration from the everyday — activities and exchanges experienced in *their* lived lives — and manifest those experiences for further exploration as art practices and products. The artist, and in this case the student-artist, strives to bring about the artwork and to master its lines of flight. In her discussion on Deleuze and deterritorialisation, Claire Colebrook (2002) states the following with regard to enhancing the power of life:

This is achieved not by all events leading up to an end, but by the creation of ever-divergent ends, creating more and more series of ‘lines’ of becoming. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and 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. (p. 57)

Ideally, providing experiences of taking off on new paths, is what art education does for art students. Artists make art as a response to the questions of life, the power of existence and its tendency to “evolve, mutate and *become*” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 1). Students are also grappling with their own beliefs and values and what it is they want to make art about, as well as how to employ materials and processes that are capable of realising their art concepts. For students, this is not a straightforward process. By most accounts it is rhizomatic, erratic and unpredictable. Rhizomatic movement, according to Lee (2008), “is non-linear, non-stratified, anti-genealogical, zigzagging here and there, which links humans and non-humans into fluidly heterogeneous networks called assemblages” (p. 922). Assemblages, by their very nature, can reform as new choices are made and relations shift.

In the studio art students experience many different bodies during the course of each day. Although the students perceive a great number of bodies and things they also understand that these bodies and things impact upon their own body. In the course of learning about art and art-making, they learn to distinguish between those bodies and things that form positive compositions with their body and those bodies and things that form negative compositions with their body. Robertson and Roy (2017) position making within the context of an embodied or material thinking:

Making—no matter how conceptual or immaterial the end result may be— doesn’t occur outside or without the mediation, complicity and/or resistance of bodies/materials. This points to a form of embodies, or material, thinking which seems to resist linguistic formalization, reflexivity and representation (p. 2)

With practise art students become adept at not only feeling the various affects signifying the bodies within their vicinity, but also to some degree, deciphering their impact and force. Students’ self-awareness of the transmission and reception of affect is enhanced as they practise looking at art. By feeling art and thinking about what it can do “art school students are forced into the role of self-fashioning professionals, as young adults they are engaged in various processes of self-creation and self-narration through material practices” (Robertson & Roy, 2017, p. 2). Through engaging in affective negotiations to do with talking about art, the students can begin to appreciate their tendencies with regard to affection, perception and conception and take responsibility for their ideas, memories and dreams.

Beth Lord (2010) argues that “for Spinoza, individuality is based on relations of motion, not personhood, and for this reason individuals exist on a number of levels”, and that “all the elements of your body make up one individual because they communicate their motion to one another in a constant relation” (p. 62). Through her interpretation of Spinoza’s proposition regarding “motion and rest, speed and slowness” (Spinoza, 1996, p. 42), Lord (2010) reinforces that the human body is a composite body making up the individual where,

the *identity* of an individual ... depends on the constancy of the communication of motion between its parts and not on the parts themselves. That is how it is that individuals retain their identity even when their parts change, whether through their growth or diminishment (L4). (p. 62)

In the Scholium for Lemma 7 Spinoza (1996) explains, “We see how a composite individual can be affected in many ways, and still preserve its nature” (p. 43). When the human body is being affected by other or external bodies, the composition, “must involve the nature of the human body and at the same time the nature of the external body”. Through the two corollaries attached to this proposition, Spinoza states that “the human mind perceives the nature of a great many bodies together with the nature of its own body”, and therefore “the ideas which we have of external bodies indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the external body” (p. 45). With each experience the body is asserting its disposition and responding to the external body through the condition of its body and its tendencies. This is especially so when an image, imagination or memory of a prior experience is brought to the fore and helps to form a particular response.

## STUDIO AS MILIEU: AFFECTIVE MOVEMENT

I want to return to something I said in the previous chapter regarding rhizomatic movement occurring within the art school studio and what this might mean for its inhabitants, both human and non-human. The studio, its physical design, governance, protocols and permissions allow for an openness and fluidity with regard to movement and physical composition or placement of things, as well as the continual experiencing of one body with another. This experiencing of bodies creates the ability for each body to *feel* and be cognisant of all other bodies within proximity to varying degrees. This in turn creates the opportunity for bodies to form recognitions with other bodies through their senses; how they receive the transmission of affects they encounter. Art students are always making explicit their sensory knowledge as it pertains to their own artwork

and that of others. Connor (2004) states that, “the senses communicate with each other in co-operations and conjugations that are complex, irregular, and multilateral. This complex of the senses knits itself together anew with each new configuration” (as cited in Robertson & Roy, 2017, p. 2). For art students, an exploration and recognition of affects is undertaken, expanding their affective capabilities to include new repertoires of body movement and the ability to *feel* sensations occurring within the body. This expansion includes the propensity of the body to act upon these intensities. I’m suggesting here that the art school studio provides many different opportunities for students to encounter *novelty* and/or *difference* being expressed through myriad forms and contexts. The transmitted affect, which is felt, upon the encounter with novelty and/or difference — as it arrives through other bodies — creates intensities, ignites interest, and forces the body to thought (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004).

To demonstrate his postulates regarding the relation of the mind and the body, Spinoza (1996) states that “that the thinking substance and the extended substance are one and the same substance, that is now comprehended under this attribute, now under that”<sup>7</sup> (p. 35). Spinoza makes clear the irreducible relation/composition between the body and the mind (in II P12Dem.): thus, “Whatever happens in the object of any idea, ... the knowledge of this thing will necessarily be in the mind, or the mind will perceive it” (p. 39). It seems that this knowledge is part and parcel (an essential or integral component) of the *felt* sensations and vice versa. Consequently, both the feeling and the thinking cannot be necessarily distinguished as being of the body or of the mind. They are of the mind AND body fluidly becoming as an all-inclusive set of compositions and ideas. However, Spinoza also states that the “human mind perceives the thing only partially, or inadequately” (p. 39), leaving us in no doubt that the thing in question is always greater in context than that which we can ascertain.

This provocative set of propositions and demonstrations enables us to think of the art school studio milieu as providing a place of myriad possibilities for encounter and affective transmission, igniting and prompting thoughts, sensations and ideas about the bodies and objects perceived. This suggests that the art student is held — by body AND mind — within the milieu of the studio, negotiating smooth and striated space

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<sup>7</sup> In Ethics II, Proposition 7, (Spinoza 1996 p.35)

orientations through and with their individual propensity or appetite for particular compositions with other bodies. My thoughts here draw upon images of an extended playground where objects, tools, bodies and structures function as seductions through which new and novel compositions of the body, choreographies and connections can be experienced. Such experiences are not governed by external forces or organising principles, other than shared social protocols. Each individual body extends or retracts, augments or diminishes their force within the greater matter of studio life dependent on their capacities. Each individual body is in composition with all other bodies, human and non-human, to varying degrees and with fluctuating intensities, as they move together forming and reforming, activating and reactivating the milieu of the art school studio. A shift over here has repercussions over there. The studio is always and already dynamic, creating micro and macro expressions that provide opportunity for individuals to gain purchase on the relations present and enhance their capability for understanding themselves, the object, the atmosphere, the idea and the terrain.

In the art school studio, students have the opportunity to explore relevant bodies and objects and/or the available terrain (physical, psychological, philosophical and geological) in multiple ways, in depth and as often as they want. This means that the students can build their capabilities with regard to affective encounters through their engagement and immersion in the dynamic of studio life. When these relational events of the body are put into practise, as a means of being engaged with other students within an ecology of practices, not only are affective capability and affective capacity enhanced but the articulation of these relations and their impact is developed and better understood. With regard to capability, Spinoza (1996) maintains that “in proportion as a body is more capable than others of doing many things at once, or being acted on in many ways at once, so its mind is more capable than others of perceiving many things at once” (De Spinoza, 1996, p. 40). It is through their bodies and the compositions that form with other bodies that art students can expand their understanding of their appetite for all manner of things, but particularly interaction, engagement, connection and what this might mean for the development of their identity.

Throughout these processes of becoming or more precisely becoming-artist, students experience the power of transmitted affect, from the perspective of discerning the received affect as both the artist exploring and developing ideas through outcome and the critic of their own and of other students’ artwork. First there is an encounter, taking

in that which is perceived. This taking in immediately initiates a sense or sensation affecting the body. It simultaneously engages the body and the mind, often revealing ideas, notions or concepts congruent in the world and mediated through creative processes. This experience is rich with sensations as the body moves toward an artwork and simultaneously extracts itself from the artwork. This happens in a rhythmical embrace as an attempt to understand the form of the object and the objectivity of the form, as the sensations are taken in and mulled over. The sensing body responds to affect and is changed. This happens, through the immediate encounter and more importantly, over time as sensations are clarified, relations tested and contexts sought for that which is encountered.

The affective space of the art studio is not ruled so much by its architectural features, although usually purposefully designed with attention to light and openness; it is governed more through the movement of bodies, affect relations and the accommodation of accumulated materials and objects. My interest lies primarily in the intricate and complex affective negotiations experienced within the studio and apprehended as human and non-human encounters. I am also interested in how we can best benefit from the recognition and understanding of such negotiations. The studio is complex and dynamic, becoming many things for many different affectively engaged bodies. The loose configuration of the space and its contents, plus the permanent daytime accommodation it provides for the students makes it a home, encompassing ownership, comfort and familiarity, as well as stability and productivity. There is a sense of responsibility that is built on community values, ethics and trust.

### RHIZOMATIC MOVEMENT WITHIN THE ART SCHOOL STUDIO

Within the art school studio, the rhizomatic quality is attached to the kind of connectivity and relations that occur between human bodies and between human bodies and things. This openness enables a certain fluidity to exist as movement takes place, affect is transmitted and received, and ideas are formed. The art school studio is deregulated, deconstructed and informal in its configuration. The composition of personal and professional paraphernalia, housed in the studio and the nature of movement, combines to produce openings and conduits into intimate, intuitive and innovative realms. Through the assembly of personalised objects available for art-making as well as for personal comfort (e.g., a particular table or favourite chair, or a carefully stretched canvas or leaning tripod), the space of the studio straddles the

seriously productive, goal-oriented laboratory and the relaxed, open, convivial, cupcake-eating, coffee-drinking chat-space. The mix of modes belonging to students' engagement and intent carries different forms of activities and has the propensity within the studio to blend and bleed. As students move between these modes they also are responding to smooth and striated space orientations. Within a traditional learning space, as in the classroom or the lecture theatre, smooth space orientations are difficult to access. Within the art school studio, however, rhizomatic movement — affective experiences driving intuitive action — promotes smooth space relations for the body and aids the experiencing of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation that enables lines of flight to occur. These experiences are often witnessed by fellow students within the studio space and often celebrated. Perhaps not articulated, as such, but recognised as breakthroughs or happy accidents. When art-learning activities or events are experienced in common the learning can be shared and returned to for further articulation. Communal-type spaces and ecologies of practices enhance the social and educational well-being of the students. Without the collegiality of the studio students are singular, isolated and distanced from the possibilities of molecular thinking that lead to innovative thinking.

### CONNECTIVITY: FLEXIBILITY AND POROSITY OF THE STUDIO

My respect for the studio as an environment in which art students are housed on a daily basis and one that operates as a space of “becoming” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004) has not changed in several decades. To me the studio has always been a magical space, alive with possibilities, where innovation is palpable and communal relations are strong. However, what *has* changed is the connectivity and porosity of the space. The art school studio no longer operates as a discrete field, or a psychologically demarcated capsule; it now functions as a hub, utilising conduits to and from the external and virtual worlds, through the internet and computers and personal mobile devices, providing ability for the immediate exchange of ideas in an ever-present information technology world.

Technology's facilitating of access to particular media has increased the complexity of studio functioning, which has enabled an expansion of research capability and a shift in focus regarding social communication. Where and how students acquire information and stimulation currently within the studio is multifaceted, immediately procured, fast-tracked and often student-led. Individuals can arise within this environment in a manner that serves their personal needs when developing an art project, as well as working in relation to other bodies, ideas and actions within proximity. Students appear to easily

dip in and out of different engagement modes, which can be both socially and educationally intentioned, including personal conversational interaction with each other. They are also engaged in concentrated searching through the internet for specific types of research. The rhizomatic movement associated with art school studio activity reaches far beyond the studio walls, creating complex assemblages that are capable of networking through myriad methods and relations and influencing the matter of creative thought and production.

### ART EDUCATION IS FINALLY UNSPECIFIC

Art education navigates the production of affectual experience of encounter and interactivity through singular, collaborative, social, collective and occurrent<sup>8</sup> art practices. Not only does art embrace new technologies and at times creates them, it has also become fluid and responsive, political and timely. As Boris Groys (2009) states, “Art education is an education that functions more as an idea of education, as education per se, because art education is finally unspecific” (p. 27). The organic and intuitive modality of art pedagogy, reads more like an exquisite economy of personal engagement within critical thinking, making and doing mechanisms, rather than learned responses to given material, phenomena, questions and situations.

Art education encourages students to establish appropriate and fluid methodologies where possible, and also to be appreciative of the sedentary structures and common routines of the university. Benefits can arise through the juxtaposition of two opposing regimes, one of order/routine and the other of rhizomatic, fortuitous spontaneity. When applied together these two frameworks form a tag team that can open possibilities and incite innovation and confidence. These discordant frames can help each other to spark something new. This tag team dynamic is similar to the tussle between smooth and striated space orientations as movement occurs and shifts are made that govern thinking and action until the opposing orientation affects the motivation and a different mode is engaged.

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<sup>8</sup> The term “occurrent art practices” is borrowed from Brian Massumi.

## ART AS CULTURAL EXPRESSION AND PROVOCATION

Art has the capability to incite affective capacities in practitioners and participating publics alike. Contemporary art practice is moving toward more fluid and interactive forms of expression, and is capable of providing inroads into philosophical debate, as well as challenging and crystallising political intentions. Contemporary art can be contentious when it focuses attention on global concerns, inter-cultural, and interpersonal questions and body politics. Contemporary art, art projects and art practices, challenge opinions as they instigate not just experience but affective provocations that influence and ignite change. This happens in the personal, cultural and global domains — through viewing, responding and discussing art social and cultural knowledges are experienced and exchanged as ideas are formed in the context of “other”. Art is provocative, art is educational, and art is a player in the processes belonging to our individuation. Art “forces us to thought” (O’Sullivan, 2006).

## THE ROLE OF ART IN SOCIETY

Artists and art galleries provide for their publics an awareness of and/or critical engagement with current political and philosophical thinking, initiating communication and conversations regarding aesthetics, ethics and values. Art is widely understood by practitioners, curators and educators of art as exerting all of these capabilities. This is especially so as art continues to challenge its publics, not so much in shocking ways but more so through its ability to reference lived or known experiences and ways of thinking through the recontextualising of common and sometimes familiar sensations, actions, events and aesthetics. The artistic encounter enables the public to re-live, re-think and critically engage with sometimes difficult and philosophically expanding concepts. Art now functions through many different interfaces with its publics, culminating in repositioning the viewer to experience “other”— to become “other”. Understanding art can give us access to virtual elements, abstract thinking empathic understanding. The negotiations and access to virtual realms that occur for the student when viewing art within the art school studio setting are similar negotiations and access that the public experience when they attend art exhibitions or take time to engage with a particular artwork. As students become more fluent in the languages of art and more cognisant of what they want to achieve through their art practice, they enter more readily into smooth space orientations with the world around them, sharpening their affect-related encounters, observation skills and heightening their senses for further encounters.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the dilemma facing art schools today and served as an in-depth enquiry into the distinctive pedagogy of the art school studio milieu. The claims made in this chapter with regard to art education were intended to shift perception and understanding of what art education does. In so doing, some misconceptions about what art is capable of doing were highlighted with the aim of helping to secure a future for art education. If we accept that art has something to offer in terms of cultural capital, we will understand that art is fundamental to the well-being of society. Art would therefore need to have a valued place in all educational domains. To limit art education within any given culture or nation would be to rob future generations of their aesthetic, critical and creative thinking.

The second part of this chapter focused on specific qualities available to students situated within the studio-based learning environment of art pedagogy and the inherent differences of this type of education. A particular focus was placed on the nature of the open or smooth space of the art studio and its ability to challenge art students with regard to their affective capabilities. The opportunity for movement between these space orientations is further supported by the governing art pedagogy, which promotes a particular relation to space and time. In utilising theories derived from Spinoza, and Deleuze and Guattari, this part of the chapter presented a considered answer to why governments and universities must reconsider their attitudes and their decisions regarding art education.

The significant role of art education is in emphasising the affective processual acts that impact on the processes of individuation for the emerging creative subject. In other words, the value of an art education is not just in giving one the opportunity to become an artist, but in developing one's ethical thinking and creative problem solving as part of a way of life; a means to respect difference and to acknowledge affective transmission. I return to these ideas of ethical thinking and individuation in later chapters.

Perhaps the university structure, culture and economic mandate may not be the obvious context for contemporary art education and its ensuing practices to flourish. However, I would like to think that it is not too late for deterritorialisations to take place within the hierarchical thinking of tertiary providers, and for reterritorialisations and lines of flight

to occur that sanction art and its powerful pedagogy for future generations. The next chapter highlights the movement in and between smooth and striated space by including a vignette (*To the Island*) that maps such sensibilities and movement. The narrative offers a means to imagine how studio experiences of mixed space orientations can be interpreted through lived experiences that then encourages a porosity of being.

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## CHAPTER 4

# EXPERIENCING SMOOTH AND STRIATED SPACE: TO THE ISLAND

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As the previous chapter noted, Deleuze and Guattari (2004) offer a simple distinction between sedentary space and nomad space: “Sedentary space is striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures, while nomad space is smooth, marked only by ‘traits’ that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory” (p. 420). The “trajectory” here is the experience of been taken to outer, virtual or other realms through lines of flight. These forays into virtual space and time can sometimes return a rich bounty for furthering ideas and solving problems, for asking questions regarding art-making and art-thinking. Art education is primarily involved in the intricate and complex affective negotiations experienced, and articulated, through art encounters. This occurs during the making process as possibilities are explored and decisions are made regarding direction and motivations. The movement from striated space into smooth space is a fundamental aspect of *being* an artist or student-artist. To be able to acknowledge and employ striated space as a means to locate and promote structures, rituals, demarcations and deadlines is imperative in achieving creative outcomes. Art education could also be asking how students can benefit from the recognition of smooth and striated space: how they can experience such negotiations; and what that might mean for the emerging creative subject and their subjectivity.

The vignette below titled *To the Island*, gives a personal view of how lived experience can be appreciated differently by thinking through a Deleuzo-Guattarian lens. It reveals, the ability of the body to always and already sense both smooth qualities and striations when being “present” to the present. This attitude converts readily into a consciousness of affect transmitted and received within a larger field or milieu that can seduce or direct body movement. This shows how it is possible to make use of the fluid nature of smooth space orientations and the more structured nature of striated space orientations.

TO THE ISLAND<sup>9</sup>

*On a bright sunny day in 2012, as my friend Robyn and I meandered our way down from the hotel lobby to Circular Quay on Sydney Harbour, I felt a certain positive energy in the air. Well it wasn't really in the air, the air was its usual self, blowing the leaves around a little and heralding the promise of a warm and blue sky day, which was a much-welcomed reprieve for both of us. The day before we had flown to Sydney from across the Tasman leaving behind a much colder blustery climate. Our first port of call for the day was Cockatoo Island. Only a short ferry ride away, the island is steeped in history as a convict settlement and a ship building yard, and is presently the site of the 18th Sydney Biennale.*

*Standing on the wharf, with plenty of time to spare, my mind wandered to the hundreds of people who would be, at that very moment, be making their way to the ferry at Circular Quay and this prestigious international event. I imagined that they were coming from all over Sydney, being drawn magnetically toward the quay, swerving and merging with intent so as to arrive at a particular time and a common point on the map. This image I had of the populace performing both random and deliberate acts that form and inform various self-organisational procedures and patterns, was generated, I'm sure, in response to watching heavy metal portable barriers being erected on the wharf. This dance was being performed in an attempt to control the manner and speed that passengers boarded the ferry. This type of queuing process may be found at busy airports, where people move, as if on a conveyor belt, zigzagging toward the ticket counter. I wondered what would happen without the barriers, would we all rush to board first? I was already thinking about luxuriating outside on the deck and sitting in the sun.*

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<sup>9</sup> The idea of the title: *To the Island*, was borrowed from the New Zealand author Janet Frame (1983), who makes reference to transitional states throughout her book of the same name. As it happened I too recognised this notion when traveling to somewhere else, although I was seeing it through the lens of Deleuze and Guattari, never-the-less I felt it fitting that I should herald in the memory of Frame's writing.

*To me the thought of being near the water and having an unrestricted view of the shoreline felt pleasant and consequently the idea of being stuck inside, surrounded by lots of people and not being able to see where we were going felt not so pleasant. (An idea... an idea of where to sit, is capable of positioning my body in the imagined future and deciding something about the quality of this act.) It is preferable that any resulting action will enhance my wellbeing and make me feel good, so I was hoping to be able to secure a spot in the sun.*

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Let's pause for a moment... What part of the choosing described above came from an idea or thought that I might have had and what part came from the feeling or sensation I might have had, in other words the "affect"? Exactly where do I want to be sitting and why is it important for me to choose a particular seat? In the end, what does it matter? Well, it seems that it does matter — we have preferences because we have an idea of what it would feel like to be sitting where we are happy and also where we are not happy. According to Deleuze (1988),

since the affections are not separable from a movement by which they cause us to go to a greater or lesser perfection (joy and sadness), depending on whether the thing encountered enters into composition with us, or on the contrary tends to decompose us, consciousness appears as the continual awareness of this passage from greater to lesser, or from lesser to greater, as a witness of the variations and determinations of the conatus functioning in other bodies or other ideas. (p. 21)

We know what encourages good feelings, feelings of "joy" and also what encourages not so good feelings, feelings of "sadness" We move according to those feelings and our movement has a will or volition attached to it, an appetite or, if you like, a kind of character. Deleuze distinguishes between an idea and an affect as he considers the history of philosophy via Spinoza's Ethics. For Deleuze (1978) An idea

is a mode of thought that represents something. A representational mode of thought. For example, the idea of a triangle is the mode of thought which represents the triangle. ... This aspect of the idea is termed its "objective reality" ... when you encounter the objective reality of the idea, this always means the idea envisioned as representation of something. The idea insofar as it is said to represent something has an objective reality. It is the relation of the idea to the object that it represents. (p. 2).

On the other hand, an affect is any mode of thought which does not represent anything. Deleuze uses the example of hope and love. Although we can think about the object of

our hope and the object of our love, Deleuze (1978) argues that “...hope as such, and love as such represents nothing, strictly nothing” (p. 2). Deleuze draws a clear distinction between ideas and affect, claiming that affect is “every mode of thought insofar as it is non-representational” (p. 2). Furthermore, he argues that

a volition, a will implies, in all rigor that I will something, and what I will is an object of representation, what I will is given in an idea, but the fact of willing is not an idea, it is an affect because it is a non-representational mode of thought. (p. 2)

When making a choice, each possibility comes with its own idea and its own affect. All of the ideas that appeal to me, are viewed through the lens of my reality and are felt according to the degree of “reality” and “perfection” (Deleuze, 1978) created through my perceptive understanding. So the idea of one particular seat may be perceived to have a greater degree of perfection, and therefore “my force of existing or my power of acting is increased or improved” in choosing that seat (Deleuze, 1978, p. 4). When I am preparing myself to choose a seat and sit down somewhere, and this could apply to a great number of different situations, I entertain a raft of possibilities or criteria that engage my thinking as I make the choice. These ideas could be connected to a complex set of notions that have manifested over many years of intuitive selection. These selections have culminated in personal images or imaginings that show me when and how I feel most comfortable, and therefore most in my power to act. Thinking about where to sit is not necessarily a time-consuming affair; it is not a matter of mathematically calculating every possibility. It is a much more intuitive intelligence. Of course, when we want some-*thing*, we do not always get what we want, however we do know that we had an appetite for that something or carried hope for it. Whichever way the choice has come about — fast or slow, considered or intuitive — the consequential effect is palpable and affective.

The story continues ...

*Meanwhile, it was time for Robyn and me to join the steadily growing queue for Cockatoo Island. There were all types of people; from families to school groups; couples and friends; individuals – young and old, ambling and shuffling forward in single file defining and cementing their physical proximity to each other. No sooner had the striated mechanisms regulated the nomadic and itinerant*

*movement of the assorted crowd that the smooth space of reconnections and possibilities then re-emerged. I stopped between Robyn, who was photographing a group of young school girls on their cell-phones, and a young man who was talking on his cell-phone. Sandwiched between these conversations that were all going out to a “somewhere else”, I watched and listened, I reflected on how our morning had been a constant negotiation between people and space. The walk to the quay, traffic lights, stop – start, the empty wharf on our arrival and then the two of us rushing for the patch of sun. The sea was lapping just beyond our vista indicating the vast expanse of harbour with its tides and currents pulling and pushing at the shoreline moving the water between here and there, between the island and the mainland. I was beginning to see a much broader picture, which detailed a different “me” within its expanse. I thought about the desire to be in “smooth space” where I could wander aimlessly. In this space, I could ignore logic and destination, and be in the moment fully immersed and free, connected but not consciously making decisions. Like a nomad, moving as if propelled by an unseen force, gentle and knowing, strong and compelling, we can find ourselves “in a space without borders” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 420) where possibilities abound.*

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Let’s pause for another moment... I am interested in what it is that prompts the small incremental movements, shifts, changes in direction, the swerve in our thinking as we move from one thing to another, one mode of being to another and one type of space to another. I am interested in how we come to understand a new kind of relationship with the transitional and designated spaces we occupy and the things we encounter along the way. I want to know how these encounters may proffer a unique and inspirational understanding of space and our affectual relationship with it. The incremental acts that form and inform how we organise our transactional movement from one place to another are not always coherent and can appear to be insignificant. However, I suspect that the internal radar is always “on” and calling the shots. I turn to the *dérive*, a way of moving through space that allows our affectual knowledge to guide, coerce or compel

our movement, its pace and direction. Here I mean both physically and emotionally in response to the environment; to that which is before us. It is a matter of being drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters we find. Historically the *derive* was performed as a rapid passage through varied ambiances; a kind of intuitive response to movement occurring without consciously thinking about it or planning a direction ahead. To *dérive* is to drift, however this means not to drift aimlessly or without purpose, rather with an emptying of the mind so that it can fully function with utmost awareness of the immediate affectual, human and non-human, terrain.

I am talking here about the kind of experience, which by its very nature, creates its own rhythm and pace enabling connections to that which has appeal and not necessarily cognitively but more perceptively; more affectively. And not necessarily fast or slow, not necessarily even or uneven, but one which will not only allow but enable the negotiation of the transition from one domain to another; from one type of space to another, from the striated to the smooth – and back again. I sensed this transition from one space to another when I was concentrating on the activity of the wharf when the barriers went up and the herding began, and I made an audio leap toward the lapping of the sea. Our recognition of felt affect or sensation guides our moving toward something or away from something. We sense and log the psycho-geographical material, and here I mean the term “material” rather loosely to encompass the phenomena that somehow presents to us as given knowledge without our taking note of any logic or sensory experience. If we become receptive to objects and acts we can lay claim to the otherness of what exists in the social and physical world. Following an instinctual reference or refrain that beckons our affectual and sensational response we can embrace all of our senses. Radar on, curb detector working and we are ready to launch...

*Meanwhile the-man-next-to-me was talking to his “not-here-in-our-present” caller about rosemary pasta. It sounded really unusual and very delicious. My mouth watered. When he finally hung up I jokingly asked myself to his place for dinner. I find that cell-phone conversations that are being held in close proximity to the public ear are capable of drawing in surrounding listeners perhaps unwittingly, but resulting in a rather open and public performance. This prompts the inclusion of bystanders as they engage with or try to ignore the audible part of someone else’s affective life. So, I felt*

*that I was included in the pasta conversation by implication of proximity, and anyway this young man needed to be applauded for his creative culinary skills and ability to make his pasta dish sound so delicious. Upon my intrusion, he laughed, and I laughed, this mirroring sparked a conversation about food and then art and predictably the Biennale. As we were waiting (in line) we talked about many things including law and order and issues of control.*

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The situation described above was funny because “Mister Pasta” seemingly had no control over who was listening to his telephone conversation and I seemed to have taken advantage of that. Although I suspect we may have become used to hearing about someone’s personal story as they speak intimately on their phones in public. Within the art school studio culture, conversations and “listenings” like the one with Mister Pasta happen on a regular basis. Not only telephone conversations but conversations occurring within proximity that have the ability to attract attention. This includes the spoken content occurring between students, between staff and students within the space of the studio, and also conversations occurring with unseen callers. These can all be gleaned in snippets or full-blown narratives. These conversations can be focused on anything from social/emotional to art/educational topics and readily cross boundaries that would otherwise exist in more formal settings. Because of the way in which students’ progress or motivate themselves through the space of the studio, throughout the day, the conversational element can function to attract or define movement and interaction. It can be the catalyst for connection. All manner of things can come from the naïve eavesdropping we do, as we will see in the ongoing story with Mister Pasta.

We (Mister Pasta and I) were talking about law and order and issues of control. I want to suggest here that this move from the smooth to the striated space was precipitated by the stage being set. We were not only responding to each other but also responding to our immediate environment, as well as our shared intention and anticipation of engaging with art. It was a relatively safe assumption that we were both interested in art, as the ferry was not stopping anywhere else on the way to or from the island. We needed to pass the time until departure and we were going to be standing next to each other for the duration as the queuing process predicated our closeness. We conversed easily. This positive disposition was not only infectious but also paved the way for good

communication to grow. I was at once in the conversation and thinking about the ease with which we were gliding from topic to topic, handing each other little gems as we spoke and being cognisant of the transitions that were being made in terms of the contexts that were revealed and revered.

Although the talking space we were in was predominantly smooth, the content of our conversation was often illustrated with examples of striated modes of being that were perhaps reflecting the physicality of our situation. We were surrounded by metal barriers of waist height that demarcated the physical space of the wharf, creating boundaries, strict hierarchies and structure. Did this environment precipitate the desire to think about other boundaries, other hierarchies and other structures? Were we reacting to our situation and being coerced by it to replicate its qualities within another domain? I am suggesting here that unconsciously we were attempting to provide a context for what we were experiencing and then when that was done we moved to the antidote. It did not take long for the conversation to turn and we were heading back to smooth space...

*When I finally asked Mr Pasta what he did for a living, he told me that he finds jobs for Aboriginal people from the Kimberley region of Western Australia. I couldn't for the life of me imagine a person from the Kimberley desert rocking up somewhere for a job that someone else had organised. In saying this, I draw upon a pre-colonised imagined and naïve picture of the nomadic dreamtime-lifestyle of the aboriginal people negotiating the vast landmass of Central Australia. They were capable of finding food and water where we would think there was none, and trading with other aboriginal peoples from the other side of a vast desert basin. The skill and exacting knowledge that this tracking involved has always astounded me. However, I guess the reality of job-hunting in Western Australia is a somewhat different picture and I never quite ascertained the nature of these "jobs". I feared that the Aboriginal culture has already moved from the nomadic to the sedentary. I was envisaging the red earth of the desert and the nomadic state of the people as they carried out their once purposeful lives. Mr Pasta informed me that in the Kimberley there are 3,000 aboriginal*

*custodians for 140,000 square kilometres of land. We were heading to Cockatoo Island, tiny by comparison being only a kilometre long and half a kilometre wide.*

*Between 1839 to 1908 the island operated as a penal colony, an industrial school for girls and a separate reformatory. In 1847 work started on the dry docks by way of gunpowder blasting and utilising the manual labour of the convicts housed on the island. In 1870 shipbuilding began and during World War II luxury liners were converted to be able to transport troops, carry stores and operate as hospital ships. So, this small island has certainly seen its fair share of heavy-duty, industrious activity, through the course of its history. It has housed despondent criminals, orphan girls and regimented navy personal.*

*On boarding the ferry Mr Pasta and I parted as we both manoeuvred our position amongst the crowd to find a seat. I returned to the brochure on Cockatoo Island's (white man) history, and pondered the collapse of time. I sat there considering the connections made when one folds conversation and environment into ideas and thoughts. Sometimes we are surprised as in the case of Mr Pasta who placed the nomadic movement of the aboriginal people in my mind and left me with a recipe for rosemary.*

*On landing we all scattered like the pearls from a broken necklace as it falls to the floor. We were eager to see this huge selection of international art that fell under the banner of "All of Our Relations". This island is a far cry from the Kimberley, although it is not without its aboriginal occupation many years ago. Interesting juxtapositions were spontaneously created between the nomadic qualities of the aboriginal people as they once negotiated the Kimberley and the intense mechanical and systematic organisational activities embedded in the history of Cockatoo Island. I was immersed in two worlds at once; two different types of motion and behaviour; two different types of space.*

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*I found myself wandering, purposefully toward, and away from things, knowing what I wanted to spend time with and moving on at will; not staying too long or going too soon, but allowing my own sensibility to reign. I was aware that I was moving between striated space and smooth space — between following the map and intuitively moving through the environment. I was at once registering both orientations and teasing out the subtle differences within their mixed configurations.*

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It is important to note here that being cognisant of striated space and smooth space is not being in one or in the other as defined or demarcated spaces but understanding the qualities and organisational properties that cohere and move the body in and between the two.

*I found myself negotiating these spaces — I say this as if I was lost, and in part that is true. I was experiencing what Deleuze and Guattari (2004) would call “local absolute” (p. 422): the absolute of smooth space achieved through “an intimate succession of local operations” where the focus is “haptic” (p. 422) rather than visual. I was integrating elements from my immediate environment as I ambled from point to point, open to changing direction and/or rate according to the “temporary vegetation, occupations, and precipitation” (p. 544) The term precipitation here, when applied to my experience, describes the beckoning affect which is holding the space of air between me and the incumbent matter; between me and the thing I may turn to or be directed toward. On this particular day, I was intent on viewing and experiencing the art installed inside and outside the buildings on the island. I was also anticipating encountering the varying degrees of “affect” one can appreciate through art and is naturally part of the art experience. However, I was also being affected by the type of matter close at hand: the leaves eddying themselves into a corner, the brush of someone’s arm in passing, the smell of dusty earth in the warm sun. All of these small but palpable encounters impacted on my movement, and in some way defined my route.*

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*Eventually I found myself entering a cavernous space, the upstairs of a warehouse type building, which contained a significantly complex and interesting assortment of fabric hanging and draped in different configurations. It fell in folds and together the individual pieces spread across the interior as if they had a say in the matter. This large-scale installation was made up of lots of different coloured soft fabric of various tones and textures, enhanced with some interesting detailed handwork incorporating buttons and other small enticements. The rhythm of this installation was punctuated by spaces that opened out every now and then, providing a slightly more long-sighted view. However, this work was predominantly very detailed and felt personal somehow. As I negotiated the fabric, becoming almost lost in the soft smooth space of it all, my focus shifted from the close-up to the middle ground of the room and finally to the far end and the bank of windows. I lowered my gaze to a tea trolley tucked against an internal wall. It contained tea-making things on its top shelf, practical and purposeful with a pleasing compositional aesthetic, which seemed to be pointing toward a white door. As I got closer I realised that this part of the space was the artist's personal corner. A threshold was being crossed — was I invading? The question lingered, and I moved on ... toward the white door, and a sign, which said Philosophy Room. How compelling, smooth space presenting yet another possibility. I moved closer and read another even smaller sign, which said: "Couch conversations with BRIAN MASSUMI."*

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The spaces my companion and I traversed on our way to the island and once we were on the island were diverse in terms of their design, stakeholders, present function and form. We travelled across many different types of terrain that suggested different approaches attitudes and possibilities. These possibilities suggested how we might interface with the architecture or terrain and still be cognisant of our thoughts, feelings and each other. Some spaces were cavernous and others intimate. All were spaces that housed people within a social or formal context. The ferry was a little different, but

nevertheless still demanded a kind of negotiation. Most of the spaces on the island were marked by their history and had been colonised further by the artists' work. None of them were originally designed for the role they played in housing art for the Sydney Biennale. Architects today would design very different buildings for the purpose of exhibiting art, educating minds and moving bodies. Attention would now be on the flow of people through the space to maximise “mobility, connectivity and flexibility” (Spencer, 2011, p. 9), and on creating a sense of belonging as well as instilling a sense of pride for the participants engaged in such public events.

Aspects of sociality are now being considered in terms of how a social space functions, its context and what form of relief or haven it might provide or how it might support “opportunistic networking” (Spencer, 2011, p. 9). The social space “is a space that functions, within the built environments of business, shopping, education or the ‘creative industries’, to mobilize the subject as a communicative and enterprising social actant” (p. 9). The art school studio creates space that witnesses the marriage of sociality and industry; connectivity and individual pursuit. Within the connections made between subjects/bodies either in social mode or a mode of making (individually but closely together), the subject continually moves between smooth and striated space orientations.

It is this kind of sensitivity that occurs within the art school studio milieu. Students working in this environment are cognisant of their personal intentions and achievements, as well as keeping an eye on the general commotion/emotion within the range of their personal antennae. The students' spatial orientation and interest in visual language operating within the studio gives them an active platform from which to appreciate the benefits of rhizomatic movement and connectivity. Often it is through moving around an active environment, moving between people, things and artworks, moving between striated and smooth space orientations, that solutions are uncovered and questions formed.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on a personal AND pertinent story about negotiating the shift between smooth and striated space. The story offers an account of a short ferry ride taken in anticipation of not only engaging in art but also to be moved many times over by the encounter with art. As it happened the experience and therefore the story far

surpassed my expectations and the narrative maps my conscious knowledge as well as my reflections in retrospect of being-in smooth space and/or being-in striated space. Parallels were drawn between the story *To the Island* and the movement students make in the art school studio, thus highlighting the ability for such terrain to manifest exceptional experiences. In the next chapter I will discuss molar and molecular thinking in art education.

## CHAPTER 5

# MOLAR AND MOLECULAR THINKING IN ART EDUCATION

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### INTRODUCTION

The chapter situates the concept of molecularised thinking in action within the art school studio and shows how the space and activity of the studio both enables and promotes a shift from molar thinking to molecular thinking. Although molar and molecular thinking was briefly talked about in Chapter 2, this chapter looks more closely at how art pedagogy can utilise this shift in thinking, particularly when used as a means to expand, develop and critique art ideas, visual languages and art practices. Appreciation of affect and its relation to thinking has become a popular theoretical terrain due in part to the affective turn and the growing understanding of affect being acknowledged as a key motivator of body movement. This chapter discusses what art does as an affectively active component of cognitive life in the studio and how the ensuing relation between affect and ideas provides a rich body-mind connectivity in order to develop subjectivities. Drawing on the work of Spinoza and Deleuze, I endeavour to understand Spinoza's theory of the affects, their relation to thinking, and consequently the relation thinking has with the formation of ideas. I also discuss the difference between Spinoza's inadequate (incomplete) ideas and adequate (complete) ideas and I relate this concept to the processes belonging to art education and how we can have access to what art is capable of doing. These processes regarding communication and knowledge take place within the context of the general milieu of the art school studio as well as the particular educational events.

In this chapter, I also suggest that art pedagogy operating within the predominantly smooth space orientation of the art school studio, provides an authentic means by which students not only become-artist but engage in explorative and experiential practices that culminate in the processual acts that realise subjectivation.

## METHODOLOGY: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

Had I not seen the development of contextual material unfolding, and here I mean the research material<sup>10</sup> that altered my understanding of subjectivation embedded in art education, I would not have been able to fully appreciate the situational events occurring within the studio as purposeful to my thesis. My observation of these events which were being digested alongside my reading about certain concepts regarding subjectivity and becoming, shifted my thinking to molecular thinking which enabled me to uncover answers that led me to questions. While I was teaching in the art studio I became cognisant of utilising intuition and rhizomatic movement — incorporating these shifts from molar to molecular thinking — as methods not only for teaching but also methods for researching and writing this thesis. These same rhizomatic processes have been used as a means to uncover a question, or to work toward a yet-to-be understood problem.

I have read texts on affect, ideas, art encounters, education, subjectivity and individuation, to name some key topics, for pertinent theoretical understanding. In practice, I have used intuition and duration as tools that have become familiar methods through which new understanding has developed. While critiquing art I have consciously put space and time around experiences of body sensation and my understanding of what that might mean to me. I have observed my own understanding merging with other notions or meanings from places called memory and imagination — both mine and others. I have felt a deliberate mingling of thoughts with those from other minds that together have created and expanded discussion about art and affect. The process of experiencing the affects and scrutinising both my observational processes and sensory body responses (regarding my personal relation to the encounter of a particular artwork), alongside witnessing the same processual acts experienced by others, provides a shared experience and a new understanding of the art encounter, and consequently each other. I became aware that this act of talking about art together within a group dynamic indulging in opinions, imaginations, memories and feelings — zigzagging as a team spirit is built — creates a sense of authentic connection through affective, aesthetic and cognitive sharing. It is these kinds of experiences undertaken in

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<sup>10</sup> In particular, Deleuzian concepts regarding affect relations and molar and molecular thinking.

art pedagogy which have helped to drive my appetite and desire within the forging of a direction for this research.

I demonstrate how talking about art and engaging in formal art critiques enables students to move between molar thinking and molecular thinking all the while creating a shared sense of community and understanding of art alongside a specific knowing of each other. These processual acts can not only culminate in a recipe for connectivity and productive sociality, but they can also enable a becoming-wiser through combined critical discussion within the student cohort. This sociality and discussion creates a particular milieu that is inevitably utilised within the processes of individuation. Seeing this happen year after year as part of the studio practice at art school has gradually brought me to a greater awareness of the inherent value of art education and the ability of studio-based learning to build both ethical understanding and a particular collegiality for the emerging creative subject.

## AFFECT AND IDEAS

As all transactions appear contingent on affect, I focus here on the relation between affects and ideas. To do so, I look at Spinoza's theories regarding affect, which have been accessed through several sources but primarily through Deleuze's (1978) lecture on Spinoza, in which he states:

What is called an idea, in the sense in which everyone has always taken it in the history of philosophy, is a mode of thought which represents something. A representational mode of thought ... a mode of thought defined by its representational character. (p. 1)

Deleuze, makes a distinction between affect and idea when he says that,

every mode of thought insofar as it is non-representational will be termed affect. A volition, a will implies, in all rigor, that I will something, and what I will is an object of representation, what I will is given in an idea, but the fact of willing is not an idea, it is an affect because it is a non-representational mode of thought. (p. 2)

Affect is therefore sensation that has no object or subject, although it may appear to. Ideas are ignited in parallel understanding of the sensations sensed between the body AND the mind, as sensations are simultaneously felt AND thought. Affect can ignite an idea about a subject or object, however it is simply sensation and is primarily non-representational until converted or realised through the extension or becoming of an idea. In his introduction to Spinoza's *Ethics*, Stuart Hampshire (1996) clarifies thus:

By reflecting on our passions and on the rudimentary and uncritical thought associated with them, we convert them into thoughtful sentiments and reasonable attitudes. Emotions that have begun as mere pathological states, independent of the subjects reasoning, may be re-directed towards objects that are intelligible objects of emotion in the light of reason. Human beings are governed by their passions, by their loves and hates, their pleasures and pains, their hopes and fears, and the requirement of morality is that by thoughtful reflection they should change the direction of these sentiments so that they contribute to the person's survival and to his or her happiness. (p. xi)<sup>11</sup>

Within the context of engaging with art and talking about art, this understanding of our passions, or affections of the body, is put to good use not only in deciphering the affective encounter but also in understanding the difference between affect, passions and emotions and what this means in shifting from molar thinking to molecular thinking.

## MOLAR AND MOLECULAR THINKING

As discussed in chapter two, the shift students make from molar thinking to molecular thinking within the context of the art school studio, is enhanced by rhizomatic movement, the nature of the studio operating as an ecology of practices and the unspecificity of art pedagogy. Because art students take risks and forge new compositions, and here I mean aesthetically as well as affectively, they experience change through exploration and experimentation therefore building resilience for change. From this position, art students can more easily shift into or out of alternative ways of making or ways of thinking. The shift from molar thinking to molecular thinking can in itself become characteristic within the processes of developing an art practice. If molar thinking is more rigid and concerned with structures and systems, molecular thinking is open to a more fluid kind of connectivity that can provide new possibilities and intensities.

The same elements existing in flows, strata and assemblages can be organised in a molar or a molecular mode. The molar order corresponds to signification that delimits objects, subjects, representations and their reference systems. Whereas the molecular order is that of flows, becomings, phase transitions and intensities. This molecular traversal of strata and levels, operated by different kinds of assemblages, is called "transversality". (Guattari, 2006, p. 418)

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<sup>11</sup> Spinoza defines the passions in relation to affect by their cause. In *Ethics*, III D3 he states: "By affect I understand affections of the body by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided or restrained and at the same time the ideas of these affections. Therefore, if we can be the adequate cause of any of these affections, I understand by the affect an action; otherwise a passion" (De Spinoza, 1996, p. 70)

In mathematics “transversality” is a term that describes how spaces can intersect. For Guattari, transversality describes the interconnected movement that occurs as molecular thinking takes place.

Art school pedagogy is centered around studio-based learning and the ability for students to interact with each other, including all levels of communication from the macro and visible to the micro and indiscernible. The kind of movement that prevails within the studio is not only rhizomatic; it can also enable shifts between smooth and striated space orientations. These kinds of activity allow for and promotes the affective body to intuitively locate lines of flight through the acknowledgement of affect and its power to shift thinking into molecular realms.

### LINES OF FLIGHT

The normative institutionalised roles of teachers and students provide the molar structures of classroom practices. Likewise, the ways in which human beings sometimes conform to stereotypical cultural or gendered behaviours makes up the molar aspects of their being. The molar thus describes what is fixed and limiting, what Ellwood (2011) calls the “knots” in our identities. Because it is already determined, the molar reduces the range of connections human beings can make with the world around them, diminishing their potential for difference and becoming-other. While it is important to note that molar identities are needed in order to function in the world —“our very reason” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 138), Ellwood (2011) reminds us “there is a rigid quality to molarised identity, which makes it difficult to change” (p. 964). In view of this difficulty, it is important to understand how the emerging creative subject within a studio environment can transition from one type of movement to another. Including what might be of benefit with regard to molecularised thinking and being able to experience lines of flight. Deleuze puts these lines into perspective thus:

I am trying to explain that things, people, are made up of very varied lines, and that they do not necessarily know which line they are on or where they should make the line which they are tracing pass; in short there is a whole geography in people, with rigid lines, supple lines, lines of flight etc. (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 10)

One way to think of these lines is to consider them as a navigational means existing within the body, operating through affective encounters varying in intensity that have

the potential for lines to “let loose”: to fly in the face of reason and to be affectively transported to a *somewhere* which was not predestined. Perhaps this *somewhere* generates a creative shift in perspective that results in a nuanced AND powerful understanding of a particular thing, concept or context. To experience lines of flight is to know you have been affected by something powerful where the resultant change and consequent understanding manifests beyond the molar or habitus.

The art school studio is an environment where students can be in close contact with one another. This is enhanced through rhizomatic movement, spatial orientations (smooth and striated), social and educational relations occurring in mixed fashion, and self-organising expectations of self. All of these factors support communal functioning and intuitive connectivity. The nature of contact that operates through the whim of the body when moving affectively encourages an intermingling of all bodies at macro and micro levels, including the affectual nature of objects and artwork alike. Art students can move differently within this particular space whereby they can encounter a variety of affective material and can respond according to their appetites and tendencies within a self-organising time frame. This ability provides art students with many different experiences of affective intensities, which helps them to make sense of their art encounters as they acknowledge the tug on their movement, their power to act. Ellwood (2011) states:

The importance of the molecular is that it draws our attention to the ways affects and our connections with others spark or block movement or change. Identity change, then, is a process of movements involving a letting go of molarised roles and rigid identifications in response to being affected. The power to affect and be affected by others is a crucial part of this change. (p. 964)

The identity of the thing, the object, the image that the art student creates and encounters throughout the creative process is also continually in a state of flux, and is expected to be read or understood within contemporary art terms and current theoretical contexts. This suggests that there is an ongoing negotiation between the receiving body (the art student) and the transmitting body (the artwork). The negotiation between these two bodies is the active component of affect relations and is created afresh within each encounter. This corporeal and cognitive activity includes the formation of an appropriate response mechanism that develops nuanced understanding of affect and the contextualisation necessary for understanding embodied meanings. And here I mean the contextual knowledge of self as well as contextual or vital knowledge of the affecting “thing”. Ultimately the recognition of affective elements and

their particular power is utilised for the student's developing ideas and artwork. As these processes take place and molecular thinking is engaged, identity change is inevitable whether nuanced and incremental or decisive and momentous.

#### MOLAR TO MOLECULAR PROPOSITIONS FOR THE EMERGING CREATIVE SUBJECT

On entry into the art school the new student is expected to take responsibility for adapting to what could be perceived as a new culture — a new way of reading (visual language), thinking about and understanding art concepts and appreciating all of their affective attributes (Ellwood, 2011). Art education is more about finding the problem than solving the problem. By being unspecific, art-making can follow its own rhizomatic trajectory which encourages shifts from molar propositions and practices toward molecular propositions and practices. These shifts can happen through student engagement with ideas and materials, including developmental processes and methodologies that are not prescriptive, and do not require fixed propositions or preconceived outcomes. By this I mean that art students often have opportunities to consider ideas beyond their known territory, which can shift their thinking into molecular realms.

Art students commonly work in explorative ways, utilising their own sensibility, methods and timing that are pertinent to their practice. Sometimes this means a reconsideration of particular outcomes and how they are determined. Learning how to determine new outcomes is to practise engaging with molecularised thinking. Risk-taking, which is a necessary step in the development of art ideas, is one such practice that challenges students in various ways, and for some this becomes the gateway to molecularised thinking. In the art studio, the process of making art often starts with a proposition, a “what if ...”? Propositions provide the license to think beyond what is known and explore the different capabilities of the material or subject matter. Throughout the process of developing art ideas and putting things together this way or that, the art student is working conscientiously through decision-making, problem solving and refining. Due to the indecisive qualities, hesitations and ambiguity often prevailing within the studio milieu, the complex arrangement of materials and ideas that form assemblages can be held in limbo. This mutability creates a space of indetermination until something moves; something shifts. The complexity of developing, which requires

multiple levels of organisation and production, can also manifest a kind of vagueness and uncertainty. For Massumi (2015)

This uncertainty can actually be empowering — once you realise that it gives you manoeuvrability and you focus on that, rather than on projecting success or failure. It gives you the feeling that there is always an opening to experiment, to try and see. ( p. 2)

Students often find it difficult to recognise ideas, experiences and constructs they can use for further exploration as art. This can be a lengthy and convoluted process as they strive to bring about the artwork and to master its lines of flight. It is instructive to quote Colebrook (2002) again here on enhancing the power of life:

This is achieved not by all events leading up to an end, but by the creation of ever-divergent ends, creating more and more series of ‘lines’ of becoming. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and 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. (p. 57)

The undertaking of tackling new frontiers is precisely what is expected of art students as they work to direct their efforts and realise their ideas. Artists make art as a response to the questions of life, the power of existence and its tendency to evolve, mutate and become (Colebrook, 2002). Students are also grappling with and learning to understand and stand by their own beliefs and values regarding their art and how they might employ materials and processes to realise their art ideas. For most this is not a linear process; it is rhizomatic, mixed and varied and, and according to Lee (2008), “it is non-linear, non-stratified, anti-genealogical, zigzagging here and there, which links humans and non-humans into fluidly heterogeneous networks called assemblages (p. 922).

To be active within this environment and to stay abreast of the expectations and demands of the curriculum, students must venture beyond their known territory, their acquired aesthetic, and their assumed ability to trial new ideas. This trialing is void of success until new thought patterns provide innovative and perceptive shifts. This shifting perception is often foregrounded by a new realisation concerning a detail, a suggestive comment, a dream, a chance encounter, a passage in a book or other insightful recognitions. During these phases students learn to be brave, patient and resilient. The engaged student learns about their capacity to receive affect and their capacity to respond. This includes how they manage their responses not only toward material

challenges and propositions, but also their connections with each other. They become more cognisant of their place within the active milieu of the art school studio. The broader context for art students' exploration and creative output is the contemporary world of relations both real and virtual, escalated image production and instant information. Ideally art students learn to take ownership of their ideas, to be cognisant of what drives their thinking, making, and their approach, and how they can ultimately position their creative output to have optimum effect and impact. This complex process means that the aim is for art students to be subjected to an assortment of materials, processes and theories, and as a consequence become responsive to the physical world in critical cognitive and corporeal ways.

### STUDIO AS A SPRINGBOARD FOR MOLECULAR THINKING

Art school studios are places of refuge as well as places of thoughtful creative activity. The studio spaces, designed for creativity, action and serious contemplation are sites of gravitational force where things happen within social, educational and personal frames. It is here, in the studio, that students assert themselves in establishing their personal space within the larger learning environment. The students make connections socially and educationally as a form of networking that helps them to establish a place — a position or platform for themselves — within the cohort. At the same time as being a springboard for molecular thinking, studios are also social spaces operating within the broader context of contemporary capitalism, “promoting communication as a mechanism of valorization, control and feedback” (Spencer, 2011, p. 9). Although these actions can appear to be supportive and therefore can become habitual, they can also be restrictive when deterritorialisations and reterritorialisations take place. However, it is the deterritorialising events, phases and molecularised realisations that lead to reterritorialisation. These shifts in thinking with regard to contemporary practices and art ideas support students to locate their own social and political agendas and their own qualities that become integral to the studio milieu. The identity changes that ensue from deterritorialising processes help to re-position the mechanisms of valorisation and control for the students, which can encourage greater agency in response to political or social mandates.

## WHAT DOES ART DO?

If we are going to ask what art does and consider the process of reading art as a means of understanding how art can trigger ideas, then we need to appreciate the role that affect plays in our response to art and our interpretation of that response. Massumi (2015) argues that

to get anywhere with the ... notion of affect ... you have to retain the manyness of its forms. It's not something that can be reduced to one thing. Mainly because it's not a thing. It's an event or a dimension of every event. (p. 47)

When we engage with art the ideas we have about it manifest through the power of affect — its impact upon the body as we think through the feelings to gain an understanding. Art apprehends our senses. Affect is a fundamental dimension of art, and the transmission of affect is what art does really well; it engages us through our feelings. Affect is also a fundamental dimension of critiquing art, including the complexities involved within each response that is motivated and uttered from the affected body. Art has a habit of catching us unawares, offering a proposition or inviting us to think about something. Something we had not thought of, perhaps, that demands our response often well before we can decide on its inclusion in our affective and ideational workings or not. When we encounter art, we can choose to indulge in the *manner* of the artwork and begin to take in the ideas and concepts that are released through a body AND mind engagement with its nuanced elements rather than only noticing its descriptive values, functions or subject matter.

Through engaging with art we can be challenged, changed and transformed. This transforming or deterritorialising experience reterritorialises our sensibilities and tendencies through new contextual knowledge. This reterritorialisation creates the ability for the body AND mind to not only locate new experiences but to *be with* a new dimension of experience, a new understanding of what is possible. According to Massumi (2008) in appreciating art we use what he calls a “thinking-feeling mechanism”:

A chair is like itself and the next chair. But it is also like a sofa, from the perchability point of view. How far the “likeness” goes is determined by the body's relation to the thing. It's not cognitive per se, like a recognition or a deduction. It's integral, a thinking at one with a feeling: a thinking further fused with a feeling of what is. But the fusion is asymmetrical, because the feeling of what is, zeroes in on what can be settled in the present, while the

thinking-further pulls off-centre and away toward more, so that together they make a dynamic, never quite at equilibrium. This gives the present perception its own momentum. (p. 11)

It is this thinking-feeling mechanism that is the dynamic that gives the art its momentum. This momentum is what Massumi (2008) calls a “dynamic posture” (p. 11). A dynamic is made between the thinking and the perceived thing, creating a kind of feedback loop, that actively collects more and more understanding throughout the duration of an engagement with art. What is gained through this process is experiential understanding, drawing its power simultaneously from the body (affect) and the mind (idea), while utilising the physical presence of that which is perceived to stabilise or propel further semblance and possibility.

This thinking-feeling of perception as it actively seeks its own expression is formalised in art education through the art encounter and verbally articulated through the art critique. With regard to visual language reading, for art students this thinking-feeling of perception inevitably becomes the *modus operandi* for deciphering all kinds of encounters, but particularly encounters with art. To do this, we draw upon our perceptive capability and affective responses so that we can create the possibility of shifting our thinking from molar to molecular thinking, appreciate our own expanding capacity, and experience lines of flight.

## THE ART SCHOOL ART CRITIQUE

Rowles, (2013b) states that the art critique is a “model of learning whereby artists present their work to a group in order to gain feedback on how that work is being read and ways they can develop it further” ( p. 11). Critiques are commonly used in art pedagogy to build a number of skills regarding the recognition of affect relations within the intelligent body and the articulation of ideas through the use of language. Art critiques support students “to develop and learn more about themselves and their work”, and are “a place to develop skills, peers groups and habits that will support them in their later careers — in art or other arenas” (p. 12). Critiques are often tailored to serve a specific purpose, the needs of a group, or a particular work or student’s question. Approaches to critiques vary as do the outcomes, however the intention is to advance students’ development of their ideas and artwork and to do so in a manner that is not judgmental or diminishing of the student-artist or the student-critic. Art critiques have a

life of their own, Rowles adds: “As Alistair Payne of Glasgow School of Art, outlines ‘Each crit, as much as you want to analyse and prepare, is going to be different. It happens live’” (p. 13).

Within the context of the studio critique, individual bodies consciously work together to decipher an understanding of artwork and its visual and palpable languages and propositions. The critical discussion can forge a greater contextual understanding of the work through sharing ideas and affective responses in relation to the work. Here I mean the physical encountering of a medium or material presented in real time and made known to the body through its particular visual language and affective qualities — what it looks like and what it feels like. Massumi (2015) says of affect that “if you approach it respecting its variety, you are presented with a field of questioning, a problematic field” (p. 48). The field is “problematic” in the sense that affect once felt and thought, renders the receiving body somewhat responsible for the compositional make-up it acknowledges and consequently the prevailing personal tendencies that possibly swerve the ensuing associative meaning or translation or interpretation. There is much to consider when our body discloses its tendencies regarding affect within the context of encountering art. Our response is not always shared and sometimes can be a better partner for a personal history or memory than the particular affective situation of the critique. With practise, personal associations and tendencies can be recognised and situated as a contingent field within the broader reading. Whatever the result the articulation of feelings AND ideas is useful for further understanding the art concepts or understanding the personalised tendencies of the self.

Through an engagement with art we are subjecting the body to an affective situation; to various affects AND thought that will either enhance or diminish the power of the body to act (Spinoza, 1996). “Art is not about representation, concepts or judgement; art is the power to think in terms that are not so much cognitive and intellectual as affective(to do with feeling and sensible experience) (Colebrook, 2002, p. 12). When we are critiquing art we begin where we can feel an attraction or affection. We announce our pleasure or displeasure; we stake a claim on our affections. We know through the felt sensation of our encounter with art that we are somehow caught in its affective embrace. When we are engaged in an art critique, we sense our capacity to be affected and we articulate our translation of the sensations felt and what we think this means in terms of

understanding the artwork. When we look at an artwork, in some way we are searching for context, both within our own sensibility, memory and knowledge and also in terms of the artwork itself. However, when we are the artist we have a greater contextual knowledge of the artwork, the interdependency of elements and compositions and their independent relations to ideas. This is because we have created the artwork from a particular understanding and premise and therefore because we know its origins we assume we know what it all means or how it could be negotiated.

Both of these perspectives on the artwork are valuable to the art critique. For the student-artist, affective qualities are more readily situated in the effective elements of the artwork and possibilities for their enhancement can be easily imagined, as the processual acts of criteria in selecting affective elements are already familiar to them. For the student-critic observing and deciphering the inherent ideas in someone else's artwork provides exposure to new compositions and the opportunity to experience novel ways to be affected. This includes new visual languages and forms of expression that impact upon the senses in unsuspecting ways. This also provides a fresh reading for the student whose work it is. The exposure to new and unseen artwork creates unfamiliar affective territory for the student-critic. It is a deterritorialising and reterritorialising process that presents both challenges and opportunities.

The art critique through these means proves to be a valuable learning tool for both the student-artist and the student-critic. This is because any differences in affect understanding and its translation into ideational thought and/or art concepts can be challenging, and the resulting discussion or debate expands everyone's capacity to think and understand. This connects the students cognitively, and they recognise how they are being affected by each other's artwork and creative expression and how discussion around their work can lead to different fields of enquiry. Jim Hamlyn from Gray's School of Art at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen describes critiques as "discussions" and considers them to be

an opportunity to discuss a whole range of issues, meanings, associations, references, metaphors, problems processes and principals of fine arts. They can range into all sorts of different areas: politics, psychology, history. ... They are predominantly guided by the work [in question]. (as cited in Rowles, 2013a, p. 17)

## THE VALUE OF THE ART CRITIQUE

In my opinion, the real work of art education and subjectivity happens during the art critique, as ideas are shared and listened to and as students are exerting curiosity regarding another's opinion or delving deeper together to tease out contexts regarding affect and the artwork. These activities not only connect students through affect relation but also enable them to understand each other through recognising and valuing each other's theoretical interests and cognitive functioning. This enables students to appreciate each other's similarities and differences, especially regarding ideas, approaches and affective and aesthetic values. The art critique primarily attempts to ascertain a series of ideas pertaining to what the artwork is doing; how it is affective; how it is perceived; what it might be talking about or what it might mean. The art critique is not designed to be judgmental or punitive, it is an active discussion contingent on a collection of individual affective responses to the semiotic values and visual languages expressed through the artwork. These semiotic values and visual languages are understood primarily through affect. The critique is shaped through the response from a particular group of critics, assembled on a particular day and who use their individual corporeal and cognitive abilities as they join forces to create a responsive reading of the artwork. The reading in question is always open to new understanding and new conceptual relations as new contexts are brought into the discussion, which in turn expand the realm of feeling AND thinking for the participants.

Some of the benefits, for students, of engaging in art critiques stem from the opportunity to articulate ideas that occur in response to an encounter with art, and to discuss, debate and argue the merits of different perspectives and compositions (affective and aesthetic) regarding perception and conceptual contexts. This can be achieved through students' acknowledging and understanding the processual acts undertaken when encountering art and articulating their ideas and opinions that are formulated through a personal perspective and affective reception of the artwork. This includes working with affect, memory, tendencies and being able to voice the emergent thoughts that are triggered by the encounter. The art critique provides collegial discussion which has the potential to open up thinking and broaden perception to include nuances and details discovered by sharing opinions. This can lead to students appreciating each other's perspectives and impart experiential knowing as to how and why they can work together to build more complex contexts for reading artwork — their own and that of each others'. It is the

broadening and building of contexts around art and art-making that ensures the development of more complex ideas and the cognitive development that they bring.

### CAPACITY TO THINK

Massumi (2015) reminds us that:

a power to affect and be affected governs a transition where a body passes from one state of capacitation to a diminished or augmented state of capacitation. This comes with the corollary that the transition is *felt*. A distinction is asserted between two levels, one of which is feeling and the other capacitation or activation. But the distinction comes in the form of a connection. This separation-connection between feeling and activation situates the account between what we would normally think of as the self on the one hand and the body on the other, in the unrolling of an event that's a becoming of the two together. (p. 48)

When we encounter art and experience the impact of its presentation and content on the body, we are referring to the *felt* response and what that might mean to the receiving intelligent body. The felt response or sensations felt within the body will trigger a sense or thought of something happening to the self, a capacity to think about the art itself, as well as an affective engagement with it. This process can begin with a sense of being interested and as this sense is put into practise and explored it can become an enquiry. When we are engaged in an art critique we experience the potential for expanding our thinking through an affective encounter with art. We feel the reception of affect and find ourselves “in the middle of ... a region of relation” (Massumi, 2015, p. 50), and then share the ideas that surface through personal accounts of what is being felt, what is being sensed and what is being understood. To appreciate this “region of relation” that is created by looking or engaging with art, we need to understand the connection between affect and ideas and how this process enables the shift from molar thinking to molecular thinking.

### AFFECT AND IDEAS

Spinoza (1996) distinguishes three kinds of ideas: affection ideas, common notions and essence ideas. Only two of these types of ideas are relevant here. I will begin with affection ideas as a way to understand a process of thinking that shifts from affection ideas to common notions as we engage with and think about an artwork. For Deleuze (1978), affection, is “a mixture of two bodies, one body which is said to act on another, and the other receives the trace of the first” (p. 6). It is also “a state of a body insofar as it is subject to the action of another body” (p. 6). Therefore, the receiving body is in a

state of affection, which is felt by the attribute of the body and thought of by the attribute of the mind. This means that “affection” is felt and thought about simultaneously. The receiving body understands this affection through appreciating both the cause of the affection as well as the state it finds itself in when being affected. This means being affected is a double-sided event; it involves *feeling* the sensation through the intelligent body and *understanding* the intelligent body’s propensity to engage with particular tendencies that will direct the degree and direction of the body’s action. When utilised as a means to challenge molar thinking, the affective event or art encounter can forge new understanding and require new responsibilities to be asserted for the subject.

Within the context of reading visual language, navigations and negotiations are contingent on the receiving body’s capacity to be affected, and also the receiving body’s capacity to act. Affects occur in the body as affections AND thoughts, however they are not reducible to one another.

That the affect presupposes the idea above all does not mean that it is reduced to the idea or to a combination of ideas. ... Idea and affect are two kinds of modes of thought which differ in nature, which are irreducible to one another but simply taken up in a relation such that affect presupposes an idea, however confused it may be. (Deleuze, 1978, p. 2)

Here, Deleuze suggests that our ideas may be confused. Although “affect and idea are two kinds of modes of thought which differ in nature” ideas can be confused, or as Spinoza would say, we can have “inadequate” or “incomplete” ideas (1996). Incomplete ideas are derived through affects that are transmitted from a corresponding or transmitting body that we cannot know everything about: we cannot know all there is to know. In other words, all of our ideas regarding external bodies are inadequate, as we cannot know everything there is to about the source of these affects. All we can manage is to make our ideas more adequate by encouraging greater understanding of their contexts.

Deleuze (1978) elaborates, using Spinoza’s example of the sun:

I feel the affection of the sun on me, the trace of the sun on me. It’s the effect of the sun on my body. But the causes, that is, that which is my body, and that which is the body of the sun, and the relation between these two bodies such that the one produces a particular effect on the other rather than something else of these things I know [*sais*] absolutely nothing. Let’s take another example: “The sun melts wax and hardens clay.” These points are not nothing. They’re ideas of *affectio* [affection]. I see the wax which flows, and right beside it I see the clay which hardens; this is an affection of the wax and an affection of the clay, and I have an idea of these affections, I perceive effects. By virtue of what

corporeal constitution does the clay hardens under the sun's action? As long as I remain the perception of the affection, I know nothing of it. One could say affection-ideas are representations of effects without their causes, and it's precisely these that Spinoza calls inadequate ideas. These are ideas of mixture separated from the causes of the mixture. (p. 6)

Within the event of the art critique we now understand that some students will receive the affection of the art in one way (perhaps like the clay and harden) and others will receive the affection of the art in another way (perhaps like the wax and melt).

An idea's adequacy is contingent on an exploration of the source of the affect in regard to the transmitting body (the external body), its composition, and how that mixes with the composition of the receiving body. This seeking of further knowledge and contextual information provides a greater understanding of why and how the composition of affects is created or transmitted, the cause of its power, and why and how affect is manifested within the receiving body in a particular way. An inadequate idea belongs to what Spinoza calls the first type of ideas, where "every mode of thought which represents an affection of the body ... which is to say the mixture of one body with another body, or the trace of another body on my body will be termed an idea of affection" (Deleuze, 1978, p. 6). Affection ideas are simply those ideas that occur without knowing their cause.

Deleuze (1978) further considers Spinoza's "famous example" of perceiving the nature and position of the sun:

"I see the sun as a flat disk situated at a distance of three hundred feet." That's an *affectio*, or at very least the perception of an *affectio*. It's clear that my perception of the sun indicates much more fully the constitution of my body, the way in which my body is constituted, than it does the way in which the sun is constituted. I perceive the sun in this fashion by virtue of the state of my visual perceptions. A fly will perceive the sun in another fashion. (p. 6)

An affection "indicates the nature of the modified body, the nature of the affectionate or affected body, the affection indicates the nature of the affected body much more than it does the nature of the affecting body (p. 6). This quote from Deleuze is directly related to Spinoza's (1996) outcome<sup>12</sup> thus: "*It follows ... that the idea that we have of external bodies*

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<sup>12</sup> In Ethics II Proposition 16, Corollary 2. ( Spinoza, 1996, p. 45)

*indicate the condition of our own body more than the nature of the external body*” [italicised in original text] (p. 45). Herein lies the sense of responsibility asked for when deciphering “what happens” and “how it happens” once our intelligent bodies have affected.

### COMMON NOTIONS

Within the context of learning about art and its visual languages, we strive for *more adequate* and *more complete* ideas with regard to learning how art and its affective power can move us — and our publics — toward molecular thinking, or new and different thinking. Although we may be able to appreciate the modified body or the affected body, in other words the receiving body (because it is our own body), in terms of our opinions about art, during an art critique we are put on notice to engage with the affective or external body and understand more about its qualities and context.

As we encounter an artwork, we acknowledge the traces of affect felt upon the receiving (our) body. We are, at this point already reading the affective sensations and experiencing an idea of affection. These sensations will engage us with the artwork, and extend our knowing of the artwork through recognising and connecting what we see (percept) and what we feel (affect). It is through these acts of engagement that we can acquire a more comprehensive knowledge of the affect relation our body composes with the artwork and therefore a greater awareness of what it might mean. As this process is occurring we also get to acknowledge our capacity for affect, and what we might prioritise or select as important visual language operating within the artwork. By listening to other responses, we can expand our thinking with regard to our individual response and by doing so we create more adequate ideas about the artwork in question. Sometimes this process of “getting to know” how the artwork is activating feelings and ideas, provides the means for molar thinking to be shifted to molecular thinking. The advantage of this shift to molecular thinking, is that it can influence one’s tendency when responding to future encounters where similar sensations, or percepts are experienced. Opening our awareness to new, or difficult-to-asertain sensations, heightens our affective engagement and improves our understanding of that particular encounter. When we process affective encounters in this way, we get to expand our capacity for affect, understand the compositions that will either augment or diminish

our power to act, and cross the threshold into the second type of idea which Spinoza calls “common notions”.

When we are engaged in the art critique and considering the event of the art encounter — in the “region of relation” (Massumi, 2015, p. 50) — the purpose of the critique is to reach for a greater understanding of the elements or properties held by the transmitting body — the artwork. During this process our focus moves between the active elements of the artwork and our receiving body and our sensing mind to ascertain connection and thought that divulges meaning. This occurs not only through our engagement with the transmitting body but also through our engagement with the contingencies, tendencies and propensities of our own receiving body. The perception of the effect of affect now has become rather complex. When an engagement of an artwork and its affective powers is experienced, the affective elements at play can bring about particular relations with the receiving body that trigger memory and are reminiscent of other things that can initiate thought and spark new ideas. The receiving body can join forces with the manifested impact of the artwork and discover the artwork’s “degree of reality” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3), that is proper to it.

The receiving body joins forces with the affective forces of the artwork so as to discover the intrinsic quality of the ideas the artwork carries. This relation or repertoire of relations also works to provide a more nuanced understanding of the affects and the intensities that occur for the receiving body. What is being considered here are the contexts regarding the external body AND the contexts regarding the receiving body. This reckoning of ideas enables the first kind of knowledge (affection ideas), through the creating of more adequate ideas, to become common notions (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3). Common notions, according to Spinoza, belong to the second level of ideas. When we are engaged in an art critique we have the opportunity to move from the first level of ideas towards the second level of ideas. Deleuze (1978) explains:

At this second level, one attains the notion-idea where relations are combined, and once again this is not abstract since *I’ve* tried to say that it’s an extraordinarily vital enterprise. ...while the common notions are not abstract, they are collective, they always refer to a multiplicity, but they’re no less individual for that. They are the ways in which such and such bodies agree, at the limit they are the ways in which all bodies agree, but at that moment it’s the whole world which is an individuality. Thus the common notions are always individual. (p. 15)

The common notions are ideas that are in relation with their causes. They can be commonly understood, but are individually felt.

In affect relations, we have a transmitting body and a receiving body. For the composition of these two bodies to create “more adequate” ideas we need to have contextual information about both bodies: the transmitting body (sun) and the receiving body (clay or wax). If the transmitting body is an artwork, we can critique this body to ascertain the active ingredients of the content. Through a deeper enquiry into the transmitting body as well as the tendencies of the receiving body we can discover further contextual information that forms Massumi’s “region of relation” (Massumi, 2015, p. 50). If the critique is carried out with many different receiving bodies (e.g., a group of students engaged in sharing ideas about the artwork), the discussion regarding the nuanced affects that are felt by the receiving bodies, and their corresponding ideas, will initially create a rich resource for further exploration and contemplation. The task is not to form agreement for agreement’s sake, but rather to test out the visual language and its appropriateness to both the transmitted affect and the intentioned ideas at stake. Through discussion and the building of contextual knowledge and cultural understanding regarding the active elements portrayed within the particular artwork, a shared understanding can be created. Because it is shared, the knowledge and affective experiences can be returned to and referenced for further discussion at a later time. And in an art school environment this occurs as the moment or occasion arises. The ideas and feelings gained from an art critique can keep reverberating beyond their initial exposure, igniting new becomings while continually creating the complex and mixed sensibilities of the art studio milieu — a complex milieu that is continually in a state of flux and that is always and already becoming.

The inherent differences held by the responding bodies and experienced through the verbalised translation of affective imprinting become apparent in the context of an art critique. Students are asked to verbalise their *felt* responses and articulate the ideas which are triggered through an encounter or affective reading of the artwork. Sometimes students lack the experience to see beyond their limited knowledge of visual language. Sometimes they have difficulty understanding their own felt responses to an artwork, and struggle to translate them into cohesive or intelligible ideas. However, with practice most students become more skilled at sensing their felt responses to an artwork

during a critique and ultimately learn to articulate their ideas. By voicing tentative thoughts and opinions, the students help each other to unravel complex affective compositions and art language propositions.

### OBJECTIVE REALITY AND FORMAL REALITY OF AN IDEA

The representational mode of thought is the objective reality as Deleuze (1978) explains: “The idea, insofar as it represents something is said to have an objective reality” (p. 1). However, an idea also has a *formal* reality.

Once we say that the objective reality is the reality of the idea insofar as it represents something, the formal reality of the idea, shall we say, is ... the reality of the idea insofar as it is itself something. (p. 2)

If an idea can be understood as being both objective and formal, then it seems an idea has two distinct aspects. There is one mode that belongs to representation and another mode that belongs to the intangible or virtual realm, “what Spinoza very often terms a certain degree of reality or perfection” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3). This degree of reality or perfection could be viewed as an “intrinsic character” (p. 3), which qualitatively defines the idea as something in itself. When the formal reality is highly valued (i.e., when the idea in itself is considered a good idea, an idea that is commonly valued), it attaches a degree of perfection to the representational mode of thought. Deleuze says,

Undoubtedly this degree of reality or perfection is connected to the object that it represents, but it is not to be confused with the object: that is, the formal reality of the idea, the thing the idea is or the degree of reality or perfection it possesses in itself, is its intrinsic character. (p. 3)

The degree of reality or perfection pertaining to an artwork is the quality of the idea of the artwork is the degree of reality or perfection that could be viewed as an “intrinsic character” (Deleuze, 1978, p. 3), which as I have said above qualitatively defines the idea as something in itself. The formal reality of the idea or intrinsic character of the idea may continually transmit an affective tone through the artwork to the viewer. This reinforces the artwork as being more or less valued as an idea in itself, which has two aspects: (1), the quality of the idea or concept that we understand from the artwork; and (2), the quality of the connection between the concept and the form of the artwork — this also includes the form of its delivery or presentation. During a critique, as particular elements are being discussed, we become cognisant of the quality of both the idea, its degree of reality, and the ability (or not) of the form to succinctly convey the said idea.

When the degree of reality or perfection is high with regard to the quality of the physical thing as well as the concept of the artwork, the affect imprint is not only powerful: it also becomes memorable.

## ART EDUCATION AND VISUAL LANGUAGE

An art education has at its core the exploration of visual language and the experience of developing ideas through making art. As an adjunct to this exploration students are encouraged to articulate their ideas and experiences as a means to develop their critical thinking as well as their conceptual territory. During the process of making an artwork, and also when it is complete, the artwork and its visual language is subjected to various types of critique. This occurs by the maker at various stages and by fellow students in informal ways. However, it is also an important educational and developmental aspect of the curriculum whereby staff and students engage in formal critiques so as to ascertain an artwork's capability, in terms of why and how it affects the viewer, and what are the ideas that are conveyed. Through appreciating how the work is received and the particular ideas that are articulated by other critics, the artist-student (maker) can be more knowing of how their artwork is received. Sometimes the readings from the critique panel do not cohere with the intentions of the artist. Sometimes it is a matter of reworking the form to align with the concept or of rethinking the intention to cohere with the form. A critique can also suggest future developments for the work and/or directions for the practice, through the voicing of new common notions that come out of the critique. Art students begin the process of learning how to think about and talk about art through engaging in the art critique from the start of their studies. It is a fundamental adjunct to exploring semiotics and the affect/idea relation. Through the process of sharing opinions and affective responses to each other's artwork, students learn to listen to different voices, think critically and develop their work from a critical perspective. Ann Hulland from Kingston University, London, suggests that by their third year

the students are learning to talk with quite a lot of grounding, depth, critical awareness and contextual awareness of their practice. They are beginning to really tease out that relationship with the audience and they can set up that relationship according to whatever their practice demands. (as cited in Rowles, 2013a, p. 31)

Once students have agency in what they are doing and more control over how their work is being viewed, they can feel the relationship between themselves as artists and their audience begin to take shape.

## ART EDUCATION AND THE INTERMINGLING OF BODIES

Deleuze and Guattari (2004) enable us to re-think the dynamics of an assemblage, and the subtle ways the “intermingling of bodies” (p. 99) at the “micro level of interaction” (Ellwood, 2011, p. 964) impacts on the body and on molecular thinking.

We think the material or machinic aspect of an assemblage relates not to the production of goods but rather to a precise state of intermingling of bodies in a society including all the attractions and repulsions, sympathies and antipathies, alterations, amalgamations, penetrations, and expansions that affect bodies of all kinds in their relations to one another. (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 99)

The material or machinic production of an art school studio is created by the “intermingling of bodies” as students respond to affective external bodies, objects and atmosphere. The dynamic is not so much about the production of goods. One might say that what is produced by students within an assemblage as such, is not only the ability to affect and to be affected but also to experience the availability of opportunity to shift molar thinking to molecular thinking. The art school studio becomes an assemblage because art pedagogy promotes the intermingling of students on affective levels which supports shifts in thinking and consequently shifts in expression and production. This requires an openness and connectivity that manifests through the organisation of spatial relations, a porosity of boundaries — audio, visual, and physical — between individualised studio spaces, and the natural movement of bodies within the space as students go about making their work. This means the activities where students are individually and independently pursuing creative relations with and through the materials and objects of their current art-making activity. Art students are intent on observing how these materials and objects impact affectively within particular compositions and are therefore put on notice to think through possibilities and test out aesthetic and functional propositions. This lends itself to molarised thinking.

It is important to remember here that art students within the studio context are part of the art studio milieu where they are being affected by each other are affecting each other, continually. The smooth and striated space orientations that prevail within the assemblage and the rhizomatic connectivity of the intermingling bodies forms a continually changing but highly dynamic environment. The mechanisms, active within

the assemblage of the studio, prompt students to apprehend the filters, gateways and thresholds that are being periodically or constantly activated within the studio environment. These mechanisms help shift molar thinking to molecular thinking, which provides access to experiencing lines of flight. Molar thinking is a necessary mode of thinking that helps to maintain our habitual sense of the world, however it can also be restrictive and hold us back from taking risks, exploring new modes of operating or experiencing new becomings.

The art studio is an environment where risks can be taken and experimentation can lead to new avenues. Risk-taking is seen as a necessary step within an art practice so as to understand where the edge or boundaries lie and by embracing risk we can experience rupture that “forces us to think” (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 176). Once we are engaged in molecular thinking we can more readily become cognisant of our thinking that questions molarised thinking. The art studio dynamic provides connectivity and affective encounter; the kinds of experiences that precede and promote the shift from molar thinking to molecular thinking. This includes the ability to be imaginative, to intermingle at will, to move rhizomatically, to shift between smooth and striated space orientations, to have spontaneous conversations, and to work intuitively with agency. Students become independent, resourceful and responsible through their personal experiences of affect-related functioning and experience a sense of being part of a community of practices that collectively maps individuation and becoming.

## THE INFECT OF ART

Both the artist and the viewer of art are engaged with reading the languages embedded in the artwork and ultimately proceed to develop opinions and sensibilities that will culminate in ideas about the work and its agendas. The artist employs this process to further develop the ideas and test results so as to create a synergy between the concepts and the form and to secure a meaningful outcome. The viewer, meanwhile, who is observing and experiencing the artwork, works at understanding what this particular artwork is *doing*. What it is doing *to them*, although they may not as yet be aware of its power as it affects. However, art viewers either persist or resist. When they persist, they too develop ideas about what the art is doing, as they draw upon their own personal sensibilities and thinking. Utilising both body and mind, the artist and the viewer embark on a process of collecting and testing ideas from that which is perceived. This

happens through feeling the intensities of an affective encounter and noticing ideas unfolding while exploring and expanding the artwork's contextual territory.

The artist and the viewer or critic of art are in fact engaged in very similar processes to understand affect relations and the realisation of ideas. The artist is, however, focused in a specific manner to achieve specific goals, whereas the viewer/critic is perhaps more open to the rawness of the encounter, devoid of any preconceived expectations for the work to deliver specific affective relations and ideas. The different experiences of being the artist or being the critic within an art school context give students the opportunity to practise their thinking-feeling skills and expanding their contextual knowledge of art concepts. These skills are utilised in the processual acts of becoming-artist. They are also utilised in the processes belonging to subjectivation and individuation. When we work with very personalised ideas as in the art-making process, we are subjected to the receiving body's particular affect relation to the perceptive world, which possibly makes art students more aware of their own subjectivity and individuation processes. These very pertinent ideas will be further explored in Chapter 7, which looks at the way in which the art school studio creates a milieu for individuation and provides an ethical quality to the inherent practices embedded within art education.

The processes belonging to perceiving art and conceiving of ideas through engaging with art involve the body. The artist's body is habitually engaged in these processes working in symbiotic connection with and through the creation and development of ideas. "Spinoza says we know not what a body can do. Feeling creates rhythmic or vibratile bodies. To feel is to vibrate thought. Feeling incites concrescence" (Manning, 2008, p. 10) which is a growing together of the reception of affect and its vibratory thought. Feeling as Manning says, "wills the activity of becoming" (p. 10).

Making and looking at art, including the translation of affect into ideas, is a body-oriented and powerful business. Manning, suggests it incites what Nietzsche called the "will to power".<sup>13</sup> This will to power, within the context of making and perceiving art, is a will to amalgamate the world around us and make sense of its conceptual

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<sup>13</sup> Assembled after his death, *The Will to Power* (1901) is a collection of the philosopher's reflections and theories taken from his unpublished notebooks.

underpinnings. It is also the power of activation. Manning (2008) writes about this in terms of movement and the body's potential to seek its limits.

This compulsion to compose is an aesthetic drive, a will toward sensation, a will to power. The will to power is not about individual power. The will to power activates the potential of a force to move a body to its limit. Power is a lure for feeling. (p. 10)

Art becomes a powerful motivator for art students because it potentially can initiate through affect the shifts necessary to transform their thinking. It can move the body towards its limits and unfold a virtual reality that is capable of shifting their molarised thinking to molecularised thinking. Manning (2008) continues:

Ask of the creative process that it foregrounds the activity of creating concepts, that it will these concepts out of the matter-form itself, that it mould the activity of process into a becoming-body of invention. Ask of the process that it value its own becoming, that it open thought and sensation beyond the actuality of what the work appears to be. Provoke sensing bodies in movement, will the forces of transmutation such that a new body (of work) emerges. (p. 10)

In the studio, it is not only a new body of work for the artist, but a new body of thought for the viewer. Through experiencing an encounter (with art) and critiquing its affective presence and ideational suggestibility, we are opened to ideas and concepts that lie beyond the initial seeing. Through the very act of perceiving art — taking it in through the body as sensation while also registering its form and content as it appears to unfold its cache of ideas — the intelligent body creates transformative virtual possibilities and new becomings. This process starts with perception, a simple sense of acknowledging something, or something affectively triggering a thought and one thing being likened to another. All of these transactions expand through the transference of values, qualities and likenesses, which prompt openings for further contextualisation, affect-laden intensities and semiotic readings to be taken in.

The mind is opened to potential through the intensities that affect ignites in the body: “Thought and imagination are the leading edges of this exploratory expansion of potential, because they can wander from the particular present posture, without actually leaving it” (Massumi, 2008, p. 11). The imagination is captured during such processes, carrying ideas forward into a futurising of new possibilities, as well as reaching back into a lived past searching for likeness and similarities that may suggest meaning or verification so as to propel novel ideas into the virtual.

The processual acts of the body and the mind that are activated during the art encounter become fairly well developed for art students. This occurs especially in relation to affect capacity and capability, as well as thought and the ability to contextualise a given perceived thing so as to make sense of it and understand the underlying diagrammatic power and connections it creates. In other words, to value and expand contextual knowledge so as to appreciate the fullness of what is presented.

## CONCLUSION

My aim in this chapter has been to situate the shift from molar thinking to molecular thinking within the art school studio environment and the more formal transactional engagement of the art critique. I have highlighted the corporeal experiences pertaining to affect and the processual acts that connect the body sensations with the begetting of ideas, and the contextualisation of those ideas. I introduced Spinoza's theories regarding the affects and their relation to ideas, drawing upon Deleuze's (1978) lecture on Spinoza. I discussed briefly the difference between Spinoza's adequate and inadequate ideas and how the art critique enables students to expand their thinking through their own perceptive enquiry and in dialogue with other critical voices. I suggest that by utilising these processes within a shared aesthetic engagement with art, incomplete or inadequate ideas can be developed into more adequate ideas. Within the studio milieu, art students have the opportunity to apprehend and practice their personal affect-to-idea processual and relational understanding, as well as exercise their cognitive and communicative skills while participating in the casual or prolonged critiquing of aesthetic and affective values.

I also identified some of the advantages of being-in-studio by mapping the experiences pertaining to corporeal and cognitive processes, and showing how an aesthetic and affective engagement within art education promotes molecular thinking, more adequate ideas and ethical practices. In the next two chapters I discuss "the way in which I do things", what in a traditional research approach would be termed my methodology. In these chapters, I write about the way I eventually came to understand what this thesis was about. During this process, I uncovered the question or "site of interest" that warranted further attention. This site of interest was revealed through the most intuitive of processes. My engagement in the thesis ultimately came to rely on my corporeal

internal affective and cognitive senses that directed (via an eloquent zigzagging form) the philosophy, the theories and the studio practices that gradually unfolded its plot.

## CHAPTER 6

# EXPERIENCES AND FEELINGS: PROPOSITIONS FOR RESEARCH

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### ORIENTATION

This chapter and the next chapter focus on methodology. This chapter outlines my intuitive and rhizomatic way of forging a research practice which in some ways was akin to forging the development of an art practice. This approach coheres with the kinds of methodologies used within an art practice whereby the end result unfolds out of the enquiry. I was not interested in answering a question or finding a problem until I recognised the answer positioned within its own contextual territory. And here I mean where it was situated both within the practices belonging to art pedagogy and within the ontological philosophy that leads me to the answer. Chapter 7 takes a more personal perspective that locates my experiences as researcher within the practical day-to-day encounters and affective movements which have dictated the direction and purpose of my thesis.

My research practice has a habit of weaving philosophical concepts with everyday experiences as a means to better understand the concepts in question. This chapter operates as a walk through some of the experiences, sensibilities, thoughts and ideas that have informed my thinking and propelled the writing of this thesis. Here, I acknowledge the concepts that have helped me appreciate the complexity associated with one's perceptive capability and the ensuing affective movement, particularly within the context of thinking and writing.

Explanation and support for the way I do things is mainly garnered from the theories of Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and Henri Bergson, which embrace affect, molar to molecular thinking, intuition, duration, and rhizomatic movement. There is an emphasis here on *doing* because when I am newly introduced to

an idea or concept, I turn it toward a practical application and explore its potential to uncover the not-yet-available diagrams, connections or contexts. This is a *doing* as well as a *thinking*, which enables the idea or concept to live within pragmatic means. As a consequence, I argue for the appropriateness of a rhizomatic course of action that helps to establish a means of further understanding the territory of enquiry — in this case the art school studio milieu and its own rhizomatic, intuitive and smooth space functioning. This territory is explored not with a question or a problem in mind but rather by being present to the practical and cognitive processes and movements occurring within the space of the studio that often cohere with particular concepts and ideas gleaned through reading.

My progress occurs through being guided by affective intensities and an overarching interest in what art can do and therefore in what art pedagogy can do. Eventually and gradually I uncover the acts and processes that inform the theories that lie at the heart of my research. My original aim was to explore the potential of such a dynamic environment and discover ways to utilise processes and events to augment art education. However, early on I found that the intensities creating movement and flow did not reside so much within the physicality of the space, or the demands of the curriculum, but manifested through the transmission of affect and were felt as body sensations. As these realisations occurred to me I was simultaneously and already theorising and reading about these philosophical concepts.

By rethinking traditional methods of research, organising structures, research questions and literature reviews, I discovered a different methodology. A methodology which is something other than strictly qualitative and performs more as post-qualitative, in that it does not “assume ... the human is superior to and separate from the material — Self/Other, subject/object, and human/non-human” (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013, p. 630). Such a methodology guides direction and enquiry through the unfolding principles belonging more to the act of enquiring than a preconceived structure that sets about answering a preconceived set of questions. My methodology is an integral part of how I do most things, however it is most apparent in my art practice and the writing of this thesis. This includes reading, collecting material, observing experiences, making connections, making dinner, or catching a ferry to an island. This unfolding of

everything simultaneously has constantly shifted the focal point of my enquiry in exciting and challenging ways, culminating with my immersion in a field that I hardly knew existed before I began.

Lather and St Pierre's (2013) provide justification for the growing popularity of post-qualitative research, and link it to a lack in existing and traditional methodologies as much as its alignment with poststructural philosophies. They argue that it is necessary to question assumptions, and they issue a call for the more traditional mindsets regarding methodology and methods to be discussed rather than assumed. Different methods need to be explored to extract pertinent and savvy data and to maintain currency in the production of educational thinking, educational experiences and educational futures (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013).

My methodological approach and *modus operandi* in this thesis utilises: post-qualitative critique, an autobiographical sense of experience, a particular and personal form of narrative, and an openness that promotes molecular thinking and secures the advantages of lines of flight. This approach has taken me on a wild ride, collecting along the way pertinent theories and experiences that help to collate a qualitative image of the art school studio milieu and its ecology of practices. My approach has also elicited for me some of the nuanced practices that occur for art students as common fare but are always and already working to develop subjectivities in particular ways. One example is the articulation of opinions, beliefs and tendencies that inform ideas pertaining to their own artwork and also pertaining to fellow students' artwork. This discovery has been particularly interesting to me as it adds complex dimensions to the seemingly simple acts taking place within art education and the studio dynamic. A simple comment in passing has the potential to become a full-blown conversation exploring contextual material. This contextualising can have far-reaching repercussions for knowledge and understanding that otherwise would not have been articulated and would have remained as "inadequate ideas"<sup>14</sup>. This is just one advantage of art school studio

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<sup>14</sup> I mentioned "adequate and inadequate ideas" (Spinoza, 1996) in Chapter 3 and I discuss these ideas in greater detail in Chapter 8, where I use Spinoza's theories to consider art education as method for ethical thinking

education and highlights why art education is so very valuable to the processes of individuation.

### THE “TEARING OF THOUGHT”<sup>15</sup>

An open-ended exploration coupled with a Deleuzo-Guattarian approach to affect and the sensory and cognitive work carried out within this research project has enabled discoveries to be made and new thinking to occur. This project has *forced* me to think. As Deleuze (2004b) says,

it is difficult to conceive of thought as encompassing those problems which point beyond the propositional mode; or as involving encounters which escape all recognition; or as confronting its true enemies, which are quite different from thought; or as attaining that which tears thought from its natural torpor and notorious bad will, and forces us to think. (p. xv)

The “tear[ing] of thought from its natural torpor” arrives through affect and the encounter of something, which alerts the intelligent body. It disassembles the cache and assembles it anew. This tearing occurs (for me) during everyday experiences, conversations, reading texts, and also writing. Through shifts in consciousness when encountering something, molar thinking can move me toward molecular thinking. Within the context of this project this transformative process has increased my capacity to think and I am excited by the mechanics of learning and the processual acts of individuation it has revealed to me. This thesis has highlighted the potential for further enquiry and interest, and I acknowledge that within this field of research there are more avenues waiting and greater degrees of persuasion and evidence possible.

The accumulation of experiences during years of observing the shifting dynamic and malleability of the art school studio’s cultural, social and psychological underpinnings, has led me to ponder the operating forces inherent in the milieu and embark on an enquiry. In doing so I am cognisant of the ways in which the studio, as an active milieu writes itself into the bodies of those working within it, as those bodies write themselves into the milieu.

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<sup>15</sup> “The tearing of thought” is borrowed from Deleuze in the preface to the English edition of *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze, 2004b, p. xv).

## WRITING AND VIGNETTES

The composition and structure of this thesis presented me with quite a challenge. From the beginning I was intent on *not* mapping a structure that I would then feel obliged to adhere to. I wanted to have the territory of enquiry unfold over time. Durational experiences and thought processes accumulated as research findings, lived experiences and provocative ideas enabled the project to surface and gain momentum. This meant that I could ignore the distraction and pressure of succumbing to a previously organised logical structure and set of questions that only related to my first hunches and early ideas regarding art and education. In my view, the considerations and direction of the research needed to emerge out of the connections that could be made between the philosophical concepts and the knowledge gained through practical experiences of art educational events. The writing therefore zigzags its way through chapters and vignettes, maintaining creative connections with productive ideas that could be both obvious and obscure. The zigzagging encouraged growth in random and organic ways but produced nothing that could be called a question or problem until the final stages. The slow emergence of a cohesive and imaginative image that understood both the philosophy and the pragmatic processes became the hidden jewel buried deep within the methodology.

The methodological thinking invoked in the process of gaining a foothold within the research territory was also active within the writing of the thesis. My approach was to let it all unfold as if it was a complex narrative unknown to me, but cognisant of its own volition and containing its own seduction and sense of completion. I mean this, not in an *a priori* way, it was a kind of volition that gains momentum along the way and steers a course by calling upon the power of affect, intuition and serendipity. The resulting benefit has brought forth the trust needed to sustain a cohesive body of thought. During the research process, I have been transported through many different love affairs with theorists and their concepts, which have fueled the drive and brought intelligence to experience. Consequently, throughout the thesis I position small narratives (vignettes) as a means to envisage relevant concepts within a lived experiential reality so as to realise them beyond the theoretical. These vignettes are written as heartfelt and meaningful ingressions that locate abstract concepts as active experience within lived lives. Through researching what could be occurring for art students when they enter into relation with

the smooth space orientation of the milieu of the studio, I too find myself entering into relation with smooth space orientations and molecular thinking. This is with regard to how I gather research material, move in the direction of my searching and affectively acknowledge the manner in which it all unfolds. As my confidence increased in the process of becoming (becoming writer and becoming researcher) I have applied the intuitive and responsive mode to my day-to-day experiences, thereby enhancing my capacity to explore conceptual and cognitive understanding alongside the practical and perfunctory nature of the everyday.

The writing of this thesis is comparable to creating an artwork. My approach to thinking through the developing ideas as I make connections between theorists, experiences, vague hunches and personal narratives is akin to being a practicing artist in the studio. In addition to this, the “data” that I collect through these processes are primarily what St. Pierre(1997) would call “transgressive data — emotional data, dream data, sensual data, and response data — that are out-of-category and not usually accounted for in qualitative research methodology” (p. 175). The practicing artist also works to make connections between concepts and theories, and various affective elements and materials that have the capacity to portray particular art concepts through affective compositions. Like the artist, I too do not know the outcome of my efforts until it unfolds before me. I am not searching for answers to any particular problem. The focus of my research would only be uncovered in retrospect as I began to understand more fully the implications of the relevant concepts. The outcome of this process is contingent on poststructural critique and the valuing of emergent conceptual thinking. St. Pierre (1997) states that “qualitative researchers in the social sciences who are fond of poststructural critiques search for strategies that might enable them to produce different knowledge and to produce knowledge differently” (p. 175).

As I write and think, I feel as though I am producing knowledge differently, and sometimes I think by reading Spinoza, a 17th century Dutch philosopher, I am contemplating knowledge differently. Not that the ideas I am pondering are unique or new, far from it. However, they are being situated within a particular environment and at a particular time in history. It feels as if Spinoza’s ideas are not that historical and perhaps apply more now to our globalised multiplicities than to the context of 17th

century Dutch society. In pondering these vast time frames and the intent at hand, I oscillate between considering the possible educational and political implications of my findings and the desire to continue reaching and writing — shaping ideas and words that have the potential to culminate into something heroic. I do not mean heroic in terms of my own doing, but in the becoming of words and concepts that culminate in a useful set of practices that are inspirational and have the ability to insight change, to inspire action and propel art education into *its* heroic future. The researcher brings things together in such a way that concepts and practices, ideas and processes can be understood — it is the small acts embedded within a studio-based education that, to me, are heroic.

Like artists in their art practice, I too am cognisant of working with both the form and the content of the work that I create or the words that write themselves upon the page. I am looking for a synergy between knowledge and experience and a means to affectively involve the reader.

### IMPROMPTU COMPOSITIONS

My thinking as well as my reading and writing have at times intuitively choreographed themselves into impromptu compositions, instead of adhering to a preordained organised plan. I ventured into a vast territory with a very small idea and no perceivable end in sight. My initial innocence and ignorance kept my interest concentrated on the immediate notion or observation I was embracing, rather than developing a possible research question by concentrating on outcomes. I knew, back then, that I did not have a question as such just an idea regarding the unseen relations that assert operational and affective forces that are not directly observable within a sociality or educational interchange. This type of data is felt more than seen and is difficult to articulate. I muddled through with, what I will now claim, to have been the most appropriate radar and ability to recognise the vague and incoherent signposts that have delivered me to my present. The process wasn't regular, even or consistent, but spell-binding, challenging, thought-provoking and dynamic. It was deterritorialising and reterritorialising. I found myself picking up a book at exactly the right time and opening a page to find an appropriate, if not perfect passage that could push an idea further toward its adequacy or completion. This gave weight to my holistic understanding of the

purpose of the enquiry and provided some serendipitous experiences that kept the momentum buoyant and the drive strong, within a swelling tide of thought. The rhizomatic and haphazard mode of affective movement, which I focused my attention on, characterises my *modus operandi*. In other words, I am as much in the tumble of the affective machine — with regard to where I turn to for inspiration and research material — as the students are when they grapple with developing and contextualising ideas and the production of artwork. Within this creative process duration operates as a continuous unfolding of ideas and points of difference that not only meld together but also meld to existing understandings that together are capable of shifting conceptual reasoning and affective recognition. This has taught me to trust in the beckoning of a smooth space orientation and the freshness of molecular thinking; to bring my vague, incomplete and inadequate early ideas or hunches to fruition. The intuitive movement and responsive ability applied to this beckoning and the ensuing events, means that I can bring my will to the project with integrity.

I use the term “duration” in this thesis as of Bergson does in his theory of duration. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze (1991) argues that

continuous multiplicities seemed to him to belong essentially to the sphere of duration. In this way, for Bergson, duration was not simply the indivisible, nor was it the nonmeasurable. Rather, it was that which divided only by changing in kind, that which was susceptible to measurement only by varying its metrical principle at each stage of the division. (p. 40)

In the context of looking at and critiquing an artwork over a duration, in retrospect it is difficult to ascertain an order of affect-related responses or a sequential notion of building a concept or meaning for the said work. This occurs as the assimilation of the ideas created seem to impregnate the overall sense of what is being experienced; they meld together without diminishing the intensity of any one particular element that has impacted on our state of being. “Looked at from the perspective of pure duration, our states can be seen as to permeate and melt into one another without precise outlines and without any affiliation with number, in which past and present states form a whole” (Pearson & Mullarkey, 2002, p. 4). It is precisely through this means that realisations occur and ideas can be contextualised and made more adequate. In relation to my research the understanding of certain concepts seems to have permeated my thinking

over time, and it is difficult to identify the exact source or inspirational sentence or paragraph that ignited such interest and provided such motivation now.

## IN THE BEGINNING

When I began this enquiry into the quality of the art school studio environment and what I saw as its agreeable effect on art students and their developing identity as young adults —their own becoming — my theoretical and contextual understanding was somewhat limited. In a search for meaning, my ideas regarding the interface between the body and the studio milieu have mostly been borrowed from Baruch Spinoza, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Brian Massumi, Theresa Brennan and Simon O’Sullivan. The abstract form of these concepts was intellectually enticing to me, and I sensually understood aspects of their theories through art pedagogy and personal experiences of the art encounter. However, as I attempted to apply my knowledge of affect to this new research territory I realised my understanding was limited and could only be vaguely realised within the context of the emerging creative subject and the studio milieu.

In the beginning, I was unaware of the hidden power or force of the milieu of the art school studio and its impact on subjectivity. Likewise, my ideas regarding affect, bodies and matter were intuitively understood through semiotics and the encounter with art, however the finer negotiations and more philosophical understandings came about through reading the theorists listed above in addition to Jane Bennett, Karen Barad, Elizabeth Grosz, Isabelle Stengers and Bruno Latour. Their texts were read with great fervour until I could test, tease and assimilate the more pertinent ideas into my own affective and cognitive knowing. The context needed for these early notions of mine to move from being “inadequate” to becoming “more adequate” was not to search for contextualising information at the source — where “affect” or “matter” occurred as sensation. That source was already part of my sensibility; my body-knowing as an artist and an art educator. My personal body-knowing was something I felt I could trust. What I needed was to weave my way through a coming into relation with the conceptual theories and the experiences in meaningful ways where engagement and reflection could enhance or enlighten each other. I needed to experience the contingency of affect within the unfolding of an idea as it occurred *in my body*, and how that created an openness and possibilities in my thinking.

This wasn't something that I could plan or consciously bring to fruition. The process of completing ideas or clarifying ideas, turning inadequate ideas into more adequate ideas, arrived alongside other things such as a new book by Massumi landing in my mailbox, a bench full of dishes or the spontaneous second assemblage of the weta occurring by surprise in the supermarket. Ultimately Spinoza's concept of coaxing inadequate ideas toward more adequate ideas began to change the fundamental way I understood some of the educational events that I had engaged with for decades. In Chapter 8 and 9 I discuss more fully the reasons why these concepts are so important for my thesis and what the knowledge of them can mean for art education and the processual acts of individuation regarding the emerging creative subject. Needless to say, my methodology morphed into a rhizomatic experiential existence that permeated my entire life.

### THE FORCE OF MATTER AND THE TRANSMISSION OF AFFECT

Initially my research consciously engaged with two different fields of interest that were made known to me through art school pedagogy and personal experiences of the art studio's affective materiality. The first field was the "transmission of affect" (Brennan, 2004). I felt a compelling urge to understand affect's impact upon the learning subject working within the ecology of practices active within the studio. I was interested in the student being located as transmitter and receiver of affect and the implication of this for the body and, in parallel recognition, the mind. I was conscious that the experience of learning operating as discovery occurred through an intuitive mode of being and the sensations attached to something *feeling* right. Therefore my interest was further sparked as I read theorists' accounts of affect and its transmission and impact on the body, both physically (Brennan, 2004) and aesthetically (Deleuze, 2004c). Out of an interest in perception and aesthetics, art students are reasonably cognisant of the sensations felt when encounter occurs — albeit usually understood in the context of art — and how these sensations translate into meaning through conceptual ideas being suggested as perception is engaged. The process of reading art is a fundamental aspect of critiquing art and developing ideas. This occurs through the *art-making* process and the conscious reflection of progress throughout the duration of making as well as when *reading* or *critiquing* the end product.

The second field of interest was centred within new materialism: an appreciation of the power that objects, materials, things and matter assert (Bennett, 2004) operating as “actants” (Latour, 1993), which also impacts the intelligent body. This includes the aesthetic sensibility and the perceptual and affectual messages that are sensed as students connect affectively, visually and physically with all of that which is in proximity. Through my intellectual engagement with these concepts and the capacity this afforded in seeing such pragmatic action occurring within the culture of the studio, I was able to further shape new considerations and relevant ideas that ignited an interest in subjectivity and individuation. The realisation that this was the precious gem, I was searching for only unfolded toward the latter part of the research journey and only in conjunction with lived experiences and significant theories and philosophies providing signposts and diversions along the processual path.

## UNDERSTANDING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE SENSES

Deleuze is recognised as having proposed a new approach to the begetting of knowledge in that he “called for an education of the senses by exploring the faculties of perception” (Semetsky, 2009, p. 443). To perceive and to be affected by what is perceived or taken in is to understand knowledge through the senses. New thinking and new concepts are encountered, experienced and developed through the body. This means acknowledging the body as an equally functioning and important element in critical thinking and concept creation. This links with Spinoza’s (1996) theory about how we create meaning from affect. The importance of the context surrounding an encounter of affect needs to be considered as a necessary stage in creating an expanded understanding of an event, which provides the advantage of “other” or different perspectives. Over the duration of this study I have come to realise the importance of the senses. Our senses pick up the properties and elements within the milieu that we are in, and that is also in us. Our feelings respond to intensities of sensation impacting upon the body. These are felt as responses to the transmission and reception of affect, and running parallel these same sensations trigger ideas and direct thoughts. Affect can act like a contagion, where a host’s energy can be responsible for “infecting” those in proximity (Brennan, 2004).

## PARALLELISM: THE INTELLIGENT BODY

This attention to the body, its felt intensities of sensation (affect) through both sad and joyous means, is exemplified in Deleuze’s (1988) treatise on Spinoza where he writes:

One of the most famous theoretical theses of Spinoza is known as *parallelism*; it does not consist merely in denying any real causality between the mind and the body, it disallows any primacy of the one over the other. ...The practical significance of parallelism is manifested in the reversal of the traditional principle on which Morality was founded as an enterprise of domination of the passions by consciousness. It was said that when the body acted, the mind was being acted upon, and the mind did not act without the body being acted upon in turn. (Deleuze, 1988, p. 18)

The body and its affections are forefront in the understanding of art, semiotics and the encapsulation of concepts within the learning context of an art school studio environment. The body's response to affective encounters produces sensations that initiate and connect or cleave with new understandings expanding or re-contextualising the knowledge of that which is encountered. The body is forced into thought (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004) through such encounters, wherein new ideas form. Semetsky writes:

For Deleuze, knowledge is irreducible to a static body of facts but constitutes a dynamic process of inquiry as an experimental and practical art embedded in experience. Thus experience is not confined to a personal Cogito of a Cartesian subject but represents an experiment with the envioning world: we can and should learn from experience. (p. 443)

Semetsky uses the term “envioning world” to represent our complete environment, including geographies, landscapes, spaces, objects, as well as human and nonhuman bodies. For Semetsky, “Experience is that quasi-objective milieu which provides us with the capacity to affect and to be affected; it is a-subjective and pre-personal” (p. 443). Deleuze (1988) might see Semetsky's form of research as a dynamic form of enquiry, as “an order of composition and decomposition” (p. 19). Deleuze says, “We enter into composition with and decompose one another according to complex laws” (p. 19) he writes this in reference to Spinoza's (1996) postulate P14: “*The human mind is capable of perceiving a great many things, and is the more capable, the more its body can be disposed in a great many ways*” (p. 44). Spinoza demonstrates this proposition as follows:

For the human body ... is affected in a great many ways by external bodies, and is disposed to affect external bodies in a great many ways. But the human mind must perceive everything which happens in the human body by (P12). Therefore, the human mind is capable of perceiving a great many things, and is the more capable”. (p. 44)

Spinoza paints an image of a perceptive mind that is cognisant in some way of knowing the body that it is. He conceptualises the body's capacity as capable of unfolding and so creating a greater capacity and capability. Throughout the unfolding of this research territory, I have experienced particular events in very palpable ways. This has enabled an engagement with theories regarding affect and the begetting of more adequate ideas to be experienced through pragmatic means. I can now recognise some of the ways in which these abstract concepts are found within my everyday life, and in turn I can more easily visualise practical applications or manifestations of abstract concepts as I discover them anew. I have relied on my body experiences and my mind's perceptive relation to them to carve a path and create not only a territory of research interests but also a growing capacity to *become* through and with the body and its relation to the mind.

## INTUITION AND RHIZOMATIC MOVEMENT

Bergson often presents intuition as a simple act. But, in his view, simplicity does not exclude a qualitative and virtual multiplicity, various directions in which it comes to be actualised. It is in this sense that intuition involves a plurality of meanings and irreducible multiple aspects. ... It is by showing how we move from one meaning to another and what the fundamental meaning is that we are able to rediscover the simplicity of intuition as lived act, and thus answer the general methodological question. (Deleuze, 1991, p. 14)

Through the researching and writing of this thesis I have come to realise that the intuitive methodology I adopted has ultimately become a safeguard against an unwarranted use of time and energy, and it is now integrated as one of my guiding principles. Such a methodology has emerged out of my propensity for being open to coming into contact with a plethora of material both theoretical and practical, where my senses select that which sparks my interest. This means of accommodating the peripheral and allowing an engagement with material that operates within a vagueness of understanding — but moves into the realm of knowing upon my focusing on it — is the “fringe of vague intuition that Bergson speaks of. Bergson explains, “the fringe of vague intuition that surrounds our distinct—that is intellectual—representation” (Bergson, 2014, p. 49). Bergson explains:

For what can this useless fringe be, if not that part of the evolving principle which has not shrunk to the peculiar form of our organisation, but has settled around it unasked for, unwanted? It is there accordingly, that we must look for hints to expand the intellectual

form of our thought; from there shall we derive the impetus necessary to lift us above ourselves. (p. 49)

To make good use of the ability to reinstate peripheral and vague knowledges into the present understanding I may have of the content and thrust of my thesis, means to be open to moving and selecting material through affective encounters and intuitive choosing. This can encapsulate the very vital aspects that congregate within the periphery of practical experience or reason and that have managed not to be organised through more formal means and are more likely to have maintained something other or different from the status quo. The openness and awareness necessary in the processing of this vague material occurs in conjunction with affective body responses to and with the material. In other words, the rhizomatic type of movement itself is of little value to me unless it comes about through the employment of my affective capacity. It is the power of attraction and the intensity of affect that reaches into the dense geography and uncovers that which will serve my interest. It is this affective understanding of the material and my willingness to explore the territory that creates the rhizomatic movement. Being open and aware becomes a way of receiving that which is otherwise obscured but nevertheless could be capable of influencing or swerving one's engagement, or indeed the value of the research. A vociferous battle rages between the two forces of agentic power: my need to garner the knowledge necessary to excavate the territory with confidence and my ability to access the wisdom, held steadfast within the material, until concepts crystallise and passion returns.

### THE RHIZOME

Deleuze and Guattari (2004) list six guiding principles for the rhizome. The first two are concerned with “connection” and “heterogeneity”, two fundamental values that inform ways of doing things. Deleuze and Guattari develop these two principles thus: “Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order” (p. 7) A rhizome moves between things in a lateral manner collecting and amassing on a consistent plane as opposed to a hierarchical order. Deleuze and Guattari elaborate:

A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only

linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. (p. 8)

My methodology was driven by a curiosity augmented through an intuitive and affect-laden engagement with knowledge. I sense that the manner, with which I take up and explore the results of such curiosity is operating intuitively and can only be described as working in relation to unpredictable lateral movement, connectivity and heterogeneity. This occurs where rigour and chance become good friends, where new points are made and new lines are forged between, in process of “nomad thought” (Massumi, 2004, p. xii). Nomad thought “does not immure itself in the edifice of an ordered interior; it moves freely in an element of exteriority. It does not repose identity, it rides difference” (2004, p. xii), unlike an “arborescent model” (p. xii), where, “what constitutes arborescence is the submission of the line to the point” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 322). When moving in nomad thought, what matters are not the points through which the lines zig and zag, where current concepts and their interpretations function “simply as temporary, transitory and evanescent points of subjectivation – but the collection of bifurcating, divergent and muddled lines” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. ix). These lines connect different ideas, different domains and at times different species. Without these lines that bifurcate, diverge and muddle I cannot expect to fully understand the territory at large.

Zigzagging lines, not only constitute connectivity but are also a fundamental aspect of my research. The lines connect not points but assemblages along the way, creating new compositions as they move rhizomically culminating in a “multiplicity” which can pass “between the points carrying them along without ever going from the one to the other” (p. ix), without forming a binary or a closed conversation being posed in a linear format and without being the point at the end of either a zig or a zag.

### THE SEED THAT SPREADS

The connectivity I experience is sometimes a shout from one space, or idea, to another: sometimes it is as if the whole room is filled with excited moviegoers, or a group of old friends catching up. I refer to “old friends” here because of the sense of accumulation and readiness that prevails in friendship. And often, the means by which we expand our

friendship circle is through meeting friends of friends, which is very similar to the way I read philosophy. Through one text I am led into a field of thinkers who beckon my mind and unravel yet another philosophical or sociological paradigm. As I read, their words bring to life a variety of contexts and connections that tangle and cross paths as the bits and bites play themselves out within a critically organised and yet haphazardly experiential world. A world that can seed new growth and new lines of thought, and help shape an organic, viral-type, exponentially expanding nub of knowledge. Imagine an inkblot spreading its thin inkiness, merging with other inkblots that swerve and tilt toward and away from each other as the substrate shifts on its axis. In this case the substrate is me — my sensibility, my thinking. It is my force in the matter of understanding and growing an idea, planting it in rich assemblage-type scenarios and being interested in its affective/infective conditions. This gives me a chance to capture the release of new knowledge as it makes its way toward me and merges with my view of the world. This shifting axis becomes the new stability, a locatable mechanism continually refreshing as if by unseen logarithms. However, here the shifts or movements are determined not by a preordained set of values, rules or ideas, but by a plethora of chance encounters, deep interest in the topic and a trust in being able to uncover something useful.

### TRUSTING INTUITION

The research for this thesis has unfolded as an intuitive, resounding, wiggly-path-building capacity reflecting nomadic movement as I was spontaneously infected by intuitions, suggestions and hunches, looking for what seemed an unsolvable problem. Manning (2016) observes, “A solvable problem was never really a problem, Bergson reminds us. Only when a question is inline with the *creation of a problem* is it truly operational” (p. 10). The problems I seek through this project are the ones that will unfold and surprise me as they craft themselves into my thinking and into the thesis. Although these problems seemed obscure or illusive initially, the response to them has come out of an enquiry that sets a context for thinking (art education, studio milieu and its smooth and striated space orientations as well as the shifts in thinking from the molar to the molecular). In other words, I am building more and more adequate ideas that form the context for thinking about and thinking through art pedagogy and its value to the emerging creative subject.

On the nature of ideas Bergson (2007) writes:

It is the clarity of the radically new and absolutely simple idea, which catches as it were an intuition. As we cannot reconstruct it with pre-existing elements, since it has no elements, and as on the other hand, to understand without effort consists in recomposing the new from what is old, our first impulse is to say it is incomprehensible... One must... distinguish between the ideas that keep their light for themselves, making it penetrate immediately into their slightest recesses and those whose radiation is exterior, illuminating a whole region of thought. (p. 23)

Manning (2016) states that “the challenge as Bergson underscores, involves crafting the conditions not to solve problems, or to resolve questions, but to illuminate regions of thought through which problems-without-solutions can be intuited” (p. 10). I started with a problem-without-a-solution. The same challenge is prevalent within the processes of making art where the aim of researching and developing ideas through making is also to illuminate regions of thought for the artist who can then manifest artwork that can possibly act as conduits to those regions of thought. These same processes that are attached to how art is made and what art *does*, in terms of creating ideas also map a methodology most appropriate to this enquiry. Within the studio context rhizomatic movement is not only endorsed but also relevant to the type of enquiry that takes place for student-artists, and proves to be an appropriate partner to intuition. When learning is centred in the interest of the student-subject it can be all-encompassing, providing an attachment not only to the outcome but also to rich understanding of how the process of learning occurs for them personally. Although many students wouldn’t use terminology such as “affect” and “intensities”, it is these *body* responses and recognitions that can sustain interest and shift thinking. The ability to follow one’s appetite in relation to what is perceived to be visually stimulating or entertaining a sense of attraction held within the affected body augments the ability to act, opine and be enraptured. Through these admirable qualities the intelligent body can embrace knowing and learning.

The studio dynamic utilises a fluidity that enables the body to intuitively use personal affect-related responses in the process of becoming-artist and becoming-researcher. The experience of internalised and intuitive timing, working in relation to rhizomatic movement, creates connectivity with otherwise disparate or un-thought elements and ideas, creating new possibilities and novel compositions. Deleuze (1991) suggests that “intuition is the method of Bergsonism. Intuition is neither a feeling, an inspiration, nor

a disorderly sympathy, but a fully developed method, one of the most fully developed methods in philosophy” (p. 13). This claim comes as no surprise to the artist, who utilises intuition as method, and usually has knowledge and experience of how intuition adheres to “strict rules, that which Bergson calls ‘precision’ in philosophy” (p. 13). Deleuze elaborates:

The fact is that Bergson relied on the intuitive method to establish philosophy as an absolutely “precise” discipline, as precise in *its* field, as capable of being prolonged and transmitted as science itself is. And without the methodical thread of intuition, the relationship between Duration, Memory and *Élan Vital* would themselves remain indeterminate from the point of view of knowledge. (p. 14)

Deleuze is drawing our attention here to intuitive acts. Although they are often thought of and presented as immediate and simple acts, Deleuze (1991) says that in Bergson’s view “simplicity does not exclude a qualitative and virtual multiplicity, various directions and in which it comes to be actualized” (p. 14). He also suggests that “we must bring intuition as rigorous and precise method to the forefront of our discussions” (p. 14). Working with intuition as both a method and an approach has brought to my attention the significant aspects of this type of methodology and the frames of reference it employs. In short a methodology based on intuition uses duration to verify and immediacy to capture. As simple as it may seem, rhizomatic movement and intuitive, responsive behaviours enable encounters with new material that suggest new thought, appreciation and action. This expanded process becomes a familiar *modus operandi* for creative practitioners because responsive engagement through and with materials at hand hones the senses, creates context, and enhances imaginative possibilities.

#### BERGSON AND THE RULES OF TRUE AND FALSE PROBLEMS

Following Bergson, Deleuze (1991) states:

Bergson distinguishes essentially three distinct sorts of acts that in turn determine the rules of the method. ... The first concerns the stating and creating of problems; the second, the discovery of the genuine differences in kind; the third the apprehension of real time (p. 14).

The question here is how to ascertain that the problem is a problem and be sure to “apply the test of true and false problems themselves. Condemn false problems and reconcile truth and creation at the level of the problem” (p. 15). Deleuze explains,

For Bergson,

the truth is that in philosophy and even elsewhere it is a question of *finding* the problem and consequently of *positing* it, even more than of solving it. For a speculative problem is solved as soon as it is properly stated. By that I mean that its solution exists then, although it may remain hidden and, so to speak, covered up: The only thing left to do is to *uncover* it. But stating the problem is not simply uncovering, it is inventing. ... the effort of invention consists most often in raising the problem, in creating the terms in which it will be stated. The stating and the solving of the problem are here very close to being equivalent: The truly great problems are set forth only when they are solved. (p. 16)  
(as cited in Deleuze, 1991, p. 15)

Had I begun this project with a solvable problem, one that I understood but needed to prove, I would have not have been able to perceive, let alone reconcile, what I now consider an honest question. It is, for me, a question that resonates with what it is to be human and what occurs for the intelligent body within the context of becoming. The third act regarding the intuitive method is to “state problems and solve them in terms of time rather than of space” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 15). The problem or question — concerning the art school studio milieu and its impact on individuation — that eventually revealed itself to me, came to my mind through time rather than as a consequence of space.<sup>16</sup> Intuitive action propelled through affect recognition, employing a Bergson-type precision, has been paramount to the development of my ideas regarding what happens in art school studio situations. The responsive activity in body and mind also stimulates the driving force that has put one thing in front of another and kept me interested and the thesis alive. More succinctly and in Deleuze’s (1991) words. “It is by showing how we move from one meaning to another and what the ‘fundamental meaning’ is, that we are able to rediscover the simplicity of intuition as lived act, and thus answer the general methodological question” (p. 14).

#### INTUITIVE METHODS

The intuitive methods and processes belonging to art-making and art education are no different from the processes I utilised within my methodology for ascertaining body knowledge and ideas regarding the unfolding of an ultimately adequate idea that was pertinent to my enquiry and became a “true” problem (Deleuze, 1991, p. 15). I have

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<sup>16</sup> I will discuss the outcome of my enquiry and the link between affect, the milieu and individuation in greater depth in chapter 9 and chapter 10 of the thesis.

learnt to acknowledge and trust the immediate and responsive signs that resonate in the body and that signify affective body knowledge. These body responses trigger cognitive function just as individual waves roll into shore and the sand, like my mind gets a soaking. This new understanding, because it is gained through external abstract concepts as well as internal bodily recognitions, fills what would otherwise be a gap in an understanding that could hunger for closure.

As I made some progress about where this study was heading, and not knowing why it felt important or what I could achieve, I discovered the invention of the problem would not occur until after it had been answered. In other words, I only understood there was an ethical dimension to individuation within the context of art education when I uncovered the complex role of duration within the contextualising and shared voicing of ideas.

Within the context of the art critique, mapping a context for the affective encounter requires time and sustained effort. When an inadequate idea is received, it will require further thought and perhaps action to be understood within a contextual territory — to be acknowledged or taken in as affectively and cognitively as possible. This new affective and cognitive knowledge amalgamates with the familiar ideas and in doing so expands the context of the new (inadequate) idea to become more adequate. This process also expands the familiar existing idea or knowledge through and with the availability of accepting the different or new inadequate or incomplete idea. Had I not employed time and effort in this way in the researching of my project, I would not have understood the difference between inadequate and adequate ideas — in theory or in practice — and the advantages of an expanded contextual meaning that of ethical thinking's relation to the processual acts of individuation. To bring this notion out into the open would be to say that in light of its ethical orientation, other different forms of individuation occurring through communication, sociality, and education could lack the slow thinking and durational contemplation needed for the development of ethical thought patterns and their applied behaviours.

The idea that certain milieu may only provide or promote “inadequate” ideas in the service of individuation has only come about, for me, by appreciating the benefit of the

pedagogy and practices occurring within an art school studio milieu. My understanding has occurred through an intuitive enquiry, an understanding of the role of affect, and the gaining of the confidence to *not* have a question from which all things must flow. Bergson states: “Discovery, or uncovering, has to do with what already exists, actually or virtually; it was therefore certain to happen sooner or later. The invention gives being to what did not exist; it might never have happened” (as cited in Deleuze, 1991, p. 13). I cannot claim an invention as such, although my question did not exist at the outset; it only came into being as elements emerged from the theories, practices and contexts gained through time, effort and the intuitive actions of the becoming-researcher. The invention for me is not the discovery of theories pertaining to ethics in connection with individuation, but more powerfully, the unfolding of experiential knowledge that contextualises philosophical understanding regarding affect, individuation and ethics. In Chapter 8 of this thesis I explore the processual acts belonging to the concept of individuation as well as the activities that enable the practice of ethical thinking to occur within the art school studio.

## DISREGARDING A CENTRAL QUESTION

At the onset of this research I had a sense that an unfolding would occur, and that the way forward would present itself within the smooth space orientation of events through which, hopefully, a durational manifestation of discovery would take place. I could not perhaps have used that terminology then, but I was very trusting that the process would shape itself into a direction of sorts. I trusted that the significant gems collected along the way would slowly and intuitively inform and infiltrate ideas about educational practice, art conversations and “becomings”. These gems ultimately led to the vital concepts and practices that helped shape the processes of individuation. This created the prospect of seeing the studio dynamic and pedagogical events as capable of supporting ethical acts and consideration of others as active individuating processual encounters. Here, I mean acts that are ignited through affect, and are capable of promoting a kind of thinking that appreciates difference and supports the enquiry or enthusiasm for wanting to know more.

## WORKING WITH INDETERMINATE ZONES

As my research practice is immersed in ideas and concepts regarding affect, transitions and the in-between, the scope of my processual work tends to be associated “with zones that are precisely not determined or localising and where things may go off in unforeseen directions or work in unregulated ways” (Rajchman, 2000, p. 5). In contrast to a traditional research methodology that clarifies a central question or naming the objective, I was determined to *not* claim a question before the solution unfolded, *not* name the objective or outcome and *not* demarcate material or data in a logical and known fashion. Instead I aimed to move between known and unknown “things” or information — thereby making or realising connections and conduits that may otherwise be obscured or lost entirely.

## EMPIRICAL WORK

In the beginning, I began thinking through how I would achieve the knowledge and understanding required to ascertain the impact of the art school studio milieu on the students and their learning capacity, and I could only imagine a thesis wrapped around an empirical study. I could only imagine a thesis that was capable of digging underground and fleshing out important insights from students that perhaps dovetailed with my own experiences or hunches. In the very early days of this research and after several attempts to interview students were carried out, I quickly became aware that this avenue would not serve my understanding of how problems arise and solutions are found. Although I gained some insight into the joys and frustrations felt within the context of studio behaviour and accommodation, the data only served to confirm what was already known.

I conducted empirical studies at two different universities, which were never intended to be comparative, but to be experienced to serve a curiosity and desire for a diverse and different mix of voices. I am grateful to the students who invited me into their studio spaces and shared their art studio experiences with me. It was the futility of trying to collect “transgressive data” that could not be categorised or themed that led me to redirect my energy and effort in a bid to find a different way of doing whatever I was doing, as my desire to ultimately secure a *real* or *true* question.

Throughout this thesis I use different types of contextual data expressed through stories and reflections — outcomes belonging to individuals that are embedded within the relayed narratives. I use “different” here in terms of Deleuze’s sense of “difference”, where “even if things might be conceived as having shared attributes allowing them to be labelled as being of the same kind, Deleuze’s conception of difference seeks to privilege the individual difference between them” (Stagoll, 2005, p. 74). When looking for how some act or thing might be impacting on a cohort of students, the more common form of ascertaining evidence or information regarding their responses is to identify where the impact affects the majority of the cohort. From this perspective *sameness* is important, and in some cases, this is relevant. In my pursuit of understanding the lived experiences reflecting the theories I am following, I refer to Stagoll’s (2005) words: “Deleuze’s difference-in-itself, releases difference from domination by identity and sameness” (p. 75). If we think of how we perceive difference it is often by using comparative skills to prove that the difference exists, and that difference is referenced through means of a binary or linear thinking and is “understood in terms of resemblance, identity, opposition and analogy” (p. 75). Bigger or smaller, alike but different, are examples of linear thinking that can easily lead to prejudiced judgements that fail to privilege “the individual difference between them” (p. 74).

Within the context of collecting information from many different sources and through personal experiences, I have often privileged the small differences occurring that denote a movement or shift in sensibility and open a space for the formation of new ideas. These small shifts usurped the leadership role from the larger paradigmatic overview, which enabled the recognition of “minor gestures” (Manning, 2016) and leisurely vagueness to prevail. This move toward the detail as well as the acceptance of duration as part of my methodology meant that any ideas of an empirical study quickly faded into another project for another time.

## CONCLUSION

It was never my intention to be focused on a specific object, action or question in my doctoral research. From the outset of this enquiry I intended to acknowledge a broader context that could inform art school studio culture and help clarify its access to the mechanisms that shift and divert thinking from the habitus or from the molar to the

molecular. Intuition as method has served me well throughout this process of gaining a footing within a complex territory and expanding contexts. This process culminates in what I believe are more adequate solutions than what could have been found using a traditional qualitative methodology. This research is an enquiry, understood through a Deleuzian lens, and situated within the deterritorialising and reterritorialising processes functioning within the realm of the art school studio. These processes potentially offer new ways of thinking about (and being responsible to) states of becoming, occurring through the complex perceptive and cognitive information that prevails within the context of the studio milieu. The path to becoming-researcher, the discovery of concepts, and the unfolding of ideas, stories and experiences have uncovered valuable solutions within this enquiry and manifested for me the practice of an exquisite and intuitive economy.

## CHAPTER 7

# BECOMING RESEARCHER: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

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### INTRODUCTION

As I moved toward my goal of recognising a question or problem, it began to form itself as vague suggestions or a series of notations upon the horizon, becoming a whole other set of mechanics manifesting molecular thinking as lines of flight took off. Initially I had been earnestly pursuing a better understanding of the dynamic operating within the art school studio, however the enquiry into my original hunches did not materialise in a manner that felt productive or one that offered new ways of thinking about what an art education can do. My practice of thinking and writing about the milieu of the art school studio and how it impacts on the emerging creative subject has developed primarily through a rhizomatic form of movement that has threaded its way through texts and experiences that I recognised as pertinent to the project. This meant the author, researcher and writer within me was immersed in what felt like the middle of body-pertinent affective experiences both inside the studio context and outside of it, experiences which strangely mirrored each other. I knew that these experiences meant something, however I was not quite able to piece it all together in any sort of chronology or logical sequence for some time.

Determined to ride it out I continued to feel my way through the research material and my everydayness of affective experiences, until an assemblage formed, as described in the *Becoming Weta* vignette (Chapter 2), where the weta appears to make a second appearance — asserting its power and momentarily implicating bystanders as well as the shopping basket, in a supermarket aisle on a cloudy day. This assemblage was experienced as a lived reality capable of composing itself mentally and emotionally, and inserting itself within an immediate physical and corporeal context. The assemblage when experienced (in this manner) simultaneously refers to other significant and

affective experiences and memories of the art school studio. The experience in the supermarket provided a lasting image and an affective understanding of how a series of disparate elements spontaneously becomes an assemblage. The supermarket shopping basket now holds, for me, an extra significance. Similar traits and elements are often at play when we encounter art or specifically artwork within a dynamic environment housing aesthetically affective materials and an assortment of productive bodies.

### THE STUDIO AS A PARTICULAR KIND OF “MADE” THING

There have been times when I have entered art school studios and felt that I could critique the state of these spaces as if they existed as artworks/installations, each one adhering to its own configuration and “understood as a particular kind of ‘made’ thing”(O’Sullivan, 2006, p. 38). However, during these times when I have encountered such accumulations of matter in studios I do not disclose my thoughts out loud but I wander through the mass of it, which overwhelms me and I cannot voice my response to it: I am just in it. This mass includes artworks, art materials, failed experiments, old ideas, little gems and leftovers. I fall prey to encounter and a collision of bodies, human and non-human, which seem to propel themselves toward me through their independent, compelling and competing visual language; a cacophony of active ingredients and assorted materials sporting and plotting their next appearance, or demand for response. I am hit with an immediate experience of sensory loading — dominating and reaching into me — touching my thoughts and affecting my mood such that I forget what I am there to do or say. Inside the visual noise of the room I become silent. I am stunned but also intrigued, moved and changed. It does not matter if the experience is a positive one or not: it only matters that it is an experience. An experience situated against and alongside other similar experiences occurring en masse for all who locate themselves within this type of environment. The studio is laden with experiences of “encounter” and therefore the experiences of becoming “other” through encounter are commonly felt, albeit through different intensities and form, within this space.

This environment is articulate, aesthetic and disruptive and it impacts on our bodies. Sometimes things deterritorialise themselves, perhaps through unknown means or considered acts, and reterritorialise as rubbish when once they were meaningful materials to be utilised as art. Or else a pile of what seems to be junk reterritorialises as

art. It's perhaps not so important to ascertain how this occurs or the particular quality of singular objects or the multiplicities that form within the art school studio. However, what is important is the effect the assemblage and accumulation of its components has on the human bodies in its grasp. How much of this active and agentic conglomeration within the studio is determined by chance or by organisation? I ask as if it could be determined by either of those qualities. In what way does this assembly of objects, matter, affect, and bodies actively manifest and transmit joyous and sad affect? These questions may not have immediate or specific answers however I'm suggesting that this unspoken but hugely dynamic *thingness* that exists — particularly in art school studios but also elsewhere — is determined by chance AND organisation and can also be understood and harnessed for its beneficial means within the learning environment.

As an example of how connections are made and assemblages are formed within the experience of the bystander, New Zealand artist Mark Schroder's (2013) artwork *Motel Amnesia*, initially discussed in Chapter 2 (see figs 2.1 & 2.2) provides an encounter that is capable of bridging the space between the viewer's recognition of sensational material and the affect of the encountered materiality. This ability to pass between the idea and a lived experience performs its best work in the art encounter, although this has also been my experience as I have been immersed in the writing of this thesis. When encountered *Motel Amnesia* offers a highly sensory experience. For me a work like this is capable of initiating a palpable return to ideas that carry us (the viewer-bystander) beyond the immediate moment and into both a past and a future.

On walking through *Motel Amnesia* the viewer is transported through time and space. A threshold is crossed, in fact crisscrossed — we may want to keep our distance, but the moist earth reaches our nostrils, just as we become cognisant of the sound emanating out of a small TV or the casual discarding of a cigarette butt. On closer observation, I realise that the cigarette butts are ceramic and handmade (see figs 2.2). I am cognisant of the craft of making, creating, even the smallest details that add to the feeling that I am balancing somewhere between life and art. The transmitted affect penetrates through sight, smell and sound creating lasting impressions and triggering new thinking about such materiality, construction and history including personal memory. This kind of experience is akin to the impact of the transmitted affect, of the studio environment,

upon my thinking. I can now add these lived moments of an art encounter to the concept at hand and to my ever-expanding capacity to take on and assimilate the complexity of affective absorption by the body and its inevitable memory and returns.

## COLLABORATION BETWEEN SPACE, AFFECT AND COGNITION

The processual events and minor gestures that connect in space, and through affect, cannot be planned nor ritualised. They occur as compelling creative acts or callings that suggest attention be given. This kind of mapping of ideas is soft, rhythmical and penetrating while it also advances the research toward future concepts that are, in the present, unknown. These experiences are both surprising and humbling. I prefer to think of this enquiry as a collaborative effort between dynamic space, a particular way of thinking, and affective and cognitive capacities. In effect, this is the becoming of me, the researcher, occurring within the context of an unwritten problem.

## HAECCEITY

Within the duration of the unfolding of my research question I became familiar with the concept of “haecceity”. According to Davies and Gannon (2009),

Haecceity or this-ness, as Halsey analyses it, is integral to what Deleuze calls smooth space – the space that escapes the over-coded striations of territorialised space. Smooth space enables an immersion in the present moment, in time and in place, that often eludes us in the press of normative expectations, of habitual thoughts and practices, and of submission to the dominant, often clichéd codes that make up the existing order. (p. 9)

To *not* submit to the dominant codes or normative expectations can lead a practical or intellectual process toward an unknown endpoint or result. To be immersed in the present moment is to be open to intuition and the “not yet signs” (Bergson, 2007, p. 13) of a possible (immediate or distant) future.

The way in which I read and absorb theories, philosophies, histories and human experiences becomes my methodology, mirroring the way in which I experience and understand affect, matter and encounter within the art school studio. From somewhere in the middle of it all, and with much insight from Deleuze and Guattari amongst others, a particular thinking about encounter, affect and “thisness” (McKechnie, 1963, p. 816) releases from the material or data as well as the transgressive experiences being

had. This thinking operates as an active agent and example of how I negotiate not only the space of the studio but also the research material, philosophical concepts and the ideas that emerge through the practice of writing. I have included below a short vignette — a reflection on my habitation of the processes through which I explored my research territory.

## HABITATION

*I inhabit the territory of my enquiry. I am in it and I pass through it, mapping lines between points of intensity in that which I encounter, and that which initiates intensity in me upon my encounter with it. The path zigzags its way between things and because of things. I take notice and connect these things to other things that I know, in order for me to become other and in order to know a not-yet-known idea, concept or plane of existence. In order to also see the way things happen through different perspectives, which are driven by particular notions or philosophical concepts. This way of doing things, discovering and validating, does not aim to fill every corner evenly or perform a completion, but to create an image, an imprint or trace, a diagram that maps ideas about subjectivity and becoming onto other ideas about objects, affect and space. All the while ideas about affect, space and objects get mapped onto and into the body (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). And here I mean my body AND the body of the text.*

*This mapping has a kind of porosity as things inevitably slip through holes, in and out, and here I'm thinking of not-yet-drawn relations possibly appearing and re-appearing, as marks join other similar marks, when called into being. They can die without trace. Sometimes the indent of the original mark is known to the substrate no matter how deftly it is erased and sometimes it is superseded and just disappears without a trace. Over a duration, other things — ideas and knowledge, juxtapositions and relations — come into play and impregnate a theme, hijack thinking and produce more poetic and pragmatic marks, dots, dashes, indents and imprints. These propel me, the writer/researcher, through a deterritorialisation of both the object of the current mode or thinking and the substrate or site at which it connects; a deterritorialisation takes place for me, alongside the impact it has on the content of the research, determining a*

*reterritorialisation with new possibilities, new encounters and the manifestation of new understanding. After all what I most wanted to come out of such an enquiry was the advent of something that in the beginning I did not know. I focus for a time on the movement away from the familiar or habitus — or from the molar identity or form of identifying — to the molecular and on to experiencing new concepts and lines of flight. I am not only looking for evidence of lines of flight but I am also working to procure such affect through my experiences regarding this enquiry, and by extension create a move toward a more expansive and useful horizon.*

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## ATTRACTION AND AFFECTIVE COUPLING

My methodology is familiar with the lore of attraction and affective coupling. In practical terms, it works like this: my raised attention (toward an idea, an act, an experience or a concept) signals a shift in thinking — toward the smooth or molecular. If it resonates throughout the duration and coheres with or befriends or touches my existing theories, concepts or philosophical frames of reference, this new idea, concept or experience will inevitably become an additional element within the research dynamic. This new composition then creates a new imaging of the research and therefore creates a shift in the possible outcome of the study. As the shift in thinking is taken up through this new dimension, new and ready-made assemblages are recognised and assimilated into the research landscape. This occurs as time and effort attempts to “untie the knots” (Ellwood, 2011) and connect the signs within the scope of the territory. The territory I speak of here, is the becoming of the practical day-to-day experiences of the researcher, recomposing the accumulating knowledge. The utilisation of intuition as a working method fundamentally drives the recognition of assemblage as compositions of affective bodies, and the sense of their combined or composite ability to either augment or diminish action. This is manifested through the transmission and reception of affect and the corresponding expanding intensities experienced in the body as a result of an encounter with a new composition of elements.

## MAPPING THE TERRITORY AND THE METHODOLOGY

In the following vignette, I recount my impression of an encounter with the studio as if it is a painting or photograph. The recounting operates as a reflective account or mapping of a method — my method.

### SMALL AND SIGNIFICANT PATCHES

*Small and significant patches map themselves onto a larger landscape as if caught in a painting whereby the daubs and dashes layers and lineages are not necessarily applied uniformly or logically. Hereby they cannot or do not want to appear in any organised or consistent form outside of the narrative and logic of sensation belonging to the image, or for the matter of this thesis, outside the intention of this research. The patches, daubs and dashes build as needed in varying depths, colours, tones and scale, inhabiting spaces and creating connections and new intensities. These rendered elements, formed through intuitive and responsive acts form a becoming within scholarly and creative practice, emphasising and elevating other elements within the plane of what already exists. The paint applied is always in relation to the substrate as it thickens with the laying down of different colours and tones, and simultaneously in relation to the external or viewed surface, creating as it goes relations between form and idea, craft and image, concept and meaning — often using visual punctuations. These punctuations are representational and abstract definitions that provide direct conduits to the heart of the work. As I roam around the palette of the painting (and the research) I find myself being pulled-up, or stopped by a highly affective locus of power or point that channels affect back into me; the thinking me who has forgotten the search for a directive or question.*

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Roland (Barthes, 1983) uses the word “punctum”, an anatomical term that refers to a sharp point or tip to define or explain an element in a photograph that is poignant, seeds the decisive moment, or denotes the touching and highly affective detail that secures the relationship between the viewer of the image and the subject of the image. Barthes states, “A photograph’s punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)” (p. 26). There is a difference between the ground and the

point, the studium and the punctum. Barthes compares these two elements in a series of war photographs, beginning with the studium:

The first, (the studium) obviously is an extent, it has the extension of a field, which I perceive quite familiarly as a consequence of my knowledge, my culture; this field can be more or less stylized, more or less successful, depending on the photographer's skill or luck, but it always refers to a classical body of information: rebellion, Nicaragua, and all the signs of both: wretched un-uniformed soldiers, ruined streets, corpses, grief, the sun, and the heavy-lidded Indian eyes. Thousands of photographs consist of this field, and in these photographs, I can of course take a kind of general interest, one that is even stirred sometimes, but in regard to them my emotion requires the rational intermediary of an ethical and political culture. What I feel about these photographs derives from an average affect, almost from a certain training. (p. 26)

The second element, the punctum, “will break (or punctuate) the studium”; it is this element “which rises from the scene, shoots out of it and pierces me” (1983, p. 26). It is not surprising that we find a similar element functioning in a similar way in painting. For me the milieu of the studio is the studium and the affective events of encounters, that occur are the punctum. The space of the studio and our expectation of it to perform a housing, and create a definition of education suggests that it may also function as the studium for the students or “extent”. The rupturing events, actions or affective punctures from human and non-human affect can be viewed as the punctum. With reference to Francis Bacon's paintings, Deleuze (2004c), calls such punctures or intensities “diagrams”, which employ high-interest impact to ignite sensation, intensify aesthetic qualities and sustain a viewing longevity. He states:

The diagram is never an optical effect, but an unbridled manual power. It is a frenetic zone in which the hand is no longer guided by the eye and is forced upon sight like another will, which appears as chance, accident, automatism, or the involuntary. (Deleuze, 2004c, p. 111)

The diagram Deleuze detects in Bacon's paintings operates more in the abstract than Barthes' punctum in photography, however they essentially perform very similar tasks that can leave lasting impressions. The diagram in painting and the punctum in photography assert a powerful juxtaposition or composition within the larger compositional organisation of the artwork.

Deleuze (2004c) goes on to discuss the diagram in relation to rest and agitation: “The diagram is indeed a stopping or resting point in Bacon’s paintings, ...a rest surrounded by an immense agitation, or on the contrary one that surrounds the most agitated kind of life” (p. 111). When engaged in research or carrying out empirical work, one finds this very type of agitation rising out of the studium or backdrop. The punctum or the diagram – the ruptures and intensities from life – brings forth new concepts and the recognition of abstract thought that can shift our knowing. Even a small measure of intensity is never an ending, nor is it the only thing that constitutes a learning, especially when engaged in semiotic readings of a more extensive situation or aesthetic. To confirm and to make very clear the relation between the diagram and the body of the work, Deleuze states that “To say that the diagram is a stopping point in the painting is not to say that it completes or constitutes the painting; indeed, on the contrary, it acts like a relay” (p. 111). This condition of semiotic language is also present for the punctum in photography as it refers us to indexical reality, relaying us backwards and forwards, as does the expression of knowledge within the process of the methodology used to create this project. This means the expression of knowledge, as understood by me, the researcher, within the stream of data and its relation to contexts that I encounter, is constantly being affirmed or denied not by me, but through its ability, or not, to withhold or expose my recognition of it. This renders itself as a highly contingent diagram in the Deleuzian sense, which entrusts itself to semiotic endeavours, intuition and human enquiry.

I am now drawing an analogy between theory informing the writing of this thesis and theory informing the reading painting and photography: with both intuitive and creative image-making pursuits culminate in an assembly of semiotic elements. The reading of two-dimensional planes in painting and photography is a fitting analogy because Deleuze’s concept of assemblage and diagram and Barthes’ concept of the punctum and studium asserting semiotic value can easily be transferred to anything under consideration, including the studio. This is because the studio is an assemblage of semiotic elements and actions that are always and already becoming. This means the subject of enquiry and the manner in which the enquiry is undertaken share this rhizomatic and intuitive process. Through this example it is made clear that abstract

notions and ideas can be both visualised and realised within a practical reality. As Deleuze puts it:

One starts with the abstractions such as the One, the Whole, the Subject, and one looks for the process by which they are embodied in a world which they make conform to their requirements (the process can be knowledge, virtue, history...). (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. vii)

The process of finding, collecting or looking for meaningful material or data is all the more pertinent when it echoes the very dynamic or behaviour of that which it finds. To be open to that which unfolds is not always going to be a welcoming experience, because it can mess with existing constructs or progress. Sometimes “it means undergoing a terrible crisis each time that one sees rational unity or totality turning into their opposites, or the subject generating monstrosities” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. vii). Against all odds, this openness Deleuze speaks of is the very thing that works to unfold possibilities and novel understanding.

At the beginning of some small but vital idea about something it is impossible to imagine the scope of its extent and power as it shifts thinking and moves the thinker through developmental processes. Some elements will expand and others will lessen in relevance or importance, dependent on the affective attractions and connections created and the availability of navigational tools and insights along the way. Anything can happen in the unfolding of experience as connections capable of making and re-making assemblages can and will progress far beyond the studio and these pages for others to tackle, affectively, empirically and conceptually. Monstrosities will be generated. Ruptures will occur and new ideas will take hold. Deleuze’s term “monstrosities” encapsulates sensations that matter; when a rupture is experienced it feels monstrous, all-consuming and yet compelling in its ability to transition molar thinking toward the molecular. These opportunities for expansion and development, which can create new insight, are not readily available if the researcher or the emerging creative subject remains fixed and immovable. Maintaining flexibility is key to the success of such a methodology and rhizomatic or non-linear-type processing throughout the project is paramount.

## LITERATURE SEARCH AND THE COLLECTING OF IDEAS

As I pored through some of the literature that surrounded these theories and ideas about human sensing, affect and matter, I focused my intellectual and cell-body knowing of

such transmissions, onto the situation in the art school studio. The literature search operated in the same way that I zigzagged my way through the studio collecting encounters with affect or punctum that embrace, project and enhance my understanding and pierce my molar thinking. In other words, in the same fashion I stumbled across a gem of an idea or theory, or a manner in which we take some of these theories into our bodies or play them out in social settings as I pored over many texts with the intention of securing something important. As I progressed through this process I better understood how to “feel my way through” and trust in the intuitive process. After all, I could not presume to be able to read everything that was available within the context of my enquiry. Therefore, I found a method of collecting texts and conversation that provided me with enough intellectual rigour and passion for thinking differently about searching and what happens in the day-to-day business of the studio environment. As in the friendship groups that I discussed earlier, one connection leads to another, and before I knew it I had gained a certain sense or understanding with regard to a particular concept. It was as if I had taken the idea or concept into my body for approval or rejection. It was as if I was holding onto it — waiting to test it out within the context of my day-to-day existence. This mulling over, often led to an insightful experience or explanation of an event that expanded the concept in real time.

Although this process is still cognisant of its own logic, it also relies on letting go of any structured or rigid organisational plan, allowing the unknown to come to life. My job loosely became a process where encounter and recognition were like opposing points that I danced between to accumulate what was advantageous to contemplate within the context of refining the research neighbourhood.

## WRITING AS A BECOMING

There will always be other material that could have given me further insight, however I am content in “knowing” or rather “sensing” when the level of intensity that I experience is adequate to fulfil and complete the task or chapter at hand. There are two tasks here: one of learning about the philosophical concepts regarding (molecular) transformations within the process of becoming, and one of expressing them in my own words as becoming-writer. Some of my understanding happens directly under my hands as they play across the keyboard and produce the very sentences that enlighten me

further, connecting the theories and ideas with my past and present knowing and experience. This process shifts my thinking and my writing into a molecular mode and enables me to *write my mind*. Writing is thinking and thinking expands with writing. And as Spinoza (1996) realised, the capacity for new thought expands when encouraged through the production of writing.

## COLLECTING AND CONNECTING

Within the exchanging-and-collecting-of-data setting, any information, data, ideas, and words are “up for grabs”, however as each block or type of data manifests through body and mind experiences and cognitions, they are also contextualised through the habitus of that body and mind. Each one differing, sometimes mimicking and sometimes finding a resonance, or suggestion that can be agreed upon. There are always many voices, personal frames of reference, tendencies and differing opinions. To average the content would be to diminish the intensity of that which takes place and to perhaps lose the precious nugget of data that may highlight the very problem that eventually could unfold. I am not concerned about numbers, majorities or collective thinking; I’m interested in personal experiences with learning and becoming, and how these experiences are recognised, personally evidenced and voiced. The precious nugget of the data, in my case, was the recognition of small gestures that arise out of feeling AND thinking. They create the space in which differences are established and meaning ultimately arrives.

## CONCLUSION

My aim in this chapter has been to articulate my personal attitude and approach toward the methodology and the collection of data, as well as my disposition regarding the affective, cognitive and practical processes of becoming-researcher. I discussed the collaboration between space, affect and cognition so as to position my methods within the context of my body, its memory and haecceity as a way of valuing the wholeness of the research process and the degree of personal acumen that resulted, for me, in providing clarity, momentum and direction. I also discussed the value of using writing as a tool in the process of gathering knowledge, collating information and regurgitating succinct flows of thought as I *wrote my mind*. Perhaps it is unusual to include such personal considerations that occur as methods within a methodology, however as I have

been engaged in a poststructural approach to the collecting of theories and concepts (data) and the methods of ascertaining the value of those theories and concepts, it seemed pertinent to give voice to the minor gestures and affective processual acts that form an indelible part of this project.

In the next two chapters I look at theories regarding subjectivity and individuation as they may pertain to the emerging creative subject situated within the art school studio.

## CHAPTER 8

# THRESHOLDS AND CROSSINGS

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### INTRODUCTION

In the art school studio, the student engages in a complex and dynamic crossing of thresholds. In this chapter this idea of threshold crossing is explored in order to create an understanding of the shifts students make, both cognitive and affective, when engaged in art pedagogy. In the telling of a story titled *To the Cockpit*, and through the consequent reflection thereof, the concept of the threshold is illustrated and explained. When carried out, the crossing of a threshold can potentially provide an expanded view and new understanding of an unknown territory or unfamiliar situation both physically and cognitively. This chapter links the conceptual understanding of crossings and thresholds with some of the practices carried out within the art school studio, such as the movement between smooth and striated space and the shift in thinking from the molar to the molecular mode.

### AMALIE'S STORY

At the beginning of this chapter, I have included a story about thresholds and the smooth space that children can quite naturally move into, often without being cognisant of the transitions made or being able to articulate the potency of such experiences. This is a playful story about a small child enjoying the opportunities that life sometimes brings. It is a story told by her parents who were relaying a series of events, from their travel, across the dinner table. When it was first told to me, I found the story particularly interesting and it stayed with me for many days. This was partly because I love airplane stories and partly because the story resonated with my current ideas in regard to the shifts in thinking that are preceded by change or the shift in body dynamics that is preceded by a particular understanding of affective relations or physiological function. Here I mean the ability of the body AND mind to learn a new dance step and the recognition of it becoming part of the flow of the music it is set to when it is fluidly carried out. When the studio is viewed through the lens of practice associated with

learning particular actions or skills, these Deleuzian “thresholds of consciousness” can result in a solution for “a problematic field”. As Deleuze (2004b) puts it:

To learn to swim is to conjugate the distinctive points of our bodies with the singular points of the objective Idea in order to form a problematic field. This conjugation determines for us a threshold of consciousness at which our real acts are adjusted to our perceptions of the real relations thereby providing a solution to the problem. (p. 205)

One can observe the performance of someone demonstrating swimming on dry land, but the problem lies in how to translate their movements when actually in the water. The problem is not resolved until the body feels the water and responds to its rhythms and buoyancy as a means to create the coherence of arms and legs in concert. The threshold exists as experience not only through a physical means but also through a consciousness when adjustments to actions, in response to perceptions, are made.

Art students make adjustments to their thinking when they are engaged in looking at an artwork that they do not initially understand. In time the students will acknowledge certain aspects that begin to filtrate their consciousness particularly as they apply effort to their observation and affect relations in regard to the artwork. This process will often culminate in the ability of the observing student to find resonance within the work and more easily navigate its semiotic symbolism, compositional elements, materiality, image construction and/or aesthetic qualities. A threshold of consciousness has been crossed; the artwork has become more familiar and meaningful. This occurs when ideas and actions conjugate or join forces with the physical environment in a cohering as a means to be present to the realised act or event within the realised environment.

In the story below the child Amalie steps into the cockpit of a commercial airplane and is instantly transported to a space filled with the mechanisms that drive the airplane; a space that seems like another world. My reflections on Amalie’s story have provided me with a synthesis creating meaning or what Dewey (1997) calls a “double movement”:

There is thus a double movement in all reflection: a movement from the given to the partial and confused data to a suggested comprehensive (or inclusive) entire situation; and back from this suggested whole – which as suggested is a meaning, an idea – to the particular facts, so as to connect these with one another and with additional facts to which the suggestion has directed attention. (p. 79)

This notion of a double movement is perhaps another way of thinking about Deleuze's problematic field and the threshold of consciousness that brings together the partial (the demonstration of swimming) and the whole or entire situation (actually swimming in water). Sometimes when we cross thresholds we are blind to the wholeness of the situation until we can apply a reflective quality to the scenario or move into it fully and enable the body movements to cohere with the idea of it in physical reality.

## TO THE COCKPIT

*The story goes something like this. Some years ago, when Amalie was about six, Amalie and her parents were travelling on a flight from London to New York. After take-off from Heathrow and eating an airline dinner, the parents settled down to watch a movie when one of the cabin crew suggested that she take Amalie on a tour of the plane. Great! They thought. That will keep Amalie busy. After about an hour or so they both looked up from their movie and realised that Amalie had not returned to her seat, and although they weren't anxious about her safety they were wondering what she could be doing for that amount of time. Next minute, with her tour guide in tow Amalie came bouncing down the aisle, to excitedly take up her seat next to her parents. Yes, they went into the cockpit, lucky girl, not somewhere that the general public has the luxury of visiting now. In the cockpit Amalie spent time chatting with the crew, checking out the 'dashboard', and peering through the window above the bank of controls into the darkness. After that Amalie and the cabin crew member bid farewell to the flight deck crew with waves and smiles as they made their way out the door and on to a different part of the plane. They ventured off to the bar in the first-class cabin where Amalie was introduced to Keira Knightley, who welcomed them by signalling that they both should take seats on the stools next to her and keep her company. Drinks were ordered and they all settled into conversation. No doubt Amalie was at its centre and enjoying the fuss. Amalie loved this part of being in a grown up's world especially as here in this strange environment she was without her parents, and yet knowing they were close by. I would like to say here that once again Amalie was in the company of greatness — however it was all in a day's flying for this little six-year-old girl who just accepted that these forays into 'other' worlds were part of inflight service.*

The problem here is one of perspective in relation to the threshold. Amalie's story reveals that thresholds have different qualities based not only on who we are but also perhaps on how cognisant we are of the crossing. For Amalie, the thresholds do not necessarily exist in the same way they might for an adult. This is because an adult may interpret the beneficence of the event in part based on presumptions about the threshold as situation or threshold per se, as well as the content/situation of what will be found over the threshold. However, if we can be affected by something and not necessarily be cognisant of the source of that something, for instance the contagious quality of hysteria (mass hysteria) (Brennan, 2004), then we can also understand how it is possible to be affected by different affective situations regardless of whether we understand such situations, or why and how shifts occur within our experienced or lived environment. Another possibility regarding Amalie and the people she met is that her appearance, in itself, operated as a threshold crossing for others; the cabin crew member who escorted her, the flight deck crew and the film star who do not entertain all economy class passengers in this way. In becoming an anomaly for these people, Amalie also became the threshold over which the front of the plane passes as she participates in conversation with the flight crew and the film star. I use this situation to take a closer look at thresholds and how through the act of crossing various positions and dispositions are folded together in a manner or way that is complex and neither commonplace nor ordinary.

These crossings demanded not only an invitation, but often an adherence to certain protocols and observing hierarchical ordering. There is a power in any crossing of a threshold and also an exchange or unwritten interchange as one moves from the outside to the inside, from being the stranger to becoming the familiar or in Amalie's case a friend. Crossing a threshold is often invitational and can open up new dimensions, thoughts and behaviours by exercising unknown or new contexts. Thresholds are always in the service of subjectivation and individuation.

Within the art school studio environment thresholds are activated whereby positions and dispositions are folded together as invitations are enacted and difference is encountered throughout the processual acts of education and sociality. Within an art school studio event, as in Amalie's story, threshold activity can be operating

simultaneously where the threshold is twofold. By accepting a received invitation, the invited becomes the “thresholder”; the infiltrator of territory becomes the very threshold between the territories. This can cause a kind of cross-pollination to occur when interest is sought and activated. Another kind of ordering can also take place within this community of budding young artists.

## LOOKING GOOD

*A type of nervousness ripples through the newly acquainted cohort, denying any return to the relaxed confidence that was felt in the high school classroom. At art school, there is little reprieve regarding misdemeanours, for the students, especially in the beginning when they hardly know each other and are continually exploring and experimenting in the face of each other. Each student must find their own way to be in the milieu of the art studio. It is testing and trying for the high-school art-class hero, as she or he is thrown together with other high-school art-class heroes where their previous accomplishments lay safely undisclosed and the all-telling pecking order is yet to be established. Most students search for new frames of reference for social and artistic acceptance. The studio houses a collaborative and competitive community, which has the potential to harbour myriad possibilities regarding personal and artistic anxiety and/or success.*

*The first few moments or days of manoeuvring inside and outside the “ring” is possibly where each student finds their niche or begins to discover a place. And here I use the term ring to talk about the space of the performance where subtle, competing behaviours and the posturing that students employ to gain recognition and build confidence, takes place, all of which can cement friendships and affirm status. These postures are not necessarily demonstrative, sometimes quiet and subtle but nevertheless still active and powerful. To complicate matters, art school pedagogies demand that risks are taken and mistakes are made, in the pursuit of expanding awareness and learning from diverse and difficult encounters with ideas, materials, methods and concepts. You might say that this naturally creates a set of circumstances that demands an ability to respond to particular collisions and collusions.*

## A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT

The emerging creative subject, poised ready to engage with all manner of things within the studio setting will be cajoled, changed, shifted, moved and re-organised over and over. Simultaneously they will cajole, change, shift, move and reorganise themselves and other things. In the studio space, all students encounter challenging concepts, processes and pedagogies that form new or different compositions with their bodies. When I use the term “space” it is with an understanding that it encompasses the physical space in question as well as the qualities of the smooth and striated space within it. It is the shape and dimension, scale and volume that houses both human and non-human elements — the visible and invisible aesthetic and affective qualities that are continually acting and transmitting their forces. Kaustuv Roy (2005) suggests that “space may be more than just a neutral background; that it might have a reality of its own, for some of its qualities and gradients are produced within a particular set of relations, and are not fixed or given” (p. 29). At art school, space is not thought of as passive. Students become aware of its power particularly in relation to their personal and professional capabilities; in relation to affect, bodies in space and installation propositions. Davies and Gannon (2009) write that “Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that space is far more than a passive backdrop to human action. Space as they conceive it is active in shaping what is possible” (p. 8). Roy (2005) elaborates:

The characteristics of space, often made invisible and pushed into the background by existing assumptions and force of habit, determine the possibilities and limits of what may occur within it. The term ‘space’ here is not metaphorical...but geo-ontological in the sense that it broadly indicates a local aggregate of distinctive, connective and directional relations between phenomena that form different distributions of sensibilities and that determine ... the generative (or obstructive) possibilities between them. (p. 30)

The space of the art school studio provides an affective and dynamic environment or geography organised and created through the very cohort that is in occupation. It is filled with everyone’s art-materials, art-thinking, art-feelings and art-products. This means that every student is being affected by the atmospheric conditions and the assortment of materials and things that may, or may not, determine generative possibilities for them. These elements are continually attracting, seducing — or even perverting — the unsuspecting senses of the student-subject operating within the space. The individual objects and collection of materials, which are already in relation and

conversation with each other, are never idle. Each of these works is confident, adheres to its own configuration and is “understood as a particular kind of ‘made’ thing” (O’Sullivan, 2006, p. 38). These “made” things have intent. They also have a history and possibly a future as they appeal to our perception of them.

## TRAVERSALS AND TRANSITIONS

Within art practices and the assemblage that makes up the art school studio milieu, many different types of thresholds are traversed. These thresholds can be social, public/private, spatial, personal, and psychological. They are profound and experienced with variable intensities as they become part of the processes belonging to the development of ideas and art-making practices. Thresholds crossed through movement between (and through) smooth and striated space, from molar to molecular modes of thinking, and the experiencing of lines of flight are known transgressions or common *modus operandi* for the student-artists. Art students occupy the studios in a variety of flexible ways that enable a “time-shifting” to take place as they pull in and out of different spaces; (physical and virtual, loose and multiple) crossing thresholds and shifting protocols, priorities and personas so as to maintain the “requisite, connective, flexible and informal modes of conduct” (Spencer, 2011, p. 16), and coherency necessary for participation in art pedagogy.

Crossing the threshold of the cockpit gave Amalie the opportunity to connect with “difference” and to transgress natural laws and organisational schemas. She herself is unaware of her own difference, or perhaps her role in the events (cause in the matter); just cognisant that she is a child and these new people she now has in her sights are adults that have unusual or special jobs. The pilot and the actor, to us, are common enough vocations, but to a six-year-old they may seem glamorous and admirable, important and aspirational. These ideas in themselves can promote imaginative thinking and propel the thinker to dream of distant lands and future times, however they can also be the catalyst for learning about difference and enabling the body to *feel* the impetus of becoming other. Learning can require courage, and enabling student-artists to embark on a particular intrepid journey, so that their thinking is moved from the molar to the molecular, is the job of art pedagogy. I am suggesting that if we can be present to the experience of the moment of transition — the moment of connecting with the external territory beyond the threshold which is not of one’s usual belonging — or be present to the movement from striated space to experience smooth

space, we can consciously take in (to the intelligent body) something “new”. After all, it is a monstrous moment when one has to think differently, to accept the new which may eradicate or replace the old way of thinking, dream, or imagined state, place or concept (Britzman, 2006). The moment of crossing the threshold between one state and another, would be cause for celebration, not marking a point of arrival or to mark an “X” on intersecting co-ordinates, but marking our being in that particular moment in our body to better dream a repeat, mimic or parody of such movement, which seems to precipitate not-recognisable encounters and the transformative event.

While “crossing a threshold” may sound like a simple act, it in fact involves a very complex set of sensations, cognitive calculations and selections, tendencies and intuitive understanding. When analysed in this way such a crossing can ultimately seem illusive, undesirable or questionable. This opacity is also due to the fact that the spaces involved, striated and smooth, do not operate independently of each other or rhythmically coming and going. They are tandem states of being that are always in mixed configuration. There is no pure smooth or exacting striation, however it is a pleasure when we can trace at times these transitions as they occur, or even retrospectively, when one can reflect on feeling more engaged in the qualities of one type of space than another AND can still benefit from what they both afford. Transitions as such are not always as powerful and exotic as Amalie’s experiences were: nor do they always make such a good story. Sometimes they are transitions into decline and the threshold can be ignored as unjustly or unwittingly the subject is removed from any sense of responsibility. However, within the context of learning, I’m more interested in the transitions and thresholds that transform the subject beyond their habitus and into the molecular thinking. I’m grateful for Amalie’s parents and their art of recall and willingness to retell their daughter’s story because it feels like a discovery to recognise a jewel inside a story and to read it through a Deleuzian conceptual lens that transforms the motivations and movements to fantastical encounters full of rich and profound provocations.

### BECOMING OTHER: THE POWER OF DIFFERENCE

Airplanes are symbols of potential thresholds between having our feet on terra firma in our own world and arriving in another world. They afford thrilling, exciting and at times fearful occupation. Airplanes, ships and horses, to name a few modes of transport, give us the

means to become “other” merely by boarding or mounting. The movement of cultures across the steppe or desert is an example of these kinds of transitions (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). With an understanding of such abstract concepts, the emerging creative subject can make better use of opportunities when experiencing crossings, thresholds and molecular movement so as to understand the possible transformative provocations existing within propositions and invitations to experience difference. Claire Colebrook (2001) writes:

For Deleuze, the concept that best answers this power to think the whole of life is difference. Life is difference, the power to think differently, to become different and to create differences. The philosophical ability to think this concept will help us to live our lives in a more joyful and affirmative manner. Because philosophy allows the transformation of life, it is a power, not an academic discipline. (p. 13)

The story of Amalie’s crossings brings to mind other crossings that have punctuated our lives, such as being on the threshold of entering someone else’s home for the first time as we move through or exchange the external/public for the internal/private. The invitation to enter, to shift from the outside to the inside, and to then displace the space inside by one’s own body “brings alive the generic potentials of hospitality, and its reversals and violations, located as it is at the threshold between invitation and invasion, hospitality and occupation” (Mukherji, 2013, p. 49). Here, in someone else’s interior, we are faced with the surprise of not knowing and the feelings that accompany unfamiliarity. Ultimately things will be revealed, time will reposition the newcomer, and somewhere in the mix there will be a reverberating articulation of loss. This loss falls on both sides of the divide. There is a loss of innocence for the visitor and a loss of privacy for the invitee or resident/owner of the home/interior space. Our lives (and histories) are heavily punctuated with such crossings as rituals or patterns, manifesting with varying intensities and levels of implication, from the nuanced but common (catching a bus, train or ferry) to the heterosexual historical tradition in some cultures of a newly married wife being carried by her new husband over the threshold of their new home. Whenever a threshold is crossed, the power dynamic is negotiated, albeit by collusion or spoken or unspoken consensual agreements. These same dynamics regarding thresholds occur within the art school studio as boundaries between individual studio spaces are crossed and new configurations or compositions of affect relations and power subtleties are experienced.

## RUPTURE

Consider, for a moment, our desire for harmony, agreement and connection, which is also prevalent within the art school studio setting. As social beings, we understand the hesitation to disrupt a cultural protocol or the natural order of things, however in art practices the rupture forms a device with which to force a presence and experience a responsibility: the ability to respond. A reversal of role on entry into an invited or chosen scenario, is always problematic and has also been used to fuel debate, conquer ideas and shift perception, particularly and purposefully when utilised in the service of contemporary art. The rupture in art is often attached to the encounter of an artwork when it presents as something not-yet-known or contains subject matter that is a shocking to the audience. The rupture acts upon the viewer/audience as a force in the matter of taking something in to the body and embodying the transmitted affect.

I would like to take a moment here to discuss the New Zealand artist Luke Willis Thompson's artwork titled *inthisholeonthisislandwhereiam*, which won the Walters Prize in 2015. This work manifested as an invitation, through a taxi ride from the gallery to the private home of the artist's family, to cross the private/public divide and enter the personal realm of the artist's family home.



Fig 8.1. Luke Willis Thompson *inthisholeonthisislandwhereiam* (2014)

Courtesy of the artist and Hopkinson Mossman Gallery, Auckland.

In this particular artwork, the art public enters, observes, absorbs, and takes into their individual bodies the atmosphere, affects and affections of the house and its contents. This leaves the interior of the house exposed, and the way in which the family members carry out their lives is to some extent laid bare. Antony Byrt (2016) describes the artwork thus:

What Thompson has created is a real fiction — a space and an experience that exists as literal form and that inserts us as its interloper *and* its protagonist. It's a play without a director, or at least a play with a director who enjoys sitting back and watching the actors figure things out for themselves. (n.p.)

In participating in this artwork, the experience of the art encounter invites the crossing of many thresholds. We hear, see and feel the dripping tap: we gaze at the collection of family photographs and we wonder at the porch laden with well-used personal belongings. Byrt is right: we are positioned both as an interloper (awkwardly and shyly not quite trusting the invitation) and a protagonist or intruder filled with curiosity, constantly crossing borders and barriers both physically and psychologically. The art world knows no boundaries and will borrow from life to talk about life as well as borrow from life to talk about art. This extraordinary, sometimes clumsy and very common act of crossing thresholds can also merge with common practices and habits as we go about our lives and experience the everydayness of becoming. We are reminded, through art, of the power of such things and their implications for subjectivity and the processes of individuation.

#### PURPOSEFUL NOTATIONS TRANSGRESSING BORDERS

I have jotted many a word, code or exclamation within the margins of my books. This gives me a sense of ownership and the responsive notation offers me the opportunity to dally with time – return to the text and remember previous engaging appreciations of it. I am both the interloper and protagonist. This means of marking the margins not only locates me, it also moves the text across the threshold that separates me from the book. Already in the act of reading, thresholds have been crossed, new territory is harnessed and boundaries softened or erased. Thresholds are a state of mind as well as physical configurations of space, marks and notations or architectural elements.

According to Sugba Mukherji (2013)

There are the margins and blank spaces, borderlands which will us to defy the soundless garrulity of the printed text, to release it from its rectilinear cage into the world of contention it claims to have left behind. Beneath the words, at the end of lines, across the visual surface of the letters if we are wielding a highlighter pen, our marks articulate and animate our books, each one testifying to a meeting or a collision of minds, a movement across mental and material boundaries. (p. 158)

When encountered, particularly in the physical realm, or through the representation of an artwork the experience of marking books can “hold a delicate, precarious, yet oddly calm, and luminous sense of the uncertain, the indeterminate and the transitory” (p. 158). Art students encounter physical, psychological and philosophical thresholds when making artwork and critiquing artwork. A creative practice encourages the exploration of the unknown, where “clarity, definition and even interiority are just beyond grasp; partly in the fascination and partly in the risk, even unease, underlying moments of transition, and the excitement of not knowing where one will end up” (p. 158). There is a particular productive space held within the experience, albeit fascinating and fearful, when crossings and thresholds are felt that advantages creative pursuits and production. Once experienced and appreciated, a threshold crossing has the capability of opening other readings regarding the crossing points or places where thresholds are crucial to the development of molecular thinking and experiencing lines of flight.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have provided several explanations for what happens when thresholds are crossed. First, I explored Deleuze’s example of learning to swim, and then described Dewey’s “double movement” that occurs through reflection and the consciousness of moving between the virtual and the actual. I then centred the bulk of the chapter around a simple narrative of a small girl’s invitation to visit a cockpit and the first-class lounge and bar where she met a film star. Amalie’s experiences of crossing explicit thresholds, are just like learning to swim. This is because learning to swim provides a means of thinking about and imagining the movement which culminates in providing powerful transitions as we enter the water and become *at one* with it. When we learn to swim we recognise more easily the transformative properties of crossing from dry land to wet water. In Amalie’s case, she may not have recognised the transformative properties that accompany such crossings, however the feelings will have been exhilarating and the benefits of such crossings cannot help but be beneficial to the experiencing body.

## CHAPTER 9

# STUDIO AS MILIEU: THE EMERGING CREATIVE SUBJECT

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## INTRODUCTION

Robertson and Roy (2017) refer to the art school as “a fluid psycho-material locus, a site of iteration, projections and re-creations, where the remembrance of past gestures, projects and practices endlessly mingle with the intuition of objects to come” (p. 5). These words return me to my earlier discussion in Chapter 2, where I described the emerging creative subject as having the opportunity to be situated within a field of affect relations circulating within the art school studio milieu. The art school studio is a particular site that initiates movement in and between smooth and striated space, and one that also encourages shifts from molar thinking to molecular thinking. The earlier chapters explore an understanding of the affective nature of an art school studio: how the student is implicated in the functioning of the milieu; and what it might mean to be an art student – to learn about what art can do. In writing about the negotiations and affective knowing that took place within the art studio, an awareness also arose of similar negotiations regarding movement and thinking within the broader context of both my life and the students’ lives. To hone the skills that function within the context of appreciating an art encounter one must recognise the affect felt within the body. In understanding the affective triggers that bring different feelings into the equation and in being able to articulate these feelings we are able to recognise their existence within other milieus. Thus, Chapter 4 is dedicated to a narrative, titled: *To the Island*. This narrative is a first-hand experience of feeling the shift my intelligent body made between smooth space and striated space in the course of waiting for a ferry to Cockatoo Island. In the story, my sensitivity to transmitted affect, subsequent ideas, conversations and negotiations and their impact upon the body, are brought to attention. Drawing parallels between the studio, the world at large, and lived experiences throughout this

thesis has enabled some of the micro negotiations, discussed within the narrative, to also be appreciated within the context of the art studio milieu.

In this and the next chapter the emerging creative subject is discussed within the art school studio milieu, carrying out similar affective negotiations, recognitions and articulations with an emphasis on subjectivity and the processual acts of individuation. Guattari (1996) explains subjectivity as “a configuration of collective assemblages of enunciation”. He positions it as an individuating process in “certain social and semiological contexts”. In these contexts “a person is held responsible for him or herself” and “positions him or herself among relations of alterity” (p. 196). The emerging creative subject is tasked with embracing the “otherness” or “oppositeness” of their fellow students within the context of the art school studio milieu. In embracing this otherness, the student learns to explore alternative possibilities they are exposed to through conversation within the studio and more formally through the art critique. The point Guattari makes is that we are both susceptible to and contribute to — consciously or unconsciously — the ongoing affective and cognitive relations regarding that which we encounter and engage — that which influences our subjective selves.

Guattari (1996) continues:

Each individual, each social group, conveys its own system of modelling unconscious subjectivity, that is, a certain cartography made up of reference points that are cognitive, but also mythic, ritualistic, and symptomatological, and on the basis of which it positions itself in relation to its affects, its anxieties, and attempts to manage its various inhibitions and drivers. (p. 197)

The art school studio then presents as a particular social context and contains semiological attributes that punctuate, interrupt, create and promote particular affective thinking and modes of being. Sometimes we are not able to see directly that which impacts upon us, and sometimes we are not capable of taking responsibility for all of the contexts within which we find ourselves. Guattari makes it clear here that subjectivation is an ongoing process and there is no essential endpoint. The student-subject must be thought of, within this context, as a body in motion, including their “various inhibitions and drivers” (p. 197), and is not bound within a static or specific image of identity. A body, the identifying body, is an open co-construction, not without histories and

memories, but also a subject actively collecting experiences, exploring possibilities and hurtling toward an unexpected tomorrow, creating new *becomings*, all the while repositioning old identities. It is here that the focus is on the *emerging* creative subject within the context of experiencing new ways of thinking through art pedagogy. Art pedagogy is involved with experiential learning and ways of thinking that enables thresholds to be crossed within processes of maturation as well as conceptual understanding.

The “subject” I am writing about becomes rooted within the culture of the studio whilst also engaging with social, and technological networks operating as conduits to the world at large. I use the term “subject” to designate the art school student as the subject becoming artist within the context of the art school studio. This serves also to look beyond the particularities of the student or students within this context, as my interest lies in their subjectivation and its relation to the particular opportunities created through art education. The earlier chapters contextualised the art student primarily within the confines of the art studio and within the context of an art education, at the same time the art student is also crossing thresholds, zigzagging and gliding between different registers and domains continually throughout their day, week, year and life. The negotiation regarding the movement of shifting between registers resides in the body AND the mind; it is realised through physical movement in and around the space as well as the movement occurring through the shift in thinking — its form and its stretch. Within this context it is possible that the art student is driving their own processes of exploration and ordering and utilising the intuitive method with an affect-related compass. Through encounter with difference, the transmission and reception of affect, and engagement with social and educational attitudes and appetites, the individual is always implicated in their own becoming.

Through transformative experiences the individual student experiences her/his own subjectivity. The interface between the body and the studio milieu influences the individual as they move toward or away from particular bodies, thoughts, elements, processes and practices. It is in this manner that causal moments and events occur that impact upon the subject, in the production of their subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari’s (2004) discussion of individual and distinct capacity is reflected in the analogy of the ox and the workhorse. In this analogy, the capacity of the workhorse is more like the ox

than the racehorse. The ox and the workhorse are less alike (they are from two different species) however, they have similar capacities in terms of strength and weight bearing. This graphic comparison shows that through the imagination and affective terms we can ascertain the similarities of the capacity of different species. Capacity becomes more about what a body can bring to the immediate task than defining it through its species. This is an important distinction to make when we are learning how to define affect felt within the intelligent body and articulate its intensity and registered meaning, as happens within the context of an art critique. To open up the discussion regarding affect I look at Spinoza's (1996) theories regarding the body AND the mind and in particular how inadequate ideas can move toward becoming more adequate ideas.

## THE EMERGING CREATIVE SUBJECT

The experiences of the emerging creative subject within the art school studio engages with the concept of subjectivity. Subjectivity is uncertain, meaning that it is not determined by or directed toward a particular and singular essential being. Subjectivity is always and already becoming, determined by the milieu we find ourselves in and our experiences in and of that milieu. This includes particular affective compositions, formed through affective encounters of other bodies, whereby our capacity to act and be acted upon is either enhanced or diminished.

Guattari's (1996) theory of subjectivity highlights that subjectivity is indeterminate, in that it does not provide a pathway for or explain how an essential being is achieved. Furthermore, the field or milieu within which subjectivities are formed is fluid, lateral, semiotic and in flux. Guattari says that subjectivity "is produced by individual, collective and institutional factors. ... It is not constituted by a dominant, determining factor that directs other factors according to a univocal causality" (p. 193). The positioning of the new student as emerging creative subject within the subjectivity of the art school studio milieu is discussed next.

## POSITIONING OF THE NEW STUDENT

Students begin their first semester of art school not fully aware of the complexities and subjectivities involved in both learning how to articulate through verbal language their feelings and thoughts within the context of art pedagogy. They are thrust into a new

geography, a new culture and an opportunity to talk in new tongues – the competitive social platform, the critical speech of the contemporary art world and the obligation to use researched material in support of their opinions. To accommodate and navigate this new geography, the contemporary art world and art pedagogy they must come to grips with understanding the complexity of visual language, communicate regularly on a face-to-face basis about their opinions, and articulate their ideas within verbal and written contexts. The art critique as discussed in Chapter 5 highlights the process of how students understand visual language through the art encounter and why these processes are important. This engagement is fundamental to the ideas and theories of this thesis. The learning takes place primarily in practical ways through being-with art objects; recognising both evident and tacit perceptions manifested in the body through affect. These manifestations of feelings (recognition of affect relations and the composition they form with the body) and thoughts (opinions, ideas and concepts forming) are then articulated through discussion. The art student becomes a new type of “reader” and “thinker” where the onus is on them to take responsibility for articulating what they are feeling and thinking regarding their personal encounter with the art object. This is achieved through claiming a personal viewpoint, positioning cultural contexts and ultimately understanding a conceptual and philosophical neighborhood or territory. Within the context of these responsibilities, affect and the body are fundamental to subjectivity and the becoming artist.

#### THE POWER OF THE BODY IN RELATION TO SUBJECTIVITY

Deleuze and Guattari (2004), avoid defining the body by its “organs and functions” and “Species or Genus characteristics”; instead they “seek to count its affects” p. 283). In seeking to account for affects the authors attend to human and non-human as well as objects, materials and matter in order to highlight the importance of the transmission of affect for the receiving body. How can we define the body (of anything) and its parameters? Deleuze and Guattari (2004) state:

We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or join with it in composing a more powerful body. (p. 284)

Deleuze and Guattari (2004) define the body through its affectual capacities utilising the concept of a graph whereby they assign “intensive signs falling under a capacity” (p. 283) to the horizontal indicator of latitude, and “extensive parts falling under relation” (2004, p. 283) to the vertical indicator of longitude. In this way, they maximise the concept of relationship between the two so as to avoid “defining it [the body] by Species or Genus characteristics”. In doing this Deleuze and Guattari clarify the importance of not attaching other loaded signifiers (such as gender, race, age and condition) to the concept of capacity.

The body that congregates within the studio becomes “an element or individual in a machinic assemblage” (p. 284). It becomes part of a body in process. The allegiances the student creates are not necessarily arbitrary, although they are often forged spontaneously through the attraction of certain affective compositions. The fluid movement of bodies is particularly noticeable within this educational context as students work to form and reform affective compositions with other bodies. These affective compositions are part of the processual acts of subjectivity, because the affect relations therein will either augment or diminish the students’ power to act. This particularly occurs during the making of artworks as well as in initiating and maintaining sociality within the art studio cohort. Art students become familiar with their body sensations that express an attraction; a sensation or intensity that increases their power to act. This power feels good and it resides as affective composition within the body. It is derived from an object, a colour, a concept or another human being. Reading affect and thinking about affect understood through an art encounter teaches art students to be cognisant of attractions and repulsions; appetites and tendencies; the subtle effects of affect made firm by the steadfast connection and memory between the body AND the mind.

When we define the body by its affective capacity we can avoid placing judgement or unjustified values upon other attributes. This approach is called ethology. This focus on affect brings assurance to the importance of feeling our feelings by being cognisant of how they influence our thoughts and ideas in relation to particular elements and concepts within an art practice. The ensuing discussion can also provide a context for understanding and articulating body responses within such affective engagement. For

the art student, this means seeing, feeling, thinking and talking about art as ethical measures to be taken in understanding semiotics and the magic of meaning in both the art work and each other. Using ethology, or utilising an ethical treatment as a method of understanding values and qualities can highlight new or different considerations of value can shift the emphasis into affective terms. It highlights expanded qualities of difference and being able to realise substantive, relative terms.

When ethology is underpinning our approach to the human subject we can expect surprises regarding capacities and capabilities, however to overlook prior perceptions or molar thinking we must be prepared to be open to new ideas that can correlate knowledge and understanding differently.

## INDIVIDUATION

I use the term “individuation” in this thesis as Gilbert Simondon (1992) uses it not to define an essential individual human being but rather as a way to understand the uniqueness of becoming and that it only coheres with the particular subject. Simondon’s writing has provided pertinent and practical analogies and accounts of individuation that have supported a deeper understanding of the subject becoming individual, becoming artist and being able to assert “an absolutely specific existence” that develops through pertinent individuating “phases”. The idea of an individual already contains the flux and flow of a constant becoming and the relevant individuating processes being engaged: “Individuation corresponds to the appearance of stages in the being, which are the stages of the being” (p. 293). Brian Massumi (2013) writes in his prelude to Erin Manning’s *Always More Than One: Individuation’s Dance*, (2013) that, “the concept charged with holding the status of the subject and object in processual suspense is *individuation*, adapted from Gilbert Simondon” (p. x).

My encounters with the concept of *becoming* began with the works of Deleuze, Guattari, Massumi, Simon O’Sullivan and more recently Inna Semetsky and Erin Manning. Their contextualisation of the becoming subject as the “more-than-one” (Manning, 2013) and the subject who encounters art (O’Sullivan, 2006) particularly captured my interest. “The body”, Manning (2013) says, “is a misnomer. Nothing so stable, ...yet we

inevitably use the concept as shorthand – how else to talk about issues of agency, of identity, of territoriality” (p. 16). Manning suggests that

relation is the quick answer. ... The body, here defined, is what comes to be under specific and singular conditions. It is the amalgamation of a series of tendencies and proclivities, the cohesive point at which a multiplicity of potentialities as this or that event or experience. (p. 16)

As discussed in the previous section, titled: *Understanding the power of the body in relation to subjectivity and the context of the studio*, the body in relation to everything including the art school studio milieu, is always responding through tendencies and proclivities or appetites as it moves between, within and through affective relations creating compositions that exude the more-than. Manning (2013) again:

Every resolution of a process—every actual occasion—carries within itself the more-than of its taking-form. Force is everywhere active, on time-lines that intersect with the occasion at hand, and on transversal lines that extend beyond it or circle through it (p. 17).

When subjected to an encounter of difference and one’s affective processes are ignited, transversal lines can intersect sensibilities creating a shift from molar thinking to molecular thinking and experiencing lines of flight. “A body is always more than one: it is a processual field of relation and the limit at which that field expresses itself as such” (p. 17).

## UTILISING TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

Operating within the art studio milieu which is a complex set of networks and affective fields as all spaces are, an art student can experience insightful realisations and recognise transformative experiences. In other words, it is an environment where a lot of information and the assimilation of knowledge is activated through physical, emotional and cognitive means. For the subject this is just one of the milieus they inhabit, and at the same time are implicated by other spaces, environments, networks (as I have noted earlier). However, the art school studio is also an environment where significant time is spent interacting with one another while in the pursuit of creativity and being mindful of affective relations and aesthetic outcomes. When affect creates a composition within the receiving body that diminishes its power to act, it is often taken as a shock or negative encounter. However, the arrival of something untoward or negating (of the power to

act) is often the very rupture that cuts through molar thinking and creates a discordant tone that often finds relief in action and reaction.

Discordancy or incompatibility is in fact the very rupture – minute or grand – that is necessary for the subject to personalise and universalise their position within the situated dichotomy and to assert “an absolutely specific existence (haecceity), something that can lead to a proliferation of many new haecceities” (Simondon, 1992, p. 298). This-ness is “literally the quality of being *this* as a relation of individuality conceived as a positive attribute or essence” (McKechnie, 1963, p. 816). The subject/nascent artist faces a variety of incompatibilities within the milieu of the studio environment that are personal as well as political; that invite a knowing and also uncover a not-knowing. Decisions are made, solutions are sought and a new equilibrium can take place. Simondon (1992) reminds us that “becoming is not a framework in which the being exists; it is one of the dimensions of the being, a mode of resolving an initial incompatibility that was rife with potentials” (p. 301). The two experiences of individuation and haecceity are indelibly linked as processes as our own distinct inner identity or “this-ness” is realised.

### THE UNCERTAINTY OF SUBJECTIVITY AND INDIVIDUATION

The experience of art pedagogy may lead one toward the production of meaning that are gained through the affective forces of the art encounter. This then would also lead to the production of the individual who, through affect relations, may be feeling and thinking their understanding of semiotics and meaning-making within the context of the production of art. Deleuze (2004a) enables us, through *his* writing on Nietzsche’s “eternal return”, to appreciate this concept as processual of interpretation and evaluation, but not in a restrictive way. Rather we should seek to expand and multiply our sense of reasoning and our aesthetic logic to include complexities and connectivity:

A thing never has only one sense. Each thing has several senses that express the forces and the becoming of forces at work in it. Still more to the point, there is no “thing”, but only interpretations hidden in one another like masks layered one on the other, or languages that include each other. (p. 118)

Regarding individuation, Simondon (1992) advises that

there remains a *region of uncertainty* when it comes to dealing with the process of individuation, for this process is seen as something which needs to be explained, rather than as something in which the explanation is to be found. (p. 299)

Simondon alerts us here to the actual exchange of energy-in-process not as something which needs to be explained but something that explains the capacity for transmission as well as the capacity for our reception of such transmitted energy and unrecognisable forces. Such exchanges impact upon our conditions of identity as the processual acts of individuation are assimilated. These exchanges are difficult to locate per se, and often its only after the fact that the impact is recognised and attached to a particular exchange, experience or event in terms of its effect on the maturation of the subject. It seems that we can only look back retrospectively to ascertain a cause of an effect. However, every cause is contingent. In highlighting the uncertainty associated with these processes, Simondon paves the way to imagine the myriad contingencies present within any operating field. Regardless of our recognition or awareness of such contingencies and their impact on the provisional acts of becoming we are *always and already* subjected to their potencies. This is the *affect* and *infect* quality of transmission that occurs when we are continually absorbing and processing the affective or infectious forces of the milieu that forms in relation with us. These forces impregnate or enter the body. They are assertive and affective – shifting existent organisational, emotional and responsive trends operating within the body.

However, we may only approach this notion of individuation from the retrospective of “the successfully individuated being” rather than in looking at “the stage where individuation takes place”. It is from this vantage point that we are granted access to “the individual that is the result of this process” (Simondon, 1992, p. 299). Simondon suggests that

were we able to see that in the process of individuation other things were produced besides the individual, there would be no such attempt to hurry past the stage where individuation takes place in order to arrive at the ultimate reality that is the individual. (p. 300)

Simondon’s point is relevant here because at times we need to slow down enough to feel the reality at hand and to value what that reality is capable of doing. As we connect with one another, affectively feeling our mingling bodies, our understanding and interpretations are modified as subjectivities are being formed. In critiquing Nietzsche’s philosophy of signs and interpretation. Deleuze (2004a) states:

Nietzsche invents a new conception of and new methods of interpretation: first by changing the space in which signs are distributed, by discovering a new “depth” in relation to which the old depth flattens out and is no longer anything; second, and most importantly, by replacing the simple relation of sign and sense with a complex of senses, such that every interpretation is already the interpretation of an interpretation *ad infinitum*. (p. 118)

Once a simple explanation or binary has been overthrown for more elaborate and complex affectual recognitions we can begin to see this process as having both a “topology and a typology”, whereby the results can exhibit “generosity, depth and creativity” or “limitation and negation” (p. 118). Interpretations therefore say something about the interpreter: “This creative selection does not happen only in the thought of the eternal return. It happens in being: being is selective, being is selection” (p. 125).

Within the studio context, binary thinking is often overtaken by another form of selection which is governed by feelings understood through affect and felt as personal persuasion. These feelings are nuanced and their interpretations are contingent on both topological and typological understanding. This form of selection, if it is going to serve the task at hand rather than limit it, requires experiential understanding of body responses as well as the interpretations that occur when the intelligent body expresses ideas that define the feelings and sensations belonging to affect transmission and reception.

## USING SPINOZA: THE BODY AND MIND

As a means to understand the more intricate processes involved with interpretation, first I would like to consider the power of affect and the body-mind connection with reference to Spinoza’s theories as articulated in his *Ethics* published posthumously in 1678. Spinoza’s method of building a theory enables us to not only understand the difference between “inadequate” and “more adequate” ideas but also acknowledges the effort required to make inadequate ideas more adequate. These concepts are fundamental to this thesis and the workings of an art school studio, as Spinoza’s theories suggest that we build contexts regarding affect relations and embrace, through this means, “difference” and what may appear to be “other”. The enquiry regarding the adequacy of ideas is important here because the transitions between inadequate ideas

and more adequate ideas are so very prevalent within art education practices. The way in which contexts are built and meaning unfolds is contingent on how a discussion, debate or critique is played out; therefore, the intricacies of this form of communication become necessary to the argument positioned within this thesis. Spinoza's theories of affect provide a means to contextualise the processes of individuation and student maturation within the context of the art school studio.

Spinoza (1996) discusses the nature of ideas and knowledge in his *Ethics*<sup>17</sup> by first establishing the connection between the body AND the mind. In Proposition 19 states "*The human mind does not know the human body itself, nor does it know that it exists except through ideas of affection by which the body is affected.*" [Italics in original]<sup>18</sup> In other words, we get to understand our corporeality through the feelings we have *in* our body. These are feelings that acknowledge and register movement and function as well as feelings that derive from externally transmitted affect. Affect is felt in the receiving body as it is correspondingly felt in the mind. I call this simultaneous action of the receiving body AND mind; the "intelligent body". We are, according to Spinoza's theories, dependent on external factors, the complex nature of our senses and our constant encounter with affects derived from sources that are beyond our making. Hasana Sharp (2005) in her writings on Spinoza, talks about our dependency to systems, institutions and communities, thus,

We have our being originally and irreducibly in nature and in some kind of community. ... The fact of "being inside"—of being inescapably embedded within a system of relationships, institutions, and practices that far exceed an individual's conscious control—is examined by Spinoza at its most basic level as well as in terms of its political implications. "Being inside," or being "finite modes," has as its consequence that we are fundamentally incomplete and dependent beings, and, therefore, we are beings submerged within, and constituted by a field of "affects". (p. 595)

Spinoza's philosophy utilises the concept of "substance" as the infinite being (or God) whereby individual bodies are the extensions of substance and the finite attributes of the infinite being. The "finite modes" that Sharp talks about are the finite modes of the infinite being or substance (God). Spinoza writes "*There is also in God an idea, or knowledge,*

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<sup>17</sup> As I refer to the propositions in Spinoza's (1996) *Ethics*, I shall reference them in footnotes so as to not interrupt the body of the text, as I feel that this section requires an uninterrupted reading.

<sup>18</sup> In *Ethics* II Proposition 19 (Spinoza, 1996, p. 47).

of the human mind, which follows in God in the same way and is related to God in the same way as the idea, or knowledge of the human body.”<sup>19</sup> In relation to this he says, “*This idea of the mind is united to the mind in the same way as the mind is united to the body.*” [Italics in original]<sup>20</sup> He demonstrates this in the scholium<sup>21</sup> of Proposition 21:

This proposition is understood far more clearly from what is said in P7S for there we have shown that the idea of the body and the body, that is [by P13], the mind and the body, are one and the same individual, which is conceived now under the attribute of thought and now under the attribute of extension. (Spinoza, 1996, p. 48)

Spinoza goes on to state: “*The mind does not know itself except insofar as it perceives the ideas of the affections of the body.*” [Italics in original]<sup>22</sup> Beth Lord (2010), in relation to Spinoza’s concept of the mind and body working together, observes:

Mind and body perfectly correspond to one another, because the mind is the idea of the body and, due to parallelism, everything that happens in the body happens also in the mind. The mind comprehends everything that happens to the body, but does not cause any effects in the body. And the body’s experiences do not cause ideas in the mind, but those experiences are directly and truly known by the mind. (p. 58)

The concept of parallelism is at the core of Spinoza’s philosophy, contradicting Descartes’ philosophy regarding the mind-body split. Spinoza’s mind AND body operate in a parallel manner, interconnected and non-hierarchical. One is not more important or aggressive than the other. The mind AND body simultaneously experience things through what we might call different lenses, registers or attributes, however they are components of something that is indivisible. In his introduction to Spinoza’s *Ethics* Stuart Hampshire (1996) writes:

For Spinoza, thought and extension (bodies in space) are two aspects of a single reality, as reality presents itself to human beings. We can switch from considering reality under one heading to considering things under another, always recognizing that thoughts can only be explained by other thoughts and the movement of bodies by the movement of other bodies. We can study an animal’s behaviour as explained by its appetites and expectations (‘It wants its mate and expects to find it here’) or as explained by physical causes (‘There was a chemical reaction which started the movement of muscles...’) The same tract of

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<sup>19</sup> In *Ethics* II, Proposition 20 (Spinoza, 1996, p. 48).

<sup>20</sup> In *Ethics* II, Proposition 21 (Spinoza, 1996, p. 48.)

<sup>21</sup> A “scholium” is an explanatory comment; specifically, an explanatory remark annexed to the text of a Latin or Greek writer.

<sup>22</sup> In *Ethics* II, Proposition 23 (Spinoza, 1996, p. 49).

behaviour can be described and explained in both ways and neither type of explanation is to be preferred to the other as being more fundamental. (pp. viii & viv)

This explanation suggests that if we can describe or explain a behaviour through two very different systems (of recognition) then we are inclined to think that these two percepts or concepts are not connected. However, they both belong to the very same action or movement within the body. Their connection is the very parallel form they take up whereby they are working together to govern the movement and understanding of the intelligent body. Deleuze (1988) argues that, for Spinoza, parallelism

does not consist merely in denying any real causality between the mind and the body, it disallows any primacy of the one over the other. ... The practical significance of parallelism is manifested in the reversal of the traditional principle on which Morality was founded as an enterprise of domination of the passions on the consciousness. It was said that when the body acted, the mind was acted upon in turn. (p. 18)

Uhlmann (2011) draws out the “significance of parallelism”: “Parallel lines of course, at least in Euclidean geometry, do not meet. One fails to see how they might be related, unless one understands the parallel, a gap, a ratio, a proportion that persists and resonates”. (p. 267) This kind of relating, which sends signals between one aspect of the body and another (recognised through one system and equally recognised through another system simultaneously) across a space or gap, whereby one signal affects the returning signal, is apparent when we engage with art. In our attempt to understand the inadequate ideas that begin to form as we engage with an object that we are yet to know we have the opportunity to create a deeper insight and enjoy a certain kind of personalised connectivity. This process is initiated by the affective elements attracting our attention, and fully emerges through the engagement we employ as we decipher the values regarding affects which are derived from the art object. As contextual knowledge grows, through feeling and thinking, talking and listening, so as to extend our understanding of the object, the inadequate ideas we have about the object become more adequate ideas. Uhlmann explains this emergent insight in the following way:

I want to argue that for Spinoza, relation is crucial to the generation of any kind of human thought, including thinking in the arts, which, too, proceeds through relations, that is, if we understand relation to involve a kind of linking or connection that proceeds across gaps, urging flashes of insight to emerge, to speak from ourselves to the mute tableau, as a lightening flash leaps from the sky to the ground or a signal jumps across a synapse. (p. 267)

Although we can speak from ourselves when engaged in a relation with the mute tableau, it's the qualities of the mute tableau that we speak of. This relating that occurs with the mute tableau, as in an artwork, has something to do with the mediation of value happening between the two sites of meaning.

We are connected through our capacity to feel and our capacity for affect relations. We can also be limited by our capacity and our tendencies, and an inability to recognise nuanced affect within the contexts of our own corporeality, associative memory and experience. With recent advances in medical science such as MRI scanning, we have furthered our understanding of the body and how it functions; how chemical reactions can be tracked and how affect-related intensities alter cell configurations (Brennan, 2004). Our current knowledge of the intelligent body — of the complexities that govern our knowing as well as our interest in affect and what this means for being responsible social bodies — seems to be very much in line with Spinoza's holistic approach to the body and his drive to realise an ethics of becoming for all bodies.

Lord (2010) explains that “for Spinoza mind and body are *one individual* expressed through the attribute of thinking and extension” (p. 58). Spinoza writes: “*The human mind does not perceive any external body as actually existing except through the ideas of the affections of its own body.*” [Italics in original]<sup>23</sup> Here Spinoza is positioning our understanding of new knowledge within the context of what we already have understood; what we already know within the context of the limitations of the knowledge and understanding already existing within our own intelligent bodies. Lord's understanding of the mechanics of the indelible connection between the body and the mind, and the corresponding nature regarding information received, provokes a difficult realisation and understanding that challenges the Cartesian theory of the mind/body split. Since the 17th century, when the content of Descartes' *Discourse on the Methods and Meditations*, was published at various times between 1628 and 1644, the Western world has traditionally perceived of the mind and the body separately (Decartes, 1968, p. 10). Spinoza's “one individual” is a rejoinder to Descartes' positioning of mind and body as separate entities in which the mind has a governing role over the body. In relation to this Lloyd (1994) writes “If to

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<sup>23</sup> In *Ethics* II, Proposition 26 (Spinoza, 1996, p. 50).

read Descartes is to read what we ourselves are, to read Spinoza is to get glimpses of what we might have been — of possibilities of self-consciousness that run against the grain” (as cited in Sharp. 2005, p. 592). If 17th century Dutch society had been able to embrace Spinoza’s thinking, we may now — within the Western world — be thinking and feeling the world differently. Regarding Spinoza’s philosophy, Sharp (2005) argues “if we could go back and choose our own adventure, we might have been better served to embrace this more naturalized and materialist path toward democracy” (p. 593).

Within the art school studio art students are embedded within a more naturalised and materialist world where their human body response (affect) is valued as an important and necessary adjunct to their learning. Students regularly practise articulating their feelings and body sensations regarding pertinent encounters (art encounters) experienced within the context of art making and art critiquing because these articulations form part of the dialogue attached to art pedagogy. The exercise of voicing ideas regarding affect, and offering opinions about visual language creates critical dialogue amongst the cohort which further contextualises each individual’s initial responses *to* affect and also their translations *of* affect. This process helps to transform woe begotten inadequate ideas into more adequate ideas. It also forges connection with the body AND mind simultaneously, in the pursuit of meaning regarding visual language.

The task I have undertaken here, is to consider, by utilising Spinoza’s theories of affect, how external bodies can impact upon the body within the experience of an art encounter. We can think of these particular Spinozan propositions within the context of critiquing art and how we can fully explore the pleasures and dangers of engaging with art. We can only know an external body through the effect it has on our own body, because the knowledge we have of external bodies is always limited: Spinoza says, “*The idea of any affection of the human body does not involve adequate knowledge of an external body.*” [Italics in original] <sup>24</sup> What Spinoza means here is that although we are susceptible to the external bodies that we encounter (especially when we are affected by them), it is through external bodies and their affects that we know about the world and our place in

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<sup>24</sup> In Ethics II Proposition 25 (De Spinoza, 1996, p. 50)

that world. However, we do not have adequate knowledge of external bodies (that make up that external world) and we do not know the full extent of the contexts regarding those external bodies, therefore we cannot know external bodies adequately. We can only know them inadequately.

### FEELING WITH OUR INTELLIGENT BODY

If we have limited knowledge of external things (bodies) affecting our body, we might *think* we know the cause of the affect but it cannot be established in fact. Our ideas regarding this external and affective body will inevitably be incomplete and therefore inadequate. For Spinoza, an adequate idea is one that necessarily must include adequate knowledge of its causes. And as we cannot know adequately the causes of external sources of affect, we cannot form perfect or adequate ideas from external things. However, the more we can know about the affecting element or thing that we can *feel* with our intelligent body, the more adequate our ideas will become. We can work toward creating *more* adequate ideas by thinking about and realising the context of the source of that which brings about the “thinking-feeling” of our corporeal understanding (Massumi, 2008).

Responding to external bodies engages a complex set of processes regarding affect relations or compositions ignited within the receiving body and between the receiving body and the external body as affect is felt as ideas are formed. Because we cannot know the full extent of the source of affect and because we cannot appreciate all of the means through which the affect is caused, the ideas we form through our own receiving intelligent body are inadequate. Spinoza puts it succinctly thus: “*The idea of any affection of the human body does not involve adequate knowledge of the body itself.*”<sup>25</sup> And again: “*The ideas of the affections of the human body, insofar as they are related only to the human mind, are not clear and distinct, but confused.*” [Italics in original]<sup>26</sup> Spinoza’s (1996) demonstration of this pertinent point reads:

For the ideas of the affections of the human body involve the nature of external bodies as much as that of the human body (by P 16) and must involve the nature of the human body [NS: as a whole], but also of its parts; for the affections are modes (by Post. 3) with

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<sup>25</sup> In Ethics II Proposition 27 (De Spinoza, 1996, p. 50)

<sup>26</sup> In Ethics II Proposition 28 (De Spinoza, 1996, p. 51)

which the parts of the human body, and consequently the whole body are affected. But (by P24 and P25) adequate knowledge of external bodies and of the parts composing the human body is in God, not insofar as he is considered to be affected with the human mind, but insofar as he is considered to be affected with other ideas. Therefore, these ideas of the affections, insofar as they are related only to the human mind, are like conclusions without premises, that is (as known through itself), they are confused ideas. (p. 51)

Here Spinoza is perhaps saying that without a fully contextualised understanding of the source of the affect and our tendencies toward particular affective compositions that can suggest particular movement and corresponding direction, we often have inadequate reasoning for what it is that we do and think. We can succumb to appetite and desire, within our internalised processing of affect, as well as build contexts and apply reason. In other words, our ideas can be confused. As the intelligent body is understanding, or attempting to understand, the source of the *felt* affects, it is also experiencing, through internal means, another process as it selects the intensities that will ignite what the receiving body will make of the *feelings* in the “feeling-thinking” (Massumi, 2008) becoming of a response (as an idea). Spinoza writes: “*The idea of the idea of the human body does not involve adequate knowledge of the human mind.*” [Italics in original]<sup>27</sup> Through Spinoza’s (1996) demonstration of this proposition, we can better appreciate his thinking:

For the idea of an affection of the human body (by P27) does not involve adequate knowledge of the body itself, *or* does not express its nature adequately, that is (by P13) does not agree adequately with the nature of the mind; and so (by IA6) the idea is this idea does not express the nature of the human mind adequately, *or* does not involve adequate knowledge of it. (p. 51)

Our ideas, which are intelligent body responses, are influenced by beliefs, memories and imagination, which is not to say that our responses and ideas about things cannot be modified or changed. However, to move from our habitus or molar thinking we need to be open to *new* ideas and things that appear to be unusual or different. This type of thinking allows for new and different contexts to make a difference; to shift our values,

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<sup>27</sup> In Ethics II Proposition 29 (De Spinoza, 1996, p. 51)

opinions and behaviour. This occurs by embracing new contextual knowledge and turning inadequate ideas into more adequate ideas.

## IN THE STUDIO

In the art school studio, students work to appreciate a cohesive understanding of artwork, both as artists while making art when they self-critique and as critics when they critique the work of others. In general, if we want to expand our understanding of art and how it is affective, we need to be aware of *how* we are being affected by art; *how* art is infecting our intelligent bodies. We want to know what art can do; what its capabilities are, just as we are curious about our own capabilities. In the art school studio, students practise reading their internal landscape of affects and they practice deciphering the aesthetic and affective codes within themselves while experiencing the world and experiencing art as encounter. The students do this through engaging with the artwork — perceiving its qualities — and responding to the sensations being ignited within their intelligent bodies. They begin by recognising a liking or disliking of the artwork. This then begs the question of *why* and *how* thinking occurs the way it does. To understand this process, we need to acknowledge the *felt* composition of affects that form within the body as it encounters the transmitted affects received from the artwork. These compositions will either enhance the ability to act or diminish the ability to act. (Spinoza, 1996). As the image, object, sound, performance, moving image or other forms of art are perceived, the body is always and already affected by it. The body is always affected by the things it encounters in one way or another, to one degree or another, as the encountered object/body forms a composition with the receiving body. As the body *feels* the situation it thinks about the elements that attract attention and steer thoughts, as the ideas unfold.

## BUILDING MORE ADEQUATE IDEAS

Inadequate ideas can, through further engagement and exploration, become more adequate ideas. Within art pedagogy ideas about the art object are tested, moderated or mediated as a means of moving them toward becoming-concept. We can at times voice that a particular work is about a particular thing or that it is reminiscent of a particular thing, or that it feels like a particular thing. When the intelligent body continues to absorb and appreciate the corresponding affect throughout a duration thinking

develops, it becomes more complex and critical by way of exploring contextual understanding. This complexity and criticality is multiplied through the communicative input of other intelligent bodies. When more than one voice is articulated, and understood, the collective intelligent body begins to create an expanding context through which more adequate ideas can be formed and more adequate meaning can be realised. Not only does the artwork become more known and understood by the participants of the discussion or critique, but the individual intelligent body has also shifted its reasoning and reckoning powers to accommodate new thinking-feeling experiences and what that new thinking-feeling experience provokes. Through sharing ideas and voicing personalised affective responses each participant in an art critique expands their capacity for affect and therefore their capacity to be affected through an experience with art and also in life. This enables the student-critic to appreciate more adequate ideas about what art can do and what life can do. Spinoza (1996) states that “the mind is more liable to passions the more it has inadequate ideas, and conversely, is more active the more it has adequate ideas” (p. 71)<sup>28</sup>. What Spinoza means here is that we can easily succumb to our passions if we are not in the habit of activating our thinking to produce more adequate ideas. By appreciating the contextual understanding of the object/body in question our minds are then more likely to be more active and to make more appropriate decisions based on the contemplation of more adequate ideas. Within the art school studio milieu, we do get glimpses of Spinozist methodology and what we might have been had we as a species read Spinoza rather than Descartes. This means realising the limits of binary systems, hierarchies and the prioritising of the mind. In art practice the body is not only regarded but understood as always implicated. It works in tandem with the mind to unravel value and meaning often creating a continuum of understanding rather than oppositional and linear thinking.

By acknowledging the relation of body AND mind within the context of studio practice we are building an art school studio culture whereby students can access their feelings and have a greater understanding of the external bodies, as well as refine their own internal ideational processes. They achieve this as they move between molar and molecular thinking, and smooth and striated space within the context of art pedagogy.

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<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 5 for an explanation of Spinoza’s “passions”.

When a body AND mind is actively engaged with creating *more* adequate ideas it is less inclined to be high-jacked by the passions or succumb to its personalised appetites and desires that may limit the ability to act (physically and mentally) and therefore limit access to criticality and reason. In the art school studio, there should be more activity utilised in the pursuit of developing inadequate ideas into more adequate ideas than engagement in the hapless pursuit of passions and appetites. This would enable the creation of a positive environment or milieu within which individuation occurs.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have discussed the fluidity of identity with regard to subjectivity and the emerging creative subject. I have also talked about the art student and the difficulties of life inside the institutional machine, as well as the abundant educational and social possibilities available within the art school studio. However, the core of this chapter is the section titled “*Spinoza: Thinking through body AND mind*”, where Spinoza’s theory of the affects and the body AND mind parallelism are discussed, which provides the background understanding of inadequate ideas and adequate ideas.

These theories and ideas of the intelligent body and ethical enquiry, are further discussed in Chapter 10, where they are directly situated within particular events vital not only to art pedagogy but also to ethical thinking within the processes of individuation.

## CHAPTER 10

# PEDAGOGIC PRAGMATICS

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the particular affective experiences and transformative processes in art pedagogy that stimulate and promote ethical thinking. I discuss how the learning about art, and the experiencing of its affective power, creates a basis for expanding affect relations and critical thinking for art students. This is particularly evident with regard to the expression and exchange of art ideas that transpires through the art critique and, for most students, continues to reverberate within the studio dynamic influencing both milieu and culture. In the ensuing pages, I talk about the ways in which art students familiarise themselves with their own affect relations (through encounters with art) and their growing ability to think through their affective body toward a more diverse understanding of visual language and the expression and exchange of ideas.

This chapter explores art studio experiences with Spinoza's theory of affect in relation to the body AND mind, inadequate ideas and the importance of enquiry regarding the causes of feelings and thoughts. I discuss these concepts because, when these processes are experienced, what can follow is the development of ethical thinking, through the acknowledgement of difference experienced while in shared understanding and communication. I explain how this helps to build appreciation of affective and aesthetic meaning, particularly when gained through purposeful enquiry. Within this context art school students are viewed as *always and already* becoming in concert with other bodies AND minds and building more adequate ideas through greater contextual understanding of the art encounter through the art critique.

## A DIFFERENT TYPE OF EDUCATION

To begin looking at art school students' subjectivities and how their identities are influenced through their engagement with art education, I want to initially situate them on their arrival at art school. It is important to acknowledge that students coming to art school engage with an unusual type of education and learning space, which may differ from those experienced at high school. Studio-based education, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, necessarily includes a space for students to work in throughout the year on their own terms and during elongated periods of time. Within these time periods they can maintain an in-depth engagement with ideas, materials, processes and, most importantly their fellow students. Within sight of each other (to varying degrees) they hone their crafting/making skills and critical thinking skills in relation to developing ideas encapsulated in the various briefs/assignments they complete. Attention to an external proposition or set of criteria is more prevalent in the early years of study. This requirement for externally focused attention diminishes in the later years to afford the students the challenge of setting their own direction and territory as part of self-fulfilling an emerging art practice.

Dina Zoe Belluigi (2013), describes the art studio as a “triad of creative person, artmaking process, and artwork ... within an enabling environment, which on a structural level includes the curriculum, and on a cultural and agential level involves teaching and learning relationships” (p. 1). Within this context, the art studio is home, classroom, and workshop all rolled into one. Challenges are met, fought and resolved socially and educationally, constituting: experiences of affective, political and ethical negotiation. The daily ongoingness of the studio community provides opportunities for students to return or refer to previously encountered affect relations, ideas and frames of reference. This kind of return to earlier experiences and the accumulation of empirical and emotional knowledge creates a more holistic approach to learning. This means that the concepts uncovered through yesterday's critique or dialogue can enjoy an extended durational context and meaning within the tomorrow. The open plan of the studio, can more easily facilitate, for the intelligent body, the shifts made between smooth and striated space orientations, and the shift from molar to molecular thinking. The flexibility and changing function of the studio space enables a connectivity amongst the student cohort, providing happenstance experiences — a “thinking-feeling” (Massumi

2008) through encounters with difference and the unexpected. By being in the space of the studio, the student consciously or unconsciously is always and already an active and affective element within the studio milieu.

Art students come from diverse backgrounds, bringing with them their coded practices and individual styles, aesthetics and values, that tacitly or overtly act as a form of self-identification and markers of cultural and personal identity. These markers are contingent on the students themselves, the discourses that drive each student's personal family histories, culture of origin and current peer group values. These discourses are highly relevant and are continually active, establishing the individual subject emotionally, culturally, socially and politically. The determination of how and why these individuals have positioned themselves is contingent on complex cultural protocols, social constructs and their body's capacity to understand affective sensations or impressions. This includes their own personal sensibilities that shape social, political and body dynamics functioning within their own particular life force. While the diverse nature of the new art studio cohort produces its own challenges as they attempt to cohere, particularly in terms of the social, political and body dynamics, it also provides experiences that enhance self-expression and social connectivity.

Within the studio it is a common experience to be lifted out of a regular routine through a momentary shift of the sensible (ability to sense), encountered not through the methodical elongation of time attached to the ability to reason and compare, but as an experience that morphs into our very being before we have the wherewithal to cast it out, attaching itself to our thinking and penetrating our depths as if heading toward the vital and unique components of our DNA (Brennan, 2004).

### INDIVIDUATION: THROUGH BECOMING-ARTIST

The already emerging creative subject, all the while is developing through the processual acts of individuation, and in doing so stands to gain the support of a critical knowing and aesthetic sensitivity, which becomes the *other things* being produced during the continual activation of these processes. In other words, the processual acts of individuation — occurring within the context of art school pedagogy and the studio — are happening alongside purposeful motivation regarding affect recognition and conceptual thinking. During the practice of exploring and experimenting with materials,

subject matter, medium or scale (to name a few obvious concerns), the student-artist critically engages with semiotics and the affective processes of aesthetic understanding occurring in and through their intelligent body. This engagement of the body and mind threads through the ongoing processes of individuation. As we interface with the world we are affected by it and through such affection and the corresponding thoughts of that affection we can further understand the world and our associations and affiliations to that world.

In art education students are encouraged to acknowledge and be present to such affective nuances felt and thought of within the intelligent body. Students can also become aware of their tendencies to consider certain things over other things, or to dismiss or value certain things because of long held beliefs or preconceived ideas about their value and/or status. These pre-conceived ideas could be the result of cultural beliefs and practices, religious beliefs and practices as well as opinions, theories and attitudes absorbed through the discourses operating within the individual's local environment and community. However, when time is spent feeling and thinking through the encounter (art), before stating an opinion or defaulting to assumption, contextual knowledge can infiltrate the affective composition that is forming between the thing itself and the receiving intelligent body. It is this contextual knowledge that begins to map different contingencies that in turn form different ideas about the cause or source of the affect. Time and contemplation therefore have the ability to reposition the value or status of not only of the art encountered but also the experience of the art encounter. To spend time with art and let the meaning of it unfold is a necessary component of learning to *read* art.

It is this notion of not hurrying past such vital exchanges that forges, for the artist, a reason to linger in the detail, to wallow in the transmitted affect, to take heed of the impact regarding the visual compositions and to acknowledge the importance of accountable, contextual contingencies. It is the very interface with objects, colours, tones and form asserting meaning as the students operate within the locus of responsibility and community that positions the artist-student within a collegial and shared understanding of what art can do. These relations primarily happen through the body, manifesting as ideas that can lead to the recognition and expansion of available fields of possibility.

## RECOGNITION OF AFFECT AND THE BODY

When art students engage with art pedagogy they learn about the capacities and capabilities of the body. On the one hand, they learn about their own body; its capacity for feeling, as well as learning about the capabilities of the external bodies (human bodies, and non-human bodies) encountered within the studio and public places as well as the private domain. This accumulative knowledge regarding the body is gained through the repeated experiences of deciphering visual language. This engagement occurs through the encountering of external bodies (human and non-human bodies) that form affective compositions or decompositions with their own body. Through these experiences art students begin to understand *affect* as the sensations both *felt* and *thought* when engaging with art and the capacity of art to form relations with their body; to augment or diminish their power to act ( Spinoza, 1996).

Deleuze (1988) asks:

What does Spinoza mean when he asks us to take the body as a model? It is a matter of showing that the body surpasses the knowledge that we have of it, *and that thought likewise surpasses the consciousness that we have of it*. ... In short, the model of the body, according to Spinoza, does not imply any devaluation of thought in relation to extension, but much more important, a devaluation of consciousness in relation to thought: a discovery of the unconscious, of an *unconscious of thought* just as profound as the *unknown of the body*. (p. 18)

Deleuze highlights Spinoza's emphasis on the unconscious body, or rather our lack of understanding of exactly what the body can do, of how the body expresses its capabilities and capacities. Likewise, with thought and its relation to the body and the unknown body, this connection provides us with a clue as to the power of unknown or unconscious thought. When we want to find "deep, embodied, vital meaning [we] must look more deeply into aspects of experience that lie beneath words and sentences, [we] must look at the felt qualities, images, feelings and emotions that ground our more abstract structures of meaning" (Johnson, 2007, p. 17). When we critique art, we need to bypass our conscious thinking and move our focus to the sensations or feelings made known to our body, so as to forge links with the unconsciousness of our other (not so easily accessible) knowledge or understanding which we may call intuition or guesswork if pressed to articulate. Johnson (2007) says,

Dewey's claim to reiterate, is that meaning-making in art is the exemplary or even paradigmatic case of all human meaning-making. Since much of art makes meaning

without words or linguistic symbols, art reminds us that meaning is not the exclusive purview of language. Indeed, linguistic meaning is parasitic on the primordial structures and processes of embodied interaction, quality and feeling. (p. 218).

This form of knowledge which includes the complexity of intuition also includes the playful rendering and recognition of an aesthetic experience; a relation forming between our body and another body that ignites our attention. When this occurs within the art school studio especially within the context of an art critique, with the expectation of deciphering meanings from ideas that come to us through the art encounter, some inadequate ideas can be made more adequate. This occurs through a contextualising of the transmitted affect, wondering what creates the affect and what makes it affective and what kind of thoughts are ignited due to its transmission and reception. In other words, to more adequately or fully appreciate and understand that which causes the affective experience. Gradually through discussion and the sharing of initial hesitant ideas, and ultimately through more decisive ideas being understood, communicated, agreed upon or contested within the company of each other, ideas *can* become more adequate compared with the insufficient ideas gained from the first reaction.

As more adequate ideas take hold they expand the thinking of everyone concerned — the listeners as well as those articulating their responses to the affect felt and the percept observed. The act of critiquing artwork where the conversation is connected directly to the encounter of art (aesthetic experience) and which manifests through verbal expression of personalised feelings, makes visible (or audible at least) an essential characteristic or aspect of self. In these vulnerable acts or moments of utterance, other members of the critique group can also experience an embodied resonance and understanding of the expressed thought or opinion that is offered up for contemplation. The experience of the art critique or making art in close proximity to other students when it is “focused on seeing and being seen in the vulnerable act of creation, can foster meaningful empathic connections” (Margolin, 2013, p. 83). Empathic connections bring us to attention and are also made memorable through the body AND mind working in unison to grappling with personal affective responses to the artwork, and also finding pleasure in having their affect compositions clarified from another’s perspective. Although the external source is received through verbalized expression manifested in language, when the meaning of that language resonates within the receiving body the

notion put forward is experienced as embodied meaning (Margolin, 2013) and “intellectual identification” (White, 2013, p. 99) can take place. As the art critique progresses we, as a team, understand emphatically that we need to pool our resources to build upon our initial inadequate ideas. This has the added advantage or pleasure of also building connection with other bodies; other humans.

## USING INADEQUATE IDEAS IN PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

Deleuze (1988) suggests through Spinoza that most of our ideas are indeed inadequate, for we do not know their causes:

The fact is that consciousness is by nature the locus of an illusion. Its nature is such that it registers effects, but it knows nothing of causes. ... When a body “encounters” another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole, and sometimes one decomposes the other, destroying the cohesion of its parts. ... The order of causes is therefore an order of composition and decomposition of relations, which infinitely affects all of nature. But as conscious beings, we never apprehend anything but the *effects* of these compositions and decompositions: we experience *joy* when a body encounters ours and enters into composition with it, and *sadness* when, on the contrary, a body or an idea threaten our own coherence. ... The conditions under which we know things and are conscious of ourselves condemn us to have only inadequate ideas, ideas that are confused and mutilated, effects separated from their natural causes. (p. 19)

To understand the cause of our ideas so as to shift them from their inadequacy into becoming more adequate, in part is to appreciate the context from which they arrive and the context within which they are absorbed or composed/decomposed. And here I mean, not only the context pertaining to the body, *the unknown of the body* — how we feel the affect that is active in forming a composition or decomposition with our body — but also from whence it came — the context of the origin of the external factor, the affect and its force. Whilst forming compositions with affective forces we are of course hijacked by our appetites, desires and tendencies which impact upon our responses, especially in terms of how we think about available possibilities. Deleuze (1988) writes:

Now, the appetite is nothing else but the effort by which each thing strives to persevere in its being, each body in extension, each mind or each idea in thought (conatus). But because this effort prompts us to act differently according to the objects encountered, we should say that it is, at every moment, determined by the affections that come from objects. (p. 21)

Within the context of art pedagogy and in particular the art critique, there exist many opportunities for art students to participate in such engagements that promote and support affect recognition and the articulation of the sensations or feelings felt in the body AND mind. This includes the expansion of inadequate ideas initially derived from such engagement, so that these tentative enquiries and semi-confused or “incomplete” ideas (Spinoza, 1996) can build, expand and be better contextualised to better understand the cause or context of the idea that has been derived through affect or affective forces. As a model of knowing, this process filters into not only the students’ ability to feel and to think, but also their capacity to decipher other pertinent properties belonging to their art practice and indeed, for some, their lives.

Simondon (1992), whose work on individuation I discussed in Chapter 9, emphasises that “*we need to understand the individual from the perspective of the process of individuation rather than the process of individuation by means of the individual*” (p. 300)[Italics in original]. This inversion of perspective, suggests that we need to become more responsible and responsive to the milieu (chosen or otherwise) that we find ourselves engaged in. Hurley (1988), in his preface to Deleuze’s *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, writes:

The environment is not just a reservoir of information whose circuits await mapping, but also a field of forces whose actions await experiencing. In a human sense, it can be called the unconscious, or at least the ground on which the unconscious is constructed. Which of these actions are we capable of experiencing? What is a walk in the forest (where the tick is waiting to experience us)? And what new individual do we compose when we “think like a mountain?” For Deleuze (for Spinoza) nature is an Individual, composed of all modes of interaction. (p. ii)

Hurley shows us here our vulnerability in terms of our susceptibility to being in our environment and perhaps encourages us to take heed and show responsibility, to reconsider our relation to the environment and its forces. He is suggesting here that the environment provides the contingencies for our experiences: our modes of interaction. These, according to Deleuze and Guattari (2004) influence our becoming. Hurley (1988) writes: “One wonders, finally whether Man is anything more than a territory, a set of boundaries, a limit on existence” (p. iii).

Returning to Spinoza, with regard to our existence in relation to the world around us, Sharp (2005) writes:

Spinoza in the *Ethics*, aims to establish and analyze the existence of finite beings, or modes, as those things which have their “being” in another (IDef.5). Human beings, and most everything we perceive, are modes, thus have their “being inside” the unbounded totality of nature, or substance. Such a reality is easily recognizable in that human modes, for example, are constantly exchanging parts of their bodies with the atmosphere in order to breathe. (p. 595)

Sharp is drawing our attention to Spinoza and his theory regarding God and substance. For Lord (2010), “Spinoza’s basic idea is that *being is one*, that *being* is equivalent to God and that all the individual beings we experience are ‘modes’ of being and thus ‘modes’ of God” (p. 15). Perhaps there is a greater porosity between things than we imagine. Whatever we encounter will be effective in influencing, steering and changing the directional forces implicit in the transformation and individuation of the becoming-individual. Such an individual or self is in constant flux. To know, or at least to have some understanding of the source of one’s becoming, is to embrace our environment and be present to affective relations, so as to know one’s this-ness (haecceity). Likewise, the producing of an artwork — the realisation, development and the extension of an innovative idea — becomes part of creating personal subjectivity. Art education encourages students to be aware of their intellectual and theoretical neighborhood as well as *where* their art thinking and art making is positioned within the art world. As they research those fields (theory and practice) they will gravitate towards artists and theorists whose thinking and making resonate with their own as embodied meaning. This can lead to the claiming of this-ness and possibly a deeper body engagement of maturation or experience ‘becoming’, but nevertheless in the moment — a felt knowing of a tangible haecceity, an understanding of something resonating perceptually, physically and emotionally, while tomorrow it may start all over again.

With reference to connectivity and returns, Robertson and Roy (2017) consider the art school as “a fluid psycho-material locus, a site of iteration, projections and re-creations, where the remembrance of past gestures, projects and practices endlessly mingle with the intuition of objects to come” (p. 5). This intermingling of knowledge and know-how, is nowhere more prevalent than in the art school studio when connections are being made and artworks are being critiqued.

## QUALITIES OF THE DELEUZIAN TEACHER

To facilitate the learning of the emerging creative subject as referenced in this thesis, the art school lecturer might harness the qualities of a Deleuzian/Spinozist teacher. As already discussed (in Chapter 2) the art school lecturer, while integral to art pedagogy, is not the focus of this thesis. However, it is important to highlight these qualities so that both art educators and researchers can build thereon. David Cole (2018) says,

The truth to applying Deleuze to the arts ... *is to produce sensation*, and to thus extend the levels by and through which art can penetrate subjectivity. Thus, a combined Deleuze and Whitehead metaphysics of sensation points to a new thinking arts-practice, that emphasises the speculative possibilities inherent within practice, and looks for ways out of being trapped by the already-given in life and thought. (p. 26)

The art school studio approached by the lecturer as milieu, allows them to engage with the curriculum and delivery in a multi-faceted and multi-layered manner. The lecturer does this by recognising and promoting the milieu as a fluid and thriving environment, fecund with possibility and capable of spontaneous affective action and connection. The art school studio enables an appreciation of rhizomatic movement and its benefit to the student (see Chapter 2) regarding spontaneous and intuitive connectivities. This includes the experiencing, understanding and the impact of smooth and striated space orientation, as discussed in Chapter 3. These connectivities may be seen to form assemblages within the studio space that can open up novel possibilities and ways of being/thinking that incite acts of becoming and the appreciation that there is no such thing as an essential subject that is being realised. This shift in recognition changes the endgame and rearranges pedagogical priorities and values. It is primarily through the plethora of affective experiences, that this process of becoming for the student is negotiated in the studio.

It is through this process of becoming for the student, that affect relations are negotiated in the studio. This enables the practice of experiencing and the recognising of affect relations found within the studio and in the encounter and critique of art occurring as learning possibilities. At all times the body is forefront within art pedagogy due to “affect” and its associated ideas paramount to the appreciation and reading of visual language. The art lecturer, therefore must position the body thus and pave the way for the engagement of affective thinking as a means to develop perception, visual language skills and the articulation of thinking-feelings and their related concepts.

One of the roles of an art educator is to introduce students to new material, novel ideas and appropriate and innovative ways of achieving their goals. When students are encouraged to be risk-takers, cross thresholds and explore the “unknown” they can experience shifts in thinking that Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the movement from molar thinking (*habitus*) to molecular thinking, (see page 33) which engages new ways of being, thinking and doing. When art educators consider Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts as a lens through which to view the studio, as well as the emerging creative subject, the content and teaching strategies become active components in urging thoughtful and critical engagement with art and each other.

## PEDAGOGY THROUGH ART CRITIQUE

I referred to the art critique in Chapter 5, in order to provide an understanding of the role of the art critique in art pedagogy and what it means for students to be engaged in a feeling-thinking approach to the art encounter so as to understand what art can do. Here, the art critique is discussed in order to position the emerging creative subject within the process of individuation. Furthermore, I reflect on how the art critique fosters *ethical* thinking. When engaged in an art encounter operating as the crux of an art critique, the participants are subjected to affective engagement, articulation of felt experiences and the voicing of opinions and experiences, whereby listening to each other acknowledges difference of experience. The art critique is a fundamental part of art pedagogy through which the art encounter becomes an active affect-related learning tool. Students practise looking, feeling and thinking about art and sharing their ideas and insights regarding how they feel when triggered by particular qualities held in the space of art and/or its visual language. In an art critique students also learn to read visual language, critique artwork and locate ideas regarding the artwork’s affective power.

### ART ENCOUNTER WITHIN THE ART CRITIQUE

Through the art encounter affect is felt by the intelligent body of the receiving subject. Affect and its associated ideas are then verbally articulated and considered within the broader discussion or debate. These discussions are capable of revealing the more hidden, nuanced and sometimes difficult-to-register feelings and thoughts that accompany the encountering of art. The art critique opens up a space for dialogue, but

more importantly a space that leads to the critical articulation of ideas and the consideration and evaluation of fellow critics' responses as a means to test the meaning of a shared experiential event, which begins with deciphering feelings and body sensations, ideas and thought patterns.

### THE CRITIQUE PROCESS

The formal art critique is an event that students work toward and one in which they present work created in response to a particular brief (during the early stages of study) or, in the later stages of study, is created as part of the student's developing awareness of their art practice. The critique enables each student-artist to ascertain how their artwork is being read by the broader art studio community. The student-critics travel as a group from artwork to artwork discussing the various meanings that are received from the work in question. Often the student-artist is asked not to divulge anything about the work so as to obtain authentic readings from the individual critics who are oblivious of the intention of the student-artist. This is not just about opinions being argued or judgements being levelled: it is about revealing critical responses to the artwork in terms of each student-critic's experience and the ideas that manifest through their specific encounter of the art in question. Throughout this process the student-critics comment on aspects they think look interesting and might carry relevant meaning. For example, how particular elements emerge (for the individual) as affective feelings and how these elements and their affects make associations with ideas and conceptual thinking. Sometimes the responses to the work begin by describing what is visible, however a meaningful critique needs to move beyond description toward conception via sensation, to be useful. Inevitably it's a matter of articulating what is *felt* and what is *thought*. The scope of the comments can be overarching or, on the contrary, concerned with fine details or travel between these two perceptive positions. The point is that the conversation amongst the critics opens up to encompass many different responses that may cohere with, or question, other responses. Articulation of ideas occurs in the first instance during the process of individual engagement with, and articulation of, the ideas expressed by individual participating critics and subsequently the other participants build or imagine — if within their frame of reference — new affect relations *with* the work, in response to suggestions and insights from those articulating their response.

As this process takes place the new possibilities are mulled over and tested (theoretically and affectively through the body and imagination) whereby, in some instances, opinions and sensibilities are reconsidered as new corporeal and cognitive understanding comes to light.

Gradually the artwork and its affect relations become more nuanced and better known to all concerned. The aim is not to create a consensus or to define a single way of apprehending the ideas distilled within the artwork, but to broaden the platform of knowledge regarding the artwork and to accumulate ideas and appreciations from other participants, from different sources. It is through these means that the students are inevitably dependent on each other's voice in the reading of their own work and that they are also capable of contributing to the reading of other students' artwork in a meaningful and informed way. The art critique entails different perspectives and responses to be offered, discussed, debated and sometimes agreed upon. The knowledge of a shared occupation of an affective field occurs through listening to different ideas and interpretations from fellow critics, which can be questioned, debated, validated or repudiated through discussion and explanation. This dependency on each other's opinion or sensibility develops as a necessary aspect of studio life ensuring, at least, an interchange of ideas and acknowledgement of associated sensations *felt* within the body. Garry Barker of Leeds College of Art maintains that, "we start the analysis of visual literacy with an awareness of the body" (Rowles, 2013a, p. 77). Barker continues to explain that when we talk about art we often use body-referencing words like "digest", "grasp" and "balance" and therefore our "whole body is part of [our] understanding and that's an interesting thing for an artist to take on board" (2013a, p. 17). Barker is suggesting a way for the students to think about the body AND mind and the indelible or "parallel" (Spinoza, 1996) connection between the two. Barker continues:

As we make something we are telling a story of the relationship with the world out there, through the material we use and the way we use it. So it starts with a bodily understanding and from that it's a lot easier to develop concepts and words that try and explain what it is that [the students] are trying to do. So by having the mind embodied in that way it gives us an approach into this internal world. Students will often be unable to articulate what they are trying to do, because they have not yet linked the internal mind with the external reality. So, we start at this level and then as they develop intellectual concepts, we look at where the intellectual concept is rooted in the knowing of the body. (as cited in Rowles, 2013a, p. 78)

When we expand those ideas through discussion we can often accumulate a notion about the artwork that we can think of as concept. Students are taught to have a voice regarding their feelings/body sensations and associated ideas and are also encouraged to enable their fellow student-critics' feelings and ideas to be articulated. The discussion and sharing of affect relations and ideas is twofold: it releases interpretations of the artwork in question and it exposes the different sensibilities, semiotic associations, aesthetic appetites and beliefs of the participating student-critics and lecturer-critics. This helps forge a better understanding of the values held by individuals within the cohort and the contextual background for those values. These discussions, regarding art, affect, semiotics, values and appetites help students and lecturers to understand not only art but also the tendencies of each other. This happens also through building an affective language together that helps position the work in question within contemporary art practice and theoretical and conceptual understanding. This ultimately helps students to articulate *how* something impacts upon their body and perhaps *why* their mind makes sense of each transaction in the way that it does. Not all bodies respond in the same way, and each person makes sense of their affect relations during an art encounter by drawing upon their senses, which includes their memory and imagination and their tendencies to value certain things over others.

The art critique is where students engage in an academic, intellectual and corporeal kind of sociality; they get to know each other through their intelligent bodies, affect relations and meaningful articulation of how they feel about certain subjects, things, constructs and/or aesthetics within the art school studio context. What this means is that art students practise articulating their understanding of semiotic language, mediated through their feeling-thinking body, during formal critiques, and also more casually within the context of the studio milieu. Within this broader context of the active and industrious space of the studio, the students benefit from the studio's capacity for the always and already articulateness of affective human and non-human bodies, which can be felt, located and affectively received. The casual and habitual studio encounters of art can also provide the basis for casual and ongoing critique. This dependency on each other's opinions, affective experiences and knowledge helps to build community and increase feelings of reciprocal generosity amongst the student cohort.

## ART CRITIQUE AND ETHICAL THINKING

When art students read an artwork, they are looking for a way to decipher the symbolism to understand what is making or creating the affective element and what this element or series of elements might mean. When engaging with art in this way, the students can link potential ideas to the affect they feel as a means to understand the qualitative values of the received affect and also by associative understanding affect's relation to thinking. Deborah Britzman (2006) writes:

Symbolization serves to link feelings to their ideas and as such is a resource for relatedness. It bridges a lifetime of losing and refinding objects and its vulnerability and promise lean upon two precarious resources that are often at odds even as both require construction and interpretation: internal or psychical reality and external or historical reality. (p. 44)

When engaged in reading art one's internal reality is already in communication with external reality by way of affect and other associated realities (psychical, psychological habitual, and historical), which are actively, although not always consciously, negotiated within that the context of affect relations. The differences occurring between these realities which include the propensity to judge, to assume and to question, need to be managed, especially if we want to act and think ethically and to not only understand but also practise an acceptance of difference. Britzman (2006) continues:

The external world is animated by one's feeling states even as it seems to demand particular feelings from us. But also, affect creates and sets in motion the internal world. This paradox of relationality plays well in psychoanalytic theories and is useful for understanding some of the constitutive difficulty that inaugurates thinking and that thinking assuages. (p. 44)

This paradox of relationality that Britzman suggests is not without its difficulties and complexities. In relation to reading art within an art critique, hesitations can be assuaged as insights and responses are tentatively voiced alongside other similar or different insights that are equally tentatively voiced, thus reducing the singularity of knowledge and the dogmatism of a singular meaning and hierarchical power. Forums of this type enable the students to test their opinions, beliefs and hunches through propositional means within the context of discussion and enquiry with each other. During a critique, profound understanding is garnered about each participant with regard to their affective sensibilities and the conceptual meaning these sensibilities evoke. The art critique is a model of shared enquiry, disclosure, discussion, and

personalised reflective and critical thinking, which in its myriad forms, creates the basis of art pedagogy.

The art critique utilises myriad processes functioning within a social dynamic, as well as working toward personal perceptual and conceptual understanding. The variability of the art critique is contingent on these processes and the participating cohort. The terrain that is traversed during a critique is as unpredictable as the outcome. As students voice their understanding of their experience of an art encounter, within the context of a critique, they do so through their articulation of corporeal feelings and the associated ideas that form whilst experiencing (simultaneously) the same artwork. Naturally there will be a variety of responses to the artwork, and certain things will be valued by some student-critics and not others, however as the process of affect reception and the articulation of the ensuing ideas and those that emerge through the critique are disclosed, the individual responses open up possible readings for all concerned.

From the onset of the art critique students understand that this event will express a sharing of responses to the work in question and ideas will be bandied around and sometimes formally discussed. The thinking that ensues through this process then generously offers its spoils to those interested. The interest and curiosity amongst students and lecturers regarding certain ideas or references to abstract concepts, philosophies, personal beliefs and opinions can act as fodder for further discussion of the work in question and beyond the critique. The type of thinking that is initiated here is both inclusive and generous, while students also garner respect for each other's ideas and a sense of obligation to investigate new forms of thinking. Critiques in themselves are variable and the depth and breadth of engagement is dependent on the calibre of the people involved, their willingness to engage with the work in question, and their ability to contribute.

What is of importance here is that as these discussions take place interested participants can realise aspects of the contextual background, experiences or cultural underpinnings of each other's position, attitude, beliefs and opinions. Empathic reasoning can transpire as embodied thinking is articulated between individuals and ideas shared. The value placed on a particular articulation of an affect or idea is not dependent on *who* initiated the articulation, but rather how that articulation resonates both with the artwork and

within each body of the entire group. New frames of reference emerge for the work as well as a new understanding of the voice/voices that expresses and articulate from their perspectives their feelings and thoughts regarding the particular artwork.

Empathy can form as participants attempt to “see” what another participant is “seeing”. This urge to find meaning and create common notions regarding the experience of an art encounter can produce a shared understanding of particular affect relations. This can create a collaboration between participants, regarding the release or articulation of a certain feeling or mood that is being vocalised. In this way shared feelings and understandings about affect relations is brought about and students find that they have synergies emerging amongst the cohort, where they least expected it. The practice of discussing affect relations and embodied meaning is not something that is deemed of value within our Western paradigm (although that is changing), however at art school it forms the crux of art conversations when learning about what art can do. Here I would like to return to the workhorse and the idea that its capacity is more like the ox than the racehorse. As explained previously, the ox and the workhorse are less alike (they are from two different species) however, they have similar capacities in terms of strength and weight bearing. And, so it is in the studio, students who would not necessarily select each other as friends because they think they have nothing in common, can connect through critiques, where they realise a similar sensibility and/or propensity to appreciate certain affects and aesthetics. What is created is an empathy regarding the embodied meaning they feel which is recognised and shared. This recognition can act as a bridge questioning, in a good way, previous beliefs and prejudices. Often, through such discussion, new contexts regarding each other emerge that can dispel or enhance previous assumptions and/or opinions. As nuanced meaning is verified and contextualised within the parameters of a particular individual’s view of the world or philosophical paradigm, the source of their ideas can be acknowledged and more adequate ideas can be understood.

As art students progress through their undergraduate degree, the understanding they have of affect relations also develops. It develops through the repeated experiencing of an aesthetic experience and the expectation (within the curriculum) that what is experienced can be articulated through language that refines its meaning. Art students become or perhaps already are, sensitive to visual stimulus and gradually develop the

means by which they can appreciate and understand the impact of affect and how it can define an aesthetic experience. The development of these processes regarding the reading of artwork and the articulation of the ideas that are generated through an engagement with art, are enhanced within the studio setting because it is a visually stimulating environment that creates responsive feeling and thinking by the very nature of being in it.

## FOSTERING IMMERSIVE PRACTICES

The concept of being immersed or in “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1993), encapsulates an application of effort and an intention where every movement or action works together and towards a specific outcome. Immersion of this kind becomes a state of being that screens or shields other peripheral forces and factors from the artist-student’s awareness or cognition. Such protection enables the functioning intelligent body to focus and to have intense concentration which can invoke deep and satisfying feelings associated with small incremental successes. Immersion in a particular project or process is experienced by students within the studio that might be also accommodating a socially active milieu. Immersion in this context can carry the student beyond the spatial and social realms of the studio into a private and unique awareness of possible directions and solutions when closely engaging in deep cognitive processes. The artist-student finds themselves immersed in intense thinking and making processes, while working within proximity of a socially productive dynamic governed by a different organizing structure. The art student experiences this *modus operandi*, of being immersed in their internalised world of creative endeavour on a regular basis. However, with practise and through engaging in art critiques, they also become more familiar with moving between the internalised intense activity and the externalised reality, social geography and broader context of the studio environment.

I am building a picture here regarding the kind of durational focus available for students within the context of art pedagogy and studio life, including the experiential knowledge art students gain in traversing between their inner and outer worlds. As students become more adept at utilising self-directed time whilst in the studio, they practise self-reliance and independence while simultaneously gaining an understanding of their dependence upon each other. Independence through acknowledging dependence on others, lies at the crux of learning how to express a viewpoint whilst simultaneously appreciating each

other's viewpoint or perspective. Within the structure of the critique, students have the opportunity to hear comments from other student-critics that can and do become relevant in the development of their own art ideas. These insights gained from outside of self, which shift thinking, can also shift the direction or focus of an art practice. These reciprocal acts of sharing ideas and sensibilities occur through formal means (the critique) and also informally within self-directed time in the studio. This part of art learning can help encourage respect for and acknowledgement of, each other. By being in flow, combining sensory skills and mental acumen and to think with clarity and precision, during immersive practices, helps prepare themselves for the art critique. This is where focus and concentration helps them to understand and articulate the impact of an affective encounter occurring within the context of listening and appreciating different responses from other perspectives and engaging in collaborative investigation and analysis. When critiquing art, the focus jumps from being immersed in the thinking feeling process of being “with” or “inside” the work to being able to verbally articulate important personal understandings or discoveries during the critique as an externalised and vocal engagement.

## SUPPORTING EMPATHIC PRACTICES WITHIN STUDIO

### EXCHANGES

Art students, intent on developing and making their artwork utilising particular skills and associated processes, often experience their brains shifting between different states; the “mind wandering”, “stay-on-task” or “vigilance” modes on a regular basis (Levitin, 2014, p. 40). While developing their ideas (in studio) and exploring possibilities for creative output, their minds can wander off to other fields and return with insights. Levitin (2014) writes: “In the mind wandering mode, our thoughts are mostly directed inward to our goals, desires, feelings, plans and our relationship with other people—the mind wandering mode is active when people are feeling empathy toward one another” (p. 40). There is a possibility here that when students are in flow or fully immersed within a task, they are capable of shifting or switching into a mind wandering state to resolve problems and perceive outcomes. By making these shifts within a larger set of tasks, they can be more susceptible to being empathic – to considering others and being more ethically aware. In this state of flow, the human is a *feeling machine* and by feeling both the internal being (self) and the external worlds (land, waterways, architecture, materials, surfaces, art and objects) the perceptive human being may be more capable of

*becoming other*, experiencing difference and realising difference as a means to experience connectivity and contextuality. In the milieu of the art school studio, the body AND mind is engaged with critique derived through the internal mechanism of realising affective encounters, as well as having an appreciation of the external world, including the social and dynamic action of others engaged in the same internalising processes culminating in externalised and observable values. The prevailing sense here is that of emergence, as the students interact with each body engaging in becoming-artist and becoming-critic all the while individuating within these contexts. However, the ability to empathise with the ideas of others' and to value them because of how they add to the contextualising of an inadequate idea as it becomes a more adequate idea, becomes the sustaining feature of the critique experience. This contextualising of affect relations and ideas can shift an inadequate idea about the artwork, into a more adequate idea. This embracing of new contexts provides new possibilities for thinking critically about the artwork and also recognition of the affect relations being felt (in the body). This allows empathy to take part in steering the communication and builds connections and knowledge beyond assumption.

The advantage here for art students is to be able to turn a reflexive gaze on their experiences and to learn to value significant nuances regarding affect and its expression. Students can be empowered by developing the context of inadequate ideas so as to appreciate empathic thinking and the expanded knowledge it brings. Within an art context this transformation of thinking and communicating happens primarily through affective resonance and collegiality. Art education gives voice to feelings and in so doing may be likened to therapy for the senses. This therapy for the senses catches the body actively engaged in *feeling* feelings and also provides a space and time to articulate the nuanced states of the *felt* feelings. The body discloses, listens, deciphers and shares. The body can learn to foreground an awareness of affect that is derived from other human and nonhuman bodies and this awareness alongside the contextualising of ideas gained through awareness of affect relations, can produce the expansion of inadequate ideas so as to shift them toward becoming more adequate ideas. This transformative process presents empowering propositions for art students, culminating in establishing further agency and efficacy for them as individuals.

## ETHICAL AND AFFECTIVE TRANSACTIONS

When working to expand their individual capacities, art students actively and affectively participate in *thinking and feeling* activities while they expand their awareness of how to process the (affective) encounter of art and its conceptually-reaching affects or sensations. These body AND mind transactions pertinent to an aesthetic experience bring ideas to consciousness through the body, in other words we *think* with our body. During these transactions, opinions are articulated, ideas debated using critical language and thought processes so as to problematise both the personal and the shared terrain. Art students have the opportunity to mature in self-regulating and self-actualising ways that often instill pride in their creative achievements, and develop their sense of purpose and their individuality or this-ness. This is explained and explored in part through the pursuit of a personalised art practice and in part through being with each other, embedded within the studio milieu. Art students are modified by their connection with and dependency upon their fellow emerging creative subjects, the programme of study, as well as the local contemporary art community. Ideally, art students learn to appreciate their personal understanding of their place in their world whilst also developing their ideas and their theoretical and aesthetic understanding of their current and transitory territories. They do this by realising their personal and political views, and their thoughts and ideas through their art practice, which is held, contextualised and viewed in the context of contemporary critical thinking, meaningful dialogue and their familiar “more-than-one” (Manning, 2013) milieu. Although they may not consciously appreciate or know about the processes of individuation, or the concept of haecceity, art students are advantaged by having access to corporeal experiences and encounters that regularly engage their senses and bring forth molecular thinking and new ways of being in the world.

As the students put their thinking into action in regard to their art-making practices, they are also thinking through their actions. Because their art practice is centred around their personal view of the world and their chosen intellectual and art expressed fields of enquiry, everything seems to them to be at stake whilst they are engaged in developing the ideas and exploring the practice. An art practice often lies close to the bone especially when it is manifesting from personal experience and not externally derived or preordained by other governance. Art students are vulnerable to criticism, however they are also rendered robust by it. They learn to position their feelings as they familiarise

themselves with affective relations regarding art. While working together in the studio their intelligent bodies form unique compositions with other bodies (objects, images and things) as well as with each other. Students become familiar with their body's response to affective encounter. In time, they become more capable of articulating their body AND mind feelings and thinkings. Sometimes the realisation of what a particular affective body means, or is transmitting — acknowledged initially as a kind of vague sensation in the body AND mind, which continually develops through the application of language and effort — gives the student a sense of identifying with a particular visual composition, processual strategy, methodology or conceptual understanding. This is transformative in the way that each identification of an affective encounter provides an imaging or imagining of the expanded idea or concept, within the context of one's already forming platform of possibilities. This thinking-feeling is taken into the intelligent body and is understood as having a particular value and quality, which may displace other values and qualities. Each value and quality is capable of supporting or denying other values as well as shifting thinking and shaping new tendencies, appetites or habits. In varying degrees of significance and scale the body AND mind is affected and the subject is thus individuated.

These powerful adjuncts to the maturing process, incremental in force and quality, are continually taking place, and for the art student this happens within a very active and affective milieu. These events are practical, emotional, and often confronting, however they are also extremely important to the becoming subject and the process by which they sense themselves and have a sense of themselves. Empathic thinking gained through art pedagogy is not necessarily confined to the art studio, the art critique or associated practices within art pedagogy. The curiosity and enquiry into "difference" can become a mode of being or second-nature, sustaining ethical thinking and as a consequence ethical behaviour. The risks and ruptures that shift movement toward molecular thinking and novel understanding are typical scenarios understood within the context of making art and often prompt empathic understanding from fellow students.

Our bodies are always in a state of flux and constantly moving in one direction or another: moving toward something or away from something — taking on one thought or another and reckoning that thought with our tendencies and appetites. We are by dint of being in the world, affective beings: always and already becoming. By not being

aware of the impact that particular events and actions, have on the intelligent body, and the means by which we can develop more adequate ideas, we could be missing vital opportunities for more pro-active and ethical becoming.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter is the culminating chapter of the thesis and has built on earlier chapters' exploration of the art school studio as an assemblage-type site of learning and art pedagogy as the transformative means by which students engage with affective encounters and affect relations. It presented and argued a case for the work that art schools do in developing affective transactions and experiences for art students who, through such processes as outlined above and in earlier chapters, experience particular kinds of processual acts of individuation.

The art critique is written about here as the *pièce de résistance* within what I consider, a unique form of education. By concentrating on the art critique, I was able to highlight the particular activities and transformative experiences that stimulate and promote empathic and ethical thinking. These experiences include experiential understanding of affect, refining affect reception, translation of sensation into verbal articulation, and the articulation of ideas emerging through affect. These acts are all associated with the encounter of art, which enables engagement to unfold within the context of exploring an independent voice while being dependent on others to help contextualise the processes belonging to the understanding of affect, percept and concept. Ultimately in this chapter I have theorised how art students, within the art school studio, build their skills together alongside the unfolding of knowledge they garner about art and visual language, themselves and each other.

## CHAPTER 11

# TO CONCLUDE

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The research for this thesis began by drawing on philosophical ideas regarding the power of affect, the impact of social and educational relations within the art school studio milieu, and the functioning of art education for the emerging creative subject. In reading various philosophical texts most notably Spinoza (1996), Deleuze and Guattari (2004), I proceeded to contemplate how these philosophies may relate to art education and the dynamic of the art school studio. This contemplation was undertaken without an overarching plan or structure, or indeed a central question posed to problem solve. Rather using these philosophical concepts granted an understanding and provided a lens through which to *feel* and think about this milieu. These broader philosophical concepts in practice in turn enabled an appreciation of the intricate workings within the art school studio and to recognise the processual acts of individuation of the emerging creative subject.

Art education and the art school studio were discussed offering experiential accounts that positioned Deluzo-Guattarian concepts within a particular pedagogy characteristic thereof. The concepts of rhizome, assemblage and affect were situated within the art school studio milieu, and highlighted the significance of art education in harnessing the transformative capability of everyday experience. While mapping the flavour and potentiality of the studio (smooth and striated space orientations, movement from molar thinking to molecular thinking and the influence of the always and already affective milieu), I began to situate the emerging creative subject within the context of affect relations, studio life and the responsibility of becoming-artist.

After surveying the pragmatics of the art school studio milieu and the reception of affect felt through art encounters, this knowledge was used as a foundation for understanding more complex theoretical concepts. What has unfolded herein, although not planned specifically, is the kind of slow contextualisation that Spinoza (1996) was so fond of. The importance of affect was discussed within the milieu of the art school studio and how the

studio dynamic supported rhizomatic movement and prompted deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation for the art student. It was suggested that the art school studio functions to a large extent as an assemblage which is made up of smaller, more personalised or intimate assemblages where human bodies and non-human bodies interact, merge and negotiate to ignite new propositions and new ways of thinking. The importance of being able to shift between smooth space orientations and striated space orientations was highlighted, which allowed for spontaneous acts and intuitive initiatives to be born. These transformative processes, are contingent on the culture of the art studio, art pedagogy being unspecific, the abundance of emergent practices and the inherent sociality and connectivity occurring between physical bodies.

Through the use of vignettes philosophical concepts are illustrated. The story: *To the Island* narrates the shifts between smooth space orientations and striated space orientations. It does this by discussing the affect relations and responses that occur while talking, thinking, walking and becoming. The shifts in movement/thinking and related theoretical understanding are recognised as being pertinent to physical movement and conceptual shifts that can take place within the art school studio setting.

Focusing on art as an affective and active component of cognitive life, experienced within the art school studio, the ensuing relationship between affect and ideas provides a rich resonance and resource for the subjectivity of the intelligent body. Art students operate at the intersection of the art school studio milieu on one hand and the conceptual, emotional and intellectual development we call art education on the other. Irrespective of where the gravitational force and philosophical paradigm steers art students' practice, they gain a greater appreciation of themselves, each other and the things they want to make art about. It is within this creative milieu that a fluid learning may occur.

The art critique is found to be a pertinent and engaging activity whereby ethical thinking is encouraged. As individual knowledge and understanding is pooled to create pertinent contexts and collaborative efforts in the search for meaning the practice of art gains a depth and richness of expression. Spinoza's (1996) theory regarding affect is outlined and underscores an understanding of the studio dynamic and the capabilities of

the body. In relation to affect, a discussion follows regarding the understanding of the body AND mind parallelism as a medium through which the emergence of ideas and meaning may be created for the emerging creative subject.

The art student in witnessing the expression of opinions, feelings and ideas from fellow art students garners a mutual interdependency and respect for negotiating embodied meaning. As students assist each other to find the context for affect relations they excavate the richer meaning within the artwork, which in turn forms the foundation of an ethical thinking. However, while ethical thinking develops within an art studio, once students have extended themselves to embrace this mode of thinking it transcends and permeates all of their interactions, potentially making them more ethical human beings. Although these opportunities are situated within the art school studio milieu, similar opportunities for ethical understanding can also apply within other environments. This is particularly so if the interactions within these environments support affective communication through smooth space orientations and rhizomatic movement. These environments, like the studio milieu, need to be de-centred, spatially and physically flexible, and open to affective relations. However, the transformative processes discussed throughout the thesis are more easily acknowledged and supported in situations where rhizomatic movement and encounters with aesthetic material, processes and practices prevail. The art school studio is therefore an ideally suited environment within which to understand such ethical transformative activities as these may be experienced through both singular and collegial pursuits within an art pedagogy.

There is a paucity of literature referencing art education, especially in relation to the art studio and its distinct pedagogical focus. My contribution to knowledge thus not only explores this distinct pedagogy but also brings a philosophical lens situated within the conceptual frameworks of Spinoza, Deleuze and Guattari to the art studio milieu. This philosophical lens positions the emerging creative subject as an integral part of this pedagogy that predisposes art students to affective engagement, the rigour of the art critique and the critical and ethical thinking that emerges therefrom.

This thesis has highlighted ways that the art student can be cognisant — aesthetically and politically — of the greater world, as well as the often inconspicuous, affective

details within the familiar world, so as to operate within an ethical paradigm; to seek context, to be empathic, and to appreciate and accept difference. While I have viewed the emerging creative subject and the art school studio through an idealised lens, this has been done consciously to indicate the scope of the potential open to art students in a studio setting receiving an art education. This lens may in turn be used by art educators to augment their knowledge of art pedagogy and assist them in applying this knowledge in practice.

I believe it is possible to harness the richness of sensory encounters and constructive and affective dialogue that build subjectivities for an ethical and aesthetic consciousness. The transformative activities belonging to art pedagogy are fundamental to the understanding of self and what it means to be fully in community, respecting each other's positioning, opinions and responses to affective relations. In experiencing the art encounter within an educational setting such as the art school studio milieu, we may become more adequate ethical beings.

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