

Reversed Painting:

Faktura and autopoietic system.

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I 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 nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements.

Andrew Farquhar
2012

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisors, Dale Fitchett and Simon Clark for their invaluable support and guidance throughout the development of this project. I would like to acknowledge my family and friends, in particular my partner Paula, for their steady patience and encouragement throughout the duration of this journey.

An autopoietic journey, filled with unexpected interruption as part of my life cycle. Whilst nearing the completion of my research I unfortunately had a heart attack. This could be attributed to an earlier life threatening health scare, therefore potentially anticipated, although this time it arrived in a completely unexpected form. Had I known in advance, prevention would have been high on my agenda. Sometimes the most unexpected events do test us. With the potential to totally derail my project and significantly disrupt my own survival, I was able to draw strength from my close family and very pleasingly present this research project.

My research proposes a practice-based investigation about painting and the establishment of a system of painting. An engagement with material and medium procedures, as the primary constituents of painting, will be explored through a concept of faktura. The idea of the system is underpinned by a notion of autopoiesis. Autopoiesis is explored as a self-generative process based as a way to derive method and structural organisation from its own making through its own lived experience.

Faktura's link to modern materials and processes uncovered a dialogue within the system between painting and digital imaging. The digital imaging served as a means of re-presenting reality. From this position the investigation opened up the opportunity for painting not to be bound to re-presenting reality. It allowed for the emergence of the new – painting's inception from itself as itself as the point of departure and return. The painting surface could be considered the place of expansion and contraction for the proposition of a new painting's emergence – painting derived from material, medium and method reflecting autopoiesis as the means.

The thesis is constituted as practice-based work 80%, accompanied by an exegesis 20%.

This exegesis is presented as a series of cycles. Deliberately autopoietic in nature, these were conceived as self-generating cycles, each built upon its preceding cycle. Each cycle is explored as a means of finding painting as well as locating a self-generative system. The first two sections, 'Concerning Investigation' and 'Foundation of Investigation', overview the fundamental concepts and influences governing the ideology of the system. The remaining sections, presented as process notes, provide a chronological description of the system's development through practice and reflective commentary.

The painting system cycle is described in the form of studio experimentation alongside selected visual examples. The process notes, whilst not conclusive, should be regarded as reflections for filtering and guiding the process development. Similar in style to the presented works, the notes represent a particular judgment point at a given stage in the system's cycle. Like the works themselves, the notes are presented as fragments, temporal entities existing on their own terms in their own time. These fragments should be perceived as a record of the relationship between the thinking and the making. Autopoietic in their own terms, they act as memories of what occurred during the making process; partially eroded snapshots of my creative thinking at the time and my understanding of the materials and medium used.

The enquiry has followed its own indications and paths to evolve beyond

the originating concept of a painting system. Each alteration to the system's strategies derives from the system's own historical record. The positioning of the selected images and process notes depicts the course of enquiry as a networked relationship between artist, materials and medium processes undertaken. The aim was to determine a self-generating methodological and structural organisation for the emergence of new life via a painting system.

In the initial stages of my research, I proposed an approach to painting built upon philosopher John Rajchman's (1995) view that "another kind" of painting is required, one of "connection – of And rather than Not" (p. 22). The 'And' indicates to me a shift toward painting founded on "a reassemblage that moves toward ... the constitutive 'forms' of a medium" (Rajchman, 1998, p. 55), rather than painting as a point-of-reference. While not seeking to reject the reference-to-something interpretation, I suggest that reference-to-something constitutes a separate stage of painting, which is removed from the painting process.

New York based painter Nachume Miller in his catalogue 'Sensual Painting' (1993) considered it necessary to focus on "constructing a system of painting ... to a new level of meaning ... [so] painting about painting inspire[s] painting" (p. 9). Using the phrase "reversed abstraction" (p. 8) Miller proposed the end point of painting as the starting point to build a new pictorial presence. Following Miller, the "possibilities of what can now be put back" initialises an in-depth investigation of the "possibilities in new composition and structure" (p. 8). Miller argued that painting "will develop its own independent logic" (p. 9). My research is based on a similar theme; that painting may be based on a structural formation inclusive to a system of painting rather than utilising established solutions, approaches and styles of painting separately in isolation.

Further alignment is realised through an engagement with historian Yves-

Alain Bois (1991) speculative and inconclusive note ending his texts in 'Painting as Model'. Bois suggestively challenged that painting has a capacity to reinterpret its past to generate a new conception of its future. Bois' re-configuration of painting suggests a re-appraisal of painting beyond Clement Greenberg's idealist formalism, via re-consideration of materiality and process manifested as apparent changes in the materialistic dimension.

Artist Mick Finch's article 'Painting as Vigilance' (1997) identified a means of achieving Bois' materialist denominator through the use of faktura. Faktura indicates a paradigm shift to an "emphasis on the process qualities of painting ... linked to a serially organized configuration, a structure that resulted from the commitment to systematic investigation" (Buchloh, 1984, p. 90). For me, thinking in these terms requires the examination of a self-perpetuating option derived from its own logic which renews and reconfigures from itself.

Faktura

Faktura has an impurity of historical definition; its meaning alters over time and in relation to different art models. Broadly, faktura embodies "medium and technique as the true constituents of the work of art" proposed by Russian Constructivists (Rowell, 1978, p. 91). Faktura appears subject to new adaption. Such adaption is highlighted by Finch, who suggested that Benjamin Buchloh (n.d.) was influenced by faktura when writing on Gerhard Richter. Buchloh's suggestion for a new faktura "emphasizes precisely the mechanical quality, the materiality, and the anonymity of the painterly procedure" (cited Finch, 1997, p. 2). Margit

Rowell (1978) in her article 'Vladimir Tatlin: Form/Faktura' regarded faktura as “a common association with the material essence, a substance or texture: 'culture of materials,' ... For a knowledge, understanding, and sensitivity in regard to materials” (p. 99). Later, relating faktura to the October Revolution of 1917, Rowell later adjusted her perspective to “Faktura will henceforth denote the introduction of modern materials representing the new age” (p. 101).

In my research I have tended towards the faktura concept of Finch (1997, pp. 4–5). Yet, adhering to the historical mutability of faktura, I have further used and adjusted Finch’s concept. My personal interpretation of faktura is therefore: Mechanical procedure and painting collectively constitute the sum of different traces. The traces are related to modern mediums in the way conditions are brought onto, into or through a surface. The procedure for finding could be implemented by an obscuring or effacement strategy. The result is a movement from re–presentation of an ideal to a level of significance situated in materiality and process.

By suggesting digital imaging technology is closely related to painting, I adopt this form as the mechanical medium in an expanded strategy for finding painting. In the initial development of my painting system, I considered the implications and relevance of faktura (specifically, painting as a model of its own construct), mechanical quality and the strategy leading to painting. This raised investigative questions regarding the nature of the proposed painting system, the paintings emerging from the system, and the role of the artist:

- how do the system conditions of paint and painting function in the system formation?
- Which process generates aesthetic outcomes – the work of art itself,

the art results generated by the system, or both?

- By what integrated means can modern digital imaging technologies inform and perform inside the painting system, rather than serving a separate function?
- how might the interactive exchange dynamics with the artist be anchored in the construction of a painting system? Is the individual who sets up the system considered the artist? Or is the person who determines the outputs the artist?
- if painting is fundamentally regarded as communication, which aspect of a painting system determines the moments of communication engagement?
- if paintings are considered finite how can a painting system be defined as infinite?

As a means of defining life, Chilean biologists H.R. Maturana and F.J. Varela offered autopoietic theory, which purports to describe the dynamics of living systems. The compound word 'autopoiesis' literally means self-production and self-creation: *auto* meaning oneself and by itself, and *poiesis* meaning production, creation and formation (Moriyama, n.d.) This research makes no attempt to conclusively define autopoiesis; rather, it posits that autopoiesis can embrace a self-generating strategy and transform painting into a system defined by its organisation.

Proposed in 1972, autopoiesis purports to incorporate invariant features of living systems, described by Maturana and Varela (1980) as a set of operational characteristics or 'living machines'. The essence of autopoiesis is

"the center of the constitutive dynamics of living systems. To live this dynamics in an autonomous way, living systems need to obtain resources from the environment in which they live. In other words, they are simultaneously autonomic and dependent systems" (Mariotti, n.d.).

The "dynamism apparent in living systems which the word 'machine' connotes" is defined by its 'organization' (Maturana & Varela, 1980, p. 76). In Maturana and Varela's 'Autopoiesis and Cognition' (1980), the autopoiesis process is defined through a concept of 'living machines':

"An autopoietic machine is a machine organised (defined as a unity) as a network of processes of production (transformation and destruction) of components that produces the components

which: (i) through their interactions and transformations continuously regenerate and realise the network of processes (relations) that produced them; and (ii) constitute it (the machine) as a concrete unity in the space in which they (the components) exist by specifying the topological domain of its realisation as such a network." (pp. 78–79)

An autopoietic system organises continuously, effectively activating the system through itself, as self-producing units in physical space. The biological underpinning of the theory can be linked to a cyclic evolutionary adaptive system. This suggests that painting may undergo interactions and transformations to structurally self-organise in ways which could be regarded as 'living'.

Throughout my painting system investigation, Maturana and Varela's (1980) concept of autopoiesis is presented as a self-generative system for painting. Characterised by adaptive, interactive conditions and perturbations of paint, the system should operate with no control imposed on individual interactions. As such, interactions are subject to perturbations that neither direct nor control, but instead trigger behavioural changes within a receiving domain, the painting. From this perspective, an autopoietic influenced self-generative painting system demonstrates how different components of interrelated processes, each retaining autonomy, simultaneously participate to structure the whole. Via a flow of conditions that allows for increasingly complex, evolving and adaptive painting, autopoiesis naturally leads to emergence of the new. The implications for which will position painting, as in itself, "to be educated by it" (Damisch, 1995, p. 262). In my research, I propose that autopoiesis cannot provide a definitive solution to the complexity of

painting, but may inspire a system of painting in which a set of networked conclusions extends beyond the originating conditions for painting.

My proposed system will explore the formal past of painting, with a view to developing new conditions of existence. I intend to re-stage my previous digital images, by combining the competencies of both painting and digital imaging into an all-encompassing strategy, while maintaining them as discrete, self-determining artistic entities. As such, the works and systems in this investigation developed within an autopoiesis framework will be self-referential.

To remain autopoietic, painting must reference itself from its own known environment, evolution and experiences within a completely closed system. Within this context, painting is less about interpreting life than about active engagement in its own life cycle.

Rather than insisting on materialism alone, I advocate a shift from seeing painting forms alone to seeing the conditions from which these forms were generated during a process. These conditions may illuminate multiple sequential paths towards additional new outcomes not exclusively derived from pre-conditioned forms. By accepting perturbation, the system is adaptive to retrieval and is transformed by varying methods and medium processes. Deletion and retention are two distinct and undefined actions of a system undergoing temporal reconfigurations in material structure. I challenge whether I am the sole author of my paintings “in terms of representation” (Finch, p. 2), by co-joining anonymous computer based manipulation processes with painterly procedures. By removing any reliance on painting to reproduce a known reality, I open chance

opportunities for achieving new potentiality. Representation is relegated to a non-painting procedure within the system via digital imaging which, it could be argued, is founded inherently upon representing reality. Historian Martin Soberg (2008), describing the photographs and digital manipulations of Thomas Ruff, reported that digital imaging identities are "often considered as possessing no independent layer of meaning itself, but simply as an indexical translation of form" (p. 10). To counter this very reliance being present in painting, I propose an alignment of painting with newer digital manipulation technologies (removed from painting per se) as a mechanism of representation.

Each distinctive medium characteristic of the system is allowed to operate within the inherent boundaries of its presumed material qualities. The concept of faktura as materiality and medium linked to locating painting in a system could be considered as:

1. the mechanical quality and the anonymity of process leading to painting; and
2. the material conditions of painting i.e. how it is made; and
3. digital imaging and painting works being two distinctive, yet linked parts of a strategy that determines one outcome.

The multifarious retrieval and deletion processes assume that the system maintains an internal organisation through its selection of observed conditions. The strategy does not comprise a totally pre-determined orchestrated performance of selected operations, but involves fluid sequences which may be perturbed. Thus, autopoietic painting as a system can be evolutionary adaptive over a potentially infinite timeframe. If the painting system generates a speculative representation of something that

constitutes the painting itself, the painting becomes a speculation of what it has yet to be. This idea proposes that something does not exist prior to painting, and cannot therefore be speculated prior to painting, leading to the concept of painting as a self-generating, emergent system.

If painting's reliance on identity forming prior to painting is disregarded, the material process properties become critical for painting to emerge. I therefore suggest that re-representation be provided by digital image processing as a predominantly optical practice. Digital imaging within the system enables re-presentation to occur at appropriate moments, potentially creating unknown desirable conditions of painting. A detached, almost anonymous gathering process that precedes painting, yet is part of the painting system, is proposed. While acknowledging the important role of digital imaging in this research, an autopoietic system must begin with painting and must always return to the physical activity of painting. Painting as a self-generative autopoietic system arises from its own conditions in a continuous adaptive evolutionary cycle. Thus, from a Maturana & Varela (1980) perspective, painting should find itself through a maintenance of itself.

In the following studio process investigations I provide a chronological account of my attempt to present autopoietic (process) painting manifested as:

- (i) repeated serially organised action of methods and materials:
- (ii) a generative system comprising multiple combinations of digital media which are
- (iii) fused and translated into painting as material procedures, inducing structural organisation via relationship to surface.

Introduction

During my early art training, my tutor Paul Dibble, to paraphrase, spoke of the 'intent to build'. His 'intention' referred to the first mark, first decision, first action. Consequently, my intent to build begins with a concept comparable to that of Gerhard Richter's 'Atlas' in which “drawings and diagrams he has compiled ... [as] inspiration and source” allow him to sift “through his material – selecting, marking and altering images then transferring them onto canvas” (Whitechapel Gallery, n.d.).

My initial source material constituted my digital photographs stored on the computer. My premise is an amalgam of 'Atlas' and painter Gunther Forg's referencing to other artist's work, not as quotation, but as a provocative starting question of what has yet to be realised (Ryan, 2002). Referencing my own work was the intention, as no new knowledge will be gained. I presented myself with generic open-ended questions such as: What does it have? What elements are necessary? What particularities belong to it?

While not exhaustive, these questions seek to provoke rather than provide answers. The latter is achieved by functional-type questions such as: what does it represent? What does it mean? By its very nature, the system is built upon generative provocations.

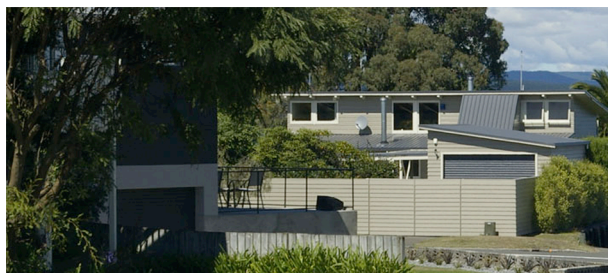


Figure 01. Farquhar, A. (2009). *Untitled* [Digital photograph].

Beginning conversation with a motif, man-made set in natural environment. Familiar and unremarkable structure. Horizontal, landscape format. Flattened forms. Shallow non-uniform grid.

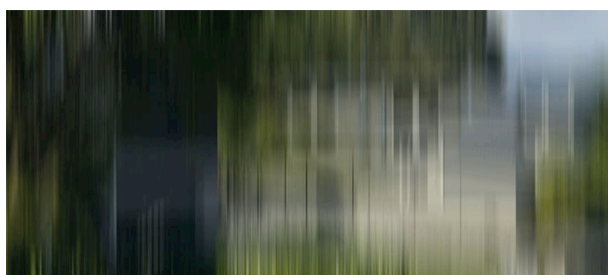


Figure 02. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital photograph].

Remove/obscure identity/function. Motion blur produces light/dark, horizontal/vertical elements. Viewpoint removed/obscured, relative to fill flat plane. Structural potential to be explored.

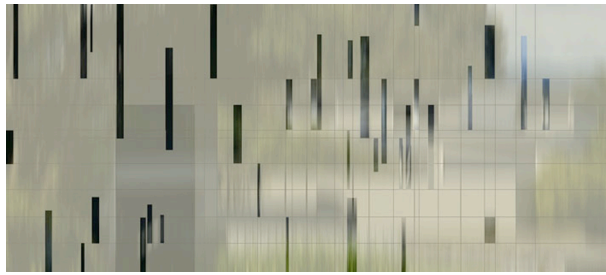


Figure 03. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital manipulation].

Superimposed veil/screen to highlight the grid strengths/demarcations. Almost like blurring ones eyes to see shapes. Structure shines through, across surface. Uses repetition as structural element. No longer equal. Screens partial removal provides glimpses/hints, windows to behind.

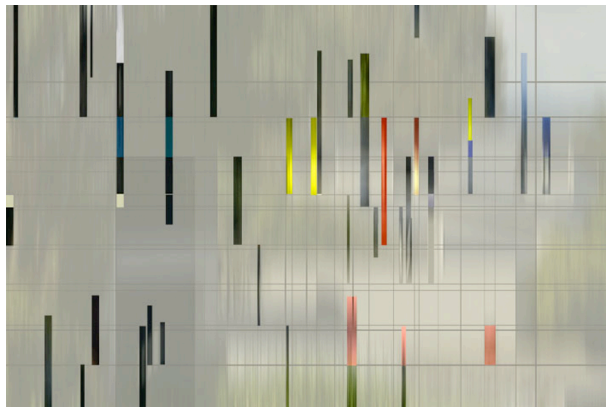


Figure 04. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital manipulation].

Format altered to organise a relationship for visual interest. Difference is drawn from the structure. Difference is drawn from repeating units. Light as colour drawn up from the contained image underneath and dispersed as structural elements/units.

Contained and dispersed ...

Duality of space and image. Surface concealing whilst simultaneously revealing.

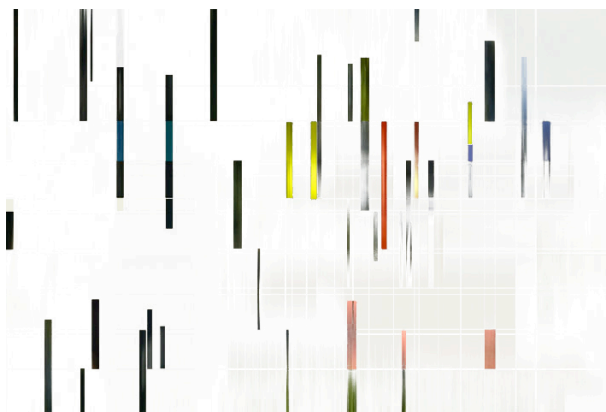


Figure 05. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital manipulation].

Original source almost totally obscured. Distance obscured. Spatial context removed. Repetition now the idea. Light from surface of original the subject. Illuminated from behind, shaped into surface. Light-as-surface.

What goes before creates what arrives after.



Figure 06. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital manipulation].

Orientation changed. Status lost in space as spatial structure. Light intensity record movement through the space/plane ... or actually is that movement through the surface?

Creates a slow meandering journey, a series of positions. Light seemingly standing still, framed, creates a series of events – connected by repetition. Digital space, smooth. Sliding horizontally with a vertical shifting. Layer without substance. Alters hierarchy.



Figure 07. Farquhar, A. (2008). *Secret* [Painting].

Similarity to earlier painting's I have created becomes obvious. 'Secret' demonstrates my past production, a visual connection to the digital image just produced.

The system has not generated the new – it's merely replicated the known. I have just engaged in a dialogue with similarity.

How can I alter this? Shift and move from the preconceived forms already known and established?



Figure 08. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital manipulation].

Project the earlier digital image upon the earlier digital image of the painting. Painting surface digitally re-presented. Rendered without substance. Ground and figure relationship obscured between photograph and painting. Reworking past with the present. Reworking the event of painting twice.

Shifting digital back to painting?
Circular maybe? Cyclic?

Returning it back to painting.

Reworking – now a collage of process? Place between photograph, screen and painted surface. Looking to forms during making. Diversity of thinking processes or is that just thinking with diversity of processes?

Re-staging painting to always return to painting. My need is always to return to painting. Why?

Paint as substance with insistence on materiality. Particularities of its own nature. Seeking new conditions of existence. Sensitivity to surface digital screen fails to provide. Paint characteristics determined by surface. Forms driven up from below. Ground created by material aspects of paint creates the forms. Forms as paint incidents.

Summary

This painting is not the emergence of the new so eagerly sought. It is just more of the same, only through alternative process stages. Advantage I perceive is the constructed painting surface as a sequence of glimpses.



Figure 09. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Painting].

Process Notes 2: Cycle strategy 2



Figure 10. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge* [Digital photograph].



Figure 11. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge* [Digital photograph].



Figure 12. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge* [Digital photograph].



Figure 13. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge* [Digital photograph].

Two new series of photographs specifically shot for purpose of establishing the system. Commonality to these images and the works generated in cycle one is there is an emphasis upon capturing surface as texture. Viewpoint creates ambiguity of identity. This time irregular, repeated units dispersed as a grid. Ambiguous positioning. Seeking link to painting before painting with reference to textural qualities. Denied/highlighted light to illustrate the grid demarcations.

Slow exposure time on camera before process manipulation. Blurring result of poor technique, not digital manipulation/process. Photographing space between viewpoint and subject. Partially obscured source.

Difference drawn from repetition. Same image photographed as varied, flawed function.

Drawing attention to light. Visual recording of objects altered without light. Altered by light through a lens. The logic of the devise and its inherent process. Light remains as an indexical operation. Coherent process obscured by poor technique. Variations beyond reality. Process obscures identity.



Figure 14. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital photograph].



Figure 15. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital photograph].



Figure 16. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital photograph].



Figure 17. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital photograph].

Similar structures with more emphasis on grid. Light, and absence of light. Excluded contextual information reduces symbolic interest. Ambiguity. Light and dark as structure. Reduction.



Figure 14a. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital photograph].

Light bands – illuminated by traces of process manipulation. Light reacting with surface to create pattern.

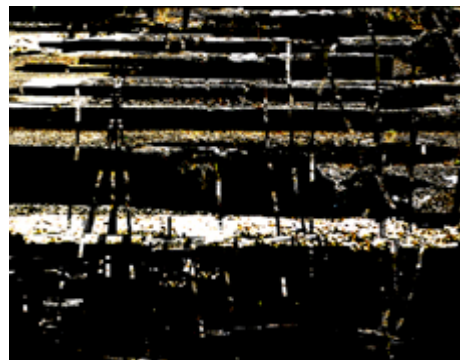


Figure 15a. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Digital photograph].

Photographed with limited spatial depth functions to illuminate objects structural potentiality. Obliqueness to read the image encourages a fragmented/dissolved subject whilst pronouncing the structure.

How to combine the two sets of images? They are similar but structurally distinct. Their own conditions, own connections. Overlaying and revisiting could produce new emergence opportunities.

These paintings are conceived from the photographs as a form of quotation. Not a direct mimic, rather, a glimpsed quotation, or an indirect reference to light on surface. An intended link to the material characteristics of paint.

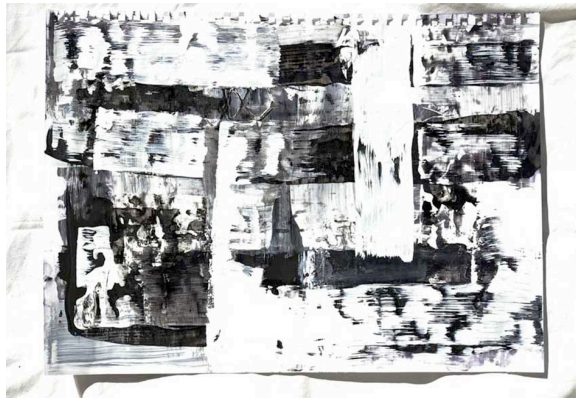


Figure 18. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled [Painting]*.

Difference drawn from repetition.

Formation depends upon a relationship to the materials connection to the surface. Forms rise up from the surface. What is left behind creates a prominence.

Difference arrives not only from the way of looking, but also from the sequence a work is constructed.



Figure 19. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled [Painting]*.

Selecting to maintain these works as achromatic as a means for me to see structure – a kind of text to be discovered

- image,
- replaced with light/medium on surface,
- creating a structural potentiality,
- a particular quality reflected back for greater consideration.

Removal of what constitutes a representational ground in relationship to a figure results in ambiguity. A de-limiting as to what is the gestural mark – the brushstroke is result of a fracture. Brushstroke formed from the ground up. A fracture of the ground as surface.

Difference is formed from experiences of the surface. A positive derived from the negative ... or does the negative accentuate the positive?



Figure 20. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled [Painting]*.



Figure 21. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Painting].

Continual repetition of structural aspects must produce difference. The material process of the painting is the expression of difference itself, the generator of new emergence, accrued from a physicality due to a number of visits made to it. Surface effects force a new experience, formed from material paint process, not limited to artist's preconceived intentions. Reliance upon re-presentation is no longer demanded, rather it acts as an aim that the original digital image will provide a blue-print seeking life to emerge from its own surface.



Figure 22. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Painting].

Colour was re-introduced for its capacity to visually activate the surface. Colour served to map key conditions as they occurred at various stages during the process.



Figure 23. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Painting].



Figure 24. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Painting].

Learning from the material aspects of previous works must precede the genesis of the next work. Paint as material substance arrives armed with its own memory, not a memory of fixed and representable tricks to be pulled from the bag on command; rather its past applications can be repeated in the present environment to encourage the emergence of the new.

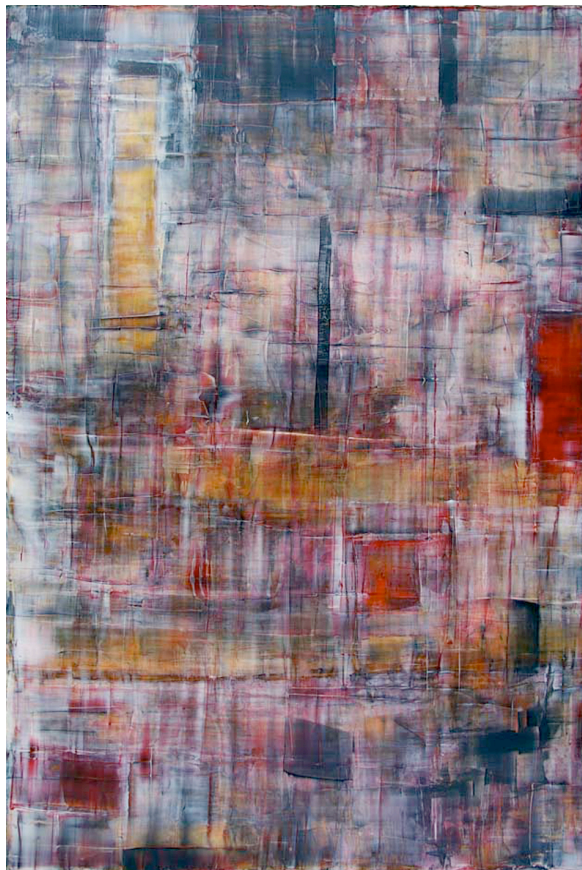


Figure 25. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Painting].

Layered, and layered some more. Paint battling with its own previous layer for its own existence. Intrusion of one surface upon another, accumulated, all in search of the earlier absent surface. The surface that remains is filled as a surface of interruption; how fragments have come into existence.

Bladed paint trace skimmed on by fabricated tools. A series of sections disrupted, left. Emphasis is placed on "breaks, disparities and discrepancies as in things that are out of the ordinary" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 14).

Accumulation results in scatterings, raised textural relief capturing, constraining new layers of paint.



Figure 26. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 27. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 28. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 29. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge* [Digital manipulation].

Digital images when considered as conditions for painting to emerge in the process are not just gradual accumulations to fully resolved painting. Rather, process should be considered as fractures, erasures, both of thought and action.

Cut, extracted, re-arranged, applied through multiple layers, looping back to repeat again and again. Derived of context, yet, an attempted linkage to painting where one set of information can overlap another. Searching for the conditions of its own context, my interest is in combining various references, similar to collage.

Rather than extracting beyond the boundaries of my systems own environment conditions, central to my proposition, is the multiplicity of difference be achieved in a closed system of continual return.

Earlier extracted samples from digital photographs, figures 10 –13 are superimposed over selected extractions from the next set (figures 14–17) and then combined with samples from '*Untitled*' painting (figure 25). In these terms the digital images combined with pre-existing painting become a stage of expansion and increased complexity.



Figure 29a. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Karangahake Gorge - two stage* [Digital manipulation].

Constructed from overlapping images makes the works appear shattered into numerous fragments. Inverting makes the image appear solarized with the effect that the ground appears to fold in upon itself.

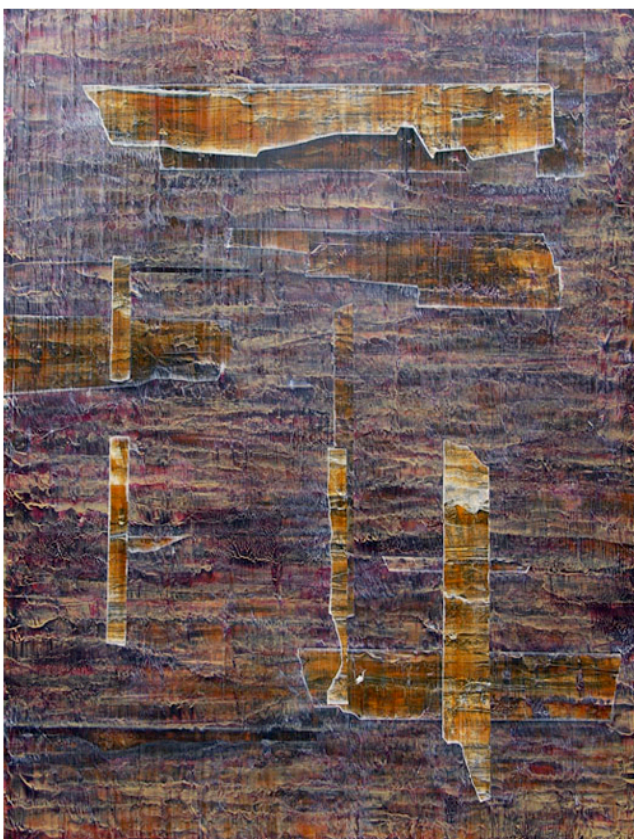


Figure 30. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Painting].

Reduction through extraction (rather than a return to reduction of form as a purification) could equally be conceived for determining increasing levels of complexity. A complexity that mimics today's adaptive world: with significantly increased access to readily-stored data; vulnerable to change; multiple layers of connection, built upon dynamic networked relations. All this places pressure on any painting system to be responsive, adaptive, expanding upon that which it knows and is able to investigate.

Striated, aggregated, between the fugitive, the furtive and the tangible describe the paintings developing conditions as result of accumulation. Yet, paradoxically they are that which has been left behind – denied, deprived of addition, restricted although pronounced as prominent.



Figure 31. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled* [Painting].

Characterised by both deletion and retention, piling up distinct layers of paint records the various temporal actions. The multifarious digital and paint processes are built primarily upon retrieval and transformation. The underlying purpose of the retrieval is to demonstrate key structural stages in forming the internal organisation. An organisation not preconceived, rather, organisation emerging from material applications responding to, or triggered by their relationship to surface. In this sense the process almost captures a painting by registering every nuance and hesitancy of the materials nature. Painting returns the extracted parts back to a whole; a whole of fragmented parts.

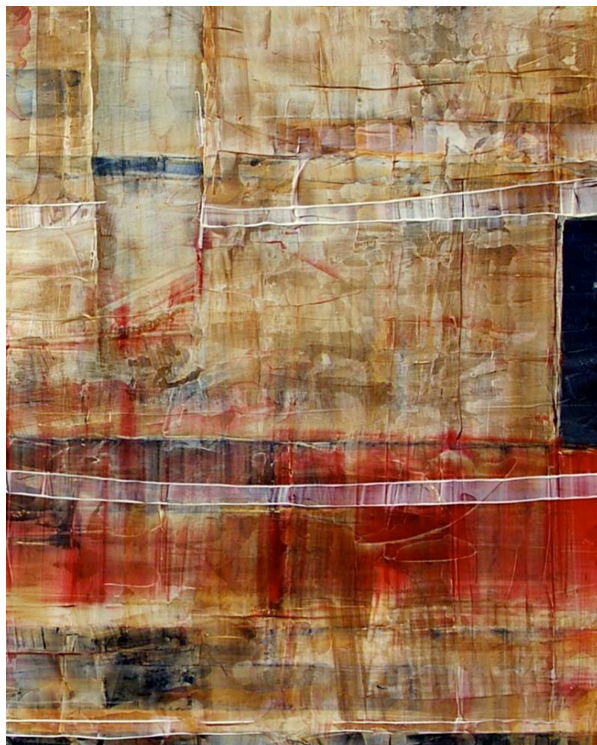


Figure 31a. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Untitled - detail* [Painting].

Summary

My thinking and selection role as the painter is to set in place the operations which are subsequently absorbed by the painting surface. Maturana and Varela (1980) state that the observer (artist) "defines a set of circumstances that lead a machine to change, following a certain path of variations in its outputs" (pp. 85–86). This process is sufficiently constrained to prevent completely random or arbitrary change. In this study, the system is built from my own selected images, which restricts the behaviour of the system to the fundamental characteristics of my own thinking at the given time. This constraint, while conceivably overbearing and possibly insurmountable, effectively prevents the system from free-wheeling beyond its own conditions, and thus maintains its organisation as a closed system. For the system to maintain unity it must initiate from painting, cycle through its operations, and return to painting. This process requires a shift in my originating source material.

Introduction

Pattern or model books, sometimes referred to as ornament books, originated in the medieval period. Their purpose was to illustrate to customers the range of objects produced by the artisan. Irrespective of historical origins or their modern equivalents, such repositories perform the fundamental functions of demonstration, initiation, and representing formal properties. My proposed living painting system shifts its origin to an archived repository of digital photographic paintings I had created previously. Stored in a computer database, these works constitute a wealth of prior painting practice from which to develop future potentialities.

As the creator of the earlier works, I now shift my role to that of initial observer of an expanded potentiality to painting. Having achieved initial proficiency with one particular paradigmatic focus for this painting, I now question whether this painting has indeed been found. The initial proficiency may yet spawn a novel variant. From the perspective of philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1964), I desire to open another avenue, where what was “said before must be said again in a different way... [It] remains to be sought out; the discovery itself calls forth still further quests” (p. 19). The originating painting results from a different paradigmatic focus that may now be re-examined, or at the very least, be described differently through repeating a known process.

I suggest that the presence of painting in the system at start and end is linked to a concept of expectation. The dynamism of the system derives from my belief that the impression of an image resides within my memory of the image and

that revisiting the image implies expectation. Expectation "consists of an image that already exists, in that it precedes the event that does not yet exist.

However, this image is not an impression left by things past but a 'sign'...of future things" (Ricoeur, 1983, p. 7).

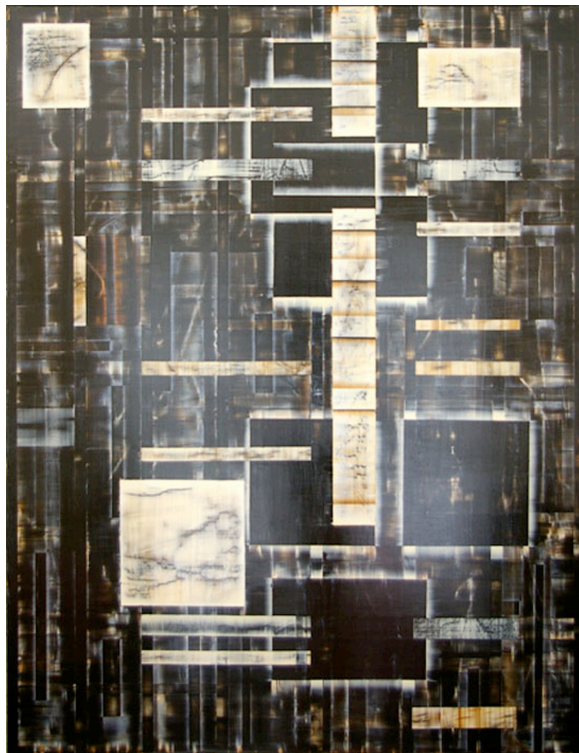


Figure 32. Farquhar, A. (2008). *Raise IV* [Painting].

Selecting '*Raise IV*' from 2008 symbolises nothing other than a particular interpretation, a structurally determined paradigmatic judgement point from an earlier event. No painting is "itself ever absolutely completed, still each creation changes, alters, clarifies, deepens, confirms, exalts, re-creates or creates by anticipation all the others" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 19). This digital photograph is a flawed and inaccurate representation. The digital image forms a link between seeing, thinking and making; a fragmented eroded relationship to a temporal provision that exists on its own terms. What is perceived now is something new, not a duplicate. Rather it is a deception, recorded and preserved by technology; a partially effaced, non-identical snapshot; a snapshot of the memory of painting itself.



Figure 33. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raise IV manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

It is this quality that renders the originating image so very intriguing. In one instance, the image appears accurate, when in fact it lacks the material nuances and characteristics, such as tactility, of the object. Secondly, whilst some technical application appears evident, the exact sequential duplication of the application is imprecisely recalled from memory. Thirdly, the paradigmatic focus, whilst pertinent to the formation of the works and possibly recorded as an intention, may not have survived in its entirety as the work progressed. Therefore, the final product may deviate from the original conception of the painting.

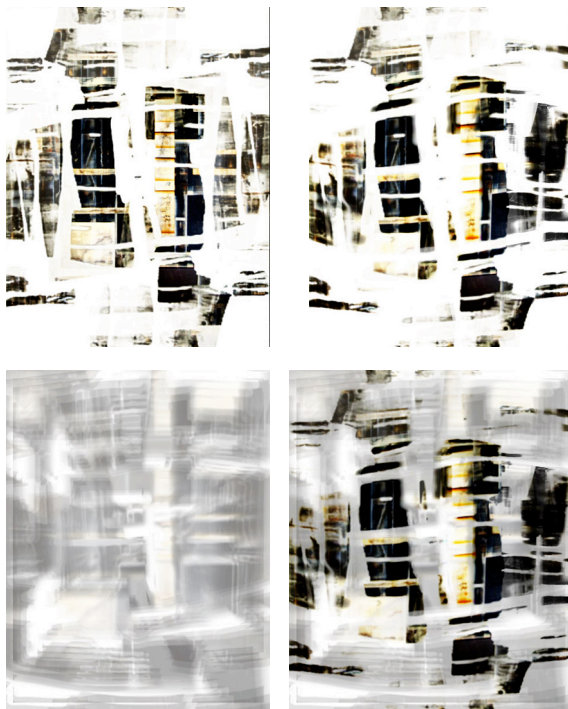


Figure 34. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raise IV manipulated - 4 stages of process* [Digital manipulation].

Of particular interest is that re-imaging of the painting provides an imprecise flawed translated mapping of an earlier process. The image as a digital re-presentation has been shifted, altered and stripped of its original processing. Never again can it be captured in its entirety, irrespective of mimetic reconstruction attempts. Such fragmented, partial recollection encouraged me to erode the whole to seek out desirable fragments.



Figure 35. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raise IV manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 36. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raise IV manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 37. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raise IV manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

To achieve this goal, components of the original image are selectively cloned, cut, dispersed, pushed and pulled. To obtain a fluctuating unstable relationship with the re-presentation of the original image, the image is deliberately eroded by contraction and movement, a process that encourages new inventive variation. The desired result is a fragmented, dissolved structure that can be explored in paint. To this end, I attempted to recreate in paint the digital manipulation presented in figure 37; the result is titled '*Raised*' (figure 38). The dynamics of the system are now focussed on exploring the faktura of paint, which again alters the potential outcome.



Figure 38. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised* [Painting].



Figure 39. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

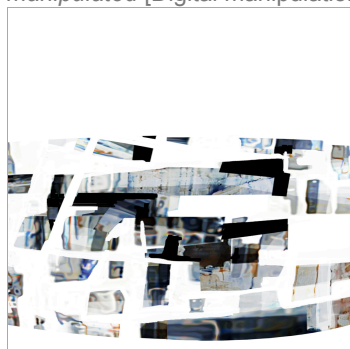


Figure 40. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 41. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 41a. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

Selection now becomes partly or wholly anchored. *'Raised'* is revisited throughout the reasoning stage, themed as 'maybe this is not "all there is to it" (Merleau-Ponty, p. 19)'. While selection implies constraint, the degree of constraint controls the forward momentum of the project. The system preserves an original digital image of a new painting from which a new possible structure is initiated.

The system might have effectively halted its cycle at this stage. However, the desire to extract more from this painting compelled me to continue and extend the cycle. On this occasion I opted against returning to the original digital image (figure 32), and instead superimposed the originating image used for the painting (figure 37) onto the digital image of the completed painting (figure 38).

Cycling from this more advanced stage enhances the sense of intrigue, and reinforces my expectation that the system is adaptive. It remains autopoietic since I am applying learned behaviours determined from within the system. Evolution and adaption has already initiated the emergence of potentially novel painting.



Figure 42. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 43. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 44. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

So far I have made continual references to structure, but have failed to answer a primary question: what is my structure?

I preferentially select from resilient, historically employed pictorial conventions such as colour, value, line, texture, shape and volume; tools of painting (regardless of mode of operation) to create space, depth and light within painting (regardless of associated school of thought). Such components, which have always influenced the genealogy of painting, remain fundamentally pertinent to autopoietic painting. Tied specifically to materiality and process, they provide an endless array of modification and transformation potentials in numerous applications.

This repertoire of actions feeds the system with components that may or may not be consumed in their entirety, but importantly belong within the painting environment. The selections are dictated by conditions of earlier painting, therefore cannot be considered as additional outside input, which would compromise the integrity of the autopoietic system. The system requirement is not to give meaning to selection, but to seek new possibilities. The thinking processes of the agent, i.e. the artist, are undermined by inquisitiveness, a “temporal beat behind the genesis of its object, therefore a temporal beat behind the genesis of itself”

(Johnson, 1993, p. 46).



Figure 45. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 46. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

The computer as a procedural tool provides purpose, in a manner similar to memory processing in the brain. The computer cuts, crops, relocates, obscures and distorts or exaggerates and amplifies, and ultimately dissolves the image completely. The image becomes a digitally modified painting, dissolved into a flattened field of dark and light bound within the separate reality of the screen. It becomes a seemingly recognisable but unidentifiable reality, forced apart from the original experience or perception.

These digitalised fragments have been cloned, edited and collaged into a new context, removed from their original locality. They remain as fragmented selections acting as fulcrums for departures and returns. Troels Anderson (1985), describing the 'Kirkeby effect' proposed by Per Kirkeby, refers to these images as motifs, points of expansion or contraction. The best carrier of selection is characterised by the motif being forced away, almost marginalised to reminiscences, "elements of imagery being of secondary importance, quite often reduced to the unrecognisable" (1985, p. 6). No longer representational as extractions, they present as provocations, questions, to reveal more of the evolving system through an array of altered conditions.

The image evokes something lurking,

hidden, not yet realised. It renders itself honestly, yet harbours conditions beyond its own present structural form. No longer a structurally whole painting, its conditions have been modified and refined, providing a diverse range of opportunities for further change. The genesis of a novel painting from repetitive sampling of one paradigmatic focus requires that these conditions be continuously updated and refined.

Summary

Painting is an inevitable outcome of the proposed system. In this context, an inevitability is deemed a fragment of the process, that can be further fragmented into cyclic evolutionary process steps to generate new potential outcomes. Having evolved my system, this research may have equally assisted me in positioning myself as a painter, within the emergence of a system of painting. Although I remain the author of the work, the structure and organisation of the painting as a process might be regarded as self-conceiving.

My intention was to set a paint system in motion and allow it to determine its own outcome. 'Poiesis' is concerned with formation, the free development of an emergent quality. My intervention persists in the painting '*Raising*' (figure 47), which concludes this cycle. The resin medium pools and congeals on the surface adhering to its own material characteristics and environmental influences. To illustrate this fact; the surface of '*Raising*' registers every variation in medium consistency and application, although the finished structure of '*Raising*' does not depend upon these variables. To date I have essentially extended my perceived limitations of the earlier photographs, by applying paint as a novel means of presentation.



Figure 47. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raising* [Painting].



Figure 47a. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raising - in progress detail* [Painting].



Figure 48. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raising manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 49. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raising manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 50. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raising manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

The next cycle of the painting system addresses my concern that my system currently does not depend upon the medium. To this end, I employ true constituents to formulate painting. Figures 48–52 illustrate a fluid, organic and non-hierarchical process that uses incremental manipulation as a means of adapting the system conditions. The sequence begins from the digital image of '*Raising*' (figure 47).

The system allows for constant retrievals; figure 48 is a partially solarised manipulation of figure 47; figure 49 is a colour-inverted version of figure 48; figures 48 and 49 are then partially superimposed with transparency dissolved during the layered manipulation, generating figure 50.

With digital manipulation programs such as Photoshop, an infinite number of combinatorial permutations is possible through the numerous image manipulation functions available. Via selection and fragmentation processes discussed earlier, digital manipulation encourages system adaption through continual effacement to allow emergence of the new.

Continual effacing is a means of finding 'difference' through emptying excess, to



Figure 51. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raising manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 52. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raising manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

account for the "strategy of the work ... its manner of negotiating–recognizing, displaying and demonstrating the measure of painting's contingency, its future possibility" (Armstrong, 1998, para. 19). Although effacing strategies are limited to image reduction, they may introduce an unforeseen accumulated complexity in combined layering of repetitively retrieved selections. Blurring as another means of reducing excess, which I adopted in the isolation and processing of figure 50, to move beyond the previous conditions to generate figures 51 and 52. Because it extracts an unlimited number of dynamic permutations from a limited number of learned processing behaviours, digital manipulation remains a closed autopoietic condition.

Within this strategy, the inter–related transformations provide direct lineage from a starting point for "improvisation and interpretation" (Miller, 1993, p. 8). The strategy recognises that structural determination can emerge in numerous guises, which encourages me to discover fragmented references that may have escaped detection during the first visit, by retracing earlier steps. "In this sense, the paintings work through ... effacing themselves as paintings in order to find themselves part of the endlessly circulating series of images ... They become images of the image of painting that they now are" (Armstrong, 1998, para. 18). Directly ahead lie a number of pre–existing and equally incomplete

opportunities not yet realised, supplying painting with a strong future contingency.

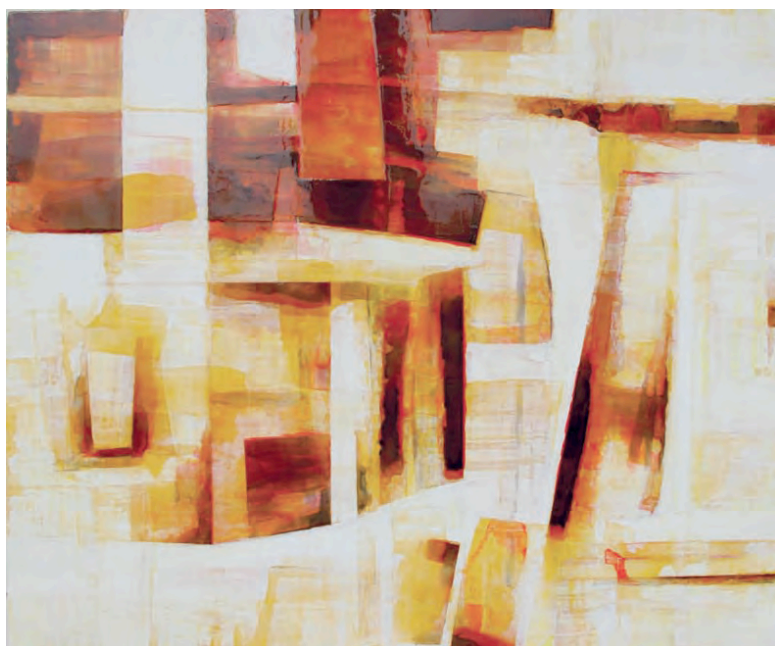


Figure 53. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised* [Painting].



Figure 53a. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised - in progress detail* [Painting].



Figure 53b. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raised - in progress detail* [Painting].

Faktura accomplishes contingency through chance. It evolves boundaries of the painting domain, thereby allowing the system to advance progressively to more complex conditions. Consequently, I believe that I cannot preconceive the direction in which a painting will evolve, since it may always be more than meets the eye – I can determine a painting's future only by retrieval from its known past. The living painting system can be urged beyond its present perceived boundaries by extending technological image-processing applications, which will require me to upgrade my skills and knowledge base in the relevant software.

When dealing with an archive of images it is important to be guided by your personal aesthetic in both practical action and selection. Such behaviour acts as a filter. It

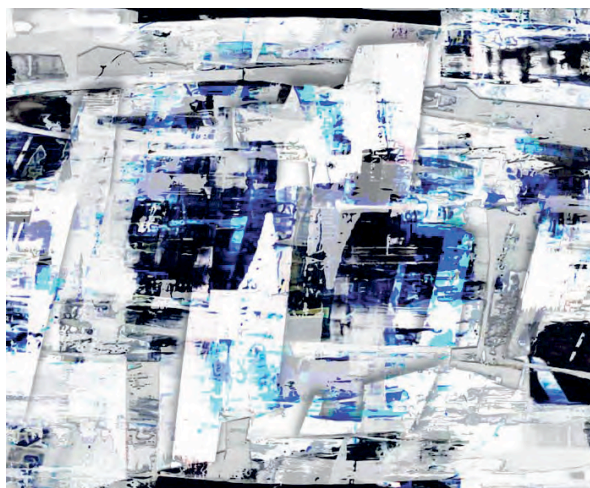


Figure 54. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raisened manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 55. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raisened manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 56. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Raisened manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

is equally essential to realise that memory has indeed aided, altered and adjusted that filter. 'Raisened' (see figure 53) is clearly derived from 'Raising' (figure 47). The works are linked by commonality of family association, encapsulated in their similar titles, yet each painting reflects its individual particularities.

It is no longer feasible to attempt authentic re-reproduction since the truth is no longer apparent. Through digital manipulation it is possible to investigate the diverse multiple threads leading from the original painting's structural makeup. Until now the system process has focussed on seeing – now it must shift to concentrate on what is happening.

The contrasting roles of digital images and painting can be investigated by filtering and honouring the digital images. This is achieved by manipulating the images to resemble potential paint techniques. The essence of digitally manipulating an image to look like paint is to capture the characteristics and nuances of paint, in thought as well as visually. The slicing and layering evident in figures 54–57 echoes a distanced paint effect, which is also artificial. However, when realigned and altered with a visual connection to paint, new paradigmatic options are presented. As visual strategies, the extracted forms I aim to present are akin to heuristic provocations aligned to Rajchman's (1998) extracting of conditions or forces for structural intent. Heuristic generators thus

seek to reveal conditions that lay previously dormant. Structure is generated by the system as "a domain of interactions in which it can act with relevance to the maintenance of itself" (Maturana & Varela, 1980, p.13). No longer an image recollecting something, the image now represents something.



Figure 57. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin* [Painting].



Figure 58. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin - in progress detail* [Painting].



Figure 58a. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin - in progress detail* [Painting].

The process now turns to that of demonstration in paint; a demonstration of gradual emergence through repeated applications and layers. The outcome is not known in advance and herein lies the fascination; to render the obscured visible is the expectation. In '*Roesin*' (figure 57) I attempt to deliver the painted structural conditions conceived digitally in figures 54–56. The new painting is conditioned by how to apply the paint materials such that the painting hints at its own structure during the making. The link to *faktura* is the contingency of variability arising from the material mass and substance, which, by adhering to surface, both capture and reveal.

Unlike the artificial flatness of digital paint manipulation, mimetic technique is not feasible. The conceived digital image provides merely an initial perspective, the foundation condition for returning to paint for formation and forward projection.

Repeated replication via formation and deformation leads to partially obscured information. Painting in the system should comprise a sequence of glimpses, filtered and effaced from their former existence by partial recollection. Rather than attempting to duplicate the conceived digital image in paint, I can perturb the system by applying interruption between stages, thereby strengthening the system. Recall alone is insufficient for exact

replication. Contingency, in the form of fugitive and unforeseeable results, is achieved by an attempted action of painting, using paint as substance, to make tangible a digital paint image that itself lacks substance. The entire system is rendered by breaking up the sequential steps of preceding actions as follows:

- utilising partial memory recall as effacement by attempting to retrieve non-tangible artificial surrogates of paint as digital references; and
- material variation generated by repeated superimposed accumulations constructed from preceding surface striations.

'*Roesin*' (figure 57) is my attempt to remember in paint the learning that occurred when generating the preceding digital manipulations.

Acknowledging that the system itself is an action of discovery, painting now embodies constant intermingled memories, resulting in unanticipated shifting dynamics. My individuality as observer and interactive participant in selection, judgement and implementation of the painting's focus derives from detached anonymous mechanical and digital manipulations. This individuality is re-directed to the qualities of paint application. Of fundamental importance are the numerous interactions or relations occurring within the process that can alter the material structure of the process.

Materiality is bound to relationships of internal organisation, so cannot be analysed in isolation. Artist Simon Ingram, (2006) from a Samuel Coleridge perspective, emphasised that attempting to understand by dissecting the intact whole is not possible when “a ‘component’ of a complex living system is decontextualized a correlate loss of meaning can accrue” (p. 2). To detach materiality from the system is to separate the determining from the interactive qualities of the system, essentially returning to interpretation, and hence to identity. Such a return signals a deviation from autopoiesis, an outside input, and explains why my earlier paintings failed to meet my expectation.

When making selective judgments on how to extend painting without correlative loss that threatens the system's survival, I must remain as observer of the distinctions embedded exclusively within the system's domain. Any variation in a painter's knowledge and skill-set results from conditions observed during the system evolution. These should ultimately be returned to the system, where they may favourably impact and alter future system conditions. Any variance or change introduced by individual interactions generates infinite multifarious combinations that successfully alter the conditions of painting.

My previously learned actions as the painter, whilst undeniable to the system, contribute marginally to the system evolution. Materiality then becomes explicitly bound to particular environments and conditions as

inter-related actions. The painter has limited capacity to master the inherent materiality qualities of these interactions due to:

- (i) constantly evolving conditional changes as components interact and;
- (ii) knowledge of the components in the system acquired by interaction is open to contingency.

Any structural change judgements passed by the painter are conjunctional and pertinent only to the conditions of the painting of interest. Therefore, autopoietic painting is informatively closed, with description, concept, structure, and image of its own world derived exclusively from the ingredients comprising the domain of its own life experience.

Fundamentally this implies that autopoietic painting is flawed from the outset. The system, though conceptualised as cyclic, in fact evolves in a decreasing spiral fashion. Ultimately the system will exhaust its own potentialities. The only means of extending the system appears to be outside input – thereby negating autopoiesis. Thus, it would appear to me that the aspirations of Nachume Miller (1993), to construct a system in which painting inspires painting, are not feasible via autopoiesis.

In my understanding, Maturana and Varela (1980), suggest that the only possible realities of life are those invoked by observational distinction. Judgement of effectiveness is consequently made within the domain, and results from the observer's capacity to distinguish. Therefore, the painter becomes conscious of oneself as the maker of distinctions reversing, through repetition of experience, to ascertain which connections should continue to feed the system. From this perspective, when the artist is satisfied that that all components are progressing under conditions controlled by the artist, the process is encouraged to continue.

Every structural determination component of my living painting system is based on the premise that the organisation is a reaction to, and a result of, existing components. The origins of painting lie in exclusive self-questioning. In my reasoning, the inception of painting from itself, where the original acts as an origin for departure and a destination for return, and where the surface of the painting becomes a place of expansion and contraction, ignores that as the artist I may be the true constituent of the system.

The painting system comes to deal with reminiscences fabricated from my past to be made present as I deem appropriate, although such reminiscences may not be apparent from the outset. In this manner each painting has always already realised itself, while not yet exposing its full existence. Painting as a self-generating system can be best understood through the hidden qualities embedded within the painting. These hidden qualities, which cannot be added, must instead be discovered. Existence emanating from painting is in turn percolated back into future versions of the painting.

In an autopoietic painting sense, is advantageous in that painting can isolate itself and can extend a painter's understanding of potential re-presentation. It is crucial to appreciate the artist's authenticity as a self-generative adapting organisation. The observing artist should not merely see painting, but should be receptive to the moment of engagement. The inception occurs when the life of a painting engages with that of the artist.

Rudimentary to my belief in painting, is that certain life perceptions, including some of the most rewarding ones, seep slowly, deeply and take time. Similarly to the speculative conclusions of Bois in 'Painting as Model' (1991), I believe that an autopoietic painting system may by chance elicit a life, an unfulfilled essence that has yet to be fully grasped. Rather ironically I suppose, I have garnered from my research that, through systematic painting, I can reduce myself to my own constituent parts to reveal the unfixed, the unstable, the re-configured emergent possibilities of an artist. Modelling Bois' speculative conclusion, my assessment of 'Reversed painting' is best described from a repeating perspective: painting "is not when itself becomes the message but when [the artist] starts to stammer and ... and ... and" (Rajchman, 1995, p. 22).



Figure 59. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 60. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 60. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

My preceding digital images are already highly fragmented, their forms dispersed through repeated manipulations and multiple layers. The process of transformation becomes a form of mapping with multiple points of engagement.

The intention was to echo the experience of moving across the smooth digital surface, mapping moments of clarity dispersed among positional ambiguity.

Essentially I aimed for an experience of transition, a perception of instability.

To alleviate the frustration of engaging in a fundamentally flawed system, I elected to inject some of this frustration back into the work. This frustration is characterised by a deliberate obliqueness to place or pronounced fragmentation of surface. Here, I attempted to dissolve the figure ground dominance of the earlier work by placing myself as the primary viewer, unstably connected to the origin of the image.



Figure 62. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 63. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 64. Farquhar, A. (2010). *Roesin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

I regard this exercise as an attempt to dislodge my particular way of thinking. Rather than seeing a complete digital image, I considered it more in accordance with Kirkeby; that is, as a contraction: a transition; a ruining of ordered hierarchical space; a movement seeking to capture that exact moment of change. Inspired by Rajchman (1995)'s influenced "and ... and ... and" stammering, I saw my digital images becoming 'stutters'; in Deleuzian terms: "in 'perpetual disequilibrium', so that the entire system stutters, murmurs, mumbles and breaks up" (Olkowski, 1999, p. 14). My frustration ultimately caused me to forego the predominance of the system as process to achieve a desired outcome. The result is a dissolution of autopoiesis and a redirection to faktura as a driving concept.



Figure 65. Farquhar, A. (2011). *Resin* [Painting].

This process, documented in the painting *Resin* (2011), was also formed in conjunction with the digital process. Rather than allowing painting to record an endpoint only, I altered my thinking process by pursuing two distinct practices entwined, co-existing to inform the new.

Combining the result of this process (figure 65) with earlier digital images (figures 66 & 67), also firmly embedded within the

process, I could disrupt the hierarchy or predetermined order in an attempt to generate painting with a difference. Again, I realigned my thinking to match Rajchman's Deleuzian position of connections: "multiple things held together by 'disjunctive syntheses'" (Rajchman, 2000, p. 4). The resulting digital images could be considered almost as time-stamps of the system's growth.

Images 68 and 69 are conceived as captured stills charting the system's evolutionary change. Rather than a direct reference to the preceding stage, these images encapsulate the system thinking at the moment of its change. Unlike the earlier works, in which the system's progression was illustrated sequentially, these works are devoid of the singular moments that contributed to their whole, although they clearly identify a particular step in the system. Rather than generating a sequence of fragmented images, the artificial digital now demonstrates a compression of time – a fragmented time. The linear time sequence has been replaced by fragmented sections stitched together, retrieved from multiple events capturing the change of the moment. The



Figure 66. Farquhar, A. (2011). *Resin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

purpose of this development is to no longer source the archive for a singular event, but to treat the archive as a series of dispersed, overlaid connections mapping back and forth previously worked visual moments. Consequently, the paintings are imbued with historical echoes; a polyphony of reference points, a succession of glimpses. The ghost of a past existence interrupts another as it encounters the new. In these terms, the series of processes involving painting and digital can be regarded as expansive, rather than restrictively bound within a closed cycle of return.



Figure 67. Farquhar, A. (2011). *Resin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

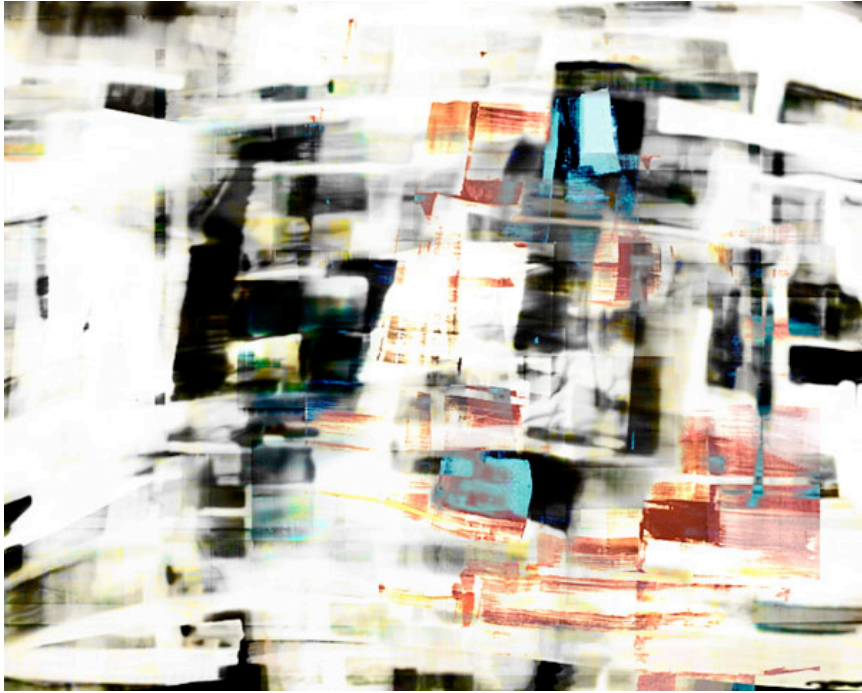


Figure 68. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

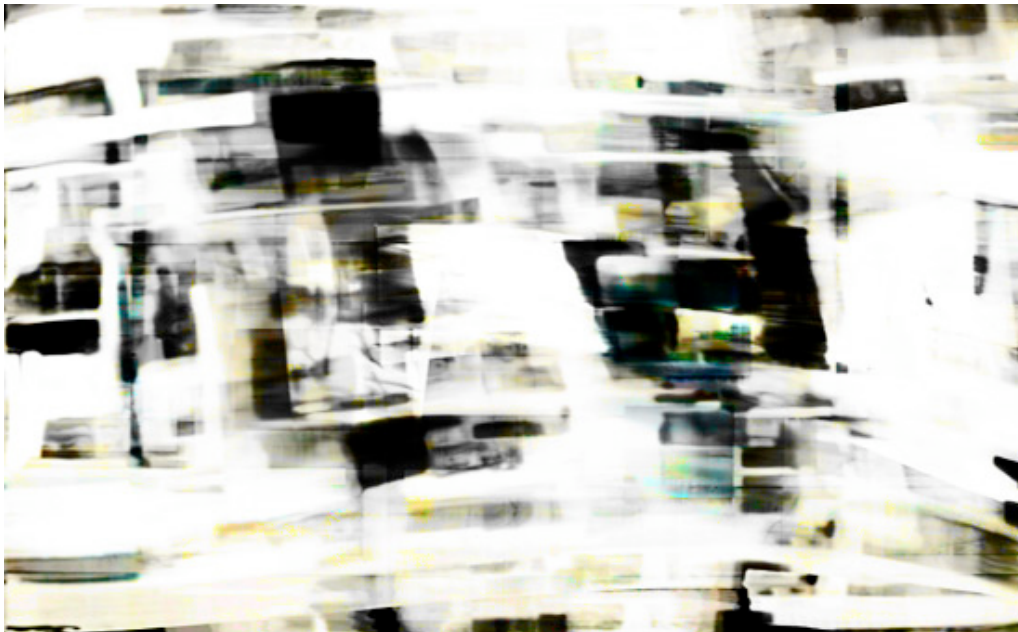


Figure 69. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

The final paintings comprising the developmental works to my concluding exhibition are responses to my belief that a painting system itself has to be considered an action of discovery. Figures 70, 71 and

72 attempt to demonstrate paint as data, a substance projected onto the surface, to be analysed and examined. Paint is considered altogether different than previous; no longer replication retrieved from digital imagery, rather now, painting is the point of translation. Painting takes the lead.



Figure 70. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resun* [Painting].



Figure 71. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resurn* [Painting].

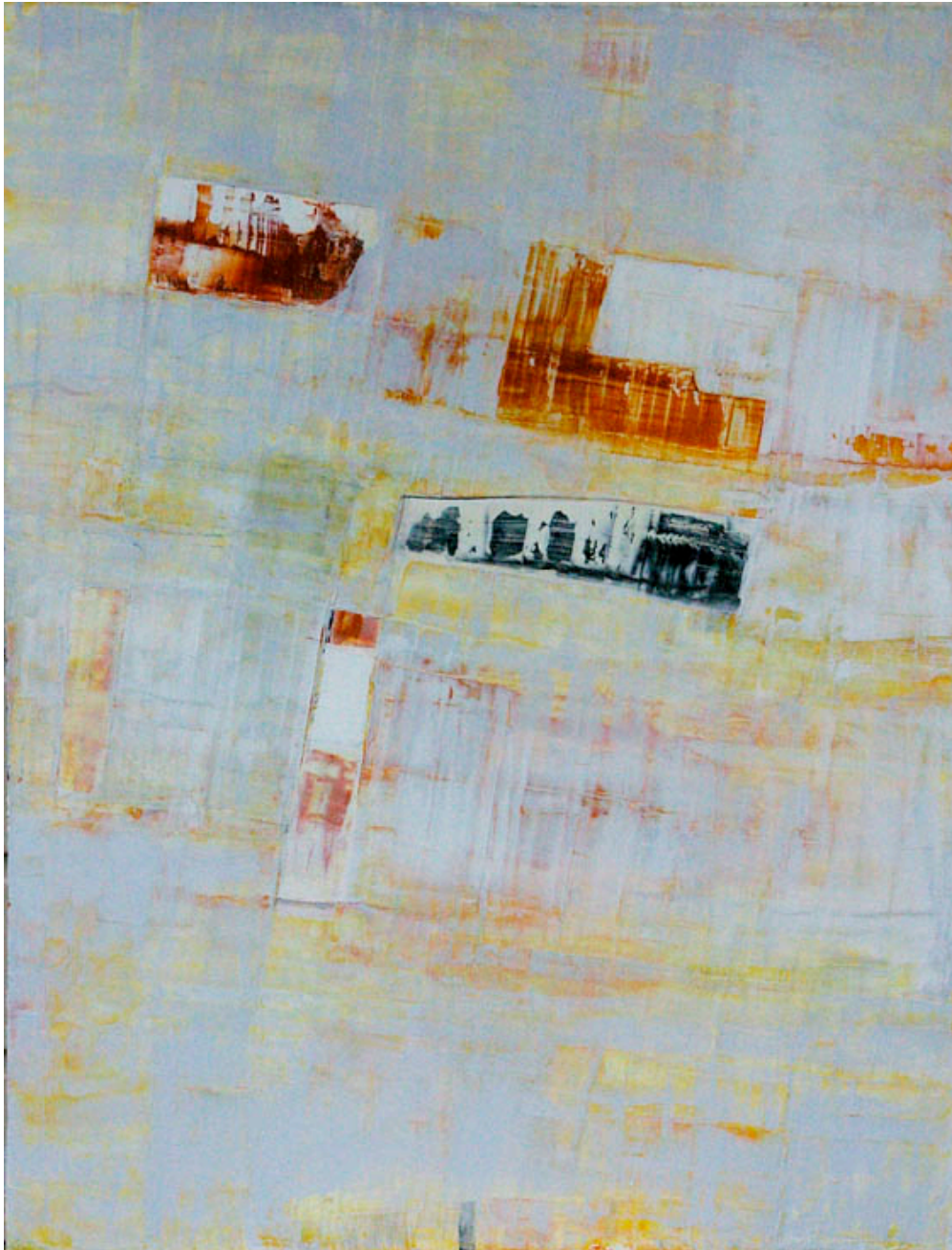


Figure 72. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Returned* [Painting].

My reworking of the system, by painting between painting's with an intended return to screen, to yet repeat again into paint, presents the system as a reversible continuity; front and back. Not an inside and outside. The system can be conceived of as a collage: a re-sizing, a re-fitting, a rearranging, pulling images through from other layers, other contexts; resulting in

ambiguous rendering that deliberately confused any exact representational reading. A deliberate shift from attempting to exactly replicate a digital image, figure 73 now directly inspires paintings (figures 74,75 and 76) by employing artist recall as the primary process. A distance is achieved for memory is one-step removed.

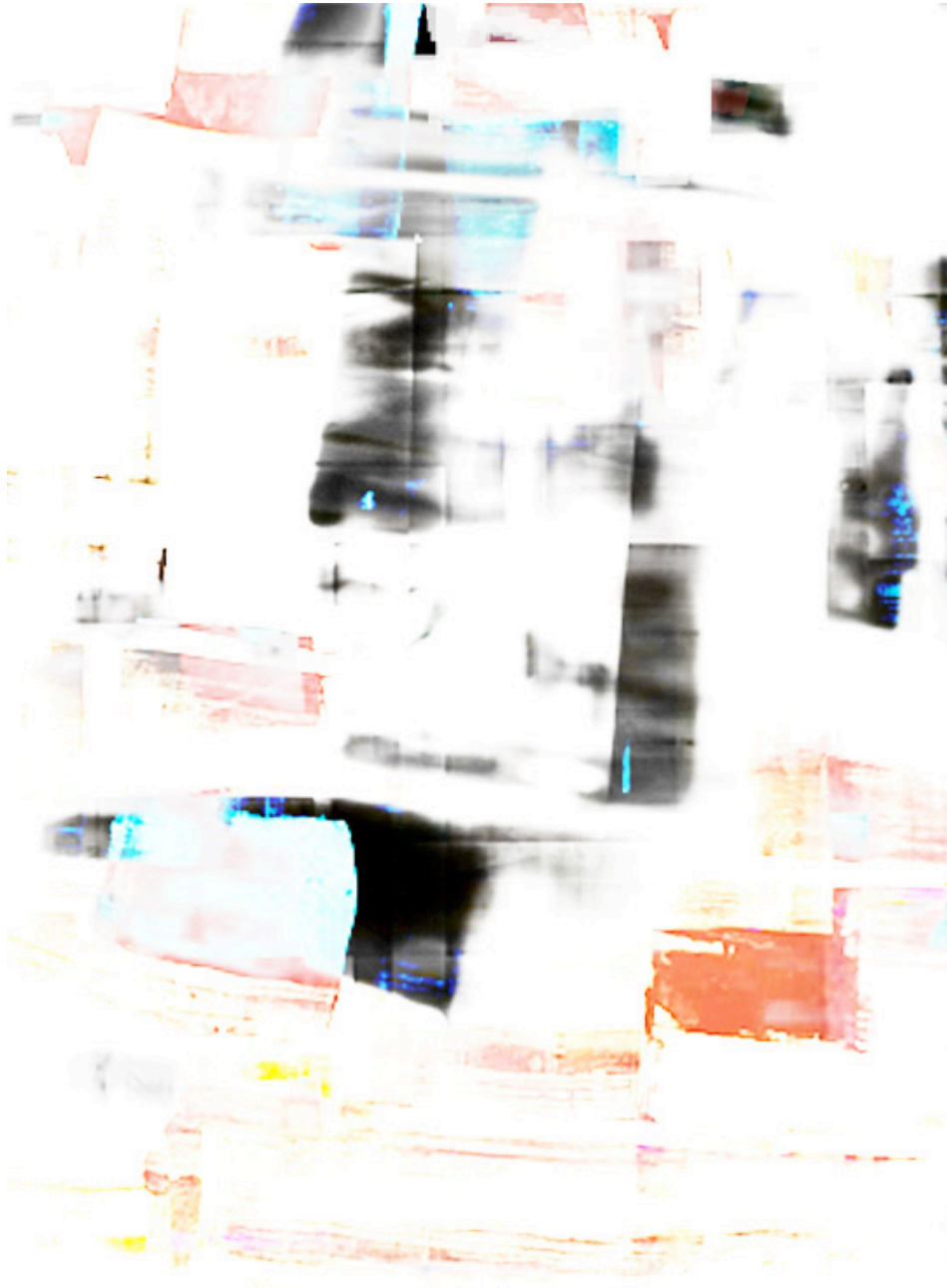


Figure 73. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 74. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resurning crop* [Painting].

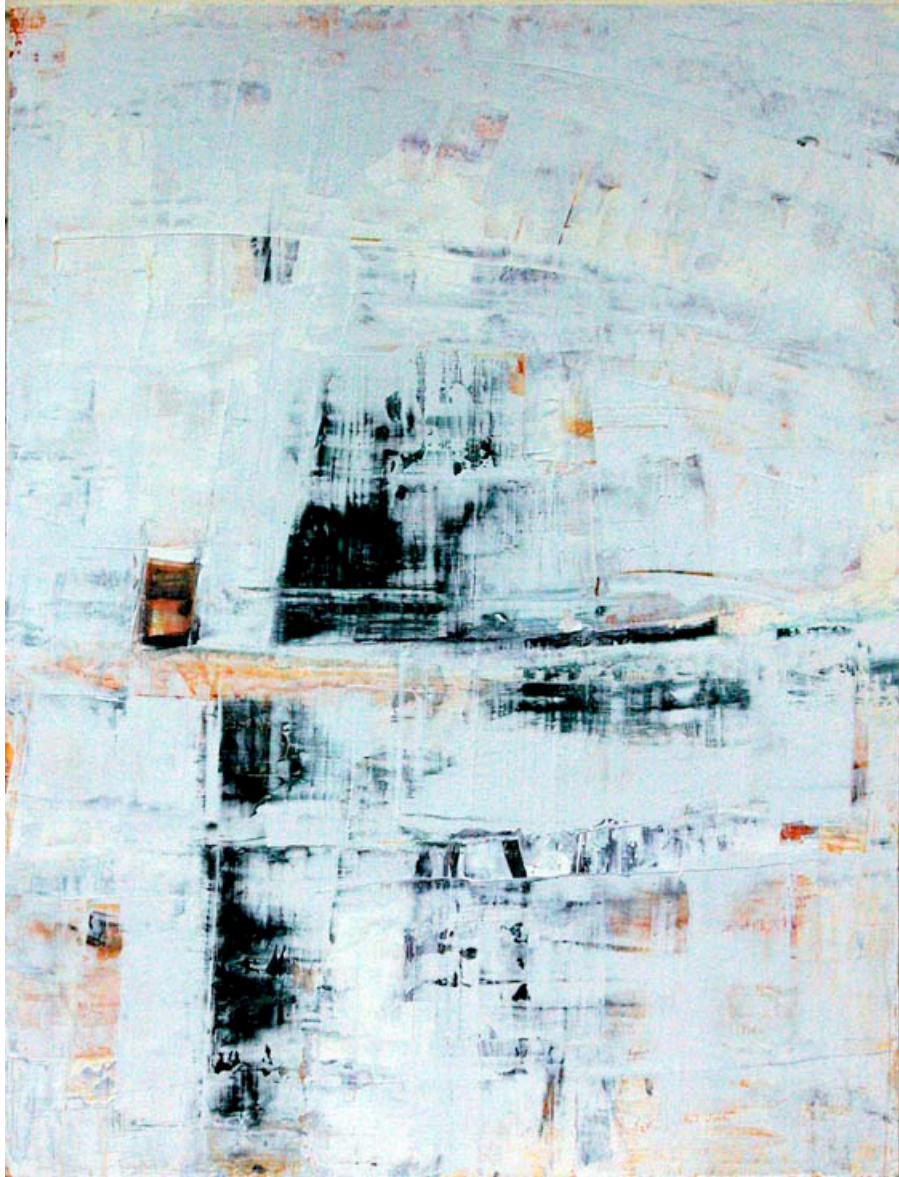


Figure 75. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resing crop* [Painting].



Figure 76. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resinging crop* [Painting].



Figure 73. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 77. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 78. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 79. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 80. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

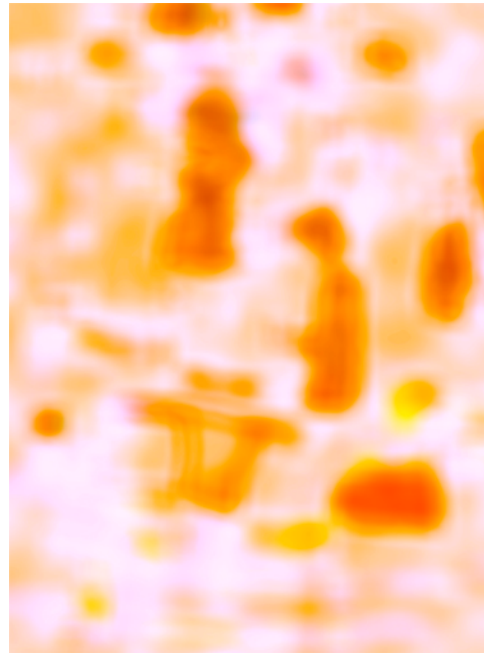


Figure 81. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 82. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 83. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].



Figure 84. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

The final selections, figures 77 –85, use digitised sections of '*Resin crop manipulated*' (figure 73) to processes new source material in preparation for the final exhibition. Using Photoshop, combining details from earlier work in order to make a template will allow transfer of forms as various patterns to a painting. There is an element of fortuity contributing to the digital manipulation process. The various layers of low pixel images interact with each other to create nuances that are ultimately inconceivable in the beginning.

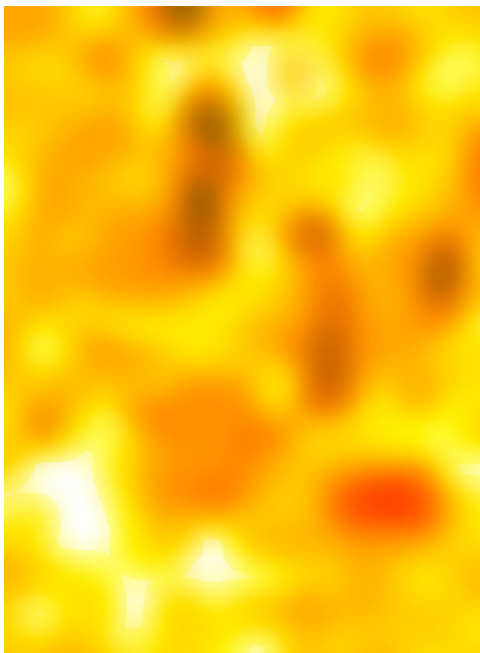


Figure 85. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Resin crop manipulated* [Digital manipulation].

This gives the images a presence, resulting from the attempt to recollect a digital source. The organic forms, resembling accidentally spilled fluid or oversized x-rays of microscopic organisms defy categorisation. The dissolved image presents a pronounced obliqueness. Flickers of colour, both warm and cool, result in images that take on a captivating luminescence that suggests vision on a digitalised screen – anonymous, beyond perception.

The paintings comprising my concluding exhibition reflect my belief that a painting system itself is an action of discovery. The paintings evolved from intermingled retrievals from unanticipated anonymous and detached digital dynamics. The seven paintings presented for exhibition incorporate the anonymous digital manipulations presented in the preceding section. The presented paintings were selected from three distinct stages, yet each retains echoes of the works that preceded them. The first conveys a deliberate vagueness and empty gesture through multiple striated layers of significantly transparent paint squeegeed onto the surface. Here I attempted to impose an interruption on a clearly articulated figure/ground relationship, moving forward to an almost inaccurate, obsolete rendering that deliberately confused any exact spatial interpretation. This was achieved via attempts to recollect a digital image from memory.

In the first stage (figure 94) I considered what characterises painting without preserving an exact moment, thereby accessing the future dynamic of a painting by imprecise capturing of multiple moments and spaces. The resultant painting highlights an additive process in which the painting builds upon its preceding stages. In this instance, I attempted to replicate a recalled digital image, hence placing myself in an unstable relationship with the painting. Here, I adopted a strategic approach using striated surfaces, with a focus on their possible interactions. Rather than avoiding certain mistakes or erasing their effects, I actively incorporated them into the strategic process. The painting captures its own discoveries.

In attempting to recollect a digital image, I recognised the need for a down-size in scale. As the artist I could retain limited quantities of information at any one time without repeat visits to the source image. This deliberate erosion of image recall and direct spatial reference is evident in the second selection of works (figures 88–91), necessitating a dissolution of surface. Selected parts of digital images were used for referencing, although these were also re-interpreted in the medium of paint. An oblique, almost dissolved image results from the pronounced texture of

each surface and subsequent layer. Highly transparent paint was woven together in numerous striated levels of colours, in mimicry of the very digital images from which the paintings had been mapped. Flickers of warm and cool acrylic colours (applied unmixed and directly from the tube) evoke a sense of expansion and contraction. Transparent colour fused together from the overlaying process established a type of digital optical colour.

The essence of the final two selections (figures 92 & 93) was discovered by extending the dissolved yet fragmented spaces to dispersed repeated engagements of surface. The forms of colour, or lack of forms through absence of colour, capture the translating of the digital effects presented earlier. During inaccurate replication, flaws and erosions are trapped, held within the material bounds of the painting. No longer hidden, removed or avoided, these same flaws present moments of making. Such qualities are influenced primarily by their materiality, and thus embody the essence of *faktura*. No deliberate copying on a digital device can totally replicate this kind of invention. Accidents, flaws, conflicts of material interaction with the artist's hand during the process are beyond the reach of digital manipulation.

I conclude by claiming that the artist is the determining factor outside and beyond the residing determinant of a system of painting. A painting cannot be produced by extensively documenting a process of formation. The paintings I have presented are not detailed recorded highlights of a thinking and making process, rather, they demonstrate the unstable artistic involvement that prevents comprehensive articulation of a painting system. This idea highlights the fundamental importance of the artist in painting. The artist gathers disparate references from diverse images and methods into a complete whole. Throughout my research, digital manipulation revealed events that can certainly alter the character of painting. On the other hand, it presents as a powerful tool for reconfiguring painting, primarily due to its numerous operational modes, which offer infinite scope for discovery and interaction.



Figure 86. Farquhar, A. (2012). Final exhibition [Painting].

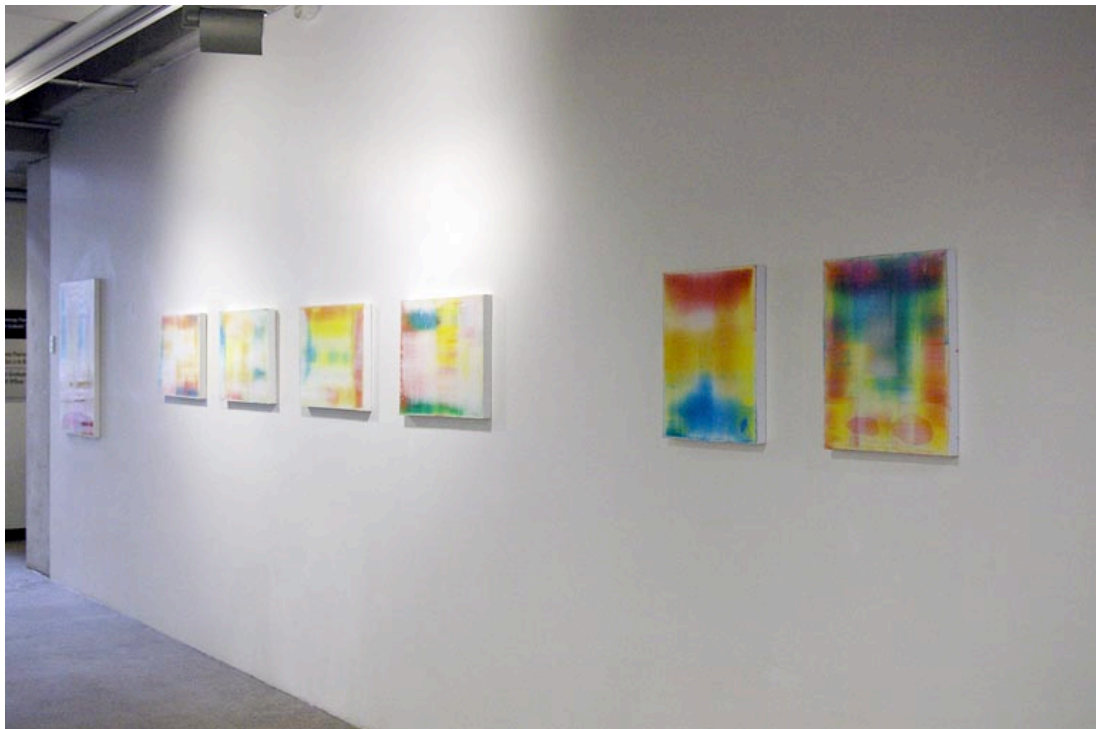


Figure 87. Farquhar, A. (2012). Final exhibition [Painting].



Figure 88. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Untitled* [Painting].



Figure 89. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Untitled* [Painting].

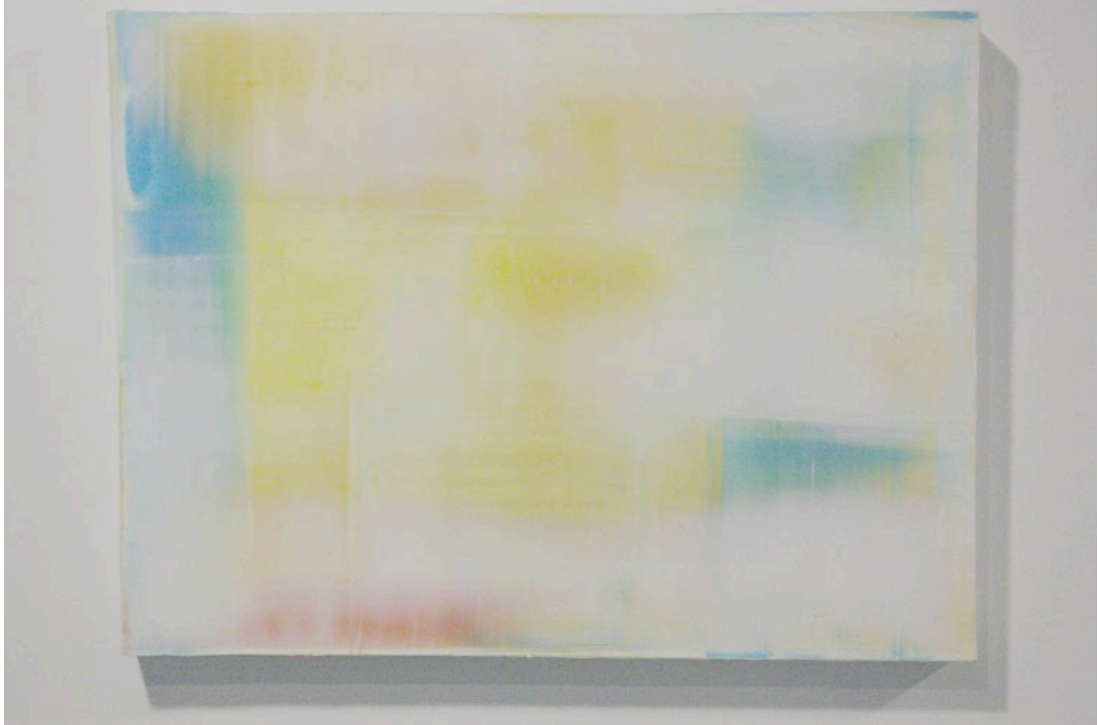


Figure 90. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Untitled* [Painting].



Figure 91. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Untitled* [Painting].



Figure 92. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Untitled* [Painting].



Figure 93. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Untitled* [Painting].

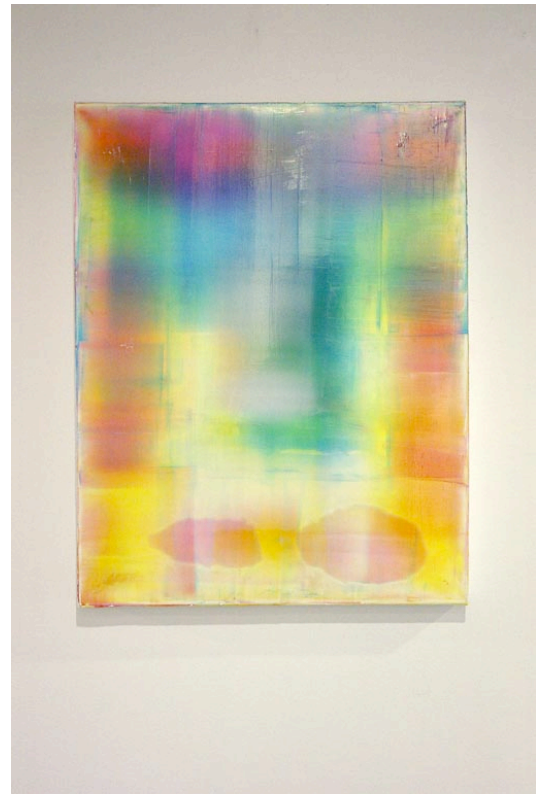


Figure 94. Farquhar, A. (2012). *Untitled* [Painting].

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