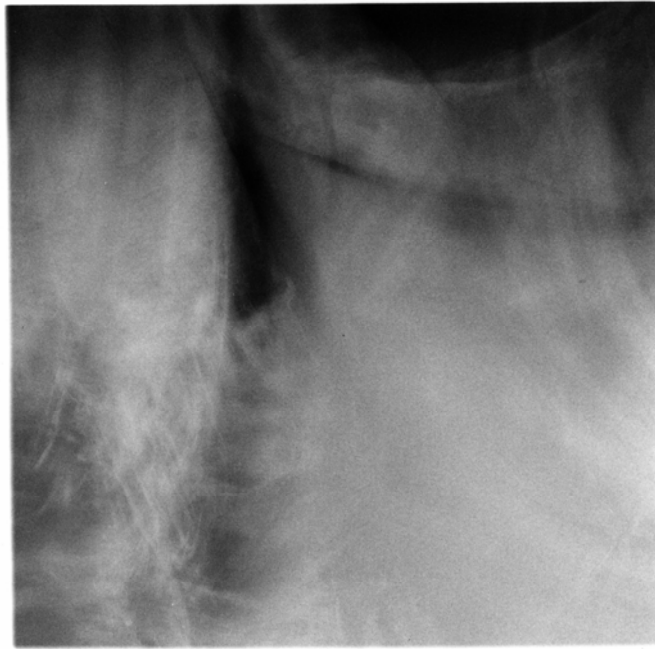


Touching a Sensibility; a photographic exploration of haptic experience

Julie (Jules) Turner Allen



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Cover Page Image: Allen. Black and White Gelatin Silver Photograph. (proof only) 2007

Attestation of Authorship

"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 qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or another institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements."

Julie (Jules) Turner Allen
2007

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Abstract

Touching a Sensibility will attempt to locate the exchange when the living body physically touches the world. Exploration into the emotive response that the lived body creates as it moves through the world, both as a passive receptor and as an active initiator, will be explored where a relationship between the touched and the *toucher* is formed. This project will use photographic processes in an attempt to facilitate the viewer to engage in the work with their own personal sensibility.

The emotional tension created, within an individual when their desire to physically touch something in the world is forbidden, impossible or illicit, will be investigated. This tension manifests itself in the form of apprehension, vulnerability, anticipation, romanticism and the sensibility of possible unpredicted connection. Photographic portrayal will be used to articulate this research and bring into fruition ideas which sit around the haptic.

Introduction

The project *Touching a Sensibility*, will attempt to define how it is, that our sense of touch assists us in our existence in the world.¹ A typical symptom of a hegemonic visual culture is the disengagement and isolation of the body in relationship with the world we occupy. Touch is the haptic means that helps intertwine us with how we experience and belong in the world. Without our sense of touch and bodily experience of the world, we would not be a participant in the world, but rather an observer of it. Juhani Pallasmaa states, *"Our contact with the world takes place at the boundary line of the self through specialised parts of our enveloping membrane. Touch is the sensory mode that integrates our experience of the world with that of ourselves"*. (Pallasmaa 2005) I am exploring this concept using photographic practice in order to produce images which reference the experiential and which are seductive and desirous to a viewer. In order to really 'see' something one feels compelled to physically touch it in order to discover its tactile qualities and thus gain more information. If one touches an object or person, one feels more of a physical connection and therefore is able to gain an experience from that touch. However, physical contact is not always necessary in order to experience the tactility and materiality of an object or person. This project will combine particular photographic processes, formats and subject matter in order to produce photographs which can be viewed as 'objects'. These photo objects intend to provoke the viewer into an emotional response which requires them to become engaged with their haptic sense, without any actual physical touching of the work.

¹ For this project 'The World' represents human society, social interaction and one's personal environment within the sphere of one's life.

*Allen. Ink Jet Print.
100x100cm, 2007 (not
referred to specifically
in the text)*



Section One:

Touch and Haptic

In order to establish context for this research and the specific aspects the project will address, it is necessary to articulate definitions of the word touch.

According to The New English Penguin dictionary, the definitions of the word touch relevant to my project are; “to bring a part of the body in contact with (something), to leave a mark or impression on something, and to be emotionally moved”.

This project will explore the physical touch of a body touching another body or object, and the idea of an emotional touch in relation to this physical touch. The ‘mark or impression on something’ from this definition will be interpreted for the project, as the emotional response and sensibility remaining, by way of a trace, after a significant physical touch.

Presence and absence will also be discussed in relation to touch and photography. For the viewer it is intended that the artwork will open up a discourse about the sensibility or emotional response to experiences of touch, by enacting desire, longing, sensuality, and romanticism.

The word *haptic* will be used throughout this exegesis in conjunction with the word touch. The use of this word (idea) assists the project because of its all encompassing interpretation and representation of my conceptual concerns. Its definition includes; the materiality and tactility of physical touch, and the impact that these qualities have on our emotions. To engage in a haptic encounter is to be involved and affected by an experience of tactility so poignant that it resonates on the psyche. This is the emotional reaction which I intend to engage the viewer into experiencing with my subjects. The photographs aim to be reminiscent of a haptic occurrence that the viewer may have had during their own lived experience. As discussed by Satre and Beauvoir, and quoted by Penelope Deutscher, “*The touch of the skin does not remain on the surface. It is the locus of a subjective project of relation to the world and illustrates how physiological and psychological domains cannot be separated.*” (Deutscher 2005) This description interprets the word touch to include both

the physical and emotional meaning of the word, and considers their correlation. This interpretation is paralleled in my practice through the relationship between the photograph, the viewer, and the constructed experience; to engage in both a physical and emotive state whilst viewing the work. It is the intent of the work to operate by creating a 'desire to know' which is so engaging that an experience based on materiality and sensuality is encountered.

Section Two:

Desire

The *desire* to touch will be understood as the act of touching for this project. An example of this is an act derived from that which is forbidden; touch which is inaccessible or inappropriate due to moral issues or fragility. One may be physically able to gain proximity to the subject but to touch it would lead to transgression. A desire to touch can be so overwhelming and all consuming, that the more forbidden it is to touch, the stronger the desire to do so becomes. Desire and longing can be capable of being so powerful and irresistible that it culminates itself into a separate entity and it (desire itself) becomes the act of touching without any actual physical touching. This desire is revealed in this project in the way that the photographs provide such ambiguity of subject matter that the viewer is placed in a position of overwhelming curiosity and desire to know. The work intends to portray the essence of sensual desire by the use of selective focusing on areas of skin and body which are suggestive of intimacy. Fig.1, Touch One, depicts part of a body within close range, but as to which particular area of body presented is left to the viewer's imagination.

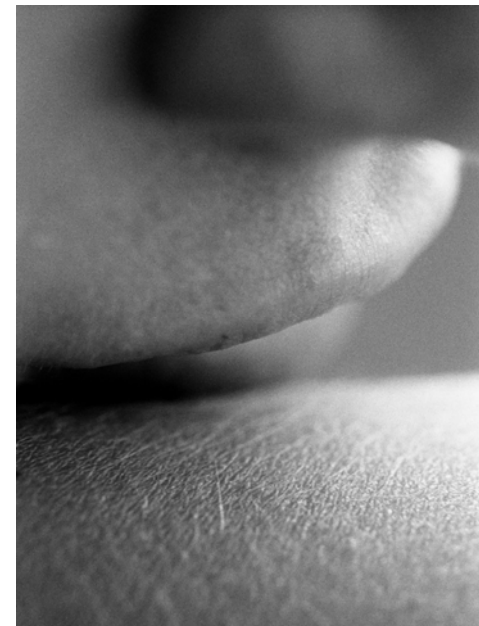


Fig. 1. Allen. Touch One.
Black and White Gelatin Silver Photograph
40 x 60 cm. 2006.

The ambiguity in the photographs is intended to be suggestive of a haptic experience; it achieves this by visually referencing skin in contact with skin. The scale of the constructed subject matter in the photograph (fig.1) is intended to be misleading so that when viewed, an emotional state of a desire to know, the nature of the subject matter and its scale in relation to the self, is created. Investigations have taken place with the scale of the work so that the viewer is constantly being challenged in its reading. This curiosity and desire to know created by ambiguity in the photographs, offers no closure for the viewer, alternatively the works provide an openness which gives the viewer more possibilities for experience. The viewer is encouraged to bring to the work their own interpretation with the intention that they each receive an individual experience, constructed by their own 'other' experiences.

Section Three:

Proximity

Typically, for physical touching to occur there needs to be proximity and active engagement. However, I would like to pose the question; is it possible to touch a person by touching their touch? By *their touch* I am referring to an object which the person has previously made physical or had contact with; does this object then hold the touch of that person? If so, if another person touches that object are they then touching the initial person's touch? The notion around the belief that an object can possess the touch of a *toucher* comes from the idea that an actual physical touch is impossible, due to lack of proximity or the touch being illicit. This idea has been investigated in this project in producing a series of photographs which depicted my skin in contact with a 'touched' object. (*Fig.2-7*). The objects included, items of clothing, a toy, a piece of soap, jewellery, a walking stick and a handkerchief. These objects were personally selected by a group of participants who had touched them with their skin several times over a period of time. By then placing them on my own skin I became involved in the relationship (act), by physically touching their touch. In recording that act through photography the photographs became the evidence of that haptic relationship. Using the same argument, the artwork itself could be seen as the *toucher* or the giver and the viewer the touched or the receiver. Therefore a doubling occurs; the artwork and viewer are both *toucher* and touched and the image in the photograph is a depiction of *toucher* and touched. The inability to touch the actual participant referenced in the image is further emphasized by the viewer's inability to physically touch the photograph whilst viewing it, due to its protective frame or laminate. The work positions itself as a representation of an act of hapticity between object and skin, and posits itself to be observed rather than participatory in nature.



*Fig.2.Allen.Touch#S. Black and White
Gelatin Silver Photograph,
40 x 60 cm.2006*



*Fig.3.Allen.Touch#M. Black and White
Gelatin Silver Photograph,
40 x 60cm.2006*



*Fig.4.Allen.Touch#O. Black and white
Gelatin Silver Photograph,
40 x 60 cm.2006*



*Fig.5.Allen.Touch#J. Black and White
Gelatin Silver Photograph.
40 x 60cm.2006*



*Fig.6.Allen.Touch#D Black and White
Gelatin Silver Photograph.
40 x 60cm.2006*



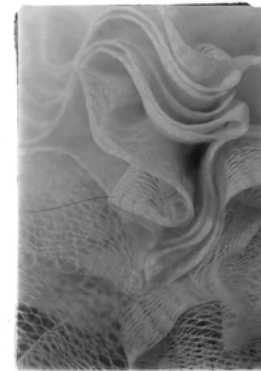
*Fig.7.Allen.Touch#R. Black and White
Gelatin Silver Photograph
40 x 60cm.2006*

The scale at which these photographs (*Figs. 2-7*) were printed is several times larger than the subject, this was intended to bring the subject so close that it became more of an experience of looking as opposed to distinct readable subject matter. Selective focusing also emphasized the close proximity of the subject to the viewer and encouraged the viewer to engage with specificity of the image before reading the entire composition. The work brings the experience of skin against object close to the front of the picture plane in order to emphasize the haptic act of intimacy and sensuality. The idea being that the experience is so close up that the desire to find out more about it is irresistible.

I wished to assist the viewer with the ambiguous nature of these photographs (*Figs 2-7*) by documenting the objects used in these photographs (*Figs 2-7*) by producing a series of smaller images which were to be viewed together with *Figs 2-7*. As I was photographing the objects I discovered the notion that it may be possible to be able to experience a physical touch by looking at a touched object. Naturally, in order to experience this touch the viewer would need to have prior knowledge that the object had been touched and by whom. The intensity of the experience could be emphasised further if the toucher of the object was of particularly significance to the viewer, as was the case with the objects I photographed and the participants who gave them to me. These photographs (*Fig 9*) were presented in an A-4 sized booklet format (*Fig. 8*) to allow the viewer to handle the images by way of leafing through pages whilst looking. The intention was, that the photographs of the touched objects (*Fig. 9*) operated by providing an experience of 'participant-object', which was constructed in the act of reading the work.

Fig. 8. Allen. The Booklet. Contains 6 Black and White Photographs. 7x10cm each. 2006 (shown in Fig. 9)





*Fig. 9. Allen. Images contained in The Booklet
(Fig. 8) Black and White Gelatin Silver
Photographs. 7 x 10cm each. 2006*

The Booklet, (fig.8) was shown together with *Figs.2-7* with the intention of complementing them by clearly depicting the objects which were too ambiguous to distinguish in the detailed photographs. Discussion and feedback in critique proved that *The Booklet*, confused this relationship rather than assisted with the reading of the work. No association between the objects photographed in *The Booklet*, and those in *Figs.2-7* could be divulged without a possible written explanation. The *Booklet* viewed separately was unsuccessful in the context of this project; it worked conceptually in the way that the objects had been touched, but this was not visually apparent. The relationship that each of the objects had to each other could not be easily determined. Although this particular piece of work was unsuccessful in its interpretation, the idea of looking at 'a touch' via a photograph is relevant and has been taken into consideration in the development of further work.

Section Four:

Absence and Presence

The concept of absence and presence in relation to touch and photography is of particular importance to this project. When physical contact occurs, for example in a handshake, the touch could be said to be contained within the two hands that are both giving and receiving a touch simultaneously. During this contact it is possible that an exchange takes place between *toucher* and *touched*, when the contact ceases, a physical trace may be left behind in the way of residue, or an emotional trace in the way of a shift in the psyche. So it is possible that both *touched* and *toucher*, in each others absence, may have a sensibility of that physical experience. It is possible that the sensibility of *the touch* or *touching* could seem to be present in the absence of the act of touching. The same could be said about a photograph, it does not exist until it's subject is no longer present in that particular moment in time, only an image of the subject remains; the photograph could be said to be present due to the absence of the subject. For this project I would like the photograph to be regarded as the trace or evidence left behind after the exchange that takes place between photographer, apparatus (the camera), and the subject. So the photographic process (an exchange) becomes reflective of the project; it is used for depicting an actual or virtual touch. During this exchange, theoretically the subject does physically touch the film or CCD panel via light or tonality, and when the photograph is being printed the subject once again physically touches the paper via light or ink in order to become permanently imprinted onto the paper's surface.

Section Five:

The viewer

5.1 The Role of the Viewer

For this project the role of the viewer is of particular relevance to how the work is thought about, constructed and presented. The role I wish the viewer to adopt is one of an active participant; to be compelled to become involved in the reading of the work by searching their emotional psyche for their personal sensibility which may have been provoked by the work. The form in which the work is presented is intended to assist the viewer in reaching their own emotive conclusion through reading the work.

5.2 Negotiation of the viewer

It is via photography that one is able to experience happenings which often escape the naked eye, similar to the way that an emotional touch can not be always be observed. It is the emotional touch from a haptic experience that the work intends to capture and present for the viewer. I as the photographer have transferred the sensibility of my experience of touch both as the touched and the *toucher* into photographic medium. The viewer in turn observes that visual information and combines it with their own experience of haptic occurrence, making them a participant and collaborator of the work rather than an observer; their reaction and response to it being part of the work itself.

As the project has developed it has become less important that a physical human touch is represented in the photographs. By depicting an actual physical touch the experience for the viewer was being limited to one of an illustration of a haptic encounter. I wanted to shift that emphasis so that the viewer is presented with a visual manifestation of the sensibility of a haptic encounter. I want to seduce the viewer into participating in the work through their own desire and longing; to touch the viewer by presenting them with qualities which appeal to their haptic sense, encourage them to romanticize and arouse an emotional response.

When movement is recorded photographically the image which is captured contains soft tonal, translucent, and transparent marks which can evoke a sense of obscurity and mystery for the viewer. In my practice, by building on these qualities it is possible to achieve a sensibility of a haptic encounter by using subject matter which seemingly has nothing to do with the physical act of touching, in the same way one can touch or be touched without any proximity or active engagement. The subject of the work is no longer a depiction of skin contacting skin; the subject is the sensibility which emerges from that contact.

The four images, *Figs. 10-13* are of a subject in motion. They fill the entire frame, which is intended to give the viewer the impression that there is more to see; that what is presented here is just a fragment of a larger image. Ambiguity is created by cropping and once again the viewer is left questioning the nature of the subject matter.



*Fig. 10. Allen. Air#One. Ink Jet
Print. 80x35cm. 2007*



*Fig. 11. Allen. Air#Two. Ink Jet Print.
Proof only. 2007*



*Fig. 12. Allen. Air#Three. Ink Jet Print.
Proof only. 2007*

*Fig. 13. Allen. Air#Four. Ink Jet Print.
40x100cm. 2007*



The images in *Fig. 14* of a moving subject bring the viewer close to the detail but at the same time push the viewer back in order for them to witness the active experience which is taking place in the images. Translucent shapes are juxtaposed against the dark background, making them appear as suspended in a moment of time. It is my intention that the viewer is given the sense that they are witnessing an occurrence, but that the subject of that occurrence remains a mystery. I want to keep the viewer questioning how the images are constructed and the nature of the subject, so as to maintain a sense of suspension.

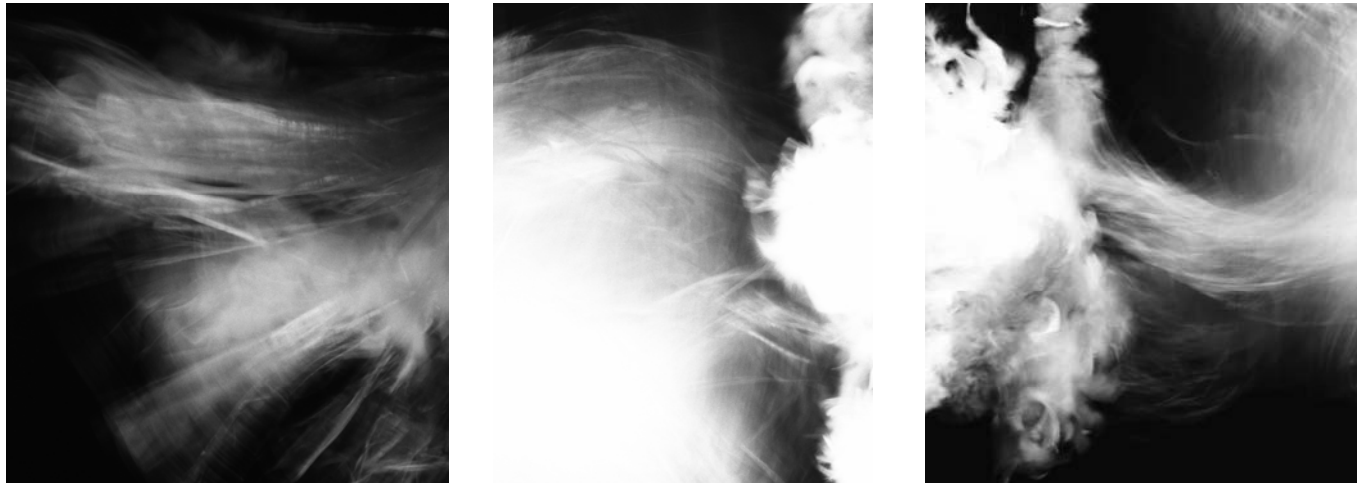


Fig. 14. Allen. Occurrence# 1 - 3 Black and White Gelatin Silver Photographs. 150cm x 60cm. 2007

Section Six:
Methodology

The research methods that I have employed in order to develop this research project combine a number of different frameworks. I oscillate between the various methods depending on where emphasis is required. I navigate my way through these different methods, many times doubling back and changing direction until I reach the desired result. Intuition and aesthetics play an important role in the final decisions. I am partly using a heuristic approach, appropriate for my research project because many of my decisions are made via experimentation, trial and error.

My preoccupation with the haptic, a concept which drives this research project originates from lived experience, and early childhood fetishes. These include but are not limited to; emotive responses to the act of touching soft objects, the desire to touch and the exchange where touching ends and the world begins. These concerns are constantly developing and evolving as I proceed with my practiced-based methods.² The making of artifacts is a manifestation of this lived experience and fetishes. I use the methodological structure of question, hypothesis, practice, reflection, format and presentation.

6.1 Question and Hypothesis

The formulation of a research question commences with a slice of my own lived experience, which has changed my epistemology, and the desire to articulate that particular lived experience to a wider audience via photography. This lived experience is documented in my journal by way of written or visual text, then further theorized by more reading until a hypothesis is formed, on which I begin making artifacts. Adaptability allows me to alter my research question if, through my practice, a varying idea becomes apparent. The written texts I use are a balance between empirical information and philosophical discourse.

² Practise-based methods include; photography shoots, drawing, manipulating images, darkroom practice, digital printing, and documentation.

The Visual texts I have found supportive for the project, primarily evoke in me as a viewer the same emotive response I wish to construct for the viewers of this project. The work by Anne Noble, Sally Mann and Uta Barth has been particularly useful to me. The triptych *Fig. 15 King Country Landscape* (Kennedy and Wevers 2001) by Noble can be viewed as both emotive and experiential. As the viewer I am drawn into the atmospheric qualities induced in the work and feel encouraged to linger and wonder. Due to the ambiguity created in the photographs, questions may arise regarding the location the images were taken, camera angle, time of day, weather conditions, etc. Noble's approach to the subject matter seems to be both sensitive and sensual; she chooses to present it using black and white film printed on heavy weight light sensitive paper. This process provides for the viewer the distinctive quality, which is typical of hand processed black and white photography. Noble has successfully united process with subject resulting in an artwork that provides a greater understanding of content by the choice and careful handling of process. The triptych possesses an aesthetic which may suspend the viewer in a moment of poignancy and reflection. In viewing this work I find myself romanticizing about particular happenings in my lived experience where a shift in my emotional psyche may have occurred and a sensibility created. In my project it is my intention to use a similar approach and to employ comparable methods to those of Noble. Primarily, choices of paper, scale, and photographic process will be influenced by the quality of image required for each work. It is paramount that the photographs are printed using processes and materials that are appropriate to convey my primary intention of appealing to the viewers' haptic sense and of arousing an emotional response.



*Fig. 15. Noble. King Country Landscape.
Black and White Gelatin Silver Photographs.
89x412mm. 1989*

6.2 Practice and Reflection

The primary concern in my methodology is the practice of making artifacts; I use theoretical concerns secondary to my practice in order to affirm what I am engaged in. The components belonging to this category include; photography shoots, drawing, manipulating images, darkroom experiments, analogue, and digital printing. The important attribute of the artifacts I produce is that they should contribute to human experience. Therefore I believe that the making of an artifact is an object of experience, and is indexical of an experience for the viewer. I have found the ideas of Stephen Scrivener particularly useful to my approach. He compares Problem-solving Research Projects with Creative-Production Research Projects. In relation to Creative-production, Scrivener quotes “the artifact is more important than any ‘knowledge’ reified in it” (Scrivener, 2005) as opposed to Problem-solving where *“knowledge embodied in the artifact is more important than the artifact, which is merely a demonstration of its existence.”*(Scrivener 2005)

In creative-practice, although knowledge and theory are essential for the making of an artifact the artifact is not wholly a demonstration of that theory; the artifact has an identity of its own which transcends from the theoretical framework. In my own methodology, whilst undertaking my practice, I make decisions based on aesthetics and intuition, which are separate from the knowledge embodied in the work. If the artifact is doing its job it will have an impact on the viewer’s epistemology rather than be a demonstration of a solution to a problem.

My methodology is practice-based and reflective. My practice is always developed in relation to critical reflection and consideration of theoretical frameworks. During the first trimester the project was concerned with the relations that develop in photographic practice between the image as empirical record and the image as expressive work. This is particularly evident in Figs.2-7 where an actual touch of object on skin is photographically depicted, but the choices used to create the images, for example, the border around the image, black and white film, hand printing on fibre based paper, etc, are all intended to present the viewer with much more than just a record of physical contact. The methodological procedures at that time moved between aspects of visual empiricism approaching objectivity of recording and reflective judgment of aesthetic expression, as the redefinition of the image as artwork.

Reflection is a central part of my methodology. I practice Donald Schon's idea as described by Scrivener, (Scrivener 2005) as both reflection in action and practice and reflection on action and practice. Reflection in action and practice is when, as I am actually making, I make on the spot decisions about how the work should proceed, (for example during a photo shoot) this type of reflection is continuous and absolutely necessary in order for the work to continue. Reflection on action and practice is when I stop working for a period of time (for example after the developing of a film and making of a proof sheet) and I critically reflect on what I have produced in relation to the rest of the project. Due to the experimental way in which I work with methods and process, constant reflection is imperative since unintended consequences often occur that I then need to record and respond to. The results of these consequences may change the way I continue to make work. This iterative approach gives me visual evidence of the practice I have engaged with in order to find a successful outcome. Experimenting with larger scale work has encouraged me to become familiar with the practice of combining analogue and digital photography.

Documentation of my work is the method I engage with to help me draw a degree of conclusion. Some of the documentation methods that I use include: regular entries into my visual diary, digital images, scanning, using computer software such as EndNote and PowerPoint, compiling notes from critiques, and installing work. Documentation is continuous and consistent; it allows me to collate my research and brings forth recurrent ideas, and patterns of thought. Discardation brings relevance and significance to the work I produce, which helps me to proceed with a particular method or process.

6.3 Format and presentation

For this project it is essential to give time to researching the most successful form that the photographs will take when they are presented in a gallery space. My interpretation of the word form includes; the scale of the work, the quantity included and the presentation methods e.g. a practical means of hanging whilst also protecting the work by showing consideration to the use of archival materials. When all of the images were viewed together as proofs I found that they naturally fell into four varying series' which were based on the qualities of the mark making (translucency), tonality,

composition and quantity of movement recorded. It was beneficial to allocate each of these series with a name or title in order for me to group them. The titles were chosen spontaneously in reaction to the series of work and include; Occurrence, Poetic, Frottage, and Vibration. It is important that these titles do not influence the reading of the works themselves and will not be part of the final presentation. The function of the titles is purely for me to use as an organisational device. *Figs. 16-19* show examples of work from each series.

Occurrence- the work appears to capture active movement in a moment of time.

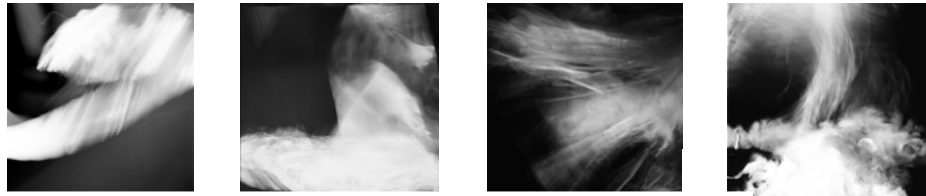


Fig. 16. Allen. Back and white proof photographs. 2007

Poetic- the work contains a sense apprehension and expectation that some *thing* may happen or has happened.



Fig. 17. Allen. Black and white proof photographs. 2007

Frottage-. The work contains marks which appear to rub and intertwine in and around each other in a turbulent frenzy.

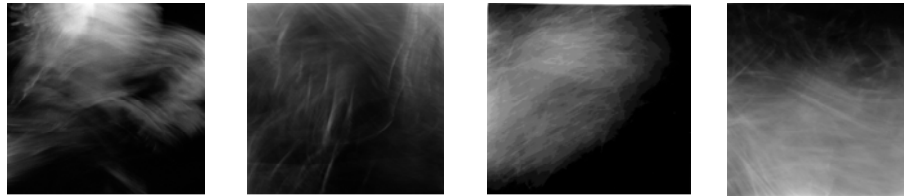


Fig. 18. Allen. Black and white proof photographs. 2007

Vibration-. The depth of field of the photograph is of primary importance in this series. The edges of the shapes appear to touch each other through the depth of the picture plane.

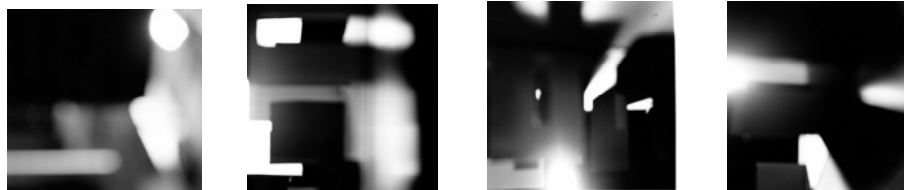


Fig. 19. Allen. Black and white proof photographs. 2007

Formatting options are experimented with and decisions are made on the basis of how they operate for the viewer in the reading of the work. Each series title will be matched by a particular form of presentation, and experimentation takes place around that method of presentation until appropriate resolution is achieved.

Consideration to the photograph as an object is given to my project. Roland Barthes speaks about this in his book *Camera Lucida*, when he himself is being photographed. *"Photography transformed subject into object....." "The photograph represents the very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object". (Barthes 1981)*

In this project it is my intention to provide the viewer with photographs that possess tangibility of presence, and which warrant them being referred to as objects. The aim is to touch the viewer through the tactility of the photograph and encourage the viewer to perceive that simulation is inseparable from substance. The photographs are designed to reference the sense that a subject has made an impression on the surface of the paper as though it has physically touched it and that the image is the imprint or trace from that touching. It is for this reason that I strive not to alter the original recording of the subject that takes place in the camera, in order to provide the viewer with an unadulterated pure image. It is my intention to carefully select presentation formats which will further emphasize the *objectness* of the photographs.

Sally Mann has made a series of work which presents photographs as objects. An example of one of these works is *Fig.20. Antietam*(Mann 2002).



Fig.20. Mann. Untitled(Antietam). 122x96cm. Black and White Gelatin Silver Photograph. 2001

The subject in Mann's image is a landscape that has witnessed a harrowing battle. The 19th Century Collodion photographic process which Mann has used results in the photograph maintaining a subtle texture, with parts of the image obscured and which appear to be peeling away. The surface of the image gives the impression that it is deteriorating in a similar way that the bloodshed on the landscape is gradually becoming less evident and less memorable over time. The edges of the image are uneven and dark, thus assisting in framing the subject and shifting the focus and emphasis onto the clearer parts. By administering this particular process Mann is forced to offer the viewer a photograph which is completely unaltered from when it was originally taken; the landscape appears to be imprinted into the paper. The tactile and tangible qualities of the photograph all assist in its objectness. The edges of Manns work are particularly important to this reading. It is important for this project to investigate how different types of edges operate. As shown in the *Figs. 17&18* a rough edge has been administered and a white border purposefully remains on some of my photographs. As in Manns work the edges encourage the viewer to be aware that a particular process has been used to create the photograph and that the whole frame has been printed (not a cropped part of a larger frame). If the edge of the image did not exist or had been cropped off, the viewer would not have any point of reference as to how the image was formed. The subtlety of the corners of some of my photographs reference the registration marks that can be seen in printmaking when an image is built up by repeatedly printing in the same place.

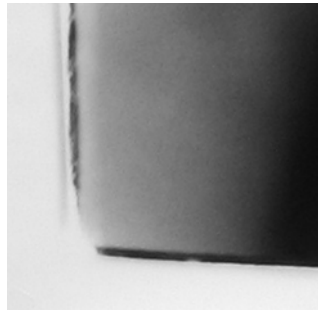


Fig.21.Allen.Detail of Fig.3



Fig.3.Details on page 8



Fig.22.Allen.Detail of Fig.24



Fig.24.Details on page 29

Some of the photographic work by Uta Barth has encouraged me to consider different visual alternatives for this project. When looking at *Fig. 19. Ground # 66* by Barth (Lee 2004) the background seems to be pulled through the space in order to for it to appear to touch the front plane. It engages me as the viewer in an oscillation of vibration through its photographic depth. This oscillation of planes touching planes is a strategy which this project has explored further in order to fully engage with the haptic experience.

Fig. 19
Uta Barth, Ground #66
Colour photograph
on panel 49.5x53.5cm. 1996



Instead of touching being captured as a moment in time across the picture plane, it is my intention that the juxtaposition of shapes vibrate and rub against and in an out of a relationship with each other through the depth of field. This concept is

explored in *Fig.20*; the shapes produced are less organic than *Figs. 15-19* but still continue to embrace the aim of the project, to pull out ideas which sit around the haptic.

Fig.20
Black and White Gelatin
Silver Photograph
20 x 25 cm



Conclusion

My research project *Touching a Sensibility* materialises ideas that sit around the haptic; the sensibility of touch in response to actual physical touch, and the emotional response to the desire to touch. The project has discussed the important role that our sense of touch plays in the way we perceive the world and how we belong in the world. These ideas have been explored using different visual languages through using a variety of subjects. The work provides an openness of interpretation which merges photographic experience with the photograph as an object by the use of various presentation modes.

Touching a Sensibility will include work from each of the series'; Occurrence, Vibration, Poetic and Frottage (See pp 24 and 25). These are working titles only and will not appear anywhere in the exhibition space. Each of these series will be installed on separate walls, Fig.21; and will be displayed in the form most appropriate for their reading. It is imperative that the work operates primarily by transference of the sensibility of the haptic, moving easily between each series, embracing the specific qualities of each body of work, whilst simultaneously bringing concord and tension.

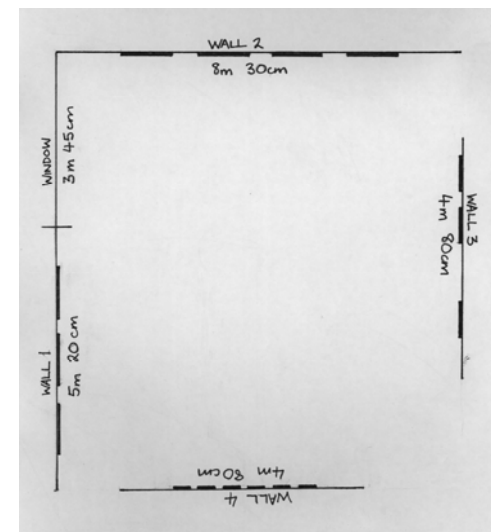
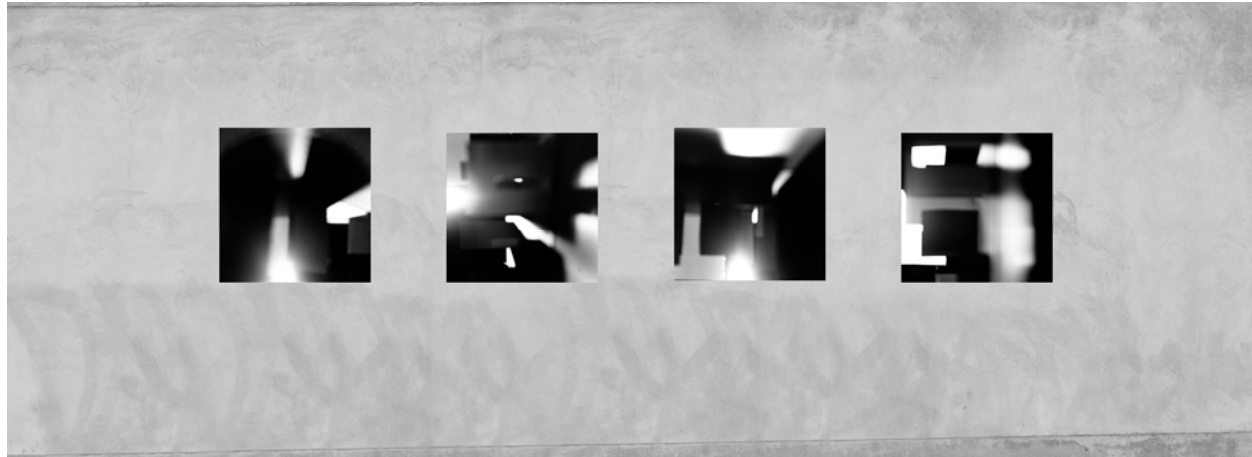


Fig.21. Proposed plan of the exhibition space

*Fig. 22. Proposed Wall 1. 5m 20cm.
(Occurrence). 1m x 1m each*



The works installed on Wall 1, *Fig 22*, will be framed using black mounting card and black frames. By using this device I am purposefully cropping off the white edges from the work so that the black tones in the images visually extend outside the picture plane. The idea being that each image then connects to its neighbour and are all read as one work.

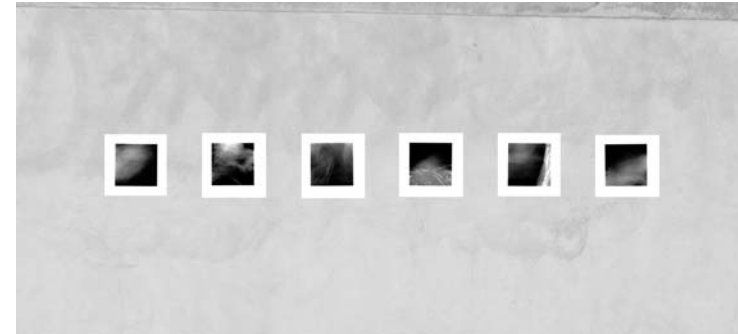


*Fig.23. Proposed Wall 2. 8m30cm.
(Vibration). 1mx1m each*

The work installed on Wall 2, *Fig.23* will be archivally laminated with a fine grain laminate in order to provide protection and also create a subtle texture, and then stretched onto the wall using pins or nails which will be hidden from view. Each image will extend to the edges providing a deliberate absence of any border. The one metre square scale of these images encourages the viewer to read them from a specific proximity, which involves them in the experience that the image provides. The clean cut edges are also intended to complement the horizontal and vertical shapes within the images and prevent the viewer from having to negotiate a surrounding border.



*Fig.24. Proposed Wall 3. 4m80cm.
(Poetic). 80cmx80cm each*



*Fig.25. Proposed Wall 4. 4m80cm.
(Frottage). 60cmx60cm each*

Irregular borders will be printed as part of the image in the work on Walls 3 and 4, (*Figs.24 and 25*). These photographs will be suspended individually in a white box frame to create the sense that the image is floating. All of these decisions are based on the discussion in the Methodology Section, (*pp26, 27*) which refers to the photograph as an object. The idea being that the photograph itself is seen as an object within the frame, whilst at the same time the whole framing device together with the photograph can be seen as an object.

The shifting scale of the photographs on each wall is intended to encourage the viewer to vary the proximity between themselves and the work as they move around the space; the intention being that a relationship is formed between them (the viewer) and the work.

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Appendix: Documentation of Exhibition

*Wall 1 (right) 5m 20cm.
Occurrence# 1 - 3 Black and
White Gelatin Silver
Photographs. 1 metre x 1 metre*

*Wall 4 (left) 4m80cm.Frottage#
1 - 6 Black and White Gelatin
Silver Photographs.60cm x 60cm*



Wall 1 (Detail)



*Wall 2. 8m30cm. Vibration#1 - 4. Black and White Ink Jet
Prints 1m x 1m*

*Wall 3. 4m80cm. Poetic#1 -3. Black and White
Gelatin Silver
Photographs. 80cm x 80cm*



Wall 4 (Detail)



