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# Gleams of light: evolving knowledge in writing creative arts doctorates

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# Gleams of light: evolving knowledge in writing creative arts doctorates

## **Abstract**

From the mid-1980s to the present, art schools have embedded themselves within university structures in Australia. Around 35 universities now offer research degrees in creative arts (Baker and Buckley, 2009). Accompanying this development, the teaching of art practice and theory has followed the humanities in embracing philosophies of semiotics and post-structuralism from Europe and America through the lenses of feminism and postcolonialism.

## **Keywords**

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**Diana Wood Conroy “Gleams of light: Evolving knowledge in writing creative doctorates”. Louise Ravelli, Brian Paltridge, Sue Starfield (eds) *Doctoral Writing in the Creative and Performing Arts: the researcher/practitioner nexus* (Libri, UK) 2014, 319-336.**

From the mid-1980s to the present, art schools have embedded themselves within university structures in Australia. Around 35 universities now offer research degrees in creative arts (Baker and Buckley, 2009). Accompanying this development, the teaching of art practice and theory has followed the humanities in embracing philosophies of semiotics and post-structuralism from Europe and America through the lenses of feminism and postcolonialism. At the same time, exhibitions such as the Sydney Biennale (since 1979) and the Asia-Pacific Triennale in Brisbane (since 1993) have allowed a new familiarity with international movements in countries beyond the centres of Paris, London and New York. In this crucial thirty years, Indigenous arts in Australia have moved from a museum context to penetrate major galleries and to enchant international audiences. This whirlwind of evolving parameters in art has changed not only the writing of art theory but also the voice of the artist. Doctoral candidates since the late 1990s have worked in seminars with international students from non-English speaking backgrounds from China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia and Iraq, permitting a transnational approach to research. Increasingly the artist as doctoral candidate has become not only the subject of critical analysis, but also the author presenting his or her work through a process of self-reflexivity that has been vital to the new thinking, especially in feminist writings of subjectivity such as those described by Sidonie Smith (c.1993). This chapter explores the idea of a new kind of “canon” emerging through the experimental research and writing of creative

doctorates in Australia.

To state the obvious: because the writing of practice-based doctorates happens within the institutional framework of the university, candidates are subject to the academic rigour applied to all PhDs. It is not “creative writing”: there are structures and conventions to observe, such as word length and format. Creative arts doctorates in the intellectual space of the university have had to contend with the perception of creative arts research as grounded in intuition and feeling through the necessity of the use of the “first person” to discuss practice. Rather than denying this often inflammatory notion of “intuition”, I would like to extend and develop it as a crucial aspect of visual and performance disciplines.

But first, to understand where we are now in Australia it is helpful to trace the relatively short time span in the development of the creative arts doctorate. Janis Jefferies (Goldsmiths College, London) pointed out in 2010 that the practitioner-theorist came to the fore only during the 1980s, an era in which scripto-visual/text and image production dominated debates within the studio and the academy.<sup>i</sup> In 1984 at the University of Wollongong in New South Wales the University Senate endorsed an entirely new Doctor of Creative Arts degree for arts practitioners. Nicholas Krauth describes the enormity of such an innovation in the university system at the time (Krauth, 2011). Devised by Professor Edward Cowie of the freshly established School of Creative Arts, it put forward a model where exhibitions and performances in visual arts, music and drama could be assessed as research, together with a thesis. The degree was entirely research-based, with no course work, and was judged equivalent to the conventional PhD.<sup>ii</sup> The first graduates were all mature practitioners of high standing in the arts, such as the painter Peter Shepherd (thesis entitled *More than the*

*portrait: the intangible with the immediately visible as a painter interprets his subject*, 1989); Irene Amos (thesis *Relationship to tradition: an investigation of the process from invention to communication*, 1989); installation sculptor and sound artist Joan Brassil (thesis *The Poetic Vision*, 1991) and sculptor from Holland Jose Aertes (*A touch of loneliness: from loneliness, emptiness and silence to essence*, 1992).

Since I began supervising creative arts doctorates at the University of Wollongong in 1998 (after graduating myself in 1996) I have been involved, like many colleagues, in the effort to explain creative arts research as bearing original knowledge to the mainstream of academic research, that is, to university research committees composed of individuals from the faculties of Arts, Law, Engineering, Informatics, Science, Education, Health Sciences and Medicine. These are the battlegrounds for attaining doctoral scholarships in competition with other areas, scholarships that pay fees and living expenses. Scholarships are essential for the transmission of knowledge, for training the next round of creative arts academics and arts professionals across the wider society.

What stands out when moving from faculty to faculty (in broad processes of assessment in promotion rounds or sitting on appointment committees) is the necessity for discipline specific doctoral writing, even when theories from philosophy, anthropology or literature may contribute to the visual and performing arts research. Exegetical writing about creative work is very testing because of the expectation and understanding of the place of subjectivity within the wider university. The “first person” is still a radical space even when supported by a critical context of reference and scholarship. Rather than concealing what Vice Chancellor Gerard Sutton used to call “the soul” in arts practice, the best writing in creative arts

doctorates does embrace what could be called a “critical subjectivity”, placing the body of work in context, allowing affect and feeling through a variety of strategies. The “first person” may intersect with sections in the “third person”. Highlighting the intrinsic direction of the particular practice by staging its materials and objectives within the specific discipline (e.g. textiles, sculpture, photography) allows the creative arts doctorate to compare favourably to long-established PhD research in, say, Geoscience or Archaeology. Scientists and archaeologists want to comprehend creative arts doctorates as speaking to a distinctive realm of knowledge with its own exacting standards. They assume that the best research will intersect with the crucial ideas within a discipline. It is understood that intuition and sensory experience may be central to this idiosyncratic arena of creative arts but the understanding of this works best when situated in the context of a particular discipline. In a recent forum at UOW the “citation” science disciplines and the “peer reviewed” humanities disciplines were compared in terms of the Excellence in Research Australia rankings (ERA). The Humanities were asked to give defined benchmarks in order to clarify research quality and achieve the higher rankings of science disciplines. Quantifying research for its greatest strategic reach is the current university position and can be alarming and challenging to experimental contemporary arts.

Valuable studies (some noted by Janis Jefferies listed above) have highlighted the parameters of “practice as research”, such as Paul Carter’s book *Material Thinking* in which he emphasised the intellectual calibre of art works by Australian artists. James Elkins provided examples of what he called “visual literacy” which acts as a counter weight in its complexity and range to textual description and analysis (Elkins 2008 1-2). Supervisors such as Elizabeth Grierson<sup>iii</sup> have taken to writing overviews of the creative doctorate to give lucid and practical suggestions not only in organising

content but also to building a coherent and articulate text. The issue of writing is linked inexorably in the minds of both supervisor and candidate to the nature of supervision itself. It is the supervisor who oversees the birth of writing in artists who may have written little until this point, in a process that is comparable to the task of a midwife. The issue of writing for candidates also attaches ultimately to examination, which is the object and aim of the exercise.<sup>iv</sup> The end purpose of doctoral writing is to be examined by experts, who need to see that the research question, the body of work, is linked to the thread of an argument throughout the supporting text. These examiners are for the most part academics engaged actively in ERA or Australian Research Council (ARC) assessments and review. Creative arts examiners, just like examiners in the sciences, want the research of creative doctorates to be both specific in focus and an original contribution to knowledge in the overall discipline, bringing us back to thinking about ensuring quality within the creative doctorate beyond the tenets of pedagogy.

After supervising to completion more than thirty doctorates and research masters (and seeing many others fade away before completion) I think I can say that there is a new form emerging, an experimental yet cogent and articulate doctorate that is comprehensible and acceptable across the academy – and yet there are difficulties. I found the difficulties located in myself as supervisor, as much as in the candidate, so that each supervision brings the necessity of listening to every glint of direction, being open to the emotional tenor in what is not said, as well as maintaining an intellectual detachment in bringing to bear wider ideas and contexts to the particular fiery feelings and vulnerability of practice. I am always aware that there is a certain element of non-literacy in artists: who like myself may think through images, not in abstract language, nor in sequences of texts. There is a reason why artists or performers with a

mature and well-recognised body of work find it difficult to write: their first recourse is their particular vocabulary of practice. Discursive thinking links ideas in writing in a way that may not appear logical to artists. So often what the postgraduate artist speaks and thinks is not in the text, although the ideas may sound coherent and persuasive in discussion. The action of making comes easily compared to the often agonising textual component. Many drop out of their research degrees through their inability to conceptualise in text. A vivid imagination does not interfere with coherent and articulate speech, but it may inhibit the learning process involved in obtaining an ease of writing.

As the ancient world, and current indigenous worlds know well, the spoken word does not really relate to the written word. “*Logos* in its spoken form is a living changing unique process of thought. It happens once and is unrecoverable” wrote Anne Carson (Carson, 1986, p. 132). She goes on to discuss Socrates speaking in Plato’s *Phaedrus*. Socrates is amazed that the written word is static and not interactive -:

Writing, *Phaedrus* has this strange power, quite like painting in fact; for the creatures in painting stand there like living beings, yet if you ask them anything they maintain a solemn silence. It is the same with written words. You might imagine they speak as if they were actually thinking something but if you want to find out about what they are saying and question them, they keep on giving one message eternally (cited in Carson, 1986, p. 132, *Phaedrus*, section 275 d-e).

This seeming fixity of text may seem deadening if it can’t be allied with the perceptive imagination, and I think this has been my constant challenge as a supervisor, to illuminate writing, to make writing as “intuitive” as practice, by using



perhaps, lateral strategies. (Interestingly Socrates related the same fixity to painted images, compared to the flow of movement and light in the perceived world.) Once the writer knows the craft of writing, said Socrates, the text will become like a living organism, “a live creature with a body of its own, not headless or footless but with middle and end fitted to one another and to the whole” (cited in Carson, 1986, p. 132, Phaedrus, section 264e).

It is striking that the word “writ/write” comes from an Old High German word *riz* meaning stroke or written character, implying an act of making (OED). One doctoral candidate was not able to write with any degree of fluency until he had unleashed a torrent of strokes and marks in blue pen onto the long interconnected pages of a concertina notebook as a simulacrum of “writing”. The “living text” is often grounded in the artist’s journal, drawings or notebooks. Like anthropologists working in the field, artists observe and experience with a heightened sensitivity in their given area. The anthropologist Michael Taussig pointed out the value of the fieldworker’s notebook as an alternate form of knowledge because it has “at least one foot grounded in sensuous immediacy” (2001, p.49). Another quality of what he calls “new thought” is highly physical and theatrical. “It is something that happened and continues to happen in your language and memories involving real people talking about other people in situ....” (p.51)

Here I want to highlight the strength and wonder of the artistic position and then show how inherently visual or performative faculties might translate into writing. Of central importance, as mentioned before, is the fact that the candidate is enmeshed in the larger issue of the place of creative arts within the academy. Doctoral research is the

cutting edge of new knowledge in any discipline of the university. How can we deal with intuition and feeling in an intellectual space? First, before looking at strategies to bring the text alive, it's useful to understand this strange business of the intuitive faculties that are so central to art practice. Discussions by Elizabeth Grosz (2004), Ruth Lorand (1999) and Charlotte de Mille (2011) reconsider the impact of Henri Bergson's early twentieth century ideas of the interaction between intellectual modes of enquiry with their scientifically measured time, and the faculty of intuition, which Bergson related to artistic perceptions and a felt, inner experience of time.

Ruth Lorand (1999, p. 401) wrote: "the concept of art serves for Bergson as a means of illustrating his brand of dualism across intellect and intuition. In this paper I reverse directions and examine Bergson's theory as a means of understanding art". She describes his belief that art was "paradoxical" in that it was unpredictable, yet imbued with a certain kind of order. Despite their duality, in some loose sense, there is an asymmetrical, negative interaction between the two orders of intuition and intellect: Lorand puts forward that "from intuition one can pass on to analysis, but not from analysis to intuition" (p.407). She argues that art demonstrates that the intuition is not only capable of operating on geometrical or intellectual orders, but also that the interaction between the orders is necessary as artwork involves both formal (intellectual) and intuitive invention across language and materials. Being an artefact, a work of art cannot be completely detached from and independent of intellectual thinking.

Stating that "Bergson claims that the two orders reflect the operation of the mind" (p.409), Lorand pointed out that this implied a bond between the two distinct orders, "It could not have been the *same* mind if its faculties were to operate independently

one of each other. The mind is able to move from intellectual order to intuitive order and back again; therefore the two orders cannot be entirely alienated” (p. 410). She goes on to discuss the necessity for an idea of “disorder” in comprehending art. “The fragmented, disordered chunks of experience initiate us to put them in order; each order answers different needs. Art offers new vital orders that consist of materials taken from our chaotic experience or from orders that no longer satisfy us” (p. 415).

In an earlier discussion of ideas about the aesthetic and the sensuous, Duke Madenfeld (1974-5) wrote that intuition for Bergson is a form of immediacy, and meant the kind of sympathy by which we place ourselves within an object in order to coincide with its inexpressibly vibrating qualities flowing in duration. He identified the aesthetic as an experience of entering into direct communion with reality itself and that art could “bring us into direct contact with sensuous immediacy” (p.10), the same phrase used by Taussig. Intuitive knowledge, Madenfeld thought, was “unmediated by any conceptualisations, is itself perfectly rational as a product of sensuous immediacy, widening a conception of rationality far beyond traditional boundaries”(p. 15).

Further reflections on the contemporary ambience of the creative doctorate come from Charlotte de Mille, who in 2011 used Virginia’s Woolf’s writing to explore intuitive processes in accordance with what she calls “the most thorough expositions of intuition as method, that of the philosopher Henri Bergson” (p. 371). De Mille arrives at the idea that the spark that ignites the process of art is material and physical sensation and therefore it is crucial for the art historian or writer to articulate art from within the experience of it. How can the writer, who may also be the artist, seek what

the artist does not say, what is intuitively enmeshed in the work? Is it possible to make a re-affirmation of immanent possibility in an artwork, of exploring the multiple referents beyond surface appearance? She points out that in Woolf's world "subject and object oscillate alarmingly in correspondence to shifts in the author's, narrator's, or reader's capacity for intuition" (p. 376). In Woolf's search for the new, the modern, she required a radically new method, not founded on rational analysis but rather in "a fluid psychology of intuition and empathy" (p. 377). De Mille's study identified "an intensely empathetic vision as the crux of intuitive perception, and re-negotiated a role for an experiential, sensation-based methodology which in its lack of self-interest nevertheless retains those prizes of disinterest and objectivity" (p. 384).

Another useful approach for self-reflexivity comes from the cultural theorist and critic Mieke Bal, in discussing the work of sculptor Louise Bourgeois. Bal says: "The concept 'autotopography' refers to autobiography while also distinguishing itself from the latter. It refers to a spatial, local, and situational "writing" of the self's life in visual art"(2002, p.184). She emphasises that what is most characteristic of the artist's work is its visual nature. The inherent visual nature of the artist, like the textual nature of the writer, relates itself to the wider patterns of the visual culture it inhabits.

It is often the case that contemporary art practice stretches the boundaries of genre. For example, Volume 1/3 of the dOCUMENTA catalogue includes 100 "documents" that accompanied the 2012 exhibition in Kassel, Germany. It illustrates a range of modes and the actual documents of research – the detailed notebooks of Walter Benjamin, the writings of the Norwegian tapestry weaver, Hannah Ryggen, and

recovered and battered archives from artists probing what the curator, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, calls the “striations” of art – all combine as ‘visual evidence’ for the way art comes to change perceptions through leaps and stabs in experiencing the world as it is. As with this catalogue, the creative practice doctorate sits comfortably in this company; it can be written in a variety of genres with the same longing to excavate meaning.

Having described the contemporary ambience of the creative doctorate, the next step here is to flesh out the idea with actual examples of inserting the individual artistic self into an institutional, scholarly context. Between 2010-2012, I co-ordinated an experimental seminar for a fast-track doctorate and supervised the group of eight mature artists with colleagues Dr Penny Harris, Associate Professor Brogan Bunt, Professors Sarah Miller and Amanda Lawson. The four men and four women were between the ages of 43 to 59 with a high level of attainment in their fields.<sup>v</sup> Their fields ranged across sculpture, photography, design, architecture, scenography, performance, sound and theatre. Three managed to complete their doctorates by the end of 2012, despite competing professional commitments, and the others are on track to finish in 2013-2014. A crucial observation here is that there is a world of difference between young artists who have just graduated and are beginning the PhD, and mid-career artists with a highly resolved practice and professional experience. The resilient competitiveness necessary for success in the artworld made for an immensely lively group and a determination to grapple with writing as a necessary career achievement.

A key point emerging from these seminars became a vital area for me as both artist

and supervisor, and that is the one constantly put forward by the inner critic: how do I stop the exploration of self from diving into narcissism and therefore becoming of less value to the world of scholarship? How can I maintain that intuitive individuality of practice and at the same time, an ‘objectivity’ towards self?

Professor Peggy Phelan, visiting from the US, made precisely this point in a seminar she gave to the Forum in August 2011.<sup>vi</sup> She suggested that in taking on a practice-based doctorate, you have to confront the self and different relationships to the self - on the page. She used the term “radically pragmatic” in admitting to a certain level of narcissism in order to push self-reflectiveness further; “to see as if for the first time how I don’t understand my flickering image reflected in the deep pool”. In order to take up one’s own archive – the artist’s documents and files - you have to emulate Narcissus briefly. But in order to avoid sheer egotism it was imperative to think through major influences and make clear your own epistemology and particular way of knowing within the discipline. What does practice teach us that is worth knowing, rather than poorly understood “philosophy lite”? One of the women said she would be “grateful to adopt narcissism as self-expression was often last on the to-do list.”

Peggy Phelan advised the candidates: “Keep alive the sense of a narrative voice that has the capacity to surprise, re-tell your sense of discovery in a work and bring other artists/thinkers who relate to the work along with you. It is great to document work that might otherwise be lost. Lead with the work and who has inspired you”.

The intrinsic force of intuitive modes of thinking discussed above by De Mille, Mieke, Bal and others can therefore be brought to bear on archives of practice and the zone of affiliations that they represent. The doctoral candidates among the SARF

group who most quickly became writers began with documenting a selected archive of their own exhibitions and performances that encapsulated a particular question that led forward, a query that needed urgent addressing. Learning to archive and describe accurately honed research skills.

At the same time the underlying research focus and question became clearer as each person read widely into the context say, of a particular year. I emphasised linear chronological sequences in making sense of sometimes inchoate material. Simple modes of writing a description of an installation and how it came to be that way, even in 'rave' form as a transcription of spoken discussions, were the beginning of understanding the coherently structured chapter. 'Write first, research later', as Australian author Rodney Hall said once in a seminar, can be a useful strategy in beginning.

In some cases lurking insights of what was most significant might draw on the wounds of childhood or early adolescence and the passion of the doctorate was to mitigate and comprehend this subjectivity within the objective knowledge of art theoretical and historical contexts. The breadth of experience in the group encompassed the sub-cognitive worlds of animals, place, sleep and violence as forces that shaped practice. Being excited about the personal field of research enabled writing to emerge although the first chapter might often go through three or four drafts. And then suddenly, it became easier.

Sometimes it seemed to me that around the edge of the seminar table stood another idiosyncratic circle of participants – those thinkers and artists whose work was

constantly referred to by individuals in the group and whose influence had formed what might be called the ‘cutting-edge’ of contemporary practice. From the very beginning of our discussions these included such classic artists as Pieter Brueghel (*The Fall of Icarus* with the corpse in the thicket), Rembrandt (*Flayed Ox*) or Von Guerard’s paintings of New South Wales. More predictably, the philosophers Jean Baudrillard, Pierre Bourdieu, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, and Julia Kristeva were constantly present, as were cultural theorists and critics, Marina Warner, Elizabeth Bronfen; writers Roland Barthes, Samuel Beckett, Jorges Luis Borges and Italo Calvino; art historians and theorists such as Georges Didi-Huberman, Rosalind Krauss and Michael Fried among many others. Local thinkers Paul Carter, Ross Gibson, Stephen Muecke, Elizabeth Grosz and Ann Stephen and Tony Fry sat among throngs of Australian artists. A great crowd of directors, dramatists and installation artists came to the table: influential ones were Thomas Struth, Barnett Newman, John Cage, Marina Abramovitch, Mary Kelly, Bill Viola, Joseph Kosuth and Susan Hiller. Those candidates involved in performance referred to August Strindberg, Edward Albee, Harold Pinter, Howard Barker, Peter Brook, Elia Kazan, Amelia Jones, Dennis Oppenheim, Alfred Hitchcock, Percy Grainger, Jerzy Grotowski, Roma Castellucci among many contemporaries. Being in Cyprus became a catalyst for exploring Vitruvius, Plato, Aristotle and Euripides, sometimes through the writing of poet and critic, Anne Carson. European and American culture was at the forefront for this group of mature artists. In the shadows stood unnamed but formidable Indigenous artists, a shaping presence in contemporary Australia. Reading and writing are intimately connected – you learn to write by reading - and the richness of language across many texts began to subtly permeate those halting chapters until they became



fluent. Each candidate had a group of such mentors to refer to, like the little figurines of ancient deities that clustered on Sigmund Freud's desk.

Thesis writers can obscure the clarity of written expression through a desire to sound more 'academic'. Richard Jenkyns in his book, *The Legacy of Rome* (1992, p.12) quoted George Orwell on the heavy Latinising of English. Orwell set out a sentence from the book of Ecclesiastes in the King James Bible: "I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all." He translated it into a modern English version: "Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account." Concrete nouns and shorter words of Anglo-Saxon and Germanic origin give the older text a poetic strength and resonance compared to the familiar obscurity of the later one.

The textual choices that were made by the Senior Artists in their final submissions varied. One sculptor chose to focus on a personal archive, documented as if it were a museum collection, and learnt to write clearly through the discipline of describing. A performance artist wrote from a holistic bodily approach, particularly the senses of sound and touch. An installation artist who was also a photographer struggled to write anything in the beginning, but overcame barriers to writing by first telling me key stories that had informed his practice, and then writing them down as poetic texts that were interspaced through more scholarly writing. Another architect and designer who

had travelled widely structured his writing around a postcolonial narrative of place in an elegant succinct style. In all cases the initial ‘rave’ storytelling identified the main focus and allowed the more formal texts to emerge.

In taking a group of seven SARF candidates to Cyprus I hoped to demonstrate the relevance for artists of concrete activities of working in the earth and with excavated objects. Doing fieldwork became possible because of my annual involvement with the University of Sydney’s Paphos Theatre excavation in western Cyprus<sup>vii</sup>. We joined the large team of around fifty archaeologists and students drawn from Australia and Europe and worked with them for a week. Practice as a way of knowing is mirrored in archaeology. Learning the principles of the horizontal grid of space and the vertical stratigraphy of time in the sides of trenches made the chronological sequence and the mapping of the site comprehensible. Photographing and drawing objects precisely required detailed scrutiny of texture, weight, and dimensions from all angles. Reading plans became an analogy of laying out a text. Archaeology is a discipline that veers towards science because it is dominated by the interpretation of material evidence of the past. The visual evidence presented in plans, graphs, drawings and photographs (and increasingly forensic and microscopic analysis) forms the actual contribution to knowledge, as it does in a creative arts doctorate. The ability to describe and analyse objects and place them in the context of parallel sites, is central. Knowledge can be drawn out of the object’s materiality, the scale, texture, fabric, colour, shape, style and context with other objects of the same space and time. This is thinking through the object itself, not through abstract terms, and this approach was a kind of epiphany for those struggling to write. As well, for many in the group, working in teams in the excavation trenches of the ancient theatre became like another kind of performance in

real time.<sup>viii</sup>

As the excavation progresses, a great archive of fragments and objects is lifted from the earth to be inventoried and classified. The artist's or performer's archive mimics this highly disciplined process of archaeology, and the objective methods of the archaeological archive can make the individual inventory more restful and attainable by comparison with the great flux of stuff from the past. Time as visually constituted in vertical stratigraphies and spatial grids became a useful tool in setting out sequences and typologies in the artist's own archive. It becomes clear that drawing and writing are closely related, and that one leads to the other through intricate processes of documentation joining subjective and objective modes. The space of the inventory of works can open doors for visual and performative thinkers in communicating their physical and metaphysical positions.<sup>ix</sup>

I was not sure how the remarkable Byzantine painted churches of Cyprus would affect Australian artists. Being in the dim spaces of domed medieval churches high in the mountains was like entering another time when imagery had a different and redemptive power compared to the ubiquitous contemporary image. In fact, the intensity of dark colour among gleams of gold and the refraction of light in the painted spaces shook up the photographers and sculptors to think freshly, and the intermittent music of the liturgy that floated up to the house where we worked together became part of a later performance.

To conclude, my reading into the articulation of intuition and intellect in the written component of the creative arts doctorate shows that there is indeed a kind of reason (*logos*) inherent in artworks that can stand beside other disciplines and be understood

by them. The format, sophistication and rigour of the textual component of the creative arts doctorate continues to crystallise since its inception in the 1980s through the joint labour of supervisors, examiners and the researchers themselves. My experience in supervising creative arts doctorates suggests that an interactive milieu in seminars in museums, libraries or sites has great impact on quicker completions, although individual one-on-one supervision sessions continue to be essential. The Senior Artists Research Forum was a special case that showed the effectiveness of providing a supervisor dedicated to a group of research candidates, a supervisor who could provide both continuity and stimulation. Candidates who all start together learn from observing others in a similar stage and learn to trust the group's varied responses. The process pin-points individual positions as intrinsic to that group ethos. Comprehending the larger theoretical scope in 'intuitive' ways provides momentum for individual artists/writers. From within the academy the mature artist researcher makes a gift to the wider knowledge systems in the university. For the creative disciplines the doctorate is a compelling way to presenting the 'sensuous immediacy' of arts practice in a rational, discursive text, that in the end will open up contemporary arts to new audiences.

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<sup>i</sup> Janis Jefferies (2010) in a lecture “Situated Practice” at UOW referred to: Sullivan, M. (2005); *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts* Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi; Hazel Smith and Dean, Roger T, *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009; Elkins, J. (2009). *Artists with phds: on the new doctoral degree in studio art*, USA: [New Academia](#)

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<sup>ii</sup> see Brogan Bunt and Sarah Miller: The boundary riders: artists in academia/artists and academia. Conference paper; Effective Supervision of Creative Arts Research Degrees Symposium, Queensland University of Technology 7-8 February 2013.

<sup>iii</sup> Elizabeth Grierson and David Forrest (eds) (2010), *The Doctoral journey in Art Education: reflections on doctoral studies by Australian and New Zealand art educators*, Melbourne, Victoria: Australian Scholarly Publishing; Elizabeth Grierson with Laura Brearly (et al) (c.2009), *Creative Arts Research: Narratives, methodologies and practices*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

<sup>iv</sup> An "Asynchronous Workshop" was organised online Aug 27- 30, 2012 for the Australian Postgraduate Writers Network by Professor Jen Webb (University of Canberra), Professor Donna Brien (Central Queensland University) with Dr Sandra Burr and Dr Antonia Pont (Deakin University). Co-ordinated by myself, the response to the theme "Examining Higher Degrees in the Creative Arts" indicated a depth of feeling in the participants about supervision, the lack of training of supervisors, and preparation for assessment in combining scholarly and creative aspects of the doctorate.

<sup>v</sup> The then Dean of Creative Arts, Professor Amanda Lawson initiated the formation of the group with an ad in the Higher Education Supplement of *The Australian* newspaper in October 2009. Out of 18 respondents 8 were selected.

<sup>vi</sup> Professor Peggy Phelan holds the Ann O' Day Maples Chair in the Arts at Stanford University USA and was a Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong 1-15 August 2011. Her books include (1997) *Mourning sex: performing public memories*, London and New York: Routledge; (2001) *Art and Feminism*, London, UK: Phaidon.

<sup>vii</sup> SARF was supported by a Challenge Grant from the UOW Vice-Chancellor, which paid half the fare and some accommodation for the two and a half week journey.

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viii Works from the Senior Artists Research Forum appear in *Aphrodite's Island: Australian Archaeologists in Cyprus*, Nicholson Museum, and in the exhibition *Response to Cyprus* at the Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology at the University of Sydney, 2012-2013.

ix See Walter Benjamin's notebooks and archives: DOCUMENTA (13) 2012: No. 001, Michael Taussig, 'Fieldwork Notebooks' p.60; No 045 Nikola Doll, 'Walter Benjamin Paris Arcades' p.316.