

Faculty of Humanities

Contemporary Arts Practice: Disequilibrium/Limbo/Resistance

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

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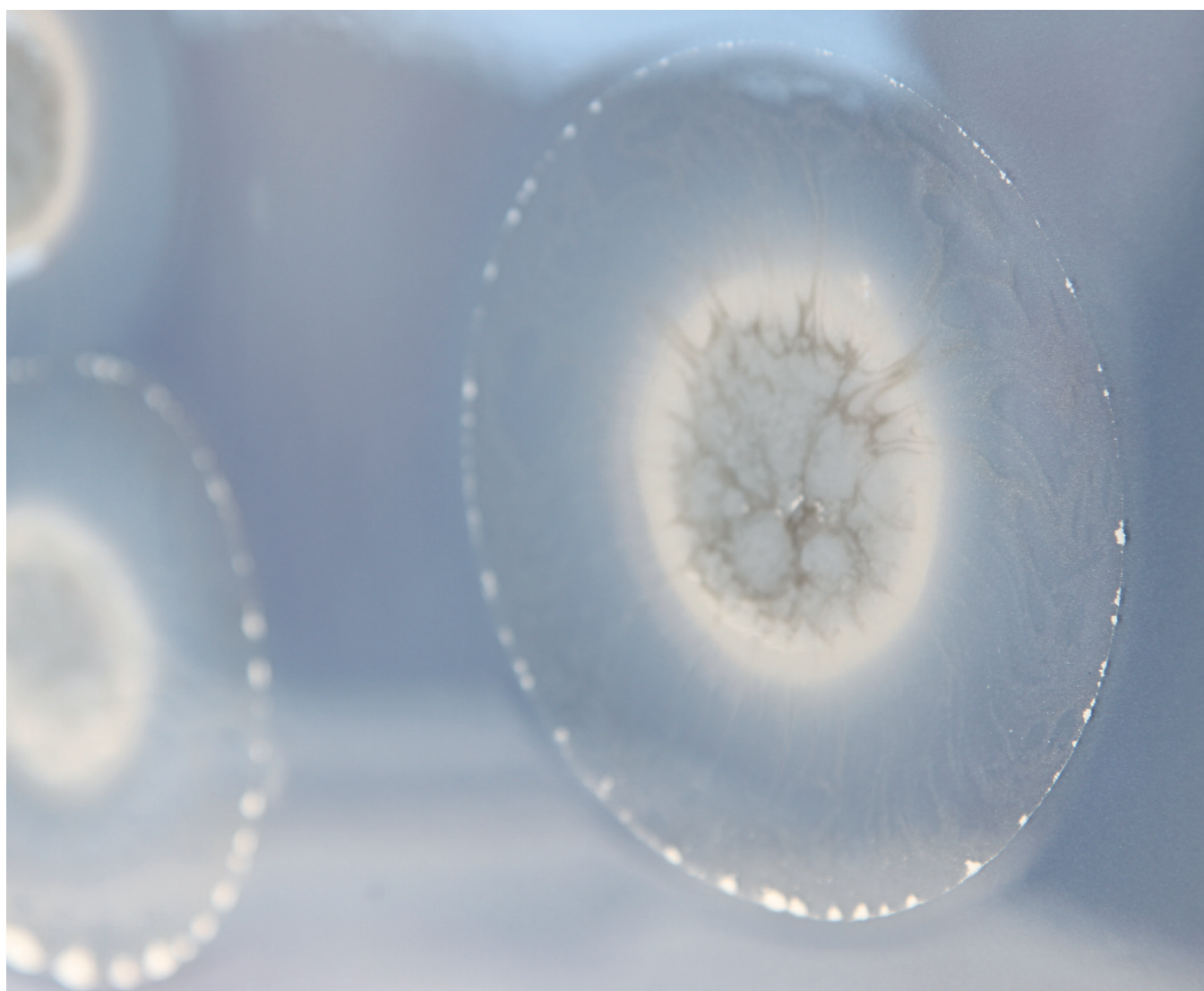
ABSTRACT

The exegesis proposes that conflict and tension are transformative factors in an arts practice, from making through to methodologies. It reinforces the dialogic nature of art-making and the artist-in-the-world: linked to, yet separate from, surrounding entities. Here, key ideas of resistance, tension and disequilibrium emerge, creating clarity through transformation. A cyclic pattern, initiated in the studio, becomes apparent, functioning to generate ideas: it is the creative force of heterogeneous combination, revolution in revelation. I utilise the term syzygy to further illustrate this concept as the active embodiment of resistance in contemporary visual arts. The idea encompasses creative production, and concepts practitioners encounter both within and outside the studio.

In combining the unlike, the artist enacts Gilles Deleuze's charge of rendering visible as opposed to rendering *the* visible. In this act, interaction between immiscible pigments and chemicals force an unconcealment, where forms and structures become apparent under pressure. This mode of unveiling sees the artist as a facilitator of resistant action, an enabler of tension. Here, these physical interactions can relate to conceptual approaches in arts practice, where the physicality of pressure, tension and stress become a transitional spectrum. It links the artist to *doing* and *being* in the world and the critical role of resistance to both respective sites. Conflict then, as an agent of resistance, operates from the studio to society, production to research, and making to methodologies.

My practice focuses primarily on resistance, from material interaction within the studio to modes of exchange in arts practice. The concepts of syzygy and limbo are visualised in the *xylem series* paintings, where immiscible materials are combined on aluminium panels. Intricate bio-forms, held in suspension, emerge in the surface of the works as a result of this tension, and the works represent, in a broader sense, struggles the artist may encounter. It is within this dynamic that the creative force of conflict is revealed.

The works of select artists are examined (my own included), together with images and poetry, and combined in a fitting dialogic arrangement. The exegesis addresses the role of the artist as maker, producer and facilitator, and questions frameworks in contemporary arts practice. It is through this lens, I argue, that the artist encounters dialogism that stretches from the making of art to roles in socio-political discourse. It is a dialogic approach to art and arts practice where the artist becomes a revelatory agent through tension, where art is uncomfortably placed; free to react interdependently with, or against, the entities it encounters.

**Fig 1**

Miik Green *xylem series - hoescht9* (detail)
mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm, 2014
Photo: Ben Phillips

Contemporary Arts Practice: Disequilibrium / Limbo / Resistance

This exegesis examines the concept of making artwork, before moving towards a conceptual arts dialogue. Syzygy, drawn from the Greek word *suzugos* (σύζυγος), and translated as 'yoked together' in English, is both a central term and a key concept within this discussion. It is extrapolated in light of the key concepts of resistance, disequilibrium and limbo; from art production and relevance, to contemporary arts practice. Here unconcealing, revealing and transformation are examined as analogous ideas to tension and antagonism. Together these impact the creation of artwork and operate within the frameworks of arts practice. These conflicting relations provide a key to the dialogic diorama that embodies arts practice: an entity complete in its incompleteness. Combined, these disparate elements are viewed as intrinsic to contemporary discourse and provide alternate modes of creative production.

TITLE

The structure and format of this document aims to illuminate studio practice through exegetical writing. It discusses the making of art; both the ideas and processes at play, and the significance of these in light of broader arts practice. To further explicate these concepts, poetry, anecdotal stories and images are provided. These elements neither function to prop up the textual body nor act as a bridge between the text and images; rather, they interdependently contribute to meaning. This particular structure seeks to provide the reader with a clear, delineated discussion, opening in chapter one with processes of studio production and closing in chapter three with the implications for an arts practice.

EXEGESIS

Comprising theoretical, poetical, mechanical and lyrical elements, the exegesis examines contemporary visual arts practice in the language of various disciplines. It is not necessarily designed to be read from beginning to end, nor to provide any concrete answers. The artist's role here is simply to probe and question. The exegesis interrogates and proposes, commencing with a focused enquiry on the making and production of art, before transitioning into a lyrical and conceptual conclusion. In this manner, dialogue is established, enabled to evolve, and, from inward interrogation, move towards an open exchange.

QUESTION

In a contemporary visual arts practice, how can tension provoke transformation, from materials and making, to *doing* and *being*?

PROBLEM

How can resistance and its analogous forms be transformative in a contemporary arts practice, from the making of artwork to conceptual approaches?

SIGNIFICANCE

From ideas of making to the making of ideas, from the micro (mixing materials in studio for example), to the macro (arts practice and its broader implications). It explores resistance in these transitory roles of arts practice where the artist becomes facilitator, collaborator, researcher, or sole producer. It relates the practitioner to the academic - from writing about, to the making of, art, and finally to prompting discussion on the role of an artist/researcher. Relevance, then, can be seen in resistive methodologies that provoke transformation, conflicting generators of meaning.

CONTEXT

Writing as a contemporary arts practitioner and researcher engaged in critical enquiry. As both a visual artist and academic, I draw on select artworks that I produce, aligning these paintings with ideas of resistance-making and transformation. I am interested in the role of the artist in relation to such resistance: from the *doing* to the *being* of the artist, framed within a broader visual arts practice.

STYLE

The exegesis is part poetic in its bridging of abstract concepts, and part propositional. Three chapters divide into additional sub-sections that examine thematic points in further detail, linking studio practice to wider ideas and fields, and examining the implications for visual arts dialogue.

Written for the informed reader with an interest in arts practice and/or its philosophical or conceptual implications. The intention is that this work is referenced and re-used in the same way that dialogic notions allow a re-creation of meaning and exchange. It aims to provide new ideas and concepts beyond the formulaic that a reader may draw from, question and contribute to. In doing so, it is considered in terms of accessibility and ongoing relevance to contemporary arts practice.

READER

The author is a multidisciplinary artist researching and writing within the same field, discussing the transition from art production to proposition - one who is interested in modes of both creating and being, and the philosophy underpinning ideas of resistance and dialogism.

AUTHOR

If, as Deleuze suggests, art is about rendering visible, and the artist's role is to reveal, then what enables this revelation to occur? Primarily, this document posits a resistance extending from the studio, where materials interact in conflict, to the artist's engagement with the outside world. These are termed as 'entities' or 'structures' that the artist encounters, generally representing, for example, bureaucracy or the community, but could possibly refer to the arts officer, architect or gallerist. I seek to present this tension as central to transformation within these interactions, utilising the poetic concept of syzygy as resistance-between-bodies. From this viewpoint, expectations and results in arts practice are challenged and reduced as the focus shifts from what the work *aims* to do, to how it *does* (or the processes at work in its revealment). In this manner, academic writing and studio production do not co-exist harmoniously, but contribute to the discussion by actively resisting and clashing in resistant revelation.

PROPOSAL

What will be detailed in further chapters is how syzygy (a term appropriated from astronomy) functions in this exegesis as a state of tension existing between two bodies, is seen in disequilibrium, specifically in relation to the arts and the arts practitioner. The exegesis is divided into three sections, which themselves split into thirds, the centre existing as the site of action, the dynamic state of conflict and resistance.

In the opening chapter, *Resistance and Arts Practice*, I examine my practice and the practical aspects of art-making and studio production. These will be discussed in light of the overarching theme of resistance and the artistic significance of combining the unlike. The idea of resistance in arts practice is further detailed in three distinct sections: 'Heterogeneous Combinations', 'Struggle, Conflict, Antagonism' and 'Framing to Frameworks'. This aims to familiarise a reader with the approach, providing a *raison d'être* for my work and laying the foundation for subsequent chapters. Initially 'Heterogeneous Combinations' are discussed as immiscible materials that unite, leading to action and interaction (framed in terms of struggle, conflict and antagonism) that is discussed in following sections. The conclusion of chapter one consolidates these concepts in light of materials, combinations and studio processes, moving to collaborative engagements and interdisciplinary sites, before shifting from creating to conjecture. 'Framing to Frameworks' primarily refers to the exchange between physical and abstract sites, where the artist as maker/producer transitions to researcher/practitioner, discussing the way in which arts practice operates in these environments.

Chapter two, *Unseen Forces*, categorises the preceding ideas of resistance and tension from visualisation to dialogism in 'Visualisation, Visibility', 'Revealed/Concealed' and 'Dialogic Dioramas'. The aim of this chapter is to examine these approaches in contemporary art, and their location within current rubrics, establishing their practical and theoretical relevance. Here, conflict and resistance are likened to specific forces (for instance those of control and chaos). Being set in opposition, there is an incompatibility, one that negates harmonious resolution. This idea allows the focus to shift towards the making, the process in which the unlike are combined. *Unconcealment* focuses on Heidegger's assessment of revealing, wherein process and action can unveil the concealed, or bring forth from concealment. Finally, the notion of visualisation through *unconcealment* is discussed: the rendering visible of that which may have previously remained unseen or opaque.

'Suspension, Transformation', 'A Syzygetical Exchange' and 'From Limbo to Light' are found in the final chapter *Disequilibrium*, which questions, proposes and provokes. It enables a discussion of arts practice as well as further possibilities within the field of visual arts. It aims to structure abstract concepts and offer interdisciplinary proposals. It introduces the concept of syzygy (the liminal enduring or essencing of a work) in order to expose a cyclic nature of arts practice; one in continual regeneration from point-to-point. Chapter three concludes in a limbo-like fashion - together/apart, resolved in irresolution. Similar to the tail-swallowing ouroboros, the conclusion merges, inexorably, with a new introduction.

The key words listed below are explained in order to foreshadow the approach and framework of this exegesis, and are provided in as close a context as possible to their in-text utilisation. Several concepts are obscure, some may not have previously been used in an arts context, and others are new terms altogether.

KEY TERMS

This idea seeks to establish the link between resistance and dialogism (that which arises between bodies as a tension-set enabler of meaning). In arts practice, for instance, a dialogic approach may be utilised in order to allow the difference to dictate the output, shifting the focus from outcome and product to process. Such an approach differs from traditional dialectic methods that direct their energies towards achieving results rather than undertaking an enquiry.

DIALOGISM

The presencing discussed by Heidegger within his seminal essay *The Question Concerning Technology* is framed within the context of an artwork as an enduring pause or capture, a continual essence of the thing. It represents neither finality nor end, but is in ongoing, fluctual stasis, set in active tension or imperceptible momentum.

ESSENCING

On a material level, these are the disparate, unlike sections that combine in the creation of artwork while also retaining their uniqueness. In this arts practice, it is in the clash of opposition that meaning is generated, as divergent outcomes can be generated within moments of discordance.

HETEROGENEOUS

The iconic image of a serpent eating its tail is a Gnostic symbol for the cyclic, spiritual nature in all things. While typically symbolising renewal, regrowth

OUROBOROS

and self-reflexivity, it is employed here to represent continual action, movement and momentum. Regarding creative practice, it points to the rebirth and regeneration each cycle affords where, as opposed to an entropic or closed circuit, new meaning is generated (the aforementioned merging of the exegesis' beginning and end enacting this same conceptual spiralling cyclicity). Seen in this context, practice becomes more an evolution or revolution than a means of generating new ideas, and far less reliant on traditional resolution.

LIMBO

The active suspended state that results from syzygetic activity. It materialises as encapsulated forms set in transition, the state between two opposing forces: an equilibrious site. Limbo embodies both a spiritual and physical framework operating metaphorically as a 'between space' or site of palpable tension.

SUSPENSION

Represents the limbo-like state in which moving forms become stationary, such as the containment of living cells between two glass plates. While this motion-in-stasis allows for observation and scrutiny of the subject, it also renders them immobile, static. It is a necessary cessation; a freeze-framing that resembles the photographer's capturing of birds in flight - forever moving, forever fixed.

SYZYGY

The embodiment of tension between two bodies. Originally drawn from the Greek, meaning 'yoked together', in English it is an astronomical term signifying the alignment of three planets. For the purpose of this exegesis, syzygy's centrality serves to represent resistant activity between bodies. In a contemporary arts practice this is a defining tension found, for instance, between the material and immaterial in the works of Anish Kapoor and James Turrell.

UNCONCEALMENT

This term draws on Heidegger's notion of revealing, to prompt out of concealment. In *The Question Concerning Technology* Heidegger refers to this process as 'bringing-forth' whereby 'something concealed comes into unconcealment' (1982 10). The term is used here between resistance and visualisation, where conflict or tension becomes an agent of revealment, to render the unseen into unconcealment.

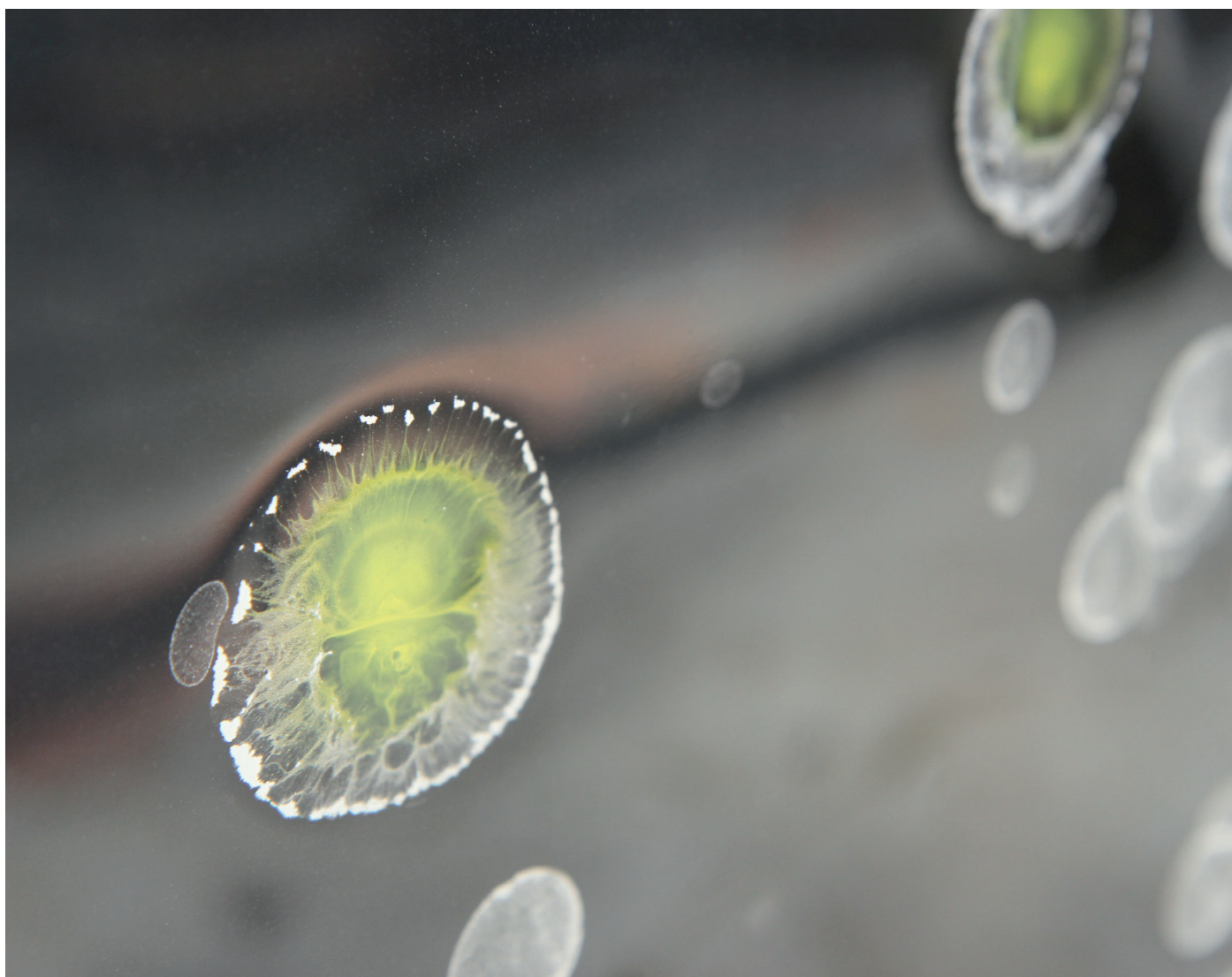


Fig 2 Miik Green xylem series - *velorum4* (detail)
mixed media on aluminium, 45 x 45cm 2014
Photo: Ben Phillips

Evident where the unseen, concealed or invisible is realised; either materially or conceptually. Within the surface of select paintings, for example, ambivalent biological forms may materialise through resistive means. As opposed to the common understanding of visualisation as the process of constructing a mental image of a form, visualisation becomes key, an indicator of conflict and a means of representing form, delineating seeing and visualising. In *The Logic of Sensation*, Deleuze's concept of 'rendering visible' (understood as a revealing that aids perception) is mobilised. Similarly, the artist undertakes a process of illumination.

VISUALISATION

INTRODUCTION

This research firstly investigates how a visual arts practice can reveal unseen forces through resistance. Structures are revealed under tension and microforms displayed as natural geometric shapes emerge in unlike interaction. In studio practice, the artist reveals or renders these forms visible; in this instance my paintings seek to bridge these concepts. Exegetical writing is linked with the two-dimensional images, where the creative resistance employed in the artworks in the studio widens the scope to encompass dialogue regarding visual arts practice. Combining resources heterogeneously, an unveiling process may occur, often yielding unexpected, significant results within interdisciplinary sites. The aesthetic structures formed within the surface of the paintings as a result of resistance resemble similar variations in nature, referencing unpredictable and unique organisms. Secondly, the exegetical writing will investigate the use of resistant combinations and their significance to practice. The significance of this project lies in its contribution to contemporary arts practice both in the making and the methodology. Resistance embodies the material interactions in the studio to the conceptual address of the artist's role in the world.

In this capacity, resistive concepts such as chaos and order become operational sites within which to make, create, write and research. These sites can be visualised both aesthetically and poetically; spaces wherein the artist creates through tension. It is during heterogeneous combination and in the limbo-like nature of these conflicting forces that my central hypothesis is supported; namely that the act of combining resistant material in equilibrium can produce a transformation similar to those demonstrated in forms such as pollen, diatoms, radiolarian and other cellular organisms. The equilibrium that exists in the formation of these unique shapes reference Deleuzian concepts of unseen forces where (through studio practice) I aim to present conflict, resistance and opposition as revelatory modalities.

Combining materials with the goal of achieving unpredictable results would be considered counter to standard methods of industry and commercial production. Molecules failing to bond, adhere or combine, for example, often indicate a flaw in the work. From coatings manufacturers to chemical producers, practitioners strive for homogeneity, and this exegesis is a response to such conformity on both a material and conceptual level. Resistance is visualised positively, having as its chief end artwork that allows for critical exchange. Heterogeneous material combinations issue a challenge to both artist as studio maker and artist-in-the-world, and encompass creative production as well as methodologies of resistant union.

1.1 RESISTANCE + ARTS PRACTICE: HETEROGENEOUS COMBINATIONS

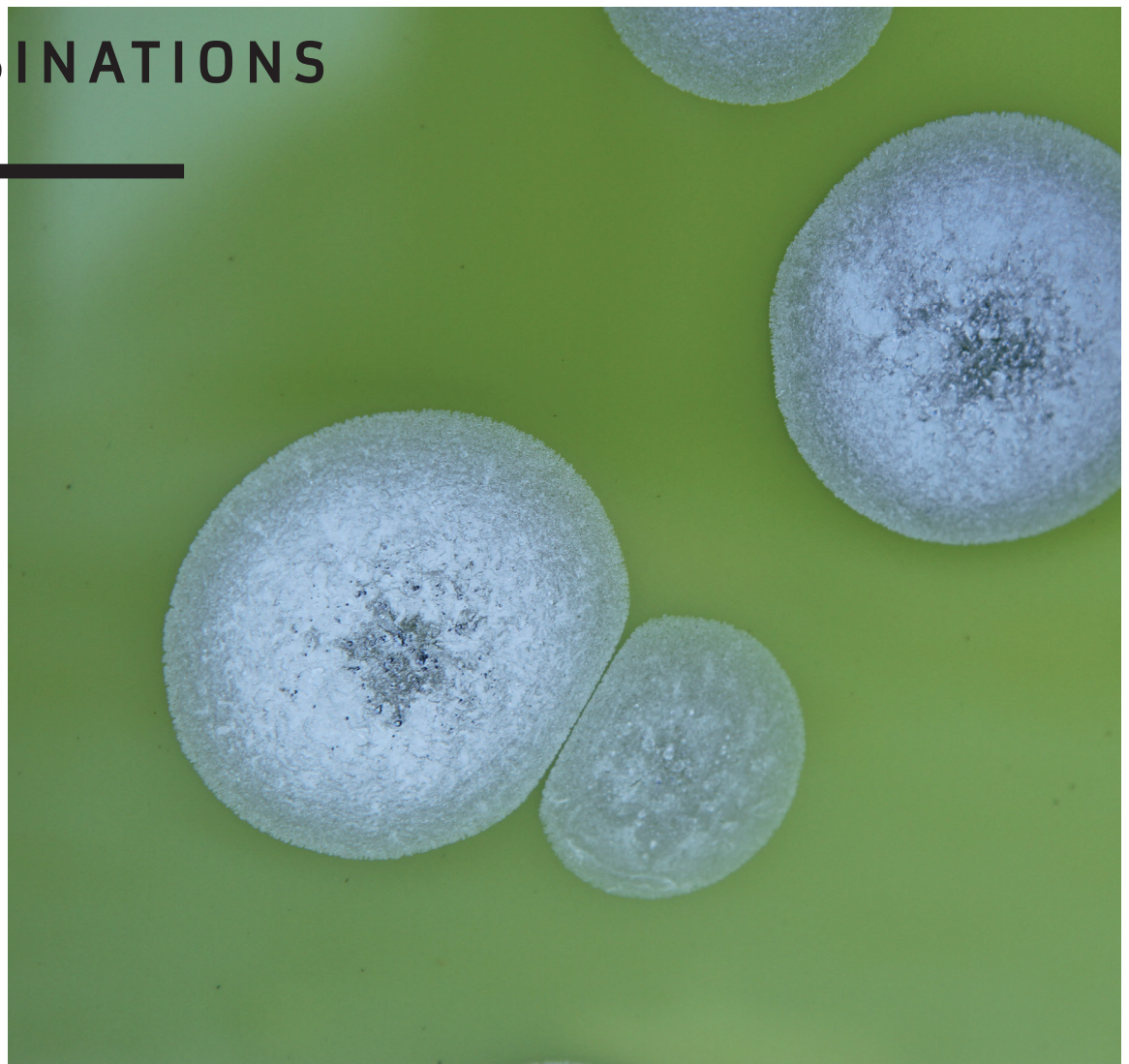


Fig 3

Miik Green xylem series - terfesia15, (detail)
mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm 2014
Photo: Ben Phillips

**SOME OF US HAVE BEGUN TO REALISE WE ARE PART
OF THE CONTINUAL INTERACTION, EXCHANGE AND
TRANSFORMATION OF ENERGIES THAT IS NATURE¹**
JOHN GRANDE

These works capture or suspend the moment when two immiscible materials meet (an instance similar to that of ink piercing water's surface, or milk, tea). Evocative, cloud-like forms materialise within the surface of my works as I inject, mix and layer similarly immiscible materials. Liquid shapes transform within the surface of the artworks as this resistance-making process is enacted, and within these abstract paintings, forms are unveiled that appear spore-like under magnification, resembling implosions, explosions, or cellular organisms.

Scientist John Thomas defines heterogeneous catalysis as 'the enhancement in the rate of a chemical reaction brought about by the presence of an interface between two phases' (1967, 8). This catalysis is a conversation between two phases: in arts practice (and my own works) a friction or jarring; an action in interaction. The polymer and urethane create an exothermic reaction when combined. The resin is a hybrid product, setting over variable periods; reaction time affected by temperature, humidity, volume of product mixed and surplus materials added to the mixture. The resin not only serves to contain the movement of materials by forming a physical barrier, but also enhances the way in which a viewer experiences these paintings.

Terfesia15 (Fig.3) contains rolls and folds, intricate cross-sections that reveal a brain-like patterning. The work serves as a cellular reminder of the shifting, ever-changing flux of our biological world, where cells merge, divide and replicate in protoplasmic ooze. Here we see the splitting of cells, transformations these organisms undergo as process restructures through division and reproduction. This work is lustrous, a sensual clash of conception and creation, containing metallic material set in a pond-green background. Elements of colour and commerce strike an odd balance between unnatural and natural, containing both a bodily and industrial quality, synthetic set against the corporeal. In this moment of division, forms are poised between split and splitting, growth and reproduction, creating a single or dual entity. While it is a single artwork, it hints at a process that recognises disparity within the whole, of a creation that relies on its segments and sections to generate action. This pulse of separation, this resistance which forces division, and tension, change, is the subject addressed by writer Professor Elizabeth Grosz when she suggests: 'Perhaps it is the consequence of vibration and its resonating effects that generates a universe in which living beings are impelled to become, to change from within, to seek sensations, affects, and precepts that intensify and extend them to further transformations' (2008, 83).

¹ Grande, John. 2004. *Balance: Art and Nature*. Montreal: Black, Rose Books. P 36.

My paintings, while varying in scale, are non-representative works that appear to reference the micro-world. They are highly reflective, augmenting light and reflection with a physicality of surface resulting from multiple layers of applied resin. Colour is a central element, with contrasting and merging pigments appearing to interact in suspension. Works of larger dimensions aim to engulf the viewer's visual field, creating an intensely immersive experience. The pellucid nature of these paintings manipulates perceived depth, making the surface plane difficult to discern, a shifting space of both movement and stasis.

I work on aluminium; a composite product in which a 0.2mm aluminium sheet encases an Acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS) plastic core. ABS combines the rigidity and strength of styrene polymers, polybutadiene rubber and acrylonitrile, and is superior to other materials in regard to finish, toughness, and hardness. These works vary in scale from 45 x 45cm to 400 x 200cm and are *mixed media on aluminium*. The mixed media generally refers to a combination of resins, polyurethanes, solvents, water-based inks, oil paint, acrylic and coloured dyes. Rows of small colours, ranging from translucent pale aqua to viscous metallic magenta are laid out in plastic tubs, and various means of mixing and combining these products are employed - from paddles to syringes - to create works that embody an arrested movement. The process is physical, as the resin requires fifteen minutes of mixing and continuous transfer from pail to pail before it can be dropped into the mix, resulting in thick strands of colour. The act of mixing part A with part B becomes more difficult as molecular bonds begin to form and the resin becomes opaque (a process intensified by the heat emitted from 80W lights surrounding the workspace). These lights provide optimal conditions, however, for producing the work, and the studio appears daylight-bright even at 3am. Chemicals, pigments and colours laid out in select rows are then consulted in a manner analogous to a scientist assessing data charts, before additional batches of colour are mixed and spread over the remaining panels.

Ambient temperature is a contributing factor to the works, as the resin sets in a relatively short amount of time. The materials are decided upon before the resin is mixed and laid out on the bench top, along with test tubes, syringes, mixing paraphernalia and a box of disposable gloves. The archival nature of Alucobond was attractive, initially designed as exterior cladding for the commercial building industry. Due to the nature of my studio practice, which involves material experimentation and chemical combinations, it has proved an ideal substrate for unstable matter and material testing. Using traditional material such as canvas would not have been viable, as the resistant processes demand a stable, resilient material. In these particular paintings, the process of mixing, pouring, and simultaneously existing



Fig 4 *Miik Green xylem series - parenchyma12*
mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm 2014
Photo: Ben Phillips

in-the-moment is taxing. Decisions involving the mixing quantities and colour combinations are made in a spontaneous manner as the painting develops. To ensure that the surface maintains a uniform cure and avoids unwanted bubbles and uncured sections, vigorous and sustained stirring is required. As previously indicated, the process used to create the paintings is a physical one, a corporeal exchange between artist and artwork.

Mixing of these pigments, colours and chemicals has substantial bearing on the finished work, and as such, the artist must pay particular attention to the process. The method I utilise is as follows: resin is mixed in large plastic pails then poured directly onto the prepared surface and spread using various implements. (As the mix is dropped from a height and the substance hits the aluminium, an audible thump can be heard). After scraping away excess resin, I begin spreading these liquid colour fields now glistening under the studio lights. At this point, pre-prepared and mixed resin/pigments are added to the formations developing on the panel, or inks and dyes are directly injected into the (now-catalysing) resin. The resin catalysis is one that primarily involves heat and time: the method entails mixing two equal parts of resin and hardener which, during the process, transform from liquid to solid, arresting pigments and materials at various stages of patterning.

These paintings suggest living, breathing, and organic, molecular structures, functioning at a microscopic or cellular level wherein tiny 'cultures' appear to be floating in either water or crude oil. This dichotomy highlights the uneasy relationships operating between two primary substances of liquid-forms; between separation and congealing, dispersing and repelling. The resin allows for the organisms to evolve (to a point), float and expand while suspended in a transitional, borderline state that causes intricate shapes to become trapped somewhere between liquefaction and coagulation. While either result may ultimately lead to a deterioration or demise, it can also signal regeneration. As humans we establish resistance in the form of boundaries or borders, but what might similar barriers signify in creative production? Perhaps in challenging these constraints clarity results, visualisation manifests.

While revelation or visualisation of abstract concepts is evident in fields as diverse as science, art and mathematics, its exemplary practitioners such as Henri Poincaré, Albert Einstein and Leonardo da Vinci, have grasped the necessity for alternate modes of understanding. In applying these concepts to mathematics, Benoit Mandelbrot, pioneer of

fractal geometry, renders these constructs visible, categorising them with names such as *Minkowski Sausages* or *Peano Monsters*. Deleuze speaks of this unveiling process in *The Logic of Sensation*, defining the task of painting as an 'attempt to render forces that are not themselves visible' (1981, 48). The artists Deleuze implicates in this act of rendering visible or 'capturing forces' (Millet, Cezanne and Van Gogh) seem to be cognizant of that which they were rendering visible. Something altogether different happens in my practice, however, namely that the artist himself rather than simply rendering visible becomes the subject of that act. In physically leaving the studio, rendering visible occurs outside of the artist's jurisdiction making him return to the painting as both artist and viewer, equally susceptible to a moment of revelation.

Writing from a scientific perspective, Arthur Miller discusses the German term *Anschauung*, as 'visual imagery abstracted from phenomena we have witnessed with our senses' (2001, 47). He explains how this mode of seeing assisted Einstein's development as a scientist, asserting that he '...benefited greatly from the emphasis at Aarau on the power of visual understanding, of *Anschauung*' (2001, 48). Sculptor Tony Cragg, who originally trained as a scientist, delineates his position as an artist, stating that science lacks 'perceivable images' for its theories, asserting that art is 'an important supplement and expansion of the sciences' (1985, 31). In concurrence with Cragg, I argue that the sciences would benefit from the mode of seeing identified by Miller, but disagree with his assertion that art should be relied upon to elucidate scientific concepts. This reductive notion places expectations on art that lie beyond its scope, creating a false dichotomy between science and art.

Abstract revelations are pivotal to my practice and its role in contemporary visual arts, aligning closely with Immanuel Kant's theory of an 'aesthetic representation of the purposiveness of nature' (2005, 19). This Kantian purposiveness can be seen in the work of Olafur Eliasson, whereby the artist attempts to draw on the essence of nature utilising sculptural intervention or mixed media installation. Similarly, my arts practice aligns resistant materials and favours processes over outcome, meaning over result. Similar methodologies are evident (and will be further investigated) in the works of select contemporary artists.

My works evolve over time, changing shape as a result of material resistance. This synthetic opposition in the surface of the artwork creates shapes reminiscent of natural forms such as bacteria, spores and cellular organisms. The work resembles something one might discover in the science laboratory, something cultivated in

a Petri dish. These organic structures are produced through adsorption (not to be confused with absorption) by the edges of the other material dispersing into, or separating from, the substrate. These shapes evolve via the combination of synthetic, heterogeneous substances while also retaining an organic-like aesthetic.

Creating a system or framework within which materials are able to develop organically allows for developments that lie beyond the artist's control. This idea is imperative to the role of the artist and to resistance, where resisting control enables a renewed focus on process and the act of making. Mixtures and combinations of resins, inks, polyurethanes and industrial paints are 'set up' by the artist, then proceed to negotiate space and barriers until catalysis occurs. The resin is a hybrid product, a mixture of polyurethane and polymer (generally resistant substances) that, through an exothermic reaction, combines to produce a highly durable, flexible finish. This process of heterogeneous catalysis suspends the visible movement of the art products through the hermetic sealing of resin. The benefit of combining un-like materials is that, like the hybrid resin, the resulting product now contains the desirable properties of both elements. This allows materials that contain a single characteristic to change, and for negotiations to occur. In relinquishing portions of the artistic process, a kind of freedom is achieved ... of their own accord, materials merge, create or break barriers, and interact in space as needed. In my work this production becomes a site of transformation, creating aesthetic forms that resemble biological microscopic studies. However, this process raises the question: 'do these forms occur in nature regardless of human interaction, or are these shapes only revealed as the resin sets?'

Medical gloves, a respiratory mask, protective clothing and safety glasses are worn during this procedure, one that involves the addition of pigments, paints and chemicals to the resin. Following this step, the material is applied (either through pouring, wiping, dragging or injecting) until the desired surface arrangement is achieved. When these works have been poured and combined, the artist's role, at least for the time being, is complete. Hereon the work begins to catalyse, capturing the reformation and restructure of materials. The two-part hybrid resin acts as a sealant, inhibiting further reaction or flux between the materials after solidification. In making these works, seeming traces of the physical process are evident at surface-level; tinctures of vigour. Returning forty-eight hours later, the paintings, whose spillage has caused the resin to adhere to the floor, are snapped away from the ground. In this way, the role of the artist and the art materials themselves are linked in a resistive manner; collectively and independently sharing responsibility for the painting.

**Fig 5**

Anish Kapoor *Untitled*
stainless steel and lacquer 129 x 129 x 21cm 2014
Image courtesy Galleria Continua

The works of selected practitioners, from prolific contemporary artists James Turrell and Richard Serra to Olafur Eliasson and Anish Kapoor, employ a similar resistivity. Their relevant works, or the methods employed in execution of those works, will be linked aesthetically or conceptually to resistance and materials within an arts context. This idea has interdisciplinary relevance and implications outside of purely arts-based practice. For example, architect Michael Hansmeyer employs a bio-process of division and reproduction of cell organisms in his practice to create elaborate computer-cut sculptural forms. Although purely interested in replicative action, his work is generated through simple algorithms. The technology needed to produce his virtual shapes is not yet available, but he envisages its viability in the future. While the hidden geometry within these forms is incredibly complex, they are made possible through basic iteration, Hansmeyer himself stating: 'these forms look elaborate, but the process is a very minimal one' (2012).

**Fig 6**

James Turrell *Rendering for Aten Reign*, daylight and LED light, site-specific installation at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 2013.
Photo: thewildmagazine.com

While he translates this perspective of nature into reality using mathematical and technological tools, his interest stems from the replication found within nature. He states: 'Nature has been called the greatest architect of all time - we can borrow nature's processes, we can abstract them to create something that is new' (2012). Like Hansemeyer's archi-sculptures, my paintings focus on the singular process of heterodox union and the inherent oppositional forces characteristic of such compositions.

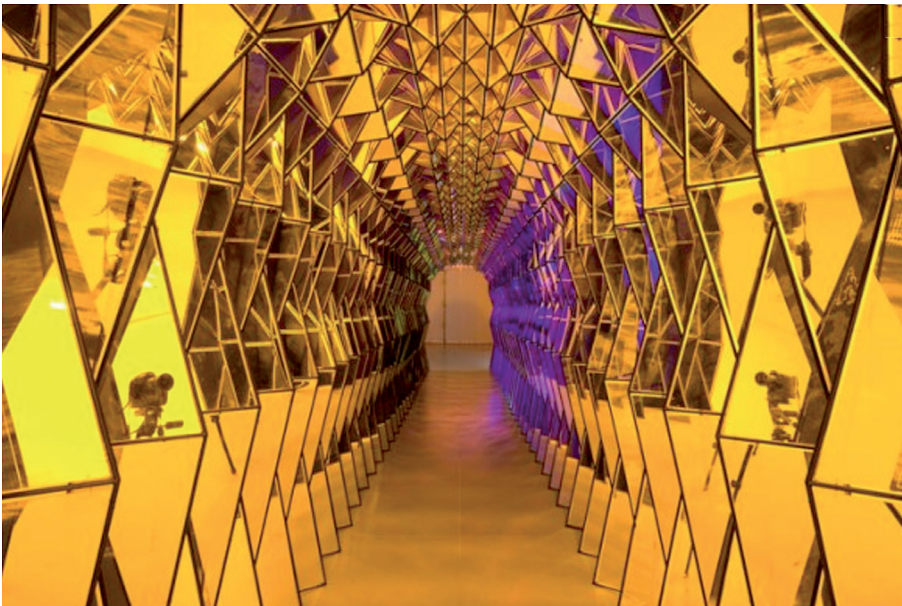


Fig 7 Olafur Eliasson *One-way colour tunnel*
dimensions variable 2007
Photo: Nathan Keay

Such opposing force is evident in Eliasson's work, from his abstraction of the natural world to the geometric; the immaterial to the material, and the seen to the unseen. In the sculptural installation *One-way colour tunnel*, he presents this dichotomy as a journey, a transition between oppositions. His works have an experiential quality that is revealed as soon as a viewer enters, interacts or inspects. His strong use of colour and line draw on the architectural and fractal-like aspects of the structures we build; the places we inhabit. Geometry links these ideas in terms of revealing or seeing what these structures represent, like bodily carbon stringers at a cellular level, or tension cables that secure bridges. In approaching this tunnel, the viewer is aware of their materiality within its portal-like enclosure. Reflection, colour, form and skeletal framing combine to immerse the entrant into his vision: an ephemeral structure of opposition.

One-way colour tunnel (Fig. 7) is rounded, tunnel-like, with a vaulted ceiling, while also composed of triangulated, rigorously Euclidean forms. At once mathematical and scientific, the rotunda is composed of discrete geo-forms. Here Eliasson,

striking a balance between the organic and the non-organic, the natural and the synthetic, achieves disequilibrium. New spaces emerge in the clarity of the unconfirmed, the presence of unnatural polarity. The work engages the viewer and questions the function of the artist and their role in audience engagement. At what stage, for example, can the maker stand back from the making and anticipate meaningful exchange? 'Is this a space that can be controlled by the artist, or is it dictated by the onlooker?' 'What framework should the artist assemble if making work that is participatory in nature?'

Eliasson's 2010 exhibition *Take Your Time* was shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. It explored the optical while distancing itself from optics, extending the experiential without relying on support mechanisms. His light-filled rooms (so bright that black hues appeared neon purple) literally affected viewer's retinas as sight and seeing were dictated by the bulbs' wattage. While most of the works were intriguing, I found Eliasson's focus on immersion unique, encompassing and conducive to a new dialogue; one based on response to the physicality of surrounding immateriality. In a dialogic sense, he combines and sets up an unlike union between disparate elements that enables an exchange between viewer and work, or site and installation. Eliasson ceases his control over the work once it has been built to specification, after which point it operates solely through viewer exchange. The goldish gleam that emerges under the rich purple light-source further creates a jarring or pulsing within the work at the very moment that time, material and presence pause. Furthermore, the sculpture, with its myriads of facets, reflect and refract, the entrant acutely aware of their presence in the midst of angle, hue, gloss, and the transformative disjuncture of both complementary and discordant elements.

While Eliasson utilises light and other means to engage the viewer, Turrell 'uses light as a medium of art rather than as the means for perceiving artworks' (Goto 2009, 25). His artistic goal is to empower the viewer with an occularcentric vision; one composed of overwhelming colour and light. Turrell, working with the most ephemeral of materials - namely light and colour - makes *Skyspaces*, purpose-built sculptural forms that frame the sky, challenging the viewer's sensorial perception. As Ursula Sinnreich and Una Kulturbetriebe note in *The Geometry of Light*, Turrell's revealing of the material nature of light and space enables the viewer to 'directly experience light as a spatial phenomenon and as a material with its own qualities' (2009, 55). His work contains an overt connectedness with the natural world and nature's presence, and his use of light is conceptually based. Making explicit his artistic intent, Turrell himself states: 'My work is more about your seeing than it

is about my seeing, although it is a product of my seeing. I'm also interested in the sense of presence of space; that is, space where you feel a presence, almost an entity- that physical feeling and power that space can give' (1985, 102). Sinnreich and Kulturbetriebe see Turrell's oeuvre as 'connected to the sensory impressions of the entire body, and the emotions – [enabling] them to have subjective visual experiences that link them in unique ways to the outside world, to their inner world, and to art' (2009, 40).



Fig 8

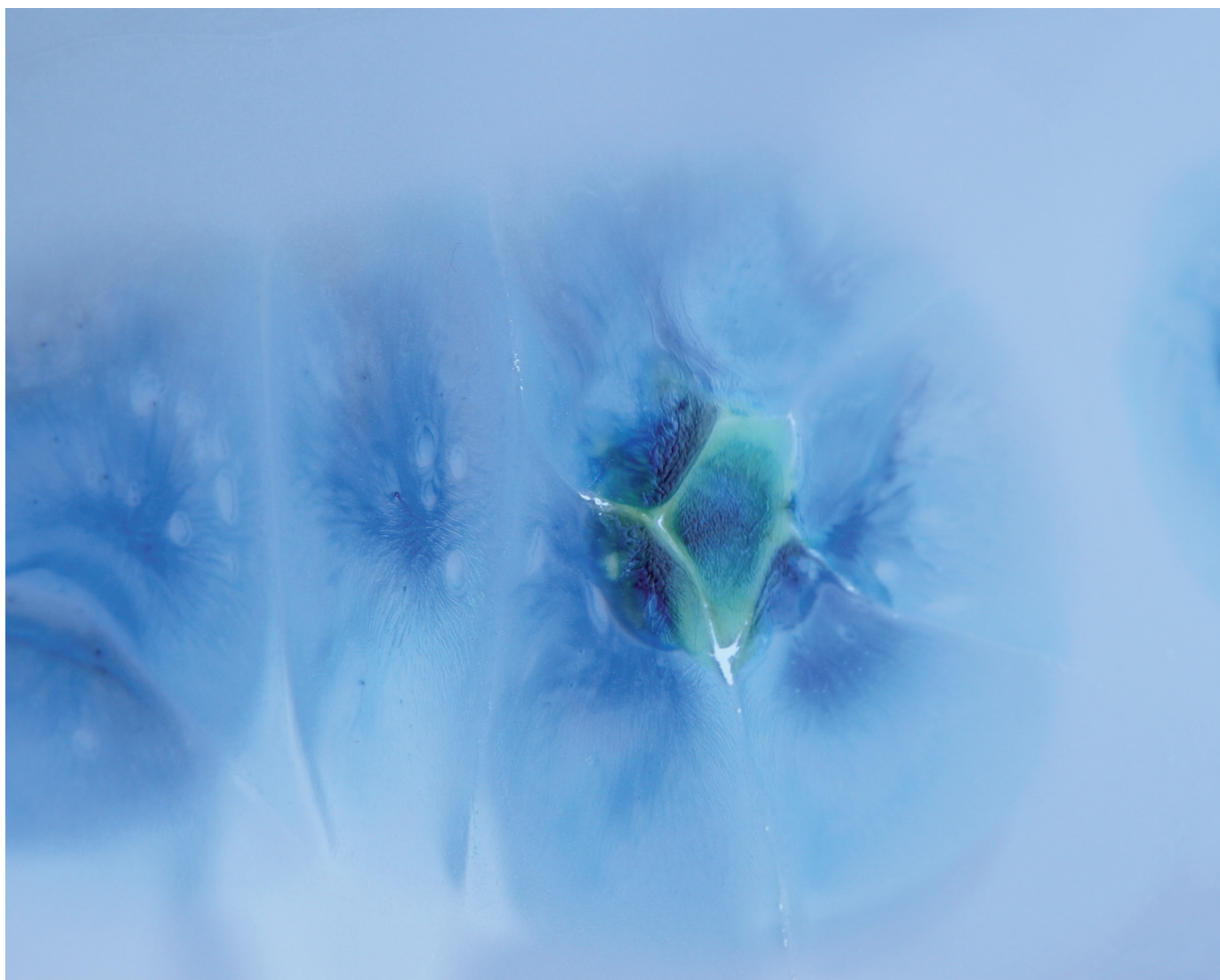
James Turrell *Breathing Light*
LED light in space, dimensions variable 2013
Photo: Florian Holzherr

Turrell's work addresses suspension, visualisation and revelation. In the above installation *Breathing Light* (Fig.8), he explores perception and ocular experience - the materiality of light harnessed, assessed and distilled for sculptural intervention. As the viewer enters the gallery, they are sanitised by light emanating from a far wall. It is at once poetic and striking, the central division acting as a bridge between material and immaterial, a pathway between space and time. The viewer is submersed in a light that overwhelms the senses with

colour and lumens. Here there is no allowance made for cognitive comprehension, only the physicality of illumination and an awareness of 'being' that permeates space. These works loosen the constraints often placed upon the seen and unseen, and challenge awareness and perception based on the 'logical'. Turrell achieves this through an undiluted immersion of experience, one utilised frequently as he capitalises on his unique vision of space and the employment of light as revelatory material.

His *Skyspaces* exemplify this unveiling; apertures being utilised within buildings to highlight and frame sections of sky. His seminal (yet incomplete) work *Roden Crater*, is a series of purpose-built tunnels in Arizona that house his vision of a dedicated viewing space for observing the night sky and cosmic occurrences. Turrell's pieces suspend the momentary, his light-filled interventions drawing together both the timelessness and transience of light. In light, he sees the spiritual and the physical emerge in an all-encompassing pulse that illuminates the void. Through *Breathing Light*, we are recipients of a renewed visual modality, a gifted re-awareness courtesy of the artist. It is Turrell's momentary illumination that in Bergsonian terms 'provides the experience of temporal duration, a salient example being a melody, which intertwines past, present and future in a meaningful whole' (Jay 1994, 197). Through sensation the Laputan is realised, from ether to an almost tangible ethereality. Here that the eye's saccadic jumps are rendered impotent, not in focus or comprehension, but in perception.

By allowing immiscible materials to territorialise, the products can create an aesthetic similar to forms found in nature – specifically micro-nature. Materials and liquids that are composed of varying densities and bases create unique forms when combined; shapes not limited to the substrate where either material may repel or combine. This creates a platform for the material mixtures to develop and react accordingly. Utilising this method, numerous questions arise: 'At what point does the artist *let go* of the physical involvement with the work?' 'Does control inhibit the natural organisation of materials?' 'Should the art material retain a resistance despite the artist's intervention?' And 'what evolves when the artist is passive or uninvolved?' Colour is important in these works, functioning as a biomarker to map movement and the extent of liquid combinations. This application of pigment defines borders and also visually demonstrates how each section has intervened to create new forms. Layer by layer, these materials push and pull, landing on single layers or bulging in-between to create dimples and ridges in the surface of the works.

**Fig 9**

Miik Green xylem series - hoechst5 (detail)
mixed media on aluminium, 45 x 45cm 2014
Photo: Ben Phillips

In my works, as a result of combining unlike elements, tension is able to develop and provoke transformation. The combination of water-based dye with oil-based paint in the above detail results in an image remarkably similarly to that which might be viewed through the microscope or telescope; unlike combinations yielding an unexpected form. The metallic silver background becomes an alien vista, a vitreous, crater-filled landscape. In turn, this blue backdrop has subsumed and absorbed the complex structures.

Researcher Lucinda Coleman discusses my practice in terms of the viewer's engagement with the work, the motivation behind the second glance. This discerning look may be due to the work's intrigue or interplay between rendering visible and rendering *the* visible. She states: 'Multi-disciplinary artist Miik Green has created a series of aesthetically beautiful artworks on aluminium panels that capture attention. They are shiny surfaces, so the viewer has to duck and twist to see the two-dimensional, mixed-media images in the reflective panels' (2013, 1). Referring to an encounter between viewer and viewed, she notes that the onlooker has to contort to register the forms and shapes within the surface. She continues: 'At first glance the images appear to be cross-sections of plants or even human cells. The colours are startling; the fine asymmetrical lines too pleasing to be random brushstrokes, surely?' (2013, 1). This is the tension, the action that occurs within the works both in the creation and the encounter. It is one that fluctuates between the natural and the unnatural, the unconcealed and the concealed.

These forms appear, created by opposing force, in what artist Martin Heine might view as the clash of autonomy and presence. In this unlikely handover, a transformative energy is exchanged between materials in heat and metamorphosing states; in the transformation from liquid to solid. In combining unlike materials, the artist is aware that outcomes cannot be foreseen, allowing for unplanned development. The act of mixing the unmixable transfers control from the artist to the materials, inviting instability and unburdening the maker from certain aspects of responsibility. These, I argue are the heterogeneous combinations of arts practice.

Life is Brief

In futility the artist thrusts, splashing,
coating uneven surfaces of fur and brickwork
disarray and dulux, flooded, dripping, costumes,
tubes soaked, funnelled and sawn down, measured
unbalanced unhinging unrepentant undeterred unmeasured
acrylic flung in hard-to-clean spaces
wrapped, plastic-sheeted detritus and dirty accessories,
chromatic throes and
exuberance, mixed colours running
in messy klutz of production, slipping, tripping
spraying amidst falling pails: walls, floor and torso
the remnants of production,
pressures of self-production and disorderly exchange
and stepping outside the frame,
a presence in absence

for Martin Heine 1957 - 2014

1.2 RESISTANCE + ARTS PRACTICE: STRUGGLE, CONFLICT, ANTAGONISM

This vision of the artist as expendable cultural sentinel serves as an ideal backdrop for discussing the struggles that the artist encounters, the risk attached to resisting. Writer David Pledger presents an unsettling vision of a contemporary artist perched precariously between commercial, governmental and political concerns, imploring us to '... work through the ambient fear created by neo-liberalism, push back against the shadow values of managerialism and constitute ourselves as a sustained contradiction' (2013, 52).

This section examines resistance from the perspective of the artist in the world, assessing the cost of this struggle when it extends beyond the studio. Noting the challenging, even detrimental impact of the creative process, Deleuze and Guattari compare the artist to a philosopher, stating: 'Artists are like philosophers. What little health they possess is often too fragile, not because of their illness or neuroses, but because they have seen something in life that is too much for anyone, too much for themselves, and that has put on them the quiet mark of death. But this something is also the source or breath that supports the illness of the lived (what Nietzsche called health)' (1994, 172-173). Pledger sees a similarly tenuous interchange, similar to the dyspnoeic artist attempting to breathe life into culture, stating: 'In the age of globalisation, artists are its canaries in the coalmine and we are struggling for breath' (2013, 2).

It is in the transition from material resistance in the artist's studio to their role in society that this concept can be visualised as *action* in arts practice. Analogous to materials placed under tension and stress, the artist may similarly experience pressure to perform, to create while also balancing everyday responsibilities. This is the artist's struggle - the expectations placed upon an artist and their practice. While this struggle polarises practitioners, in that some allow creative constraints to dictate their practices, while others abandon these limitations altogether, it can also be viewed as a refining force that eliminates impurities. In enduring this process, the artist may emerge transformed, critical revelation initiating a life-altering experience. *Is this struggle commensurate with that of arts practice, and if so, does the reward cover this cost? Are the two able to be separated?* These, and other related questions, are ideas that emerge in the studio, where engagement occurs on a material level, between mutually resistant substances.

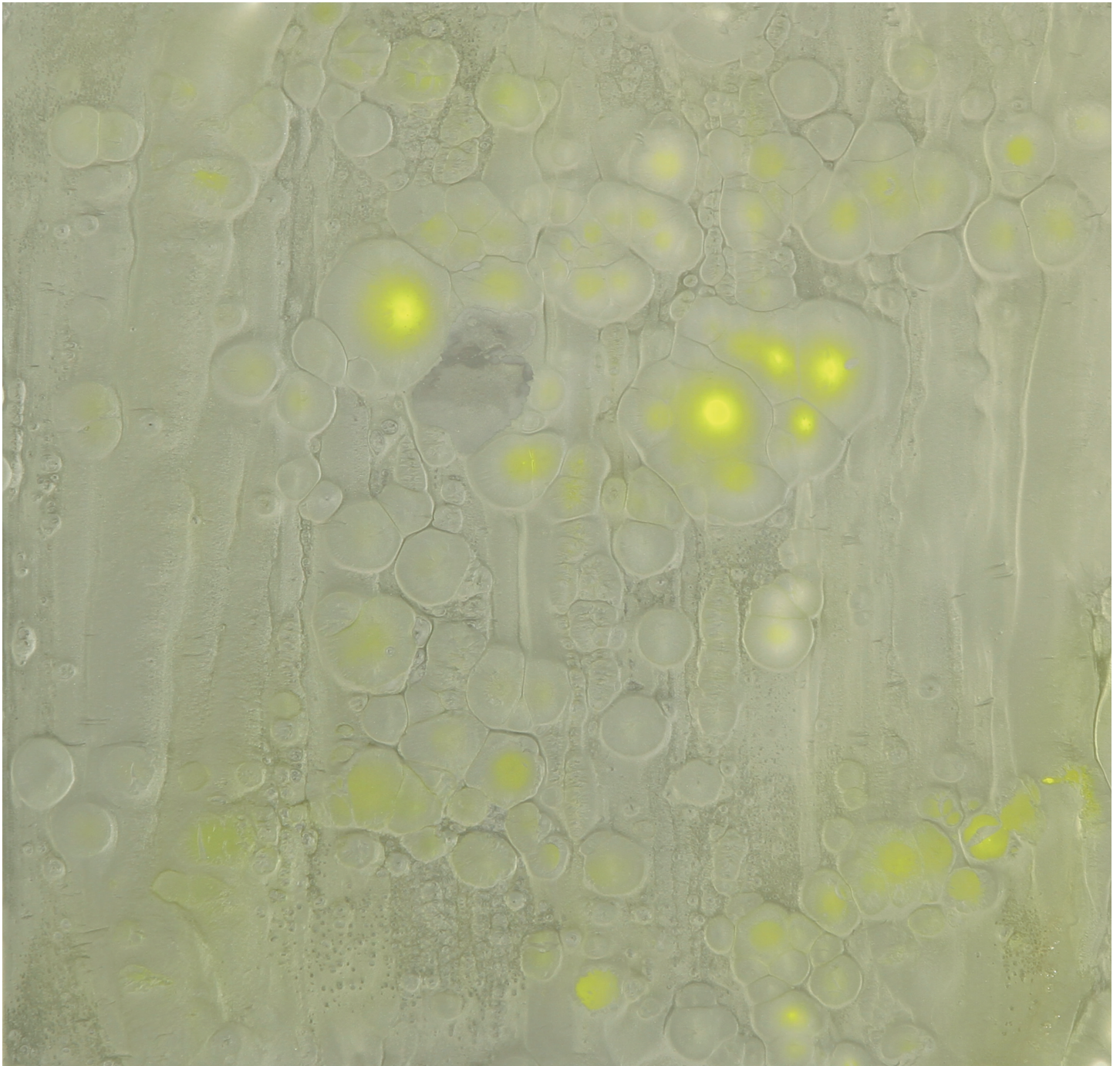


Fig 10 *Miik Green xylem series – meiosis2*
mixed media on aluminium, 45 x 45cm 2013
Artist photo

IN ALL CHAOS THERE IS A COSMOS,
IN ALL DISORDER A SECRET ORDER²
CG JUNG

The shiny microcosms of *meiosis2* (Fig.10) adopt this resistive motion and successfully interpose; however their interaction could also be described in terms of failure or futility, of surface over-saturation. The paintings present a distorted plane, a space in which the surface becomes a portal to another viewpoint: while one can focus on the intricate stellating patterns within the immediate surface, there is also a loss of spatial perception. As colour and light recede into obscurity, clarity resumes control and the plane is regained. These paintings communicate ambiguously, in a collision of form, scale and colour; unlike combinations foreshadowing a deformation and deregulation that redefines their formal qualities.

The detail here is representative of the current and ongoing body of work, the *xylem series*, which explores amongst other things, cellular division. While *meiosis* explores this iteration and procreation of life, it similarly acknowledges an impending deterioration. The work exemplifies the same process of replication that biological structures undergo, from nestling fat cells, to mergers of bodily fluids. The painting appears lipid-like, conglomerations of zygotes accreting in cumulous array, and could be envisaged as glands, nodules, tissue junctions, or secretory organs. While the detail shown here resembles biological movement, this instance of transition is physically sealed, paused and encapsulated. The silvery outer structures of these endocrine forms jostle against one another in individual attempts at primacy. In segmentary form, there is semblance of unison in discrete sections, a gentle but resistant force operating in this proliferation and excess of cell bodies. *Is this claustrophobic development a healthy multiplication of growth, or a sign of advanced decay?* The work questions dichotomous states, equilibrium and entropy, delineated as stages in a life cycle. These paintings are the result of material interaction and artistic intervention, where the injection of pigments result in surface islanding that creates and also breaches material boundaries. Bubbles signify the post-effervescence of life, suspended here as globules of stifled oxygen set in an equilibrious hypoxia. Embodying the theories of Pledger and Deleuze and Guattari, this work is as much about breath as it is about asphyxiation. These opposing states both give and take life, enhance and diminish it, the cellular patterning suggestive of both expiration and respiration.

In one sense this is an artwork in which we see the stasis of coagulance; alternatively it is the perceived flux of impalpable movement. Whether it is the depth of resin or the amount of light that refracts through the material, past-play-within is evident,

² Jung, Carl. 1981. *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. New York: Princeton University Press. P 66.

entrapped interaction. It opposes the two-dimensional face of dialecticism that philosopher Hegel struggled to delineate, seeking instead an ongoing exchange. Departing from Hegel's philosophical premise, these paintings seek another life and meaning in terms of dialogical purpose versus dialectics. This polarity is clearly delineated in *Dialogics as an Art of Discourse in Literary Criticism* by writer Don Bialostosky, who states: 'As dialectic strives for conviction on a question and rhetoric for persuasion of an audience, dialogics strives for comprehensive responsiveness and responsibility for the consequential person-ideas of a time, culture, community or discipline—that is, for the fullest articulation of someone's ideas with the actual and possible ideas of others' (1986, 789). Like Bialostosky's definition of dialects, my practice favours an ongoing dialogue over quantifiable outcomes, viewing the struggle as analogous to the pursuit of meaning, not a process through which primacy of one entity over the other is attained.



Fig 11

Martin Heine *Voltaire*
oil & acrylic on synthetic polymer, 83 x 105cm 2009
Image courtesy the artist

In *Now The Hard Part* (David Bromfield's publication on the works of artist Martin Heine), he describes similar resistive action, one that Heine lived out, noting that the artist was '...prompted by a profound need to claim the freedom of the other, to stand apart from the conventional, the routine and the mainstream' (2011, 11). Heine was an artist familiar with struggle: in the 1970s when he was interviewed to join the German forces, he splashed his urine over the enlisting officer's desk in a (successful) attempt to resist conscription. In transferring these ideas of resistance, resilience and reaction to the canvas, Heine uses paint and various materials, pushing thick colour through flyscreen to reveal form. His work *Voltaire* (Fig. 11), depicts a suburban landscape rendered in bright yellow and pink hues, the overgrowth translated in contrasting sections: landscape in landscape. Here, paint asserts itself over representational pictorial, removing what would have been apparent into abstraction, the known subverted in an intentionally gaudy application of colour. Heine's conscious use of flyscreen embodies a material and conceptual conflict, a border that signifies obstruction and freedom, or, as Bromfield notes, 'a material formal and functional marker between inside and outside, between human and non-human, art and nature' (2011, 63).

By forcing paint to interact with a screen, Heine effectively transfers his intent through the tools of the artist while still maintaining autonomy of the work. His paintings focus on the hopelessness of the struggle, the futility of pushing against bureaucracy, and also serve as icons of resistance. The methodical informs the methodology as the literal squeezing or pressure applied in the production of his artworks serve to highlight conceptual concerns, or ways of making and being. If it is the artist's charge to reveal, then Heine approaches this with both intuition and instability, critiquing institution, power structures and the social and political gatekeepers the artist often encounters. Heine sees a unity of opposites, but uses the studio strategically to represent this inherent disunity. Dissatisfied with the germane, the predictable, and the proletariat, his frustration culminates in a process of making defined by struggle.

Heine's use of colour is vividly kitsch and over-exposed, yet acts to illuminate a conflict of parts set in opposition, a reaction between unlike bodies. His is a cultural critique emanating from a centrality where Heine, as chief antagonist, confronts cultural barriers, displacing them through the application of pressure, and continually challenging resistant sites. In doing so, he joins a long tradition of artists who have utilised their work in a similarly provocative manner. As writer David Darts notes '...the visual arts have been used for decades to reveal tears in the social fabric, thereby exposing the caesuras between fundamental societal values (i.e. justice, democracy, freedom) and the dominant

discourses and normative practices of the status quo' (2004, 318). Here, his actions highlight the apathy of the unseeing, the uninterested, or serves as a provocative message to those engaged with his work. Heine's pieces contain elements of the everyday, registering his discontent with the limited materials at hand, forcing paints to merge and embrace a language of resistance. Professor Charles Goodwin argues for a similar disequilibrium, employing the phrase 'multimodal interaction', and citing the benefits in combining unlike resources to create a greater whole. In his paper *Building Action by Combining Unlike Resources* he argues that the application of this approach allows for 'transformative collaborative action' (2010, 1). This union offers a collective discussion or dynamic, however ultimately Heine and Goodwin perceive a greater value in conflicting dialogue. *How then can these unlike combinations benefit arts practice?*

While Goodwin's premise centres on language and conversation, its application has a further role in art practice; one that embraces change, discontinuity and the *other*. Goodwin again explains this resistant union as 'actively and simultaneously combining materials with intrinsically different properties into situated contextual configurations where they can mutually elaborate each other to create a whole that is both different from, and greater than, any of its constitutive parts' (2010, 1). Conflict then, can be viewed as a desirable outcome; the crucial process in multimodal interaction (an idea that has interdisciplinary relevance). Musicians such as Kanye West, Boards of Canada and RL Grime are aware of, and capitalise on, this counterforce, as will be outlined in further detail. Resistance in the material sciences, for example, reveals structures and patterning that inform the scientist and relay crucial information about the unseen or concealed. Outside the studio, this dialogic approach could form a useful model for interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaboration as meaning is produced through the clash of voices.

Through Goodwin's theory of mutual elaboration and Heine's practice, a new dialogue is enabled; one that values conflict and resistance. My paintings operate similarly in that they restructure key materials under pressure, entities composed of opposing and unique elements. These disharmonious components amalgamate, entering a struggle necessary for transformation and reassembly. The concept of such transformative unions can be identified in fields as diverse as dance or music, subverting traditional expectations of fluidity or harmony. Movement in contemporary dance, for example, or the discordant poetic compositions of modern music might exemplify resistant bodies in motion. Through resistance, music and art allow for the *other* to develop, and terms such as mixing and production intersect (albeit with discipline-specific relevance). Musicians such as Kanye

West, Boards of Canada and RL Grime are aware of, and capitalise on, this counterforce, as will be outlined in further detail.

Several months ago, I revisited the album *The Campfire Headphase*, by Scottish electro duo, *Boards of Canada*. Band members (and brothers) Marcus Eoin and Mike Sandison create atmospheric, analogue music, with veiled references to spirituality, science and mathematics. Their layered tracks are overlaid with abstract sounds such as robotic noises and laughing children; the artists utilising obsolete gadgetry and low-tech instruments that combine chaos and order. I realised, on inspection of the cover, that the images were similar to those found in one of my artworks. On re-listening to the album, however, I saw that it was not only the album's cover that resembled my work (a glossy painting with a composition of striated cellular forms with muted green and blue tones), but the music itself.

Discussing their musical approach, Sandison states: 'We throw tracks back and forward at each other. Sometimes we jam the core idea down as a take, or one of us will start something and hand it over, and vice-versa. There isn't really one method or any particular strength for either of us because it changes from track to track. We both write melodies but at the same time we're both technicians in some way, so the process is quite unpredictable and messy' (quoted in Pattinson, 2013). My studio production echoes the methods employed by Eoin and Sandison in that I invite an instability that pairs disorder with order. In this aesthetic clash music as diverse as that of *Boards of Canada* as well as electro acts *Klaypex* and *Digitalism* bear a strong resemblance to my work, the artists similarly transforming duality into a dialogic space of contrary collaboration.

American DJ/producer *RL Grimes*' work is also analogous with my own - several glitchy tracks abstractly mirror the new paintings whose disjointed sections of red and orange sat inharmoniously against a yellow expanse of colour. As I listened to the song's use of piano and synth, a resonance with my artwork became apparent, a disruption manifest in pockets of intensity; in monotony. Grimes' *Grapes Alla Vodka* (salva remix) similarly floats between an unregistered and incessant repetition; in terms of painterly composition it represents an exercise in process. These tracks are reliant on periods of registration or delineation that separate it from a background. Without these abrasive interjections, homogeneity develops, foregrounds blending into backgrounds and monotonous lines. In the painting process this delineation appears in contrasting forms, together/apart, becoming a transferable concept that likens the musician's mixing studio to artistic production.

the masked smell of resin lingers,
a polymer combination, linking polyurides,
acrid cleaners and ink bottles,
labelled containers and tubs, rows of experimentation.
Diagrams, in preparation for
the gleam of liquid, pouring
stiff act of mixing - between combining and isolating,
interspersed - in colour, heat
white
bubbles and gaseous breath
hissing of searing surface,
where intense heat releases globules,
that rise and break on skin, leprous pustules bursting
spreading and loosening, settling colour,
turning fluctuations to fused-action
the inky pigment, embedded where dropped,
bright, blooming in-between gloss,
in transparency.
Spreading, webbing and stretching - etching
into fresher glassy territory,
the liquid expanse of coagulant, sucking

this burst of light, striating,
the metamorph, profuse/loosened in
entrapment, enticed through
the liquid-droplet intravenous, interpolating,
at the intersection of macro
interventions of membrane
highlight-fillers,
fused in incompatibility, sealed in primary
unlikeness,
an awkward conversation, the stilted retorts,
linked, conversing, muted conversation. Open
communication, of muted speech
unregistered and disconnecting as essence
ebbs
and slows into stringy astringent sections,
joined, conjoined
in unanimous anonymity
union in disarray

Painting supports arrive in my studio as sheets of aluminium, generally square-shaped. The panels are then fashioned into 'canvases', and folded and fixed around an aluminium frame. Preparing the studio is a key part of the making process (to ensure that there is no interference with setting resin and/or paint, bugs, dust, dirt and any other contaminants are eliminated). Vacuuming and sweeping form part of an artistic ritual, then, which ends in intermission – the 48 hour waiting period necessary for the surfaces to cure.

Before I begin painting, two bench tops are readied – one a colour-mixing station, the other the workspace itself. The mixing table becomes a testing site, a place to experiment with various chemicals, pigments and textures prior to their application. (This also allows me to foresee any reactions that may occur as a result of mixing counter products). The bench top provides stability for the painting as I dispense various materials, leaning over, moving around the workspace, much of the excess paint running down the sides of the work and onto the bench top.

Gloves on, mix colours, gloves off
Gloves on, stir resin, gloves off
Gloves on, mix paint into resin, gloves off
Gloves on, spread product over panels, gloves off
Gloves on, inject chemicals and pigments, gloves off

After starting these new paintings, I remove my respirator and as it slips off, the toxic air smells synthetically fresh in comparison to the claustrophobia of the vapour mask. As the aluminium panels lie on the table, resin is poured, spreading across the surface of the painting. I work the resin in, dispersing it in a coloured expanse, and as it begins to slump in gelatinous strings over the side of the frame, small pools of colour begin to form on the tabletop. There is a messy physicality of connection between maker and material that is evident, traces of action still apparent in the work as it begins to harden and seal.

The resin becomes more viscous after it is mixed, and begins to warm. It is increasingly difficult to move the product around, and at this point there is little time for addition of more colour or material as the resin is too hot to touch, slowly settling into catalysis. Light streams from the paintings as I remove my gloves, rolling the catalysing

colour inside out, further examining the pieces. The work is striking; various yellows shift into a diaphanous wash, a lemony syrup against the dimpled pockets of intense colours.

Certain paintings require much more attention than others. As forms develop or structures devolve, my response is to an extent dictated by material reactions within the surface of the work. Some paintings need no further interaction after the initial pour, while others are produced by repetitive injection (reoccurring spots that form a cellular landscape demand a more dedicated approach). As the liquid spreads beneath the surface of the paint, it either hangs as an inert delineation or rises to interact with the top layer.

Addressing the artist's role in the creative process, Heine posits an independence inherent in the work itself, stating: 'There is this presence that is not mine, although I have control of it ... I think that I have proved that a certain autonomy of artwork is possible. This is the only way that such a presence can be contributed to a liberated artwork' (Bromfield 2011, 61). Heine claims control of the artwork, then, while simultaneously suggesting a kind of liberation; his art functioning to render these concepts visible.

Writer Art Markman posits the tendency to gravitate towards the path of least resistance as an integral aspect of the human mind, stating: 'Generally speaking, we do not want a creative way to cross the street, brush our teeth, or make dinner that is completely disconnected from our past experience' (2013). Despite these natural inclinations, however, he notes the importance of resistant creativity within an arts practice, asserting that: 'spending your time with people who agree with you is pleasant, but bad for your creativity. If you really want to be pushed out of your comfort zone, find people who approach life and work in a radically different way than you do' (2013). There is a certain discomfort in this action similar to the risk attached to artistic resistance.

My paintings embody these ideas in the resistant gelatinous sections of colour that seep within surfaces while also existing independently of each other: they are, as we will discuss in detail later, 'yoked apart'. This arrangement isolates pigment from material, and in the Deleuzian sense of rendering visible, paradoxically succeeds. The intention of the works is not to render the visible in order to represent natural form, but to reveal through process. In a Hegelian sense, the focus would remain on the representative image, while

for Deleuze it is the process of revelation that is important, the struggle to render visible. In unveiling these structures in aesthetic formations, the artwork presents as biological image, similar to the illustration that might feature in a scientific journal. It is as if an image has been captured and the cellular interaction examined by a qualified observer. The work resembles still images such as fat deposits, plant structure or stem cells, viewed through a microscope. The flow has a certain likeness to the body, or human morphometry, analogous to that observed by the biologist and embodying the variations and reproductive (and iterative) qualities of the cellular. Discussing the laws of nature, Deleuze states: 'If repetition exists, it expresses at once a singularity opposed to the general, a universality opposed to the particular, a distinctive opposed to the ordinary, an instantaneity opposed to variation and an eternity opposed to permanence' (1994, 3). Deleuze here refers to the vast cycles operating in nature; of variety and permanence, repetition, reduction and even futility.

Heine's work demonstrates a similar awkwardness and ineffectiveness; that of negotiating with exigencies outside arts practice. He utilises performance, paint and painting in order to resist regularity or prescribed boundaries and expectations. As Bromfield suggests, Heine: 'addresses the klutz and clumsiness of a life in which our best actions are merely impulsive, patterned from a need to amuse ourselves by inventing rules that pre-empt revelation'. He goes on to posit that life is '...seduced and enslaved by the imperatives of style and modish consumption, rather than the oppressive routine of labour. Modern or postmodern, slavish conformity is the way to go, the one persistent premise, the most efficient form of unfreedom' (2011, 3).

Bromfield exposes the futility of conforming to certain expectations that surround arts practice, suggesting that creative freedom is merely culturally tokenistic. He marks Heine as an artist who works against the grain, exposing the ineffectual, the Ecclesiastical meaningless, in an all-too-familiar artscape; a cultural space slowly succumbing to mediocrity. His works look, sound and feel like art, but reference the meaninglessness of the product created for consumption's sake. Theorist Lyotard addresses similar subject matter when he states '...what assurance is there that humans will become more cultivated than they are? If culture (culture of the mind at least) requires work and thus takes time, and if the economic genre imposes its stakes of gaining time on greater part of phrase regimens and genres of discourse, then culture, as a consumer of time ought to be eliminated' (1988, 181). Where Lyotard sees a slippage of culture into strategies of exchange, Bromfield sees labourless, commodity-driven consumption, noting: 'It is utterly alien to local

habit, problematic, suspect, unacceptable to the benchmarked bad taste of the trivial, the corporate and the timid, who control the visual arts' (2011, 3).

A struggle similar to that mentioned above exists, for both artist and artwork; one that is seemingly chaotic, maddening and futile. As poet Rimbaud notes, in typically poetic fashion: 'This poison will remain in all our veins even when, the fanfare turning, we shall be given back to the old disharmony. O now may we, so worthy of these tortures! Fervently take up the superhuman promise made to our created body and soul: that promise, that madness! Elegance, science, violence!' (2003, 61). The poet's hallucinogenic *A Season in Hell* details his personal experiences of madness and the artistic struggle. His writings are disorderly, incoherent at times; yet provide insight into the artist as one struggling against a sluggish awakening. In achieving temporality and spatiality, the artist frees the viewer to contemplate the corporeal free of bodily constraints. Consubstantial to this idea, these paintings' details act as an exposé, possibly of the inner workings of the body, or the structuring of a cell's nucleus. Espousing notions analogous to those found in Plato's *Pharmakon* (both lethal and life-giving), Rimbaud speaks of a poison that remains in the veins, like an elixir that is both life-giving and life-taking. Is this, perhaps, a poison of unawareness, of unseeing, of unknowing?

There is a price, therefore, for resistance, a cost attached to this struggle, a necessary conflict through which change (and with it, transformation, occurs). It is an expense the artist bears in order to reveal and render visible, an exertion that redefines and re-establishes meaning. The next chapter furthers this premise, detailing resistive modes of collaboration as well as alternative approaches to public art (an extension of arts practice). These are the possibilities the artist must grapple with if they are able to object, obstruct, and even outlast. To return to Pledger's brilliant analogy, the artist exists in a cultural coalmine, a space in which the threat of suffocation is ever-present. It is important to remember, however, that while these actions come at a price, in such toxic environments the cost is always greatest to the canary.

1.3 RESISTANCE + ARTS PRACTICE: FRAMING TO FRAMEWORKS

WHERE ART NO LONGER CREATES CONFLICT BUT
GUARANTEES A CONFLICT-FREE ZONE WITHIN
SOCIETY, EXPERTS CEASE TO OFFER ORIENTATION³
HANS BELTING

This section examines resistance in terms of methodology; from collaborating, to engaging with other parties (interdisciplinary engagement or collaboration being viewed as a means of extending an arts practice towards interaction with other bodies). I advocate the pursuit of uncommon spaces over those shared: a space where meaning is framed through sites of opposition. Grosz asserts: 'If framing creates the very condition for the plane of composition and thus of any particular works of art, art itself is equally a project that disjars, distends and transforms frames, that focuses on the intervals and conjunctions between frames' (2008, 18). This is a framing of arts practice that extends beyond itself, encompassing exchange and discourse, opposing delineation and demarcation. Resistance becomes an action derived from opposition, which removes the traditional limitations of collaboration, provokes public interaction, and prompts exchange.

Framing collaboration in this manner places value on interaction rather than traditional dialectics, and enables an ongoing dialogue. Similarly, arts practice in the public sphere can become a dialogic address, exposing cultural norms or questioning ingrained values, expectations or agendas. Pledger returns to this notion of the artist as cultural mediator when he states:

Most changes in the world – environmental, political, social and economic – can be explained by the playing out of tension between reduction and expansion, the push-and-pull of globalisation. Artists sense and articulate this tension because they work at the edge of things, they feel the shifts and changes, they internalise and express them, they mediate upheaval and explain crisis, they 'see' issues of social and mental well-being as intrinsic to their practice, they see into the spaces between things and the languages they use are not bound by words so they have the capacity to speak to everyone (2013, 27).

It is at these 'edges of things,' I argue, that the artist is enabled to reveal, an artwork is activated, or a project propelled forward.

³ Belting, Hans. 2003. *Art History after Modernism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. P 11.

Stringers that drag, separations delineating space,
contact via resistance.
the tensor active, repelling/inviting
between gravity and levity
an acidic meteoroid,
the cordial-saturated bilge pump.
A polarised pinpoint,
radiant lilly pilly shroom
Fulleresque: exostructure/inner tumult
frothy wart hole, war hole

A three-part harmony,
the meteor, flung star

suspended between earth and heaven
despatched and arcing across stratus,
searing path of acceleration,
towards destruction, impact,
in weightlessness noiseless
inaudible, hurtling fiery sphere,
otherworldly
between ether and matter,
atmospheres,
loosed cosmic force
bolide cataclysm, ablation
prima materia in staged velocity
the crossover departing
Alpha Crusis

**Fig 12**

Miik Green/Chris Malajczuk *Petri Sweat #4*
Petri dish, resin, dimension variable 2011
Photo: Lance Ward

Petri Sweat #4 (Fig. 12) is the result of a collaboration with Chris Malajczuk, a nanotechnologist based at Curtin University, and is founded on creating works that operate through/under tension. Malajczuk's doctorate involves tracking amphiphilic lipids in the blood brain barrier and analysing this activity as a potential contributor to Alzheimer's disease. These particular lipids are hydrophobic and lipophilic: resistant, yet drawn to, water, traversing this barrier to compound in synapse-inhibiting plaque. Our combined research interests focus on suspension, thermodynamic instability and heterogeneous combinations, and while our distinct areas of expertise collide, it is the collision itself that enables the works to be produced. This process, based on tension, has resulted in artworks formed through expended (unlike) energy, where resistance is evidenced in an extension of practice that lies outside the sphere of control or comfort zone of both parties. The dichotomous lipids embody an inherent opposition analogous to that existing between Malajczuk and myself; a partnership that highlights the radical or transformative potential of working outside a 'safe' or mutually compatible sphere. Initially, our collaboration resulted in two separate bodies of work: a series entitled *Suspensions* (resin and mixed media on heavyweight Canson paper), and *Petri Sweats* (mixed media on Petri dishes), and culminated in the 2011 exhibition *Unnatural Phenomena* at the John Curtin Gallery.

The artworks are the culmination of shared research, referencing thermodynamics and material suspension. Here liquid-like forms imperceptibly creep off the paper, resinous slumps encapsulating vivid pigment washes. These pieces seduce the viewer, their lustrous surfaces and luminous colours provoking the observer to revisit the work several times. Throughout the production of this series, we discovered a method of working with one another that avoided the typical outcomes expected from an artistic/scientific collaboration, whereby there is a mutual target. We chose to focus on key concepts, approaching them resistantly as we problematised the borders of our respective disciplines. Our fields became barriers to push against as we interpreted abstract concepts, framed by interdisciplinary tension. Our works were then able to reflect key ideas without relegating the artist to a simple visual agent of scientific ideas. Similarly, the scientist was freed from the equally restrictive aspects of either testing or unpredictability. Rather, we chose to consciously invite instability into the equation. It was in the making, and subsequent discussions, that the central theme of this exegesis emerged; namely the notion of resistance as a process that ultimately leads to transformation.

Lyotard's concept of the *différend*, which pertains to meaning being generated in incompatibility is germane here, encompassing as it does the play of inherent oppositions that

cannot be reconciled, yet are consubstantial to, dialogue. He states: 'As distinguished from litigation, a *différend* would be a case of conflict, between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgement applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy. However, applying a single rule of judgement to both in order to settle their *différend* as though it was merely a litigation would wrong (at least) one of them (and both of them if neither side admits rule)' (1988, xi). This idea embodies the tension of 'unresolution' that challenges the 'accepted' or 'acceptable'. When this engagement is viewed through the lens of public art and arts practice, there is a 'giving over' process in which the artist releases the work, allowing it to be reframed and recontextualised.

When the artist places works in the public realm, they invite (and expect) a response. While in some cases the work can be viewed as a challenge (the artist exerting their will on a resistant public), the viewer is by no means passive. As author Harriet Senie notes: 'Far



Fig 13

Richard Serra *Tilted Arc*
rolled COR-TEN steel, 37 x 4m 1981
Photo: Frank Martin/Getty Images

from being perceived as an imposition of power, public art is adopted or adapted according to audience activities and inclinations' (2008, 197). Furthermore, they can also often function as successful interventions bridging the built environs with the surrounding landscape, or connecting people to ideas in a three-dimensional capacity.

**SOCIETY CAN FUNCTION WITHOUT THE ARTIST. HE IS CONCERNED WITH ART. HE
MAKES ART WITHOUT REGARD TO SOCIETY. IF HE MADE NO ART SOCIETY WOULD
NOT KNOW THE DIFFERENCE. SOCIETY MAKES NO PROVISION FOR ART; IT IS
UNNECESSARY. ARTISTS LIVE IN A SOCIETY THAT IS NOT PART OF SOCIETY⁴**

SOL LE WITT

The furore surrounding Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (Fig.13) is a fitting example of the *différend*, the resistance that the artist engages with, especially in regards to public art. The rolled steel sculpture was produced in 1981 as a response to the urban surroundings of the Federal Plaza in downtown Manhattan where Serra's interest in the physicality of material was approached in terms of form, placement and intent. Though originally authorised by the United States General Services Administration, it was bureaucratically rejected years after its installation and eventually decommissioned. The main antagonists in its eventual removal were a judge and several influential public servants who stated that their daily routines had been interrupted by the placement of the sculpture. Ironically, it was for this very purpose that *Tilted Arc* was designed: to be austere - to force itself on the urban landscape, disrupting the quotidian and automatised.

In hindsight, Serra's vision of his work, as well as its purpose, contained the seeds of controversy, a foreshadowing of what would evolve (or devolve). Its curving, rusted face stood as a futuristic challenge to bureaucracy and the resistance he would foreseeably encounter throughout the process. *Tilted Arc* looked out of context in its environment (Serra's original intention), and should it have remained, it would have signified the compromised existence of the artist within an art-resistant society. The dynamic nature of the work demanded interaction, forced the onlooker or pedestrian to change their daily habits; it dictated and directed. Similarly Serra's sculpture stood as a challenge to what he termed 'power structures' (those political and commercial bodies that would prove most

⁴ Quoted in Baume, Nicholas. 2011. *Sol LeWitt: Structures*. New York: Yale University Press. P 64.

pivotal in its removal). Serra had designed *Tilted Arc* specifically for the plaza in which it was placed, fought against its removal and ultimately disowned the work after its dismantling. While the dismissal of Serra's sculpture may have arisen from an artistically apathetic culture, one that demands that public art politely blend into its surrounds, the artist's ability to impact or provoke the general public is clear. This reinforces the notion of the artist's dialogic role in socio-political matters, and the alternate (even opposing) language that their work invokes. In this way art emerges as transformative; promoting interaction through an oppositional clash.

On reflection, the work seemed destined for removal, particularly given the agenda of those in power. Their reasoning was simplistic and reactionary - they didn't like art impacting their world in any discernible or tangible way. *Could the public servant so adamant about the work's disruption of order, though, not have taken a different route to work?* The sculpture, over the course of its installation, must have elicited a variety of responses, and while it seems that the majority were initially negative, we must remember that culture exists in a constant state of flux, and as such, the public's notion of exchange and interaction would inevitably have shifted. As author Joanne Sharp notes, the response to *Tilted Arc* highlights 'the complex ways in which urban space is made and imagined by the range of people overseeing and inhabiting it, and illustrate the important materiality of artwork caught up in competing discourses and practices of the city' (2007, 276). Views are anything but static, constantly in a state of transformation, and I believe that *Tilted Arc*, should it have remained, would have elicited praise rather than derision (possibly by those most vocal about its removal). Serra consciously imposed his art on the public, forcing them to reconsider art's role and the possibility that it should function to confront the mundane or automatised rather than merely perform the role of an aesthetically pleasing backdrop. What Serra managed to do, effectively, was to draw a proverbial line in the sand, to create an object that provoked aesthetic division amongst people. The controversy surrounding *Tilted Arc* has subsided, but what made it such a successful yet divisive work remains the subject of ongoing, contemporary enquiry; namely that of art's role in public space, the role of the artist in society, and the placement of arts practice within established rubrics. In creating a work impossible to ignore, then, Serra achieved success, working outside established canons, creating controversy and forcing the bureaucratic hand.

In 2011, I was engaged in a similar power struggle along with collaborator, architect Brad Ladyman. While the story does not descend into the public debacle that led to the removal of *Tilted Arc*, it contains a similar tension and antagonism that marked a transition

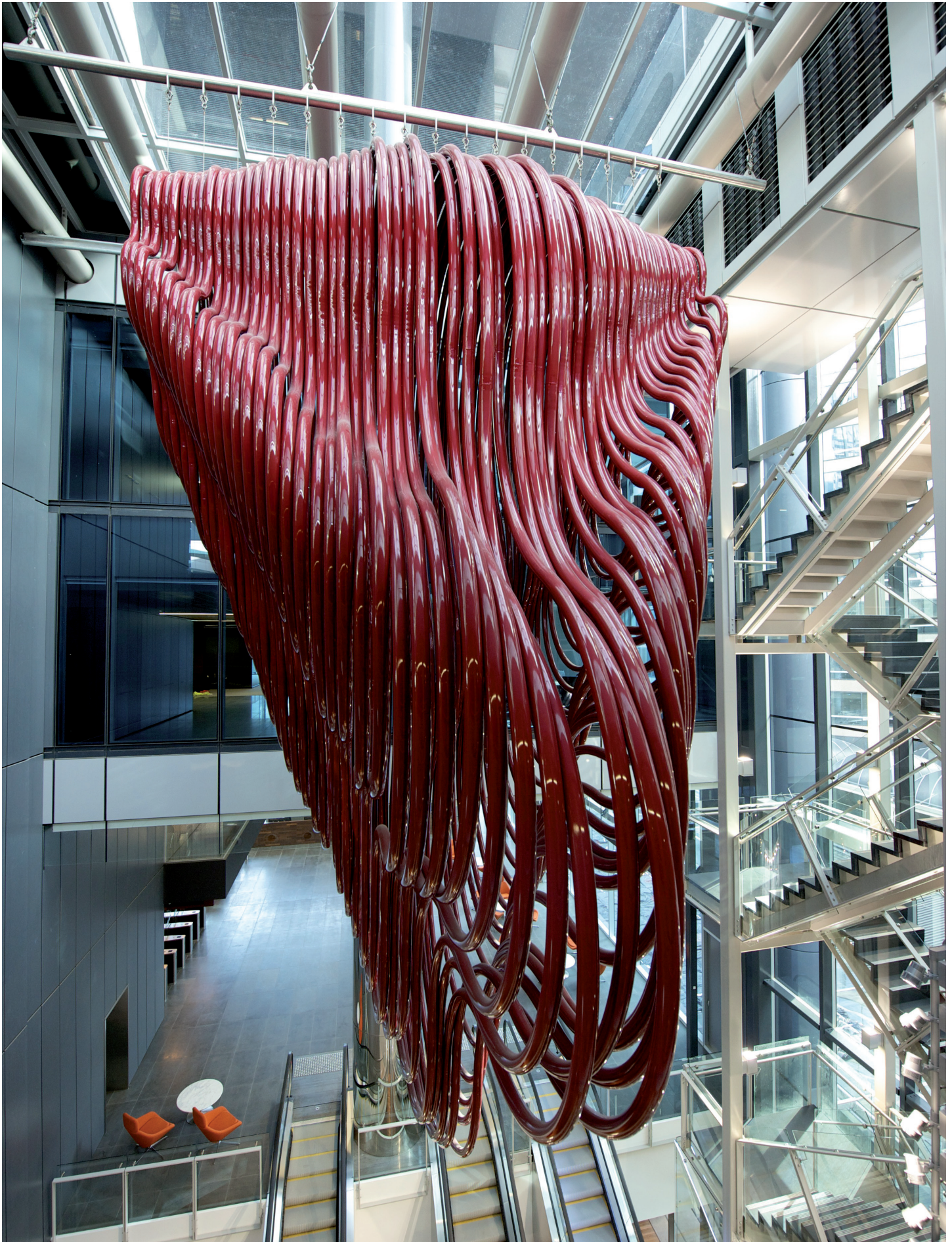


Fig 14

Miik Green/Brad Ladyman *BHP 312*
suspended work, aluminium, auto paint, 1000 x 900 x 900cm 2012
Photo: Sandy Sturmer

from the conceptual underpinning of my arts practice. Methodology became method as I was placed resistantly against an establishment; similar to materials reacting or interacting in incompatibility I became a participant in a significant struggle, pushing against the kind of obstructions Heine visualised.

The work I was commissioned to complete was a suspended sculpture composed of loops of painted aluminium tube that would fill the lobby's five-storey void. I proposed a static work *BHP 312* (Fig. 14) that embodied movement in light and form, and which would function as a purposive, aesthetically-pleasing interruption for workers traversing the building. From one end the tubes aligned – structured, concentric and ordered, however after a point they began to unravel chaotically, an amalgam of twisting loops that created loose and lyrical momentum. This disequilibrium allowed the viewer to experience the work within the architecture of space, via conceptual tension, a dichotomous physicality of form, evolving and abstracting. The client anticipated a work that embodied connection and connectivity, linking miners operating in the field to those based in the building, however *my* vision was for a work that symbolised the flow of blood throughout the body, arterial movement embodied in a heart-like form; a sculpture pulsing from a central atrium. This formed the key motif, the subordinate being the organic lines created by machines on the mine site or ore trucks descending into the earth. The tracks formed through this circuit could be seen as Bakhtinian cycles of downwards and upwards motion or in its final form, lines of transit. Each loop would mimic onward movement while simultaneously referencing time, motion and material. The blood-red finish represented the haematite, the colour of the ore primarily mined for export (*haema* denotes blood in Greek). In this way the work would embody a resonance with bodily extraction and forms, a conceptual return to its origins.

Oppositions clearly exist in the work: The form, for example, contains both the idea of descent and ascent, light and dark, material and immaterial. It relies on both viewer and viewpoint, each section being framed by various segments of the building. Many of the offices either look out on, or are framed by, these sections of delineated lines, variegated when seen at different angles. Within this space, the sheen and angularity interacts with the architecture, an interior seemingly devoid of humanity, the products and design of minimal habitation. The work is situated above the escalators, suspended over a constant source of human traffic akin to the circulation of trucks entering and exiting minesites. At this juncture, one is able to look up and appreciate the density of the work and the linearity that excludes light and lightness. This is the man-made element of the work, the point at which one's geometric compulsions exclude the organic and biological, the *other*.

Resistance and antagonism became functional tools in the production of this sculpture, however instead of stress resulting from juxtaposed materials in the work itself, the conflict manifested in the form of heated dialogue, or the equally uncomfortable *absence* of dialogue. The tension I experienced set the stage for uncomfortable conversation, located within a shifting equilibrium of power and control. For the artist, this process can elicit feelings ranging from mild discomfort to great pressure, however the positive results that often ensue generally justify the struggle. Discussing the antagonism faced by Ladyman and myself during the process of installing the sculpture, Darren Jorgensen writes:

Green and Ladyman resisted BHP's request that they change the colour and orientation of their untitled, 3 ton work of twisted metal that hangs ominously above the escalators. They didn't want to repaint it BHP orange, nor to hang it on its side so that it looked like an open cut mine. Like Frodo in Lord of the Rings, they confronted the Lords of the Tower of Mordor to emerge victorious, the great red ziggurat installed as they conceived it. Yet in terms of the overall architecture of Perth, theirs was a minor victory (2013, 6).

From the project's infancy through to installation, we experienced resistance from our commissioning body - many meetings were set, and various attempts made to remould the sculpture into a functional piece; something the client would be 'more comfortable with'. Below is an excerpt from a meeting set up to address finishes and the application of colour. Although retrospectively comic, it initially played out as a near-Shakespearian tragedy. The BHP representative is (aptly) named here after *King Lear's* 'Edmund', protector of wealth.

Edmund: So you received the meeting minutes about the colour sample?

Artist: We did, but we haven't changed our mind on the colour.

E: Well you'll have to; it's not the way we work.

A: I realise that, but it's also not the way we work. As we explained, our supplying the colour samples doesn't give you the right to select from a swatch, it is for an indication of the colour the artwork will be finished in.

E: That's not what we agreed on, and you won't be given approval to proceed.

A: Well that makes it difficult for everybody doesn't it?

E: It will be whatever colour the asset leaders decide on at our next board meeting, and that will be a final decision.

A: We won't be changing the colour, no matter what the asset leaders decide. As we explained at the last board meeting, and on our initial proposal, the colour is intrinsic to the work as an entirety - that hasn't changed since then.

E: That doesn't matter to us, contractually you were asked to provide samples at this stage.

A: Which we have provided. We'll have to leave that issue of choice to contract misunderstanding – generally with these projects, samples are given as an indication of the artist's choice, not provided for client selection.

E: What I will do is report back to the asset leaders and let them know you've been inflexible.

A: Sure, we are happy to meet again, but it would be a waste of time. We'd just be reiterating what was said at the last meeting.

E: I mean, what we could do is just go to your factory and repaint the work in the colour we prefer.

A: Sure, I'd like to see that.

E: Or we just won't pay you.

A: Yes, you will.

E: I think you are forgetting who we are, these are big guys.

A: We don't bend over for anyone.

E: So that's it then.

A: That's it, let us know in writing.

After tense meetings such as these, where veiled (and unveiled) attempts to constrain the sculpture to a functional aspect of the building were employed, the work was successfully installed according to our envisioned form. Suspended now in the foyer,

it represents aspects of the man-made as springs in tension: the contained potential of resistance. In the end, the work is both constrained and unconstrained, but more importantly, it is unaltered. As the artist, however, I personally felt altered and repositioned, and in this process, realised that the struggle itself was of more importance than the outcome. Self-doubt, insecurity and stress were faced in the midst of this compromised artistic vision, where those in a position of power attempted to reduce the role of art to what amounted to design, signage or function. While it is not necessarily the artist's responsibility to educate, education may nonetheless occur as a by-product of resistance, stemming from the act of creating, challenging and pursuing an unadulterated artistic goal. Illustrating this point, a BHP representative, upon installation of the piece, commented that the work exceeded their initial expectations, admitting that the outcome was 'much better' since we had refused to compromise. Reflecting on this exchange, Jorgensen concludes his article with a statement: 'The Green and Ladyman experience illustrates the way that architects, corporations, councils and governments may not know what they are asking for when they commission artwork' (2013, 6).

Through the transformative aspects of tension and interdisciplinary collaboration, two parties emerged changed. Artist and client were challenged, repositioned, even altered, when faced with the pivotal question of the artist's role, and the role of the art itself, within the public domain. I view the role of arts practice as one that should welcome conflict: accordingly, resistance is evidenced in varying degrees in my artwork, especially those works placed in the public arena. These artworks (and the works of many other practitioners) often become a subject of debate, critique or controversy, and as a result many artists create work that fails to challenge tradition or provoke dialogue. Instead, their work seems purpose-built to remain unnoticed, works of non-art so integrated into the utility of a building that they are essentially rendered invisible. This is a reductive approach, however, and significantly diminishes the role of public art and its transformative potential. As Tom Finkelpearl succinctly notes: 'In the long view, the history of art is the history of public art' (2001, 15). The subject of public art, or art for public spaces, is a contentious issue, one that involves the artist engaging with exigencies that may be in contrast to their initial intent, desire or approach.

The following chapter focuses on what this resistance allows us to see or experience in terms of visualisation. The act of resistant action exerts a force that can render visible previously concealed forms. Tension can be then viewed as a revelatory agent of that which has been previously remained hidden. It is under pressure that these details start to emerge, as life is revived and the cell begins its inevitable division.



Fig 15

Miik Green xylem series – avium3
mixed media on aluminium, 185 x 185cm 2013
Photo: Ben Phillips

2.1 UNSEEN FORCES: VISUALISATION, VISIBILITY

HISTORY IS THE 'PALE CAST OF THOUGHT' AS SHAKESPEARE SAYS.
IT THROWS A VEIL OVER THE WORLD, AND AFTER A TIME, OUR EYES
GET ACCUSTOMED TO THE WEAKENED LIGHT AND WE COME TO THINK
THAT THE WORLD LOOKS THE SAME AS IT ALWAYS HAS⁵

JAMES ELKINS

This chapter focuses on the artist as one who presents a vision, or establishes a way of viewing the world that *reveals* rather than *represents*. In rendering-visible-through-resistance the artist uncovers new meaning, framing sensation. The work operates on the senses, and may be experienced in discordant moments of clarity.

Visualisation, or visibility, is about seeing. For writer James Elkins, it is about engaging with the world aesthetically, envisioning anew objects as diverse as the human body or industrial water drains. In *How To Use Your Eyes*, he details the visual pleasure of discovery, from experiencing a sunset to investigating the common postage stamp. His gaze stretches from fingerprints to box culverts, examining the extraordinary nature of seemingly commonplace items. Elkins' chapter on oil paintings investigates the aesthetics of 'craquelure' (the minute cracks that form on the surface of centuries-old artwork). In it, he argues that evidence of the artist's involvement with the work provides the viewer with a richer appreciation of the *nature* of the work rather than the contents of its frame. It can reveal elements such as authenticity, technique, structure, application of paint, the age of the work or the type of canvas. This awareness of the creator behind the creation, he suggests, can cause what might be viewed as an aberration to actually eclipse the work, stating: 'Every once in a while, the crack pattern is more beautiful than the painting itself. I feel that way about an abstract painting by Piet Mondrian that I saw a few years ago: the painting itself is just a few black and red lines, but the craquelure pattern has a lovely, perfect spiral' (2000, 26).

To visualise in terms of Elkins' aesthetic allows for rediscovery, for the reframing of objects often overlooked, for the banal or perfunctory. The artist absorbs the world in a similar fashion, uniquely poised to represent, present or evoke. In making works resistant to conformation (the chief aim being revelation), the artist as maker engages in a mode of visualising, of bringing these ideas into visibility. As active participants in this process, we are enabled to see these concepts, or as Elkins notes: 'once you start seeing them, the world—which can look so dull, so empty of interest—will gather before your eyes and become thick with meaning' (2000, 13). Elkins essentially sees past the represented, the objects and utility of form, to presence, traces of human-ness and history.

For the visual artist, a similar delicate balance exists between representation and revealing, between narrating and illustrating the figurative, or framing

⁵ Elkins, James. 2004. *Pictures and Tears: A History of People Who Have Cried in Front of Paintings*. New York: Routledge. P 101.

sensation. In 'chaos, territory, art' Grosz intimates that the artist's role is to '... extract something imperceptible from the cosmos and dress it in the sensible materials that the cosmos provides in order to create sensation, not a sensation of something, but pure intensity, a direct impact on the body's nerves and organs' (2008, 22). Although my practice might be considered less orthodox in the application of unlike materials, it aims to prompt sensation or visualisation, a conscious uniting of opposing forces, a kind of staged clash. This clash is orchestrated, however the outcome remains independent of the artist; a handing-over-to-material that facilitates and contributes to exchange.

Visualisation and clarity also allow the artist to observe distinctions. In arts practice this is a useful tool - as the artist communicates, creates, and negotiates a practice where hidden, concealed or uninformed exchanges can prove murky. This is the grey landscape through which the artist wades, where the contradictory affords a necessary



Fig 16

Richard Serra *Inside Out* (Installation at Gagosian Gallery, London)
weatherproof steel 2013
Photo: Vassili Di Napoli

delineation. This tension or antagonism provides a marker, a crucial point of reference otherwise unavailable. These are the distinguishing factors between ephemera and physicality, invisible and visible: material and non-material.

In direct contrast to Anish Kapoor's overtly tactile and tangible approach of surfaces, finishes and skins, Richard Serra's work interrogates the nature of the material, displaying them in sheer solidity. His is one that embodies a similarly unique approach to material, the physicality of his large-scale steel-forms confronting the viewer '...in relation to the effective treatment of materials, phenomenological reception through the bodily senses, which has to do with perceptions of weight and mass, scale and plane' (Phong 2006, 5). There is a cognitive understanding directly related to Serra's approach: his willingness to let the materials *be*, for example, serves to heighten the viewer's awareness of the work's materiality or their ability to 'visualise mass'.

Although I appreciate Serra's adherence to material fidelity, my argument is that in surrendering control, one creates a space for anomalies: for the unforeseen to emerge. As such, I actively pursue and generate unpredictability in my work, and in loosening artistic authority as the maker, align more closely with artists such as Kapoor.

Noting his own departure from Serra's artistic approach, Kapoor discusses the vital importance of eliciting opposition as opposed to focusing solely on materiality. He highlights the importance of juxtaposition when he notes: 'one of my fantasies about the object is that there's always a non-object; that there's always a parallel. And interestingly, modern physics seems to say that there is too' (in conversation with Renton 2011, 25).

These notions of dichotomy are evident in nature's minutiae (from pollen through to blood cells), and these aspects of micro-nature, constantly evolving or devolving, are a central motif in my work. Importantly, I choose to let this process occur independent of the maker, whereas Serra's approach positions him as the subject's master. While this may secure the artist's specific vision, it denies him a degree of objectivity, inhibiting the material's transformative capacity in the process.



Fig 17

Miik Green xylem series – argyria16 (detail)
mixed media on aluminium, 45 x 45cm, 2014
Artist photo

In 1904, *Kunstformen der Natur* was published, a work containing plates of natural organisms sketched by biologist Ernst Haeckel. The forms were unique, varying from microorganisms to polyps, algae and diatoms. Haeckel's purpose in translating these forms to print was to reveal to laymen of his time something previously hidden, and privy only to his scientific contemporaries. Haeckel effectively aestheticised these shapes in the form of illustrated plates and drawings – contributing to art and science simultaneously. There is an important distinction, though, between Haeckel's mode of representation (faithfully illustrated and rendered forms) and that of the arts practice that seeks to render visible

(visualisation occurring via tension). While these organic shapes might appear as intricate as the forms in Haeckel's sketchbook, their origins are established in artistic process, not in order to represent, but to reveal.

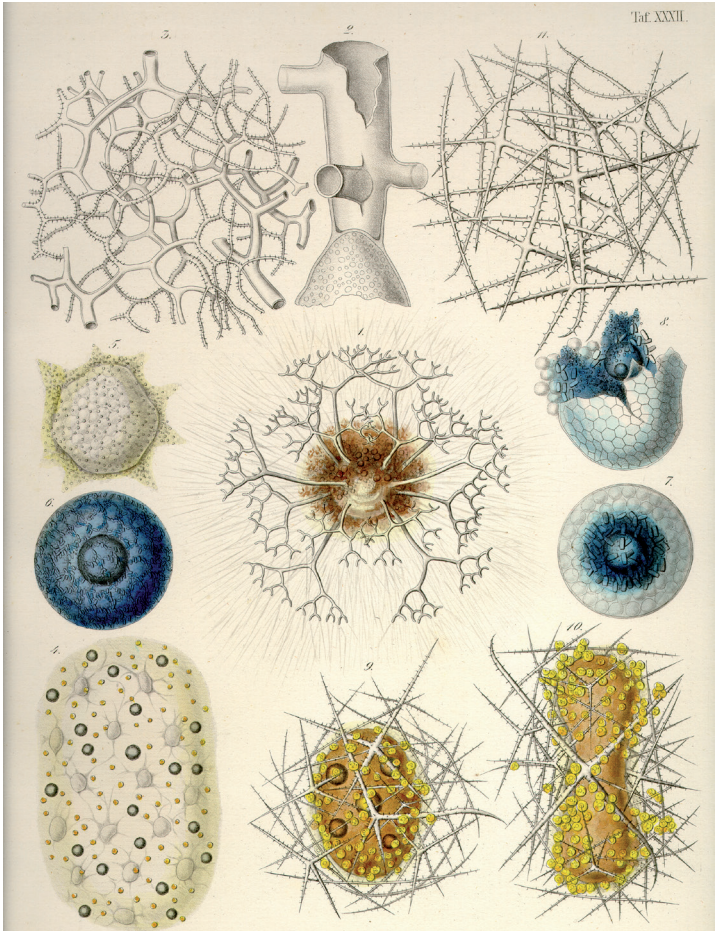


Fig 18 Ernst Haeckel Plate 32 from *Die Radiolarien (RHIZOPODA RADIARIA)*, 1862
Image courtesy Kurt Stüber

Resistance becomes, in this way, a mechanism for visualising, and by employing it, the artist creates works framed in opposition. While Haeckel sought to represent these in their truest forms, the artist enables a reaction; one that captures the struggle beneath the intricate patterning.

Many shapes that develop within the surface of my paintings: *argyria*¹⁶ (Fig. 17) resemble radiolarian (microscopic sea-forms such as marine protozoa). They are intricate, skeletal and organic, materialising as injected polyurethane ink transposes within layers of catalysing resin. In later stages of catalysis, however, the resin becomes viscous and plastic-like, resisting the intrusion of ink. When these molecular bonds are loose and liquid, the ink disperses into the top layer, creating a form that is skeletal in appearance, while also containing multiple separations. The first radiolarian-like form began to develop when I released a vibrant ink droplet into the surface of a partly finished work. The droplet indented the surface of the work, interrupting the painting's homogeneous flatness and providing a contrasting definition as the ink reacted/interacted with the background. Initially the evolving shape was smaller than a five-cent coin, but overnight it had transformed, blooming to a tennis ball-sized structure. While the shape resembled a radiolarian captured in time, rendered immobile, it simultaneously contained traces of embodied movement.

This is about *what* emerged and *how* it emerged, the shift observed in this particular mode of exchange. Instead of an artist dictating the process, he intentionally enacts a rendering visible, allowing for revealment through opposition – an accidental frisson.

This was a key conceptual development in my practice, one that recognised the inherent freedom in disequilibrium and oppositional forces. It was coupled with the realisation that at some point the artist must relinquish control, claiming joint responsibility for the finished product. What emerges in the surface of the painting is dictated solely by resistant material interaction, where forms are arrived at through polar forces, creating shapes combined of discrete elements. The aesthetic is one borne from struggle or friction – a site of conflict. Radiolarian structures found in the natural world are strikingly similar to those appearing in my painting, which begs the question: 'are these synthetic material combinations indicators of similar processes in the natural world?' 'Is the morphometry evident in both forms (the artwork and its natural counterpart) linked in a similar resistive process?'

In the paintings, the struggle is evidenced *after* the action occurred, the resin capturing the collision, immortalising opposition and acting as a recording agent. The struggle is, then, the physical activity itself, the interaction between the artist as the act of pouring one colour into resistant matter causes forms to materialise and metamorphosise. The image or formal structure rendered through this interaction is one both *within* and *outside* the natural world, an embodiment of an organic/natural skirmish. There is that first tangible encapsulation of matter, wherein particles of a chemical substance are mixed with a fluid but remain undissolved. The physical suspension that occurs thereafter may resemble an identified cell or virus sealed between two glass slides. In contrast, an ephemeral suspension denotes the immaterial, the momentary, and the unseen – something that the photograph, but not the human eye, is capable of capturing.

Organisms, cells and atoms are distinct from each other, operating privately to form the cohesive, united functions of living organisms. While they deteriorate within this cycle, they also re-materialise in later iterations. From life to death and beyond, these are the unseen and chaotic cogs within the organised system of constant equilibrium and opposing force. Such unique combinations also permeate Eliasson's work, described by Chicago-based curator Madeleine Grynsztejn as being 'built around a series of coexisting and incommensurate oppositions' (2002, 92).

Eliasson uses geometric shapes and fractal-like forms to stage an interaction between nature and the spectator. Titles such as *Your circumstance disclosed* or *Your compound view*, reference this goal, the latter being a large sculptural work composed of mirror, wood and steel that forms a faceted, geodesic, mirrored shape. Eliasson states: 'This is part of the history of how we see nature, which is also where mathematics comes from – from trying to encompass and measure natural conditions' (2002, 29). His works resonate with both disciplines, derived as they are from Möbius strips, Penrose tiles, quasi-crystals and other such structures that both scientist and physicist use to 'visualise abstract data'. Mandelbrot and Eliasson's work focuses on Euclidean geometry versus natural geometry, their joint concern being that of unveiling the complexities of the natural world. Mandelbrot reveals the fractal face of nature while Eliasson discusses linking the viewer with 'a hidden order, a natural intelligence revealed only when we view it in repetition, in series, in an order that supersedes man's limited capacity to comprehend the complexity of the world he inhabits' (Grynsztejn 2002, 110).

The significance of Mandelbrot's research lies in the scientific realm, modelling his work on this premise of self-similarity, including a theory on vascular geometry. Adapting reasoning, and assuming that nature normally employs self-similarity, anything outside this could be considered abnormal (a distinction that has enabled surgeons to visually distinguish between healthy and abnormal vein function in the human heart).

Within my arts practice, many diverse areas intersect and overlap. While individual elements such as public works or gallery exhibitions are discrete (and in some cases oppositional), they heterogeneously form a sum greater than its parts. In their disharmony and irregularity, these sections become an extension of practice that can be realised, an expansion of thought processes and ideas. This artistic research (in keeping with the exegetical writing) aims to reveal the unseen by employing material resistance. It



Fig 19

Olafur Eliasson *Viewing Machine*
stainless steel, 2001
Image courtesy Centro de Arte Contemporânea Inhotim

is a process that aims to visualise physical structures from abstract concepts. For example, these shapes may appear as pollen or cell-like deposits that bloom within the layers of resin, paint or product. While these forms reference the micro, the pigments and immiscible matter remain both separate and united in stasis. Utilising this process of heterodox combination, we broaden our horizons to envisage unions between light and matter, earth and sky.

Forms that act similarly are encased in the surface of a selection of my works, like encapsulated experiments. Parallels in other fields might be the scientist's use of microscope slides to seal bio-matter for further scrutiny, or the photographer's recording of a 'moment' through the lens of the camera. In a similar fashion, I aim to capture, suspend or pause these visual interactions. The vivid colours in these works can act as markers, as opposing pigments/dyes that are visually separate when combined with the resistant additive. This aids the distinctive qualities found in the works - the separation becomes visual in the same way that it does when dyes are used to stain in cellular testing or to improve X-ray imaging in the case of a barium trace.

**ART HAS NO OTHER OBJECT THAN TO BRUSH ASIDE THE PRACTICAL,
USEFUL SYMBOLS, THE CONVENTIONALLY AND SOCIALLY ACCEPTED
GENERALITIES, IN SHORT, ALL THAT MASKS REALITY FROM US,
IN ORDER TO PLACE US FACE TO FACE WITH REALITY ITSELF⁶**

HENRI BERGSON

⁶ Quoted in Curtis, James. 1975. "Bergson and Russian Formalism" *Comparative Literature* 28 (2): P 111.

Stains, dyes, wipes-stripes. Blended pulp with fleshy undertones.

Mucous membrane materialising.

Imploding and exploding in cosmic array.

Stringers and supports for a natural micro-highway.

Deterritorialised yet with distinct boundaries and borders.

Resistant, persistent, perspirant,

sweaty nodules clinging to pigmented liquids.

Stain-smears, blood-bruises, spent capillaries.

Burst vessels, starburst. Split, spilled, spilt.

Opaque – translucent

Thick – thin

Resists – yield

Force – coerce

Motion, restraint. Movement reposed. Matter, repositioned.

In achieving unconcealment, we become privy to the unseeable, we are presented with the invisible-made-visible. We are empowered to see the form for what it is: the result of invisible force, the embodiment of tension in opposition. Visualisation is aided by colour – through contrasting of opposite (base) combinations, the forms delineate themselves; self-arranging according to contrast. This process materially, visually, and aesthetically, potentially affords the viewer clarity, an insight into the birth of structure. It hints at a hidden order – alchemic, spiritual, yet with the gloss, sheen and vibrancy of modern industrial paint and product. Where the scientist uses clarity to test, the artist employs it as a self-reflexive tool, both in practice and as an outcome of experimentation in the studio.

Discussing the notion of clarity further afield, particularly in relation to the written work, Philosopher Immanuel Kant emphasises emphasizes the writer's call to illustrative lucidity, stating: '...the reader has a right to demand, in the first place, discursive or logical clearness, that is, on the basis of conceptions, and, secondly, intuitive or aesthetic clearness, by means of intuitions, that is, by examples or other modes of illustration in concreto' (1900, xii). Where Kant refers to the reader, the artist assumes the viewer. Unlike the writer, however, the artist is not obligated to provide clarity. Art can be obscure, messy, and irresponsible, however this practice still manages to convey *meaning* that, in itself, becomes a clarity-producing process.

The *xylem Series - hoechst* paintings draw their name from a medical cell-staining technique. By adding a colourant to the cells, the structures and functions of organisms can be revealed. Through this form of testing, the scientist or doctor is enabled to reveal, to visualise certain molecular characteristics for a particular assessment. Here the reverse occurs as the scientist accesses the tools of art and through process is able to visualise internal bodily structure. In utilising colour-staining, scanning and imaging techniques, colour unconceals, moves towards/reveals a diagnosis. The play between macro and micro is again apparent, the forms appearing as celestial bodies and also microbes in solution. The viewer observes the arrangement, and while planetary forms appear static, they are subject to unseen force. While movement is perceptible in live chemistry, or in the process of studying cell-forms, in artwork an ambiguity remains. *Are these cells in transit - representations of live momentum, or the record of past motion, of spent energy? Or are they sterile and sealed, seen within glass slides, or viewed through the lens of the microbiologist?*

Medicinal, tubes, glassware - labware.

Droplets and chemicals, the alchemic process of distillation

An effort of pigment,

colour imposition, hue transition

The impurities of rust-red, dried-blood revealing

tinted marks of trauma, and re-marks.

The stain/scan/cerebral sections

of inner geography, morphometric maroon of

inert gas islands marooned in

solution.

Dyed in the wool, a sepia-tinted tract –

Mars.

Dieback spore, skin pores: skin pours

Wept, past regret...

Dust to liquid, to dust again. From

light-starved lichen

in flotilla of spatial spatters,

anemone sundial,

the bitters;

returning once more to the medicinal.

Unlike its application within the scientific realm, within my artistic practice the act of combining the unlike anticipates *un-outcomes*: the unpredictable, the unaccountable, the uncanny, the unplanned or the unstable. Each of these challenge expected outcomes, inviting a change and transition that serves to evade fixed meaning. In arts practice, the artist can operate similarly, not by abandoning process or methodologies but by enabling the unlikely to develop. Within arts practice, however, this uniting of opposites both allows for, and creates within, a state of tension. It is aware of, even encourages, this resistance. Referencing Kapoor's artworks, Rosa Martinez cites similar oppositions, stating: '...the play of opposites between positive and negative, between matter and the sublime, finds in *Islamic Mirror* a unique form of coexistence and synchronicity' (2009, 58). Here, Martinez notes the visual power of the oppositional, the contrast of form and colour. It is as if colour again acts as a delineator, the contradictory revelation of pigment in this sublime representation.

**Fig 20**

Anish Kapoor *Ascension (Red)*
2009
Image courtesy Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Ascension (Red) (Fig. 20) is Kapoor's singular vision; a spiralling cloud of pigment, at once ethereal mass and discrete particles. The installation manifests as a solid flume of colour, yet embodies the transience and fleetingness of the momentary; chasing one's shadow. Kapoor draws on his religious background to connote the soul's ascension (overtones of spiritual revelation in the transcendental red updraft). Here form is revealed in movement, the unnoticed in the vivid force applied to matter. From a religious perspective, the dust-like pigment's ascension heavenwards recalls the Biblical line recorded in Ecclesiastes 12 verse 7: 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it', representing man's original state. While Kapoor imbues the piece with hope, he also discusses the notion of limbo, or the state of suspension in which matter, material and man co-exist; the unequal balance here paused in transition and subject to force. These are the moments in which we see past the representational or reproduction, and glimpse the cycle itself. Kapoor has titled the work *Ascension (Red)*, conflating both small and large, pigment and process, breath and bones, particles and the prolific. It is a work that encompasses two scales, two worlds, and two lines of thinking. It is the sheer mass of the pigment that enables us to see colour, to appreciate its vividness; a powerful vision realised through minutiae.

Power is evoked here through the assemblage of discrete elements functioning together/apart to create a work in dialogic embrace. Two worlds intersect in that moment where concept meets material, intent collides with process, and site interacts

with response. Here there is room for exchange, the artist allowing for the unpredictable or the unrepresentable to inform, imbue and interact. This exposes the dialogue to failure and unpredictability, the materials invoking abstract concepts. Lastly, the work addresses the notion of the 'cycle', and forms an integral feature of this exegesis inasmuch as it focuses on progression and regeneration (a site where Kapoor sees the transitional in the transient). His work explores what is beyond the liminal and towards the eternal. Spiral becomes circle; one in repetition, constantly revolving and evolving. Writer Nicholas Baume views this co-existence as 'creative chaos', or '...a dynamic struggle to find a way, grappling with moments of clarity, elusiveness of thoughts and means to find a way, a form, a solution that might also mean the destruction of what existed in order to move forward' (2008, 127). He goes on to suggest that this is a site of compromise for the viewer asserting: 'We sense two states pulling at us. But rather than oppositional, both are needed to bring forth something new' (ibid).

New York's Guggenheim, as a gallery space, seems purpose-built for Kapoor's *Ascension*, the circular staircase echoing the work's trajectory. In this regard there is also a site response, a circulation or continuation of the movements made by man. As one walks up, they begin to experience the work in motion, and on reaching its furthestmost viewing point the installation seems (retrospectively) to have been a pilgrimage to equilibrium. This aspect of the encounter further extends the concept of man's materiality, his existence as a point in a cycle. This is the nexus between ascent and return, between past and future, and again, the journey itself. As the pigment rises, we return to the immaterial, reflecting on the fact that while these particles form a body they eventually resettle into individual, unseen elements. Kapoor allows space for an audience to ponder their own spirituality, prompting conceptual exchange. His early pigment works are now imbued with the transcendence he sees within us - our very matter. This is a spiralling upwards towards light and life, at once evocative and provocative: a cloud of swirling, never-settling dust symbolising the inherent irresolution of existence.

This concept influences the way we view or interpret the world, even in its utilities, patterns and contradictions. We are forced to remediate simplicities and complexities that shift natural phenomena into the sphere of human interaction. This, then, is revelation, staged in dialogic arrangement, energy between representation and form where temporality endures. In an arts practice that displays such resistance, we are enabled to discover and visualise the static flux of creative tension, locating meaning somewhere between the tangible and intangible. Conservation, then, becomes the consequence of observation, a shifting equilibrium linked to resistance.

solution / solution

Will this improve... with the lights turned on?

Illuminated landscape, alien,

and liquid absorbing but not dissolving,

resisting dissolution is solution

luminescent patterns, indicators of good and bad,

right and wrong, normal and abnormal

a hideaway found, something wrong?

It is the tester's tool, imbedded, scanned,

appraised

finding shelter in, seen.

spilling secrets now

holding monitored -

colour infiltrator

image creator, hue delineator
between benign and malignant,
waking, readjusting, sitting
awaiting verdict, health?
life and death: night/day
resting on pigment still nestling inside, and on
opinion that rests on insight,
information obtained in film, in observation
and the observed
and now the consult chart - a colour wheel,
the artist's tools becomes the surgeon's sight -
we see now that the lights are on...

2.2 UNSEEN FORCES: REVEALED/CONCEALED

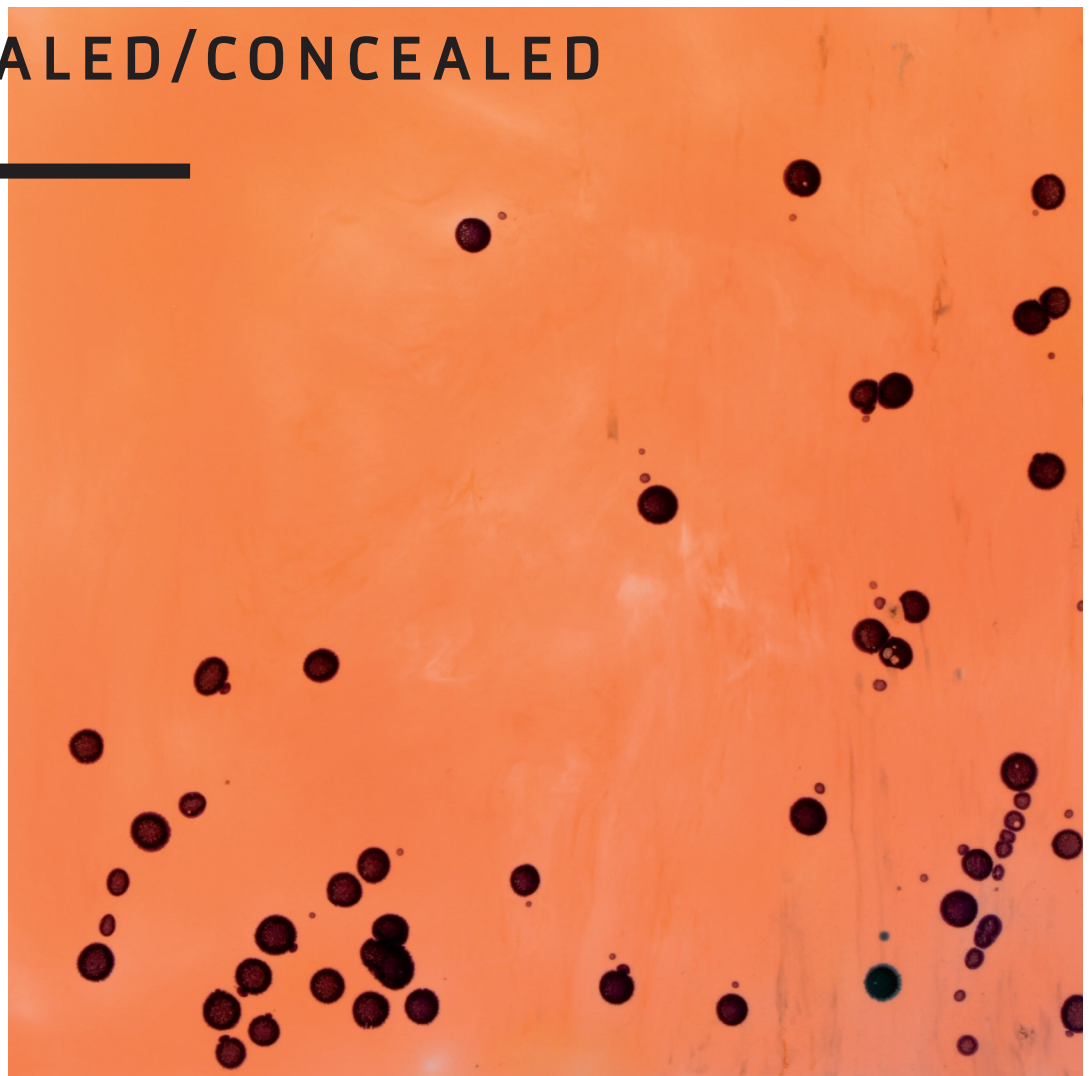


Fig 21

Miik Green xylem series - terfesia7
resin, enamel, ink and thorium on aluminium 108 x 108cm 2012
Photo: Ben Phillips

THE ARTIST IS THE CREATOR OF BEAUTIFUL THINGS. TO
REVEAL ART AND CONCEAL THE ARTIST IS ART'S AIM⁷
OSCAR WILDE

In my practice, forms or structures are concealed in revelation (and vice-versa). It is within this process of capture that patterning and growth become apparent, fluctuation between generation and deterioration. The capturing process enacts an energy shift, a displacement seen in polar opposition. To allow is to simultaneously inhibit.

This sub-chapter examines the processes that enable visualisation, acknowledging the co-existence of an equally strong force of concealment. In order to probe the concealed, to force such revealment, a form of capture must occur, similar to that employed by the scientist who traps living tissue within glass slides, or the photographer who suspends images in time. In both cases, seeing is brought about by equilibrious shifts that confine and define, restrict and depict. The artist facilitates this transaction - their interaction with the work illuminating the previously unseen.

⁷ Wilde, Oscar. 1970. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. London: Bibliolis Books. P 3.

Seen in this
a translucent shimmer, glazed augmentation,
refracting heat, light –
light to limbo, limbo to light.
self absorbed,
self-reflection and refraction. The layers of lucidity,
clarity and ambiguity clash,
while minutiae en masse vie for breath,
and surface.
closing the eyelids, the memory and,
sublime sleep

contact(less)

organs

Hanging and floating in limbo,
a drowsy hum, timed pulse of inner music,
the throb of exchange, in contactless contact of sensory knowledge
within a yolk of muffled audio, warmth, security, confinement,
pressing, pressure, stress,
from inner

birth

to outer
pulled, grasped,
brought out, screaming and struggling, resisting the new
resisting the air, white noise, white lights,
bustle, as the cord is cut, the cable
severed, connected in
disconnection

data

The paintings display this polemic switch on a cellular, molecular and transitional level, exposing and probing concealed networks. *Terfesia7* (Fig. 21) refers to the common variety of desert truffle, and select paintings (such as this work) mirror aspects of their intricate fungal interiors. The formations within the painting seem to resemble a kind of geographical blueprint, a depiction of the structural makeup of a plant stem, both revealing sections and segments of movement and life, and freeze-framing them for further scrutiny. In this instance, the coagulating sections displayed reference a bodily examination undertaken to discern the presence of hostile cells or probe benign growths. It is the image's ambiguity that defies rational analysis, existing as it does in a space that represents both the human and non-human, synthetic and natural, liquid and solid. Here, counterforces within the painting are exposed, evidence of conflict in creation.

On closer inspection, the patterning in these works resembles coral, arteries or cross-sections of the brain, containing a topographic aesthetic, cerebral earth systems viewed from above. As the ink spreads, capillary-like branches move outward, and streaks of concentricity are trapped in glassy stasis. In these pieces a micro-landscape connects the human and non-human, the body to the natural world, and the synthetic to the biological. Resistance is revealed in suspension, made apparent through a kind of ambiguous clarity where emergent forms illuminate a hidden world. In the same way that the tools of science act on a body (probing, recording, interrogating) to aid diagnosis, arts practice also affords the viewer glimpses of the concealed nature of the unseeable. In utilising the materials of art-making, the artist is less concerned with the documentation than with the *action of revealing*. Visualising unseen forces in science and art is the rendering visible of the concealed, or in the Heideggerian terms previously discussed, a *bringing-forth-out-of-unconcealment* (1982, 10). In scientific testing, a picture or representation is sought; in art a revelation, and this revelation relies on the materialisation of form – far more concerned with the *producing* than the *product*.

Highlighting this discrepancy between maker and object, Grosz notes: 'Science, like art, plunges itself into the materiality of the universe, though with very different aims in mind. Where science seeks the regularities, predictabilities and consistencies – the patterns – of this chaos, art seeks its force, its impact. This is not to say that art does not draw on science or that science does not draw on art, but in drawing on each other's resources each must transform the work of the other into its own language and its own purpose' (2008, 61). While Grosz clearly appreciates the transformative potential of an artistic/scientific exchange, it is only within the domain of art, she posits, that the concealed can be rendered visible.

**I BEGAN IT AS AN INVESTIGATION. I TURNED SILENCES AND
NIGHTS INTO WORDS. WHAT WAS UNUTTERABLE, I WROTE
DOWN. I MADE THE WHIRLING WORLD STAND STILL⁸
ARTHUR RIMBAUD**

The *xylem* works also attempt to connect the seen to the unseen through material intervention; these revelations spanning from spores to stratus, from atoms to atmospheres. In biology, the xylem process refers to a plant's method of drawing water via their cellular structure. The surfaces of my artworks contain a liquidity and spatial patterning that reference the biological cross-sections of a plant mid-function. In this way the work embalms, and the artist becomes an agent of preservation. Similar to the way that controversial anatomist Gunther Von Hagens 'plastinises' parts of the human body, eternalising the transitory, contradictory concepts appear united in cessation. My paintings, however, venture beyond Von Hagens' quest for transcendental revelation: while his works provoke a bodily, corporeal response, these works further reveal a hidden world within which we are all interwoven.

In order for these structures to be unconcealed, they must undergo a process that (paradoxically) relies on concealment. As an insect is preserved in amber, so these coloured interactions of material are encapsulated within resin. *In creating artwork, then, does the artist become a revelatory agent?* According to Heidegger, this is a possibility, when he states: 'Could it be that the fine arts are called to poetic revealing? Could it be that revealing lays claim to the arts most primally, so that they for their part may expressly foster the growth of the saving power, may awaken and found anew our look into that which grants and our trust in it?' (1982, 35). Unveiling these forms through process bears similarities to Heidegger's revealed *Being*: that entity which exists between hiddenness and unconcealment. Professor William Bossart, in his article 'Heidegger's Theory of Art' reiterates select aspects of Heidegger's hypothesis, pointing to the existence of a second form of Being, viewing it as 'a continual conflict between hiddenness and unconcealment' (1968, 65).

Writer David White however, replaces Heidegger's *unconcealment* with his preferred term 'revelment' (1970, 515). Yet the necessity to arts practice of these select stages of unconcealment becomes quickly apparent in the functionality of these individual elements. Heidegger rightly separates the discrete, and in doing so is able to draw distinctions between, for instance 'entbergen' (to reveal) and *Entbergung* (revealing). He is also able to clarify *Unverborgenheit* (unconcealment), and the active *hervorbringen*' (translated literally as Bringing-forth-hither brings hither out of concealment, forth into unconcealment) (1982, 10 - 11). In his summation, then, White reduces Heidegger's intended extrapolation of these particular terms into select motions, thereby undermining conceptual clarity. The terms formulated by Heidegger applicable to arts practice, for instance, are occasioning, presencing, enframing or bringing-forth.

⁸ Rimbaud, Arthur. 2003. *A Season in Hell and Other Works*. New York: Dover Publications. P 27.

DIARY ENTRY: THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATION TOOK PLACE ON NOVEMBER 18TH, 2013

November 18th:

I lay on the office floor staring at the ceiling.

It had been a draining week marked by long stretches of reading, writing and research, and I was still struggling to situate Lyotard, Deleuze and Bakhtin comfortably within my work.

As I stood up, the room seemed to shift and I fell back, disoriented, onto the carpet.

As I woke to a (still-rotating) room, post-it-note lined walls whirled past, and Heidegger came to mind.

Perhaps the strain of reading his Being and Time had caused me to faint, the outcome of an overload of thought.

While it had literally knocked me out, I liked the thought that what had transpired was possibly the result of a kind of hermeneutic spin.

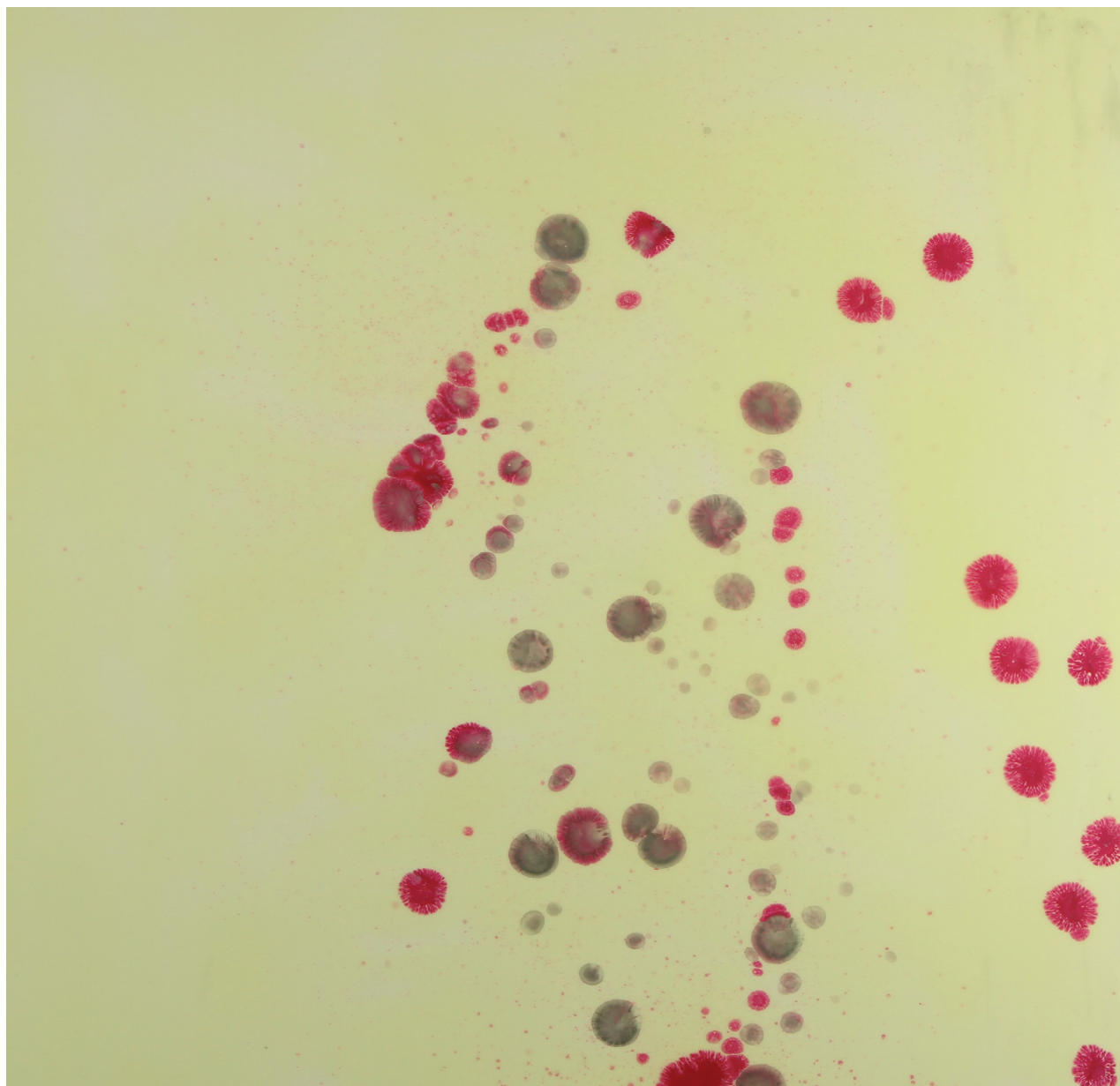
In the 2011 motion picture *Sherlock Holmes*, Holmes' arch-nemesis Moriarty refers to man's innate inclination towards conflict. It prompts the question: Is such a desire for confrontation or antagonism ingrained in our psyche? Do we naturally gravitate towards strife? And if so, how might this concept impact art and arts practice? In the surface of (Fig.15) the work *hoechst2*, we see blood-like stains or dried marks on concrete. These shapes also represent the dialogism of a micro and macro world, representing both cells and the cosmos. They seemingly form gaseous planets and bio-forms in mitosis, Jovian bodies versus micro bodies.

My works mimic the cellular, referencing the inner workings of a nucleus, depicting what may lie below layers of plant material. The flowing patterning suggests a state of transition, a morphing of shapes within protoplasmic matter. In suspending these forms, there is a purposeful attempt to stall or delay the process of decay, embalming these interactions in resinous limbo and enabling them to be revisited and investigated at a later stage. *Why are these forms so seductive? How do they manifest in a multitudinous capacity?* In capturing these invisible forces, I bestow permanence on the impermanent, tangibility on the transient. The works reveal the inner workings of a natural world, each transition creating new glimpses into the concealed micro-world surrounding us. Here resonance lies in revelation as the viewer is introduced to intricate structures set in ambiguity, from cellular plant forms and inner geologies, to geographic lines and atmospheric bodies.

LIFE COMES INTO BEING, BLOOMS AND VANISHES⁹

DMITRY ZAKHAROV

⁹ Zakharov, Dmitry. 2012. "Max Cooper – Micron". Dmitry Zakharov. <http://www.dmitryzakharov.de/Max-Cooper-Micron>

**Fig 22**

Miik Green xylem series - hoechst2
mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm 2013
Photo: Ben Phillips

Hoechst is a cell-staining technique used in medical imaging to help reveal microforms. The inks used in this method are bio-fluorescent dyes designed to uncover molecular characteristics of the body. The *hoechst* series also involves discovery, albeit in a different capacity, with pigment and colour delineating form. In *hoechst2* (Fig.22), pinkish-red and silver organisms are scattered within the painting's frame, and could just as easily be a blood-spattered floor or germination within a Petri dish. As a series of paintings, the works are specimen-like; cadavers providing glimpses into the mysteries of the human body, but while the process appears scientific, it differs in its conceptual concerns, or the methodology involved in the structure's formation. Where science is involved in probing, testing and formulating, the discourse generated here relates solely to process, to resistance in arts practice. The forms fulminate in movement, in disorder: a violent spray of life.

The detail within the work resembles released gaseous particles or the gradual development of lichen on a substrate. In every instance, the paintings reference natural formations, addressing release and containment, or concealment/unconcealment. In limiting the work to a set frame, I am able to seemingly capture select parts of a larger arrangement where microforms and bodies function independently of this extract. In this way, the canvas manages to constrain parts of the whole, to capture an essence of meaning that allows for further, independent self-organisation. Much like the medical practitioner who utilises pigment and colour to discover, assess, or reveal the state of a patient's health, the artist enacts an act of revelation. The binding of dye to organic matter highlights, delineates and unconceals. It becomes an agent of clarity similar to a dancer's choreographic poses, or specific notes within a musical composition.

uncontrolled execution,
where splats lash the ground
visceral with metallic taste
grit and grist, palpable enmity -
the antagonist goaded, prodded, coerced
until erupting into
a diorama of
pigment and pulp, like battered brains
the libidinal body, laid out - intestinally, a grotesque display
of steam and stench, unglamorous force with distain for subject
all substrate - with incessant push,
straining, a plunging and tearing
of materials, matched against matter, music rising
crescendo, dragging/smoke trails,
entrails of paint, triumphant
breathless, dusty rouge
swept up in terror and violence,
muscle against material,
pulse slowing, gaze dropping
to downcast eyes and noiseless cheers

Musician and rapper Kanye West's 2013 album *Yeezus* polarises listeners with its aggressive, repetitive, broken and displaced elements. While the majority of the album is characterised by these properties, an occasional melodic interjection, a cessation of chaos, occurs, which affords the album a kind of redemptive quality. Interestingly, the album embodies the positive and transformative properties of resistance, revealing, and the pairing of incongruous elements, in that my appreciation of the album (despite its seeming disarray) has begun to grow. It is not easy listening, nor is it satisfying, jumping as it does from chorus to bridge, incorporating shouting and screaming before cutting to melodic breaks, breathless chanting and voice coder manipulations. Its incongruities and evident disorder, though, also lend it its unique appeal. The Track *New Slaves*, for example, begins with typical Kanye screed, fades into a hypnotic outro and ends with a sweeping, melodic finish. While the various elements here co-exist in disharmony, in opposition as it were, they also produce a unique, and eventually revelatory, album.

[Outro: Kanye West & Frank Ocean]
I won't end this high, not this time again
So long, so long, so long, you cannot survive
And I'm not dyin', and I can't lose
I can't lose, no, I can't lose
Cause I can't leave it to you
So let's get too high, get too high again
(Too high again, too high)

In *Yeezus*, overall disparate elements fight to be heard, aural conflict transferred to the listener as he negotiates his contradictory responses towards the album. Operating in a similarly heterogeneous combination, elements of my practice also exemplify this embodied captivation, where counterforces create and polarity produces. Sheen from the surfaces reflect a mirror-likeness, where a flatness of the pigment absorbs and repels the gloss. It pushes and pulls, contracting and expanding: it attracts and repulses, exposing the contradictory. Here music, literature and art function to embody a tension, to engage in the exchange as they also record, and in their individual manners, conceal.

Are these the kind of contrary compositions, then, that have the capacity to reveal meaning to the listener, viewer or reader?

In Dostoevsky's 1869 novel *The Idiot*, the messianic figure of Prince Myshkin is surrounded by a plurality of voices, characters intersecting and interacting in a cacophony of conflicting intents and agendas. In allowing many voices to speak simultaneously, Dostoevsky engenders meaning that is created in divergent determination. The novel concludes in much the same way as *Yeezus* - in ambiguity, in opposition, in resistance. The resin sets in contained uncertainty. This dialogism will be further investigated in the following section, where tension is found in unlike pairings, in its purposeful orchestration, underpinned by a typical Bakhtinian dialogic which will be further discussed in 2.3.

2.3 UNSEEN FORCES: DIALOGIC DIORAMAS

Dialogic tension arising between states is opposed to the dialectic process. Philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism sees ideas existing both together and separately to prompt transformative action. His dialogic view promotes unresolvability, in-between-states, and divergence: properties at odds with dialectics. In his article 'Back to Bakhtin' theorist Robert Young notes: '[Bakhtin] ...makes it very clear in those texts signed with his own name that dialogism cannot be confused with dialectics. Dialogism cannot be resolved; it has no teleology. It is unfinalizable and open ended. Dialectics, according to Bakhtin, are monological' (1986, 76). In its monologism, then, dialectics has a kind of two-dimensional flatness that does not sit well within arts practice. While it may be concerned with the struggle, it has as its chief end resolution, or the establishment of meaning; a notion which runs counter to current discourse surrounding arts practice (particularly regarding the evolution of ideas, or the positive aspects of experimentation, even failure).

While dialogism differs from the dialectic *conceptually*, it is also draws from similar notions of duality or ambivalence. These terms often refer to two elements that may operate in tandem or combine/unite in synthesis - concepts closer in theory to that of embodied opposition. The fundamental difference is that the dialogic should be viewed as unrestricted. The closest conceptual premise to dialogism is philosopher Hannah Arendt's theoretical notion of 'plurality', where engagement and allowance for the presence of disparate voices creates action and forms our world. Her notion is that active opposition is vital, and creates a positive exchange, stating: 'In this respect action needs plurality in the same way that performance artists need an audience; without the presence and acknowledgment of others, action would cease to be a meaningful activity' (quoted in d'Entrevés 2014). Arendt's philosophy resonates with Bakhtin's later concepts of the dialogic and heteroglossic, ideas that echo with her political and social constructs of meaning and the world.

These notions are echoed in Derrida's discussion of Plato's *Phaedrus* (the concept of two opposites forming one feature, polarity, or the unlike union), he again gravitates towards a Bakhtinian, heteroglossic arrangement. *Pharmakon* (both remedy and poison) is set in an active opposition nucleate to dialogic activity. Derrida writes 'This pharmakon, this "medicine", this philter, which acts as both remedy and poison, already introduces itself to the body of the discourse with all its ambivalence. This charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be – alternatively or simultaneously – beneficent and maleficent' (2004, 70). Here meaning is derived from multi-faceted discourse rather than the plurality or polyphony of many voices. The concept can be applied to arts practice in material form, where the use of colour, line, form and surface transition to embody meaning, intent and emotion. It suggests the medicinal, spiritual and scientific in arts practice, resisting definition and proposing in its place a heteroglossic array.

Expanding upon this imperative Bakhtin writes in *The Dialogic Imagination* that:

Dialogism is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood, as a part of a greater whole – there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others' (Bakhtin 1981, 426).

While he establishes the dialogic as a meaning producer, ripe for transition to arts practice as resistant creative methodologies, he further instates its intent: 'This dialogic imperative, mandated by the pre-existence of the language world relative to any of its current inhabitants, ensures that there can be no actual monologue (1981, 427).

In my practice, dialogism is apparent in artwork viewed through the lens of resistance, or in making-and-creating in opposition. It is objects existing in irresolution, resembling Lyotard's notion of the impossibility of phrasing the unphrasable, or what he entitles the *différend*, wherein '...something asks to be put into phrases, and suffers from the injustice of not being able instantly to be put into phrases' (1984, 7). The dialogic here presents us with differences that can be aligned in a fashion, together creating new meaning. This is a tension that eschews resolution and, unlike the dialectical imperative,

regards the nature of this conflict as consubstantial to knowledge. Seeing this dialogic diorama unfold frees the artist to focus on the process of making, the *action* of painting or the *construction* of sculpture rather than what may arise from these actions/constructions. Essentially, the ideas-in-themselves are privileged over the physical manifestation of those ideas. It lessens the pressure on the artist to fulfil specific expectations, or create a pre-determined product: it allows for the possibility of intuitive intervention, creative response, and (importantly) failure.

This act of pulling-back, of allowing for instability in art, challenges the value of contained, constrained, unsurprising art; works made-to-order for those within the market. These are the very monological ideals that inform bureaucracy, commerce and consumption, sites against which the artist resists and reacts. This is Lyotard's *différend*, the point at which arts practice finds itself profoundly contra surrounding bodies. *What are the implications, then, for the incompatible, the unnameable or the unresolvable? How do we position that which may not have a function or traditional 'purpose?' How do we discuss, for instance, the 'unusual?'*

Arts practice allows for factors such as these, and welcomes the diverse outcomes that often result from art making, but in doing so, also sets itself apart from the entities that it encounters, may work with, and possibly even rely upon.

Recognising the dialogic nature of arts practice is key to embracing the resistive, tension-filled, and antagonistic elements that often inform a studio practice, and act to redefine the artist's role. The dialogic elements are those that resonate with a viewer; a point at which tension is perceived - works that interact without reliance on anything other than the viewer's gaze. The early Greek philosopher Heraclitus likens a similar unseen force or strain to that of the drawn bow, strings taut, ready to deliver the arrow, whereas Heidegger refers to this invisible tension as 'physis'. As Bossart states: In *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, Being is identified with physis, the overwhelming power which is an inscrutable unity of motion and rest' (1968, 60). It is in this imperceptible tension between two poles that flux appears as stasis. It is this same dialogic that has relevance to my arts practice, from studio process to the broader framework of arts practice. Kapoor's sculpture *Cloudgate* (Fig.23) with its physicality of active exchange mobilises Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. It is an object that actively lures and repels the onlooker, resisting and resting within the landscape.

Kapoor's works contain dialogic aspects, embodying differences while proposing meaning through the collision. His sculptural works have a spiritual and cultural sensitivity that are at once physical and ephemeral. The work *Cloudgate* is composed of welded, machine-cut, mirror-polished, stainless steel plates, that form an organic entity, an appropriate vehicle for demonstrating the concept of unconcealment as a portal for revelation. It is a work difficult to interact with or to document without firstly being framed by its surface, the liquid-like exterior resembling a great all-seeing eye. It unveils the interaction



Fig 23

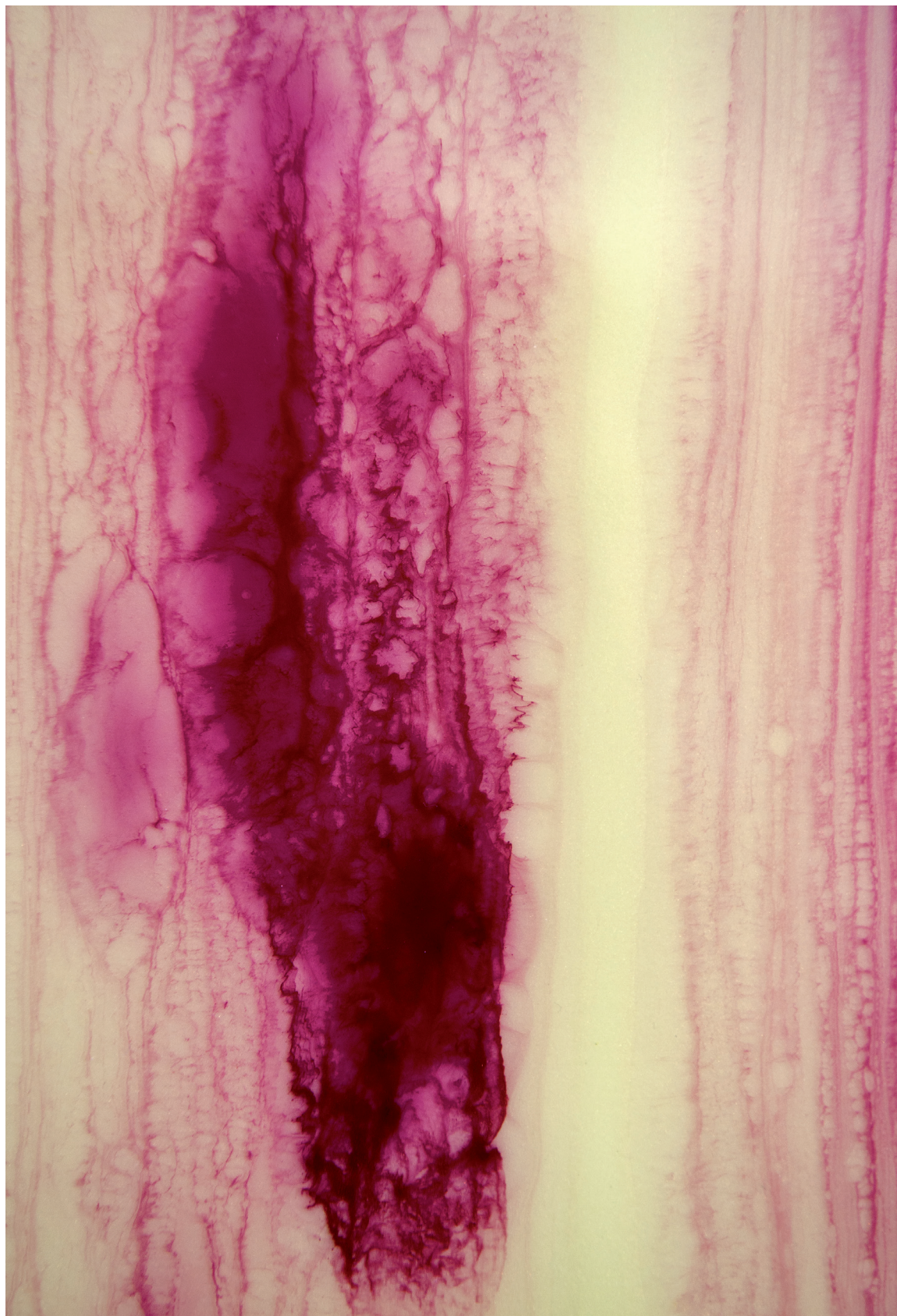
Anish Kapoor *Cloudgate*
polished stainless steel, 10 x 20 x 13m 2006
Photo: Jared Burnett

between human and landscape (seen also in the architecture that it frames and which, via its mirror-skin, is reframed). It encompasses both the human and natural world, reflecting the onlooker and their immediate environment. It forces interaction by reflection and refraction, its all-encompassing, curvilinear form exempting nothing from its gaze.

Attempting to frame or capture the work is a futile endeavour as its mirrored surface omits nothing within its radius. At the point that the onlooker encounters the work, they have already been encountered: to see it, is to first be seen. The viewer, on discovering its framing power, cannot avoid a sense of awe: the portal becomes a vision, revealing the unseen or unseeable. Like gazing through the convex lens of a telescope, it offers an introspective viewpoint while simultaneously broadcasting this acuity. As a public work of art, it symbolises the making and movement of space and place; it refers not only to an individual in community, but also to those societies capable of separating and organising. It is an active conceptual entity whose materiality reflects what *has been*, rather than what *is*, an entity in animate discourse, an exchanger, involved in an ongoing conversation between a city and its constituents, a '...transubstantiation of material so that we might reflect on meanings beyond the thing itself' (Jacob 2008, 123).

Cloudgate is ongoing, ever-changing and dynamic, responding to shifting skylines, seasonal fluctuations, and other such elements in transition. Acts of construction and destruction, set against that most temperamental of backdrops (the sky), play out across its screen. The apex of *Cloudgate*'s bean-like form bends heavenward, revealing both earth and sky, light and dark. It is gentle yet forceful, unyielding, yet malleable, sending the retina into orbit while extending a grounded perspective. Like a mercurial pod paused in motion, it appears both liquid and solid, amorphous yet unchanging. Works such as this reflect the surrounding movement, where impassivity lends weight to transfer in this leguminous timekeeper of transition: in *Cloudgate* we envision both the past and the future in the present.

Kapoor's success as an artist lies largely in his ability to transform abstract concepts into physical being while maintaining a polemic narrative. As British writer Michael Bracewell phrases it, 'Kapoor advances the correlation between sculpture and spiritual technology – mediation and physiological 'reflection' – that has always been a major theme within his art' (2011, 20). Like Kapoor, my works attempt to show the outcome of resistant action, the results of dialogic force. They are works that provide information, yet purposefully remain indeterminable and ambiguous, functioning to stimulate meaning, hinting at sites and spaces of revelation that span from hidden micro-worlds to pictorial charts in the physician's waiting room.

**Fig 24**

Miik Green xylem series - haplostele13 (detail)
mixed media on aluminium 108 x 108cm 2013
Photo: S+F Jody D'Arcy/Jo Carmichael

ONLY WHEN ART IS FRAGMENTED, DISCONTINUOUS AND
INCOMPLETE CAN WE KNOW ABOUT THE VACANT ETERNITY
THAT EXCLUDES OBJECTS AND DETERMINED MEANINGS¹⁰

ROBERT SMITHSON

The detail in *haplostele13* (Fig. 24) resembles the pulpy, bodily, bruised capillaries of unseen inner sanctums. It is an image that could just as easily be a medical study of a malignant lesion or the diagrammatic extract of a fruiting body. Injecting the ink 'neat' into the background creates a vivid, vascular-like stain that troubles the former serenity and softness of the painting. With its oversaturated pink ink bleeding into a delicate, yellow-cream expanse, the work takes on the fleshy appearance of a nectarine. Where the pink has infiltrated, pockets of island-shaped forms manifest, dispersing in rivulets, dissipating into the background while retaining integral form. The overall appearance is that of a lake whose tributaries have overflowed into surrounding territory. This rich central 'lagoon' maintains intensity, yet the surrounding runoff has permeated outlying spaces, creating a dendritic spillover. The linear aesthetic delineates this process; a concentric heart dictated by vertical force, opacity balancing the translucent pink hue of the polyurethane ink, a testament to resistant physical union.

Ambiguity lends an unease to the work's appearance, with creamy sections resembling fruit flesh or pustules. The integral concept here is resistance, one reliant less on the form's likeness to similar structures in the natural micro-world, than the production process. These are forms that manifest under stress and resistance, and a simultaneous yielding and assault are evident in this detail. Growth and decay, life and death, co-exist, the painting a transcript of health or evidence of disease. The likeness to biological imagery is uncanny, a site where conflict becomes cellular, and irregular regularities are formed through stress. Those details that a viewer is initially drawn to when examining the artwork may facilitate an exchange between viewer and work ... resistance encompassing both physical approach and conceptual concern. Colour, translucency and material become transitional vehicles for discussing ideas of conflict, tension and separation. Resinous surfaces (the initial point of attraction) engage the onlooker in a theoretical premise. The exterior's serene, liquid-like appearance beguiles the viewer, while the inner imagery repels with its likeness to decaying flesh.

¹⁰ Quoted in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Sky, Alison and Jack Flam, ed. 1996. Berkeley: University of California Press. P 333.

In toxicity screenings, patterns can be glimpsed, barium contrasts and x-ray sections privy only to the specialist. Out of context, however, they contain a striking passivity that transcends the commonplace. Elkins provides an interesting artistic perspective on these overlooked/unnoticed forms or sites through referencing the aesthetic of bitumen. He parallels his analysis of roads with those sections on oil paintings where surface cracks allude to obscure meanings, history or environment, stating: 'Cracking, distortion, disintegration, ravelling, shoving, rutting—I love the terminology of distressed pavement. The utterly ordinary mangled surface of the road in Chicago, which I walk past blindly every day on my way to work, is full of metaphors for human disaster' (2000, 33). By visualising structures in this manner, Elkins observes as the artist might, perceiving meaning in the functional; the uncanny in the operational. Interpreting form in this manner allows us to assume an artistic viewpoint, to glimpse the dialogic potential of the everyday.

Dialogism of the 'commonplace' or pedestrian, is envisaged in similar ways, and can be discovered in fields as diverse as music, architecture or dance. The following paragraphs detail my encounter with these ideas as artist-in-the-world, and my justification for labelling them as subtle sites of dialogic resistance. They range from the utility of traffic infrastructure to comedic subversion, where meanings are grasped in Dostoyevskian collision, remaining deliberately unresolved. The forms we encounter daily embody these contradictory notions and reveal this alternate-ness in interaction. Traffic lights or power poles, for instance, contain an inbuilt instability, designed as they are to crumple on impact, minimising the driver's potential injuries. The term for the inbuilt ability to crumple under stress is termed 'frangibility', a pre-planned measure that lies dormant until the moment of impact. Utilities such as signage, road markers and streetlights that are within a certain proximity to the road must contain these properties; exhibiting a kind of dialogic coexistence. Given these dual/oppositional structural requirements, mundane items such as the common light pole and other such banal structures suddenly prove intriguing, imbued with dialogic potential that could be unlocked by something as random as an off-course vehicle.

Here, similar to the forms that appear within my works, utilities are poised for action, set-in-tension, and interesting links between arts practice and everyday structures begin to emerge. Even the use and implementation of the familiar (traffic barriers present an interesting parallel) can initiate a dialogic conversation. The *VICROADS* road safety weblink (2010 11), for example, documents in length the rationale behind these structures (the potential damage of striking a barrier, they claim, is less harmful than that of a vehicle

**Fig 25**

Wedding World bridal shop in Bayswater, Western Australia 2014
Artist image

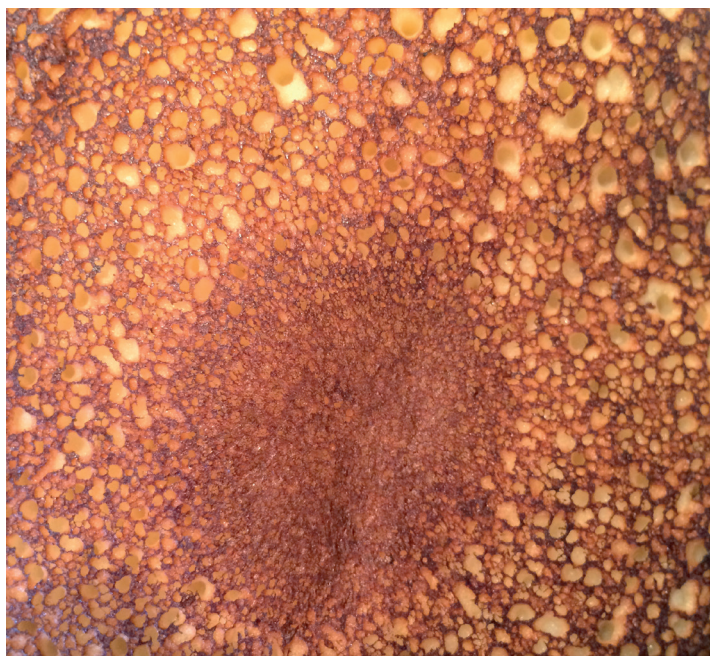
veering into an embankment). In the fabrication and installation of these items, the document refers to appropriate levels of stiffness, while also highlighting their ability to fragment under stress. The frangible requirement supports the polemic narratives; the contradictory nature of these regulations culminating in unlikely terminological couplings such as yield/resist, rigid/flexible and stable/unstable. The conceptual then, more than the actual materialisation of these objects, is notable given that these structures do not generally display a spirit of collaboration. Interestingly, public art works such as sculptures that are placed near traffic areas must also meet the requirements of frangibility. *Does creating artworks with such specific requirements, we might ask, serve to undermine art's potency?*

Wedding World (Fig. 25) is a wedding supply shop in Bayswater, Western Australia, and is an exemplar of dialogic disturbance in the everyday. The shop front is a mix of hard-edge, abstract architecture and military design; a laser-cut, geometric @Cor-ten shell falling from roofline to street level in angular, rusted-steel sections. It obscures vision yet commands attention. It is intrusive, imposing and instantly recognisable. Structurally formidable in its severe minimalism, it blocks light, eliminating the kind of open and aesthetically-pleasing display one might typically expect from a wedding supply shop. This dialogic resonance causes a cognitive dissonance, one brought about by disturbed expectations and the uniting of oppositional elements. An aesthetic friction is created

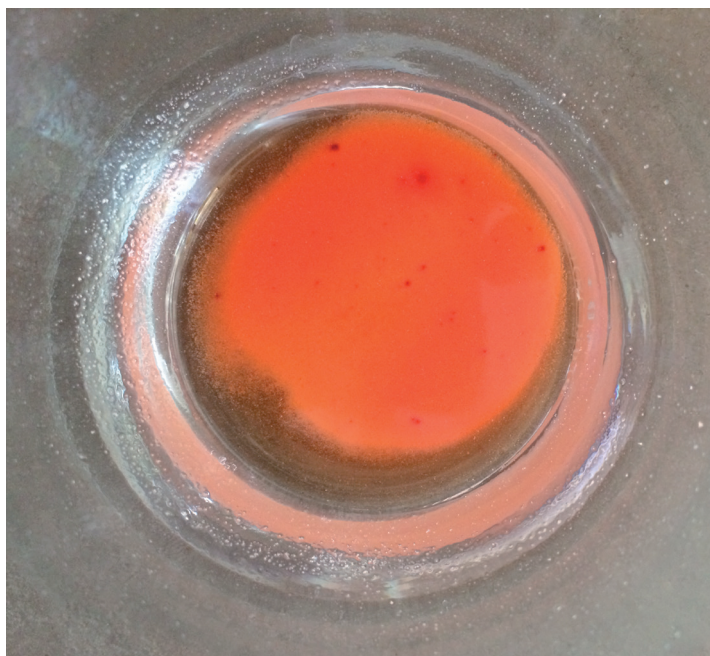
through frustrated expectations. While we expect a wedding shop to appeal to those approaching marriage, to embody some aspect of the bride or the feminine, the structure is devoid of any such traces. There is no softness, no light, and the colour white is conspicuously absent (which, considering the symbolic significance of the colour white within the context of the Western wedding, is fairly radical). In locating and reflecting upon the source of our visual vertigo, however, we are confronted with our own pre-expectations, those roles and ideas we unwittingly adopt/absorb.

Initially, I had thought the building was called *WEEDING WORLD* (another friend *WELDING WORLD*), due less to the quality of the signage than our subconscious inability to marry the idea of a wedding supply shop with the industrial monolith encountered. Dialogism is evident, however, in the fact that this odd combination has a surprisingly mesmerising quality where elements jar, creating a tension that exists for the duration of the viewer's gaze. An onlooker experiences resistance in this unnatural combination; a satisfying fluctuation between comprehension and consolidation. Similar interventions are seen in the aesthetics of everyday objects that are the subjects of counterforces.

The final chapter investigates further that which arises as a result of dialogism, that which emerges in the process of resistance. The theme is disequilibrium, an upsetting of balance, a disorder evident on either side of order. Creativity lies in knowing the limits of either side, of negotiating control and chaos, allowing disequilibrium to be a site for making and establishing dialogic action.

**Fig 26**

Pancake base of cooked pancake 2014
Artist image

**Fig 27**

©Berocca residue bottom of a glass 2014
Artist image

3.1 DISEQUILIBRIUM: SUSPENSION, TRANSFORMATION

Disequilibrium is an upset of the scales, an imbalance of order and composition. In arts practice this instability enacts resistance towards traditional methodologies, allowing for the unplanned and unpredictable. It is disruption of the formulaic, a motion towards or away from equilibrium, points of departure and arrival.

In a material sense, suspension captures the uncapturable. The resin in my works, at the point of catalysis, functions as an active enabler, shape, structure and forms now becoming locked, fixed in time, motion in material. In this sense, the resin performs the same function as a camera, constraining and containing the momentary. This method of capture differs from that of the camera, however, in its method of capturing. The camera cannot truly capture motion; the recorded forms that develop in the photographic studio are stills as opposed to still/life. The camera is unable to preserve, only to *record* activity, rendering motion through representation. As Susan Sontag notes: 'To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge – and, therefore, like power' (1977, 4). The power here is one that seizes, gleans from, and reshapes reality into a series of manageable, controllable, objects.

The method of capture lies in enabling paintings to develop through material interaction interdependent of the artist. This allows for reanimation of physical properties that can be held and maintained in a transitory state. Sontag revisits this notion, stating: 'All photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicking out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt' (1977, 15). Sontag relates capture to mortality and memento mori, a premise which features prominently in works such as 15th Century German painter Hans Memling's *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* (Fig.28), contrasting life with non-living states.

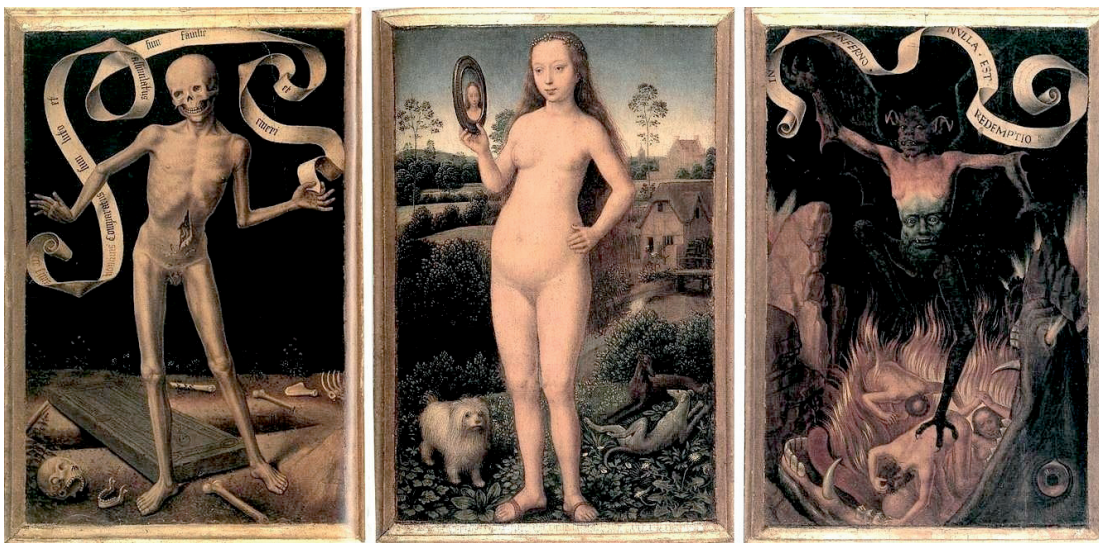


Fig 28

Hans Memling *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*
oil on oak panel, 22 x 15 cm (each wing) 1485
Image courtesy Musée des Beaux-Arts, Strasbourg

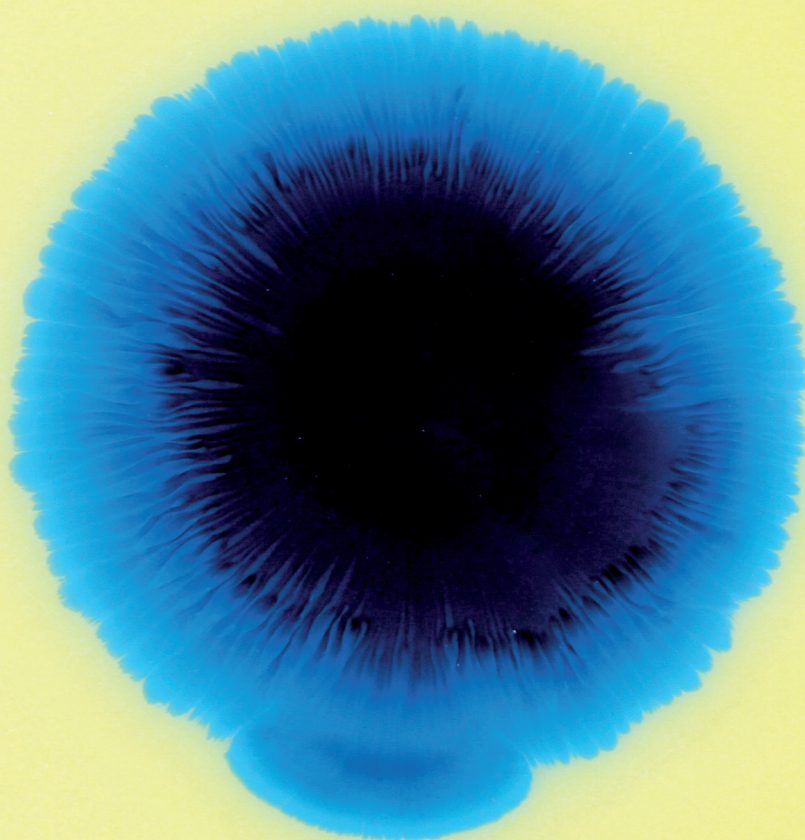
Like the photographic process, my works employ a similar resistant-modality that encapsulates and pauses, enabling the viewer to observe the unseeable; the embalming resin giving permanency to the impermanent; stasis incited in flux. Where materials and fluids previously wrestled in motion, the process offers denouement, a post-transformation evident in suspension, and vice-versa. This metamorphosis of liquid to solid relies on unlike suspension and the clash of reactants. These catalysing limits ensure a state-changing modification that in turn has the ability to suspend, to immobilise movement. It transforms life into still-life in a procedure that anticipates renewal beyond decay.

Suspension/transformation here is integral to the artistic process, evidenced in its unveiling of a material's invisible force. Unlike the taxidermist who prepares deceased animals for presentation, this display regards the process of capture alone. Where the taxidermist seeks to bestow a permanence or life-likeness to the dead, my practice is interested in a temporality and transience that captures the immaterial in the material. In bringing forth these forms, the immaterial is granted materiality, and in preserving the same structure, a cycle is established. Like the tail-swallowing serpent ouroboros, it undergoes

constant and dialogic change. In this circular icon of the alchemist we see suspension and transformation, the circle of life, a primordial unity where entropy becomes growth and renewal. Writer Duane Jsaari states in his article *More About The Ouroboros* that: '...one has to see the ouroboros in motion rather than as a static image. Think of the symbol as a photographic snapshot of a process, something that could not be depicted directly' (2012). The ouroboros, then, is both movement and the moment, and should be understood as the stationary in mobility. This is what dialogism, especially in relation to arts practice, affords: the ability not to see merely one aspect, or even two simultaneously. It is in the unlike combination, the disparity and activity, that meaning is effectuated.

Take, for example, the word 'hang': it is a basic term, yet it embodies the complexity between the states of both action and non-action. Viewed through a Bakhtinian lens, it can be seen as an active-pharmakon of embodied resistive motion. In the studio processes that underpin my practical work, similarities arise when translated to the broader concerns of arts practice. Understood within the framework of the ouroborotic, the word 'hang' suddenly becomes pertinent to this exegesis, referring as it does to the suspended or 'hanging' object. Another definition pertains to mortality, of death by hanging. Finally, it could also refer to decoration or adornment: the act of 'hanging' a painting. In light of the ouroboros reference, this singular word encompasses changes-of-state, and moves towards a cyclic, rotating action and beyond, where 'hang' as suspension might exist between the gallery and the gallows.

My paintings exemplify this concept through the natural-bio-structures that appear in the surface of the works. In order for these forms to be revealed, they are suspended or sealed in clear resin. The forms may appear decorative or ornamental, but they are also revealed in these patterns, unconcealed in suspension. These forms are the result of an act, a process consistent with the unveiling, the bringing-forth of form. This is less about the cosmetic than the act of revealing the material processes that this hanging relies upon. As English contemporary artist and writer David Batchelor asserts: 'While cosmetics can both enhance beauty and conceal ugliness, they can also suffocate life. They really are against nature; they can be used to decorate a corpse, but they can also make a corpse of what they decorate' (2000, 57). Here death and concealment are both revealed and rendered through colour, where pigments act to establish the essence of vitality or also to chronicle the existence that was. Noting colour's role in this disclosure Batchelor continues: 'One is the fleeting triumph of life over death; the other is the permanent victory of death over life' (2000, 58).

**Fig 29**

Miik Green xylem series - terfesia8 (detail)
mixed media on aluminium, 185 x 185cm 2012
Photo: Ben Phillips

Within these various interpretations of 'hang', physicality of suspension equates to a materiality of patterning and structures; features that appear in my paintings. These are the encased, entrapped and permanently paused interchanges of motion, embedded pigments held in time.

The other point of interest here is that while we have a 'hanging', or suspension-in-motion, time is also of relevance. The insect set in amber becomes a fitting illustration for suspension as a marker of time, alternately scientific, geographical, and historical. In the act of preserving, the fossil becomes inextricably linked to both the past and the present. In the future, in impending death, there is also revelation, a revealing. In my studio practice, however, this is linked to preservation. In the act of hanging a person by ligature, the animate becomes inanimate. There remains, however, a temporary presence of action: the rope continues to swing in pendulous movement, as does the convict, whose body twitches and kicks in a macabre stay of execution. This concept is embodied through a process of enquiry where what transpires is the demise of previous structures. A bioform is revealed in emergence, a post-death exposed in expiry.

Disequilibrium is arrested in the natural geometry of *terfesia8* (Fig. 29), its abstract shapes similar to those observed in petals or pollen, protozoa or polyps. These forms provide both a conceptual and aesthetic key to this mode of resistive research that focuses on a revelation unlocked through tension. Details such as this are primarily seen or viewed at a micro-scale (much of the resonant data and imagery suspended in the surface of the paintings can only be collected through the scientific microscope). As such, details are only rendered visible through an unnatural or man-made process

In the same way that glass plates contain and inhibit the organism or cellular, the resin becomes an agent of identification, an investigative tool. As the resin hardens, the reaction between the heterogeneous materials gradually comes to a standstill, indefinitely suspending imagery in time and motion. The interaction between these unlike particles at the molecular level, then, has effectively been paused and encapsulated; an action that allows for containment of otherwise ephemeral moments in a physical state. Such a process is similar to capturing the transience of cellular dispersion in a microscope. This method of seeing and suspending opens up many conceptual possibilities in terms of capture and transformation. These moments are, in effect, suspended in motion, ready for

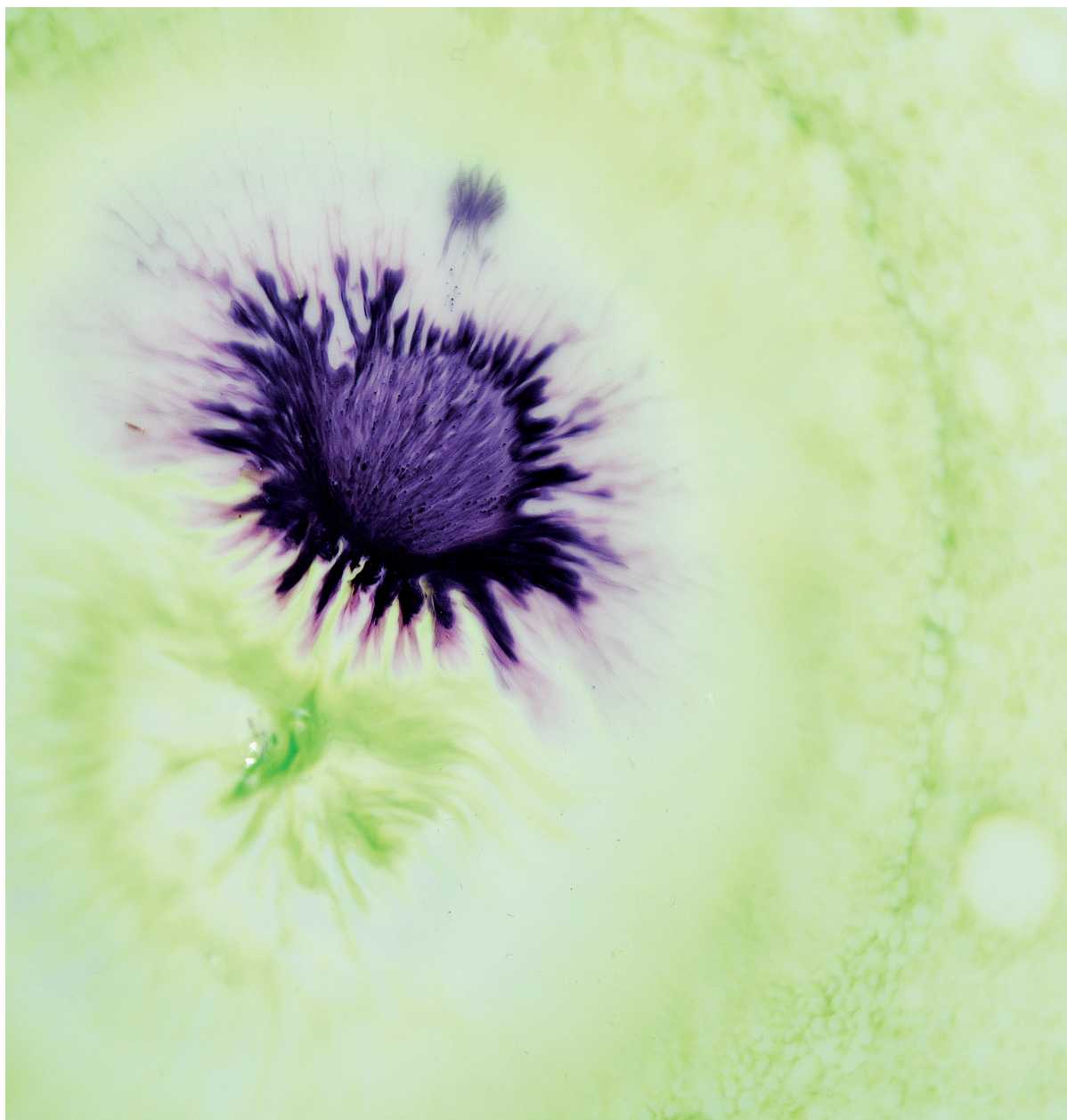
further examination by the viewer, who will ultimately draw his or her own conclusions as to the origins of the forms and the imagery presented.

This process allows for a revelation of the ways materials influence each other, are absorbed, mixed or repelled, all in their unique and unpredictable way. The pathways of blood-red resin mimic physiological capillaries, seemingly mapped by vasculogenesis, a dynamic framework for embryological growth. Closer examination reveals closed pathways and defined edges far removed from a nascent scaffold formation, hinting at an underlying polarity of force at work in these paintings.

The edges of these works are often rounded due to surface tension; an oversaturation of material causing spillovers, splatters of resin and pools of epoxy to harden on my studio floor. These pools contain convex menisci seemingly trapped in a liquid state of thermodynamic mediation, and with it the macroscopic variables of pressure, internal energy, temperature and entropy through which catalysing forms shift and change. They materialise due to a transfer of heat and energy that eventually leads to state-changing transformation. The setting and sealing of the resin prevents any further liquid movement, enacting molecular suspension and stabilising pigment particles within the surface of the artwork.

**THE INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE COLORS IN A SUNSET ARE
NOT LIKE THE INVISIBLE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN THE COLORS IN A
RAINBOW OR IN A PAINTING. THE FACETS OF A CRYSTAL ARE ALIGNED
ACCORDING TO VERY PARTICULAR RULES, AND THOSE RULES DO NOT
APPLY TO ANY OTHER OBJECTS¹¹**
JAMES ELKINS

¹¹ Elkins, James. 2000. *How To Use Your Eyes*. New York: Routledge. P 244.

**Fig 30**

Miik Green xylem series - terfesia5 (detail)
mixed media on aluminium, 185 x 185cm 2013
Photo: S+F Jody D'Arcy/Jo Carmichael

These are surfaces of light and reflection, colour and refraction, abstractions drawn from nature and augmented in transformation. Creeping tendrils of pigment become veins that retain and contain light, networks infiltrating the skin's translucent flesh. They become capillaries extending or retracting in traction, trapped in animation; liquid-filled lumina bound by cellular flotillas. The transcendental qualities of these materials are highlighted through reverberation and lucidity. In *terfesias* (Fig. 30), pressure-bounded, fluid-filled sacs have burst in vivid hues, perforating the uniform membrane as gelatinous islands form, redefined. The viewer is drawn through an abstracted plane, an augmented view of self and surroundings infusing the interiors of hidden worlds with the clarity of colour, interrupted homogeneity suddenly made apparent.

Suspension and transformation shadow one another, existing simultaneously, co-dependently; transformation evidenced through the transition from liquidity to solidity, motion now sealed within hardened polymer epoxy. In the setting-process, part A and part B interact, the painting's surface acting as a window through which coloured pigments (now contained within the gloss and fastened in chemical reaction) can be observed.

For transformation to occur, interaction must take place between the unlike: between bodies, materials and arrangements. Through this process a state-changing energy transfer is created, one, which allows for observation of ongoing reactions. Grosz relates this to the notion of temporal change, where the artist is able to capture the temporary or impermanent in the transitory. In *chaos, territory, art* she posits that artwork '...arrests, freezes forever, a look, a moment, a gesture, an activity, from the transitory and ever different chaos of temporal change, in the transitions between one percept and affect and the next that marks the life of a living being' (2008, 74). This is suspension located in transition, transformation paused in motion.

Within the surface of these works, suspension transforms fluidity into dormancy, a cessation of movement enacted. It pauses, captures, seals and displays, culminating in the liquid-made-solid through physical setting of resin. It also captures the ephemeral in time, in a surceased moment of inertia. The two-fold materialisation of this concept can be likened to curare, the naturally derived alkaloid toxicant. Curare acts both as a neuromuscular blocking agent and anaesthetic, its application relaxing the skeletal muscles for surgery. Paradoxically, however, it also has the (rare) potential to lead to asphyxiation, its previously life-giving properties now a catalyst for death. Aesthetically, the *xylem series* paintings have been likened to both muscle tissue and plant material, cellulose and cells. Curare, enacting similar aspects of dialogism, links the corporeal to the botanical in suspension.

The curare now bridges the human/non-human divide in a strange coupling of natural and synthetic. It acts on tissue, inhibiting time as the recipient slips toward a limbo that slows and suspends life's functions. Not dissimilarly, the movement-ceasing resin acts to inhibit interaction to a set point, enacted over time. It reveals through suspension and, in a physical sense, acts on bodies. Its use brings life in proximity to death, hovering between the two states. As a medicinal tool, curare enables life-preserving surgery to take place by suspending the patient. The ouroboros and curare both serve here to symbolise an arts practice that values meaning and exchange, and the significance of resistive-creation. This site is a transitional zone where ideas are translated to material, and concept initiates artistic production. In this active/re(-)active territory, two spaces become interchangeable at the shifting nexus between ideas and making.

Incipient blots
and discoloured flecks
dispersed in maculous array,
entrapped deposits
enframed sediment entombed
in immobile reanimate asphyxia
anoxic underside of caustic observance.

Foment of ferric-abeyance, hiatus
of efforescent bloom
an angiosperm set, post-flush departed,
leaving traces of res gestae: what was
is left behind to meta/morph
no flutter of movement just adjustments
pressure in the sticky heat
disembodied, repositioned and waiting
casket-confined stays closed, stay close
in larval form, curled, embraced.

Transformed heat of hibernation where changeling
inter-change is probable,
inescapable now opening
fixings loosening shaking
shedding shredding
stretching straining in this case,
shaking off a dead awakening discarding
displaced an awareness of air, the other, outer skin
seen now
outside and exterior
seized flutter of movement

Suspension is the paused power of disequilibrium, a fragmented, transforming, capturing-of-form conjunct to equilibrium. It is disconnected from, yet tethered to, the uniformity, consistency and symmetry of polemic states. Establishing this resistance as disequilibrium positions tension as the key factor between states - a polemic bridge. The following sub-chapter presents an illustrative concept for visualising this relationship: three bodies in alignment as this dynamic array prompts transformation. Tension, as I will argue in further detail, is epicentral to this tri-part methodology of resistant creativity, or 'syzygy'.

3.2 DISEQUILIBRIUM: A SYZYGETICAL EXCHANGE

Syzygy is a locale between bodies, a singular site that nonetheless appears as a triptych. In this section the middle body that exists within resistance will be examined, locating it as the space in which tension is embodied: a resistive centrality. This is where action occurs, the beating heart at the centre of the violence and interaction. It sits somewhere between revealing and visualisation and precedes (and precipitates) a state of limbo. As we have approached this idea of resistance from two poles (one regarding the artist *making* and one regarding the artist *being*), syzygy becomes the living, breathing interaction between materials where art is created in *making*: in *being*, it is an approach to practice that results in dialogue or discourse framed by a visual arts practice. Both contain resistance that primarily functions to create exchange, and syzygy is the interaction that takes place at the point of collision. To use a musical analogy: if opposition were two cymbals moving towards each other, syzygy would be the actual moment of impact. In this instance, it is neither an instigator of action nor is it tethered to either cymbal; rather it is the noiseless encounter of items on impact, before the clash is even audible.

(un)(connect)

Turbulent neon bulbous sacs,
glistening, moving, gliding currents,
flowing and blinking
seepage and glue, glag, clag,
prismic antifreeze, oil slick
islanding liquid
spread the fats on the floor like a fan
lime lipids, tissue scored, micro/core
the undercarriage
nebulous network of fibre, the utility of the cellular,
neostructure of neuron and hindered synapses
presently blurry fuzzy
sleep-clogged eyes

awakening yet
blinking, grasping in
weighted laboured
blips-blip ellipse still blinking.
Sticky and gelatinous now, the
agar holding, gel-moulding surface folding
libidinal skin of Lyotard, unwrapped
exposing inner workings
now
connected in unconnectedness, linked in isolation

cells that formed a body
now create a cell block
engaged to caged
together/untethered
yoked apart
flickering flickers
glints and gleams
now hazily
obscured

Syzygy is the visceral action through which art occurs; the *activity* of creation. It is the actuality, or bringing-forth that precedes limbo. It is what emerges as a live or bodily response in the artistic process of creation; material formations perceived in suspended animation. Here in the making-process, resistive-action reveals, unconceals and renders visible. It can also extend beyond studio processes (from *being* to *doing*) and through this transition provoke and prompt as the artist engages with other agencies. When the artist enters collaborative environments, discourse between the two parties can result in tension, however the outcome of this tension can often have a positive effect on the work. Here, this resistance reveals the value of combining unlike resources or viewpoints. If we imagine the artist's practice as being situated at one end of the spectrum, and the engaged collaborator on the other, syzygy could be envisaged as the third body that allows for, or creates, dialogue. It is a visualised, recognised, productive tension present in liminal space. It can manifest amidst brief and outcome, divide two practitioners or emerge between an artist and gallerist. At any one time, the artist can be involved in complex negotiations within arts practice, particularly when it extends into arenas such as the (often resistant) public realm. Syzygy becomes this embodied activity: it is the clash that occurs in the oppositional encounter. As an illustrative tool, it allows a more concrete example of dialogic resistance in arts practice - a conceptual premise that regards tension as a dynamic producer of meaning.

**Fig 31**

Miik Green xylem series – argyria3
mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm 2013
Photo: Ben Phillips

The *argyria series*, specifically *argyria3* (Fig. 31) were intended to portray the biological interaction that occurs between the human and non-human; our interaction with matter. Argyria, medically defined, is an irreversible condition that develops when the body absorbs excess amounts of silver, turning the skin a silvery-grey. Most notable examples are Paul Karason and Rosemary Jacobs who were prescribed colloidal silver, discontinuing the treatment only when their skin took on an ashy sheen. Under magnification, the skin of sufferers contains minute silver deposits, and it was this idea of action within the body emerging *externally* that inspired this particular thread of the *xylem series*. It (literally) embodies syzygetical excess: it is beyond the point of concealing/ revealing that the silver breaks through the barrier of the skin and prompts a shift in colour. This idea is represented in this painting through the overload of an alien substance, silver becoming clarity emergent in resistance. It is evident in the metallic streaks that enter into, and exit from, the bodily translucence of the mandarin wash; the puckers and spats of molten lead-like pigments in colourful collusion. It is in the disparity of these separations and during the course of this unlikely union that a transformation takes place. The tension enacts a metamorphosis-inducing pull/push, where new meaning is produced, envisaged and recorded.

In a similar manner, my practice seeks to reveal interaction in inaction, placing counterforces in syzygetic arrangement. In this manner, inner workings can be exposed, unfolding forms that bear unnatural resemblances to those of natural structures, and creating lucidity in indeterminacy. Acknowledging these heterogeneous combinations and framing them within the subsequent tension, the artist is afforded scope to engage and activate, transformation now developing through strange couplings. Baume cites a 'cognitive dissonance' in Kapoor's work, wherein 'conflicting perceptions compete for primacy' (2008, 17). *Argyria3* reveals a similar struggle as the molten-silver sections encounter planes of translucent tangerine vying for dominance. It is this play, action, slipping in and out of itself. It simultaneously seduces and repels, sucks and spills, the surface becoming a planar receptor of mutual opposition and correspondence.

Developing stimulating and innovative ways to combine established, unlike materials forms the foundation of this process where equilibrium encounters instability. Syzygy results from reactions of stress, conflict and change; in this instance, revealing hidden structures requires the material to be heterogeneous, repelling other material in order to demarcate. Again, colour here takes on the role of biomarker, a practical

visual tool utilised in science for structural mapping or cellular definition. Importantly, it is found through a form of resistance (or contrast), enabling an aesthetic clarity.

Here the polemic face of nature is revealed; Geo-Euclidian shapes that appear organic under the microscope contain, in hidden curvatures, detailed geometries. It is resistance's state-changing lens that combines opposites and unites binaries. It is an approach that is opposed to integration, hybridity or synthesis; one that understands the capacity of the incompatible or incongruous to create meaning or generate exchange. In the three-stage process mentioned above, it is the combination, bookended as it is by *pre-combination* and the *combined*, that is revealed as syzygy.

As a framework for arts practice, it shifts the focus to the process or the means rather than the end result, and in doing so avoids outcome-driven art. It welcomes the unplanned, releasing the artist from preordained or preconceived results. It embraces an unpredictable dialogue, therein emancipating the researcher from the constraints of predictable conclusions; creating a space, instead, for the unintended, for discovery. Once the outcome is apparent, the artist faces a new set of questions. 'Has this form developed due to a natural or unnatural process?' 'Is this work of a more representational or abstract nature?'

As forms develop in the surface of my work, structures appear that resemble photographs viewed through a microscope. *Am I, the artist, now rendering visible? Does the work embody these artists' ideas of intent/process, or solely mimic nature in rendering the visible?* I posit that both are achieved, although the intent is to render visible. When work is process-driven, the combination of resistant pigments and materials can result in a seemingly representative, synthetic form. If the intent had been to reproduce the form, the approach might be to photograph a pollen form, or carefully render the image with a fine paintbrush. The heterogeneous activity at work in my process renders the *visible* while simultaneously a representative visualisation emerges. In this image, we see the micro, the bio, and cells in division: flux and stasis in unison. The finger-like exterior of the form has created a barrier around the circular bubbles, either in extent or retreat. This is the natural and the unpredictable united; the unintentional, even unnatural, suddenly manifest.

In astronomy and astrology, syzygy denotes a kind of unity, especially in regards to coordination or alignment of stars and planets. There is a disunity in this unity; bodies aligning, while remaining distinct. My work embodies syzygetical exchange, a concept surmised by University of Kansas Professor Edith Clowes as 'interactions [that are] are captured in the rather obscure concept of syzygy, which focuses on the idea of conjoining discrete things and experiences into a vital whole' (1996, 552). I produce work wherein both the details (and the whole) appear galaxial, in planetary flux. The paintings allude to those moments of impact or action that are rarely seen (a comet entering the earth's atmosphere, for example, or a star disintegrating). It is here that the artist simultaneously invokes the finite and the infinite. The amorphous forms featuring within the paintings contain both stars and surrounding interstellar space. The artist's plane is the cosmos: absolute space, a black hole that sucks in surrounding matter. This poetic notion of syzygy continues Heraclitus's concept of the unity of opposites: the joining of the separate and the uniting of the discrete. This is an undesirable outcome, commercially speaking, in that scientific testing of products generally ensures homogeneity.

Supernova – comet-like, a metaphysical amphimixis
projection, conception and stellation
while the void sucks and sprays, nebulous rays
of microspasm, macroplasm
cosmic synapse.

Metamorphosis mutations, lime trans-slime
liquid thistle retreat,
plasma vortex,
ink bleeder/pigment haemophile,
hirudin centauri,
the fusible asterism
pathology, flux

The same resolution of antimonies is intrinsic to my practice, a space where the differences between things are not only revealed but also embraced. Here the tension between opposed forces is paramount. Heraclitus analogised this concept using the illustration of the drawn bow; the tension between string and bow enabling the instrument's use, a latent potential of action in inaction. Under these conditions the arrow can be released from its temporary immobility. Professor Marc Cohen regards this imperceptible movement as unseen revelation of resistance, stating: 'Here the tension between opposed forces - the string being pulled one way by one end of the bow and the other way by the other - enables the bow to perform its function, to be the kind of thing that it is. It seems static, but it is in fact dynamic. Beneath its apparently motionless exterior is a tension between opposed forces' (2002).

Cohen alludes to both life and death in this picture, naming the bow *biós* (life) and humorously exchanging the accent to *bíos* (death). The bow that is in tension, he claims: 'represents the tension between opposites in conflict; the opposition is expressed metaphorically in the name of the bow, which (with the help of a pun) means just the opposite of what the bow's work is' (2002). In arts practice this constant tension or opposing force manifests in the artist's struggle. This pressure or strain, however, has the ability to transform the work of the artist in the same way that a pearl is fashioned through abrasion (conflict even) within the oyster.

What might previously have been perceived as a two-way relationship can potentially now be viewed by the artist as a three-part composition – the centre forming the embodiment-of-tension. In mathematics, this could be referred to a trinary relationship, however in typical Euclidian manner the middle body remains neutral. Where this differs from other expectations of arts practice (such as the example of the mathematical trinary) is that resolution rests on achieving a harmony or balance between two sides. In contrast, the syzygetical framework embodies a dynamic relationship, formed in triune tension. In a broader sense, this middle body may symbolise issues ranging from power, compromise or ethics, to the subject of morality or politics. In negotiating these elements they become resistive factors within a dynamic whole.

Conservative expectations become increasingly apparent within the domain of public art, as evidenced by BHP's resistance to the work *Untitled 312* outlined in 1.3. Such works are described (in arguably euphemistic terminology) as 'wayfinding markers', 'integrated', or 'artworks containing a functional aspect'. Terms such as these generally refer

to works designed to blend in, to avoid provocation, interference or even engagement with an audience. This is art that assumes its surroundings - sensible works of art that have been reduced to serving a merely decorative function. *But what purpose, we might ask, lies in the work of art that neither provokes or engages?*

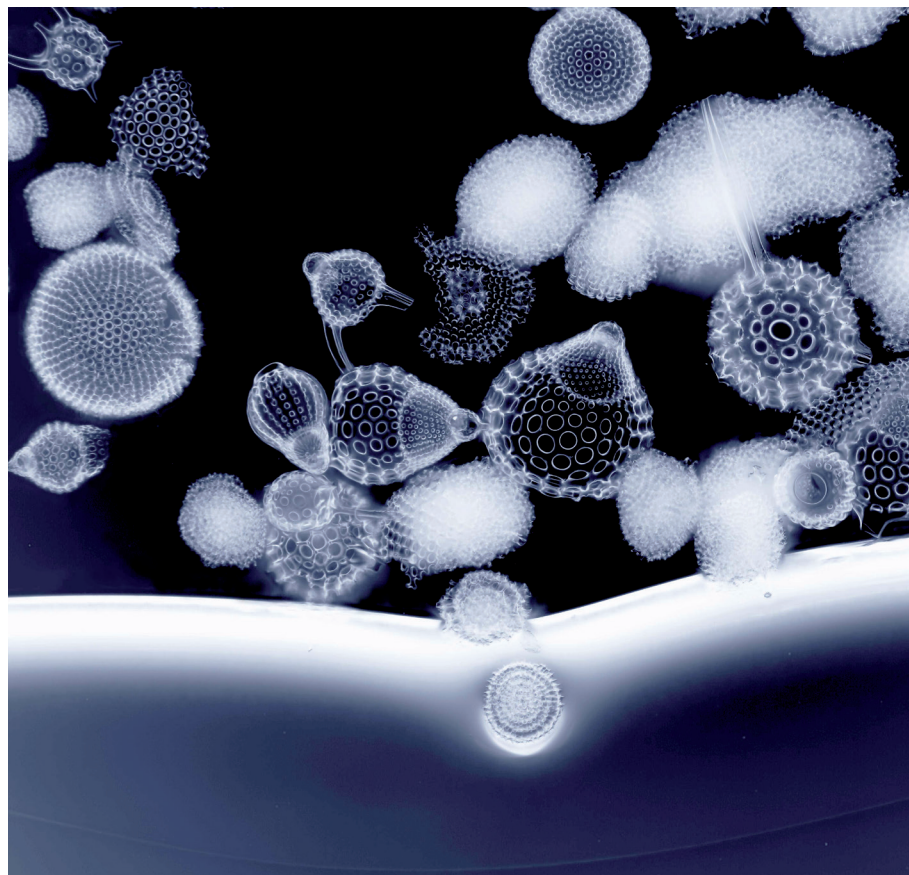
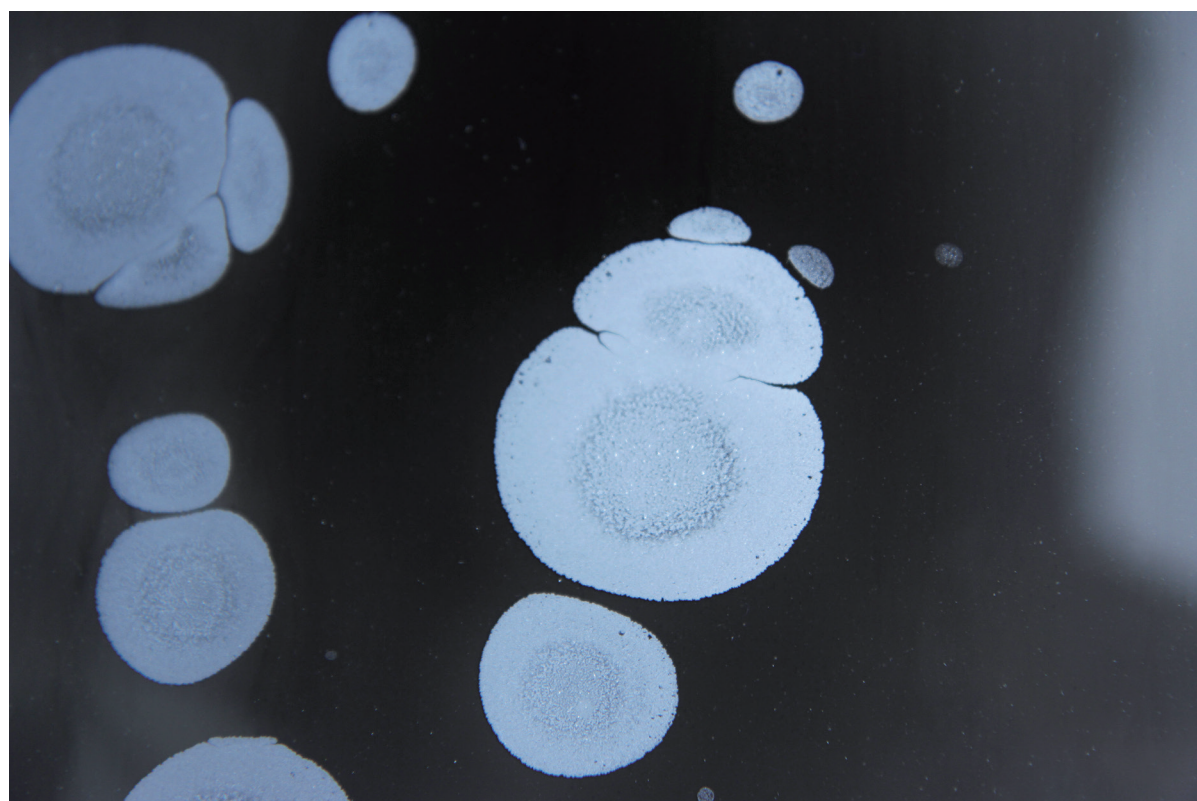


Fig 32

Ralph Grimm *Radiolaria shells* (120x)
photomicrography image 2012
Image courtesy Ralph Grimm

**Fig 33**

Miik Green xylem series - argyria14, (detail)
mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm, 2014
Photo: Ben Phillips

In the *Mysterium Coniunctionis*, Jung introduces the notion of resolution in opposition that the ouroboros presents, stating: 'This 'feed-back' process is at the same time a symbol of immortality, since it is said of the Ouroboros that he slays himself and brings himself to life, fertilizes himself and gives birth to himself. He symbolizes the One, who proceeds from the clash of opposites, and he therefore constitutes the secret of the prima materia which unquestionably stems from man's unconscious' (1977, 356).

Again we are confronted with a spiritual concept that points towards limbo: *is the moment at which the ouroboros swallows his tail an ever-presencing or eternal notion?* While we cannot fully comprehend the notion of the ouroboros, in its constant cyclic state its application to arts practice is made more tangible and perceptible. I view this as the point at which the work exists between states *and* outside of states rather than being caught in a feedback loop - a state between movement and immobility, between entropy and energy - in dialogic disarray. Syzygy materialises poetically as the tension between two states, and forms the basis for this exegesis - the premise of which is that in this particular arrangement unconcealment is able to occur. Such a state exists between water and pigment, as the ink droplets are captured in dispersion in a glass or in situations as diverse as the cryogenic suspension of life.

In the 1980s motion picture *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* Harrison Ford's character Hans Solo was fictionally encased in 'carbonite'. Frozen in situ, Solo was paused in resistant movement until rescued, between soma and stone, in sarcoid stasis. Syzygy then *is* the action in the dialogic space, suspended movement between bodies.

open-close

glinting

bright on this brink, stepping

sideways into lipid-lined

planic dioramas

presently

glossily glistening glowing

coruscant sheen pulsates

reflected perspected

partial pull spatial pool

push

captivating/submersed

submerged

submersed/captivated

pulled

slick sticky,

liquid embrace, sucking

soft vacuum, intake

elasticity, plasticity

thickness, enveloping darkness developing

warping and wrapping

into a nullifying

open

close

3.3 DISEQUILIBRIUM: FROM LIMBO TO LIGHT

This subchapter concludes the exegesis - the theme of resistance culminating in limbo-as-essencing, or endurance of a work of art; a process realised through the aforementioned resistive modes. This is art that renders visible in order to reveal, art which utilises opposing forces, exposing an event horizon which contains the potentiality of Cocteau's mirror. For 19th century French artist/poet Jean Cocteau, the mirror symbolised a conduit to the afterlife or underworld. In the 1932 movie *The Blood of a Poet* it transports him bodily between earth and Hades, the mirror becoming a delineator between two states: a plane of possibility. Limbo becomes an active tension existing between bodies, or the liminal space between conflicting forces: the interplay of opposition in arts practice. It should be envisaged as a site of imperceptible resistance rather than a state of balance. It is set in action, evidencing vitality in lethargy. At the heart of these unlike combinations, disequilibrium forces participate in a waiting process, bound in limbo.

The exegesis proposes that limbo is similar to an intercessional site, existing as an in-between or non-space. It is a purgatorial state where time and space are suspended in an unknown intermediary zone within two extremes. This idea is, in turn, relatable to the physical aspect of a studio practice where materials such as paint or pigment in a liquid or flux-state pass into, or through, a transformative stage: into limbo, into light. It is past and pre-action, located on either side of syzygy, and set between bodies. If syzygy is the *action-inside*, then limbo should be regarded as a transitional site: the waiting room where newborns are welcomed, or an individual is informed of a loved one's passing. The airport similarly depicts this notion of both arrival and departure, with its equal possibility of ascent or descent. If syzygy is the action-of-making, the actualising of artistic activity, then limbo is the *actualised*, materialised in the completed artwork.

This stage follows those previously discussed (suspension and transformation, for instance), yet remains sealed, maintained within a state of inertia that engages the viewer in a prolonged exchange. Limbo is the encapsulation-state of structures trapped in glass-like potentiality. Light is refracted and reflected through and by the metamorphic skin, illuminating internal structures, detailed by the transformed inks and resin. These now-static microforms hang emergent throughout this conflict, frozen within layers of clear product. Their resistant actions are on display; signifiers of past movement, they remain posed in latent possibility. This process both reveals the futility of a life blind to decay, and simultaneously acknowledges the notion that deterioration is integral to regeneration and renewal. This is an approach to arts practice in which terms such as together/apart, syzygy

and tension seem more appropriate than 'integrated' 'hybrid' or 'compatible'; Sites where tension exists are embraced - presenting a framework, a cyclicity of ideas that generate new meanings. One finishes and starts at the very same moment - origin found in conclusion, in continual, resistant dialogue.

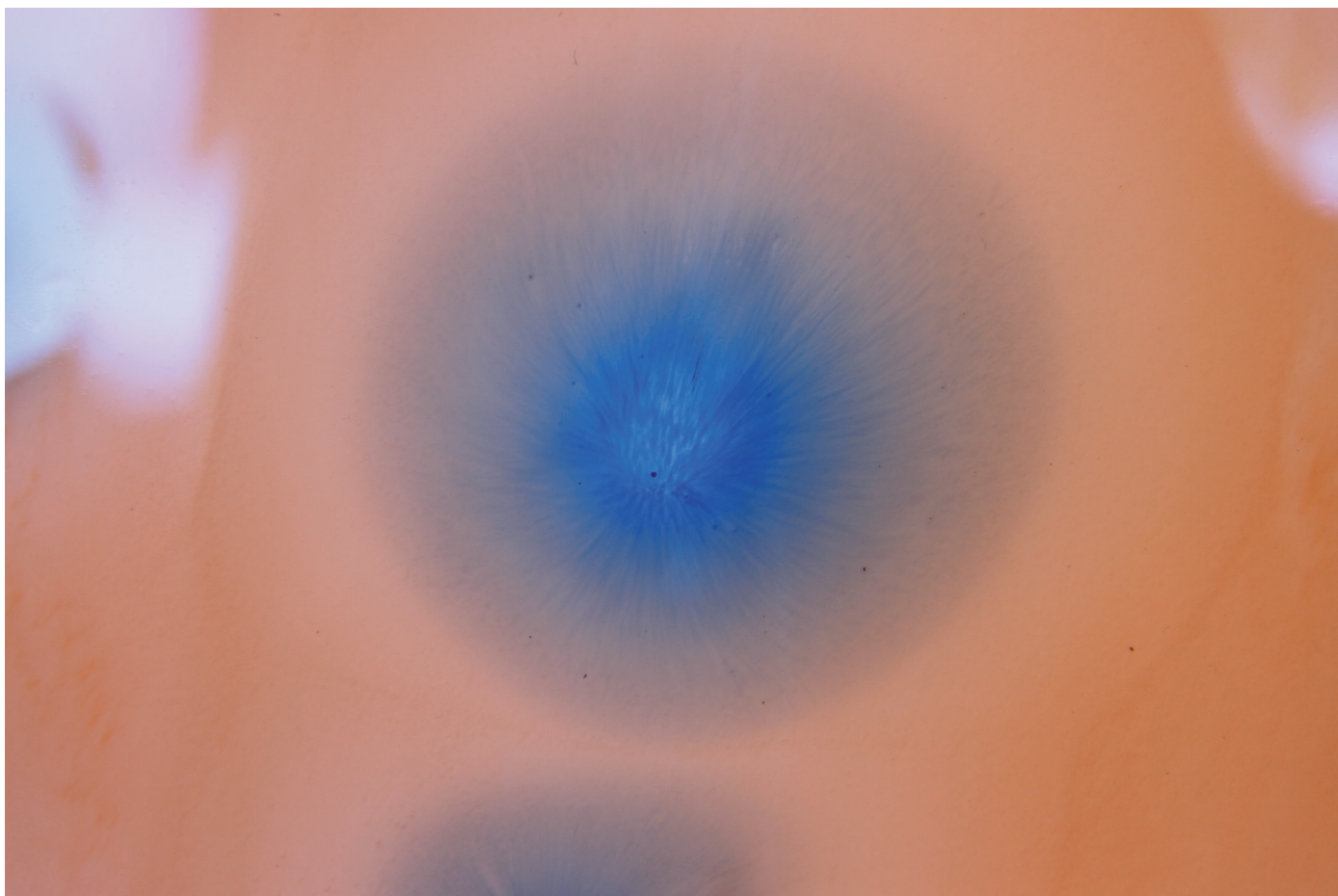


Fig 34

Miik Green xylem series – terfesia 14 (detail)
mixed media on aluminium 108 x 108cm 2014
Photo: Ben Phillips

Terfesia14 (Fig. 34) shows a spotting, spreading colouration within a field of liquid-orange gloss. These forms appear as inner and outer contusions, as receding or emerging splotches, either benign or malignant. This evident ambiguity references an interior and exterior geography that transposes the cellular with the atmospheric. Linking the surface-markings to those within, these Cartesian structures appear both as bodily anomalies and the perfection of cellular consistency. They manifest here as the visible raised blotches of the tumour, welt or bruise, yet also reference the unseen; the bacterial, the pathogenic, or a viral infection. While the image appears blurry or slightly out of focus, it contains, on further investigation, tightly radiating groups of colour. These forms contrast the liquid repulsion of orange uniformity; physical separations evidenced in the island-like structures. In freezing or capturing these fossil-like forms, the paintings speak of life or/and the afterlife; the spiritual glimpsed through this portal. In these between-spaces, emergent details pulse and retract in a state of possibility, benign microforms now becoming the viral or pathogenic.

These artworks contain the energy and vitality of blood cells pulsing through the body, yet acknowledge the systems that both support and suppress life (dynamic arrangements which are no more than the sum of their parts). Perceiving entropic potential within the system, these works allude to a cyclic model that recognises the light beyond the dark. Limbo fluctuates around resistive modes as an in-between state. In visualising this position, we draw again on theories as diverse as Bakhtinian dialogism, Heideggerian *essencing* and Lyotard's *différend*.

Limbo, according to Bakhtin, is revealed firstly in its fundamental incompatibilities; in an inability of bodies to reach resolution. This aligns with Lyotard's *différend*, which proposes fundamental and immediate irresolution - no traditional resolution, no end, and no orthodox understanding between unlike parties. The very act of joining disparate elements dictates that traditional integration is improbable. This is not an incompleteness synonymous with 'unfinished', as it is through this very productive resistance that we see these combinations as finalised, complete in their incompatibility. Finally, Heidegger's *essencing* (drawn from the German word *Wesen*) discusses a permanence that endures, a limbo-like state.

The images within my works emerge in great detail; captured, an encapsulation of motion and form – the essence. This limbo-state is active, remaining tense

while enduring in an incomplete, unfinished and unresolved capacity. It is action better described as an *unending pause* rather than a resolution (this notion of pausing indicating that work is still to be completed, meaning to be produced). So, like the ouroboros, the cyclic symbol of rebirth, we have encompassed the spectrum of art-making to arts practice, and finally arrived at a state of limbo, albeit one with an inconclusive conclusion. In returning to the origin, the point of repetition becomes a site of revolution. With these propositions in mind, we might pose questions such as: 'when is a work of art complete?' Or 'how does the artist react to the cyclic nature of arts practice?'

Limbo then is cyclic, as concepts become points in a cycle, positions nearing completion of revolution, either side of action. It is either devolving in the entropic manner that artist Robert Smithson envisages, or in the self sustaining, self-recycling circuit. It is tipped beyond equilibrium, towards a new beginning. This is the curare wearing off, the patient awakening, recovering - the body breathing again, suspended in a dreamlike state. It restores animation (though not full function) to the patient.

Limbo is the resonance in resistance that exists between infection and immunity - the point at which the artist demonstrates resilience: post and prior-syzygy of action transfer. It is analogous to the chrysalis; that entity between caterpillar and butterfly, neither one nor the other, but both and neither, emerging from the cocoon transformed. It has survived the struggle, and in limbo becomes transformed through transition. Limbo sees a journey commence not towards a destination, or traversing from point to point, but as a moving-between in stationary-flux.



Fig 35

Robert Smithson *Spiral Jetty*
 Installation in Rozel Point Utah 1970
 Photo: George Steinmetz

Smithson used landscape interventions with entropic rather than cyclic systems in mind. In works such as *Spiral Jetty* (Fig.35) (1970) or *Asphalt Rundown* (1969), Smithson manipulated geological matter and industrial material, exemplifying the inherent destruction seen in creation. *Spiral Jetty* is an iconic earthwork situated in the Great Salt Lake, Utah. Assembled from rocks, salt and mud, the work turns inward, coiling towards a central point. It is a monument to the flaw of the system: whilst appearing ordered it is simultaneously chaotic, framing the uncontrolled forces of nature in an unsustainable loop. The artist plays with polemic concepts of growth and collapse, living and dying. His works highlight the way we view, and interact with, the structures around us. Glimpsed in Smithson's entropic vision, *composing* and *composting* become contradictory elements in traction. To compose is to build, to add, towards a composition, while composting is deterioration, a breaking down towards separation. Both concepts are states, oscillating points set in motion/rotation. In their physical manifestations, growth emerges from decay, organisms eventually disintegrating and superseding one another.

LIFE IS ONLY A SHORT EPISODE BETWEEN TWO ETERNITIES OF DEATH...
EVEN IN THIS EPISODE, CONSCIOUS THOUGHT HAS LASTED AND WILL
LAST ONLY A MOMENT. THOUGHT IS ONLY A GLEAM IN THE MIDST OF A
LONG NIGHT. BUT IT IS THIS GLEAM WHICH IS EVERYTHING¹²

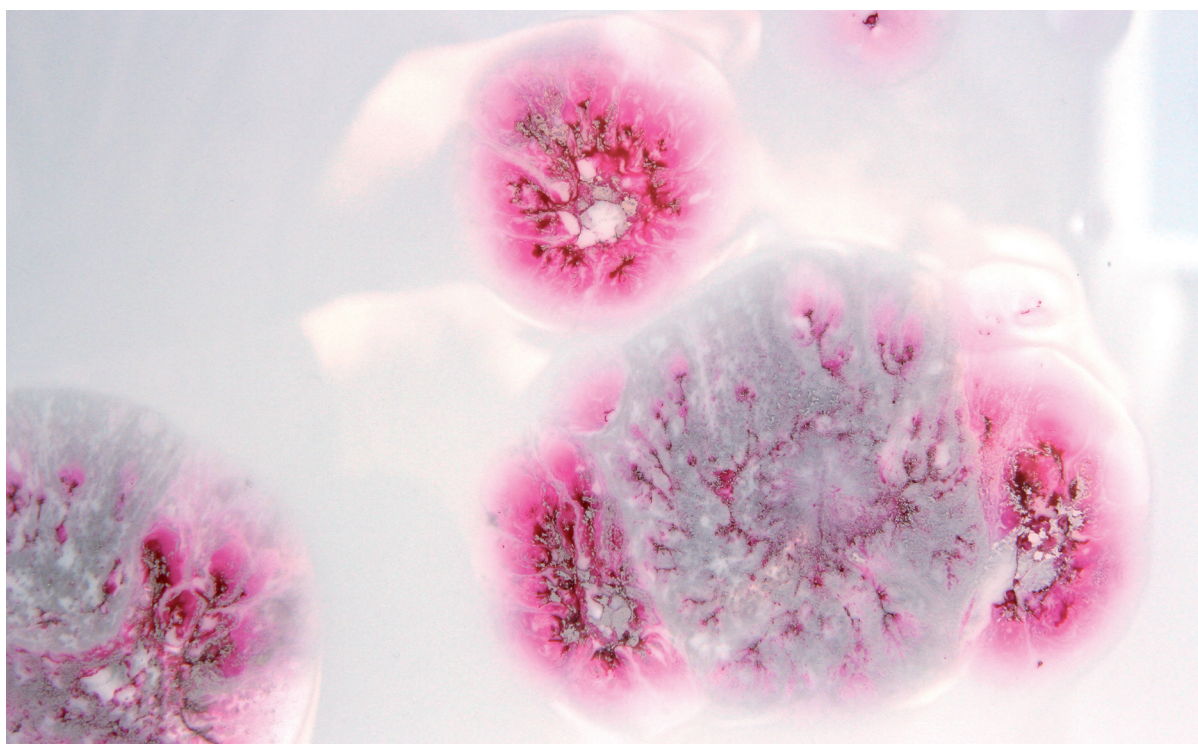
HENRI POINCARÉ

What Smithson perceives in socio-political systems surmounts to an organised futility, a cyclic descent towards energies expending. This breakdown is reflected in his installations, large land artworks that slowly break down and submit to the same entropic laws that originally allowed them to be present; a futility he nonetheless embraces. The otiose undertaking of resistance here as expended effort is necessary: ultimately the process points to a greater breakdown, that of organisations as a whole. Smithson sees an Ecclesiastic hopelessness in these systems, yet chooses to respond as the artist, the objective onlooker. He looks towards the inevitable collapse wherein meaning and structures emerge anew through deterioration, surmising: 'So you have this stalemate and I would say that's part of the clashing aspect of the entropic tendency, in other words two irreconcilable situations hopelessly going over the same waterfall' (1971, 307).

Similarly, life's gleam is seen in limbo, an in-between-space where a similar state of awareness is evident, yet set in tension. *On either side of life, there is death, and while a limbo-state may be achieved in death, could it also possibly denote a pre-life state?* While Lyotard may not refer to limbo in terms of suspension, he highlights its fundamental incompatibilities as precursors of the limbo-state where unlike conversations clash and meaning is created. Discussing these polemic notions, artist/writers Sonal Jain and Mriganka Madhukailya state:

The contrast Lyotard draws here is between definite or determined events and objects versus the indefinite happening of events and undetermined objects of which we are not ordinarily aware. Painters like Newman and other innovators within aesthetic modernism- e.g. Cezanne, Braque, Picasso, Klee, Malevich, Kandinsky, abstract expressionists, minimalists etc-attempt, in different ways, to evoke this hidden or obscured dimension of time and awareness, the between-space (2004).

¹² Poincaré, Henri. *The Value of Science* eBooks@Adelaide The University of Adelaide Library. P 15.

**Fig 36**

Miik Green (detail) *xylem series - hoescht4*
 mixed media on aluminium, 108 x 108cm 2014
 Photo: Ben Phillips

Here the contrast is likened to limbo, and is described in resistive terms; an incompatible dialogue to be rendered visible by the artist. Again we return to a Deleuzian notion of forces, of *unconcealment* in arts practice. In a statement echoing this premise Jain and Madhukaillya note:

It happens within a live context, a happening event rather than representing specific objects or definite events in a representational manner. Within modern Western culture, imbued with the ideals of Enlightenment reason and scientific rationalism, we tend to foreground technical procedures, definite results, and determined outcomes. What these artistic innovators within the avant-garde (advanced guard) have done is to foreground the more mysterious, ineffable, dimension of our experience, the indeterminate happening of events in time, memory, and experience (2004).

Here the artist's role is that of revealer, a facilitator in unveiling hidden forces.

Paintings such as the detail in *hoescht4* (Fig. 36) embody this dialogic potential: from a distance the imagery functions to delineate forms, bunches or blossoms of colour, petals in (de)formation. Close proximity to the work, however, reveals the intimacy of this dispersion, the particles receding in light and space. Composition is caught transitioning from material demarcations to a dispersion that hints at the immaterial nature of original matter. Within this translucent plane, the viewer may see objects as varied as decaying fruit, brain folds or a nebulous vista, and while the painting contains the potential for further exchange through controlled unpredictability, it remains reliant on two parties that interact. This is the site for establishing a continual exchange, where meaning is produced through resistant interaction and made physical, manifesting within works of art. In terms of limbo, it functions between meanings, establishes dichotomies and catalyses the clash.

Conclusions: The culmination of my conceptual research and creative production ... the exegesis and the artwork ... comprise an original contribution to new knowledge with broad implications and specific applications significant to both practice and practitioner.

The key resistive concepts of disequilibrium, syzygy, and limbo become modes of resistance integral to transformation and allow the possibility for exchange. In this manner, the artist facilitates a dialogue of *unlike interaction* that negotiates creation and control while embracing an alternate mode of making. Linking studio practice (doing) to the challenges faced by the artist beyond the studio (being), a discourse is set in motion with the potential to influence contemporary visual arts practice.

Firstly, resistance offers a unique premise for the practicing artist, their societal role, and contribution to contemporary arts practice in that it allows for another iteration to develop. Myriad forms of resistance culminate in the process of maintaining the syzygetical stance required for creation and revelation; an arrangement that is reliant on tension. This shifts the focus beyond a limited view of resistance that places it solely between two bodies; it moves outward, framing a panorama of the three bodies as tension centrally manifest.

In adopting this viewpoint, and approaching arts practice accordingly, the artist is able to view conflict or resistance as the catalyst for a dynamic, engaging relationship.

These ideas are activated when the artist extends their practice into the realm of public art, where the employment of a syzygetic lens might serve to reveal associated political, social or commercial agendas. In the same manner, the combination of heterogeneous resources might prompt an unveiling process that yields unexpected or significant results. It is in these disequilibrating patterns permeating my paintings I draw from the (aforementioned) Deleuzian concept of unseen forces. It is here, and through tension in a studio practice, that conflict, resistance, and opposition are seen as revelatory modes.

Secondly, it aims to stimulate a new approach to the field of creative production, where resistance, tension and conflict become modes for revealing. In these unlike arrangements, we see the motionless activity of limbo. The phrase 'In limbo' conjures up timelessness, a liminality, or a period of extended waiting or between-space. It is in this between-state of transition that cycles change: liquids solidify, and solids deteriorate. For the visual artist it is about allowing for the unplanned, the unexpected, or the unnatural; a concept relevant both inside and outside of the studio confines. In this manner of art-making, the creator is released from dialectic operation/oppression, and is able to depose the preconceived, planned and expected.

In arts practice, and through a new awareness, the practitioner becomes increasingly adept at negotiating the socio-political complexities that surround artistic expectation. It allows for a re-engagement with dialogic conversation, a space in which expectations may not necessarily be met, or traditional resolutions reached. It favours processes that feature incompatibility and utilises resistive practices as meaning-producing methodologies.

**THE OUROBOROS IS NOT BITING ITS TAIL OFF IN AN ACT
OF SELF-DESTRUCTION BUT RATHER IS CONSUMING IT TO
CREATE THE ENERGY FOR RESURRECTION
– A CONTINUOUS CYCLE OF LIFE AND DEATH¹³
DUANE JSAARI**

¹³ Jsaari, Duane. 2012, November 21. "More About the Ouroboros" *Living and Alchemical Life*. <http://ouroboroscycle.com/blog/?cat=9>.

liminal

sunlit?

states

two - between in and out

between struggle and lassitude

letting-go

murmurs and music

sleep - chaotic,

of out and into slipping

just a

darkness

nothing-ness

darkness

a just

slipping into and out of

balancing, swaying, suspended

between mediation and meditation

to meditate (and separated by that fine line)

to mediate

some traverse it easily

to pause, to edge backward

just behind it,

enjoying the idea

of ideas

of focus with no focus

a travelling – destinationless -

...until...

the future starts slow,

as reminders tingle

edging back, nudging

chaotic - sleep

music and murmurs

letting-go

lassitude and struggle between

out and in between - two

states

fluorescent-lit

prerelease

Consciously shifting into

dislocating whiteness

before the light engulfed you.

Breathe out – now,

concentrate and evaporate - then

to the aperture,

don't step back from it

tapping, persisting

jostling, pushing

shouting, screaming

in self rescue, grabbing at air

arms out

breathing fast and dropping

dropping back between

grabbing at thoughts

and, as the spinning top slows

to just stay, to hold on,

as the heart will surely fail

hold onto those singular points

those flashes that delineate

star markers to guide,

grab and grasp

until released

in relief

We have discussed the cyclicity of arts practice in terms of suspension, disequilibrium and dialogism, however limbo occupies a unique domain in this discussion. It is situated between bodies and states of being. Utilising limbo in this manner draws us to the central notion of inactivity in action while encompassing a wider debate of oppositional forces that arise as a result – between and around, enveloping and continuing. In this arrangement, the symbolic ouroboros can be likened to Derrida's concept of Thoth, the Egyptian god of the afterlife. As Derrida states: 'This god of resurrection is less interested in life and death than in death as a repetition of life and life as a rehearsal for death, in the awakening of life and in the recommencement of death' (2004, 93). Each of Thoth's actions, he asserts, is defined by such 'unstable ambivalence'. The common thread running through limbo, for instance, can be envisaged in Thoth as static tension held between states. This builds on the premise established in previous chapters of this exegesis: namely that there is a relevance between states, whether relational, social or political; one dependant on their transitional nature. Dialogue between them is visible, revealed in action. Where syzygy presents the active third party in the centrality of tension, limbo places this activity within a system of continuation that pauses, revolves and repeats.

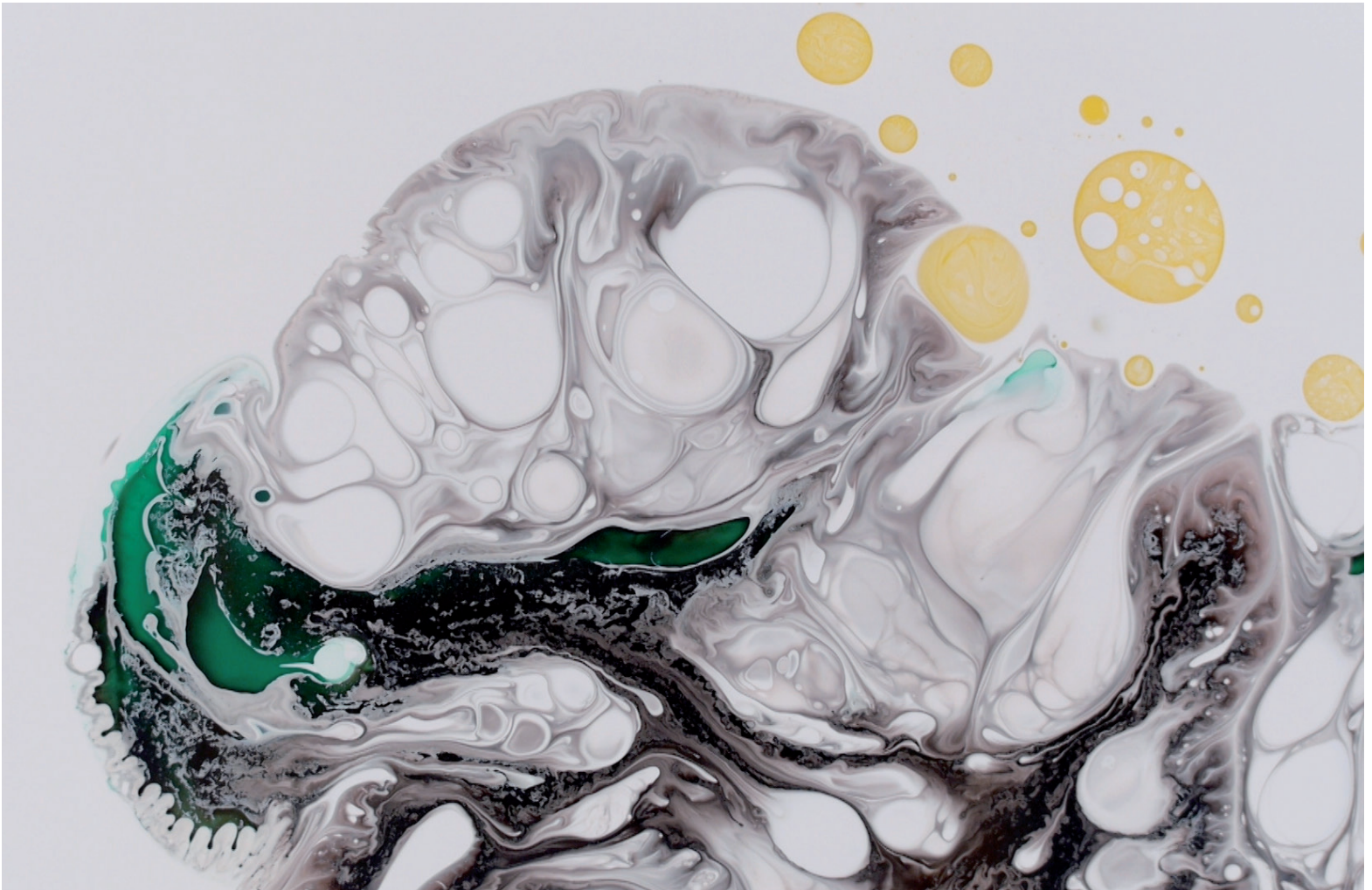
Limbo leads on from the space syzygy established between disequilibrium and equilibrium, amidst the static and fluctuating, a pivotal event between commencement and completion. Unlike an initial or final instance, it is transitional, akin to the ball traversing an arc. It is captured momentarily, without movement, between and outside definition: a zenith encompassing neither and both descriptors simultaneously. In limbo is the unspent potential of return, of turning back towards the primary site. It is comparable to the thrown object suspended in mid-air; poised for descent, making its return towards earth. This apogee-state is paused-active, but not in the same way that we have discussed suspense, which could be described as paused-action. Unlike photography, this goes beyond simple capture; it moves us towards the cyclic, re-engages us with the past, and re-imagines discourse through disequilibrium. In the studio, this represents a shift from the artist's role as maker to facilitator, where materials combine, together/apart. In practice this symbolises a shift from traditional modes of exchange that favour outcome or result over intent and interaction. The significance of this proposal lies in its awareness of tension, whether that is manifest in the processes behind art production or within the discourse surrounding arts practice. In perceiving tension, we are empowered to decide with clarity, to proceed in recognition, and to comprehend creative processes in all their complexity. The cultural implications of this idea lie in a dialogic re-imagining and re-awareness of the arrangements that surround us, as well as our responses to these systems.

Where cultural descriptors such as the 'other' exist today, they act as markers, creating division, promoting separation. Denoting the strange, the unusual, and the opposite, the other represents, as postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha notes, an 'articulation of difference' (1983, p. 19). The idea of conformity, sameness and placed expectation sit within a rubric that is dialectic and static (read 'us' and 'them'). Languageing this idea in dialogic terms, 'us' and 'them' become 'we,' and we are able to see the self in the other. These are the cultural and social ideas that the artist is then open to actively engage with, both in the world and in arts practice. These constructs come into play as work leaves the studio and practice extends into the world (where the work is placed and how it is perceived, for example, is in connected-disconnectedness). These are interactions that, filtered through Bakhtin's dialogic and established through Lyotard's *différend*, pave the way for unlike exchange, one that is necessarily yoked-apart as opposed to yoked-together.

In recognising this resistance, or resistant union, the artist is freed: at liberty to push against, embrace, or negotiate this tension in all its analogous forms; to shift opinions, subvert outcomes or challenge preconditions. Accordingly, they are released from expectations regarding the work (some self-imposed); emancipated from the idea that it must contain an 'ideal resolution'.

While this exegesis concludes inconclusively, the research points to, presents and questions the roles, functions and strategies of contemporary art, from practice through to making.

The artist's responsibility is not to provide answers but to cultivate meaning, to offer new perspectives for thought: it is the role of the artist to elucidate, not to validate. In this stepping-aside, there is a lessening-of-control and a moving towards the chaos of clashing opposition. This clashing opposition is the place in which the artist envisions resistance in all forms, as well as its transformative possibility. This energy exchange disregards expected, orthodox union, and is concerned solely with the before and after action of syzygy. It is a site in continual transfer between flux and stasis, the visible and the invisible.

**Fig 37**

Miik Green/Chad Peacock *shifting states: mikros kosmos*
still from video projection 2014

Here, the action of transformation is at the heart of this cyclic revolution; revealed in resistance. It is a responsive feedback loop in which new meaning is continually produced, a dialogic encounter between life and death, light and dark, the constant source of renewal and regeneration. This limbo is a state that artists and arts practice can evolve from and react within; where opposing forces, struggle and resistance become facilitators of transformation. This is the dancer's repose, the musician's refrain, and the artist's response. It is seen here in the arranging of exegetical enquiry alongside practical research, between writing and making, that *yoked-apart* releases and contains, frees and binds.

In arts practice, opposition initiates an ongoing dialogue, one that does not stop, but merely pauses: it essences, endures but never ceases. It is here that we glimpse the repetition of a cycle set in ouroborotic motion, where concepts rematerialise to inform a re-creation, and resistance acts as a revealing agent. Thus, in a closing that eschews finality, that places the beginning at the end (and vice versa), we return to the cycle, continuing as it does on its inexorable path, and anticipate further exchange.

AND WE - WE LIVE HALF IN THE DAYTIME, AND
WE - WE LIVE HALF AT NIGHT¹⁴
THE XX

In arts practice, opposition initiates an ongoing dialogue - one that never stops, only pauses: it essences, endures but never ceases. It is a place where concepts rematerialise to inform a re-creation, and resistance acts as a revealing agent. In a closing that is simultaneously a beginning, the cycle continues. This study has intentionally avoided finality; has sought to enact an indefinitely deferred ending. There exists, now, a space for external input, for an alternative voice.

Yours.

¹⁴ Croft, Romy, Oliver Sim, Baria Qureshi and James Smith (The XX). 2009. VCR. Copyright: Universal Music Publishing Ltd.

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Green, Miik. 2015. 'Syzygy and the Cyclic Nature of Arts Practice' *International Journal Arts Theory and History*, Volume 10, Issue 2, pp.19-27.
Illinois: Common Ground Publishing

PUBLICATIONS/ CO-PUBLICATIONS

Green, Miik. 2015. 'Chaos, Order and Disequilibrium' *The International Journal of Social, Political and Community Agendas in the Arts*, Volume 10, Issue 1, pp.13-23.
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Green, Miik. 2014. 'Disquiet in Arts Practice: Resistance, Conflict and Antagonism' *Cactaceae Journal*. Perth: Benchpress.

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Green, Miik. 2014. "Syzygy: Arts Practice and Interdisciplinarity" Paper presented at the Ninth International Conference on the Arts in Society, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy 25 – 27th June 2014. <http://artsinsociety.com/the-conference-2014/program-and-events/schedule-of-sessions>.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

Green, Miik. 2013. "Chaos, Order and Arts Practice" Paper presented at the Eighth International Conference on the Arts in Society, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary 24 – 26th June 2013. http://artsinsociety.com/_uploads/Arts_Program.pdf.

RESEARCH – SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Green, Miik. 2013. "Uncommon Frontiers: Resistance and Equilibrium in Arts Practice" Paper presented at Interdiscipline: AAANZ Conference, Victoria College of the Arts, Melbourne Australia 7 – 9th December 2013. http://aaanz.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/AAANZ_webversion2.pdf.

CREATIVE WORKS

Green, Miik and Chad Peacock. 2014: *shifting states: mikros kosmos*, video projection 6:04 mins.

Green, Miik with Lucinda Coleman, Johannes Luebbbers, Katie Chown and Charity Ng, 2014: *Untitled7 (performance)*. For InConversation, Spectrum gallery, Edith Cowan University, 9th October 2014.

Green, Miik and Brad Ladyman. 2013: *Untitled 312 (sculptural installation)* rolled and brushed aluminium tubing, 4 x 5 x 15m. Completed February 2013, Esperance Residential College, Esperance, Western Australia.

Green, Miik and Brad Ladyman. 2012. *BHP Orange213 (three-ton suspended sculpture)* rolled aluminium tubing, auto paint, 10 x 9 x 8m. Installed March 2012, BHP Billiton foyer, 125 St Georges Tce, Perth, Western Australia.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2014: *LIMBO* Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne.

2013: *SPILOVER* Linton & Kay Galleries, Perth.

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2014: *BETA BLOCKER*, SoDA14 Exhibition John Curtin Gallery (WA), Cossack Art Prize: invited artist (WA), *SEDIMENTATION* Linton and Kay (WA) Victoria Park Art Award: invited artist (WA), ArtGeo Award (WA), Guildford Grammar Art Prize (WA).

2013: *Aesthetica Art Prize Exhibition* York (UK), Hazelhurst Award (NSW), St Hilda's Art Fair (WA), St John of God Hospital Art Prize (WA) Guildford Grammar Exhibition (WA).

2012: *Celebrate* Linton & Kay Galleries (WA) Form, Process, Materiality Melody Smith Gallery (WA).

RECENT AWARDS

2014: Recipient of Artflight Grant through Department of Culture and the Arts, WA.

2013: Winner of the Greg Combie Humanities Research Award, Curtin University.

Adams, Lyndall, Renée Newman-Storen & Christopher Kueh, 2014. *InConversation* catalogue.
Perth: Pilpel Print.

Rule, Jessica. 2014. "Collectors' Edition". Habitat liftout, The West Australian, August 15.

Coleman, Lucinda. 2013, August. "Behind the Scenes" Lucid Blog.
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Green, Miik, 2013. Exhibition catalogue for *SPILLOVER*. Perth: Bicubic. ISBN: 978-0-646-90132-9.

2014. Associate editor of The International Journal of New Media, Technology, and the Arts.

Associate editor of The International Journal of Social, Political and Community Agendas in
the Arts. Current Artsource Board Member.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

RELATED AFFILIATIONS
