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[Figure, 1.1.] *Facade Study.*

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I hereby declare this submission is my 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 acknowledgment is made in the acknowledgements.

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AB-S,  
tract. /

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This thesis explores through the creation of four artworks, the nature of the **sublime ruin**. To facilitate this it examines the disintegration of selected religious feminine metaphors.

The artworks are rendered through a multiplication of layers bound by translucent/transparent resin.

These are produced to examine the potentials between traditional craft and contemporary digital mediums, thus creating sites where eroding fragments may express an excess of meaning through enigmatic construction.

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## IN-T, roduction. /

This thesis is located in the realm of creative practice and the exegesis serving it seeks to contextualise key issues activating and developing the project towards its resolve. In this regard the exegesis is divided in to three sections. The first is methodology. In this section I discuss the interfacing of heuristics and Dalí's Critical Paranoid method.

These complementary methodologies were used to both optimise chances of discovery in the research and heighten irrationality in the process of framing and making work. Both methods are intrinsically disruptive to convention and unstable in terms of linearity. Their unique interface enabled me to heighten levels of enigma in the work and break ritual and formula in my problem solving strategies.

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**The unique design of the methodology was necessary because I wished to push engagement with the metaphor beyond the limitations of conventional, figurative illustration.**

The second section of the exegesis considers critical ideas underpinning the research.

It discusses useful framings of the sublime and the ruin. In the research these ideas are used to position considerations relating to four enigmatic feminine metaphors sourced from Judeo-Christian literature. They are The Whore of Babylon, the Woman Clothed with the Sun, Sophia and Lilith. The final section of the exegesis brings in to discourse imagery and linear narrative. It provides a 'Mapped Experience' of the research traced through a migration of ideas and experiments. This section serves to contextualise the discussion on methodology and make explicit the relationship between critical ideas and the work.

In this regard its content may be seen as contributing to the 20% of this thesis that is concerned with contextualising and analysis.

The **g r a p h i c design** of the work however, is part of the 80% of the project concerned with creative realisation of the work. It is thus to be considered as part of the artistic investigation that also includes the four exhibited artworks.

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## ME-T, IN-T, hodology. / roduction. /

This research utilises methodologies that are exercised through creative practice. The objective of the research has been to develop a series of four artworks that engage with notions of the sublime ruin. In order to understand material, I have had to ask questions of it, interpret it, discover dormant potential within it, and at the same time remain open to new possibilities.

Extensive experimentation and intuitive creation have facilitated an understanding and conceptual reframing of the sublime ruin.

In arriving at this reframing I have employed a research design [methodology] that has used certain principles and approaches of heuristics, activated by a paranoid-critical method.



[Figure, 1.1.] Lucas Doolan. *Facade Study*. Digital still image. 2006.

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**Qualitative heuristics** has a long history as a research methodology in philosophy and the natural sciences, and more recently in Art & Design. It is a methodology that embraces qualities of exploration and discovery and is a process that *"from the beginning and throughout an investigation... involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery"* (Moustakas, 1990, p.11). Throughout this procedure a practitioner may become *"...personally involved... searching for qualities, conditions, and relationships that underlie a fundamental question, issue, or concern"* (ibid).

**Heuristics serves this present research project because it is my desire to create [discover] a body of work that is highly original.**

To do this, I need to move beyond the formulae that have produced competent but stylistically similar work for me in the past.

I also required a methodology that was flexible, non linear, and might embrace disruption. Heuristics has a structure that enables discord to be accommodated. This is important because solutions in this project sometimes occur via antithesis and illogic.

Heuristics is useful because it relates to the ability to find [discover] knowledge, patterns or a desired result by intelligent, divergent questioning and guess work rather than by applying a pre-established formula. A heuristic methodology often involves the employment of tacit knowledge<sup>1</sup> in very complex and divergent ways. Wood (2004) also suggests that because heuristics is more *"concerned with discovery, rather than proof"* (p.9) it is a more appropriate method for many designers because it does not involve a *"series of linear, finite questions"* (ibid).

Thus heuristics may be understood as a non-formulaic method of solving a problem. It employs forms of trial and error and uses informal methods or experience. Heuristics applies intelligent questioning and guess work in order to help find knowledge, patterns or a desired result.

Within the research there have been many complex creative problems to be solved. The best way I saw of solving these was by comparing the mysterious, unknown or problematic with something familiar and understandable. This enhanced the chances of discovering unique patterns, and analogies. In order to locate these analogies a continual examination into past and present work was undertaken. This was done by considering aesthetic similarities in each image (such as form, contour and line weight) as shown in Concept 05 of Mapped Experience (see attached text) of: I also asked questions of singular and grouped works. The foremost question being: *What is the potential of the sublime and ruin as a catalyst for framing feminine figures as a terrain composed of decay and enigma?*

From exercising these questions new potentials were discovered and new adjustments made. An overall pattern gradually emerged that helped to overcome differences and thus resulted in created texts where more cohesive patterns emerged and identifiable inter-subject coherence became evident.

FO  
OT  
NO  
TE  
1. Tacit knowledge refers to the personal knowledge of the practitioner gained through everyday experiences. The practitioner uses their own knowledge and understanding to undertake courses of actions. Schön (1983) says "our knowing is ordinary tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action" (p.49).

In the process of researching and developing these works the preliminary research question often shifted.

This was due to the escalating and internally unstable bodies of data being accumulated. Although in some methodological approaches this escalation of (superficially) unrelated data might be seen as problematic, in heuristics it is not.

Kleining & Witt (2001) state that *"If this happens the research person is advised to continue the research under the new headings despite institutional and planning problems"* (p.2). Thus one can trace significant shifts in the framing of this research project as I sought to focus and refocus the question in the light of developments and changes within the research. The project was initially concerned with investigating the memory's ability to store and retain information as sublime ruin. Although the consideration was not necessarily flawed, it was not a direction that produced the fertile creative connections I was seeking.

In order to find a method of creatively exploiting the potential of the sublime ruin as a metaphor, the research question was re-examined under a series of new headings (**see appendix text 'Mapped Experience'**). The research question eventually addressed the sublime ruin as a device for considering the enigmatic feminine.

Throughout the research project the development and testing of various bodies of work underwent rigorous and diverse questioning. Earlier developments in this project lacked this variation of questioning and as a result, tended to lead to just one answer. To avoid one-sidedness and to create a *'maximum variation of perspectives'*,<sup>2</sup> I had to adjust preconceived and historically successful practices used in the development of my art. Significant changes in approach to elements like media, scale, and formula were employed to achieve this.

In order to optimise the chance of discovery and enhance the quality of my creative exploration, I had to be open to new concepts. Former approaches to data collection and analysis included computer enhancement, photography and sketching. In this project these were combined with increasingly useful approaches to exercising ideas that included multiple re-editing of images, creative writing, painting, and the immersion of the self in a conceptual environment<sup>3</sup>.

**In this process I was seeking new ways of creating form from the**

**f o r m l e s s .**

FO  
OT  
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2. A term used by Kleining and Witt (2001) in their treatise on heuristics: The qualitative Approach: A methodology for discovery in Psychology and the Social Sciences. Rediscovering the method of introspection as an example. The term refers to avoiding one-sidedness of representation of a topic. Kleining & Witt state that "If researchers assume that a variable may influence the data they should implement variations" (p.2).

3. This idea may be understood as 'the world' of the work. Moustakas (1990) in his book Heuristic research: design, Methodology, and Applications says "...when I persist in a disciplined and devoted way I ultimately deepen my knowledge of the phenomenon. In the heuristic process, I am personally involved. In heuristic investigations, I may be entranced by visions, images, and dreams that connect me to my quest. I may come into touch with new regions of myself, and discover revealing connections with others (p.6).

ME-T, PA-R,  
hodology. / anoiac-critical. /

In aiding the potential of heuristics to heighten the chances of discovery in this project, I adopted aspects of a paranoi-critical methodology. This method was designed to open up connections between data. It was developed in the early 1930's by Salvador Dalí<sup>4</sup>, and may be understood as an extension of a method of simulation into the field of visual play.

According to Dalí by simulating paranoia an individual might systematically undermine his rational view of the world because he is being continually subjected to associative transformations. **The point of the approach is to persuade oneself or others of the authenticity of these transformations**

its in such a way that the 'real' world from which they arise loses validity.

This method has been generally understood as a surrealist technique employed in the production of paintings and art work<sup>5</sup>.

The method that derived from certain surrealist experiments<sup>6</sup>, is fundamentally a constructive

process with an  
i m p u l s i v e  
technique that involves breaking cognitive barriers through alternative approaches to thinking. The method allows space for a more subjective and subconscious connection between data, and the generation of more ambiguous imagery.

The employment of this method within the research occurred in the later stages of the project. It helped to produce images that contained a high level of enigma. Indicative of this is Concept 07 of Mapped Experience (see attached text) where I created various images that attempted to convey certain considerations of the sublime.

These were generated by incorporating recordings of the first thoughts and feelings that entered my mind, without consideration as to how logical, or important they might be.

FO  
OT  
NO  
TE 4. Dalí (1942) described the paranoi-critical method as a "spontaneous method of irrational knowledge based on critical and systematic objectivity of the associations and interpretations of delirious phenomena" (p. 46). The aspect of the paranoia that helped in the development of his method was the ability of the brain to perceive links between things that rationally are not linked. Dalí suggested that an active process of the mind was used to visualise in the work and he sought to incorporate these visualisations into the final product. An example of the resulting work is an image that appears to depict one thing, but upon closer scrutiny [and alternative perception], may appear ambiguous or as something quite different.

5. Breton praised the critical-paranoi-critical method, for the creation of surrealist texts. He suggested that it was an "instrument of primary importance" and that it, "has immediately shown itself capable of being applied equally to painting, poetry, the cinema, the construction of typical Surrealist objects, fashion, sculpture, the history of art, and even, if necessary, all manner of exegesis."

6. Max Ernst's frottage technique with psychology is understood to be one of these experiments. This involved rubbing pencil or chalk on paper over a textured surface and interpreting phantom images visible in the texture of the paper.

ME-T, CO-N,  
hodology. / clusion. /

In summary, the research design employed in the realisation of this thesis utilised two associated methodologies. **Heuristics** was used to optimise the chances of discovery in the project. This was necessary because I was concerned with challenging my past artistic practice and managing the Protean<sup>7</sup> nature of the research.

As an activating agent I also employed certain approaches developed by Dalí in his **Paranoi-critical method**.

These were used to heighten irrationality in the process of framing and making work. While both methods are intrinsically disruptive to convention and unstable in terms of linearity, their unique interface has enabled me to not only heighten levels of enigma in the work, but also creatively approach complex metaphorical concepts.

This has meant that I have been able to circumnavigate traditionally 'illustrative' approaches to subject.

While this discussion of the methodology employed to activate the research in this thesis has been outlined here, the process of its implementation is explained and illustrated in the appended text ' M a r i p e p e d E x p e r i e n c e ' .

FO  
OT  
NO 7. I use the term in reference to the mythical construct of Proteus, the prophetic Greek sea deity who changed his shape to avoid giving fixed answers to 'fixed' questions. He is therefore paradoxically associated with both mutability and discovery.




CR-I, IN-T,  
tical framework. / roduction. /

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This thesis is interdisciplinary in nature and as such draws on a wide range of academic and professional arenas. The critical framework therefore, examines significant discourse related to theoretical and practical research underpinning the project.

The research project considers the theories of the sublime as visual/conceptual references. Imagery of conceptual ruins was used as visual elements in the four artworks.



TH-E,  
sublime. /

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A number of researchers have examined the sublime<sup>8</sup> and its emphasis has shifted radically from considerations of the abstract to those of aesthetics. **Ashley-Cooper** (1711), **Denis** (1693) and **Addison** (1712) historically discussed the sublime in their depictions of the vastness of the Alps. The sublime they considered was a physically inspired state that embraced a contrast of aesthetic qualities.

For these writers the beauty of nature produced feelings of pleasure and repulsion. They saw within the sublime both awe and the infinity of space. Through these they simultaneously experienced both harmony and terror.


More recently, the sublime has been considered by philosophers like **Schopenhauer** (1819), **Dessoir** (1970) and **Lyotard** (1994). However, the work of **Kant** (1764) and **Burke** (1756) has been of particular interest to this thesis.

This is because they both theorised beauty and sublime as contrasts.

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OT  
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TE

8. Sublime (from the Latin *sublimis*: looking up from) is the quality of vast magnitude or greatness, whether artistic, physical, moral, intellectual, or metaphysical. In aesthetics the term generally refers to a greatness with which nothing else can be compared and which is beyond all possibility of calculation, measurement or imitation.



BU-R,  
ke. /

TH-E,  
sublime and the beautiful. /

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Burke discusses sublime and beauty in terms of oppositions such as pain and pleasure, joy and grief, society and solitude, and also in considerations of imitation, beauty in colour and fairness of colour. He sees that powerful emotions (terror, ideas of pain) are sources of the sublime. He says,

*Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain... whatever is in any sort terrible... or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling* (p. 39).

Burke's categories establish fundamental attributes for depicting an object that embraces notions of the sublime and beautiful.

However, depicting true sublimity in an artwork is a challenging task when one is not seeking to move beyond images of nature's awe.

Burke describes the sublime as referring to a greatness that is beyond all measurement<sup>9</sup>. The sublime object he suggests, may be obscure, powerful, vast, infinite and dormant. Burke defines a very clear demarcation between a sublime object and an object of beauty. He says, "*beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and negligent... beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy*" (p. 124). It is this notion of conflict between the sublime and the beautiful that this thesis draws upon.


In concord with Burke, it posits that the mind is capable of being overwhelmed by feelings of **contrasting emotions that create a sense of awe and ambiguity**. This visually may be an object that is composed of highly contrasting colours, or an object that is predominately obscure, exhibiting only slight traces of detail. The image I suggests, may visually create emotions both of

pain and **pleasure**.

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FO  
OT  
NO  
TE

9. A major difference in the theories of Burke and Kant is the way in which they view the sublime. Burke uses the word "horrible" to define the sublime, while Kant recognises that the sublime is composed of both pain and pleasure. In their definitions of the sublime, Burke and Kant agree that the sublime is something vast. Burke says, "Greatness of dimension is a powerful cause of the sublime" (Burke p.61.) In his Critique of Judgment (1790), Kant says "We call that sublime which is absolutely great" (§ 25). He distinguishes between the "remarkable differences" of the Beautiful and the Sublime, noting that beauty "is connected with the form of the object", having "boundaries", while the sublime "is to be found in a formless object", represented by a "boundlessness" (§ 23).



LO-N,  
ginus. /

TH-E,  
sublime and the artwork. /

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In his treatise On the Sublime, the first century theorist Longinus, analysed the sublime rhetorically. His view was that the sublime is an expression of grand and noble passions. He argued, "*For, as if instinctively, our soul is uplifted by the true sublime; it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting, as though it had itself produced what it has heard*" (p.5).

L o n g i n u s  
was concerned with an analysis of sublime sensations that arose from within the soul of the individual.

He believed that these might lead a reader to have a more emotional response on viewing an artwork. Longinus came to the conclusion that the sublime is reached through art. Thus, he posited the sublime not as a natural occurrence but as an effect of art.

Longinus claimed there were

f r i n c i p l e  
p r i n c i p l e  
sources of elevated language. The first two components were produced instinctively. They were the 'power of forming great conceptions' and 'inspired passion'. The other three were the products of art. They were 'thought and expression', 'noble articulation' (which was comprised of 'words, metaphors and elaboration of language') and 'elevation'. It is these five principles that he claimed created the foundation of discourse surrounding the sublime.

Longinus states that images contribute significantly to the sublime. Their purpose he argued was to stir passion and emotion. True sublimity he suggested is generated when an artist has developed visually and theoretically their knowledge of the arts. When an artist is dedicated he argues that sublimity will enable the forming of grand conceptions through inspired passion. Thus for Longinus, an artist must invent and conceive ideas.

He stresses the fact that the sublime is not produced solely through intuition. He argues that the artist should not create for the sake of creating; instead 'he' must be aligned with the thought of conscious art.

This alignment creates a tension between constraint (of form) and freedom (of expression). Unexpected connections, encounters and experimentation all at some stage of the design process he might suggest should be brought under control.

Thus it may be argued that the effect of art may relate to both emotion and reason. The art work should contain an intricate dialect. This dialect should be built through rigorous investigation. Only then can the work of art articulate a concept and bring its visual manifestation to a state approaching the sublime.

## TH-E, spectator. /

For a spectator of the sublime everything that is new or ambiguous creates a pleasure within the imagination. Whatever is new or ambiguous with its incongruity attracts our attention. When applied to creative work it can make the imperfections of nature please the spectator Longinus suggests that as a spectator, we quickly tire of looking at a resolved place 'or posture'. Our thoughts he suggests, are relieved at the sight of the unknown.

Longinus believes that the sublime art contains something **indescribable, 'impossible to gain say'** and it is this that gives the work its **enduring resonance**. He says,

*"when, on reading or listening to something several times, a cultivated and expert reader feels nothing great inside, no reflection richer than the literal perception of the discourse, but on the contrary notices- on reading and re-reading- that the sense of the work has waned, then he is not in the presence of the sublime, but of something that lasts only the space required for reading and listening. For true greatness is something that enriches the thoughts, something that it is hard, if not impossible to gainsay, something that leaves enduring, indelible memory"* (p.13-14).

I would suggest that as a spectator, our imagination may seek excitement. It may seek to be overwhelmed by an object that is more vast than our capacity. The sublime's underlying restlessness is therefore product of an artist's creation. This sublime object may be depicted as small, intimate and decorative or may be vast, universal and unadorned. Our mind may be set in motion rapidly alternating between Kant's two states of 'repulsion' and 'attraction'. The mind may dislike restraint that obscures part of the object, yet we may receive a pleasant sensation when the obscurity is decoded.

In the light of this, the sublime may be understood as a moment of high emotional intensity that may be experienced as a discordance between the represented and the expectations or desires of the spectator.

## RU-I, n and sublime. /

In this thesis I use the term 'ruin' to mean the remains of something that has decayed, collapsed, or lost elements of structure such that its disintegration, either physical, cultural, or narrative opens a viewer up both to an excess of possible meanings (interpretation), and to a loss of meaning, (a process of undoing, a disorientation and a reduction of the self). To understand this concept I will **unpack** this definition in a brief discussion of the ruin as sublime, decay, history and space.

Ruins show us a world in which the sublime and the beautiful are united. Ruins are a site where a spectator may experience an extreme reduction of the self. This moment may be created out of confusion and the process of reduction may resemble the initiation moment of the sublime within the ruin. In fact every item on Burke's (1756) list of qualities that the sublime and the beautiful stimulate can be found in the ruin: terror, obscurity, power, fairness of colour, smallness and privation. The ruin may be said to be a formless world, one where the imagination unfolds the experience of the sublime.

The spectator is the one who defines the ruin, and without the spectator the ruin could not exist.

## RU-I, n and history. /

Harbison (1991) suggests that in the ruin, history is said to be embodied. As a ruin declines he believes it may also progress. He argues that history may be understood as only being released when the absence of fragments is permitted.

Thus to Harbison, the ruin is a place of  
r e m e m b r a n c e  
and  
f o r g e t f u l n e s s .  
History is the record of past events and times.

The melancholy of the ruin embraces history through a spontaneous journey in search of the mysterious past. Thus ruins evoke an abundant history' Trigg (2006) suggests we discover remnants "disused but not dispersed" (p.147).

History is often built from these disused fragments and from there we construct narratives. But as many remnants are discovered, many also vanish.

Therefore the narratives of history are constituted of both accurate and vague recollections. History falters, reconstructing the fragments of the ruin to form a new isolated whole. Ruins leave behind traces of the past waiting for the present to animate them. These traces accumulate, creating a layering of pasts.

The layering enriches interpretations that may create sites and where excess of meaning and the emotion of loss are simultaneously depicted. Makarius (2004) commenting on history as a fragmented construct says,

*Through the loss of unity and completeness of which they are symptom, ruins reflect an image of contemporary world where meaning splits into an infinitude of branches; implicitly, they figure the obliteration of that point toward which the march of history seemed to converge, mirroring the atomization of the individual in society and in life" (p. 8).*



## RU-I, n and decay. /

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The ruin deteriorates through the process of decay, falling from one condition into another. This process is often caused by nature's ability to weather fragments over time. Time's ability to disfigure objects stimulates the emotion of loss.

This **inevitable passing of time** may be defined as a mark of imperfection. As time passes the process of decay continues. Trigg, 2006, states that "*the still image becomes the measure of passing time, and thus decay*" (p. 103). This view of the still image suggests that decay can be visually measured through static frames. These frames create sites where eroding fragments may be viewed. As decay reveals the underlying layers of the ruin its decay quickens as its shell has been shattered.

The inner fragments of the ruin are now exposed. As time passes the image of the past is increasingly exposed.

**The ruin constantly gathers withered fragments of the past. This exposure expresses the force of decay.**



## RU-I, n and space. /


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As entire forms subside into a desolate past, I suggest that multifaceted planes and spatial configurations are generated.

Space within the ruin is mobile, variable, complicated, and explorative. Thus the ruin may be conceived as having no centre. The more the fragments become distorted, the more ambiguous the space becomes; this heightens the chance of discovering new

**p a t h s** .  
Instead of one solution leading to a single point, we encounter a site with multiple configurations. The site is constantly expanding and contracting. Trigg (2006) suggests that "*as we return to the ruin our old navigation is shattered, we are forced to be creative with our interaction*" (p.145).

Therefore as we navigate through a ruin we experience a physical sense of discomfort. Our sense of order from the past is disrupted. Now using our imagination we may interact with the displaced form. The vast, mysterious and obscure spatial arrangements represent a site of intrigue.



## RU-I, n and this thesis. /

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I am interested in this research with the idea that certain metaphorical figures maybe decoded entirely as ruins. These ruins contain the process of decay, sites of remembrance, and conditions of disorientation.

The artworks are images for the spectator.

They are ruins in themselves but  
o r c h e s t r a t e  
ideas and vestiges of meaning in a way that invites the viewer to read them as ruins. This  
disorientation of the space of the ruin is central to the works that form the core of this research.

**I utilise a multiplication of layers to produce a void between lightness and dark. For when a spectator views such a piece he/she will bring certain details to light and other particles will be absorbed into forgetfulness.**

The discrete nature of this process frustrates the need for association that is opened up by unconsciousness.

This reveals a world of traces that hint at wholeness without ever granting access to it. **Thus ruins and decaying bodies materialize the interplay of presence and absence of meaning.**

The ruin may be seen as the loss of meaning, incomplete and disorientating. A site where one can experience an extreme reduction of the self.



## CO-N, ceptual ruins. /

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Although the 'ruin' is normally framed as an architectural artefact, this project seeks to consider the notion applied to more abstract 'losses of meaning'. This is brought about through a consideration of four Judeo/Christian feminine metaphors. My research has utilised the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, the accompanying Apocrypha and the Nag Hammandi Library. The four figures that form the subject of the artworks I suggest, may be understood as manifestations of the sublime ruin.

**These four ruins contain notions of decay, fluctuating history and are sites where space is continually transforming.**

They are in essence, conceptual ruins. The artworks are images for the spectator. They are not ruins in themselves but orchestrate ideas and vestiges of meaning in a way that invites the viewer to 'read' them as sublime ruins.

The four metaphorical ruins developed in this project do not excavate fixed ideas. Rather individually they express selected examples of enigma leading to a reduction of the self.

The ruins are sublime because they function as an ultimate form of awe, and simultaneously denote an excess and a loss of meaning.



## WH-O, re of babylon. /

The New Testament ends with the book of Revelations<sup>10</sup>. This scripture is composed of apocalyptic writing. Chapter 17:1-2 describes the mythical feminine figure of the Whore of Babylon. One of the seven angels introduces her to John saying,

*Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth have committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries*

The Whore of Babylon is a **Christian allegorical figure** of evil mentioned in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament of the Bible. She is associated with the Antichrist and the Beast from the Earth by connection with the metaphor of the kingdom with seven heads and ten horns. She bears the title, "Mystery Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth", and is described as being,

*There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead (Rev. 17:3-5).*

Chapter 17:18 states that "*The woman you saw is the great city that rules of the kings of the earth*". There are several theories as to what she might represent. My research embraces the theory that the Whore of Babylon symbolically represents Earthly Jerusalem<sup>11</sup> (Hahn, 1999).

**Thus the Whore of Babylon may be understood as a city that is going to be punished.** The city is clothed in fine garments and jewellery which may be interpreted as a sign of wealth. The beast she commands may be ten kings and seven mountains<sup>12</sup> which the city is constructed upon.

The golden cup may represent a medium for the spread of corruption throughout the land. The kings commit various adulteries with her and thus she may be considered to control their actions.

She may be understood as the antithesis of the allegorical figure of the woman "*clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars*" (Rev. 12:1). The two figures form points of opposition in the apocalypse.

The Whore of Babylon being the epitome of corruption and the woman clothed with the sun being the personification of purity. It is to this second figure this project also turned as a site of consideration.

### FO OT NO TE

10. The book of Revelations is also known as the Revelation to St John the Divine or the Apocalypse.

11. Scholars like Hahn point out that although Rome was the prevailing pagan power in the first century when the Book of Revelation was written, the symbolism of the Whore of Babylon may refer to an apostate false queen, who continues to falsely claim governance of the spiritual realm. In this view, Israel or Judea ruled by Jews who did not accept Christ as a Messiah, is argued as being a spiritual harlot and thus a whore. Revelation 17:15-18 says the "woman" (Babylon) is "that great city". Theologically however, there is continuing debate around interpretations that equate "Babylon's trappings of gold and silver and her clothing of diverse colours" to the Jewish nation's historical involvement in the trade of precious metals, jewels, textiles, and other merchandise.

12. The seven mountains if she represents Judea would be Mt Goath, Mt Gareb, Mt Acra, Mt Bezetha, Mt Zion, Mt Ophel and Mt Moriah.



## WO-M, an clothed with the sun. /

Prior to the depiction of the Whore of Babylon within the book of Revelation we encounter her antithesis. Chapter 12:1-3 introduces her as,

*A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth.*

The woman clothed with the sun is also a Christian allegorical figure. She is connected with the kingdom of heaven and the red dragon of Revelation by the association of the kingdom with **seven** heads and **ten** horns. She is described as giving "birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter" (Rev. 12:5). She is further revealed fleeing from the great dragon in chapter 12:13-14,

*When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach.*

Like the Whore of Babylon there are a several theories as to what the woman clothed with the sun might represent<sup>13</sup>. My research embraces the theory that the woman clothed with the sun symbolically represents **Heavenly Jerusalem. This city is in contrast to that of Earthly Jerusalem.** Thus, the woman becomes the antithesis of the Whore of Babylon who dwells in desolation. Being clothed with the sun may be interpreted as Jesus clothing her with his brilliance. The number twelve stars that crown her may symbolically represent the twelve tribes

of Israel. **Traditionally she is depicted as a celestial figure adorned in splendour.**

13. The woman clothed with the sun may also represent the church. If she does represent the image of the church she may also represent the bride of Christ. She has also been portrayed as symbolising the Virgin Mary.



## SO-P, hia. /

Sophia is mentioned in several Nag Hammandi scriptures. These are a collection of thirteen ancient codices that include a large number of important Gnostic texts discovered in Egypt in 1945. She is first introduced in writings that discuss the origin of the world,

*After the natural structure of the immortal beings had completely developed out of the infinite, a likeness then emanated from Pistis (Faith); it is called Sophia (Wisdom). It exercised volition and became a product resembling the primeval light. And immediately her will manifested itself as a likeness of heaven, having an unimaginable magnitude; it was between the immortal beings and those things that came into being after them, like [...]: she (Sophia) functioned as a veil dividing mankind from the things above.*

Sophia is a figure who appears in both Gnostic and Orthodox Christianity. She is identified as feminine and in Greek her name means **'wisdom'**. In scriptures she inhabits a spiritual land known as Pleroma. She is described as the creator of the Jewish God Yahweh in the Old Testament of the Bible. In the Origin of the World Sophia is described a

*Having created the first product, she will put away the wise fire of intelligence and clothe herself with witless wrath. Then she will pursue the gods of chaos, whom she created along with the prime parent. She will cast them down into the abyss. They will be obliterated because of their wickedness. For they will come to be like volcanoes and consume one another until they perish at the hand of the prime parent. When he has destroyed them, he will turn against himself and destroy himself until he ceases to exist.*

**Sophia is perhaps a more complex and 'contradictory' concept than the preceding figures.** Symbolically she represents materiality. In this regard, scriptures frame her as both the creator and destroyer of the material world. She is believed to be the Holy Spirit of the Trinity and is understood as residing in all of us.

Significantly because she contains both the celestial and material she acts as a veil blinding mankind from the world of Heaven.



## LI-L, th./

Lilith has appeared in various religious and mythical texts. She is mentioned in the prologue to the Epic of Gilgamesh, Isaiah in the Bible, passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls and also in Goethe's 1808 Romantic literary work the Faust Part, 1.

**Lilith is most commonly interpreted as Adam's first wife.**

*...woman for Adam, from the earth, as He had created Adam himself, and called her Lilith. Adam and Lilith began to fight. She said, 'I will not lie below,' and he said, 'I will not lie beneath you, but only on top. For you are fit only to be in the bottom position, while am to be in the superior one.' Lilith responded, 'We are equal to each other inasmuch as we were both created from the earth.' But they would not listen to one another. When Lilith saw this, she pronounced the Ineffable Name and flew away into the air (chapter 23a-b).*

The *Alphabet of Ben Sira* is comprised of stories or folktales from the Bible. Lilith is a Judeo Christian metaphorical figure and may have derived from the Babylonian-Assyrian word **'lilitu'** meaning, a female demon or wind-spirit. The Kabbala describes her thus;

*Lilith is a harlot who fornicates with men. She has no mating with her husband, for He [God] castrated the male and cooled the female... This Lilith -- the Merciful One save us!-- has dominion over children who issue from a man who has intercourse at candlelight, or with his wife naked, or at times when he is forbidden to have intercourse. All those children who issue from these mentioned, Lilith can kill them any time she wants to, because they are delivered into her hand (Patai, 81:463-464).*

Lilith is conceptualised through various Judiac myth evidenced in the Kabbala, the Talmud, the Incarnation Bowls and the Malkah ha-Shadim. Although her framing is often nebulous, Lilith is often understood as a form of demon. She epitomises Judiac concerns with sexual expression that is either singular or non-procreative. Although in some texts she appears to have a male consort, in others she is un-partnered. **She specifically operates as a metaphor for lustful attraction, sterility in women and the loss of new born**

l i l i t h

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CO-N,  
clusion. /

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**This exegesis has sought to highlight and connect certain theories regarding the sublime and the ruin.**

**It does not seek to present a deep analysis of various writings within these arenas because the sublime and the ruin are used in this research to activate creative endeavour rather than to be the subject of the thesis per se.**

Theories relating to these areas have guided and challenged the creation of four artworks. These works employ notions of the sublime and ruin as a method of engaging the spectator with enigmatic but provocative considerations of four Judeo-Christian, feminine metaphors.

The critical ideas generated from a consideration of the writings of Burke (1757), Kant (1790), Longinus (1890), Trigg (2006), Makarius (2004), and Harbison (1991), serve to create subjective, obscure and ambiguous sublime moments that may not be decoded as absolute depictions of the sublime, but may creatively open the potential of the work to such considerations.

**Because of the nature of the research, it is still in a state of final refinement at the time of writing this exegesis. Therefore some minor updates to this exegesis may be made after the work is examined.**

## RE-F, ferences. /

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Trigg, D., (2006). *The aesthetics of decay: nothingness, nostalgia, and the absence of reason*. New York: Peter Lang

Woodward, C., (2001). *In ruins*. London: Chatto & Windus





# Mapped

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CO-N,  
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introduction	/ 49.,
bachelor of art & design	/ 50.,
bachelor of art & design [honours]	/ 54.,
concept 01	/ 56.,
concept 02	/ 62.,
concept 03	/ 64.,
concept 04	/ 66.,
concept 05	/ 70.,
concept 06	/ 82.,
master of art & design	/ 96.,
concept 07	/ 100.,
concept 08	/ 104.,
concept 09	/ 114.,
concept 10	/ 120.,
concept 11	/ 126.,
concept 12	/ 130.,



## IN-T, roduction. /

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*Mapped experience* charts a journey of the sublime through investigations into the ruin of abstract ideas. From here it extends into a consideration of the ruin of the enigmatic feminine. In it I relate both my journey and the products of that journey.

**Accompanied by a personal commentary, *mapped experience* navigates my engagement with theoretical and visual ideas.**

Thus, it may be seen as a log of migrating details, of daily experience visualised through experiments. The commentary is a chronological documentary that details events, experiments, findings, and imagery in which one may identify significant shifts.

This is the journey that led to the four artworks comprising *The Sublime Ruin*: the enigmatic feminine.

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# BA-C, achelor of Art & Design. /

November 2005 saw the completion of my Bachelor of Art & Design degree with an exhibition at the Aotea Centre in Auckland.

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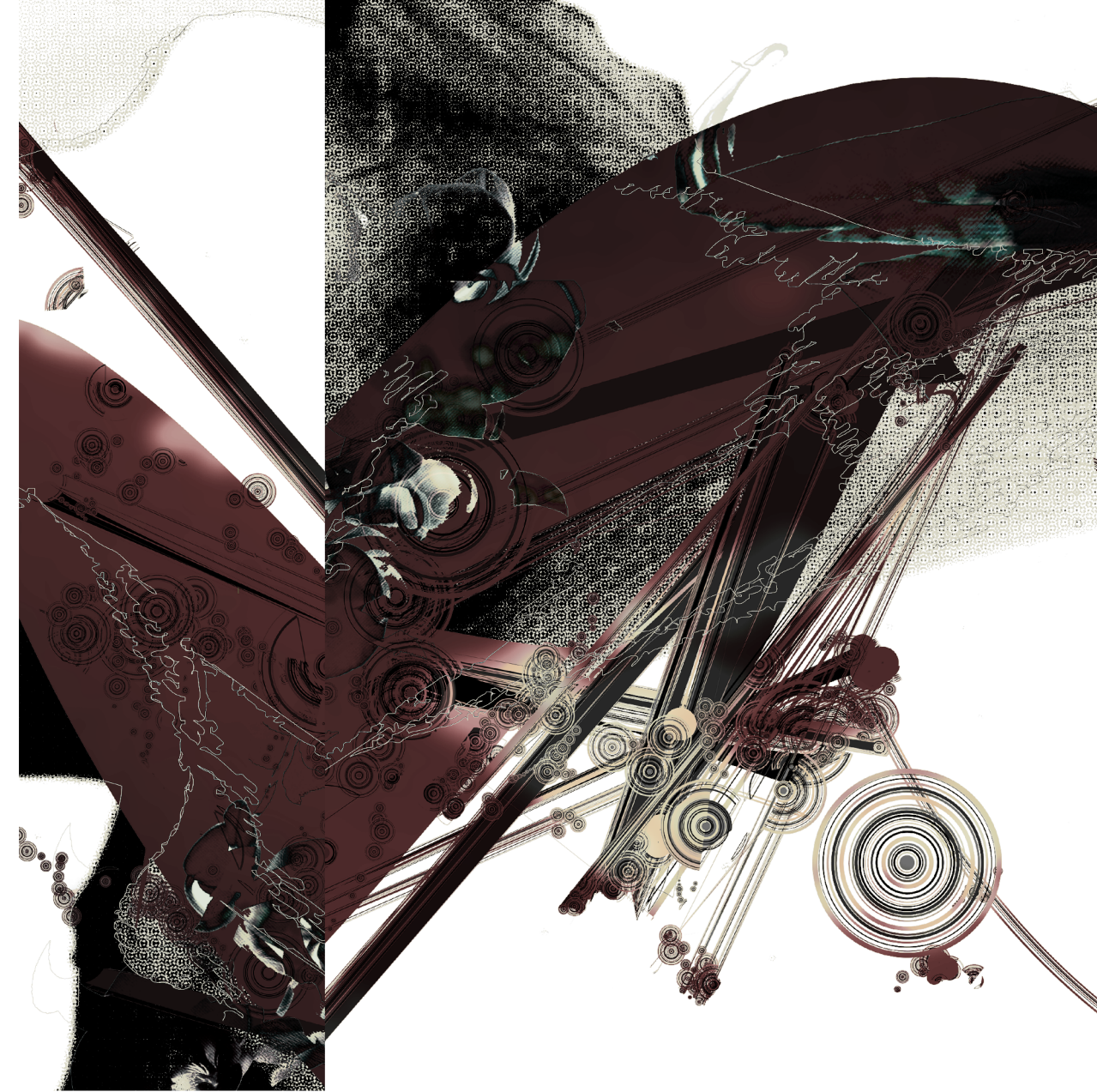
This exhibition displayed four digital prints that embraced notions of perfection. Perfection has historically been associated with disciplines that include mathematics, physics, chemistry, ethics, aesthetics, ontology, and theology. As only having a few months to understand and visualise this concept I took the view that perfection may be understood as completeness and flawlessness. **Geometric shapes became the focus.**

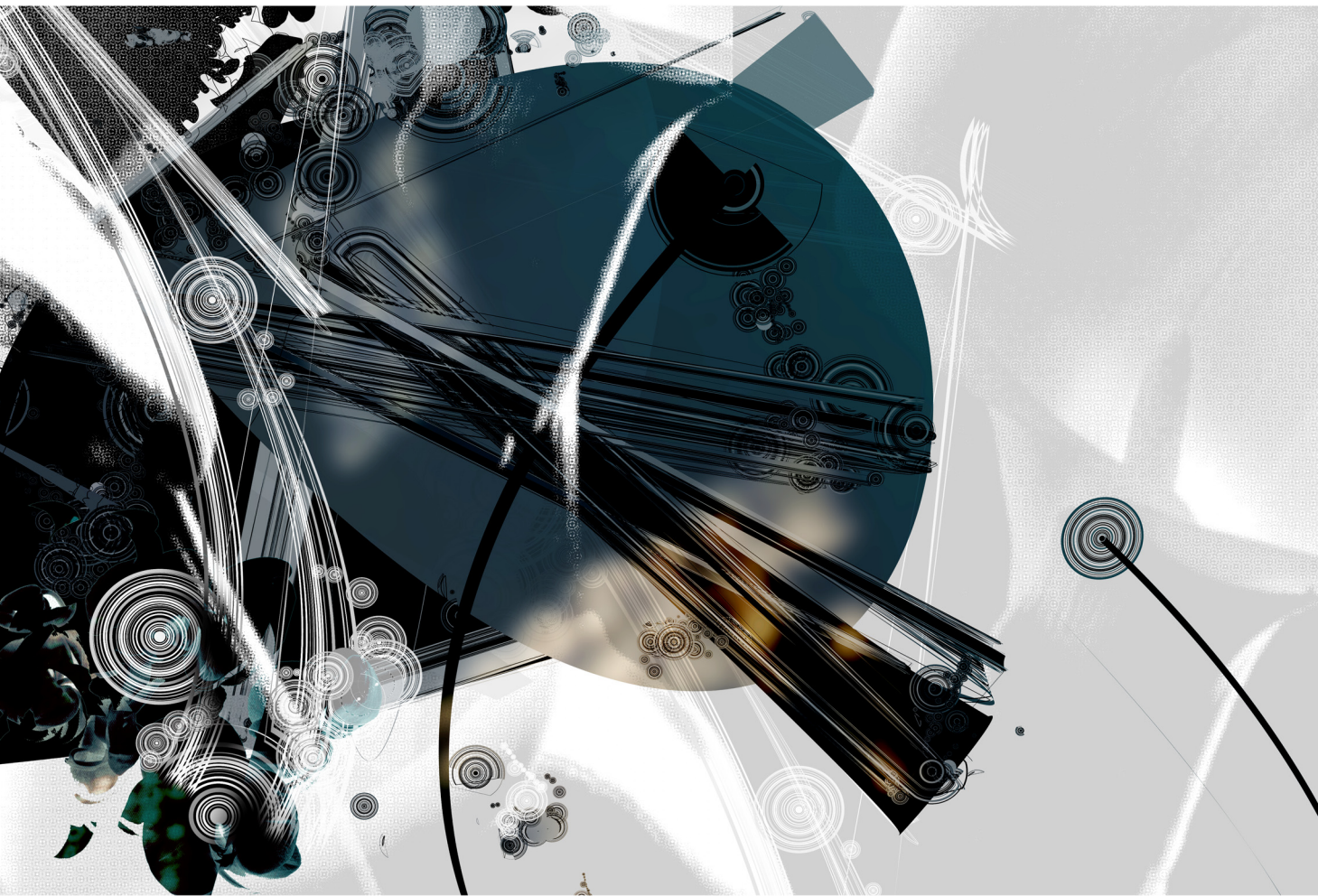
Eventually the decision was made that the circle mathematically and aesthetically contained aspects of both the complete and the flawless. Various experiments were conducted utilising

**c i r c l e s**  
as the primary elements.

Using Adobe Illustrator the four major points of the circles were dragged and manipulated to portray

**p e r f e c t i o n**  
as an object that contains all the requisite parts but is animated by its blemishes and defects. Thus something considered deformed may also be perfect.





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BA-C,  
Bachelor of Art & Design [Honours]. /

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As I was interested in pursuing my studies further I began to consider notions of the sublime. After encountering Edmund Burke's (1757)

### *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*

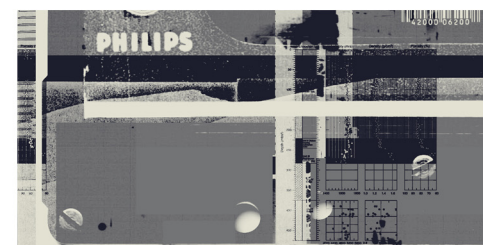
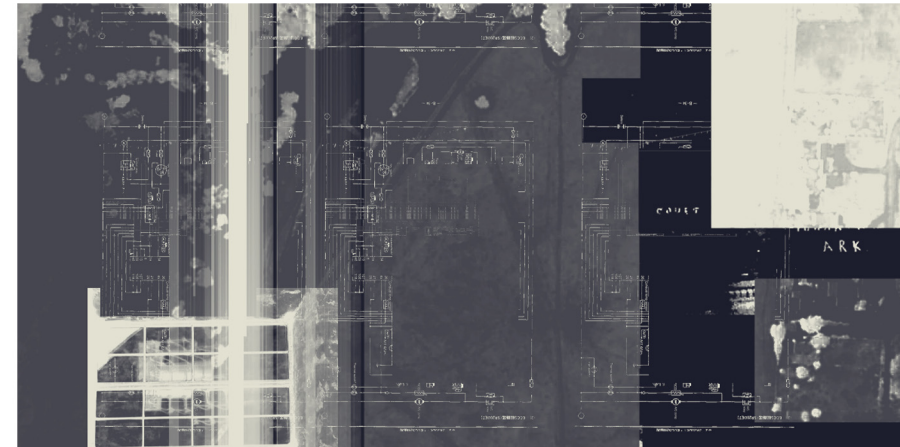
I was able to frame the sublime as something related to notions of beauty. This links to concerns I had with framings of perfection that I had found stimulating. Burke's enigmatic awe intrigued me; as I began to delve more deeply into writing around the sublime I realised how vast and contested the concept was. **The summer vanished with me spending most of my time buried in books<sup>14</sup>. The ideas that several of the theorists were discussing were very confusing at first.**

Philosophy was fresh ground for me. Struggling to comprehend exactly what the sublime was I utilised a method of note taking. I wrote all important quotes down and underneath attempted to translate them in my own terms.

In doing this I challenged what I read with the question: *"What theoretical and visual attributes does this quote display?"*

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14. Adorno, T., (1984). Aesthetic Theory. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul  
Beckley, B., (2001). Sticky Sublime. New York: Allworth Press  
De Bolla, P., (1989). The Discourse of the Sublime: Aesthetics and the Subject. Oxford: Basil Blackwell  
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Kant, I., (1960). Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime. California: University of California Press.  
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Longinus, P., (1890). On the Sublime. London: Macmillan and Co.  
Weiskel, T., (1976). The romantic Sublime. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.



## CO-N, cept 01. /

After reading Burke, the early stages of the research were primarily concerned with his and Kant's strong differentiations between sublime and beauty. **The conflict that occurred between the sublime and beautiful essentially argued that beauty was light and the sublime dark.**

The first image created in my research was constructed from photographs of reflected light on various objects.

They were then overlaid in Photoshop. The image was created to indicate an ambiguous form that contained the idea of conflict through the contrast of light and dark. Burke (1757) discusses how colour depends on light and how light exists with its opposite, darkness.

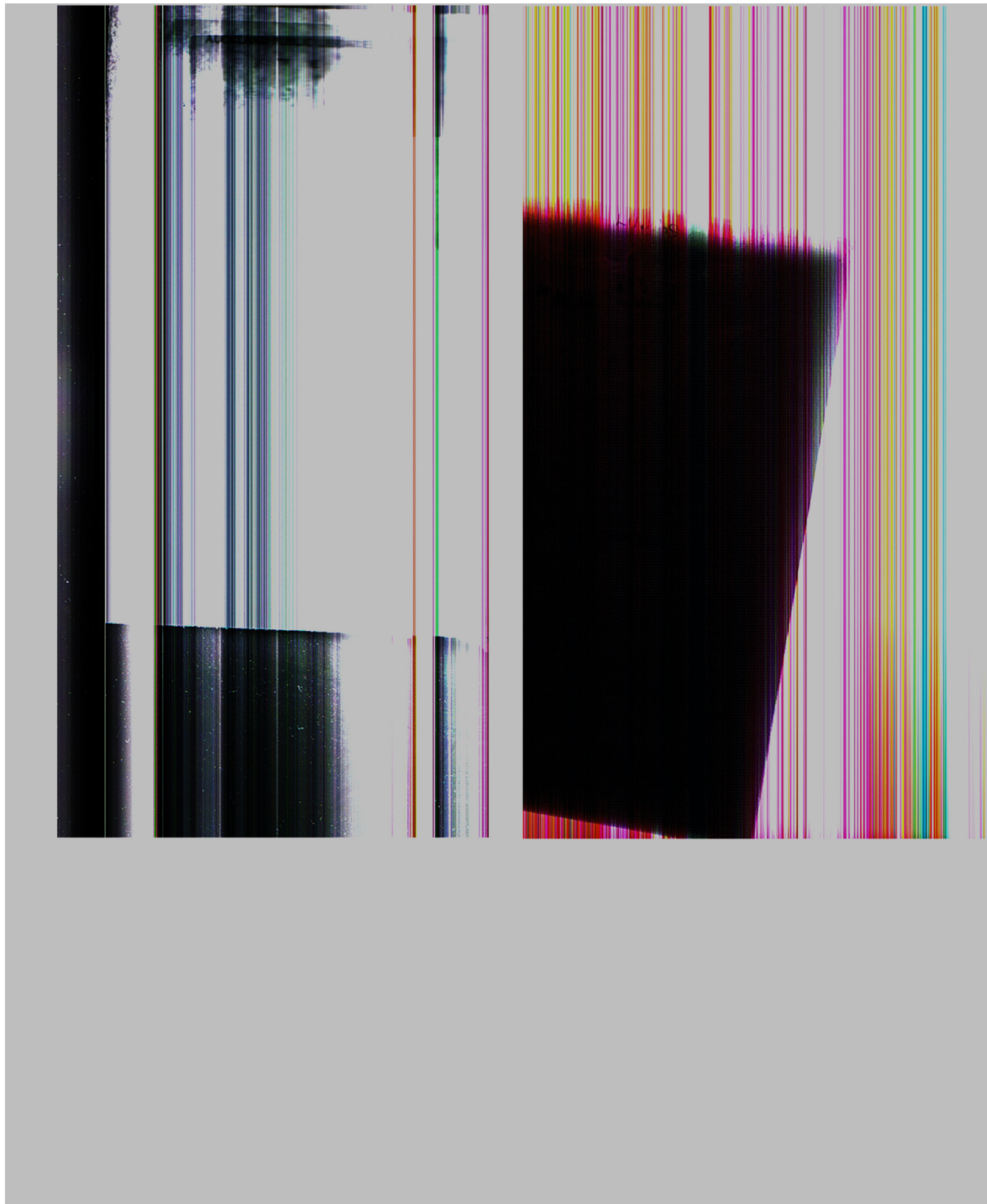
*Extreme light, by overcoming the organs of sight, obliterates all objects, so as in its effect exactly to resemble darkness. After looking for some time at the sun, two black spots, the impression which it leaves, seem to dance before our eyes. Thus are two ideas as opposite as can be imagined reconciled in the extremes of both; and both in spite of their opposite nature brought to concur in producing the sublime. And this is not the only instance wherein the opposite extremes operate equally in favour of the sublime* (Boulton [Ed.], 1958, pp. 80-81).

The idea of contrasted light was extended because I had recently acquired my own flatbed scanner. I began to experiment with scanning light itself. I set up the scanner so the lid was open during scanning.

As the scanner commenced I manipulated light from a lamp bulb to come in contact with the surface of the scanner and then be pulled away. In some scans the light was stationary and in others it was in motion. I then scanned objects such as a book and manipulated the light around it as the scanner recorded.

What resulted were compositions of straight lines. The high contrasted imagery contained vibrant colours that suggested notions of vastness and infinity which Burke posits as powerful causes of the sublime.







CO-N,  
cept 02. /

At this stage of the research there was still no question assigned. I was simply enquiring into how certain sublime attributes might be visualised.

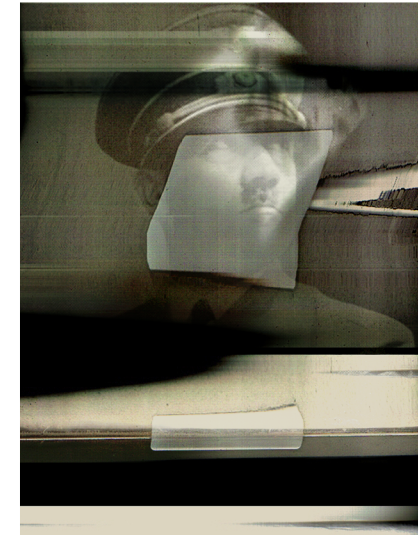
After discussion with peers and my supervisor an idea surfaced that the sublime might require an activating agent.

**This activating agent might be understood as a focused subject or concept where sublime attributes might be applied.**

The aim of this experiment considered an agent like  
**A d o l f**  
**H i t l e r**  
who might be described as having a sublime personality. Accordingly, in a series of experiments an image of Hitler was overlaid with the previous scans of light to create a sense of obscurity. However, this idea faded quickly.

It seemed very arbitrary and a lack of discovered information around the idea that an individual may be described as having a sublime personality meant that it became very subjective, and lacking in critical substance.

**L E E R**



**A D O L F**  
**H I T L E R**

CO-N,  
cept 03. /

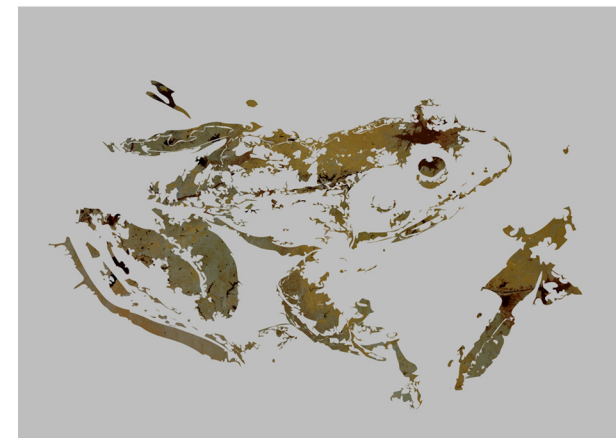
By researching German, English, French and American Romantic painters<sup>15</sup>. I became aware how the effects of nature were often used to interpret notions of the sublime. However, instead of depicting a treacherous landscape, I remembered reading Burke's section on 'power'.

In sitting the book of Job he describes a horse in two clarifications. He says,

*The horse in the light of an useful beast, fit for plough, the road, the draft, in every social useful light the horse has nothing of the sublime; but is it thus that w are affected with him, whose neck is clothed with thunder, the glory of whose nostrils is terrible, who swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage, neither believeth that is the sound of the trumpet? In this description the useful character of the horse entirely disappears, and the terrible and sublime blaze out together* (Boulton [Ed.], 1958, pp. 65-66).

I therefore created a series of images that depicted fragmented animals. These were created by tracing parts of animals. Scanned images of hand-crafted textures were then embedded within the traced elements. Stylistically the images looked delicate but also contained elements of the ugly. I was curious if, when an animal was depicted as fragmented, would the ideas of the useful and the terrible merge to create sublime  
**p a s s i o n s ?**

However, I was unsatisfied with the outcomes of the experiments. Upon reflection I felt although visually stimulating the images didn't depict sublime notions effectively because they felt more friendly than terrible.



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15. Salvator Rosa, Benjamin West, Casper David Fredrich, Francis Danby, Claude Lorrain, Henry Fuseli, Hudson River School, James Ward, JMW Turner, John Constable, John Hamilton Mortimer, John Martin, Joseph Wright, Nicholas Poussin, Richard Wilson and Thomas Cole.

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## CO-N, cept 04. /

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At this stage I considered the employment of a narrative. I thought this might act as a rigorous activating agent. I decided to consider Edgar Allen Poe's short gothic story: *The Fall of the House of Usher*<sup>16</sup>.

Writers like Baldic (1992) had discussed examples of Poe's writing in his comprehensive introduction to the *Oxford Book of Gothic Tales* and the relationship between principles of the Sublime and constructions of Gothic (and Neo Gothic) literature suggested a fruitful line of enquiry. **The images I created used similar methods to those employed in concept 03. This series of images was a test to explore how I might depict sublime attributes within a narrative.**

However, although highly enigmatic they felt constrained by an established literary paradigm. As a result I considered creating my own narrative so I might have more control over the nature of awe in the work. **The creative process for the literary work included surrounding myself with diverse reading material and from this I began to pick individual words, never once choosing the next word from the same book or page.** This created a very enigmatic and nebulous form of poetic 'narrative'.

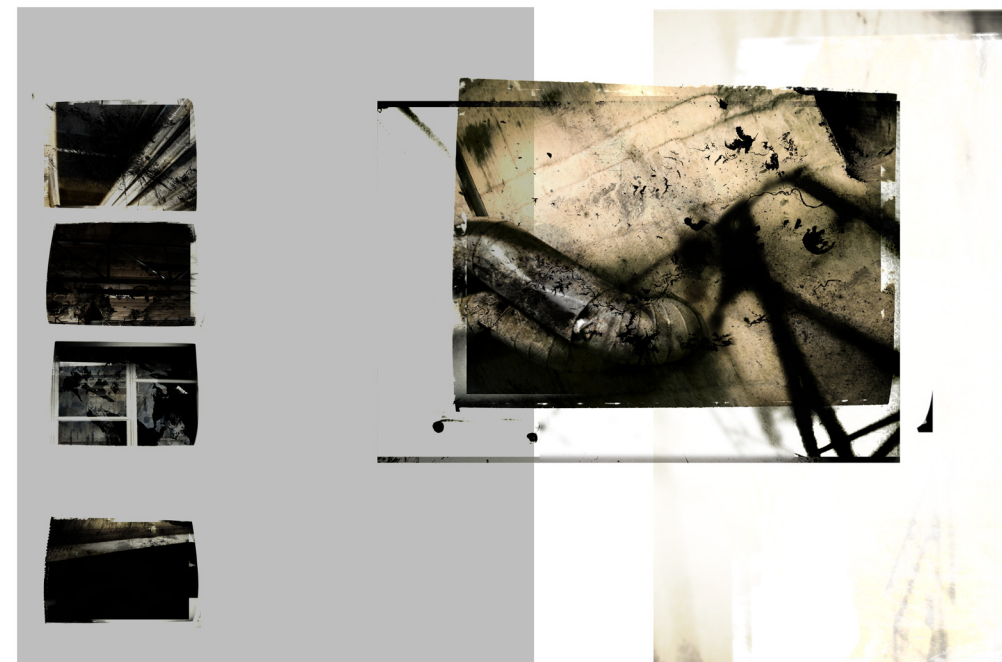
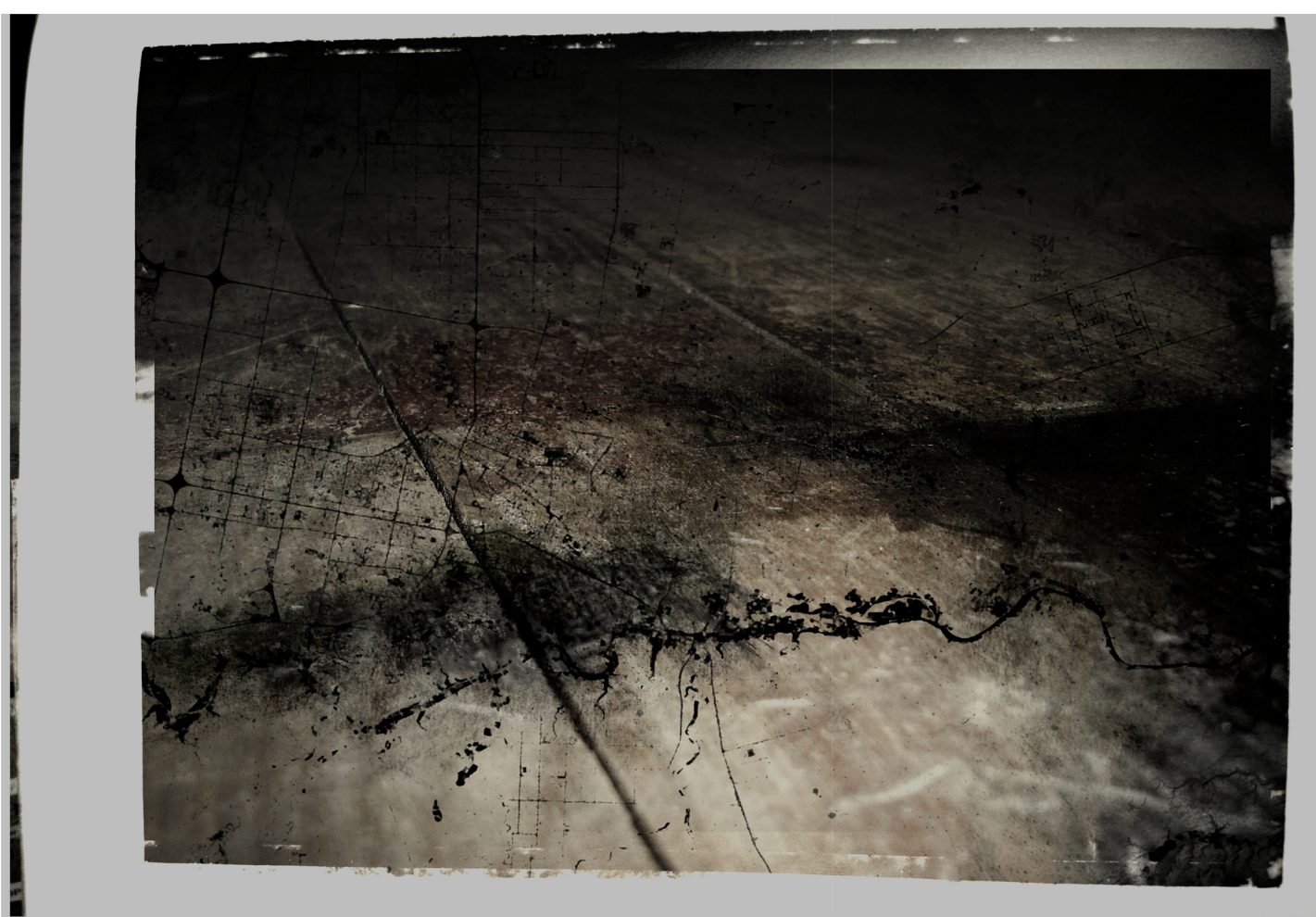
There was no sense of order but the chaos created highly ambiguous and imaginative scenes. In response to this writing a series of photographic prints was constructed. These engaged with spaces within the central city of Auckland.

They were overlaid with images I created using analogue processes like mark making, sketching and the creation of painted textures. Upon reflection I began to realise that although the images embraced notions of the sublime (as chaos) the idea of the narrative was awaiting a deeper level of engagement within the research.

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16. Baldic, C. (1992) *The Oxford Book of Gothic Tales*. New York: Oxford University Press.





## CO-N, cept 05. /

Once again finding myself overwhelmed by the theory of the sublime I revisited the Romantic paintings. I became aware of the propensity for depicting dilapidated and decaying structures. From this the idea of the ruin surfaced.

In concord with this, my concurrent discovery of decaying electronic components from various rubbish containers around Auckland led the research to consider how technology might be considered a form of ruin. Driven by the potential of this idea I collected around 80 different components.

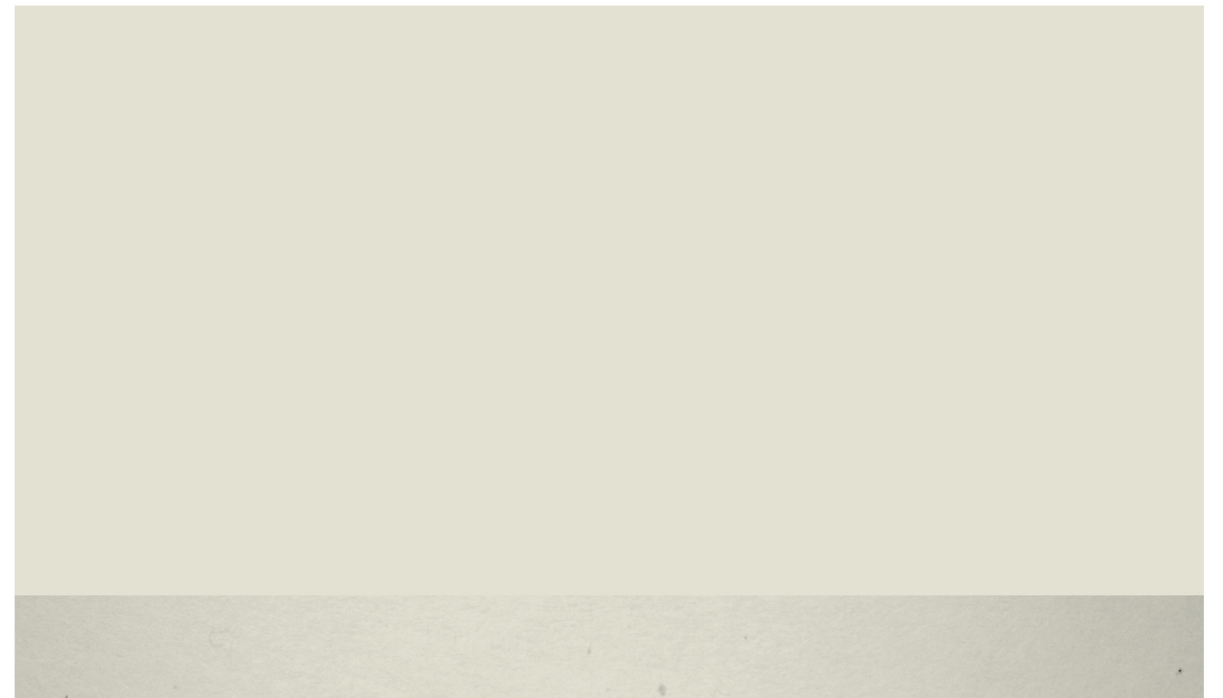
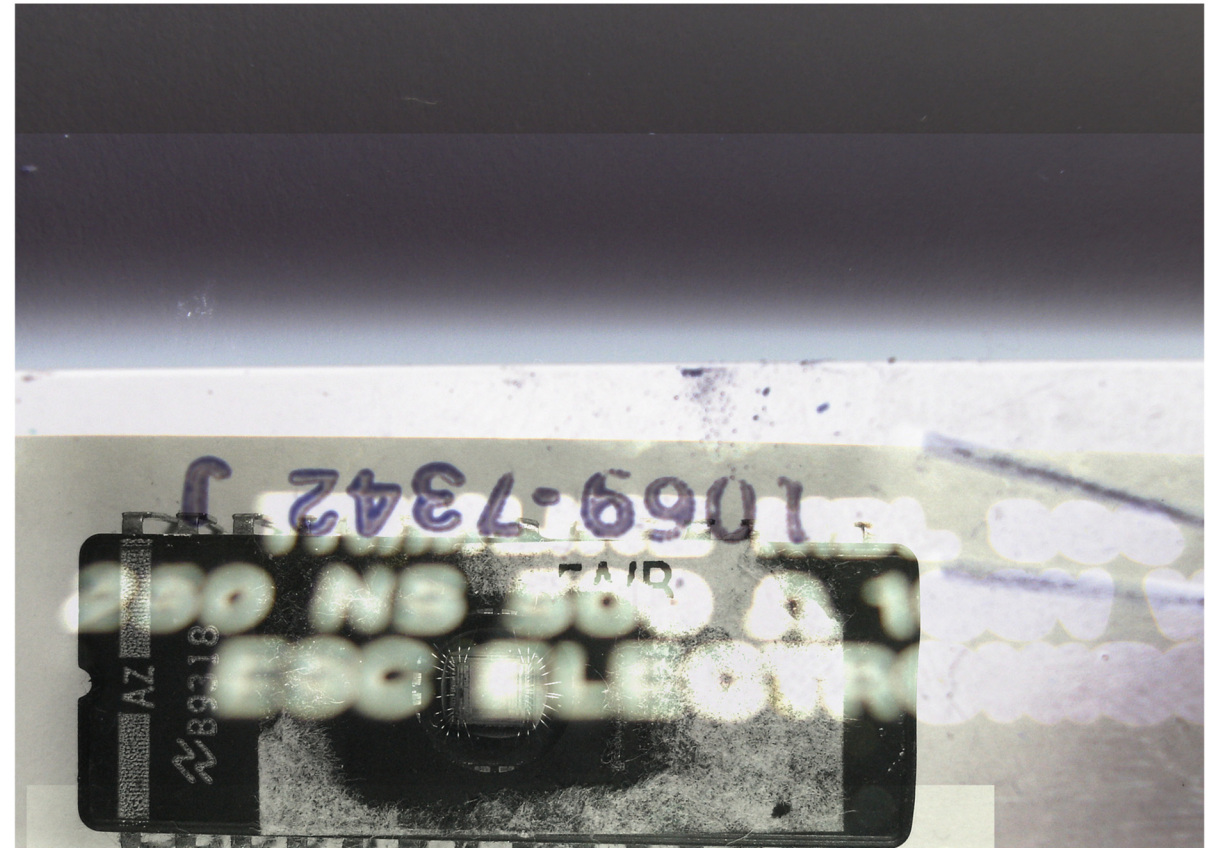
**Each item was documented through sketching and was also photographed from various angles. This was done to analyse shape and colour as I had never worked with these objects before.**

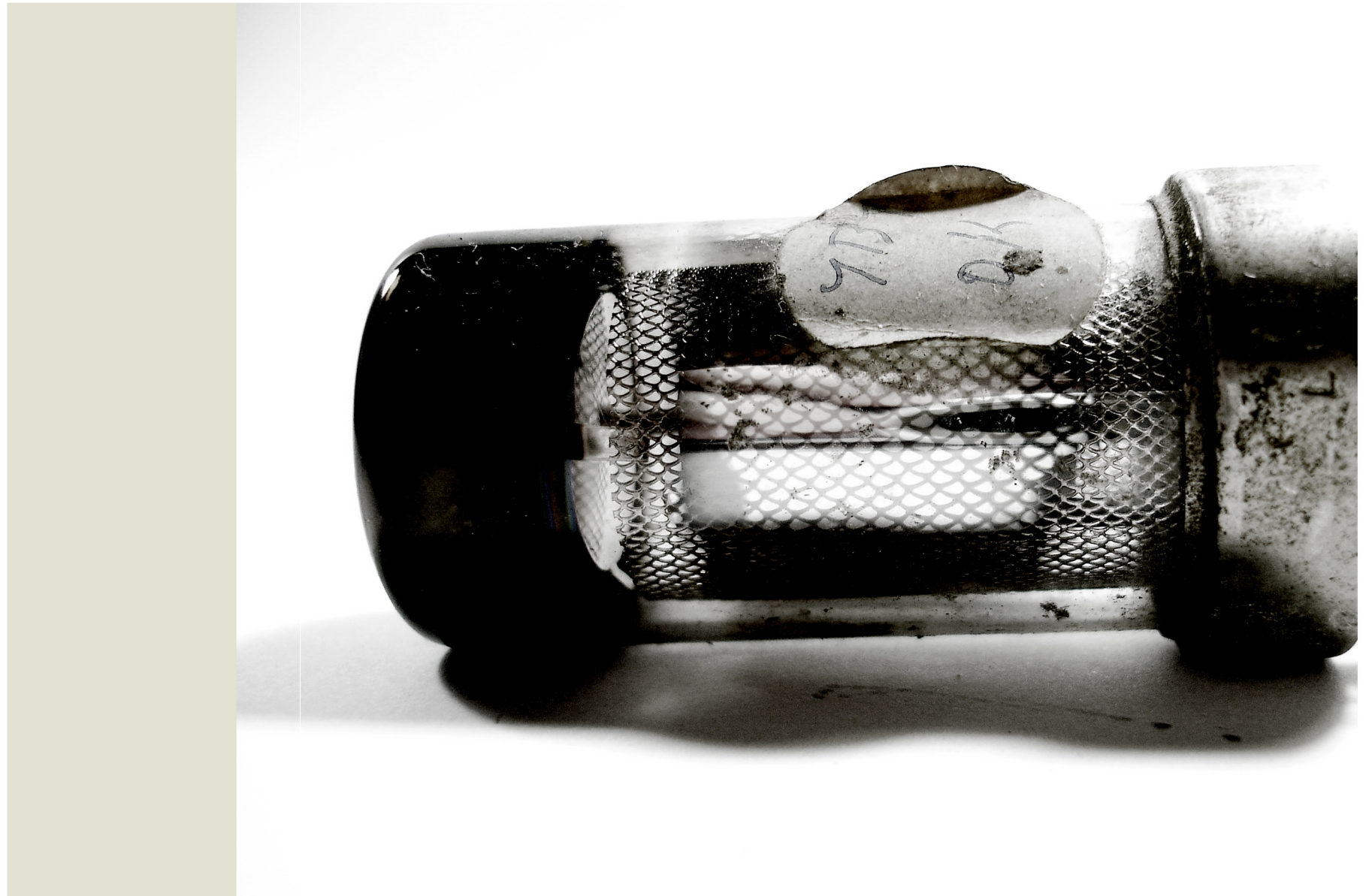
I noticed that the gratification of the ruin, its (decay, detachment and devastation) was both distinctive to individual remains and continuously repeatable.

Ruins show us a world in which the sublime and the beautiful are united together. I discovered that every list on Burke's (1757) list of qualities that aroused the sublime and the beautiful were locatable in the ruin; (terror, obscurity, power, fairness of colour, smallness, infinity, light, vastness etc).

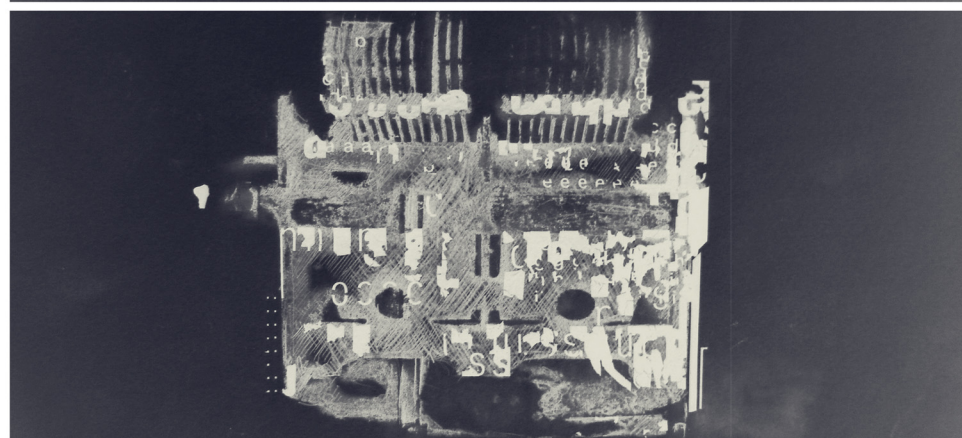
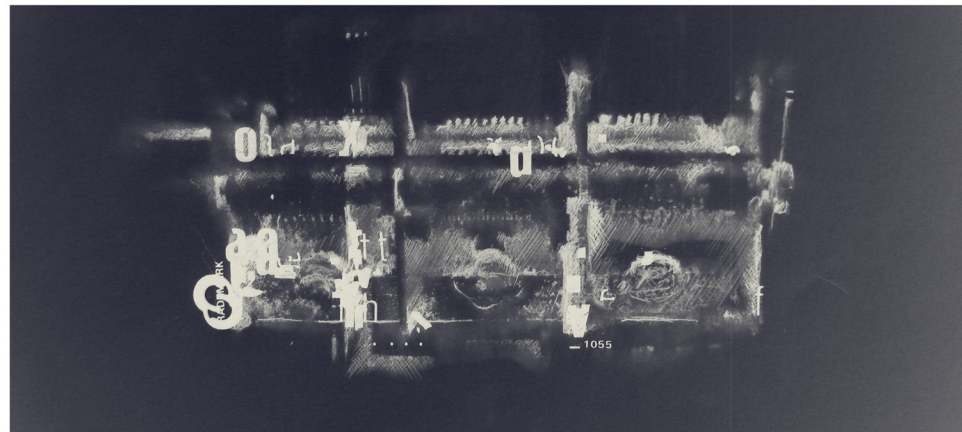
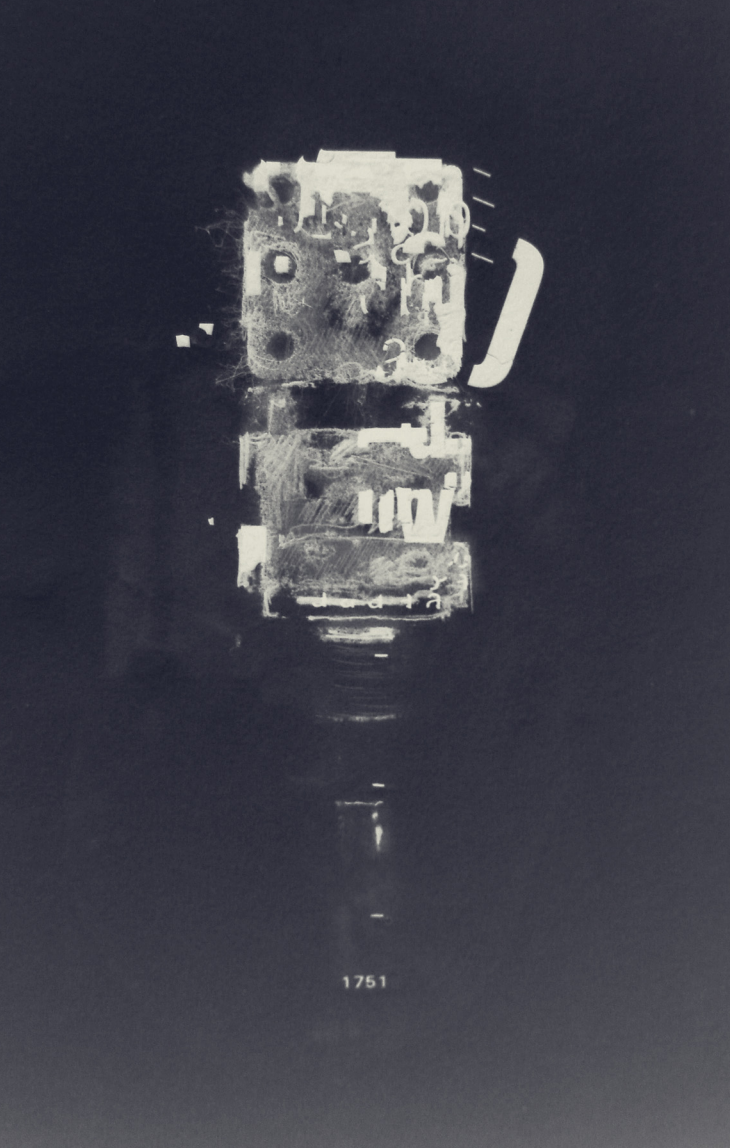
Because the ruin suggested a formless world where one's imagination unfolded the experience of the sublime, I realised that it is the spectator that defines the ruin. Without a spectator, the ruin could not exist. From these considerations I began to think of the ruin as a potential

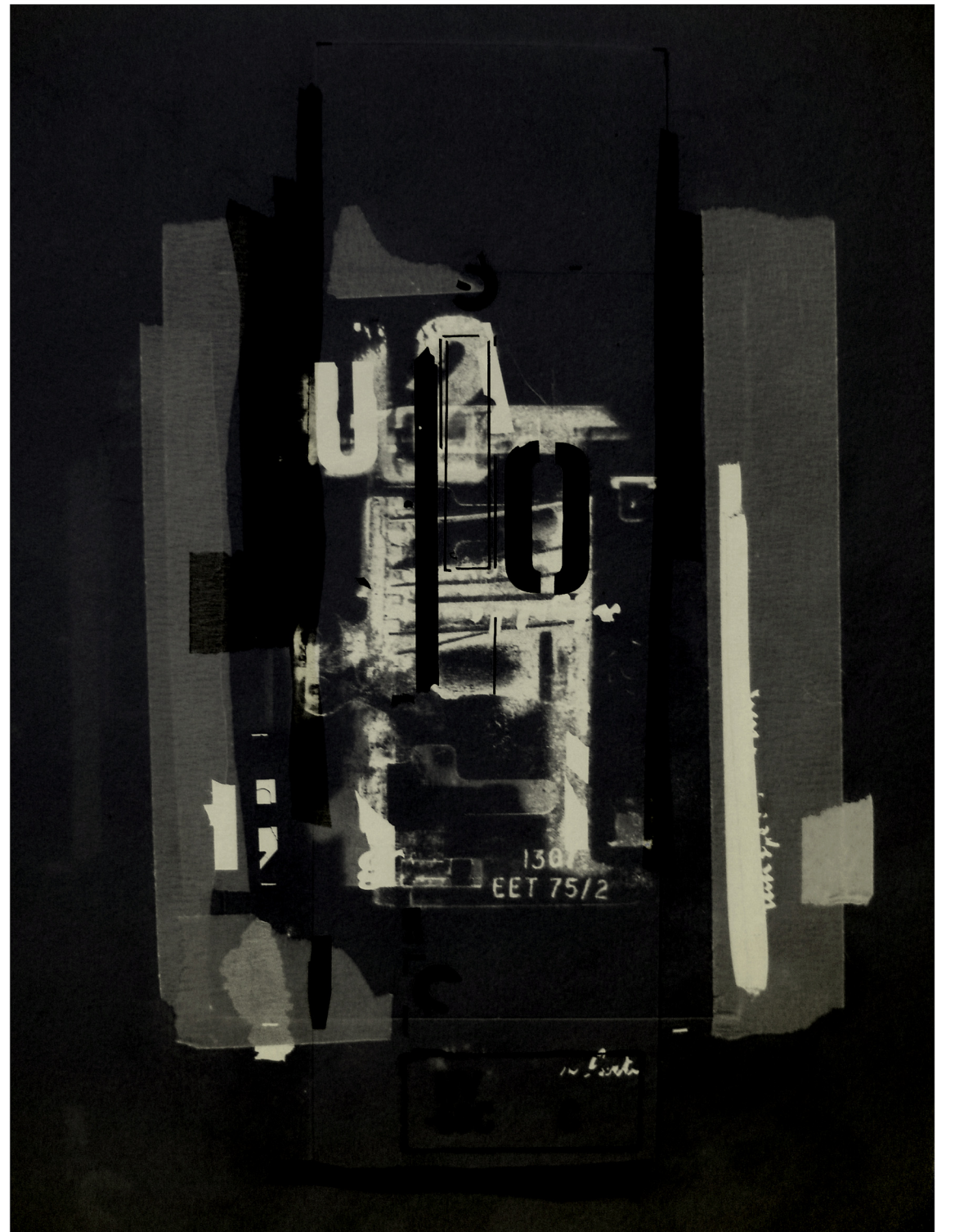
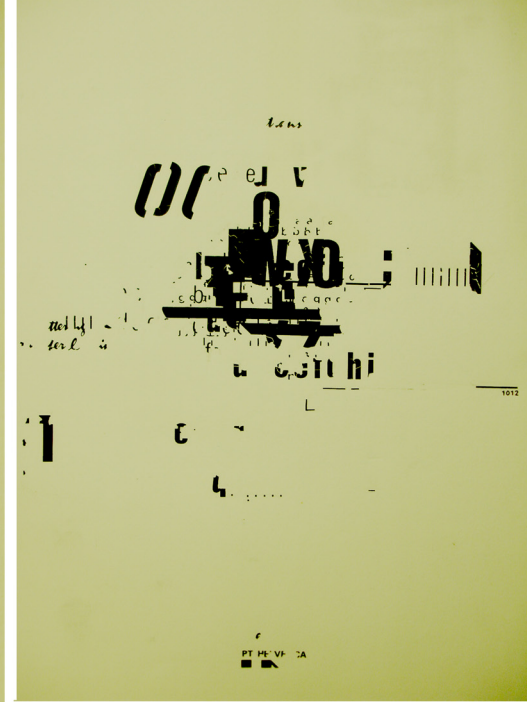
**m a n i f e s t a t i o n**  
of the sublime. I experimented with a very large scale work constructed out of components in a state of visual and visceral decay. This was a visual test to see if the image stirred any thoughts that might further challenge connections between the ruin and the sublime. The scale of the work was an acknowledgment of the spectator viewing something at both a distance while also being drawn into an intimate engagement with its losses and intimacies.

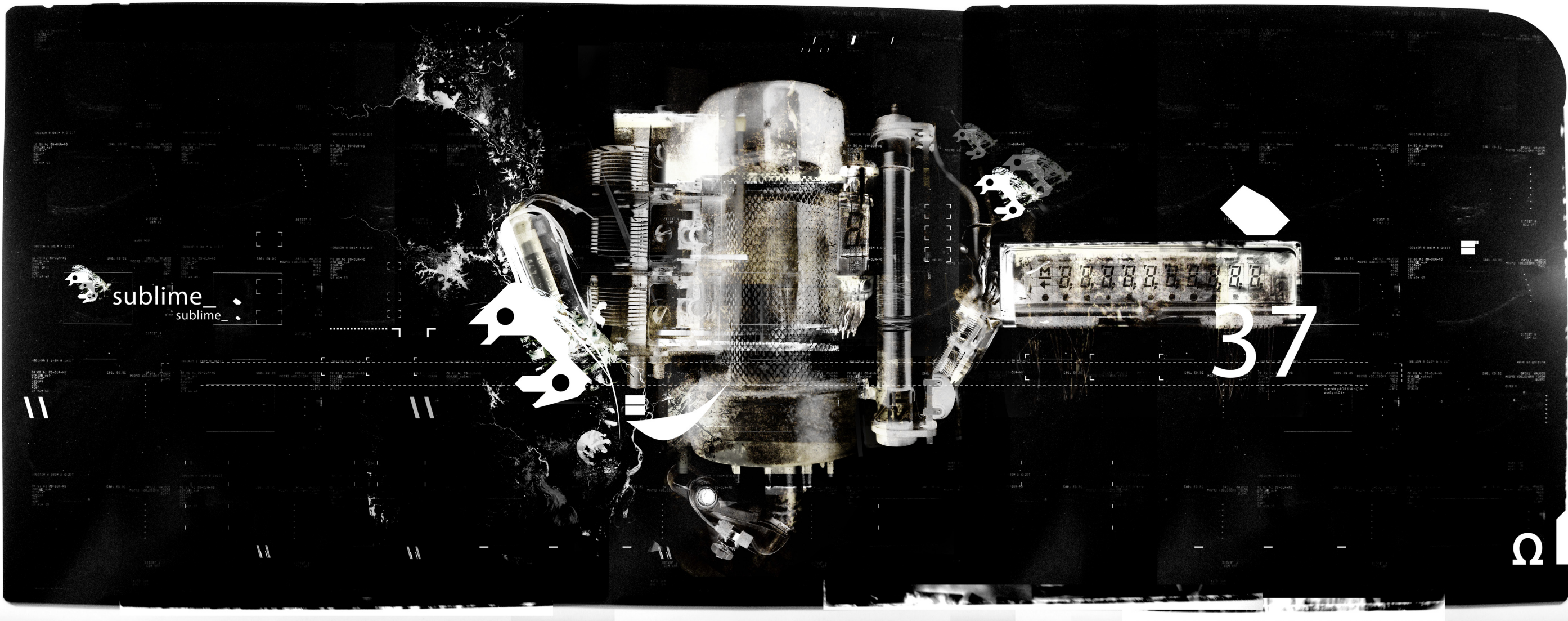












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## CO-N, cept 06. /

*Concept 05* resulted in responses to the large work. I began to consider the ruin, not as architectural but as conceptual. I tried framing it not as a form, but as an idea. As a result I moved back to my contemporary environment and considered the idea that in society we may experience ruins of ideals.

**Five ruins were trialled, the ruin of privacy, ecology, intimacy, time and space and authenticity. These were developed as prints that utilised similar methods of construction so they might be cohesive as an exhibition set.**

Each utilised elements of electronic componentry. The backgrounds were created from photographs that were overlaid with hand-drawn textures. This increased the dynamic tension in the work.

The five prints were developed not to excavate deep ideas of ruin.

Rather individually they expressed selected examples of globalised ideals for which we sense a loss.

The images were not designed as illustrations but as catalysts, that through engagement might cause a spectator to experience a reduction of the self.



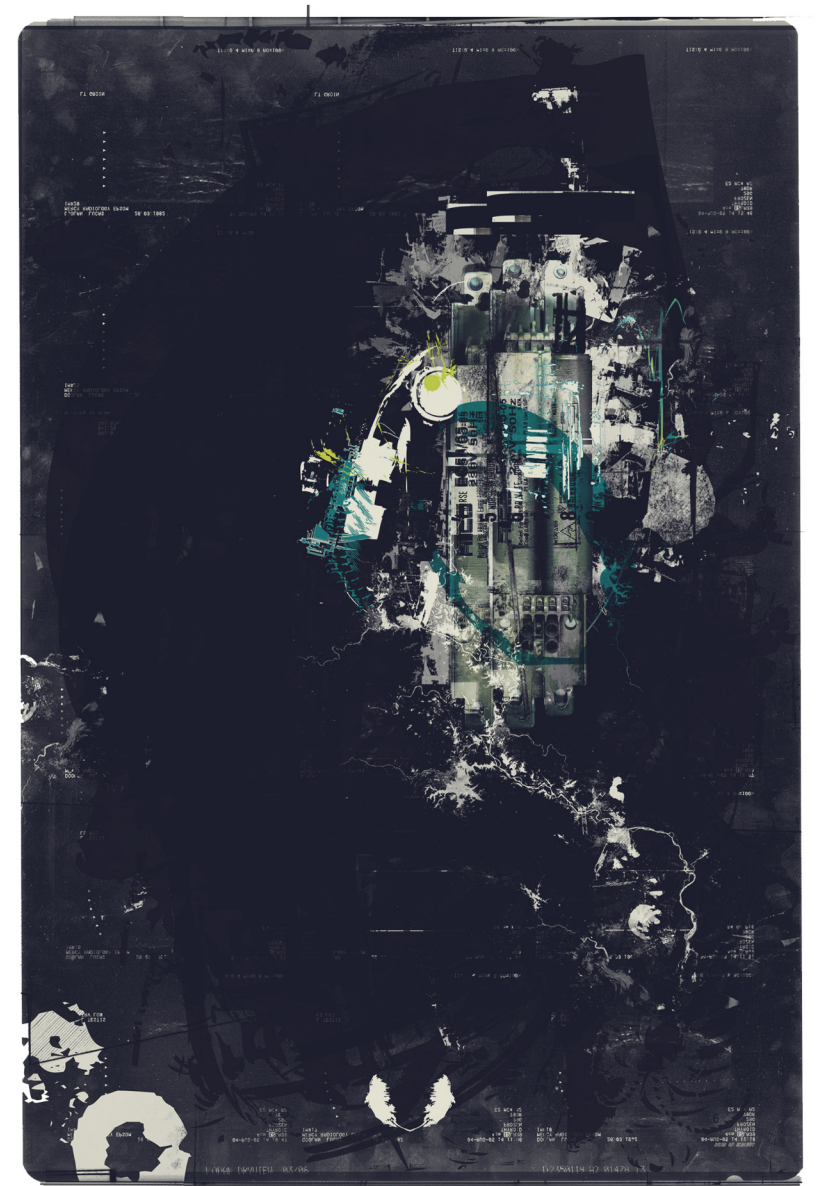




Figure 1.1. This figure illustrates the concept of 'Ruin of Ecology' through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.1.1. The concept of 'Ruin of Ecology' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.1.2. The concept of 'Ruin of Ecology' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.1.3. The concept of 'Ruin of Ecology' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.



Figure 1.2. This figure illustrates the concept of 'Ruin of Privacy' through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.2.1. The concept of 'Ruin of Privacy' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.2.2. The concept of 'Ruin of Privacy' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.2.3. The concept of 'Ruin of Privacy' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

- 0. 1.1. RUIN OF ECOLOGY
- 0. 1.2. RUIN OF PRIVACY
- 0. 1.3. RUIN OF INTIMACY
- 0. 1.4. RUIN OF AUTHENTICITY
- 0. 1.5. RUIN OF TIME AND SPACE

UNSEEN THE IRON KEY TURNS, SUNLIGHT DIMINISHES AND DARKNESS BEGINS TO STRAIN.

[PROLOGUE]

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INHABITED WITH A FROZEN WHITE WASTELAND, BOUNDLESS FIELDS AMATE THE PERSECUTED. INFINITE SOLITUDE UNEARTHS INSANITY. WHILE MYSTIFIED FIGURES LAYER AS THE PAST RECONSTRUCTS. A MASS ASSASS, THAT NEVER BEFORE EXISTED. RUMED MANIFOLDS OF DARK ANGELS LAY DORMANT. FAMILIAR FIGURES ARE NOWHERE TO BE FOUND. THE EXCESS OF MEMORIES OBSCURE PATHWAYS OF REALITY. DRAPED BETWEEN PHYSICAL DESTRUCTION AND REVIVAL OF EXISTENCE. BONES TWIST AND WHINE UNDER THE IMMENSE WEIGHT. SENSES WANDER LIKE A DYING MAN. RECONSTRUCTION SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE. OBLIVION FLUCTUATING ABOVE WILL ENGULF ALL.



Figure 1.3. This figure illustrates the concept of 'Ruin of Intimacy' through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.3.1. The concept of 'Ruin of Intimacy' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.3.2. The concept of 'Ruin of Intimacy' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.3.3. The concept of 'Ruin of Intimacy' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.



Figure 1.4. This figure illustrates the concept of 'Ruin of Authenticity' through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

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1.4.3. The concept of 'Ruin of Authenticity' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

THE TEMPEST LAND WAS AMBIGUOUS AND FRAY.



Figure 1.5. This figure illustrates the concept of 'Ruin of Time and Space' through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

1.5.1. The concept of 'Ruin of Time and Space' is explored through a dark, abstract illustration of a creature with multiple limbs and a central body, set against a dark background.

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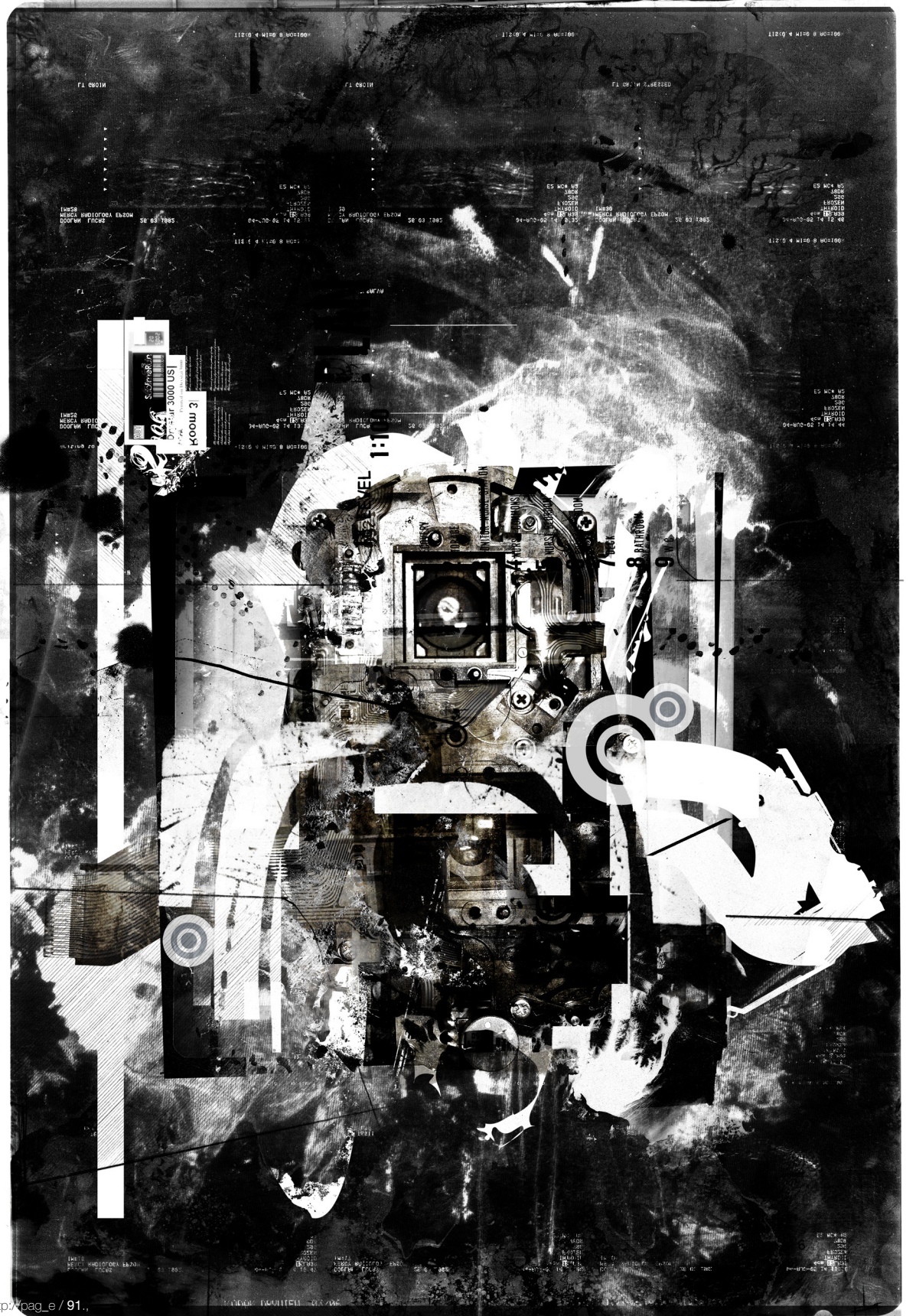
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However I felt that, the theory of ruin within the honours dissertation was not investigated in sufficient depth.

Despite this, I was challenged by its potential and it was to become the key theoretical focus for my thesis research. Visually the five ruins of ideals lacked certain rhetorical sublime attributes.

I felt that upon reflection no matter what work I created if it was just a digital print it would never depict true notions of ruin or sublime.

I wanted to explore the idea that a graphic design work may also embrace a level of craft within the final product, not just within the process. While studying Art & Design at the university I noticed that I create a lot of work utilising craft methods such as painting, sketching, mark making and print making.

These are then combined with more digital methods such as photography, scanning and digital manipulation. **The end product is predominately a print.** When

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published a book titled the End of Print. He suggested that art and design had reached a limit. I was inclined to agree. **The limit is not the 'artists & designers' lack of ability to create but rather technology's lack of ability to produce alternative methods of print.** This may be the case since design is often related to mass production. My goal visually became concerned with this idea and the production of artworks that embraced both digital and craft aspects of composition.



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cept 07. /

A series of A4 (210mm x 297mm) prints were constructed to engage with elements of

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associated with the sublime. Burke (1757) suggests that the sublime is often produced from passions of pain and pleasure.

I was more interested in the idea that the sublime was ambiguous and created from within. The trouble now lay in depicting this visually. I approached these works with little thought of what might be illustrated. Rather, I returned to approaches generated through intuitive or random actions.

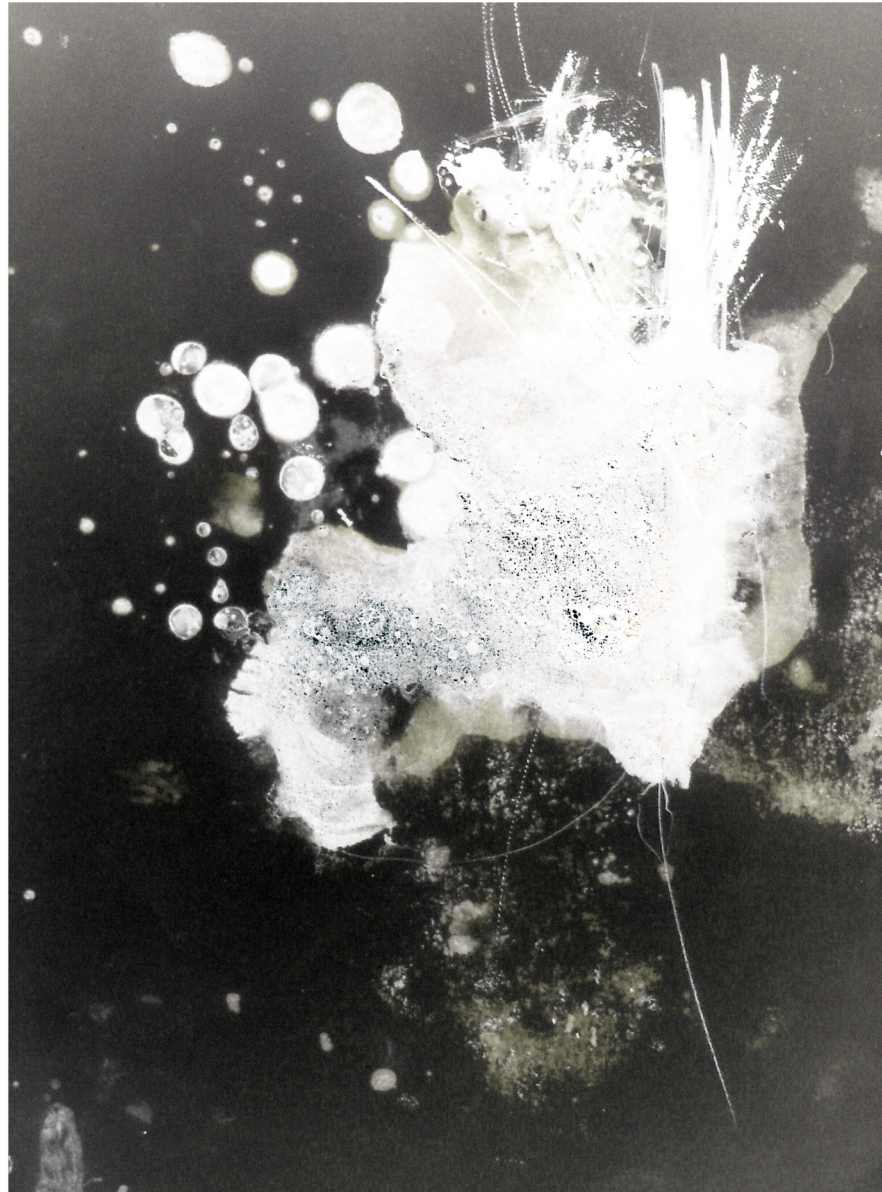
It was my understanding that if I knew exactly what was to be produced, then certain levels of **enigma might be lost.**

This series of work is an example of employing aspects of a paranoiac-critical methodology. The images began from either a blank white page or from a digital print. These were then worked over by rolling paint where desired. Images were then scratched into with needles and craft knives. Some works had oil poured into the paint to create a more fluid feeling.

I felt the expressiveness of the series of experiments lacked a certain level of control which intrigued me because of its relationship with Longinus (1st Century AD) rhetorical sublime. In his *On the Sublime*, we are told how rhetoric fills us "with a proud exaltation and a sense of vaunting joy, just as though we

*had ourselves produced what we heard"* (Havell [Ed.], 1890, pp.4). **He established ideas that remained central to discussions on the sublime such as grand conceptions, inspired emotion and a gravity of thought.**





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cept 08. /

Although I was concerned with the sublime, its relation to the ruin kept 'troubling' the research. I conceptualised the ruin as an expansive idea that might be broken into three categories, decay, history and space. Ruins evoke an abundant history and history is the record of past events and times. Drawing on this idea I began developing a series of works that attempted to portray the ruin as a place of

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I used the book as a structure for testing the potential of this idea. This is because I saw the book as a ruin that embodied history. The paper and words written within the book may be said to be decaying. In H G Wells (1895) *The Time Machine* he portrays a time traveller who discovers a library in the future

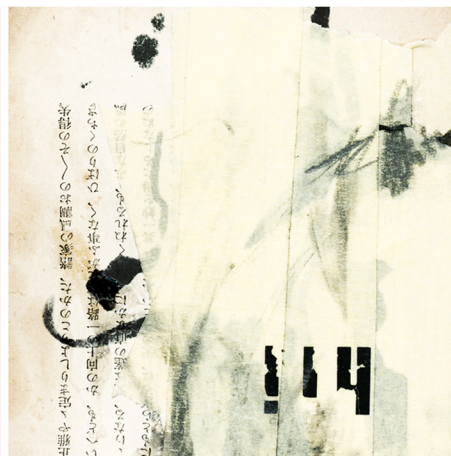
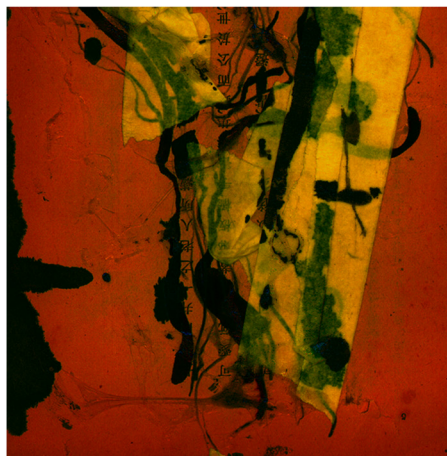
*I went out of that gallery and into another and still larger one, which at the first glance reminded me of a military chapel hung with tattered flags. The brown and charred rags that hung from the sides of it, I presently recognized as the decaying vestiges of books. They had long since dropped to pieces, and every semblance of print had left them. But here and there were warped boards and cracked metallic clasps that told the tale well enough (p.142).*

The decay of literature was not just limited to Well's apocalyptic vision. Patrice Higoonnet suggests that "books have disappeared into dust" and Alvin Kernan's (1990) *The Death of Literature* speaks of "the disintegration of literature".

In exploring the potential of the ruin as a book I collected old Japanese and New Zealand paperbacks and worked over them using black Indian ink, masking tape, cello tape, pencil and leterset.

**The books in their original state created sites of remnants, neglected and derelict but yet not dispersed. When worked over, parts were obscured and lost.** I was interested in how history may have been fragmented and from these fragments new narratives might be constructed.







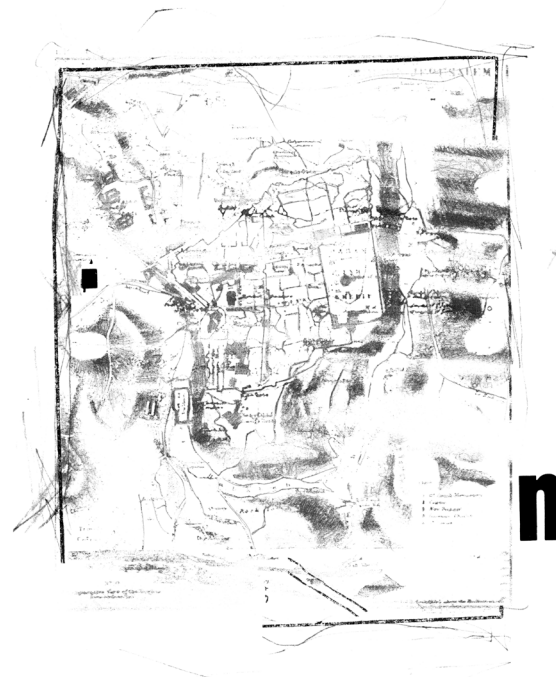
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The disintegration of literature led me to consider the decay of the self. As individuals we may be understood as a ruin.

I was fascinated by the way in which Salvador Dali depicted the female figure within many of his artworks. Upon analysing two of his drawings *Coccyx women* (1938) and *Gradiva* (1938) I noticed that the figures are portrayed as a whole but are formed from fragments.

**I decided that feminine metaphors might be employed into my research to facilitate the idea of the sublime ruin. Initially I tried two methods to visualise the figure.** I set up a photo shoot to explore how I might depict the figure by using the camera and digital manipulation. Susan Sontag's (2000) *On Photography* states

*To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge – and, therefore, like power... In deciding how a picture should look, in preferring one exposure to another, photographers are always imposing standards on their subjects. Although there is a sense in which the camera does indeed capture reality, not just interpret it, photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings are (p.64).*

I didn't have much experience with photography at this point but understood that I could use the camera to interpret a figure the same way that a painting and drawing can. I saw the camera as a tool like a paintbrush or pencil and as a paintbrush can create different strokes and pencil different weights so to could the camera create different effects.

Using a wall in my garage as the backdrop I laid out a white cloth on the floor as a ground and also draped the model in wet cloth. The poses didn't depict any particular metaphor they were more exploratory. **These images were then manipulated using Photoshop to create textures of decay. These were then overlaid with scans of textures painted on cardboard boxes. The final results created a new aesthetic that I had not worked with before.**

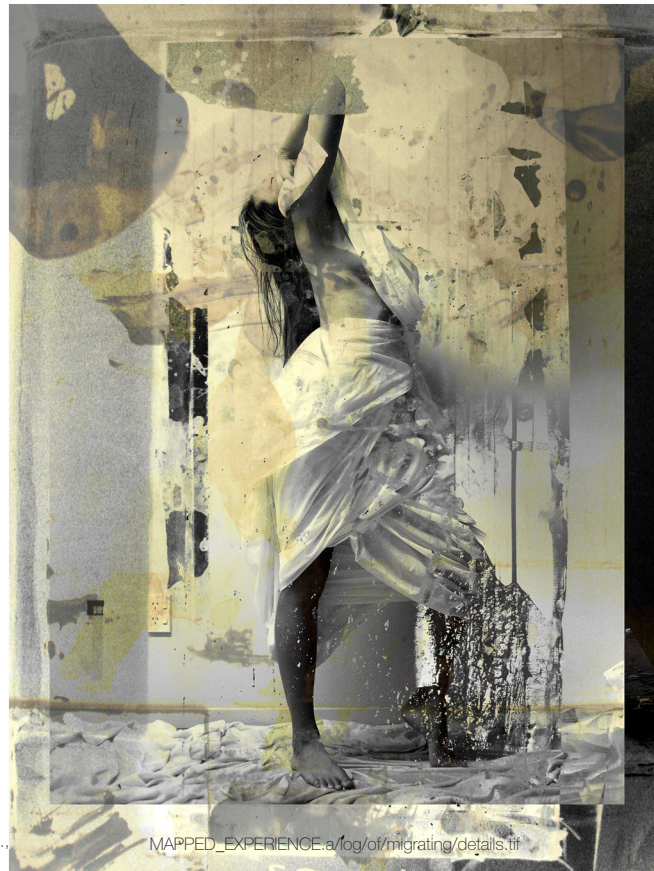
**They were successful in my mind because the figure melted into the background. The demarcation between ruin and substrate became blurred and from this arose a level of enigma.**

These works portrayed more constraint of form, unlike many preceding works that were more expressive. The final experiments I decided would have to utilise both these creative methods in order to be effective.

At this point I approached the figure from as a drawing. I was interested in what stylistic approaches I might generate that might move the research forward. Two images were generated utilising multiple single curved lines to suggest the essence of the figure. Another series looked more expressively at certain aspects of the figure.

These were approached by sketch fragments of the figures shoulder, head knee and elbow etc. These were not intended to depict readable forms; instead the intention was to explore the emotion and expressiveness in the human figure.







# CO-N, cept 10. /

**Deciding that I might be depicting four feminine metaphors as sublime ruins, the search for which metaphors began.** In order to narrow the field I decided that they would all come from religious scriptures. I decided on two very quickly, they were the Whore of Babylon and the Queen of Heaven from the Book of Revelations.

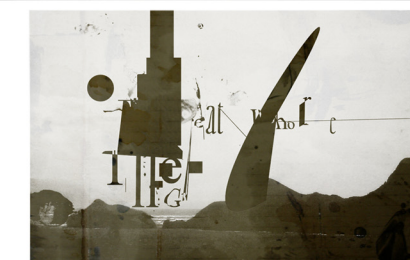
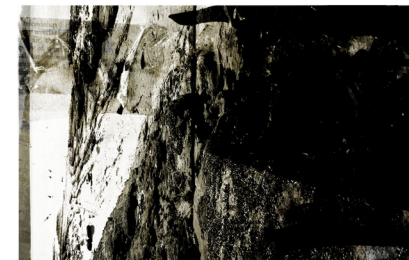
The remaining figures at this time were tentatively, the Virgin Mary, the Bride of Christ or Jezebel. These three were not decided upon because they weren't seen as metaphorical as the others. Late within the research (and after extensive reading of Gnostic and apocryphal texts) the other metaphorical figures would be Sophia (from Gnostic Christianity) and Lilith (from Judeo Christianity).

The first metaphor researched was the Whore of Babylon. Through my readings I discovered that both she and the Queen of Heaven had been argued as metaphorically represent Jerusalem. The Whore is described as riding a beast that has seven heads.

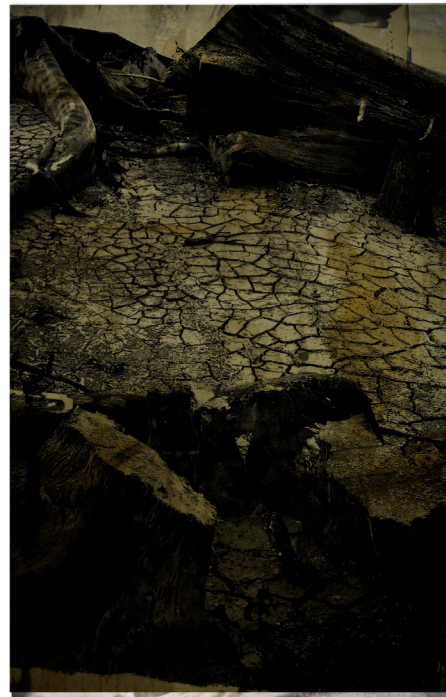
These are metaphorically seven mountains and one mountain was named Mt Zion. I discovered that there was a Mt Zion in the Waitakere Ranges just outside Auckland city. I was interested in what a discourse between apocalyptic metaphors and the New Zealand landscape might offer. Accordingly, I travelled throughout the ranges and photographed different sites. The images

were later overlaid with the textures that I created in books. **This constant use of layering was an attempt to accumulate a layering of pasts.**

**However, this idea of the landscape soon tired. The Waitakere Ranges ended up not being the landscape that the metaphors would be embedded within. I began to understand the Whore of Babylon as a negative pathway (the Queen of Heaven representing the positive pathway) that mankind travels throughout life. Therefore, I understood that the Whore of Babylon's landscape should be ambiguous and not a referential setting.**







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cept 11./

At this stage of the research, having moved from the book back out to the print, (via considerations of the landscape) I was concerned with how decay might be framed.

**As decay holds many visual attributes I felt the only method to frame this process was employ the idea of static frames.**

Thus I approached a series of works with the idea that each static frame might represent a frozen moment in time in which the process of decay was captured and contained.

This might be likened to the old photograph of the film still that may be conceptualised as suspending and holding a moment of time. Barthes (Roland) in *Camera Lucida* (1981) argues that a photograph is not so much a solid representation of 'what is' as 'what was' and therefore 'what has ceased to be' (ruin).

**It does not make reality solid but serves as a reminder of the world's inconstant and ever changing state. My initial thought was to wedge images between perspex and glass. This changed with the discovery of resin.**

A series of images was created where layers of imagery were cast in clear resin. As the resin was setting I would delicately pour oil, varnish and Indian ink in.

This idea was a very important step within the research. The resin would act as a type of enclosure where enigmatic eroding fragments might be viewed.





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cept 12. /

The ruin is also influenced by the idea of space. The following series of photographs explored the idea of disorientation. Dylan Trigg's (2006) *The Aesthetics of Decay: Nothingness, Nostalgia and absence of Reason* states that "The ruin is in constant process of morphing into multiple configurations... as we return to the ruin our old navigation is shattered, we are forced to be creative with our interaction" (p. 136).

Space within the ruin may be described as mobile, variable, complicated and explorative. Two large artworks were created to explore this concept.

They were both 1000mm X 3000mm. The experiments sought to join them to create a backdrop for an upcoming photo shoot. Instead using the camera I cropped and selected certain areas of the artwork that I thought depicted a sense of disorientation and vagueness of space. These were then manipulated in Photoshop. The adjustments only involved a slight enhancement of colour (no overlaying was required).

These images managed to engage with notions of absence and presence in that they illuminated the complex dynamic between erasure or destruction and construction. In this regard they intersect with concerns expressed by Nauman where the writer suggests that

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"is not and can never be complete; there is always the residue of something that is no longer there and expectation of something that has occurred and the anticipation of something that is about to happen" **and thus a ruin.**

