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**The monotype as a distinctive form:
a practice-led investigation into how the
monotype can deliver affect.**

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FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Susan Alford Chancellor, hereby declare that the thesis presented here is the outcome of the research project I have undertaken during my candidacy, that I am the sole author unless otherwise indicated and that I have fully documented the source of ideas, quotations or paraphrases attributable to other authors.

Signed:Susan Chancellor……………… Date: 26th September, 2018…………….. ….

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Abstract

The monotype as a distinctive form: a practice-led investigation into how the monotype can deliver affect.

This practice-led research project investigates the monotype as a distinctive form, and one which has been hitherto somewhat under-regarded and given relatively little theoretical analysis or interpretive attention from the perspective of the studio practitioner. This research leads me to investigate distinctive formal, material and perceptual qualities of the monotype process, which are conducive to metaphoric associations appropriate to my themes of memory, space and time, through the generation of affect.

Both the monotype and affect are realised in in-between spaces. The monotype emerges from exchanges that take place between iterations of drawings, painting and printing, and the images that result are influenced and transformed by these exchanges. Throughout the project I explore and analyse resonances between the qualities of the monotype and the characteristics of the concepts of phenomenology and affect.

My research is informed by the writings of: Antonio Damasio and Siri Hustvedt on affect, phenomenology and memory; Brian Massumi on affect; Henri Lefebvre on space, time and rhythm; Tim Ingold on linear interconnectedness; John Berger on drawing and process; François Jullien on the Chinese tradition; the philosophy of Elizabeth Grosz, and Thomas Middlemost on the monotype in Australia.

In creating several series of monotypes involving expressive and intuitive gestural imagery, and qualities of luminosity and rhythm resonant with my lived experience, I have been influenced by artists past and present. These include Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, John Constable, Paul Cezanne, Sidney Nolan, Georg Baselitz, Cy Twombly, Ken Whisson, Elisabeth Cummings, and Chinese ink and brush painters. I reflect on the qualities of immersiveness, between-ness, tactility, spontaneity and the intuitive expression of personal experience,

as qualities intrinsic to the monotype, and essential to my project's aim for the delivery of affect. I further explore the relations of composition to pictorial space, of figure to ground, distinctive to the monotype.

The accompanying exegesis charts the course of my discoveries with the affectively engaging monotype as I create expressions of my lived experiences through the themes of familial relations, our relations to place and to our natural environments, and to the life of the studio. While I began with a sense of these themes as leading my project, the monotype process became, in a sense, the true subject matter of my research. While I absorbed and filtered my own bodily experiences of the world, my engagement with the monotype process became a significantly transformative one, an exploration of multiple states though the various iterations of an image, and a process of imbuing images with metaphysical resonance.

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Introduction

The monotype as a distinctive form: a practice-led investigation into the ways the monotype can deliver affect.

> Art is the process of making sensations live, of giving autonomous life to expressive qualities and material forms and through them affecting and being affected by life in its other modalities.[1]

Between painting and drawing

Although I had always considered myself to be primarily a painter enchanted by the expressive qualities of colour, my connection to the world has often been through drawing, because for me, "drawing is as fundamental to the energy which makes us human as singing and dancing", as the writer, John Berger so aptly put it.[2]

Drawing is a primary act of creativity, like breathing, whereas painting is a process of accretion and concealment where layers are built up to cover a ground.[3] François Jullien, in praise of the sparse, incompleteness of sketches, suggests they have a seductive force, with a capacity to assure passage by not sealing things off.[4] For the same reason I have often been drawn to the sketched paintings by artists such as John Constable, Marlene Dumas and Paul Cezanne, where the immediacy of the gestural mark, the openness and incompleteness of the sketch and the expressiveness of colour combine to draw me into an imaginative world. It was my objective to explore this rich area between drawing and painting. My challenge was to find an intermediate form as an entry point for this research.

I have also held a fascination for the print, enjoying the element of surprise and transformation inherent to that form and, from my previous experience with printmaking, I judged that the monotype had the potential to mediate between

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[1] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth,* (USA: Columbia University Press, 2008),103.
[2] John Berger, *Berger on Drawing*, (Ireland: Occasional Press, 2005), 109.
[3] Tania Kovats*,* "Traces of Thought and Intimacy"*,* in *The Drawing Book: A Survey of Drawing, The Primary Means of Expression*, ed. Tania Kovats, (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007), 9.
[4] François Jullien, *The Great Image Has No Form*, (USA: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 77.

the directness of drawing and an engagement with paint. My research thus became an exploration of how the processes and qualities particular to the monotype could deliver affect to my thematic concerns of engaging with lived experience – through time, space and memory. My research began with an exploration of familial relations and progressed to encompass my lived experience of place and nature.

Drawing and the monotype share qualities of spontaneity, creative speculation, immediacy, directness, expressiveness, rawness, fragmentation, and unfinishedness, all of which open up potential for the activation of the imagination. While drawing might be likened to breathing, inspiration alternating with expiration, thought alternating with direct marking of paper[5], temporality operates differently for the monotype. I became intrigued by this temporal aspect of the monotype process. While it encompasses the spontaneous act of painting directly onto the plate, the sketched painting is then abandoned to the will of the press and time stalls, is drawn out, as one waits with bated breath to witness the transformation. I feel strong resonances between this process, the delivery of affect and my lived experiences, and these relationships will be a focus of this exegesis.

Distinctive qualities that are found in the monotype

Many painters have been attracted to the monotype process for its simplicity, immediacy, versatility and the chance aspect of the process, facilitating experimentation. Edgar Degas produced 450 monotypes between 1878 and 1893. Roberta Smith, writing about the monotype exhibition – *A Strange New Beauty* – held at Museum of Modern Art, 2016, wrote that, "Among print mediums, and perhaps all works on paper, monotypes were and remain hotbeds of spontaneity and improvisation", and describing her experience of being with the monotypes, "we might almost be riding on his hands as they flit across a plate, revising, adding, wiping away while the ink is still wet and printable".[6]

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[5] Tania Kovats, "Traces of Thought and Intimacy", in *The Drawing Book: A Survey of Drawing, The Primary Means of Expression*, ed. Tania Kovats, (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007), 9.
[6] Roberta Smith, New York Times, *Edgar Degas: A Strange New Beauty*, Museum of Modern Art, accessed online on 24/10/17.

The searching, open and exploratory form of drawing and the incomplete open image of the monotype have frequently been thought of as secondary to painting or an adjunct to it, whereby a serious painter might enjoy periods of experimentation or make useful sketches for future paintings. This seems to be borne out by the paucity of artists who work *principally* with the monotype.

My research into the monotype revealed historical surveys such as Carla Esposito Hayter's book, *The Monotype, The History of a Pictorial Art*, and the significant historical survey of Australian monotypes by Thomas Middlemost in the catalogue accompanying *MONO uno*, an exhibition devoted to Australian monotypes, which I visited in 2009 in Wagga Wagga. The only reference I have found to an artist whose central practice has been the monotype was that of Bruno Leti (1941–), who has produced monotypes since the 1960s. Middlemost sees the monotype as the core of Leti's oeuvre and suggests that his monotypes are the most important body of work within the history of Australian monotypes.[7] I was interested to discover a shared influence in the monotypes of Degas and the late watercolours of Cezanne with both Leti and Wayne Viney.[8]

I found that the monotype as a form has been under-regarded and under-theorised, except by those writers mentioned above. Enchanted by my earliest applications of the monotype to my research, I became convinced by the results to develop the project into an exploration of the monotype as a distinctive form; further, I found little had been written about it in a theoretical or interpretive sense, from the point of view of the practitioner. Therefore, this became a significant aspect of my project.

The monotype can be defined "as a unique inked or painted impression transferred from an uncised, and unregistered matrix".[9] The monotype process I employed in this research project was one of applying oil paint to a transparent uncised and unregistered plate and pressing the image onto either paper or board. The impressions were made in an etching press with

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[7] Thomas A. Middlemost, *MONO uno*, (Charles Sturt University, ACT: Blue Star Print, 2009), 34.
[8] Ibid, 38.
[9] Ibid, 36.

dimensions of 110cm x 70cm. I found a great deal of flexibility existed within this set of parameters.

A number of distinctive qualities of the monotype drove my research. The imagery of the monotype is illuminated by the paper ground. The transferred paint surface breaks open where the white of the paper flickers across the flattened surface area of the print and shines through translucent oil paint. I was excited by the sensuous combination of the luminosity, the tactility of the paper, and the intensity and clarity of the oil colours. I therefore decided to use oil paint exclusively, also favouring it for its translucency and malleability, and its ability to be spontaneously painted and printed without preparation of surfaces.

Unpredictability occurs at two points in the monotype process: at first, when applying oily paint to the slippery surface of the plate; and second, under the pressure of the press. A degree of control is lost as soon as the brush meets the plate, sliding in unbidden directions, leaving uneven quantities of paint in its wake. The only certainty is that the image will not be the same as the one imagined. Unpredictability is compounded when the image is abandoned to compression in the press. When compressed, paint may extrude unpredictably, leaving surprising new abstracted shapes while enmeshing the paint in the fibres of the paper. The surface of the monotype is energised by the effect of extrusions and losses of paint in the process.

The flattened surface of the paper acts as a reminder of its materiality. Whilst paint is enmeshed with the paper, the transformation causes a tension between the picture plane and picture space, the ground becomes strangely enmeshed in the illusory space created by the imagery, thus creating a flattening effect, whilst also generating an intriguing visual oscillation between ground and image. This perceptual ambiguity creates a sense of uncertainty.

Where the paint has been lost, failing to transfer onto the paper, the broken and now altered brush marks generate a porous-looking image. The quality described by Jullien, as belonging to the sketch, of a "seductive force, with a

capacity to assure passage"[10] also becomes available to the monotype through its loss of painted marks. The opening up of the imagery, this incompleteness, leaves potential space for activation of the viewer's imagination and for the transfer of affect. This quality offered a way of imbuing my imagery with an abstract, metaphysical resonance, full of potential.

As my appreciation of the distinctive qualities of the monotype grew through my practice-led research, my main research question emerged. How might the material, formal and perceptual qualities of the monotype be employed to deliver affect?; and furthermore, how might I enhance the sense of immersion for both the maker and the viewer, by accessing the 'seductive force' of the monotype?

The significance of phenomenology and affect to the research

The terms *phenomenology* and *affect* are both important to my research. In the following section, I explain what is meant by these terms and how they relate to my research. Phenomenology is the study of structures of experience or consciousness.[11] The writer Siri Hustvedt informed my research throughout and I was drawn to her interpretation of the philosophical concept of phenomenology, based on the extensive writings of the philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Hustvedt explains that, "…Merleau-Ponty underscores a relation between self and the other, in which the other is always entwined in the self, although the two are neither identical or confused." Hustvedt quotes Merleau-Ponty:

> Between my consciousness and my body, I experience it, between this phenomenal body of mine and that of another as I see it from the outside, there exists an internal relation which causes the other to appear as the completion of the system….my subjectivity draws its body in its wake.[12]

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[10] François Jullien, *The Great Image Has No Form, or On the Nonobject through Painting*, (Chicago and London: University Chicago Press, 2009).
[11] David Woodruff Smith, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Phenomenology*, first published 2003, revised 2013, accessed online, 1/1/18. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology
[12] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "What are We?" in *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women,* by Siri Hustvedt, (NY: Simon and Schuster, 2016), 351.

She goes on to explain: "The players in this system partake in both first/second person engagement and a third person awareness of their bodies as objects in this world."[13] For my purposes the terms phenomenology and lived experience used throughout this exegesis refer to my conscious experience of the phenomena I encounter in the world. These subjective experiences might operate through perception, bodily awareness, emotion, memory, imagination and embodied action, for instance.

Throughout my research project, lived experience, or *those other modalities*, provided impetus for new bodies of work. My mother's death at the outset of the project encouraged me to take the subject of family dynamics for my earliest monotypes. This experience led me, in the early stages of the project, to create expressions of the phenomenological experience of family dynamics. This was followed by expressions of family life in space and time, and in the latter stages I created expressions of lived experiences with nature through the monotype. My aim was to convey affect through the monotypes, or to convey a sense of my own lived experiences to the viewer.

I have found various definitions for 'affect'. The commonly held view is that affect and emotions are lower or lesser things that engage with greater things such as reason and consciousness. They are described as background feelings by the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, whose writings illuminate my work throughout the project.

Affect was originally used by psychologists to describe a display of feeling or emotion. The term takes on different meanings in the fields of psychology, philosophy and art theory. While the concept of affect places the emphasis on embodied experience like phenomenology, the philosopher Eric Shouse makes it clear that affect is not a personal feeling; that feelings are personal and emotions are social but affects are pre-personal, occurring prior to conscious recognition.[14]

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[13] Ibid.
[14] Eric Shouse, "Feeling, Emotion, Affect", *M/C Journal*, vol. 8, issue 6, Dec. 2005.

The philosopher Brian Massumi explains that the walls of the body are sensory receptors to affects that are perpetually undulating and reforming intensities, in a continuous and variable process of responding to the world outside the body.[15] According to philosopher Patricia Clough, the infolding and unfolding of these intensities between two bodies, virtual and flesh, occurs in a way that is autonomous from language, sensation and emotion.

I was drawn to the description by philosophers, Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, who identified affect as an in-betweeness, a state of readiness to act and be acted upon, an event existing outside consciousness, removed from knowingness and beyond emotion, living in a state of besided-ness.[16] The non-conscious experience of intensity is a moment of unformed and unstructured potential. Affect is the body's way of preparing itself for action in a given circumstance by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the experience. This description held a strong resonance for me with the qualities that I discovered in the monotype. Through the exegesis I reflect on the resonances between the receptivity of the monotype, the receptivity of paper and the neurological receptivity of the body.

Affect precedes thought and, according to Damasio, without affect, "feelings do not feel".[17] In an adult, affect is what determines the intensity (quantity) of a feeling (quality). It amplifies our awareness.[18] The power of affect lies in the fact that it is unformed and unstructured or abstract rather than being attached to other subjective feelings. This makes it transmittable in ways that feelings and emotions are not and it is because affect is transmittable that it is so powerful. According to art theorist Susan Best, the affective dimension of art may be apprehended or felt fairly immediately but its meaning is not readily apparent.[19] The time lag between the potential opening up from affect, to the re-

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[15] Brian Massumi in Eric Shouse, "Feeling, Emotion, Affect", *M/C Journal*, vol. 8, issue 6, Dec. 2005, 1.

[16] Kat Beavers, "What is 'affect' and 'affect theory' as it relates to art critiques?", accessed 23/10/17, www.quora.com .

[17] Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error*, (New York: Quill, 1994, 2000), 204-24.

[18] Silvan Tompkins, *Exploring Affect: The Select Writings of Silvan, S. Tompkins,* ed. Virginia E. Demos, (New York: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1995), 88.

[19] Susan Best, *Visualizing Feeling: Affect and the Feminine Avant-garde*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 7.

presentation of affect to our consciousness, can be imagined as a kind of echo of the moment.[20]

I have found in the monotype distinctive formal, material and perceptual qualities which are conducive to metaphoric associations appropriate to my themes through the generation of affect. Clearly there were strong resonances between the qualities of the monotype and the characteristics of the concepts of phenomenology and affect. My research project also questions the nature of a sense of resonance I felt between my studio practice and the other lived experiences that are expressed through the monotype.

My monotype process thus became, in a sense, the true subject matter of my research. I absorbed and filtered my own bodily experiences of the world and my monotype process became an additional transformative agent. Distance was created by the various iterations, first painted then compressed and reversed, and finally transformed, imbuing the images with metaphysical resonances.

The trajectory of the research – Chapter outlines

In Chapter One I discuss my early research, which was driven by an event in my family life. My investigations into the phenomenological experience of drawing the subject from life is explored as a way of opening up the territory between drawing and painting for my research. I discuss the way the late watercolours of Cezanne influence my decision to create monotypes for the project and this discussion is illuminated by the writings of Antonio Damasio, Siri Hustvedt, John Berger and Jonah Lehrer. As my research with the monotype begins, I describe my early application of devices appropriate to the monotype process, such as overlapping of plates and repetition, to enhance my expressions of family relations and discuss how I achieve affective engagement.

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[20] Paul de Man in Simon O'Sullivan, "The Aesthetics of Affect, Thinking Art beyond Representation", Angelaki, *Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, Vol. 6, No.3, 2001: 126.

In Chapter Two I discuss how my project became an exploration of the conveyance of affect through my themes of time, space and memory. The lived experience of family is explored through two series of work that investigate family in domestic settings: the assemblage, *The Family Lounge*, and the panoramic series, *Annie's Room*. This investigation is illuminated by writers on concepts of time, space and memory, including Tim Ingold, Antonio Damasio and Siri Hustvedt. I discuss how I create the monotypes in expanded forms to enhance the inherently immersive qualities of the monotype and how I am influenced by immersive paintings by Georg Baselitz, Sidney Nolan, Karin Mamma Andersson and Kiki Smith. During this stage of my research, I make a major shift in my practice and expand on my research questions to explore the potential and implications of deriving imagery from memory and imagination. I discuss this fresh approach and how my investigations into the way memory operates in the brain reflect my themes and express temporal and spatial aspects of a metaphorical space.

In Chapter Three I discuss the large composite monotype, *Generations*, created with monotypes on boards. I discuss the way I employ the altered effects of new surface in pursuing the expression of my themes and the way I was able to achieve additional immersive qualities with a sense of luminosity and a further expanded scale, influenced by the immersive *Water Lilies series* by Claude Monet and the series *Lepanto* by Cy Twombly. At this stage of the research I made a further shift in method by working with intuitive imagery and was drawn to nature, the monotype reflecting my overlaid memories of place, thus creating potential for the viewer to access affect and engage with their own memories of place. I explain how these investigations intertwined with an investigation into my bodily and imaginative processes of art making through a sustained period of six months in the studio. The writings of Henri Lefebvre and Ross Gibson illuminated these reflections.

In Chapter Four I discuss my experimental work made as I investigated my phenomenological engagement with the moisture cycle and its unpredictable, fluid and timeless nature. In the final series, *Questions about Weather*, I continue to question the nature of weather through my bodily engagement and receptivity to it. I discuss how I discover resonances between the nature of

weather, my body and the materiality of paper as I find ways to answer my questions about weather. Gesture and a free-flowing structure become important in the expression of my themes in this series and I discuss the influence of gestural paintings by John Constable, Elisabeth Cummings, and Chinese ink and brush paintings. The work is informed by the writings of François Jullien, George Rowley and Hubert Damisch. I discuss how the themes of transition and between-ness take on significance in this series, reflecting the monotype process and resonating with my phenomenological experiences with weather and with the generation and flow of intensities in the transmission of affect.

Chapter One

Introduction

My original research proposal involved exploring relations between drawing and painting. Based on my previous experience with the monotype and for the reasons I discussed in the Introduction, my plan at the outset of my research project was to transform my life drawings using the monotype as my medium.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with my early research, which was driven by the human subject – specifically family members – as a way of investigating relations between drawing and painting. Time spent with my mother while she was in her final illness was particularly important, as drawing her daily led me to investigate the phenomenological experience of drawing and painting from life. This period of research was informed by the writings of Siri Husvedt, John Berger and neuroscientist Antonio Damasio. These investigations include an examination of the late watercolours of the painter, Paul Cezanne.

I discuss the resonances I found between Cezanne's late watercolours and the monotype and how they conveyed to me his sense of immersion in his subject, and how this influenced my decision to investigate the possibility of conveying a similar sense of immersion of my own lived experiences via the monotype.

In the second part of this chapter, I outline the methodology I used for this stage of the research project and discuss my early experimental monotypes. My work is contextualised with reference to the experimental monotypes of Edgar Degas and monotypes by three Australian painters – Charles Blackman, Guy Warren and Bruno Leti – and paintings of family groups by Oskar Swintscher and Zhang Xiaogang. From the outset, the monotype proved to offer rich potential for experimentation and expression of the lived experience of familial relations and as a method of conveying my feelings and potential space for the flow of affect.

Part One: Beginning

As I began my research I was living with a once-in-a-lifetime experience, that of caring for my mother in the final weeks of her life. Drawing portraits from life formed a daily practice for me. I drew on a small pad with charcoal, easy to hide away if the moment seemed inappropriate. Thus, my time was occupied. My mother was an enthusiastic collaborator in this shared experience, allowing me close scrutiny, a rare privilege. It kept me close to her while it allayed my own feelings of sadness and boredom. My simple elemental tools of charcoal and paper seemed appropriate for recording the last vestiges of a life that had once held much colour, detail and complexity. Other artists have responded in the same way to this experience, such as John Berger who drew his father immediately after his death (Fig.1.5) and Lucien Freud (Fig.1.6) who made drawings and paintings of his mother as she came close to death.

Although I was unable to begin my studio practice as planned, this life event shaped the early work in an unexpected way by providing the impetus to take the subject of 'family' for my research project and to continue with the phenomenological experience of directly drawing my subjects.

Figure 1.1. Some of the original drawings pinned to the wall (2013)

Eventually, I pinned the best of these fragile fragments of a life passed away onto my studio wall, for my brothers when they arrived to help arrange the funeral (Fig.1.1). Over the following months, whilst engaged in producing the first monotypes in the studio, I had time to observe my drawings, initially arranged in a somewhat random fashion. By a process of deletion and reconfiguration, I came to an arrangement that seemed to reflect my feelings about my experience with my mother.

Fig. 1.2. Susan Chancellor, *Sitting with Pattie, (*2013)

Sitting with Pattie (Fig.1.2) was exhibited as a series of paper fragments, signifying a life in visual decline. I felt that this format expressed not only the inevitable progression of my mother's decline towards death, but the rhythmic inspiration and expiration of that progress. I was asked to give a talk about the work at the exhibition, and in response I received stories from viewers who had similar life experiences. So, in that sense, I knew that it had been worthwhile, firstly to make the drawings and secondly to have left time in the studio for a sympathetic format to emerge as a memoir, reflecting my lived experience. Throughout my research project, lived experiences would continue to provide impetus for new bodies of work.

Following on from this intense experience of drawing my mother's small portraits, I decided on a suitable methodology for the next stage of the project; to continue to draw subjects from life then use the drawings as templates for my studio based monotypes, the second part of the process.

Fig. 1.3. Alice Neel*, The Soyer Brothers,* (1973)

Influential in my choice of motif was the work of Alice Neel (1900–1984), an American figurative painter. In a video recording of Alice Neel working, I noted that she mostly sat her subjects in the lounge room and chatted to them as she worked. A sense of Neel's relationship was conveyed to me through her paintings. Aiming to convey a similar sense of my relationship with my subjects, I decided to emulate this technique.[21]

Neel painted what she felt was truthful about her subjects rather than accurately recording details. In the painting*, The Soyer Brothers* (Fig.1.3), Neel depicts two Russian immigrants to the USA, elderly friends of Neel, who was seventy three years old herself. The writer Jeremy Lewison suggests that, in this painting, subjects and painter stare at each other, recognising their shared decrepitude. He says that "dwarfed by the space they look diminished".[22] This led me to consider how I might approach the portraits I was making, to find a way of providing space for me to enter the picture in some way.

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[21] Andrew Neel and Ethan Palmer, *Alice Neel*, video recording, distributed by Madman Entertainment, 2009, accessed 9/9/2013.
[22] Jeremy Lewison, *Alice Neel: Painted Truths*, (Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), 53.

Fig.1.4. Susan Chancellor, *Annie*, (2013), life drawing

Family friends agreed to sit for portraits at home over the Christmas period when various generations gathered together to celebrate the holiday by the sea at the home of the family matriarch, Annie. I knew this family well but was not as close as I had been with my mother, nor as distant as I might have been with a hired model. This in-between status made me anxious, particularly as I was having to 'perform' in a group setting. In the following piece of experiential writing, I describe the experience of drawing one family member in the lounge room, as I set about the task of gathering information for my proposed monotypes.

Vicky had agreed to sit for twenty minutes. With a piece of charcoal in hand I looked up, then put charcoal to paper. I was nervous. A dog jumped from one lap to another as conversation continued, but my attention was on the subject.

Would I have time to draw in the dark areas of tone to show the line of light along the nose and chin? Proportions first…quickly, her mouth is so like that of her second sister. I can see it now. The brow is different. Perhaps I should have used the same pose? Difficult to catch it on my page with all the talk at afternoon tea, with dogs snuffling around our legs and one upon her lap I see. It is a pleasant place to be, included en famile with friends. I catch the scent of Christmas cake, patient by my side, but I will wait. I take a breath, back to work, now in full flight my hand and charcoal move in a rhythm capturing the shapes and volumes they detect. I hope she might remain a minute longer while I get this line right, but this mobile face holds more truth for me than the passive one of holding tight. Faster! My performance will be over shortly and the working drawing will be shown around. For me, the drawing is a fragment of the truth though. The rest is held firmly in my memory awaiting transformation into its coloured form in time. I can hardly wait.

In drawing my human subjects from life, I risked losing accuracy and detail but benefitted from being part of a relationship with the subject and from a sharpened visual memory of the subject. Thinking about the way Neel had imbued her paintings with unsentimental honesty, investing the painting with reflections on the finite nature of human life, I became interested in how it might be possible for me to express emotional aspects of family life through the vehicle of the monotype. I set about producing a large selection of life drawings of my subjects and before working with these in the studio, I researched the phenomenology of drawing and painting from life.

In the Introduction, I gave a definition of phenomenology based on the writings of Siri Hustvedt. John Berger further illuminated some of these processes for me. Berger saw drawing as a reciprocal process, an unarticulated dialogue between the model, the artist and the drawing, each in turn altering the other as the drawing proceeded along. Interestingly, he pointed out that there was no given moment during the assembling of the fragments of a drawing that the drawing truly resembled the subject and the completed drawing, as a static object, could never be the subject itself. It was instead made up of assembled moments in time, as fragments of drawn lines. Berger's experience of drawing the face and head of his father in the coffin (Fig.1.5) resonated with my own. He

described it as a peculiar circumstance, which would never be repeated, a unique moment of scrutinising the 'death mask'.
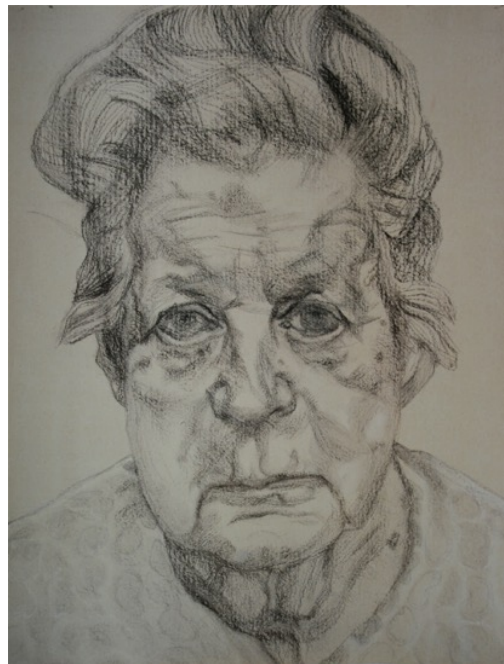
Fig. 1.5. John Berger, *Drawing of His Father* (1976) (left)
Fig. 1.6. Lucien Freud, *The Painter's Mother* (1983)

It is helpful to understand some of the neurological processes that are involved in the phenomenological experience of drawing and painting a subject from life. In the explanation that follows, I refer to the influential late watercolours of the artist Paul Cezanne, that were of particular interest in contextualizing my work. I researched these and the paintings and drawings of the artists Alberto Giacometti and Giorgio Morandi.

The writer and neuroscientist Jonah Lehrer suggests that Cezanne made a contribution, through his art practice, to the neuroscience of vision. The neuroscience of the very early twentieth century took a reductive view of 'vision', believing that vision was all about light falling on objects. The resulting sensory input was then transmitted to the brain, thus allowing us to experience the visual effects in a direct way. To this day, there is much to learn about the neuroscience of vision, but as Lehrer says there is now "proof that visual experience transcends visual sensations".[23]

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[23] Jonah Lehrer, *Proust was a Neuroscientist* (New York: Mariner Books, 2008),117.

Lehrer explains the 'top down' theory where there are two pathways of sensations from the eye through the brain, the fast pathway allowing us to experience a coarse blurry picture, arriving 50 milliseconds ahead of the slow one which reaches us after meandering through the visual cortex whilst it analyses the lines of light and relates them to previous experience. He contends that Cezanne shows us the raw reality from the fast pathway. Using this raw information Cezanne was able to convey via his painting, his own visual reality. In this way, he presents an active and very personal vision to us.[24]

The gallerist and writer, Ambroise Vollard, provided some insight into Cezanne's painting processes and the development of his memory bank, when he described his own experience of sitting for a portrait. He endured 115 sittings, which Cezanne insisted were necessary for him to 'see well'. After these daily sittings Cezanne would spend some hours making drawings and watercolours in museums and out of doors in preparation for the next day's sitting. Such preparation, the degree of attention given to his subject and the constant output of work provided a basis of his inventiveness and unique vision.[25]

When making a drawing, vision is only one of the sensory processes at work. I was interested in the way the body is able to store memories. Practising as a physiotherapist for almost four decades, I had become acutely aware of the part played by proprioception in drawing and painting. Proprioception refers to the Latin word *proprios*, meaning one's own. Sensory information is sent to the brain from the joints, muscles and ligaments, in a constant stream, alerting it to the body's position in space and its relationship to other objects. Information about movement is also received. When we combine all of this information with visual, auditory and tactile information we are able to make a response. As we learn a new skill like typing, drawing or driving a car, practice makes the motor part of the activity more automatic, allowing our attention to be given to other

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Matthew Simms, *Cézanne's Watercolors: Between Drawing and Painting*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), Chapter Four.

more complex social, cognitive and creative activities, and I argue that proprioception is an essential part of the practice of drawing.

Siri Hustvedt opens up a discussion of the theories of phenomenology as it relates to both the artist and the viewer of artworks, with mention of proprioception. She goes on to describe the theories of Anne Treisman, a scientist in the field of visual perception, who explains that the pre-attentive process notifies us quickly of colour, figure, ground and scale while also giving us proprioceptive information such as spatial awareness. This sort of information has evolutionary value to us. It is also thought that we quickly process an emotional response in the form of pleasure, disgust or awe, for instance. Treisman says that after our initial response, the attentive phase begins, enabling us to reflect. We are then able, with our embodied minds, to make active and creative responses.[26]

Treisman's explanation, though similar to Lehrer's, is a fuller one, and her theory seems to me to tie in with the theories of Antonio Damasio, who explains how background feelings are always present in an individual, and that emotion consolidates memory, providing us with a continuously enriched source of experience that we are able to use in making unique and creative responses to visual input at any given moment.[27]

Cezanne was capable of a flexibility in the to and fro between intentionality and spontaneity in painting his late watercolours. After visiting an exhibition of the watercolours, mounted by the Bernheim-Jeune brothers in 1907, the year following Cezanne's death, Rainer Maria Rilke added weight to this idea when he described the watercolours as "the drifting notes of an enchanting melody", exuding "equal amounts of deliberateness and spontaneity".[28]

[26] Siri Hustvedt, *Living, Thinking, Looking: Essays*, (New York: Picador, 2012), 236.
[27] Antonio R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999).
[28] Matthew Simms, *Cézanne's Watercolors: Between Drawing and Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008),166.

Fig. 1.7. Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, *from Les Lauves,* (1902–06)

In the late watercolours, Cezanne was interested in describing 'the envelope', as he called it. From the period 1902–1906, (1906 being the year of his death), there are nineteen known watercolour versions of *Mont Sainte Victoire*[29] (Fig.1.7), painted near Aix in Provence, where he was living during this period. The envelope described the atmosphere around objects, the light and air between the artist and his motif. The more Cezanne observed his subject the more a diffuse network of reflections seemed to dissolve the forms. In these paintings, he expressed his particular vision by means of many marks and lines in and around the contours of the forms standing before him. Objects became silhouettes of several colours, painted over in layers then sometimes added to again in the studio, evidenced by many pin marks at the corners of the paper. The work was often overdrawn with more graphite marks, creating an added level of instability at the edges.[30] I was particularly drawn to the dynamism and

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[29] Ibid,158.
[30] Ibid.

airiness of these paintings, resonant with the dynamism and airiness of the monotype.

Fig. 1.8. Georgio Morandi, *Still Life*, (1962) (left)
Fig. 1.9. Alberto Giacometti, *Portrait of the Artist's Mother (*1937)

I have explained something of Cezanne's phenomenological processes. Reading Ernst Scheidegger's first-hand accounts of the artist Alberto Giacometti's drawing and painting practice, I was able to see similarities between his practices, Cezanne's and those of Giorgio Morandi (Fig.1.8). In the mid-twentieth century when Giacometti was living in Paris with his wife Annette, Scheidegger observed that he drew everything he could find and stuck to a rigid work plan, similar to that of Cezanne. Giacometti would not talk while he was working directly from his subject because he did not wish to break his concentration. He would draw, redraw and overdraw an image many times before it left his studio. Looking at some of the paintings of his mother in the Kunstmuseum in Zurich, I noticed that he had also scraped back some layers of paint, then repainted some areas, leaving others bare (Fig.1.9). Giving some insight into these processes, he said: "Every day you can rediscover a table, chair or even a cup to be more beautiful and real than ever before."[31]

The younger painter, Giorgio Morandi, loved Cezanne, sharing his acute attentiveness to his subjects and his wish "to lift off the veil of convention from

[31] Ernst Scheidegger, *Traces of a Friendship: Alberto Giacometti* (Zurich and Frankfurt/Main: Verlag Ernst Scheidegger AG, 2001),149.

visual experience".[32] Siri Hustvedt contends that "there is something more belated in Morandi beyond the present moment, not found in Cezanne, in the ambiguity between where one thing ends and another begins…". She thinks that he plays with both preattentive and attentive vision in his paintings.[33] It is well known that Morandi took long periods of time to paint a group of objects from life and that he often repainted the same object. These objects, so very familiar to him, were new to him each time he looked.

The philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who wrote extensively on phenomenology and art, made this observation about attention: "I see what I attend to, I remember what mattered, not all the flotsam and jetsam I don't care about."[34] However, for most of us most of the time, what we 'see' is coloured by our visual expectations. Anyone who has ever attended a life drawing class knows that beginners are always focussed on their drawings and therefore their expectations take precedence over what they can actually see. More experienced artists only glance at the paper. They trust their proprioceptive sense and their immediate responses and are therefore able to give the subject their full attention. John Berger tells a story about his attention failing. He often tried to draw his friend's wife but was unsuccessful because he kept trying to capture her beauty, this expectation preventing him from seeing the truth.[35]

Merleau-Ponty also observed of Cezanne's work that: "It is impossible to distinguish between what sees and what is seen, what paints and is painted."[36] The quality of attention Cezanne gave to his subjects, allowed him to bypass the usual expectations. Words disappeared from his mind, as the subject transformed into a series of contours and colours. To quote from Cezanne:

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[32] Siri Hustvedt, "Giorgio Morandi: Not Just Bottles", *in Mysteries of the Rectangle*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005),131.
[33] Siri Hustvedt, "The Drama of Perception" in *Living, Thinking, Looking*, (New York: Picador, 2004), 236.
[34] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in Siri Hustvedt's "The Drama of Perception" in *Living, Thinking, Looking*, (New York: Picador, 2012), 285.
[35] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing:* Based on the BBC Television Series with John Berger (London: British Broadcast Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972).
[36] Siri Hustvedt, *Living, Thinking, Looking*, (New York: Picador, 2012).

> … a minute in the world's life passes! To paint it in its reality, and forget everything for that! To become that minute, to be the sensitive plate…give the image what we see, forgetting everything that has appeared before our time…[37]

Here Cezanne is describing his experience of feeling at one with his subject and his painting, of his bodily acceptance of the subject before him and his transference of affect to his painting, and this in turn allowing for the transfer of affect from the painting to us. I found a resonance between Cezanne's use of the word 'plate' with the plate that would become part of my monotype process in the studio. In the next section of this chapter I will go on to describe the qualities I found in the monotype that allow for the delivery of affect.

Part Two: The Monotype and the Family

The monotype – a distinctive form

Although historical images of family groups were of passing interest, I had decided that my ongoing focus would be on family dynamics. With the monotype, I aimed to explore family dynamics in contemporary life, using my sketches as templates in a creative investigation of this topic. Adopting the monotype was a key decision, shaping the trajectory of my whole research project.

Fig. 1.10. Experimental work, (2013). The ink drawings of sisters were resized and reversed before being used as templates for the monotype printed from two plates onto one sheet of paper. These images are revitalised in the monotype *Annie, Jill and Penny*, (Fig.1.19).

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[37] Ibid, 31.

The monotype had been part of my art practice over the previous decade and I had exhibited two series of monotypes with other paintings and prints and had found in the process an intriguing paradox, as it allowed me to produce a hybrid form that could not easily be classified as one thing or another; painting, print or gestural drawing. I was also drawn to the element of surprise and the opportunity for spontaneous experimentation. In the Introduction, I outlined the qualities of the monotype that continued to fascinate me: transformation and abstraction of the imagery; the unpredictable loss and spreading of paint under compression; the opening up of the imagery through that removal of paint, and the perceptual ambiguity caused by a visual oscillation between figure and ground and tension between the picture plane and the picture space.

Fig. 1.11. Edgar Degas, *Rest, (*1879)
Fig. 1.12. Edgar Degas, Landscape: *Estérel Village* (1890-93)

Edgar Degas produced two large bodies of monotypes in two separate periods: the black and white images over five years from 1878 until 1883, and the landscapes in colour from 1890 to 1893 (Figs.1.11, 1.12). Degas also used many monotypes as substrates for pastel paintings. According to Jodi Hauptman, Degas took the medium of the monotype to radical ends and expanded the possibilities of drawing, heightening the sense of tactility of the paper. She also remarked that "this process of repetition and transformation, mirroring and reversal allowed Degas to extend his approach to form".[38] Seeing

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[38] Jodi Hauptman, exhibition catalogue for *Edgar Degas: A Strange New Beauty*, The Museum of Modern Art, accessed online, 24/10/17.

Degas' monotypes included in museum displays and exhibitions influenced me in my decision to experiment with the monotype.

At the exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria in 2016, *Degas: A New Vision*, I was able to renew my acquaintance with Degas' monotypes at close range and observe his many additive and reductive techniques with brush marks, cloth, cotton wool, and sharp objects. He removed and repainted freely with malleable oil paint, his brushwork becoming looser as he progressed through time with the medium. Degas made the coloured landscape monotypes on a country holiday in Diénay with friends in 1890–91. Georges Jeanniot recounted Degas' processes in making these monotypes in the studio. In these images, he used oil paint diluted with turpentine, allowing him to cover some areas with thinned translucent paint.[39] Later Degas combined the monotype with pastel, driving him to less formal and more radical approaches to his painting.

It seemed that this speedy and active way of working was like sketching with paint or drawing with a malleable medium. Through my personal experience of carefully observing Degas' prints, I could sense Degas' bodily engagement with the work, recalling similar actions of my own. The process requires one to imagine an outcome where the image appears in reverse. I realised that abstraction of the image occurred as a natural consequence of the monotype process, through its speediness, through the methods of applying paint and then again through the pressing and printing process, as discussed in the Introduction (Fig.1.10).

In 2009, at an influential exhibition, *MONO uno*, I viewed a collection of monotypes from the Charles Sturt University collection at the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery. According to Thomas Middlemost, the exhibition curator, Australian monotypes from 1898 onwards have included bold colour and colour has generally been part of the Australian experience of monotypes, as he says, "It is something we do best".[40] Included in this exhibition were monotypes by the Australian painters, Charles Blackman, Guy Warren and Bruno Leti. I will

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[39] Henri Loyrette, *Degas: A New Vision*, (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2016),190.
[40] Thomas A. Middlemost, *MONO uno*, (ACT, Charles Sturt University: Blue Star Print, 2009), 6.

describe some of the distinctive qualities of the monotype in relation to *Alice Symbols* by Blackman (Fig.1.13) and *Cornish Coast* by Guy Warren (Fig.1.14) and *Clunies (series 3)* by Bruno Leti (Fig.1.15).

These examples of monotypes by Australian painters illustrate some of the qualities of the monotype. In this exegesis I do not have space to present an historical survey of the monotype by International or Australian artists. As a painter this practice-led research refers to the painters who have been my main influences in this project, some of whom have produced monotypes. With regard to the history of the Australian monotype, Thomas Middlemost's thesis on this topic is of great interest. He refers to clusters of painters who have produced monotypes over the past one hundred and twenty years and examines in detail the work of Rupert Bunny (1864-19947), Margaret Preston (1875- 1963) and Bruno Leti (1943-), whose work I mention below[41].

As I outlined in the Introduction the distinctive qualities of the monotype include unpredictability, the formal and perceptual qualities resulting from compression of the painted image and a particular quality of luminosity inherent to the monotype on paper.

Fig. 1.13. Charles Blackman, *Alice Symbols* (1984) (left)

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[41] Thomas A Middlemost, Australian Monotypes, Thesis (PhD.), (Canberra, Australian National University, 2012)

Fig. 1.14. Guy Warren, *Cornish Coast* (1988)

Fig. 1.15. Bruno Leti, *Clunes (Series 3),* (1996), monotype on paper, on canvas

Reflecting on Cezanne's watercolours, I noticed a similarity with the monotype
in the vibrancy of colour produced by the overlaying of translucent watercolours
on white paper. Like Blackman and Warren, I favoured the qualities of oil paint

over water-based paint because of the richness of colour, the translucent quality, the reliability of colour retention and its malleability in application. Bruno Leti has produced a large body of monotypes considered by writer Thomas Middlemost to be the most important in the history of the Australian monotype. In the abstract landscape *Clunes (Series 3)* (Fig.1.15), three techniques combine to make a technically complex monotype, resulting in an intriguing image. Smudged black marks combine with gesturally applied areas of translucent colour and finally sharply scraped geometric lines contrast with the gestural painting to divide the picture plane. In my later work, *Generations*, I would reflect on this Leti's complex layering. Leti's description of his experience with the medium of monotype resonated with my own:

> I feel I now have more control in the mark making than perhaps with painting. This has accrued with experience and the confidence of this print making process…the brilliance of paper through veils of ink – had all the qualities of printing, technically, and it had one other: it left a remnant or a ghost of the idea after the impression was made.[42]

There is great potential for flexibility in colour effects with the monotype. A flat area of consistent pure or impure colour can be produced by mixing colour on the palette, or by only partially mixing paint as it is brushed onto the printing plate. Interesting but unpredictable effects can result, allowing scope for vibrancy through simultaneous contrast and broken areas of colour. I observed that the tonal contrasts between discreet hues and white spaces offered possibilities for jewel like areas of colour, such as those on Blackman's monotype (Fig.1.13) where the viscous oil paint extruded onto the paper, leaving strange shapes of vibrant colour, adding drama and a surreal quality to the images. Similarly, Degas allowed a large area of diluted green oil paint to bleed in the monotype, *Estérel Village* (Fig.1.12), altering and abstracting his image and drawing attention to the monotype process.

I was influenced by the expressive potential in Warren's directional broken brush strokes in *The Cornish Coast*, (Fig.1.14) The speed of paint application was palpable as my eyes travelled with the brush, at first loaded with paint then

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[42] Sasha Grishin, "Bruno Leti, letter to Sasha Grishin", 10th May 2011, in *Bruno Leti, Portrait of a Printmaker, Matrix to Paper, Forty Years of Printmaking*, (Melbourne, Australia: Macmillan, 2011), 46.

dry, scraping the surface and leaving energised markings in its wake. The directional spatial openings activated my imagination with affective potential, allowing me to feel the wind and the sea circling through the landscape.

Fig. 1.16. *Annie*, (2013)

As previously outlined, my intention with my earliest series of monotypes was to explore aspects of my subjects' characters and familial relations rather than produce a series of portraits. The paintings of two artists influenced my creation of the monotype *Annie*.

Fig. 1.17. Oskar Zwintscher, *Portrait of the Artist's Wife* (1901) (left)
Fig. 1.18. Zhang Xiaogang, *A Bloodline Family* (1993)

German artist Oskar Zwintscher (1870–1916) painted two aspects of his wife, one more contemplative than the other (Fig.1.17). In *Annie* (Fig.1.16), one of my earliest monotypes in this series, I was able to represent two sides of the same subject by overlapping two plates and linking the images with painterly techniques. The immediacy of my process enabled me to prepare plates then spontaneously unite images, presenting them in a fresh context. In this example, two sides of the same subject, two sides of her personality were examined, the effect being more dynamic and open than the conventionally painted image of the painter Oskar Zwintschter.

My research led me to the Chinese artist, Zhang Xiaogang, and his *Bloodline* series where he painted a thin red line, wending its way through the figures and patches on their skin, using these to unite family members. Ambiguously, the gazes of the subjects do not meet, indicating a degree of independence from each other despite their genetic ties[43] (Fig.1.18). In *Annie* (Fig.1.16), I created a red line through the figure for a different purpose, using it to unite the two aspects of the subject and depict the diminishing flow of vital energy in a woman entering her ninth decade. The red line wends its way through an otherwise grey palette.

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[43] Karen Smith, *Nine Lives: The Birth of Avant-Garde Art in New China*, (Zurich: Scalo, 2006), 263-299.

Fig. 1.19. *Annie, Jill and Penny,* (2013)

By manipulating the scale of the figures and then loosely linking the imagery with gestural brush marks, line, colour and shape in *Annie, Jill and Penny*, (Fig.1.19), then printing with three separate overlapped plates, I was able to emphasise the existence of hierarchies within families and a slight awkwardness that can co-exist with familial closeness. Annie's dominant position in the family is demonstrated in this way. My investigations into family relationships were inevitably coloured by my own familial experiences. The rhythmic connections might suggest harmony, but the scale of the figures and some awkwardness in the seated positions and facial expressions, and the broken incompleteness of the monotype, metaphorically leave space for questions regarding mother/daughter and sibling relationships.

Fig. 1.20. *Jo and John*, (2013)

The monotype is easily adapted to repetition and mirroring and in *Jo and John* (Fig. 1.20*),* I was able to contrast family resemblances and emotional ties with independent tendencies between father and daughter. Though similar, each print is unique, reflecting the way our perceptions and emotions alter moment by moment in the ebb and flow of closeness and distance in family relationships.

Although the images in this series were transformed through iterations of drawing, painting and printing, evidence of my original phenomenological experience with the sitter remained in the form of gestural traces.

Conclusion

The experience of drawing my mother repeatedly as I sat with her through the last weeks of her life made me realise that my interests lay more strongly in forming expressions of lived experiences than purely in the formal associations between drawing and painting. I found my early monotypes opened up fertile

territory between drawing and painting as well as offered great potential for my investigations into aspects of family lived experience.

As it was my intention in the early stages of the project to continue to derive my imagery from drawing the human figure from life, I decided that an investigation into the phenomenology of this practice would be helpful. The writings of Siri Hustvedt, Antonio Damasio and John Berger informed the early research, and the works of other artists who have drawn and painted directly from their subjects were illuminating. In particular my examination of the late watercolours of Paul Cezanne revealed resonances with the openness and dynamism monotype.

The qualities of openness and incompleteness, the luminosity and the sense of ambiguity inherent to the monotype, allowed me to create images that could stimulate the viewer's imagination and trigger memories about their own family lives. After making my first few monotypes in the studio, using my sketches as templates, I soon realised that the monotype was an ideal medium for the investigation of familial relations, because it offered a facility for developing relationships between images and for creating complex compositions by overlapping plates, repetition, mirroring and manipulating dimensions, emphasising the emotional qualities and affective engagement that I was aiming to bring to the work.

The studio became a place of discovery where things were almost always in a state of flux, progress waxing and waning, reflecting the rhythm in family life, the subject of my work. I began to see that the rhythms and disruptions that I was able to create in the work resonated in a metaphoric sense, with my lived experience in the family. From this observation, new questions opened up for me about how the monotype might express metaphoric resonances of family life in time and space. In the next chapter these themes are explored.

Chapter Two

Introduction

In Chapter One I discussed how the monotype had potential to express feelings and emotions attached to familial relations. This chapter discusses two key works: the assemblage, *The Family Lounge*, and the panoramic series, *Annie's Room,* in an exploration of how the monotype can be used to express aspects of family life within a domestic space. I discuss the departures I made in scale, colour and tone, and the new imagery created from memory and imagination.

I discuss my reasons for using the ghost print for *The Family Lounge* and creating an assemblage to express aspects of family dynamics and I discuss the shift that occurs during the process of creating this work, from working directly from the subject to working from imagination. The confluences with the work of the artist Kiki Smith that inform the work are explained, as well as influence of the paintings of Karin Mamma Andersson and the insights they give to the expression of mood through ambiguity.

In *Annie's Room*, I leave the human figure behind and work entirely from memory and imagination, creating a metaphoric space. I discuss the influence of the immersive works *'45*, by Georg Baselitz and the *Bend in the River* by painter Sydney Nolan in expanding the scale of my work and the continuing influence of Mamma Andersson's paintings in my explorations into the expression of mood.

I discuss the visual devices I use to incorporate the rhythms, disruptions and repetitions of life and overlaid memories of family life through time in the metaphoric space and how the writings of the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio offered insight into the processes of memory. The writers and philosophers, Tim Ingold and Gaston Bachelard, also informed the work.

Fig. 2.1. Susan Chancellor, *The Family Lounge,* (2014)

Part One: The Family Lounge

In Chapter One I looked at aspects of relationships between various family members and recalled my own lived experience in family life, giving expression to this through the monotype. In this next body of work, *The Family Lounge* (Fig.2.1), my investigations into family dynamics widened to include an exploration of the dynamics of a family unit of four within a defined domestic space. I also expanded on my investigations into the potential for the formal and perceptual qualities of the monotype form to convey affect.

This body of work took on an expanded scale in a new format. I set out to portray this nuclear family unit within a domestic space; the father and one daughter resembling each other, and the mother and the other daughter forming another pair. Being limited by the dimensions of the press I decided that an assemblage of monotypes consisting of four sheets of paper and eight separate plates would be an effective way to form the composition.
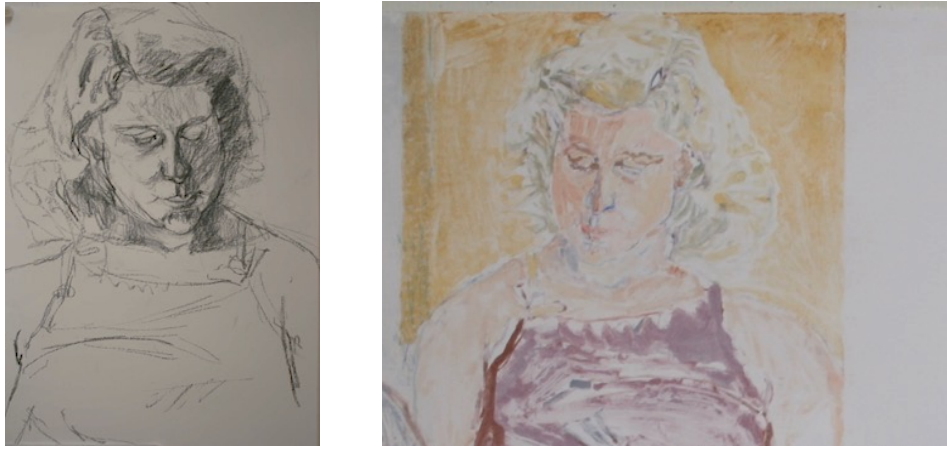
Fig. 2.2. Life drawing and monotype print from drawing (2014)
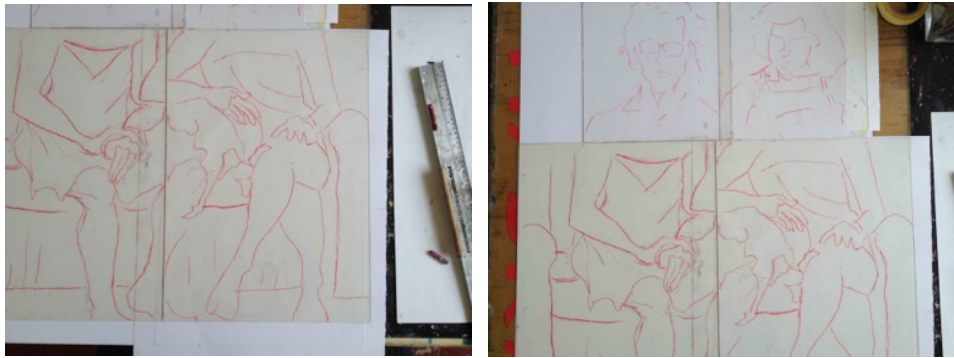
Fig. 2.3. Oil crayon outlines on reverse of plates made from templates, prior to painting on reverse of plates (2014)

The ghost print – transparency

The ghost print was my next discovery, appropriate to expression of lived experience. On completion of the monotype, *Jo and John*, my curiosity was aroused by surplus paint remaining on two of the plates, so I decided to take second impressions, or ghost prints. These fourth iterations of the original drawings were captivating in their paleness and transparency. The further loss of paint through the process of being compressed a second time caused the imagery to appear to be even more transparent and filled with light. These pale images were suggestive of the fading of time and of a bleaching summer sun. The particular family group of four portrayed in this work were second and third generation members of the extended family visiting the family matriarch in the summer break, as had been their habit over decades. The suggestion of

summer seaside holidays was further enhanced by my choice of palette, a dominant yellow with a secondary transparent blue.

Another effect of the twice compressed ghost print was the exaggerated perceptual quality of figure and ground oscillation that I described in the Introduction to the exegesis, the image now even more tightly bound to the paper and conveying an amplified sense of ambiguity and uncertainty to the viewer. Compression produced a very flat and smooth looking 'finished' surface, which contrasted with the unfinished appearance of the disjointed imagery. I will discuss the use of this effect more fully in relation to my research into the paintings of the artist, Karin Mamma Andersson, later in this chapter.

Fig. 2.4. Kiki Smith, *Assembly 11* (2008)

I researched the work of American artist Kiki Smith whose imagery, printed onto translucent paper or etched onto glass, had a quality of transparency similar to that of my ghost prints. In Smith's assemblage of lithographic prints *Assembly 11* (Fig.2.4) I also found similarities in format, working processes and the subject of the human figure. Using a method similar to my own, Smith made the initial drawings of her figures from sittings with friends and family, then

transferred these images onto a plate by using a cartoon beneath as a guide, her images also altering as she painted onto a slippery surface.[44] In *Assembly 11*, it can be observed that one template of the same image of a female figure has been used repeatedly, re-clothed in each instance.

Ambiguity and dissonance

A dissonance between the bodies and the portraits in *The Family Lounge* results from the method of their creation, the portraits derived from life drawings and the bodies from imagination. I exaggerated this ambiguous effect by emphasising the imperfect joining together of the imagery as I aimed to impart an expression of awkwardness that might be felt by the daughters, now young women, by being tightly jammed together on a lounge for a protracted period with middle aged parents. In doing this I was projecting my own feelings onto my subjects. Naturally occurring inconsistencies between sections of the monotype were amplified by my deliberate mismatching and repositioning of body parts to exaggerate the sense of ambiguity in the work.

The disjointed bodies that appeared to push outwards against the picture plane promoted a sense of restless movement across the lower section of the work, contrasting with the static portrait pairs in the upper section of the work. This was intended to engender a sense of restlessness within the family group and a metaphoric suggestion of time passing by with change occurring moment by moment.

This effect was further amplified by the way the figures were assembled together rather than being composed as a group. The figures do not exchange gazes. The quality of unease that results from the method of assembly is also apparent in Smith's group, in *Assembly 11*.

Imagery

Significantly, it was at this stage of the project that I made my first shift away from the practice of life drawing as a source of imagery and began a new practice of working from memory and imagination. Although I had relied on the

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[44] Catherine J. Morris, *Kiki Smith: Sojourn*, New York: Brooklyn Museum, 2010.

original phenomenological experience of life drawing for the four portraits in *The Family Lounge*, the images became further distanced from the phenomenology of my initial experience with each iteration, sketch to painting, painting to first impression and then to the second impression. These remaining traces of my lived experience reflected a distance in time and a distancing of the images from my hand.

In making this change in practice, I knew I would be foregoing the directness of transfer from my subjects, but I reasoned that, in freeing myself from my reliance on pre-made templates as starting points for new work, I would gain scope for expression in other ways, free to alter and distort the imagery, expand the scale and alter the format.

More importantly, in thinking about severing my now tenuous link to my life drawing experience, I speculated that drawing on my own memory store I would be creating a practice more appropriate to my emerging abstract themes of timelessness and memory. As the project progressed I would increasingly rely on memory and imagination as a source for my imagery.

Fig. 2.5. Karin Mamma Andersson, *Travelling with the Family* (2003)

It was my intention to find ways to express my personal experiences with mood and feeling. The paintings of Karin Mamma Andersson piqued my interest in how disruption to figure and ground could alter my mood as a viewer. My research revealed that the family was not commonly used as subject matter in contemporary painting, but one of Andersson's paintings, *Travelling with the Family* (Fig.2.5), does address this subject matter. Many of Andersson's other paintings explore family life, as she uses aspects of her personal life to draw out her larger themes. In *Travelling with the Family*, a family group sits at a table with food and drink, while a seventh member sits out at the side in a separate space.[45] Andersson has devised a composition where the inhabitants are all self-occupied, either missing or avoiding each other's gazes, in a way similar to the figures in the assemblages, *The Family Lounge* and *Assembly 11*.

Strangely, just as these figures seem unaware of each other, they also appear unaware of what is going on in their dining space. The shadows on the table are inconsistent with the objects upon it, some of which are transparent. The room is surrounded by a landscape that appears, oddly, to be inside it while at the same time to be merging and overlapping. Some figures visually disappear into a black background and, even more disturbingly, an opaque black shape appears across the top half of the picture. Half the painting is treated in a lyrical, light way and the rest is ominous and opaque. It takes some time to observe these oddities, and the viewer soon becomes engaged in considering the possible meanings.

The sense of foreboding and confusion that is evoked in this painting where parts of the foreground and background are ambiguously flipped and disrupted, and something incomprehensible and shocking seems imminent, causes us to reassess concepts of time and space. With these devices Andersson delivers affect. We are confused and we worry about the family that seems unaware of the ominous opaque presence invading its dining space. Some of Andersson's paintings are based on stories, films, newspaper articles and dreams, but she

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[45] Karin Mamma Andersson, Lars Noring interview, *In and Out of the Visible Frame*, *Mamma Andersson*, Stockholm: Modern Museet, 2007.

won't disclose their meanings, thus adding another layer of mystery to the work.[46]

Fig. 2.6. Kiki Smith, *Pilgrim* (2010)

My interests were beginning to turn towards the themes of time and memory as well as space. I had discovered that there were resonances between Smith's thematic concerns and my own, so I returned to her work to examine the installation, *Pilgrim* (Fig.2.6), exhibited at the Pace Gallery, New York, 2010. In this large installation Smith portrayed an open narrative about the precarious wanderings of a woman during life's pilgrimage. Smith remembers the stages of her own life whilst exploring the life cycle of a generic woman in this installation. The female is central to Smith's oeuvre. She investigates the female life cycle and women's relationship to animals and the cosmos, and in so doing employs the figure as a 'type', reusing and transforming one image multiple times into

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[46] Ibid.

different settings and in theatrical poses.[47] In her work, there is an inference of change and timelessness as well as transformation.

The theme of time is present in the production and in the expression of Smith's work. Here the final iterations of the original life-sized drawings begun five years earlier were now transformed into glass paintings. Nearly thirty framed and gridded glass panels were displayed in this installation where light was transmitted through the field of images, visible on both recto and verso surfaces. The experience was described as essentially theatrical and phenomenological, responding to our movement where the images take the viewer back in time and simultaneously forwards through a mysterious and timeless world of the life of a woman.[48]

The effect of abutting and overlapping eight rectangular plates on four rectangular sheets of paper in *The Family Lounge* was to break up the surface in a grid like fashion and create a distancing effect, similar to the distancing effect that occurs through the gridded construction of Smith's glass panels in *Pilgrim*.

Reflecting on my recent studio investigations, I found resonances with Smith's themes of time, change and transformation. Transformation of the imagery is inherent to the monotype process and the inevitable result of iterations from initial sketches to finished artwork through which the initial idea gains new life.

The immersive quality of the installation of *Pilgrim* piqued my interest in potentially expanding the scale of my next body of work to achieve a sense of immersion and further my ability to convey affect.

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[47] Virginia Chieffo Raguin, *Kiki Smith: Lodestar*, New York: The Pace Gallery, 2010.
[48] Robert C. Morgan, *Kiki Smith: Allegories on Living and the Mysteries of Existenc*e, The Brooklyn Rail, 2010.

Part Two: Annie's Room

> The past is with us as we press into the future…in this pressure, lies the work of memory, the guiding hand of consciousness that, as it goes along, also remembers the way. Retracing the lines of past lives as we proceed on our own.[49]

This quote from Tim Ingold resonated with the theme of memory that I wanted to develop in my next body of work, and his reference to the idea of pressing into the future struck a chord as I considered the pressing of my images while pressing ahead with my project.

In the monotype series, *The Family Lounge* (Fig.2.1), I explored the idea of 'family' in an illusory space. In this new body of work, I decided to create an illusory space as a metaphor for the 'life' of an extended family. Over recent decades, Annie's extended family had regularly returned to the fold to reconnect, one member with another, to celebrate and commiserate or simply pass time together. We all have strong feelings attached to certain places and this feeling intensifies with exposure and the heightening of emotions.

Hustvedt quotes from the writings of neuroscientist, Joseph LeDoux, "emotion is vital to consolidating memory…because brain systems are typically active during emotional states".[50] My own experience inside my friends' lounge room was a heightened one, emotionally charged with first hand sensory perceptions that were repeatedly refreshed over time. I felt a strange duality as artist/onlooker and participant/friend and knew that the expression of my lived experience of the space would inevitably be coloured by my past experience of the rooms I had inhabited with my own family.

The philosopher, Gaston Bachelard, writes about a house as an inhabited space that shelters daydreaming, a place imbued with dream values and the house as "a domain of intimacy".[51] Bachelard considered imagination to be a major power of human nature and it was my intention to create the imagery for

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[49] Tim Ingold, *Lines*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2007), 119.
[50] Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are*, (New York: Penguin, 2003), 322, in Siri Hustvedt, *A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women*, 355.
[51] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press,1994), Chapter One, 12.

the intimate space, *Annie's Room*, from my imagination and my memories of items, patterns and furniture in this room that I had often visited. In working this way, I would make a complete departure from my previous practice of working directly from the subject. I will discuss how I created this imagery to express my lived experience of this room, later in the chapter.

First, I will discuss how I expressed the colour and light I had experienced in Annie's room and how this and the unsealed quality of the monotype combined with the serial panorama format to convey affect. I will outline my influences in developing this format for the monotype, *Annie's Room*.

Colour and light

In creating *Annie's Room,* I left behind the faded ghost prints of *The Family Lounge* as I decided that a large tonal range of light and dark would better emphasise the diurnal cycle of the sun moving from window to window through the day, leaving patches of brightness and shade in its wake. Light and shade metaphorically express the ups and downs of family life: the births and deaths over the decades associated with this space.

White paper and transparent colours, thinly applied, would reflect the light, while thick applications of darker colours would express darkness. My palette for the new work remained consistent with that of *The Family Lounge*, predominantly yellow, earthy golds and reds with a secondary blue reflecting the light and atmosphere of the seaside location. I expanded this basic palette to include depictions of multi-coloured furnishings and patterning observed in the space.

In the paintings of Karin Mamma Andersson I found confluences between the effects of her methods of paint application and the quality of airy openness in my monotypes. Her rough, swift application of paint, and the alternation between thick impasto paint and transparent washes left some areas of the ground exposed. This seemed to act in a similar way to the porous quality of the monotype, opening space for the activation of memory.

In reference to the painting, *Travelling with the Family* (Fig.2.5), and others, art critic Midori Matsui proposed that Mamma Andersson's practice of skimming

over the surface of the ground rather unevenly with paint, added to the deterritorialisation of the viewer's perception. She suggested that the rough application of paint left folded traces on the surface, establishing analogical relations between disparate parts of the picture, also giving a shimmering effect. This, she explained, reflected the nature of the imagination, further suggesting that comprehension of Andersson's work required this sort of scattered attention.[52]

I now considered using this uneven skimming effect as a method of imbuing the work with similar qualities of imagination. The porous quality of the monotype could be extended as a panoramic interior. The broken quality of the print's surface combined with the dynamics of tonal changes, imbuing the work with a shimmering effect.

I speculated that my proposed approach with colour and light, the uneven open quality of the monotype, the flipping of figure and ground throughout the expanded scale, might contribute to conveying affect through immersion and a sense of spatial and temporal length in this context.

Fig. 2.7. *Riverbend* by Sidney Nolan (1964–65)

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[52] Midori Matsui, *In and Out of the Visible Frame*, *Mamma Andersson*, Stockholm: Modern Museet, 2007, 3.

Immersion

I had frequently visited the painting, *Riverbend* (Fig.2.7) by Sidney Nolan, on permanent display at the Drill Hall Gallery in Canberra, and I found in it a similar folded and shimmering quality to that of Andersson's paintings. Nolan achieved this effect by removing areas of paint in a similar way to the reductive technique used in monotypes, as well as by skimming over the surface with a paintbrush.

I found it amazing to think of Nolan in London in 1965, distanced from the Goulburn River at Shepparton, making this eleven-metre panoramic series from memory; the place so familiar to him that he was able to recall and recreate it in only a few days. Nolan's lived experience of the heat and silence of that eucalypt forest, the colours, the shapes, and the atmosphere are skilfully conveyed to us through his painting. This affect is conveyed to me on each of my return visits. Nolan acted as 'a sensitive plate', as Cezanne put it; holding onto his memories of the lived experience of place, he was later able to create the painting.

My own experience of immersion on my visits to Nolan's panoramic series influenced my decision to create an immersive monotype. I was similarly influenced by the memorable experience of the installation *'45* by the contemporary artist, Georg Baselitz on a field trip to Europe in 2014.

Fig. 2.8. Georg Baselitz, *'45* (detail) 1989*,*

Fig. 2.9. Georg Baselitz *'45* (1989)

The work, '*45* is made up of twenty incised and painted wooden panels, each 200cm x 160cm in size and set about 10cm apart, in a gridded arrangement, covering a whole wall of the gallery space (Fig.2.8). The wall was evenly lit by natural and artificial light. As I entered the gallery from the left, I was amazed, not only by the scale and the monumental nature of the work, but by its rawness and vitality (Fig.2.9). I paced the length of it, then back again. Having already walked nearly fifty metres, I moved away at several points to try to take it all in, then backwards and forwards, alternately seduced by the brash materiality at close range, then by the overall rhythm from a distance. I realised that the immersive quality that I aimed for, came from the sense of rhythm as well as the scale and the bodily engagement I experienced in walking backwards and forwards and travelling the length several times. This understanding encouraged me to plan a work of spatial and temporal length that would engage the viewer from close range and at a distance.

The layering of paint and incisions on the boards of *'45* also had a repetitive and rhythmical quality that influenced my thinking in ways to depict the layering of

memories in *Annie's Room*, a space redolent with dreams and memories. I
wanted to express a sense of passing time. As the project progressed, memory
and imagination played a greater part in the development of my imagery and I
found new ways to depict memories with the monotype.

Fig. 2.10. Susan Chancellor *Annie's Room,* (2014 -15)

The production of *Annie's Room* did not involve the complicated overlapping of
plates as my previous monotypes had done, but in this new work the larger
scale plates and paper with dimensions of 100cm x 70cm required exacting
referencing of imagery and colour, from one plate to another, whilst working in
reverse. Careful planning and experimentation were required. I devised a
technique of cutting and collaging areas of imagery, to mitigate errors made
with this uncertain technique (Fig.2.11).

Fig. 2.11. Collaging technique.

Having observed the dynamic effects of Baselitz' layering with different media, I
enlivened the surface and increased contrast of *Annie's Room* with the addition
of pastel, suggesting the layering of memories (Fig.2.12).

Memory and time

I set out to depict the decades of memories held within a space where generations of this extended family group had gathered for holidays and anniversaries.

In reflecting on memory and time I drew from the work of the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, whose insights enhanced my understanding of the way memory operates in the brain. He contends that the autobiographical self is under a continuous process of reconstruction, the present always being flanked by the past and our anticipation of the future.[53] We now know that memory is subjective and unreliable and that gaps and distortions exist in the replaying of past events, while some memories are lost and others are distorted.

Working from my own imagination and memories of place in this representation of memory, I found I could distort motifs and alter scale, bringing some elements to the fore, then allowing them to recede and later reappear in a different form and context (Fig.2.12). This, I speculated, would resonate with the way memory operates in the brain. Gaston Bachelard writes about the transsubjectivity of an image, occurring when a poetic image, conjured up by the poet (or artist), is communicated to another person. I took this to have a similar meaning to affect and I aimed for this quality in my imagery.[54]

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[53] Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, (Great Britain: Vintage, 2000).
[54] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994),199.

Fig. 2.12. Annie's Room, detail

When I have engaged with the people and objects in a room, I have caught myself in that moment, remembering the past. According to writer Ian Farr, this phenomenon, the spatialisation of time, was anticipated by Proust's writings. Farr explains the way stereoscopic memory occurs in simultaneous time, where a memory returns involuntarily, having lain forgotten, it can be perceived in that moment as having the same spatial quality as that being experienced in the present, like the simultaneously fused view of the left- and right-hand photographs in the stereoscope.[55]

As Tim Ingold explains in his book, *Lines*, our lives can be imagined as threads braided together rather than as discrete straight lines travelling from point to point, some threads loose, others ending while some continue on, all in some sort of loosely binding synchronicity.[56] In a similar way to Ingold's theory of 'braiding', the philosopher Félix Guattari suggests, "that both the past and future inhere together in a perpetual present, an enduring liquid moment containing

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[55] Tim Ingold, *Lines,* (Oxford, Routledge, 2007) 119.
[56] Félix Guattari, in *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, 1992, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 92 in *Time*, *Documents of Contemporary Art*, (London, Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT Press, 2013),178.

both memory and potentiality".[57] The visual imagery suggested to me by both Ingold and Guattari led me to create a metaphoric representation in a loosely braided fashion.

In A*nnie's Room,* I alluded to my theme of timelessness in the spatial length of the work and in the uneven broken quality of the monotype surface. I created sense of rhythm and flow in the imagery by loosely braiding the imagery together with colour, line, shape and texture, over the spatial and temporal length of the installation, to give a sense of the interconnectedness through the fluctuations and recurrences in family life.

In the final panel of the series, framed family photos depicted on a table top act as reminders of times past, these encouraging the viewer to pause, then to thread a passage back again through the maze of objects, meaningful to this family alone but reminiscent of many others.

Unpredictability and ambiguity

I speculated that the sense of immersion and disorientation would convey a dream-like visual effect, taking the viewer into the world of my subjects.

Through disquiet and confusion in the imagery I aimed to convey my own feelings about family life and depict the way my memory has operated when recalling a physical space and the events that have occurred there. As discussed in Chapter One, unpredictability and ambiguity are qualities of the monotype and I planned to emphasise this quality of disruption to the figure and ground, and create ambiguity in the imagery on a much greater scale than I had in my previous monotypes.

Fig. 2.13. Disjointed imagery panel to panel

In *Annie's Room*, the alternating shimmering or folded effect over an extended length was combined with more localised flipping of the figure and ground and with exchanges of colours between figure to ground. The ambiguity of these combined effects was intended to create confusion and disturb the viewer, reminding them of their own experiences. I worked on these devices as I moved along the spatial and temporal length of the panorama, panel to panel. Where the separate monotype panels met I was able to cause further disruption by leaving small gaps and exaggerating the interruptions to the flow of imagery with dissonant changes (Fig.2.13). This also had the effect of reflecting my theme of change through time.

As I proceeded I reflected on the complexity of the subject of family life, the complexity of memory reflecting the complexity of my studio practice at this stage of my research.

Repetition, flow and rhythm

Reiteration, recurrence and repetition all play a part in emphasising my theme of the passing of time. Reiteration is an integral part of the monotype process, and in this work, reiteration is reflected in the serial repetition of panels and gaps and then again in the recurrent appearances of objects, colours and

shapes throughout the metaphoric narrative. With recurrences of animal and object shapes and patterns, I aimed to demonstrate the way visual recollections may vary from time to time, dominant sometimes and at other times recessive, coloured, shaped and scaled for each of the contexts in which they appeared.

The serial repetitions present in Baselitz' work, *'45* (Fig.2.8)*,* alluded to the sheer numbers of people affected by the Second World War and with this device he memorialised his personal experiences of the war.[58] The serial placement of panels is a type of repetition that can, as the art historian Briony Fer explains, "dramatize the temporal through animating and transforming the most every day and routine habits of looking".[59] Fer suggests we would be lost without repetition as a means of organization of the world and as a reflection of the passing of time.

Once I had placed a few panels horizontally end to end, I noticed that the work was gaining a filmic quality and I observed that, by following the narrative from left to right, the small interruptions acted not only as an organising device but they reflected the interruptions in the diachronic flow of family life Fig. (2.14). As well as rhythms, disruptions occur in family life and in this work they are reflected in the gaps between the panels and the disjointed imagery. The regular gaps also provide a space for the viewer to 'take a breath' in this intensely figured narrative.

There are various ways in which the passing of time is reflected in this work. Robert Morris suggests that art permits "relatively sustained periods of puzzlement and deferred responses – delays in terms of 'truth'"[60] or in the manner of 'affect', which is conveyed before we apprehend the conscious echo of it. Passing of time is reflected in the temporal length of production of the work and I aimed to engage the viewer in the unravelling of inconsistencies and ambiguities through the spatial length of the complex panorama, intending that

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[58] Shulamith Behr, *Baselitz*, London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2007.
[59] Briony Fer, "The Infinite Line", 2004, in *Memory*, *Documents of Contemporary Art,* ed. Ian Farr, (Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT Press, 2012), 73.
[60] Robert Morris, "In Conversation with W.J.T. Mitchell", 1994, in *Memory, Documents of Contemporary Art,* ed. Ian Farr, (Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT press, 2012), 92.

bodily engagement with the work would be experienced in a similar way to my immersive engagement by *Riverbend* and *'45*.

Fig. 2.14. Construction of series, one panel after another at seven metres length

Flux

Another objective was to portray the constant state of flux within a domestic space. Rosalind Krauss suggested that the artist William Kentridge expressed a state of flux in a nation's traumatic history with a new medium, where the viewer could see drawings being made by Kentridge then instantly wiped clean and redrawn by means of video recordings of his actions.[61] In *Annie's Room* the ebb and flow of a family's lived experience was reflected in the continuous flow of imagery; through expressive brush marks, flowing linear markings, linked areas of colour, recurring organic shapes, patterns and furnishings.

Conclusion

The monotype assemblage, *The Family Lounge*, investigates lived experience of family in domestic space. Ghost prints are the material traces of my original portraits and these provide resonances with my emerging theme of passing

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[61] Rosalind Krauss, in "Negative Images", by Lisa Saltzman, in *Memory, Documents of Contemporary Art,* ed. Ian Farr, (Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT press, 2012),195-7.

time and form an expression of bleaching summer sun. Through the dissonance created in the composition I was able to express some of my own remembered feelings of awkwardness that can occur at times in family life. The effects were emphasised by the ambiguous flipping of figure and ground in the ghost image. During the construction of this work, my shift in method towards working from memory led to an emerging interest in the theme of memory.

In *Annie's Room*, I made a significant departure from previous work by taking my imagery entirely from imagination and memory of lived experience. This allowed me greater freedom to explore concepts of memory and passing time in the life of an extended family. In investigating these concepts, I drew on the writings of Antonio Damasio, Henri LeFebvre, Tim Ingold, Gaston Bachelard and Midori Matsui.

In *Annie's Room*, I aimed to engage with the cyclical and pulsating rhythms of family life, the breaths and heartbeats, the footsteps and the recurring celebrations of the occupants of this space and I found these aspects of family life could be sympathetically expressed through rhythm, movement, repetition and recurrence with the monotype and also through a sense of flow and the braiding together of imagery. The further expanded serial panorama, *Annie's Room*, was designed to reflect the temporal length of family life in a metaphoric space and open the space to the flow of affect. I was influenced in expanding the scale of my work and creating immersive effects by the immersive works, *Bend in the River* by Sidney Nolan and *'45* by Georg Baselitz.

The paintings of Mamma Andersson influenced my decision to use shimmering effect to enhance immersive effects and in the methods I used to enhance the perceptual effects of figure and ground disruption, evocative of disruptions in family life and reflecting the operation of memory in the brain.

I found confluences with the work of Kiki Smith, particularly in the theme of transformation that held a resonance with the process of the monotype. The theme of transformation would take on a greater significance in my next monotype, *Generations*. My focus had now begun to shift from familial relations towards the more abstract themes of time, memory, space and transformation.

In response to the feeling of interiority and potential awkwardness of family life indoors, evoked in the investigations of this chapter, in the next chapter I develop these themes with lived experience in nature and open space.

Chapter Three

Introduction

While reflecting on the previous monotype, *Annie's Room*, I realised it was the combined effect of the immersive quality in the expanded scale of the monotype and the inherent qualities of the monotype – its porosity, figure ground disruption, luminosity, unpredictability and energy – that offered potential for the transference of affect. I felt encouraged to explore all of these aspects of the monotype further.

In this chapter I discuss the monotype series, *Generations,* a work of imagination that was created over a sustained period of six months in the studio. The work began with experiments I made with oil monotypes on board. I discuss how my enchantment with the exaggerated effects of compression led to abstracted intuitive imagery that reflected my themes of memory, space and change through time.

At this stage of my research it had become clear that my project was not so much defined by my choice of imagery, but was centrally about the affective potential of the monotype process. This conceptual shift in my research process, working now with intuitively generated imagery, led me to approach this new series with an emphasis on how the monotype's qualities of immersion and luminosity might contribute to the operation of affect. With the objective of furthering the immersive effect in this body of work, I expanded the scale of the work.

This chapter is divided into two parts. I first explain my decisions and preparations for the new imagery, colour and form of the work with a discussion of my influences. These influences include two immersive works: The *Water Lilies* series by Claude Monet and the series *Lepanto* by Cy Twombly.

In the second part of the chapter I explain the resonances I find between rhythms of my body, my life and my work in the studio. The writing of artist and

writer Ross Gibson and the writer and philosopher Henri Lefebvre inform this series in this regard. Questions arise for me about space, rhythm and memory in the composite monotype and this leads me to re-examine the work of Twombly and Monet as well as that of the contemporary painter, Ken Whisson. I also interrogate the positive and negative effects of the gridded format.

As the work progressed, I realised that I had been drawn to nature and specifically to the natural landscape that surrounded me as I worked. Although I had not planned to portray a specific place, the many overlaid memories of a familiar landscape revealed themselves in *Generations* as an abstracted representation of the view from my house.

The title *Generations* seemed apt when I thought about the depiction of place that had emerged from my imagination with intuitively created imagery. I am fortunate enough to live on a tidal estuary. Signs of human life come in the form of vessels on the water and broken shells within the soil, remnants of shellfish consumed by generations of people who were here long before me. This makes me conscious of my generational position in time and my responsibility in reflecting something true to the nature of this place through my work.

Fig. 3.1. *Generations*, gallery view (2016)

Part One: Expansion

I have described the immersive experience I had with Nolan's *Riverbend* and Baselitz' *'45*. Two further experiences influenced my decision to make the large work, *Generations*. I visited Monet's vast installation, the *Waterlilies Series* on my field trip to Europe in 2014, and I encountered Cy Twombly's series, *Lepanto* by chance on another occasion, in 2015. I will describe their influence on my research before I go on to discuss the creation of my own work.

Fig. 3.2. Cy Twombly, *Lepanto(detail)* (2001)

Lepanto

On my way to a wedding in Bavaria, by chance I encountered the immersive installation, *'Lepanto'*, by Cy Twombly, at the Brandhorst Museum in Munich. The permanent installation occupies a large curved wall in a purpose-built space. When I entered the vast three hundred and fifty square metre gallery, my sense of immersion was immediate and I was enraptured by the drama, a sense of enclosure emphasising this effect in the relatively shallow gallery space (Fig.3.2). No more than three or four panels could be viewed at once, the dimensions of each being 216.5cm x 340cm. So, being alone in the gallery, I paced the length, stepping backwards and forwards to observe details, my

bodily engagement similar to that of my visit to *'45* by Georg Baselitz, described in Chapter Two, where the scale and rhythmic quality had influenced me in creating *Annie's Room*.

I was drawn to *Lepanto* by the overwhelming vibrancy of colour as well as the sense of rhythmic alternations in the installation. The series was set out with the first, fourth, eighth and twelfth canvases giving aerial views of abstracted vessels. These motifs, which have also been interpreted as open wounds or fires, were painted with liberal quantities of red and gold. The alternate groups of water motifs were painted in contrasting cobalt and cyan hues.[62] The writer Richard Howard aptly described the visual rhythm in *Lepanto* as a "scrupulously ordered … work in four movements forming a single anthem to the war god".[63] In an interview with Nicholas Serota, Twombly explained his method for the creation of this rhythmic quality. Short of space in his Virginia studio, the canvases were painted in three batches of four at a time, the groups stacked one in front of each other as he worked.[64]

The allusion to the passing of time in the painting's historical subject matter resonated with the sense of passing time in the rhythmic alternations in the work and with my bodily trajectory along the spatial and temporal length of the installation. All of these reinforced the affect I experienced. From my research, I learnt that the scenes depicted in *Lepanto* alluded to a turning point between ancient and modern worlds, the Holy League overcoming the Ottoman Fleet in 1571.[65] Writing about Twombly making *Lepanto* late in life, Howard goes on to make another interpretation that resonated for me: "Twombly has created a Lepanto we have all won and lost, the battle of making art."[66]

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[62] Anna Rühl, *The Museum Brandhorst*, (English Edition, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2013), 18-19.
[63] Richard Howard, "On Lepanto", 2001, in *Writings on CyTwombly,* ed. Nicola del Roscio, (Schirmer/Mosel, 2002), 302.
[64] Cy Twombly in interview with Nicholas Serrota, *Cycles and Seasons,* (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), 52-53.
[65] Anna Rühl, *The Museum Brandhorst*, (English Edition, Munich: C.H. Beck, 2013).
[66] Richard Howard, "On Lepanto", 2001, in *Writings on CyTwombly,* ed. Nicola del Roscio, (Schirmer/Mosel, 2002), 297-298.

Water lilies

I shared Claude Monet's interest in the subject matter of nature, including reflected light and movement in water. On a field trip in 2014, I made a long anticipated visit to the *Waterlilies Series* at Orangerie Museum in Paris and this visit had a profound influence on me through its immersive quality, sense of rhythmic movement, and the sense of timelessness in nature that it conveyed. The *Waterlilies Series* occupies the curved walls of two spacious rooms connected by passageways, in the form of the sign for infinity, this symbolising peace at the end of the First World War[67] (Fig.3.3).
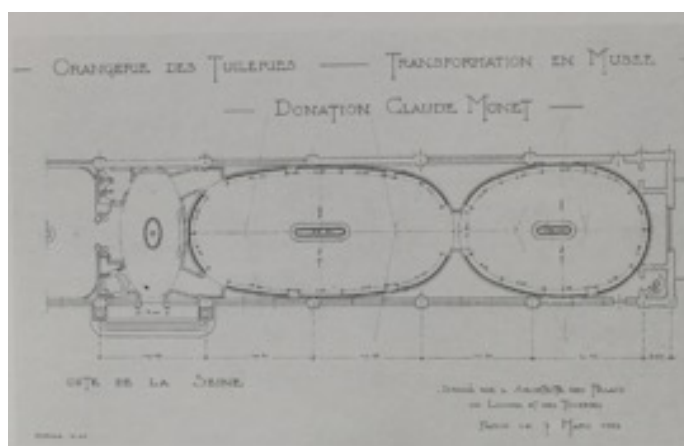
Fig. 3.3. Layout for *Waterlilies Series* (left)
Fig. 3.4. Claude Monet, *Green Reflections* (detail)
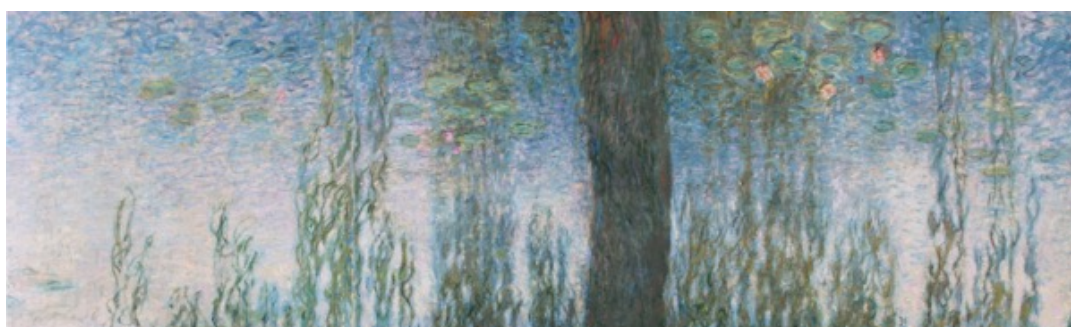
Fig. 3.5. Claude Monet, *Waterlilies Series*, *Morning with Weeping Willows* (detail) (1914–26)

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[67] "The Water-Lily Cycle", *Orangerie Visitor Guide*, (Paris: Éditions Artlys, 2012), 16-17.

Keen to understand how Monet had achieved the immersive quality I experienced, I observed a number of contributing factors, including the vast scale and continuous flow of imagery. There was an implied rhythm in the flowing water and a rhythm in the placement of the waterlily pads.[68]

The lack of orienting cues, the absence of horizon lines and the inverted reflections (Figs.3.4 and 3.5) gave the imagery an ambiguous quality, amplifying the sense of immersion. Monet, forced to work close to the canvases due to their size, had moved from canvas to canvas, painting from multiple focal points, reinforcing the sense of immersion. Later, as I worked on *Generations*, I was similarly positioned in a shallow space in my studio and forced to work at close range, and by then I was aware that I could use this to advantage in my own work.[69]

I might have sensed the rhythmic qualities more intensely and become more immersed in the *Waterlilies Series* had I been alone. There was no room in this museum to pace up and down. The crowds formed their own slowly moving dense river, so I bided my time for the prime viewing spots where I was able to stop for a while and imbibe the spectacle until I felt I could hold onto my embodied vision well enough to reflect on it later*.*

I questioned how I might create qualities of rhythmic movement and ambiguous spatial and temporal qualities in a form that would engage the viewer from close range and from a distance. I decided to create a monotype wall composed of thirty six individual monotypes speculating that I might be able to engage the viewer with close range and distant views as well as multiple viewpoints.

Dates were secured several months in advance for an exhibition entitled *Re:Space,* at M16 Gallery in Canberra, where I could test these propositions. With my co-exhibitors, I negotiated a wall space of 7.2 metres wide by 4.2 metres high. In contrast to the step by step development of *Annie's Room*, where I had responded to observations and experimentation as they occurred in

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[68] Jeremy Lewison, *Turner, Monet, Twombly: Later Paintings*, (London: Tate Publishing, 2011), 116.
[69] Ibid, 58.

the studio, I pre-planned each aspect of the relatively ambitious new work to fit the time schedule.

The monotype, creating new imagery

Fig. 3.6. *Generations*, (detail) (2016)

While experimenting with the monotype on boards I became fascinated by the extreme reaction of the oil paint to compression on a less absorbent surface, by either spreading out further or releasing contact more readily, thus generating an even more porous image than those on paper (3.6). I wanted to emphasise the rawness, vibrancy and exaggerated abstraction that this delivered, and this led me to search for simplified, intuitive forms from my imagination to express my growing interest in memory and change.

By now it had become clear that my project was centrally about the affective potential of the monotype process. In *Generations (3.1)*, I departed from imagery that related to specific people and places and relied on intuitive imagery entirely. Reflecting on these images, I realised that I was being drawn to natural forms for this body of work.

Working from imagination and intuition, I began to 'doodle'. All my life I had drawn roughly triangular somewhat organic crystalline forms. They seemed to relate to landforms or rocks or perhaps even to cells. I altered the spatial contexts of the pencil sketches, linking some and disconnecting others, mindful

of the shapes between, my pencil wandering intuitively over the paper. Lines took their own paths, some lingering while volumes grew then flattened and dissolved. I continued to add dimensions to these motifs then flatten them, making them appear to move in space, some compact and others loose. On this occasion, I was turned towards my newly constructed wall on the long southern side of my studio. In the window above the wall I spotted a cumulus cloud passing by. I captured it, as an abstracted version. In my mind, it turned in space above me.

As these abstracted gestures and images recurred I recognised their potential in exploring the territory between abstraction and representation, and indeed in describing processes of change through time. I planned for each of the thirty six boards to have unique imagery, only loosely linked to others by colour, line or shape. In this way, I would explore the metaphoric relationship between individual and community.

Contextualizing intuitive and gestural imagery

The development and execution of the new motifs for *Generations* was an important point of departure. I speculated that allowing my hand and my intuition to take precedence over the 'presence' of working from life would allow for freer associations with an experiential source. In Chapter Two I discussed how I had translated my understanding of the function of memory into a visual form in *Annie's Room*. In developing the new imagery, I felt strangely afloat, unconnected to an event, place or person. In the new work, the visual outcome would be largely unpredictable.

Although the forms and images began as intuitive scribbles drawn from memories, these figures drove the creation of the more purposeful imagery that eventually populated *Generations*. Some gesturally drawn forms representing clouds and rocks for instance, could be interpreted by the viewer as symbolic of and belonging to the natural world. Crystalline forms that seemed to unfold into geometric shapes then minimal lines and marks signified movement, change, breaking up and transformation.

This was both exciting and daunting. To help me think about the new imagery and to contextualise it, I returned to Monet's *Waterlilies Series* and to Twombly's *Lepanto* to examine the gestural brush marks these artists had made in response to memory.

Given the large scale of his late canvases, (approximately two metres by three metres), Monet altered his practice of painting *en plein air* and began to derive imagery from sketches and memory. The motifs of lily pads and light reflected on water from Monet's home garden at Giverny featured in approximately two hundred paintings, evidence of his vast memory store of this subject. I was interested to understand why Monet had made a shift towards abstraction so late in life and speculated that both the altered practice of working from memory and his poor eye sight may have contributed to the shift to broad gestural brushstrokes and a further flattening of the depth within the illusory space. Another factor lending itself to a more abstracted conception of the pictorial space was Monet's tilting of the plane of the water's surface vertically, thus paralleling the picture plane and creating an 'all over' continuous pictorial field.[70]

I found myself drawn to Twombly's sweeping gestural marks in *Lepanto*. These reflected the speed of his actions and the length of his reach, this series taking only two or three days to paint, in contrast to Monet's twelve year marathon.[71] I noted the speedily applied brushstrokes, the paint stick and pencil marks as traces of the artist's bodily movement at close range. I found Richard Schiff's observation regarding the similarity in the image creation of Twombly and Willem de Kooning illuminating. He remarked that both artists "generated paintings out of 'nothing' by allowing feeling to congeal in the form of dissociated marks that grow into association, barely".[72]

Roland Barthes, who described his own attempt to imitate Twombly's gestural techniques, made the observation that Twombly's gestural line was inimitable and by extension, that one's body was inimitable, suggesting that the imprint left

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[70] Jeremy Lewison, *Turner, Monet, Twombly: later paintings,* (UK: Tate Gallery of London, 2012).
[71] "The Water-Lily Cycle", *Orangerie Visitor Guide*, (Paris: Éditions Artlys, 2012), 20.
[72] Richard Schiff, "Charm", in *Cycles and Seasons*, by Cy Twombly*,* (London: Tate Publishing, 2008), 25.

by an artist's body as index had the potential "to seduce, transport or derange the body of another".[73] I aimed to engage my viewers with the material qualities of the new monotypes on board from an intimate distance and from afar. The addition of pastel to surface of some panels would enhance this effect.

Fig. 3.7. Ken Whisson, *Outer Suburb of Melbourne under Rain* (1994)

It was Whisson's intriguing gestural imagery that influenced me most in my new imagery. It was different from that of the overlaid brush marks of Monet and from the speedily and roughly applied brush marks of Twombly. It seemed to me to be more intuitive and more playful. In the painting, *Outer Suburb of Melbourne under Rain* (Fig.3.7), I observed that the gestural marks, constructed with smaller body movements than those of Monet and Twombly, also seemed more pre-considered.

It had been my practice to work in the territory between representation and abstraction and I planned to continue this in *Generations*. Whisson had begun painting in Australia in the 1960s when a sharp divide existed between those

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[73] Barthes, Roland, in *Writings on CyTwombly,* ed. Nicola del Roscio, (Schirmer/Mosel, 2002), 97.

painters who followed representation and those who moved towards abstraction, and Whisson has straddled both sides of this divide throughout his lengthy career.[74] In doing this, Whisson has developed a unique visual language which, as John MacDonald aptly put it, "he re-presents the world in an order of his own instinctive devising. We are then able to reflect more deeply on it".[75]

On re-examining Whisson's paintings in the context of this project I was struck by their close relationship to the monotype in their qualities of spatial openness, dynamism and of incompleteness, his paintings opening potential for the transfer of affect in a similar way to the monotype.

Planning for colour and light

"Colour helps to express light, not the physical phenomenon, but the only light that really exists, that in the artist's brain". [76]

Light is a vibrational field of energy and the luminosity emanating from a light source reflects off a pigmented surface onto the rods of the viewer's retina, where it is optically blended and interpreted by the brain.[77] As part of the planning process, I questioned how I might generate a luminous atmospheric effect in *Generations*. I found the luminosity of the sparkling white paper was lost in the expanses of white gesso, also the bland materiality of the ground did not invite touch as the paper had, so I began a new technique of colouring the boards with thin washes of gouache. I discovered that by painting directly onto an absorbent surface with water based paint I could enhance the luminosity and add complexity to the image. In my decision to create layers, I considered the expressive complex layering of Bruno Leti's monotypes.

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[74] Glenn Barkley and Lesley Harding, *Ken Whisson: As If,* (Melbourne: Heide Museum of Modern Art, 2012),15.
[75] John MacDonald, cited in *Ken Whisson: As If,* (Melbourne: Heide Museum of Modern Art, 2012), 30.
[76] Henri Matisse, "The Role and Modalities of Colour", 1945, in *Colour: Documents of Contemporary Art,* ed. David Batchelor, (London: Whitechapel, MIT Press, 2008), 99.
[77] Merv Moriarty, *Colour: The Definitive Guide*, (Wallagoot: Merv Moriarty Artist Education, 2011), Chapter Two.

Fig. 3.8. Paul Klee, *Abend in N* (1937)

I was influenced in my decision to colour each panel differently by the writing of art critic and writer, Rosalind Krauss, who saw the grid in the twentieth century as an element of modernity, its progress beginning with scientific discoveries in visual perception where coloured particles were broken up into a grid like form.[78] Although I realised Krauss was not writing about paintings, the idea of particles of coloured light reminded me of the multi-coloured luminous grids of the painter, Paul Klee, whose paintings I had long admired, for example, *Abend in N* (Fig.3.8), and this influenced me in my decision to apply a different coloured wash to each monotype.

Thinking about how I might apply colour to my grid of thirty six panels, I saw the opportunity to create a field of coloured rectangles set out so that they might appear to pulsate, reflecting light in the atmosphere. The illusion of movement could suggest bodily rhythms of breath and pulse, enhancing the immersive effect of the large-scale installation and connecting it to lived experience of

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[78] Rosalind Krauss, "Grids", *October*, MIT Press, vol.9, (summer, 1979): 57.

nature. I aimed for a harmonious combination by exploring the variables of colour, hue, tone and purity.

In choosing a very high key palette for the gouache washes I was influenced by the paleness and fragility of the paintings by Agnes Martin, which I had seen at the Tate Modern in London in 2015. I was attracted by the reductive and repetitive qualities of her paintings and the translucency of her colour and this led me to develop a high key colour field.

I planned to generate a gentle blue and red light from the work and therefore chose a harmonious palette limited to red, magenta, purple and blue. I began a new painting technique. By mixing containers of diluted gouache colours, some pure and some impure and in various strengths, I applied the paint to the boards by several methods; by brushing, pooling and dripping.

Fig. 3.9. washes drying

Fig. 3.10. initial colour arrangement

Wonderfully transparent colours appeared as the paint dried on the absorbent gesso, with a fragility reminiscent of Martin's paintings. It seemed possible to look through the painted layer beyond the surface of the ground (Figs.3.6, 3.9, 3.10). The results were unpredictable, with individual subtle markings, where traces of the methods of paint application seemed to resonate with the reflection of light on water and movement of moisture in the atmosphere. Across the surface of the wall, I arranged the panels into harmonious groups, with colour shifts from red on the left, towards cobalt/ultramarine blue in the centre, then further shifting towards magenta on the right.

Part Two: Resolution

Lived experience in the studio

In Part One I described my plans and preparations for the project but I understood that a large part of the research would take me into the unknown. In the essay, *The Known World*, artist and philosopher Ross Gibson explains that there are two ways of knowing, the explicit that requires analytical and critical skills, and the implicit, or embodied, knowledge. Using both, the artist puts herself at the inside and the outside of the work almost simultaneously.[79] Gibson's essay contextualised my lived experience in the studio where I combined tacit knowledge with analytical skills to create a complex work of art.

When I began to integrate the different aspects of *Generations*, I discovered that the intensity of colour and raw vibrancy that had so fascinated me in my experiments with the oil monotype on board had come to dominate the subtle washes and disrupt the harmonious arrangement of my initial translucent grounds. I questioned how I might go about creating harmonious relationships with such complex work. Gibson cites the writing of the philosopher Paul Cilliers, whose observations resonated with my dilemma in the studio: "Complexity cannot be reduced to simple, coherent, and universally valid discourses." He goes on to explain that when we pause to consider the flow of 'action-and-reaction' in creative experience, many of our precepts will fail or need adjustment, and once we stop to analyse these and propose further strategies we then take these back into the studio, and so this process continues on. He describes the rhythm of this narrative as 'restless'.[80]

Restless flow of 'action-and-reaction' was certainly my experience during this six month period of intense studio practice. I faced an unpredictable outcome as I worked experimentally to create effective relationships and cohesion, in

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[79] Ross Gibson, "The Known World", TEXT Special Issue, Symposium: *Creative and Practice-led Research: Current Status, Future Plans*, Oct. 2010.

[80] Paul Cilliers, *Complexity and Postmodernism*, cited in "The Known World", TEXT Special Issue, Symposium: *Creative and Practice-led Research: Current Status, Future Plans*, Oct. 2010.

exploring my themes of time, space and memory. Over these months my daily bodily activity in the studio soon took on a rhythm of its own. Alert in the mornings, having reassessed the final steps taken from the previous day, I would shift the positions of panels, reassess the effect of my alterations, then begin a new process of paint removal followed by painting and printing as required. Placing myself in front of the work as a viewer I became aware that every move and decision I made would immediately change the way the work would be received. This caused me to slow my *action and reaction* working process.

Unconsciously, during sleep, my mind would continue to work.

Although I thought I was managing to keep body and soul together I knew I had placed myself in dangerous territory when I remembered a vivid dream. I dreamt one night that I was walking across a field of slippery sodden clay that opened up at regular intervals into deep chasms. I needed to make one step at a time, gingerly onwards, scanning the landscape for new openings where, had I slipped I would not be seen again. Although it seemed ridiculous to need to make this regular journey, for some reason I was doing it…

I found it was not possible to make useful reassessments without intervals of rest, so the mundane tasks and distractions in the kitchen and garden were helpful when a solution was not immediately apparent. These daily rhythms reflected the changes I was making to the wall, in allowing rhythmic spaces to interrupt the busy gestural markings over the surface of the wall.

In his book *Rhythmanalysis[81],* Henri Lefebvre poses questions about time and space in relationship to the rhythms of everyday life. I found myself, in the context of this project, paying particular attention to the rhythms both inside and outside my body. Two seasons passed, along with my daily routines. I was often aware of my heartbeat, and my surging pulse rate, in tune with successes and failures, then settling overnight and in calmer times. Lefebvre suggests that

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[81] Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis: space, time and everyday life,* (London: Bloomsbury Revelations, 2015).

the sum of these personal and shared rhythms is woven into a fabric of 'the present' in our presence, if we wish to give them our attention.[82]
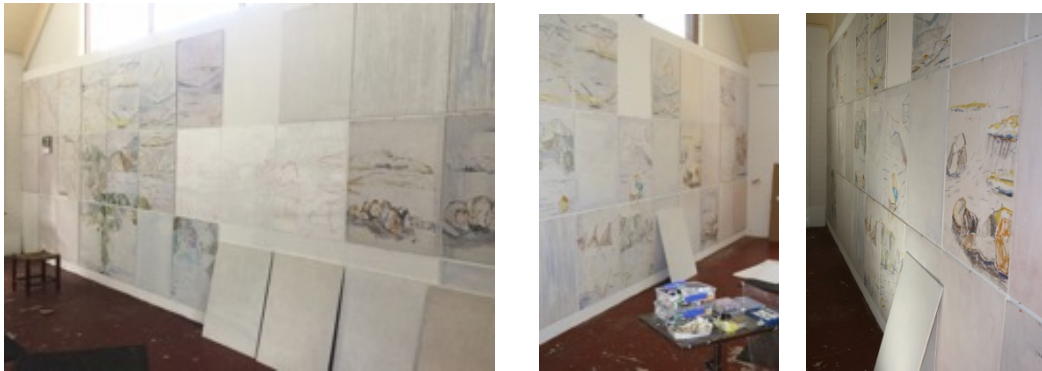
Fig. 3.11. The disassembling and reassembling of panels

As I progressed, each step became more deliberate and prudent. I attempted to make alterations using the two painting techniques in tandem when possible, the oil paint requiring turpentine for removal and the gouache, water. Complete removal was impossible, many panels being recoated in layered gesso or the reverse sides repurposed for painting. I engaged myself in creating links in colour, lines and shapes, from panel to panel, whilst the space began to open up in the composition (3.11).

Day after day I worked along in sections, altering imagery and allowing space to punctuate the surface, the larger artwork began to breathe and the atmosphere found a balance with the imagery. In achieving this, little by little I began to breathe more easily myself.

When I reflected on the harmonious arrangement of colours I had taken time to recreate, I felt it lacked vigour and this led me to a decision to add a note of dissonance to the field of colour. This was achieved by the addition of minute quantities of yellow, a hue originally excluded from my palette. Two panels running vertically from the top near the centre formed a complement to the adjacent violet panels, enlivening the whole wall with simultaneous contrast. Even a small quantity of diluted yellow in a field of reds and blues will draw the eye, as Wassily Kandinsky explained: "Yellow, if steadily gazed at in any

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[82] Ibid. Chapter Two.

geometric form is insistent and aggressive in character."[83] The field of colour was transformed to illuminate the monotype.

Setting out the composition with spaces between panels created similar effects of rhythmic punctuations over the temporal length of the work, as in the previous series, *Annie's Room*. However, the spatial aspect in *Generations* had expanded from this previous work with the building of a gridded composition. My bodily progress across the wall, column by column reflected the emerging visual rhythm in the work. Rosalind Krauss suggests that the grid offers both a spatial and a temporal aspect.[84] One of my key objectives in creating *Generations* was to explore the complex relationships between individual monotypes and those between the individual and the whole composition. Questions about the formal and emotional effects of gridded arrangements arose for me.

Grid

I began to consider other gridded artworks. Looking back at two works I had made in the past, I was interested to see that the themes of passing time and memory were present in the photographic work, *Starling Street* (Fig.3.12), from the 1970s and in *Snapshots of Broken Hill, Heydays*, from 2011 (Fig.3.13). The first was my response as an undergraduate art student to a familiar space, and an expression of time and place, flattened and preserved by multiple images from a single focal point. *Snapshots of Broken Hill, Heydays*, was created in a multi-focal gridded composition recalling my memories of time spent in Broken Hill and reflecting the many traces of the past that I observed in the mining city whose hey days had passed. Both of these works relied on the photographic content in contrast to the intuitively developed later work, *Generations*, but the themes of passing time and memory were recurring.

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[83] Wassily Kandinsky, "Concerning the Spiritual in Art", 1911, in *Colour: Documents of Contemporary Art,* ed. David Batchelor, (London: Whitechapel, MIT Press, 2008), 59.
[84] Rosalind Krauss, "Grids", *October*, MIT Press, vol.9, (summer, 1979): 51, 55.

Fig. 3.12. Susan Chancellor, *Starling Street*, photographic grid (1975)
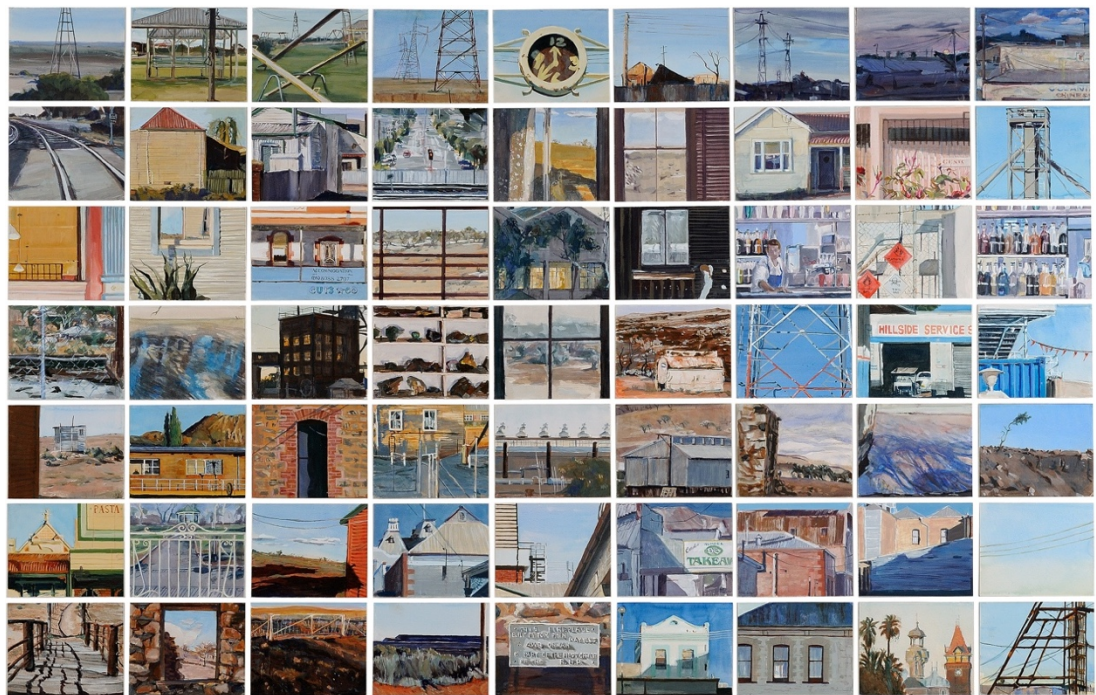
Fig. 3.13. *Snapshots of Broken Hill, Heydays* (2011)

I investigated devices and techniques that might be useful in finding a balance between unity and disunity in the composition. Applying psychoanalytic theory to gridded work, Rosalind Krauss suggested that traumatic stories can be repressed within the grid, promoting endless repetitions of the same conflict.[85]

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[85] Rosalind Krauss, "Grids", *October*, MIT Press, vol.9, (summer, 1979): 59.

This applied to Baselitz' work, '*45*, discussed in Chapter Two, where a consistency in techniques, layering and imagery lent cohesion to the work while it also expressed his theme of mass losses of life caused by war.

Fig. 3.14. Imants Tillers, *Double Reality (self portrait),* (2016)

As I was writing about the grid, Imants Tillers' painting, *Double Reality (self portrait*) (Fig.3.14), was conveniently hanging in the Archibald Prize exhibition at my local Regional Gallery in Bega, so I was able to carefully observe his methods. I was interested in understanding how Tillers had created cohesion in his work and noted that he had used the device of repeating motifs and evenly scattering them throughout the composition. The canvas boards, tightly abutted, diminished the gridded effect and his limited palette of pink, black and white with small amounts of complementary green also enhanced the cohesive effect, as did the text inscribed across adjacent panels. I have observed Tillers' use of these sorts of devices in other examples of his work, where he has painted images across the whole gridded surface, achieving cohesion in this way while at the same time activating the surface with a pixelated appearance. The arts writer Robert Hughes explained that this effect was based on the scientific studies of visual perception, especially those of Eugene Chevreul, 1839, where

he showed that local colour was mixed in the eye. The interference of these colour aureoles meant that each colour changed its neighbour, meaning that colour perception then was a matter of interaction, a web of connected events.[86] In *Generations,* I found that while the pixelated appearance also helped to activate the surface, this effect was enhanced by my palette and arrangement of colours that generated a pulsating effect, suggesting air movement in the atmosphere.

In *Generations*, the distinctive appearance of the monotype was a unifying factor in the composition, as was the reiteration of some of the forms, a device facilitated by the monotype process. However, other factors tended to create disunity, such as the spacing between the monotypes and the highly individualised imagery that I created for each panel. I made the decision to do this for three reasons. First, I aimed to explore relationships between individuals. Secondly, I aimed to demonstrate my theme of change through time with a range of imagery from representational to abstract, as in the example below (Fig.3.15). Further, I aimed to enhance the immersive quality of the work with multiple viewpoints. Affect is not only enhanced by the bodily engagement of scale and by multiple viewpoints but with multiple panels the effect of seriality through repetition created a different kind of affect.

Fig. 3.15. *Generations* (detail)

Opening space – generating affect

With the objective of finding a balance between unity and disunity, I decided to open up the overall space further, create a greater sense of rhythm and create

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[86] Robert Hughes, "The Landscape of Pleasure", in *The Shock of the New,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 114.

links between monotypes with colour, lines, shapes and textures. In addition, I planned to create the illusion of directional movement. I speculated that with these devices I might generate resonances with atmospheric light and air movement, and the ebb and flow of life.

Fig. 3.16. Ken Whisson, *Traveller's Tale*, (1986)

I returned to Monet, Twombly and Whisson to examine the 'space' in their work and look for its meaning. I learnt that the poet Stéphane Mallarmé was Monet's friend and influence and that his writings had also influenced Twombly. Mallarmé saw the structure of poetry as a series of words and absences and he believed that emptiness, or the spaces in a poem, mattered as much as the fullness, or the words.[87] I observed this influence in the *Waterlilies Series* where the balance between space and imagery, stillness and action, had been achieved by Monet in the rhythmic arrangements of lily motifs and empty watery depths where it seemed the rhythms of life were reflected. *Lepanto* moved along at a more energetic pace but was also rhythmically paced, spaces alternating with activity.

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[87] Robert Hughes, "The Landscape of Pleasure", in *The Shock of the New,* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2013), 121-124.

Monet and Twombly were in the final years of their lives when they painted *Waterlilies* and *Lepanto.* These paintings and Whisson's *Outer Suburb of Melbourne under Rain* (Fig.3.7) and *Traveller's Tale* (Fig.3.16) all derive imagery from remembered landscapes, with the associated feelings and emotions that are attached to memories. The feelings of nostalgia for changing times and loss of culture are conveyed to me in the judicious spacing that occurs in the paintings. A sense of uncertainty is also conveyed through ambiguity in the imagery, through openness and incompleteness. I recognised that the spacing and placing of the imagery in these works was both purposeful and intuitive, operating at an implicit level. It is not only the placing of an image within a field that requires skill but it is also the pacing, an intuitive skill understood at a bodily level where rhythms of the body resonate with the creation of artwork, as discussed in Ross Gibson's paper.[88]

Siri Hustvedt observes that a story's meaning is not purely semantic but it lives in bodily rhythms, juxtapositions and surprising metaphors in which one's sense invades or evokes bodily memories in the observer.[89] I have described earlier in this chapter how my studio processes became entangled with the rhythms of my body and with passing time. I had opened up the space in *Generations* and scattered the imagery in a manner resonant with the way in which I now understood memory to operate in the brain. The work thus began to reveal the source of my intuitive imagery as derived from deeply overlaid memories. The outcome of my sustained lived experience in the studio unfolded as a visual reflection of my lived experience of place, in *Generations*.

Like Cezanne, who saw himself as 'a plate' capable of absorbing his subject and transferring his sensations onto the canvas directly, I now saw myself as 'a plate', capable of absorbing my subject, in this case, of my lived experience of place. My experiences were delivered by a more circuitous route, however, first through my memory bank and then through the monotype process. Through these processes they had become more scattered, more open and more abstract, and thus able to convey affect.

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[88] Ross Gibson, "The Known World", TEXT Special Issue, Symposium: *Creative and Practice-led Research: Current Status, Future Plans*, Oct. 2010.
[89] Siri Hustvedt, *A Woman looking at Men Looking at Women: Essays on Art, Sex and the Mind*, (Simon and Schuster, New York, 2016), 375.

Fig. 3.17. *Generations* (2016)

Fig. 3.18. Late afternoon light on the lake view (2016)

An abstracted version of my own living 'view' had only revealed itself over time. The northern view from my house (Fig.3.18), now transformed (Fig.3.17), appeared in abstracted form as the monotype, *Generations*. It came to me as a strange and slow realisation. In this way, a third type of lived experience had emerged unbidden from my memory store. My view is as familiar to me as Monet's waterlilies, Whisson's landscapes and Twomby's Italian coast line was to them, memory overlaid over memory, time after time.

My wall, I came to realise, specifically reflected the late afternoon or early evening light, not a particular moment but a scattering of memory from many afternoons. One particular afternoon as I took in my lake view, I listened to

Hindustani music on the radio. I am drawn to the rhythmic qualities of Indian music, while knowing little about it. They were playing an afternoon raga and I learnt that traditionally, certain sorts of music are played to suit times of day or season, every piece improvised. The music seemed to resonate with rhythmic qualities of *Generations.*[90]

Conclusion

My main aim for this stage of my research was to explore ways the monotype might deliver an affective engagement by expanding on the immersive potential that I had created in *Annie's Room*, and I set out to achieve this through a further expanded scale, multiple viewpoints, a sense of rhythm and directional movement across a large pictorial field.

With a shift to intuitive imagery I made further explorations into the qualities of vitality and porosity offered by the monotype, creating potential for the transfer of affect. I speculated that by generating a sense of luminosity I might enhance the immersive potential of the work and better express my lived experience in nature. The potential for resonance with atmospheric phenomena was enhanced by a luminous palette.

By working intuitively, I was able to find new expression for overlaid memories, furthering my interrogation of the theme of memory. The imagery I created for *Annie's Room* was very dense and enclosed despite its length of over seven metres. In contrast, the openness, scattered abstracted imagery and scale of *Generations* offered a different way for the viewer to engage their own imagination and memories. While *Annie's Room* might have brought back memories of family life, *Generations* opened potential for engaging with both the rhythms in nature and bodily rhythms, resonant with the ebbs and flows of lived experience.

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[90] Aneesh Pradhan and Adrian McNeil, playing tabla and sarod on ABC Radio National "Afternoons", accessed 29-06-16.

My lived experience in the studio was informed by the writing of Henri Lefebvre and Ross Gibson, and the work was illuminated throughout by immersive paintings by Claude Monet, Cy Twombly and the paintings of Ken Whisson.

In *Generations*, relationships were explored in many ways between the paint and the support, between oil and water based media, between abstraction and representation, colour and tone, and between quiet space and active space in the compositional arrangement of the monotypes. I found I was becoming interested in this idea of between-ness and decided to explore this further with my next monotypes.

In the next chapter I will explain the development of new monotypes as I continue to explore themes of memory, timelessness and between-ness through my lived experience of weather.

Chapter Four

Introduction

Through the sustained production of *Generations* in the studio, I had become interested in and sensitive to the qualities of luminosity and movement in the atmosphere. After the M16 exhibition, I visited Lord Howe Island where I became aware of different weather conditions, wind and rain events occurring daily.

In this final stage of my research I aimed to investigate the phenomenon of the moisture cycle and explore ways to transfer my sense of immersion in weather through the monotype.

My research included investigating the scientific fundamentals of moisture and light in the atmosphere. I also researched the history of cloud painters with an emphasis on John Constable, with whom I found some resonances.

In my early experimental monotypes, a series of three vertical panels, *Lifting and Falling*, I explored ways to depict the effect of light on clouds and the clouds' shadows on earth and sea, while reflecting my vertical viewpoint as I watched cloud movement above me. In the next work, a composite monotype, *Cloud/Light*, I explored ways to depict movement and buoyancy in clouds and luminosity in the atmosphere. I provide a summary of my findings for these experimental works and the questions that arose in the course of these series.

Through the final monotypes *Questions about Weather*, I planned to create a sense of the unpredictable nature of weather and my bodily relationship to weather with spontaneous gestural imagery on paper. Before proceeding with my final monotypes, I examined the work of gestural painters, Elisabeth Cummings, Ian Fairweather and Joy Hester, who had conveyed affect to me

through their paintings. My aim was to gain some insight into their methods and contextualise my work.

Finally, I discuss how the writers George Rowley, François Jullien and Hubert Damisch illuminate the conceptual, gestural and spatial qualities of Chinese ink and brush painting, thus informing my practice. I found strong resonances in the Chinese paintings with the in-between state of the monotype and my themes of change, timelessness and delivery of affect.

Impetus and influences

On Lord Howe Island in October 2016, I experienced different weather conditions from those at home, and observed the daily accumulation of cloud around Mount Gower, the wind shifting these clouds across the landscape. This was followed by rain in the afternoon. I became more attentive to alterations in the weather, experiencing movement, heat, light and moisture through my eyes and skin in a kind of 'measuring' of atmospheric changes. I was reminded again of Cézanne's description of his phenomenological experience in landscape. Like Cezanne, I felt like a 'sensitive plate', but where his sensations were transferred directly to the canvas, mine would transfer through memory to the printing plate, to be transferred and transformed once again as a monotype.

Away from my studio, with only the basic tools of charcoal and small sketch pad at hand, I sketched the landscape out of doors (Fig.4.2).
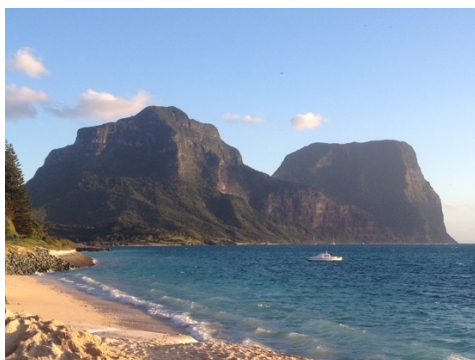
Fig. 4.1. Mount Gower, Lord Howe island (2016)   **Fig. 4.2.** sketches (2016)

Preamble

My seat is hard and sandy. I am drawing while clouds move determinedly across the landscape. Cloud shapes fall on hills as moving shadows, misshapen repetitions of their soft moist volumes; dry and darkly opaque they fall on hard surfaces, obligingly defining the rocky contours of Mount Gower, before slinking away. I had hoped that they would stay awhile. As the wind speeds, my pencil lags behind. I remember William Kentridge's drawings filmed in motion, and I think, how clever! Can I find a way between paint and press to show what I am seeing?

The large cloud surrounding Mount Gower, as iconic as the mountain itself, made me aware of the continuous cycle of rising and falling moisture (Fig.4.1). Paying attention to clouds shifting in space sharpened my awareness of the constantly changing nature of weather, and of my bodily responses, moment by moment, to air movement, temperature, moisture and light. I began to think of myself as a neurological receptacle for 'weather', a porous being, wide open to weather. My engagement with the phenomenon of the hydrological cycle (Fig. 4.3) prompted me to investigate the fundamental science and to examine the paintings of other cloud watchers. Before going on to discuss the experimental work I made on return to my studio, I will discuss how this research influenced my new work.
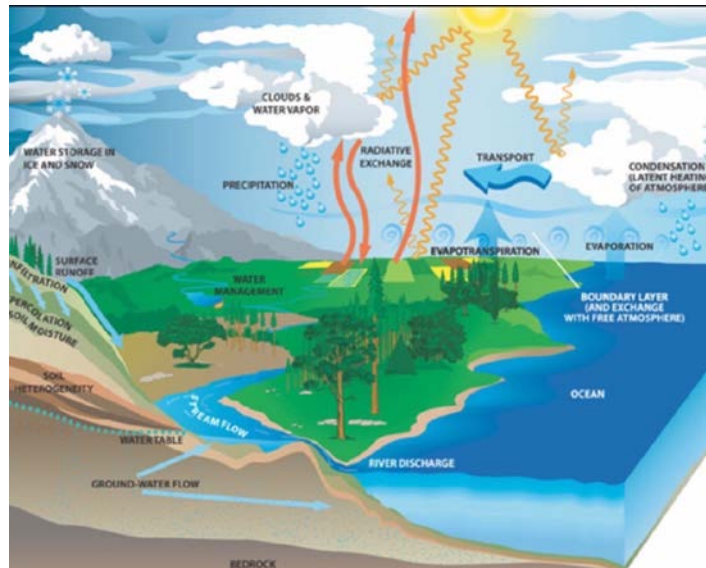
Fig. 4.3. Hydrologic Cycle

I researched the fundamentals of light, shadow and colours in the atmosphere to help me better understand what I was experiencing. On Lord Howe island, I noticed that once the earth began to warm, puffs of moisture moving skyward could be seen projecting from the land into cool air around Mount Gower's peak, forming clouds, these then shifting helplessly with the wind, their earthly shadows relentlessly in tow. I was aware that the clouds, laden with moisture, obscured sunlight from the land and sea beneath them, thus affecting my visual perception of the unfolding spectacle of life around me, the shapes, volumes and colours in the landscape.

I discovered that the whiteness of clouds resulted from random scattering of light waves being refracted into all colours of the spectrum by the large water droplets and crystalline ice particles in a cloud. High above, where the air is thin, the smaller atoms and molecules refract shorter energetic blue photons while refractions of longer less energetic yellow and red photons make their way down to the denser atmosphere, where their penetration closer to earth can only be seen when the sun is very low and near to earth.[91]

To contextualise my work, I researched the history of cloud painting and found that possibly the earliest depictions of clouds were those of Italian artists in the

[91] J. Kepert, Bureau of Meteorology, ABC, "Science/ask an expert", accessed 28/03/17, http://www.bom.gov.au.

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, such as Cimabue and Giotto. Those artists were depicting religious narratives and thus obliged to take the word of Christ seriously when he said, "hereafter shall you see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven."[92]

Renaissance painters used clouds as a device to enhance their perspective paintings, however, their depictions were not realistic.[93] In Northern Europe, Jan van Eyck (1390–1441) is said to have painted the first realistic skies. Breugel the Elder accurately depicted weather conditions in some of the coldest winters in Europe in his paintings that have been considered 'truthful to nature'; these paintings were used as evidence of the occurrence of the Little Ice Age, in the mid sixteenth century.[94]

Other painters began to take an interest in clouds as a subject, such as Claude Lorrain, but it was not until two English painters, John Constable, born 1776 and J.M.W. Turner, in 1775 that the sky was made a key feature of painting, worthy of painterly investigation in its own right. Luke Howard's cloud classifications, made in 1883, were studied by Constable and it was during this period of time that great advances were made in science generally, with meteorology lagging though, due to the difficulties encountered in taking scientific measurements above the earth.[95]

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[92] Matthew 24:60, The Bible.
[93] John E. Thornes, University of Birmingham, "A Brief History of Weather in European Landscape Art", *Weather*, vol.55. 2000, accessed 1/10/2017 online at onlinelibrary.wiley.com.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Anne Gray, *Constable: Impressions of Land, Sea and Sky,* (National Gallery of Australia, 2006), 11.

Fig. 4.4. John Constable, *Rainstorm over the Sea* (c.1824–28)

Interested in painting the sublime, Turner painted dramatic atmospheric effects, focusing on the interplay between light and atmosphere, often at the expense of 'truth'. He opportunistically recorded unusual weather events in speedy sketches using these and his memory as a basis for studio paintings. In contrast, Constable's more 'typical skies' were influenced by a childhood spent in a farming community in Suffolk, where he learnt to love being present in the landscape.[96] The historian Ernest Chesneau wrote of Constable,
"He is a poet whose nature is roused to ecstasy by stormy elements; although not blind to tranquil beauty, it is life and movement that stir the depth of his soul."[97]

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[96] Charles Robert Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable Esq. R.A.,* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845), 195, accessed 05/09/2017 http://archive.org/details/memoirs.
[97] Ernest Chesneau, *The English School of Painting* (1882), (English edition, London: 1885), 142.

I shared Constable's curiosity about weather events and his love of working *en plein air*, such curiosity deriving from one's attentive presence with natural phenomena. It seems probable that Constable's sustained interest in this subject matter grew out of his sensitivity to atmospheric influences, as noted in Charles Leslie's memoir about Constable.[98]

Constable worked directly from the subject for over twenty years. One example of the work is the painted sketch *Rainstorm over the Sea*, (Fig.4.4) and he remarked that, "the observer of nature may daily watch her endless varieties of effect".[99] I was fortunate enough to be able to view a selection of the hundred or more cloud studies at the exhibition, *Constable: Impressions of Land, Sea and Sky*, at the National Gallery of Australia, in 2006, These studies, once dismissed as insignificant, are now considered an important part of his oeuvre, illustrating his working practice. On the reverse sides, he recorded the details of time, day and general weather conditions.[100] "Constable, who wanted landscape painting to be scientific as well as romantic"[101], explores both these aspects of interest with the annotated sketches.

With my new monotypes, I was similarly engaged in these processes. Even though my efforts to draw Mount Gower had been frustrated, I began to imagine how I might mesh my lived experience with my new basic scientific knowledge and create a response with the monotype.

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[98] Charles Robert Leslie, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable Esq. R.A.,* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1845), 285, accessed 05/09/2017 http://archive.org/details/memoirs.
[99] Ibid, 195.
[100] John Gage, *Constable: Impressions of Land, Sea and Sky,* (National Gallery of Australia, 2006), 36.
[101] John Constable in his lecture published by Charles Robert Leslie: see Bandt, "Walkenbilder and Walkengedlichte der Romantik",74 and 77, in Hubert Damisch*, A Theory of /Cloud/: Toward a History of Painting*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 194.

Lifting and Falling
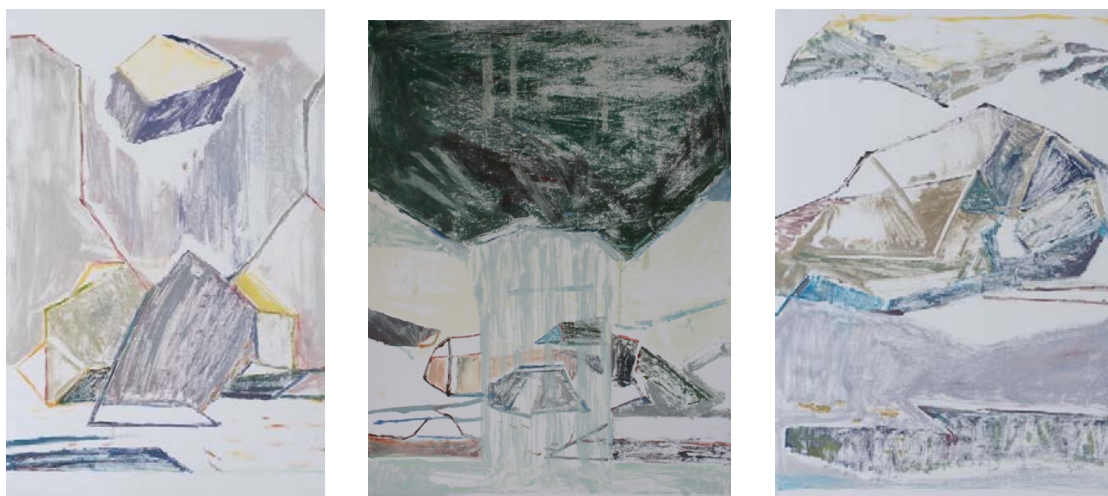
Fig. 4.5. Susan Chancellor, *Lifting and Falling 1, 2 and 3* (2016)

Rainstorm over the Sea (Fig.4.4) reminded me of the afternoon rainfalls on Lord Howe Island. Constable's cloud paintings gesture towards abstraction, generating light rather than representing it. My first experimental monotypes were a series of simple oil monotypes on paper, *Lifting and Falling* (Fig. 4.5*),* where I aimed to emphasise the contrast between light and shade observable in the moisture laden clouds and the consequential visible alterations to the landscape beneath. I also intended to continue to experiment with abstracted imagery.

I have flown through clouds and experienced diminishing light while being buffeted by the alterations in air pressure as I strained to see the light reappear, wishing for the turbulence to end. I read an account of a pilot who survived the extreme weather conditions of a cumulonimbus cloud, where the cloud created its own forces of electrical energy accompanied by terrifying sound. Forced to eject from his plane, he fell 45,000 feet through the swirling eddies and up-draughts of wind.[102]

I decided to use a vertical format for this interpretation of cloud activity in response to the verticality of my own bodily stance and my new habit of

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[102] Gavin Pretor-Pinney, *The Cloudspotter's Guide*, (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, 2007), Chapter Two.

observing the upward passage of the moisture laden air cycling through the atmosphere to its inevitable descent. The gravitational force of falling rain was another influence in the verticality of this format.

My palette reflected the colours of sea, sky and landforms, to express the sunlight and shadow that I had observed by creating images that contrasted strongly with the whiteness of the paper. In emphasising contrasting tonal values I made a further shift towards geometric abstraction with forms that conveyed a sense of volume and weight.

On reflection, I noted, Constable's *Rainstorm over the Sea* conveyed a sense of wind movement as well as weight and drama, where *Lifting and Falling* seemed to me to lack buoyancy and movement, the cloud motifs hanging somewhat rock-like in a clear sky.

Fig. 4.6. A view of clouds from above, shadows beneath on the sea

Although we know that clouds carry the weight of water and ice, they look light and fluffy, especially as viewed from above. I have flown over clouds, witnessing the staggering sight of the brilliant white tops lit from above. Flying above the sea, my eyes have followed white clouds before spotting the darker shapes of their shadows beneath on the ocean. I have marvelled at the spectre of light and colour around me (Fig.4.6).

Thunderstorms are dramatic but rare compared to the everyday formation of small cumulous clouds blown at the will of the wind. I decided to try a different

approach that would allow me greater scope in exploring luminosity, air movement and moisture in every day experiences.

Cloud/Light

In my next monotype, *Cloud/Light* (Fig. 4.7), I aimed to follow the Romantics, who "turned clouds into symbols of change".[103] Change through time has been a theme of my research project and each of my previous monotypes has demonstrated this theme in different ways. The process of the monotype itself involves transformation, a feature that I have previously emphasised with the illusion of movement and with enhanced ambiguity. In the next body of work, *Cloud/Light*, I aimed to further emphasise these qualities.

Fig. 4.8. exploratory working methods (2016-17)

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[103] John E. Thornes, University of Birmingham, "A Brief History of Weather in European Landscape Art", *Weather*, vol.55. 2000, 374, accessed 1/10/2017 at onlinelibrary.wiley.com.
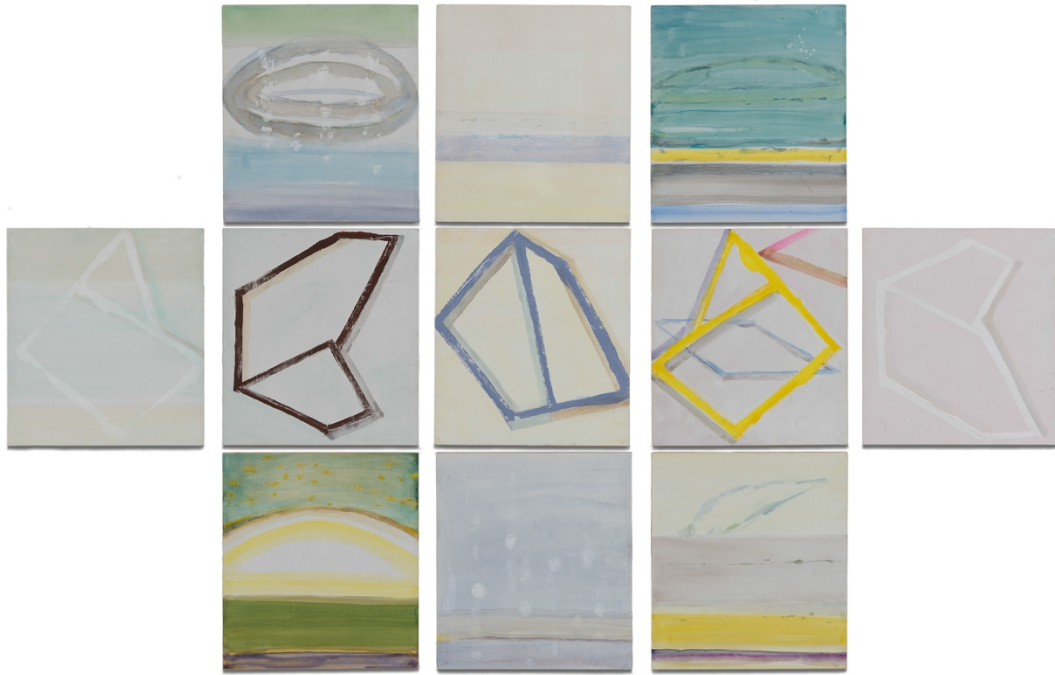
Fig. 4.7. *Cloud/Light,* (2017)

I reasoned that a return to the combined techniques of oil monotype and water based paint, developed for *Generations,* would offer greater scope for enhanced luminosity and the expression of fluid changes in nature. Embracing a broader palette including magenta, viridian, blue and yellow, would better represent the vivid colour recalled from my Lord Howe experience. Horizontal bands of colour were intended to represent layers of light, moisture and density in the atmosphere, forming colour links, thus uniting individual monotypes and reflecting the cohesion in the natural forms and colours of nature. To enhance fluidity further I began brushing paint directly onto the ground in a gestural manner (Fig.4.8).

Constable remarked that no two days or even two hours were ever alike and in *Cloud/Light* the illusory effects of movement were intended as a reminder that nothing in nature remains static, that change is constant.[104] Two devices were developed with the aim of achieving these effects. The buoyant quality of the apparently floating gestural motifs contrasted with the illusion of slow turning in

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[104] Anne Gray, *Constable: Impressions of Land, Sea and Sky,* (National Gallery of Australia, 2006), 7.

the geometric images. These geometric motifs were set out side by side, so that the ambiguous planar relations might appear to separate and conjoin, then bend and tilt, giving the appearance of slowly rotating frames.

The palette and arrangement of colours in this work reflected my experience of colour in the atmosphere, and the illusion of movement expressed buoyancy and the slow movement of clouds across the sky. However, I found a less successful aspect of the work was the loss of a sense of verticality by the horizontal setting out of the panels with geometric forms. Such clearly defined forms seemed inadequate to express the unpredictability of weather. I sensed I might better facilitate the transfer of affect with greater spontaneity of gesture and by adopting a vertical format.

Gesture – between the abstract and the figurative

Before embarking on my final body of work, *Questions about Weather* (Figs.4.13 and 4.14), I examined the gestural paintings of Elisabeth Cummings (1934–), Ian Fairweather (1891–1974) and Joy Hester (1920–1960), whose paintings had conveyed to me a strong sense of their remembered lived experiences.

First, I examined the diptych, *Rain Clouds over the Tweed,* (Fig.4.9) by Elisabeth Cummings, featured in the exhibition, *Elisabeth Cummings: Observing Nature,* at the Drill Hall Gallery in Canberra in 2017. This painting caught my attention as it conveyed a mood of confusion and foreboding. This was achieved with an unusual palette of green and complementary crimson that produced vibration where pure hues were juxtaposed, contrasting with a flat heaviness in areas where these colours mixed and overlapped to create grey and black. The palpable tension I experienced from her use of colour reinforced my view of the importance of colour in expressing mood. A comment by Cummings suggested she experienced a similar sort of tension in Cezanne's painting to that which I sensed in hers: "Cezanne's paintings were rocking with that tension and life, they were energy and life. It moved, it moved. To have that

life in the painting."[105] Cummings' paintings also 'rock with tension and life' but, unlike Cezanne, Cummings does not paint directly from life, but uses her memory to recreate lived experiences.

Siri Hustvedt illuminates the phenomenon of the intermodal transfer of sensations in her writings about her own heightened sensuality. She experiences 'emotional weather' of others as physical pain and colours as physical sensations. She can be soothed, amazed, made anxious or attacked by colours and she argues that we are all intertwined in a kind of sensory reciprocity.[106]

Fig. 4.9. Elisabeth Cummings, *Rain Clouds over the Tweed* (1999*)*

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[105] Elisabeth Cummings in conversation with Sioux Garside, *Elisabeth Cummings: Observing Nature*, Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra, ANU, 2017.
[106] Siri Husvedt*,* "Becoming Others", in *A Woman Looking at Men looking at Women*: *Essays on Art, Sex and the Mind*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2016), 374-5.

As Terence Maloon has put it, Cummings's paintings "are less representations than they are radical metaphors or equivalences".[107] For my final work I intended to return to my practice of working in the territory between abstraction and figuration and I aimed to create work with metaphorical suggestions.

Representational elements in her painting give clues as to Cummings's intent and trigger the viewers' memories of their own experiences with rain storms. An emblematic cloud and its shadow, hanging in the upper right of the *Rain Clouds over the Tweed*, provided a clue to the source of heavy rain, while the viewer's emotional involvement is evoked by a sense of chaotic movement in the multi-directional, overlaid brush marks.

Overlapping of transparent passages of paint reveal Cummings's practice of working back into wet paint, and also reworking onto a dry ground. This adds depth to the painting and demonstrates Cummings' many returns to the memories that stimulated her actions, reflecting the passing of time.

I became conscious of my bodily engagement with the painting as I stepped towards the physical surface to enjoy the abstracted coloured brush marks then back to a 'guided projection' of the whole image. I found myself oscillating between the two positions, in the manner Cummings painted, I imagine.[108] I would take this experience into account in my next work, as I had in *Generations*.

Considering the unpredictable nature of weather, I decided to pursue the intuitive gestural imagery that I had used in *Generations*. So, I continued my research into gestural painting, interested in understanding the part that might be played by intuition, that implicit way of knowing, described by Ross Gibson.[109] American gestural painter Joan Snyder's account of the way 'intuition' operates for her intrigued me:

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[107] Terence Maloon, *Elisabeth Cummings: Interior Landscapes*, Drill Hall Gallery, ANU, Canberra, 2017,12.
[108] E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion, Conditions of Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, (London: Phaidon, 2002), Chapter Seven, 280.
[109] Ross Gibson, "The Known World", TEXT Special Issue, Symposium: *Creative and Practice-led Research: Current Status, Future Plans*, Oct. 2010.

I can be very spontaneous and very much in control at the same time. There's not a mark or drip of the painting that's not meant to be there. I know that the accident is going to happen that way. That's going to drip that way and as it drips I'm going to wipe that off. I'll block that drip or I'm going to add water to that drip, to make it go further. I'm controlling what's happening.[110]
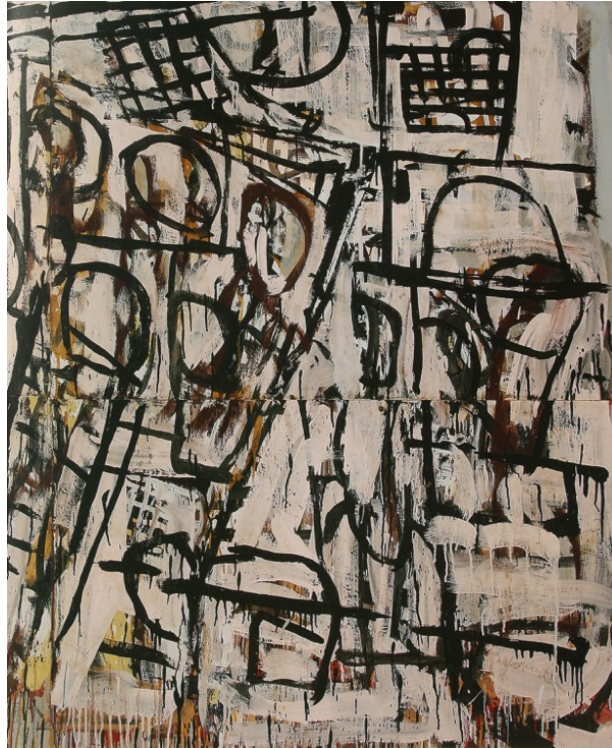
Fig. 4.10. Ian Fairweather, *Monsoon* (1961–62)

Fig. 4.11. Ian Fairweather (detail), *House by the Sea* (1966–67)

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[110] Joan Snyder, *Joan Snyder*, (N.Y.: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 2005), 42.

Having become fascinated by the distinctive painterly language of Cummings, Whisson, Baselitz and Twombly, I wanted to better understand how different painters had expressed their memories of lived experience. The gestural paintings of Ian Fairweather and Joy Hester have held a fascination for me. I noted that Cummings' way of layering short multi-directional colourful brushstrokes contrasted with Fairweather's layered, long wandering strokes; each searching in their own ways to retrieve memories.

In Fairweather's painting, *Shalimar*, over seventy layers were identified, reflecting a multitude of overlaid memories from times passed. Murray Bail commented that Fairweather's painting, made when he was seventy six, *House by the Sea* (Fig.4.11), was a "powerful and emotionally felt painting, displaying the untidiness of memory".[111] In these paintings the memories of others are evoked. Fairweather, influenced by the calligraphy of Chinese scrolls, began over time to make more fluid and intuitive brush marks. In reference to the painting *Monsoon* (Fig.4.10), Robert Hughes remarked: "The brush is firm but relaxed, intuitive but controlled. It possesses a secret inevitability of form, even down to the colours and length."[112]

One of my objectives with the new monotypes was to trigger memories through intuitive gestural imagery. Joy Hester's fluid gestural brush marks and open spatial structures convey strong emotions.

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[111] Murray Bail, *Fairweather*, (Sydney: Murdoch Books Publication, 1981), 222.
[112] Robert Hughes, *Fairweather*, (Sydney: Murdoch Books Publication, 1981), 122.

Fig. 4.12. Joy Hester, *Lovers 1* (1955)

Referring to the ink painting, *Lovers 1* (Fig.4.12), Deborah Hart commented, "her dramatic intersections of black and white, with the most delicate washes, ... recall the precision, clarity and subtlety of Japanese Haiku and Chinese calligraphy."[113] I was drawn to the sparse unfinished quality of Hester's paintings, resonating more closely with the monotype than those of Fairweather and Cummings.

Chinese ink and brush painting

Finding these links to Chinese ink and brush painting in the work of both Fairweather and Hester, I decided to investigate Chinese painting further to gain insight into how I might employ gestural intuitive painting with an open spatial arrangement, like those of Hester, in an expression of immersion in the moisture cycle. I was inspired to aim for suggestion, simplicity and flow by the following quote:

> "…the brush must possess the power of spiritual suggestion through emptiness. The brush comes to an end but the idea is without limit. Simplicity, emptiness and suggestion are paramount."[114]

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[113] Deborah Hart, *Joy Hester and Friends,* National Gallery of Australia, Australia, 2001, 118.
[114] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 77.

Master painters in China train for many years to attain the level of skill necessary to make the 'right' suggestive mark and give expression to the invisible. E.H. Gombrich quoted an old Chinese formula with a similar sentiment, "ideas present, brush may be spared performance,"[115] suggesting that full attention to the idea would facilitate our projection. The writer François Jullien, in praising the unfinished qualities of a sketch, as opposed to a carefully completed painting, adds weight to this idea. He quotes Roger de Piles: "The imagination delights in discovering and completing that which it attributes to the painter even though in fact it comes only from itself."[116]

Jullien explains that the 'line' in the art of Chinese painting arises from the continuous transformation of forms in accordance with their inner rhythm rather than from the reproduction of form.[117] It is the constant search for a balance between opposites such as black and white, dry and wet, thin and thick in the use of ink across the surface of the painting that is applied in the expression of the ceaselessly emerging 'breath-energy'.[118]

Paper and skin – immersion

Before I discuss how space and structure in Chinese ink and brush painting informed my work, I will explain my decision to return to paper as a ground for the new work and my fresh choice of palette. I recalled my memories of immersion in rain.

I have frequently driven right through clouds on Brown Mountain's ascent and descent, journeying between the south coast and Canberra. There I am acutely aware of being in amongst the moist droplets of cloud as I try to see through the windscreen, wipers flying. I have understood that the white voluminous presence in the sky is nothing but collected moisture. I am enraptured as I try to watch the road.

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[115] E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion, Conditions of Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation*, (London: Phaidon, 2002), 280.
[116] François Jullien, *The Great Image has No Form, or On the Nonobject through Painting*, (Chicago and London: University Chicago Press, 2009), 4.
[117] Ibid, 203.
[118] Ibid, 195.

While making my exploratory drawings *en plein air* on Lord Howe Island I was not protected by a car and became more attentive to alterations in the weather; I was the porous being, the 'sensitive plate', wide open to 'weather'. The porosity of the paper seemed to me to be akin to my skin and my eyes, equally receptive to the forces of nature. The paper awaited the pressure and touch from my body through the brush. It awaited my thoughts, feelings and the emotions embedded in the grease and moisture that would be both pressed and stroked onto it. Pigment would percolate into the pores of the paper, staining it with my gestures.

Antonio Damasio explains that, like paper, the body maintains some boundaries, and acts as a selectively permeable wall, filtering unwanted information while sending the more interesting information, via the process of 'focused attention', to the short-term memory.[119]

Paper, requiring no preparation, also offered the opportunity for spontaneous responses. I could produce an oily print and make an immediate response with water based paint. This process reflected the swift changes in weather I had experienced. In *Questions about Weather* (Figs.4.13 and 4.14) the oily, gritty, gestural brush marks of the monotype were intermingled with watery marks made directly onto the paper in a synchronous fashion, the white papery spaces representing sunlit moisture in the clouds. I speculated that this would create an expression of the fluidity and buoyancy of clouds while the synchronicity of the brush marks might represent the synchronicity that I had observed in changes of weather, where, for instance, the sun came out from beneath the clouds in unison with shadow movement and the almost imperceptible alteration to the colour over the land and sea.

I worked with a palette of wet yellows and greens, the colours of new growth following rain. These colours intermingled with the gritty, muddy colours of the earth in the monotype, and with the white papery spaces representing sunlit moisture in the clouds.

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[119] Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, (Great Britain: Vintage, 2000), 135-137.

Working spontaneously meant I was extending my technical risk taking, adding a new level of unpredictability to the production of the work, while allowing a less mediated expression of my experiences and responses, thus creating a resonance with the wilful nature of weather. I felt excited and a little nervous as I allowed my intuition to take the lead.

Fig. 4.13. Questions about Weather 1 (2017)   **Fig. 4.14.** Questions about Weather 11 (2017)

Structure – space – the void

Chinese painters use voids as amplifiers for depth and timelessness, embodying a positive spiritual value about emptiness, allowing the viewer an imaginative potential, where emptiness and fullness are reciprocal.[120] This opened questions for me about how I might express my thematic interest in timelessness. Clouds in Chinese painting belong to the mountains and most of

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[120] B. W. Higman, *Flatness*, (London, U.K.: Reaktion Books, 2017), 188.

the skies are empty voids, yet the voids form an important part of the design (Figs. 4.15 and 4.16), vapours and clouds rise into space, gather around cliffs and drift over wide expanses, producing interplay between shadows and light.

Moving away from the distancing effect of the gridded format of *Cloud/Light* and *Generations*, I developed a freer flowing structure more like that of the Chinese paintings and made a shift back to vertical panels with a freely flowing structure engaging with a void. This reflected both my vertical viewpoint in the moisture cycle and it alluded to the theme of constant flux and my yearning for understanding. My use of space in this format varied from the way I had allowed space to operate with the imagery of *Generations. Questions about Weather* introduced a central void more like that of the Chinese paintings. The concept of the 'void' was illuminated for me by my research into Chinese brush and ink painting and by the writings by the historian George Rowley and writer François Jullien.

Flow and transition

In Chapter Three I mentioned the influence of the poet Mallarmé on the emptiness and fullness in the paintings of Monet and Twombly. There are parallels between this and the insights I gained into the concept of Tao in Chinese ink and brush paintings.

Damisch discussed the recurrent element of the cloud in Western painting, describing it as a counterpoint to perspective. He compared the Western approach, where the cloud is used as a sign, to the approach taken by Chinese artists, for whom, he observed, "painting is not a copy of something, a pre-existent universe, it is itself a universe…"[121] An explanation for the structure of Chinese painting is offered by the concept of Tao where the fusion of opposites is significant. It suggests that a state of flow and relativity exists between the seen and unseen. By contrast, in most European painting, spaces free from touch tend to only be found in drawings and watercolours, where blank paper

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[121] Ryckmans ed., *Les* "Propos sur la peinture" *de Shitao*, chapter 17, 115, in Hubert Damisch*, A Theory of /Cloud/: Toward a History of Painting*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 216.

spaces act in a supportive but subordinate role to figuration.[122] In European art, the inclination is towards form, reason, science and the expression of human emotion. In China, where the intangible is important, there is an emphasis on intuition, imagination and the moods of nature.

I learnt that in Chinese paintings, the pictorial space does not emphasise the vertical and horizontal axes of the painting nor does it rely on one point of perspective, rather, there is a moving focus and a quest for unbounded space.[123] Clouds, in these paintings, alternately reveal and conceal, making presence and absence felt in equal measure where the depiction of a process of constant transition is desired. This idea resonated strongly with my experience with weather changes.

Jullien remarks that European art owes part of its originality to the emphasis it puts on the gap between presence and absence, while Chinese painting, in contrast, expresses a free-flowing transitory state. This relies on the Tao concept where yin and yang or emptiness and fullness engender each other, shifting from one plane to the next. This state of 'as if' is not to be captured by description but understood by feeling.[124] Jullien maintains that the vitality in the paintings derives from the active interaction between the yin and the yang, the vital breath circulating and communicating within the painting.[125] Damisch claims that it is the painter's job to get the complementary aspects to work in concert.[126] This is reinforced by Rowley's discussion of the Yin–Yang, the unity of opposites, as a unique relationship between the known and the unknowable in Chinese paintings, where a state of flux between the seen and the unseen is a kind of symbol for the Tao, creating the fulfilment of mutual need.[127]

The imagery for my final monotypes, *Questions about Weather*, was influenced by my new understanding of the void and of the concept of Tao. By creating

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[122] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959).
[123] Ibid.
[124] François Jullien, *The Great Image has No Form, or On the Nonobject through Painting*, (Chicago and London: University Chicago Press, 2009), 4.
[125] Ibid, 77.
[126] Hubert Damisch*, A Theory of /Cloud/: Toward a History of Painting*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 217.
[127] George Rowley, *Principles of Chinese Painting*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 50-51.

gestural intuitive imagery, the monotype brush marks working in concert with the directly painted marks, I was able to produce a sense of fluidity and flux, of a transitory state. This was reflected in the fluid range of imagery I used, between figuration and abstraction.

In *Questions about Weather*, I aimed to bring together my scientific understanding of the hydrologic cycle with my bodily experiences. *Questions about Weather* explores the interface between these two ways of knowing. Where the diagram, *The Hydrologic Cycle*, (Fig. 4.3.) graphically symbolises this phenomenon, my interpretation has similar graphic and symbolic elements such as lines and marks indicating directional flows and actions of air, water and sun, however my rendering of these is gestural thus transforming the devices of scientific diagramming into something more subjective, bodily and poetic.

There are also some abstracted representational forms in this work, but they are designed to be ambiguous rather than explicit. For instance, dripping rocks in the process of disintegration float on the picture plane, and relationships between various elements in my hydrologic cycle become unfixed and open-ended expressing fluidity and change in my search for understanding of weather.

Fig. 4.15. Li Kung-nien, (Late 12ᵗʰ c)   **Fig. 4.16.** Mei Ch'ing, *View of Lien Hua* (Late 17ᵗʰ c)

Conclusion

The final body of work, *Questions about Weather*, responds to my lived experience with the moisture cycle, taking into account my bodily engagement with weather and my observations of the synchronicity of the changes in light, shade and colour as they followed the movement of clouds beneath the sun. In the work, I also reflected on and engaged with my vertical stance and our viewing of weather events in the sky from below, introducing a vertical format. This viewpoint tends to activate a sense of our vertical peripheral vision, whereas *Annie's Room* engaged with horizontal peripherals.

I found the geometrical forms used in the first of the experimental monotypes were unsuited to reflecting the fluidity and unpredictability I had encountered in changeable weather. The more gestural and broken painting techniques in both the monotype and the directly brushed gouache that I employed, effectively expressed these qualities of weather. Furthermore, my return to imagery that

moved fluidly between figuration and abstraction emphasised my theme of change.

My examination of the work of gestural painters to whom I had been drawn, by the transfer of mood and affect, illuminated the development of my approach in this series. These painters included John Constable, Elisabeth Cummings, Ian Fairweather and Joy Hester. Finally, I was strongly influenced by the writings of George Rowley, François Jullien and Hubert Damisch and the vertical scroll tradition of Chinese painting. From these writings, I gained an understanding of how the concept of Tao is central to Chinese painting and through this, a state of transition, a constant ebb and flow. This informed my final monotypes and resonated strongly with the intrinsic quality of transfer and transition in the monotype form, as it did with the operation of affect.

Working with a circular compositional structure and engaging with a central void allowed for a fluid expression, reflecting my theme of timelessness and the cycles of life.

By creating an allusion to the receptivity of human skin with the receptive quality of paper the work implied a human subject immersed in a world of affect as well as weather.

The concepts of transition and recurrence over time that I understood to be present in Chinese painting resonated with my own expressions of these themes with the monotype, the open porous quality of the monotype reflecting the open spatial arrangement and the circular structure, leaving a metaphoric space where memory might be free to operate and for affect to flow.

Conclusion

> "Art is the becoming sensation of materiality, the transformation of matter into sensation. The arts is not the construction of simple sensations but the synthesis of other prior sensations into new ones."[128]

When I began my research, my initial impulse was to explore the rich territory between the immediacy and openness of drawing and the expressive qualities of paint. I had the experience of the monotype, a form that distinctively displays qualities of drawing, print and painting all at once and it soon became my choice of medium to open up these formal explorations and to examine the subject of familial relations. Like painters before me, such as Edgar Degas, I was attracted to the simplicity, immediacy and flexibility of the process and excited by the element of chance.

At the outset of the project an intense involvement in family life led me to explore family life as a subject in my first series of monotypes. My interests broadened from the family to a consideration of lived experiences, progressing to an engagement via the monotype, with interior and exterior spaces and the atmospherics of weather. Writings by Antonio Damasio, Siri Hustvedt and John Berger were important in my understanding of the nature of phenomenology, in all its expressions; bodily engagement, relationship of self to others, to the physical environment, memory and emotion.

Significantly, while investigating Cezanne's phenomenological experience of working directly from life, I recognised in the open dynamism of his late watercolours a similar quality to the open dynamism of the monotype. The intertwining of Cezanne with his subjects, where he saw himself as a sensitised absorbent 'plate', resonated with my experiences of drawing from life and also from my lived experiences in the world. It was my direct experience of the material qualities of these watercolours that convinced me of the operation of affect, bringing to my consciousness the feeling of Cezanne's experiences of more than a century ago.

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[128] Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth,* (USA: Columbia University Press, 2008), 78.

The process and qualities of the monotype drove my project and made possible the transfer of affect. Both monotype and affect are realised in in-between spaces. The temporality involved in the painting of the image, followed by transfer, compression and reversal in the printing process, echoes the gap in time before the intensities of affect are consciously realised. The temporal lag opens up potential for change, "a portal to a world of impermanence and interpenetration".[129] According to Damisch, "the between is that which the thing breathes, gains its freedom and allows itself to be permeated".[130] Reflecting Grosz' observation about art as 'the becoming sensation,' both Damisch and Simon O'Sullivan refer to an area of transition that becomes available through art. I have found a striking resonance between this process and the monotype process and also in the way affect might be experienced. These relations have come to form the basis of my research project.

In my earliest experimental monotypes, I found that the material loss of paint to the image, the incompleteness, had a seductive force, inviting the viewer's attention and causing imagination and memory to be activated. The abstracted image, also energised by losses and extrusions of paint, appeared to be strangely incorporated into the smooth surface of the paper, thus creating a perceptual oscillation between figure and ground and a tension between the picture plane and the picture space.

I found that the sense of ambiguity created by these perceptual qualities engendered doubt, an unsettling feeling that could only be reconciled through reflection, tending to further activate the imagination and memory, thus driving the flow of affect and potential for change. As the project progressed I discovered expressive means appropriate to each series of work to enhance these immersive qualities of the monotype, such as with colour, light, the shimmering effects of uneven paint coverage, expanded scale, rhythm, composition and gestural imagery.

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[129] Simon O'Sullivan, "The Aesthetics of Affect, Thinking Art beyond Representation", Angelaki, *Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, Vol. 6, No.3, 2001: 128.
[130] Hubert Damisch*, A Theory of /Cloud/: Toward a History of Painting*, (California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 95.

My project began with monotypes of a relatively small scale, expressing intimate themes of family relations influenced by the painting methods of Alice Neel. The monotype lent itself to devices such as overlapping, repetition, mirroring, manipulating dimensions that could be employed in expressing emotional tensions and links that reflected lived experiences in families. In my second series, *The Family Lounge*, I found a way to enhance the immersive qualities of the monotype by expanding the scale through an assemblage of multiple prints and creating an illusion of movement in the composition. The ghost print added a dimension of fading time and bleaching sun to this series.

As my broad thematic concerns of time, change and memory became more dominant, the work grew in scale and scope to encompass these themes and I made a significant shift in method by creating imagery from memory, the imagery in turn reflecting the way memory operates in the brain. Through this method I found ways to engage with the rhythmic cycles, the disruptions and layered memories of family life in a metaphoric space created by an expanded immersive scale in the panoramic series, *Annie's Room*. My project became an investigation of how the monotype might convey affect through my metaphysical themes of time, memory and space. My investigations into the way memory operates were illuminated by the writings of Antonio Damasio and Siri Hustvedt, while writings by Tim Ingold informed my choice of a braided and flowing structure meant to represent the temporal and spatial aspects of the work. Immersive paintings by Sidney Nolan, Georg Baselitz and Karin Mamma Andersson influenced the work.

The immersive paintings of the *Waterlilies Series* by Monet and Twombly's series, *Lepanto,* influenced my decision to create an expansive multi-part monotype with intuitive gestural imagery using oil paint on board, which added rawness and vibrancy to even more porous imagery than those produced on paper. During a sustained period of six months creating the series, *Generations*, an expression of my lived experience of place, intermingled with an investigation into my bodily and imaginative processes of art making. Dealing with the complex multi-layering and multi-sensory ordering of each element into a convention of visual language sharpened my awareness of the implicit and

the explicit processes of making art and the relationship of this to my bodily rhythms. These experiences were clarified for me by the writings of Ross Gibson and Henri Lefebvre. In *Generations*, invisible fragments were paradoxically made visible, offering a different way for the viewer to access affect and engage with their own imagination and memories.

The final monotype series, *Questions about Weather,* was an expression of my experiences with weather, and the moisture cycle in particular, and became an even more boundless, fluid conception of my practice. Resonances between paper, skin and neurological reception to sensations were examined and the concepts of immersion and fluidity expressed through gestural imagery that oscillated between abstraction and figuration in a circular format. The synchronicity of water based and oil monotypes resonated with my experience of weather. This series was informed by gestural paintings by Elisabeth Cummings, Joy Hester, Ian Fairweather and Chinese ink and brush paintings, and the writings of François Jullien, George Rowley and Hubert Damisch on the concepts of Tao, timelessness and transition. The writings of Elizabeth Grosz and Simon O'Sullivan have informed my writing about affect.

The ideas of transition and between-ness predominated in this final series, resonating with the monotype process and with my understanding of affect as a 'becoming sensation', an intensity that occurs pre-attentively to consciousness, before displays of emotion appear and the feelings that are tempered by subjectivity and intellect. Regarding the making of art, O'Sullivan observes: "Art's function is to switch our intensive register and reconnect us with the world."[131]

The monotype process and distinctive qualities continue to intrigue me and I have come to regard this period of practice-led research as part of a continuum in my art practice. In answering my research question, I have discovered many ways to convey affect with the monotype and, furthermore, I have discovered many ways to amplify the intensity of affect through the monotype.

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[131] Simon O'Sullivan, "The Aesthetics of Affect, Thinking Art beyond Representation", Angelaki, *Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, Vol. 6, No.3, 2001: 126.

As the project progressed the monotype increasingly drove the research with its capacity to resonate with my phenomenological experiences and reflect my themes, and while my research initially focussed on these themes the monotype became the subject of its own investigation and in a sense the true subject of my research. In a similar vein to that of O'Sullivan, who claims, "the existence of affects, and their central role in art needs asserting"[132], through my sustained engagement and experimentation with the monotype, and my growing appreciation of its process and qualities, I have come to the view that this distinctive form deserves a greater presence in art discourse, in analysis and interpretative attention from practice-led research.

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[132] Ibid.

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