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# The Order of Being

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
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## ABSTRACT

*The Order of Being* is a purposeful investigation, via the elements of spirituality, physicality, science, philosophy and art process into what might be the foundational reality of space, matter and consciousness. In so doing, this inquiry aims to uncover how humanity “thinks” to know this reality, and more importantly, how humanity might “not think” and therefore may experience it. This paper explores whether the lived existence is best encountered as a form of energy, with brain, body and consciousness reverberating to become more than the mere sums of their parts.

Via the works and experiences of theologians, scientists, philosophers, artists, those refusing titles, and taoist readings this paper attempts to simplify and unravel just what a foundational reality might be. Running parallel to this research is the raised awareness that the human condition is presently and historically caught in a reactive cycle imprisoned by reason, a condition largely composed of knowledge, power, materialism and religious zeal. This paper examines whether these constituents are in fact limitations to experiencing what Jiddu Krishnamurti refers to as Intelligence. By investigating ways others have disarmed the barriers created by reason, we may gain better access into perceiving ourselves as space, matter and consciousness: an intermeshing of universal energy.

The paradoxically intimate and expansive connection between universal energy and the lived experience then acts as a platform to go beyond the tentative, intuitive actions of past art making, to experience a deepening of raw perception, primal unknowing and its physical response. These innate experiences may allow for the artmaking to become a deed to facilitate energy's processes, accepting and honouring the sensible and the indistinguishable as permeating elements to our order of being.

## INTRODUCTION

There is no 'me', only the organism as a form of energy,  
In being nothing, I am everything and all energy.

Jiddu Krishnamurti<sup>1</sup>

In my past practice I have worked intuitively, that is to say I have worked predominantly from a place of feeling, with little knowledge of art history, theory, or philosophy, being drawn to create art that has some kind of connection to energy: that which manifests as waves of light, heat, colour and sound. I have realized these energies as a paradox, dynamic yet still movements impressing the sensory and phenomenological experiences of my lived existence. The relationship between energy and lived existence has led me to investigate further what rationalist philosopher Benedictus Spinoza [1632-77] suggested to be "the underlying reality of matter and consciousness".<sup>2</sup> It is my feeling that there is a constant, yet not necessarily visible movement of energy that permeates every thing, animate and inanimate, including our thoughts<sup>3</sup>, and the repetitive circumstances of our daily living, connecting us to some sort of primary energy field that exists universally.

This period of postgraduate research has enabled me to investigate the work of artists, writers, philosophers, and scientists who articulate perspectives that reinforce this idea of an "underlying reality". These investigations have also led me to appraise the validity for not necessarily accepting the material conditioning of what we sense, think and do to equate to the sum total of our lived existence. Rather, there is the consideration that our ability to reason possibly restricts us from entering into, or becoming one with this underlying reality. *The Order of Being* is my attempt to process, via a kind of visual, sonic and metaphysical engagement, these waves of energy that constitutes space, matter and consciousness.

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<sup>1</sup> Al Boag, *From Being God to Being Human*, The Krishnamurti Text Collection and Index. P 161

<sup>2</sup> Paavo Pylkkanen, *Mind, Matter and the Implicate Order*, ed. M.P. Silverman A.C. Elitzur, J. Tuszynski, R.Vaas,

<sup>2</sup> Paavo Pylkkanen, *Mind, Matter and the Implicate Order*, ed. M.P. Silverman A.C. Elitzur, J. Tuszynski, R.Vaas, H.D. Zeh, *The Frontiers Collection* (Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2007). P 134

<sup>3</sup> David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (London: Routledge, 1980). P 213

The first section of this paper discusses the more abstract approaches to the Divine Logos of Christ via the mystical path of Medieval hermeunetic Meister Thomas Eckhardt [1260-1327]; the empty mind of contemplation through the experiences of writer and dialogue maker Jiddu Krishnamurti [1895-1986]; the philosophies and wave energy scientific theories of quantum physicist David Bohm [1917-1992]; the body-as-it-is-lived-in-by-me<sup>4</sup> philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty [1908-1961]; and the spontaneous musings of contemplative Taoism, interwoven throughout this paper as an elusive and enigmatic source of wisdom and profundity that dates from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC.<sup>5</sup>

The second section describes the works of various artists who have visually, kinetically, sonically or philosophically demonstrated creative connections to Spinoza's underlying reality. Viewed through the artwork and philosophy explored via the "untroubled mind"<sup>6</sup> of painter Agnes Martin [1912-2004]; the "ungraspable"<sup>7</sup> forms of sculptor Ann-Veronica Janssens [1956-]; the "what happens of itself"<sup>8</sup> for sonic and kinetic artist Max Eastley [1944-]; and the interrelatedness of sensory perception, spirituality and matter from artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye [1910-1996]. Each artist and their distinct art practice, deconstructs and exposes the limitations of human reason with our propensity to tailor this underlying reality to fit our constructed concepts and ideas. During my period of research I have reflected on the strength and intelligence of these artist's works and found it an inspiration for my own.

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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies, Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994). P 86

<sup>5</sup> Please note: it is my feeling that Taoism is best acknowledged in this paper by interweaving verses, or paragraphs of verses from the seminal text, the *Tao Te Ching* attributed to Lao Tzu, which offers us some sort of sensible description of the "world as it is" and the process by which it seems to work. Threading these enigmatic offerings into the findings of those researched, Taoism's open-ended intelligence has some sort of relevance to all. This seemed a fitting way to express an interconnected underlying reality whilst honouring the intentional elusiveness of Taoism with its distrust of words and systems.

<sup>6</sup> Arne Glimcher, *Agnes Martin Paintings, Writings, Remembrances* (Phaidon Press Ltd, 2012). P 168

<sup>7</sup> You Tube BOS18, Ann-Veronica Janssens Interview, <http://dasplatforms.com/videos/ann-veronica-janssens/> 09/07/2012

<sup>8</sup> Ray Grigg, *The Tao of Zen* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles. E. Tuttle Co, Inc, 1994). P 38

The third section describes the development of my creative work, *The Order of Being*, in relation to my past practice and the ideas developed from this research. The status of the appearance of something as being discernable by thought is challenged, with this research disclosing an attempt to convey the constantly moving states of energy that exist in the equilibrium of the moment rendering matter, place and space as one. *The Order of Being* also considers repetitive daily activities that have produced honed skills, enabling us to *do* these activities automatically without the need to think or problem solve<sup>9</sup>. Through these mastered, non-thinking actions of daily living we may encounter a potential threshold: a flow-zone for accessing Spinoza's underlying reality. This research and my current art practice has enabled me to explore the unfixed possibilities of engagement between the viewer and the making, hopefully leading to further inspiration and expansion from this field of enquiry.

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<sup>9</sup> Jiddu Krishnamurti, *The Awakening of Intelligence*, Harper Collins New York, 1987 See Krishnamurti's notes on weaving P 51

## SECTION 1

### The Limitations of Human Reason

The intellect, as an intellect, is none of the things it knows: it must be unmixed with anything, having nothing in common so that it might know everything.

Meister Thomas Eckhardt,<sup>10</sup>

Meister Thomas Eckhardt champions an exegesis that unfolds the Divine Logos, a spiritual path reconciled by revelation as accepted by the Christian community of his time. This disclosure strips away the material conditions of sensible things: thinking, acting, to reveal the immaterial existence of the detached intellect or soul. Eckhardt interprets that the vehicle of the revealed Word, via Jesus Christ, is absolutely necessary for the intellect to free itself from the prison of reason. Christ, as Eckhardt believed, acted as the conduit between the true nature of existence and being human, the Divine Logos becoming the ground of human being, and not an object of human reason.

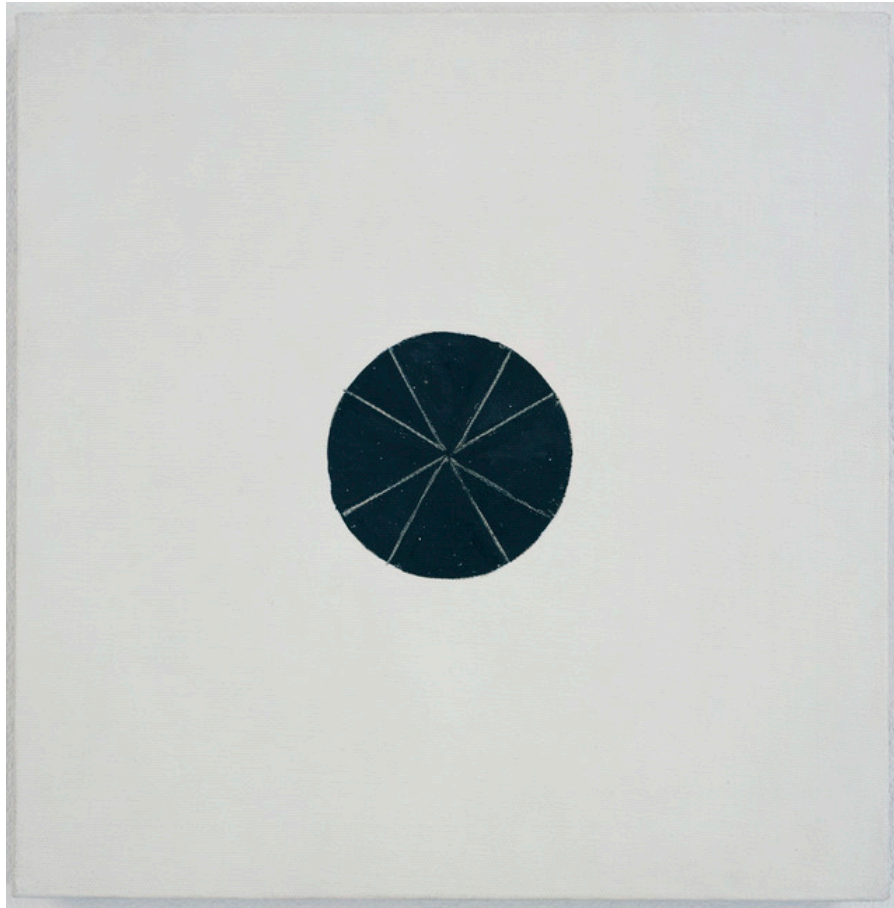
Eckhardt's sermons and writings reveal that any attempts to noetically grasp Reality were doomed to failure as humanity is finite and limited in our creature intellect. It is the brain and the human body that provides the sensible material for thought and action, Eckhardt's "outer man", whereas essential intellect at its root is formless and modeless, the "inner man", untouched by the senses or anything created by reason<sup>11</sup>. This essential intellect is a radical departure from the Divine Logos of Ancient Greek Philosophy. From the Presocratics [pre 470 BC] such as Pythagoras of Samos [6<sup>th</sup> century BC] to the Neoplatonists [6<sup>th</sup> century AD], it was held that an objective rational order to the cosmos was

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<sup>10</sup> *Master Eckhardt: Parisian Questions and Prologues*, trans. Armand Maurer [Toronto: Pontifical Institute for Medieval Studies, 1974] P 51

<sup>11</sup> Robert J Dobie, *Logos and Revelation, Ibn Arabi, Meister Eckhardt, and mystical hermeneutics* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010). P193

knowable by reason and evidence alone.<sup>12</sup> Rather, Eckhardt's beliefs follow on from the epistemology of scholastic philosopher St Thomas Aquinas [1225-74] who held that "all knowledge proceeds by abstraction of the immaterial intelligible form from material sensible particulars"<sup>13</sup>.



Agnes Martin, Untitled, 1959  
Oil on linen, 30.5 x 30.5cms, Pace Gallery, New York

Eckhardt then developed a second metaphysical abstraction proposing that the intellect or soul must separate itself from all that is created to become conformed to God. Eckhardt's God is "pure existence by virtue of it being the pure act of understanding".<sup>14</sup> Unless the intellect undergoes this second abstraction, it will remain a creature and merely a sign of divine existence, with no positive existence of its own accord. The human creature, as viewed by Eckhardt, merely limits the existence we receive from God. By humbly accepting the deficiencies of human reason, the intellect empties itself of any inner

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid. P 285

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. P189

<sup>14</sup> Dobie, op. cit. P 196



attachment to its own existence, reflecting the Divine Logos and transforming itself from within. It is Existence in itself: that which is “infinite and no particular thing”<sup>15</sup> that causes all creatures to exist. This second abstraction is described by Eckhardt as “detachment, a perfecting of the soul to make an undistorted mirror of divine truth and capable of knowledge of God”.<sup>16</sup>

Detachment as held by Eckhardt is an “ontological virtue”<sup>17</sup>, with the intellect no longer being the place of “contingent representations”<sup>18</sup>. Detachment perfects the creature with regard to Existence itself, thereby perfecting the intellect in its “essential nothingness”<sup>19</sup> so that it can apprehend pure existence. As Eckhardt stated “whoever wants this or that wants to be something, but detachment wants to be nothing at all. So it is that detachment makes no claim upon anything.”<sup>20</sup>

So the Sage embraces the One  
and becomes a model for the world  
Without showing himself, he shines forth  
Without promoting himself, he is distinguished  
Without claiming reward, he gains endless merit  
Without seeking glory, his glory endures

The Sage knows how to follow  
So he comes to command  
He does not compete  
So no one under Heaven can compete with him

*Tao Te Ching*, Verse 22, Paragraph 2-3

## **The Empty Mind of Contemplation**

Will is independent of the fact of ‘what is’, it depends on the self, on what it wants.

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<sup>15</sup> Dobie, op. cit. P 192

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. P 189

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. P 192

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. P 282

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. P 192

<sup>20</sup> Meister Thomas Eckhardt, *De deutschen und lateinischen Werke herausgegeben im Auftrag der deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft*, trans. Robert. J Dobie (Stuttgart/ Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1936). *Vom abegescheidenheit*, P 406

Jiddu Krishnamurti <sup>21</sup>

The immaterial ontology of Meister Thomas Eckhardt's Divine Logos interconnects with the metaphysical, yet non-religious offerings of Jiddu Krishnamurti. Here we find a human being of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who refused labelling as philosopher, guru or religious leader. Krishnamurti left the teachings of Theosophy, a system of belief based largely on Brahmanic and Buddhist ideas, after its hierarchy had hailed him as the next Maitreya or 'World Teacher'<sup>22</sup>. Krishnamurti went on to develop dialogues and writings contesting that the thinking brain, the brain that reasons, is the greatest impediment to freedom of the mind. This freedom is pure observation without direction, not conforming to any faith-based system, the past or linear time.<sup>23</sup>

According to Krishnamurti it is the material entrapment of thought that is humanity's limitation to intelligence. Intelligence was regarded by Krishnamurti to be "timeless existence", <sup>24</sup> whereas thinking was restricted to a constant cycle of action and reaction, a finite pursuit that manifests into the next action and reaction. The material mind of reason contains what Krishnamurti believed to be emotions, thoughts, and will all of which are limited as these things are extensions of perception and not primarily the accumulation of knowledge. <sup>25</sup> Krishnamurti contends that thinking is of linear time, utilising knowledge and experience that acts today from what has been learnt in the past. He makes the point that the future is already established by the past, and the mind that sees according to some acquired formula is acting in the past<sup>26</sup>. Thought as experienced by Krishnamurti, is always adjudicating, estimating, restraining, surmounting and therefore always in some sort of state of resistance. Consciousness was explained by Krishnamurti to merely contain the content of thought, a response to memory, knowledge, experience and time. He poses the

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<sup>21</sup> Krishnamurti, *The Awakening of Intelligence*. P 35

<sup>22</sup> Mary Lutyens, *Krishnamurti, The Years of Awakening* (London: John Murray, Shambala Publications, 1975). P 21

<sup>23</sup> [soundcloud.com/mortengranau/phaxe-morten-granau-four3two](https://soundcloud.com/mortengranau/phaxe-morten-granau-four3two), posted 23/04/2014. Note: it would seem that Krishnamurti's distillations have been recorded by contemporary sound artists Phaxe and Morten Granau, listen to *four3two*.

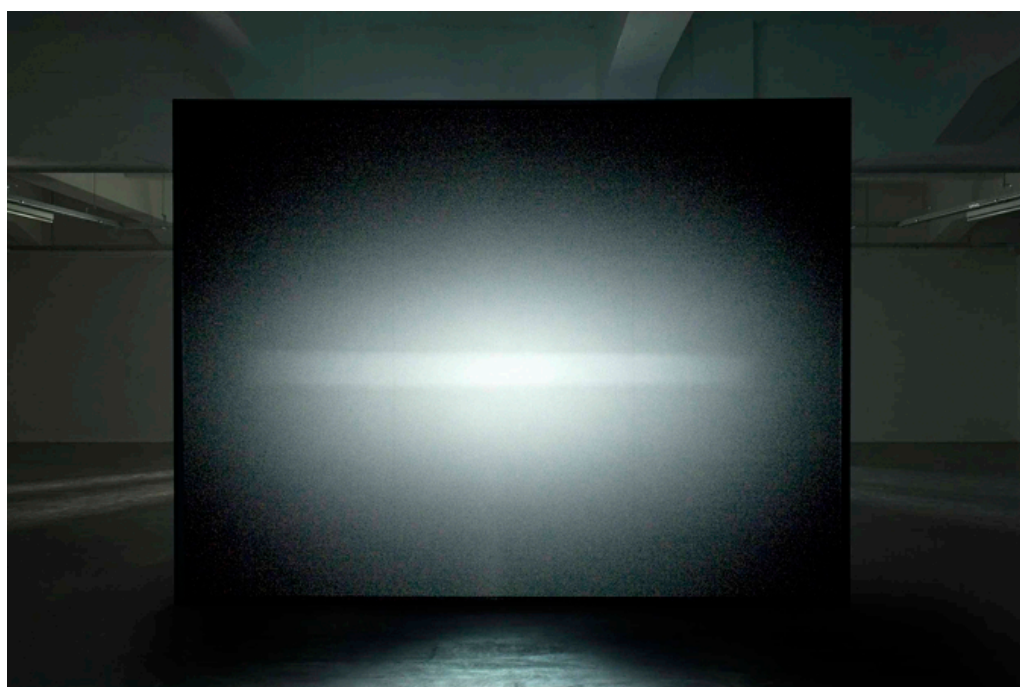
<sup>24</sup> Krishnamurti, op. cit. Part VII P 375

<sup>25</sup> Krishnamurti Foundation Trust, "Krishnamurti/ Bohm dialogues," (Switzerland: Krishnamurti Foundation Trust, 1965-1985). "Beyond Limits "1992

<sup>26</sup> Krishnamurti, op. cit. P 356

question, “Can consciousness empty itself of it’s content? Can the mind empty itself and yet have a brain that functions as a marvellous machine?”<sup>27</sup>

When a human is in a state of thought there is a centre referred to by Krishnamurti as the “me “and “non-me”: the “observer, the thinker, the experiencer”.<sup>28</sup> Around that centre is the “observed”<sup>29</sup> and in-between there is a thought-created space where images are made and the ego is held. The observer and the observed is the thought-acquired barrier to intelligence. It is when thoughts are stilled and no images are formed, that the centre is no longer in operation and is emptied to become intelligence.<sup>30</sup> “When thought sees it is incapable of discovering something new, that very perception is the seed of intelligence. That is intelligence.”<sup>31</sup> By emptying ourselves of all thoughts, intelligence, the empty mind, can then reflect immeasurable and timeless insight.<sup>32</sup> There was for Krishnamurti “no division at all, only a tremendous source of energy”.<sup>33</sup>



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<sup>27</sup> Jiddu Krishnamurti, *The Awakening of Intelligence* (HarperCollins, New York, 1987). P 50

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. P 42

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. P 42

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. P 47

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Part VIII, P 411

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. P 47

<sup>33</sup> Boag, *From Being God to Being Human*. P 161

Ann Veronica Janssens, *Untitled* [Martin Mac 2000 performance]  
9' loop Programmed b/w light projection, beamer, DMX recorder, RetroScreen grey relast, PVC<sup>34</sup>

Become totally empty  
Quiet the restlessness of the mind  
Only then will you witness everything  
Unfolding from emptiness  
See all things flourish and dance  
In endless variation  
And once again merge back into perfect emptiness-  
Their true repose  
Their true nature  
Emerging, flourishing, dissolving back again  
This is the eternal process of return

To know this process brings enlightenment  
To miss this process brings disaster

Be still  
Stillness reveals the secrets of eternity  
Eternity embraces the all-possible  
The all-possible leads to a vision of oneness  
A vision of oneness brings about universal love  
Universal love supports the great truth of Nature  
The great truth of Nature is Tao

*Tao Te Ching*, Verse 16, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3

## **That which Appears to Be**

Essence is now the appearance of something, but the essence of true being is unknown and ungraspable.

David Bohm <sup>35</sup>

Investigating the source and behaviour of immeasurable, timeless energy was the life work of David Bohm. He and Jiddu Krishnamurti held dialogues that were documented as interdisciplinary enquiries into the underlying reality of space, matter and intelligence. Krishnamurti's experiences of the empty mind emerge

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<sup>34</sup> Janssens: "Luminous beams are inscribed, by back projection, on a large screen crossing the gallery space. They produce a rapid, almost hypnotic pulsation, liable to provoke retinal persistence in the eye of the viewer." Galerie Micheline Szwajcer

<sup>35</sup> "Beyond Limits " Krishnamurti/Bohm Dialogues, Krishnamurti Trust 1992

as timeless insight, a still yet dynamic movement of total order with no beginning or end.<sup>36</sup> David Bohm's findings as a quantum physicist arrived at a somewhat similar analogy embracing a theory of space as an immense, ordered, interpenetrating, multidimensional sea of energy he termed the "Holomovement".<sup>37</sup>

Bohm's Holomovement suggested the energy waves that comprise the universe are a substance, whose different aspects belong to one whole and unbroken continuum, a neutral ground that exists beyond mind and matter. Matter, life and consciousness all have a common ground in the holomovement, and could be viewed as a "democracy of sub totalities"<sup>38</sup>, but the holomovement is the only thing given the status of substance. This monistic ontology is in accord with Spinoza's proposal of an underlying reality and the findings of German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz. [1646-1716] Leibniz deduced that there is only one substance that is the fundamental stuff of the universe, and everything else that exists can be in some way derived from this.<sup>39</sup> We are to be aware that it is Bohm's belief that it is unlikely that we will ever know what the "totality of all that exists actually contains and the holomovement is likely to be a mere stage in an infinity of further developments beyond it" <sup>40</sup>.

This was not the ontology of philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes [1596-1650] who defined matter as an extended substance, consciousness as a thinking substance, two different substances resolved by the ability of God, who being outside of matter and consciousness, brings the two together. For Bohm, Descartes's theories were problematic as Descartes relied on the ability of God to resolve a dualistic universe. Yet Bohm felt Descartes was onto something about the essence of consciousness and matter "namely that our thoughts live in an order in which extensions [matter] and separation are not fundamental".<sup>41</sup> It was Bohm's feeling that inanimate and animate matter, the brain and consciousness

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<sup>36</sup> Trust, "Krishnamurti/ Bohm dialogues." "Beyond Limits "1992

<sup>37</sup> David Bohm, "A New Theory of the Relationship of Mind and Matter," *Philos. Psych* 3(1990). P 273

<sup>38</sup> Pylkkanen, *Mind, Matter and the Implicate Order*. P 90

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. P 95 See Leibniz's "Monad" theory., Mc Cann. E, *History: Philosophy of Mind in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, , ed. S Guttenplan, A Companion to the Philosophy of Mind (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

<sup>40</sup> Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. P 213

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. PP 196- 197

are aspects that are abstracted from the Holomovement, which in turn makes connection to Bohm's notion of an Explicate/ Unfolding and Implicate/ Enfolding Order. According to Bohm these orders present as " a set of co-present elements at different degrees of enfoldment",<sup>42</sup> a principle he believed to concern the entire universe into each region of space.



Christine Simpson: *Carbon Waves III*, 2011  
Car air filters, steel frame, monofilament, cord, dimensions 3.5m h x 1.5m w x 600mm d

Basically, Bohm's Implicate and Explicate orders propose that electrons or elementary particles are enfolded in the universe. These electrons unfold in

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<sup>42</sup> Pylkkänen, op. cit. P 116

waves and then fold back again. An explicate order is transformed into an implicate order via enfoldment; unfoldment does the reverse.<sup>43</sup> When electron waves unfold to slightly different points, they sometimes form a series of points that are very close together which we perceive as particles. The wave is the implicate order, the particles are the explicate manifestation. The implicate and explicate orders suggest that every thing is comprised of particles in a constant state of wave-like movement, folding and unfolding to create the appearance of material things that we perceive to be something, yet whose essential nature is to be immaterial. Each particle of matter contains information about the whole universe and information about each particle can be found everywhere in the universe.<sup>44</sup> These unfolding and enfolding orders “may enter our sense organs, to go on through the nervous system to the brain. More deeply all the matter in our bodies, from the very first, enfolds the universe in some way.”<sup>45</sup> For example, thinking is enfolded in our consciousness, unfolding to a certain thought, folding back, and unfolding again as the next thought appears. If we have a series of thoughts that are not too different it seems to be a continuous process.

Consciousness, as proposed by Bohm is not merely a mechanical process of brain function: “patterns of excitation of the sensory nerves and how they may be recorded in memory”<sup>46</sup>, but includes thought, feeling, desire, and will. Bohm suggests consciousness also “involves awareness, attention, perception, acts of understanding and perhaps more”<sup>47</sup> and can be experienced via the simultaneous presence and activity of reverberations to gather a sense of movement, flow and continuity.<sup>48</sup> These reverberations could be visual, sonic, sensory, memory or logical activities, or a fusion of these activities, which undergo active transformations in the brain. The outcome involves “various emotional responses, bodily sensations, incipient muscular movements, and the

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<sup>43</sup> Pylkkänen, op. cit. P 112

<sup>44</sup> Pylkkänen, op. cit. P 106

<sup>45</sup> Pylkkänen, *Mind, Matter and the Implicate Order*. P 105

<sup>46</sup> Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. P198

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. P 198

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. PP 198-199

evocation of a wide range of yet further meanings, often of great subtlety”.<sup>49</sup> It was Bohm’s feeling that these active transformations mingle and interpenetrate in various degrees of enfoldment giving rise to an immediate sense of movement; the primary attribute of the Implicate Order. Consciousness was suggested by Bohm to be comprehended in terms of the Implicate Order, along with reality as a whole<sup>50</sup>, not as it merely appears to us, but as it is in itself. “Bohm assumes that the totality of existence, including our knowledge, is movement; movement implies the possibility of change”.<sup>51</sup>

Though formless and intangible  
It gives rise to form  
Though vague and elusive  
It gives rise to shapes  
Though dark and obscure  
It is the spirit, the essence,  
The life-breath of all things  
“But is it real?” you ask-  
I say its evidence is all of creation!

*Tao Te Ching*, Verse 21, Paragraph 2

## Lived Existence

The body as I live it, experience it, is not a subject separated from the world, it is not a mind cut off from matter and space.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty <sup>52</sup>

The essence of consciousness as suggested by David Bohm could not be entirely reduced to mechanical processes, humanity needing to “reflect on” and “give careful attention” to what happens in certain experiences<sup>53</sup>. This non-mechanistic approach to an inward sensibility is analogous to the work of phenomenologists such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and contemporary consciousness researcher Antti Revonsuo who emphasises the need to take our

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<sup>49</sup> Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. P 199

<sup>50</sup> Pylkkänen, op. cit. P 99

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. P 155

<sup>52</sup> Grosz, op. cit. P 86

<sup>53</sup> Bohm, op. cit. P 108



inner experiences seriously when studying consciousness<sup>54</sup>. It was Merleau-Ponty's belief that the mind was not imprisoned in a mechanical brain and body: an independent material circumstance that cuts us off from an interpenetrating immaterial reality. Making claim to humanity's "being-to-the-world"<sup>55</sup> via the flesh, Merleau-Ponty's body-as-it-is-lived-in-by-me suggested our corporeality was an immanent and transcendent relationship with reality<sup>56</sup>.

Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's [1905-1980] investigations claim that to 'be' is trans-phenomenal, its character never fully revealed in the totality of its manifestations<sup>57</sup>. Sartre also made the distinction that being for itself or consciousness had a transcendent priority over being in itself: the body as object. This conflicted with Merleau-Ponty's claim that the body was not an object, rather the body was a condition of being through which the synthetic nature of experience was realised<sup>58</sup>. In this instance experience was to be understood by Merleau-Ponty as this fluid interaction of mind, body and bodily situation, located midway between the mind and the body, both active and passive, linked to the locus of consciousness.<sup>59</sup>

By 1986 in *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty had developed an ultimate theory of the flesh to be "thinkable by itself"<sup>60</sup>, a prior condition to humanity's physiological and psychological modes of perception. Indeed the flesh had become the ground of being in itself, viewed as a condition of "intermingling and possible integration, a commonness in which both subject and object participate, a single 'thing' folded back on itself"<sup>61</sup> This raw experience produced a nondualistic ontology which interrelates the inside and the outside, a prediscursive scenario before reason and its imposing systems step in. "Natural thought always precedes acquired thought, not identity, but

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<sup>54</sup> Pylkkänen, op. cit. P 108

<sup>55</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962). P viii

<sup>56</sup> Grosz, op. cit. P 86

<sup>57</sup> Antony Flew, *A dictionary of Philosophy* (London: Pan Books Ltd, Laurence Urdang Associates Ltd, 1984). Sartre, Jean-Paul

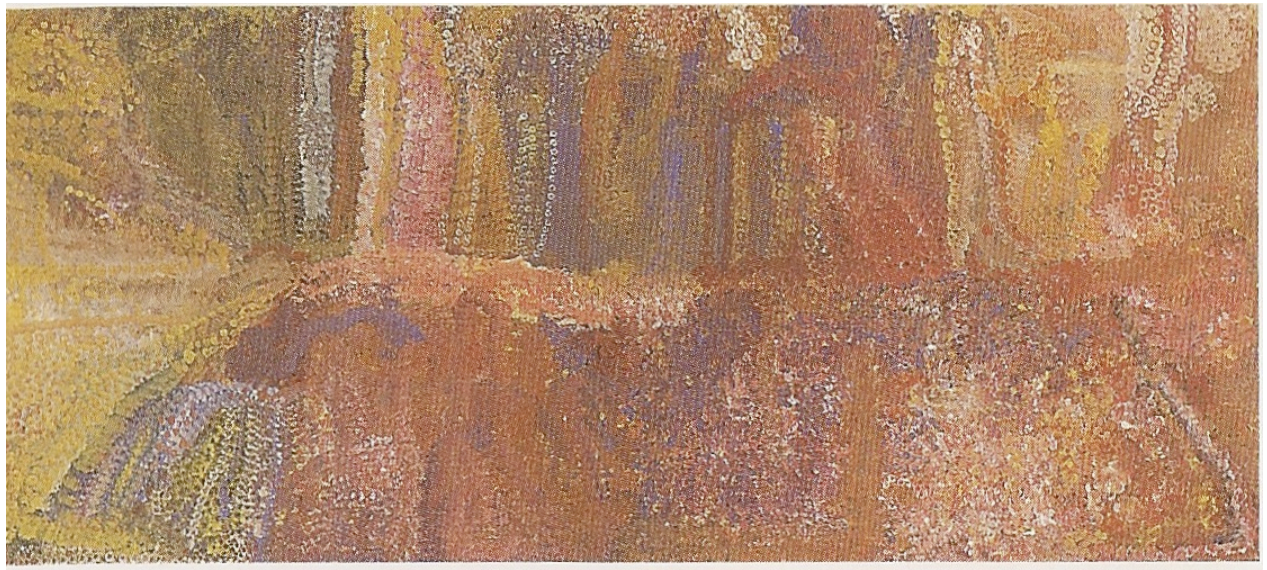
<sup>58</sup> Grosz, op. cit. P 86

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. P 95

<sup>60</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefisat, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968). P 140

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. P 147

non-difference, not distinction but clarity at first sight”<sup>62</sup> Object and subject, the sensible [visible] and the intelligible [invisible] are to be understood as untied things, pulsing as some kind of ordered yet alternating variations in a common flesh, “shimmering”<sup>63</sup> this underlying reality. Here to we find the beliefs of Merleau-Ponty and David Bohm aligning, “ at which point can we say that there is a sharp distinction between what is alive and what is not? Life itself has to be regarded as belonging in some sense to a totality, including plant and environment”<sup>64</sup>



Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Desert Storm*, 1992

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 121.6cms x 310cms, courtesy Holt Collection, Delmore Gallery

According to Merleau-Ponty the ground of the flesh was “reversible”<sup>65</sup>, folding in on itself to create “a place where the negative [nothingness] could really be, the application of the inside and the outside to one another, the turning point”<sup>66</sup>. In this equivocal place Merleau-Ponty felt there was neither identity, nor non-identity or non-coincidence<sup>67</sup>. Mind and body, subject and object, the visible and invisible interconnect, constantly exchanging and interlacing modalities to generate outcomes of a kind of ordered union and separation of things and

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid. P 272

<sup>63</sup> Grosz, op. cit. P 96

<sup>64</sup> Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. P 194

<sup>65</sup> Grosz, op. cit. P 100

<sup>66</sup> Merleau-Ponty, op. cit. P 264

<sup>67</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*. P 264

experiences perceived in the present moment. “It is a question of finding in the present the flesh of the world [and not in the past] an ever new and always the same”.<sup>68</sup>

In his final text Merleau-Ponty considers “the indeterminacy of the boundaries of each of the senses, their inherent transposability, their refusal to submit to the exigencies of clear cut separation or logical identity”<sup>69</sup> This indeterminacy poses the question, when does the toucher become the touched, the seer become the seen? This conundrum Merleau-Ponty termed a “double sensation”,<sup>70a</sup> a position of ambiguity that exposes the open-ended variations of subjectivity and objectuality. The senses translate into each other, sight, touch, hearing and smell function at the same moment and combine their effects in the primary of the flesh.<sup>71</sup> Merleau-Ponty states, “the sight of sounds and the hearing of colours comes about in the same way as the unity of the gaze through the two eyes: in so far as my body is not a collection of adjacent organs, but a synergic system, all the functions of which are exercised and linked together in the general action of being in the world.”<sup>72</sup>

A mind free of thought  
Merged within itself,  
Beholds the essence of Tao  
A mind filled with thought,  
Identified with its own perceptions,  
beholds the mere forms of this world

Tao and this world seem different  
But in truth they are one and the same  
The only difference is in what we call them

How deep and mysterious is this unity  
How profound, how great!  
It is the truth beyond the truth  
The hidden within the hidden  
It is the path to all wonder,  
The gateway to the essence of everything

*Tao Te Ching*, Verse 1, Paragraphs 3, 4 and 5

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid. Working Notes P 269

<sup>69</sup> Grosz, op. cit. P 96

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. P 100

<sup>71</sup> This interrelationship of the senses is in alignment with the concept of Synaesthesia, a blending of the senses, experienced by artist Wassily Kandinsky as visible colour vibrations with audible musical responses, his paintings stimulating “multiple sensory responses”. Francois Le Targat, *Kandinsky*, trans. Kenneth Lyons (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1987). P 52.

<sup>72</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*. PP 232- 234

## SECTION 2

### The Untroubled Mind

To try to understand is to court misunderstanding

Agnes Martin <sup>73</sup>

Artist Agnes Martin held the conviction that Reality was a matter of intuition, a quality of the inner mind and transcendental experience; that which exists beyond time, dimension or form. The intellect or the act of thinking, was a reflection of the outer mind and nature<sup>74</sup>. Martin's perception of nature was the world of objects and things in which we "live in the mundane; thought, fear, ego, and pride blinding us to what is forever known to the untroubled mind"<sup>75</sup>. This state of mind was for Martin as awareness to 'Life'<sup>76</sup>, to the immaterial reality of perfection and beauty. Martin's luminous grids were expressions of infinite expansion and rhythmic cadence, visual orders reflecting her belief in a 'true unchanging reality'<sup>77</sup>.

Martin considered her art philosophy and practice to be aligned with Taoism<sup>78</sup> and Abstract Expressionism, the latter a period suggested by art historian Edward Lucie-Smith to have its roots in Surrealism.<sup>79</sup> This art movement had a leading figure in André Breton who claimed that Surrealism was "pure psychic automatism, by which an attempt is made to express, either verbally or in writing, or in any other manner, the true functioning of thought".<sup>80</sup> The Surrealist movement arrived in New York with the outbreak of the Second World War seeing the emigration of artists such as Max Ernst, Roberto Matta, Salvador Dali and André Masson.<sup>81</sup> This surrealist influence led to an art movement that applied predominately to American Post World War II art from the 1940's and

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<sup>73</sup> *What we do not see if we do not see*, Lecture, City University, New York, 1979

<sup>74</sup> Barbara Haskell, *Agnes Martin* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1992). P 97

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* P109

<sup>76</sup> Glimcher, *Agnes Martin Paintings, Writings, Remembrances*. P168

<sup>77</sup> Haskell, *op. cit.* P 108

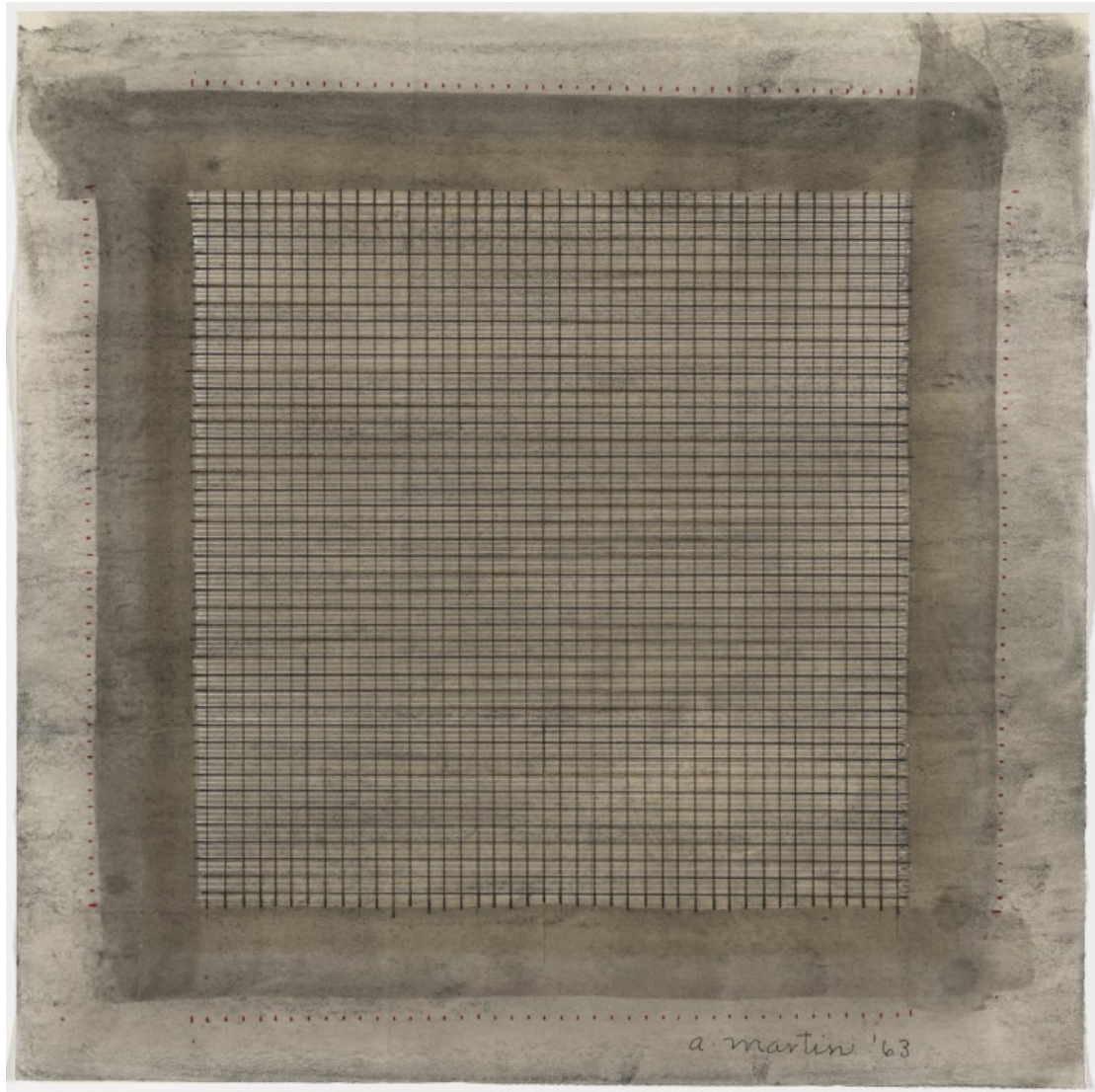
<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* P 95

<sup>79</sup> Edward Lucie-Smith, *Movements in Art Since 1945*, World of Art (London, New York: Thames and Hudson, 1984). P 25

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* P 25

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* P 26

became known as Abstract Expressionism, conveying ideas concerning the spiritual, the unconscious and the mind – manifesting as two styles. The first was energetic and gestural seen in the paintings of, for example Jackson Pollock and William de Kooning, the second style was a more tranquil and abstract approach witnessed in the art works of Mark Rothko and Agnes Martin. <sup>82</sup>



Agnes Martin, *Wood 1*, 1963

Watercolour and graphite on paper, 38.1 x 39.4cms, The Museum of Modern Art, New York 2012 Estate of Agnes Martin, Artists Rights Society [ARS]

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<sup>82</sup> Lucie-Smith, op cit. P 40-42

Abstract expressionism liberated painting from the space of a room via its participation and connection with universal energy; an energy that according to Barbara Haskell “unfolds in a time that escapes our measurement”<sup>83</sup>. This energy manifested itself in Martin’s art practice as active visual transformations on canvas. Art critic Rosalind Krauss described these transformations thus, “stepping back from the grid Martin’s paintings seem to feel atmospheric like a permeable mist, stepping back again the paintings become opaque, impermeable, immovable as stone”.<sup>84</sup> Rather than pursuing what Martin regarded as the limited formalistic goal of abstraction, her non-conceptual artworks became a kind of spiritual exercise that “invites the viewer to recognise states of perfection already extant within ourselves”<sup>85</sup>.



Agnes Martin, *Unbeckoning Grass*, 1958  
Oil on canvas 101.6 x 101.6cms. Pace Gallery, New York

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<sup>83</sup> Haskell, op. cit. P 110

<sup>84</sup> Rosalind E. Krauss, *Bachelors* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1999). P 79

<sup>85</sup> Glimcher, op. cit. P 11

Harmony, gratitude and devotion to beauty were the ways to Martin's art, the intellectually grasped experience was the enemy of making art<sup>86</sup> and "all works that are self-devoted are absolutely ineffective"<sup>87</sup>. It was intuition that was the inspiration, a response to an inner voice that recognised beauty, a beauty that was felt as truth and responded to as art. "Beauty is an awareness in the mind, a transcendent reality. What we see is not beautiful in itself, rather a catalyst to the awareness of beauty that already exists in the inner mind."<sup>88</sup> It was Martin's experience that this intuitive awareness of the inner mind is present to us at all times but our intellect rejects it in order to maintain our thought-driven prejudices, our constructed ideas. According to Martin, perception was an innate knowing: a function of receiving and responding. "Perception is part of a process, it does not identify, perception is a primary experience, thinking a secondary experience".<sup>89</sup> Seeing was to recognize, and beware "one who has become all eyes does not see"<sup>90</sup>.

Awareness to the "infinite sublimity of reality"<sup>91</sup> Martin experienced as a state of readiness, obedient to the conscious mind, detached from the self to function as a conduit for truth to create art free of responsibility and purpose<sup>92</sup>. According to Martin a mind emptied of concrete thoughts was an abstract response to a mind that is "infinite, dimensionless, without form and void"<sup>93</sup>. One could argue that there are parallels between Martin's spiritual philosophy and her discipleship to the inner mind with the formless and modeless essential intellect that reflected Existence as held by Meister Thomas Eckhardt. Yet Martin, like Krishnamurti did not embrace the concept of a transcendent supreme authority, and believed with great conviction in a world free from hierarchial value systems. These concepts

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<sup>86</sup> Glimcher, op cit. P 13

<sup>87</sup> Glimcher, op cit. P 141

<sup>88</sup> Glimcher, op cit. P 13

<sup>89</sup> Agnes Martin, *Writings*, ed. Herausgegeben von Dieter Schwartz (Cantz, 1992). P 89

<sup>90</sup> Martin, Agnes, *What we do not see if we do not see*, Lecture, City University, New York, 1979

<sup>91</sup> Glimcher, *Agnes Martin Paintings, Writings, Remembrances*. PP 34-35

<sup>92</sup> Haskell, op. cit. P 110

<sup>93</sup> Glimcher, op. cit. P 83

were “anti-freedom”<sup>94</sup> for the conscious, untroubled mind. “All the authority there is, is within ourselves as a result of our obedience [to the conscious mind], then we are free. This is the only road to freedom.”<sup>95</sup> With more accurate obedience Martin believed we become more aware of the true and unchanging reality. This reality Martin painted as a merging, a breaking down of form to create fluctuations of figure and ground, simultaneously capturing qualities of stillness and movement<sup>96</sup>. In leaving the fixed form behind Martin created “a space for perception, realized stroke by stroke, line by line”<sup>97</sup>, portents Krauss experienced as a permeable process: “wall to mist, weave to cloud, closed to open, form to formless.”<sup>98</sup>

This world is nothing but the glory of Tao  
expressed through different names and forms  
One who sees the things of this world  
as being real and self existent  
has lost sight of the truth  
To him, every word becomes a trap  
everything becomes a prison

One who knows the truth  
That underlies all things  
Lives in this world without danger  
To him, every word reflects the universe  
Every moment brings enlightenment

*Tao Te Ching*, Verse 32, Paragraphs 2 and 3

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<sup>94</sup> Glimcher, *Agnes Martin Paintings, Writings, Remembrances*. P 86

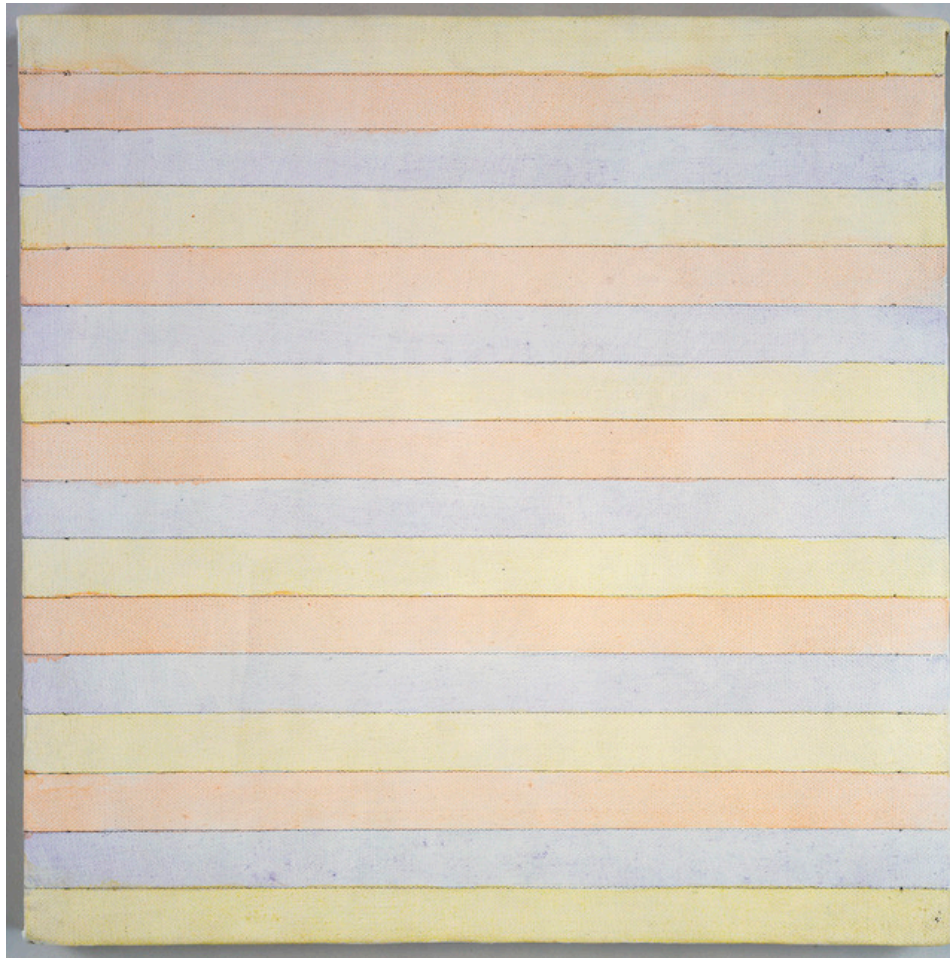
<sup>95</sup> Ibid P 86

<sup>96</sup> Haskell, op. cit. P 108

<sup>97</sup> Martin, op. cit. P 7

<sup>98</sup> Krauss, op. cit. P 82





Agnes Martin, *Untitled #9*, 1999.  
Acrylic and graphite on linen, 30.5 x 30.5cm, Pace Gallery, New York

## **The Ungraspable**

I am interested in what escapes me -- not in order to arrest it but in order to experiment with the 'ungraspable'. Engaged gestures, the loss of control that is fully assumed and proposed as an active experience, my way of proceeding consists of such loss of control, the absence of overbearing materiality, the attempt to escape from the tyranny of objects.

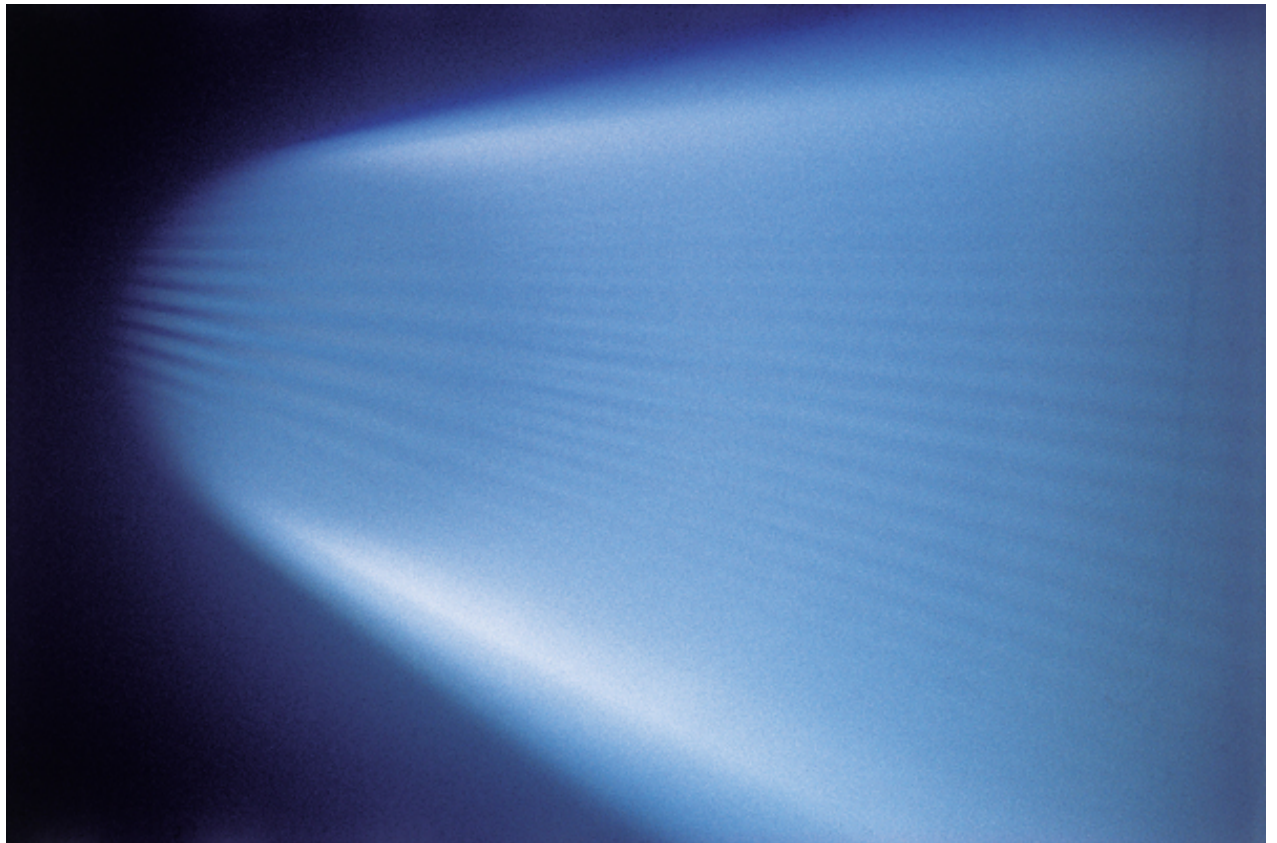
Ann Veronica Janssens<sup>99</sup>

Agnes Martin's permeable grids of conduited energy interconnect with the artwork of Ann Veronica Janssens in the sense that both are signifiers for spaces

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<sup>99</sup> Michael Francois, "Ann-Veronica Janssens, Sculpteur, extract interview," *Gico Artistas Belgas, institute de la Juventual* (2004).

of perception, thresholds for reception and response. Unlike Martin whose art practice was an essentially spiritual journey, Janssens' "ungraspable"<sup>100</sup> projects are based on scientific facts, with cognition, reflexology and psychology at the heart of her experiments<sup>101</sup>. By dissolving the assumed relationships of time, space and matter via spatial extensions, distribution of light, radiant colour, and translucent or reflective surfaces, Janssens reveals the instability of our perceptions.<sup>102</sup> The outcome as transcribed by Michael Francois is a sort of "grafting of super spaces; spaces surrounding a given space, spaces without space, places for the capture of light, spaces conceived as springboards towards the void. It is the void that I try to set in motion, conferring upon it a kind of temporality".<sup>103</sup>



Ann Veronica Janssens, *Corps Rond*, 1996-2001  
Artificial light, dimensions variable <sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qenILOTrZXM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qenILOTrZXM), Roccoco Productions for Das Platforms, 09/07/2012

<sup>101</sup> Francois, "Ann-Veronica Janssens, Sculpteur, extract interview."

<sup>102</sup> Janssens, Ann Veronica, Interview/Text, Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, [http://www.gms.be/index.php?content=artist\\_detail&id\\_artist=29](http://www.gms.be/index.php?content=artist_detail&id_artist=29), 2014

<sup>103</sup> Francois, "Ann-Veronica Janssens, Sculpteur, extract interview." 2004

<sup>104</sup> [http://www.hanstheys.be/artists/ann\\_veronica\\_janssens/](http://www.hanstheys.be/artists/ann_veronica_janssens/) 26/10/2008

To me it would seem that there is an historical connection from the art philosophy of the Constructivists to Janssens' dynamic voids of ephemeral temporality. Constructivism first appeared as a formal art concept with Naum Gabo's *Realistic Manifesto* in 1920. Gabo developed an art philosophy and practice embracing space as a sculptural element, investigating height, rigidity and volume without mass.<sup>105</sup> As stated by Gabo "I eliminate angularity in space construction and give space the curved character which it has to my perception. There are some who consider my spheric theme as an image of infinity. I feel continuity rather than infinity".<sup>106</sup> Gabo's spatial continuums are investigated by Janssens whose sculptures do not define matter, rather they act as experiences to destabilise matter and distort time, creating thresholds where the image is reassimilated<sup>107</sup>: an intermingling and continuation of structure and space.



Ann Veronica Janssens, *Golden Section*, Sydney Biennale BOS18, 2012

Reflective Film: 10m w x 4m h. Glass, coloured distilled water, paraffin oil, wooden base, 60cms w x 60cms d x 112cms h

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<sup>105</sup> Lund Humphries, *Gabo* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957). P 9 See Plates 70-71, *Variations of Spheric Theme*, 1937

<sup>106</sup> Ibid, between plates 64 and 65

<sup>107</sup> Francois, "Ann-Veronica Janssens, Sculpteur, extract interview." 2004

Since Gabo, Constructivist ideas evolved to use light, chance, movement, repetition, optical phenomena and spectator participation with objects.<sup>108</sup> Indeed by the early 1960s new ideas of space via mathematical and scientific discoveries led to new images or no images; colour was rejected as a sentimental indulgence or, like Janssens, adopted as a force<sup>109</sup>. As public interventions, Janssens' multi-sensory environments allow for the viewer to experience the artist's work via choice, responsibility and participation.<sup>110</sup> By creating images that are structured as stimulus for perception, Janssens' art experiments allow participants to oscillate between various combinations of sound, colour, mist, light and space, each element intermingling to confuse the boundaries of matter and architecture.<sup>111</sup> As stated by Marie-Ange Brayer, Janssens' "works move to an unlimited edge between opaque and transparent, interior and exterior, centre and edge. Janssens' work never occupies space and is never included in it"<sup>112</sup>.

Janssens' sensibility to engage the participant in these sensory, perceptual and metaphysical experiences seems also to reflect the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible*. By reducing the field of vision, Janssens heightens our awareness to perception as a primary process, merging the participant into the world, released from the bonds of reason via a loss of control as to what is there and what is happening. This is Merleau-Ponty's turning point of neither identity nor non-identity, to become a bodily, as opposed to a purely visual or rational process.<sup>113</sup> As Janssens notes "you don't need to think about it".<sup>114</sup> By Janssens negating all recognizable landmarks and distances time slows down, the participant innately moves more slowly and cautiously, "the light illuminates nothing that can authorize our wandering".<sup>115</sup> It is Janssens' intention to intensify our conscious experience, to "push the limits of perception,

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<sup>108</sup> George Rickey, *Constructivism, Origins and Evolution* (New York: Braziller, George, 1967). P 89

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, P 91

<sup>110</sup> Francois, "Ann-Veronica Janssens, Sculpteur, extract interview." 2004

<sup>111</sup> Francois, interview

<sup>112</sup> Marie-Ange Brayer, *Inside the Visible, Impulse of the Possible Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art*, ed. Catherine de Zegher (Massachusetts: Mit Press Cambridge, 1995). PP 445-447

<sup>113</sup> Brayer, op cit. P448

<sup>114</sup> Theys, Hans, "Interview, Ann Veronica Janssens: Sculpting Time", 2006.

[www.hanstheys.be/artists/ann\\_veronica\\_janssens/](http://www.hanstheys.be/artists/ann_veronica_janssens/)

<sup>115</sup> Ann Veronica Janssens, Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, [www.gms.be/index.php?content=artist\\_detail&id\\_artist=29](http://www.gms.be/index.php?content=artist_detail&id_artist=29), 2014

to amplify the senses, to stimulate the organs and organize them beyond their natural limits”<sup>116</sup>.



Ann Veronica Janssens, *Jamacian Colours for Melle Léone*, 2003

Space filled with artificial mist

By adjusting the perceptual parameters of space<sup>117</sup> Janssens’ art interventions become this mirage-like experience of motion and instability and it is here that we find connections to David Bohm’s Implicate Order: a set of co-present elements at different degrees of enfoldment. As Janssens states “properties of matter: gloss, lightness, transparency, fluidity, and physical phenomena: reflection, refraction, perspective, balance, waves, are rigorously investigated for

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<sup>116</sup> [www.flashartonline.com/interno.php?...ANN-VERONICA-JANSSENS](http://www.flashartonline.com/interno.php?...ANN-VERONICA-JANSSENS) #291 July-August-September 2013

<sup>117</sup> It has been suggested that Janssens’ artwork also makes connection to Op Art, although she is quoted as saying in her online text for Galerie Micheline Szwajcer “the Op Art movement does not really interest me”. If we take for instance the art of Bridget Riley, her paintings operate as visual phenomena bordering on the apparitional, creating the sensation of something interacting and interpenetrating. But Riley’s artworks are not concerned with a formal destabilization of the void, rather the concern is for forms and colours to be organized to make visible the enigmatic essence of seeing and being. [Bridget Riley, *Working with colour, Recent Paintings and Studies by Bridget Riley*, London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1984. PP 3-4]

their ability to destabilize the very concept of materiality.”<sup>118</sup> This paradoxical treatment of objects, Jannsens’ transformation of things into transitional functions, can be seen to reflect Bohm’s musings on essence and appearance<sup>119</sup>. Glass is used to stratify space, altering and amplifying space’s visibility; aluminium foil diffracts and reflects space; mirrors function as light transmitting agents reconverting a place’s conditions of visibility; concrete blocks become constructions of space, paradoxically circumscribing a void<sup>120</sup>. As experienced by Brayer this intermingling of elements “shifts us from one reality to another, at times linking the visible to the acoustic, acoustic to the tactile, tactile to the invisible in a never-ending permutation of the perceptual conditions of the place”<sup>121</sup>. These experiences underscore the fleeting, ephemeral or fragile character of what Jannsens, the Constructivists, Merleau-Ponty and Bohm are proposing as the true nature of physical reality.

Eyes look but cannot see it  
 Ears listen but cannot hear it  
 Hands grasp but cannot touch it  
 Beyond the senses lies the great Unity-  
 Invisible, inaudible, intangible

What rises up appears bright  
 What settles down appears dark  
 Yet there is neither darkness nor light  
 just an unbroken dance of shadows  
 From nothingness to fullness  
 and back again to nothingness  
 This formless form  
 This imageless image  
 Cannot be grasped by mind or might

Try to face it  
 In what place will you stand?  
 Try to follow it  
 To what place will you go?

Know That which is beyond all beginnings  
 And you will know everything here and now  
 Know everything in this moment  
 And you will know the Eternal Tao

*Tao Te Ching, Verse 14*

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<sup>118</sup> Ann Veronica Jannsens, text, Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Brussels  
[http://www.gms.be/index.php?content=artist\\_detail&id\\_artist=29](http://www.gms.be/index.php?content=artist_detail&id_artist=29), 2014

<sup>119</sup> See Ann Veronica Jannsens, Carriageworks, Sydney, 2012  
<http://www.carriageworks.com.au/?page=Event&event=Ann-Veronica-Jannsens>

<sup>120</sup> Brayer, op. cit. P 446

<sup>121</sup> Brayer, op cit. P 448



Ann Veronica Jannsens, *Blue, Red and Yellow*, 2001  
Neue National Galerie, Berlin. Courtesy of Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Brussels<sup>122</sup>

## Traceless Traces

If we perceive, we are alive, however tiny the event. Perhaps that is why I strive to find significance through sounds and movements that operate at the threshold of perception, offering an elusive, dream-like world which for me is vital and close to the state of life itself.

Max Eastley <sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Jannsens' installation *Blue, Red and Yellow*, constructed on the terrace of the Neue Nationale Galerie Berlin 2001 gave the external appearance of a pavilion-like structure. Upon entering, the internal boundaries were confounded by a dense mist and the interweaving of blue, red and yellow transparent colour film. These colours fused at intersections, the participant wandering through a dematerialised colour abstraction.

<sup>123</sup> Max Eastley, Exhibition Text, Metropole Gallery, Folkstone, England, 2008

Ann Veronica Janssens' immaterial sculptural abstractions destabilize our sense of time and movement so that the participant feels as if they are in a slow-motion film<sup>124</sup>. In some ways this sensory state is echoed in the timeless and trance-like artworks of artist and musician Max Eastley. Both artists, and their creative outcomes convey a permeable shift from the visual, to the audible, to the sensory, to the intelligible, both providing potential access to unexperienced perceptions regarding an underlying reality. According to Eastley "movement is a kind of ghost, uniting visual things and sound"<sup>125</sup>, the visual perceived as solid, the audible as intangible or less solid, and movement as even more remote and even more intangible. Eastley states "I am constantly moving between those three elements and at any point all three could be termed ghostly illusions"<sup>126</sup>

Unfortunately not that much has been written on Max Eastley, but his art projects have a biographical presence on You Tube. Gleaned from a suite of artworks from Eastley's *Clocks of the Midnight Hours* one finds an intuitive sensibility to the environment. This sensibility interconnects with Agnes Martin's innate responses to an underlying reality: "the falling sun, was gold, then grey, then nothing",<sup>127</sup> it is not the landscape as object that acts as inspiration but something more subliminal.

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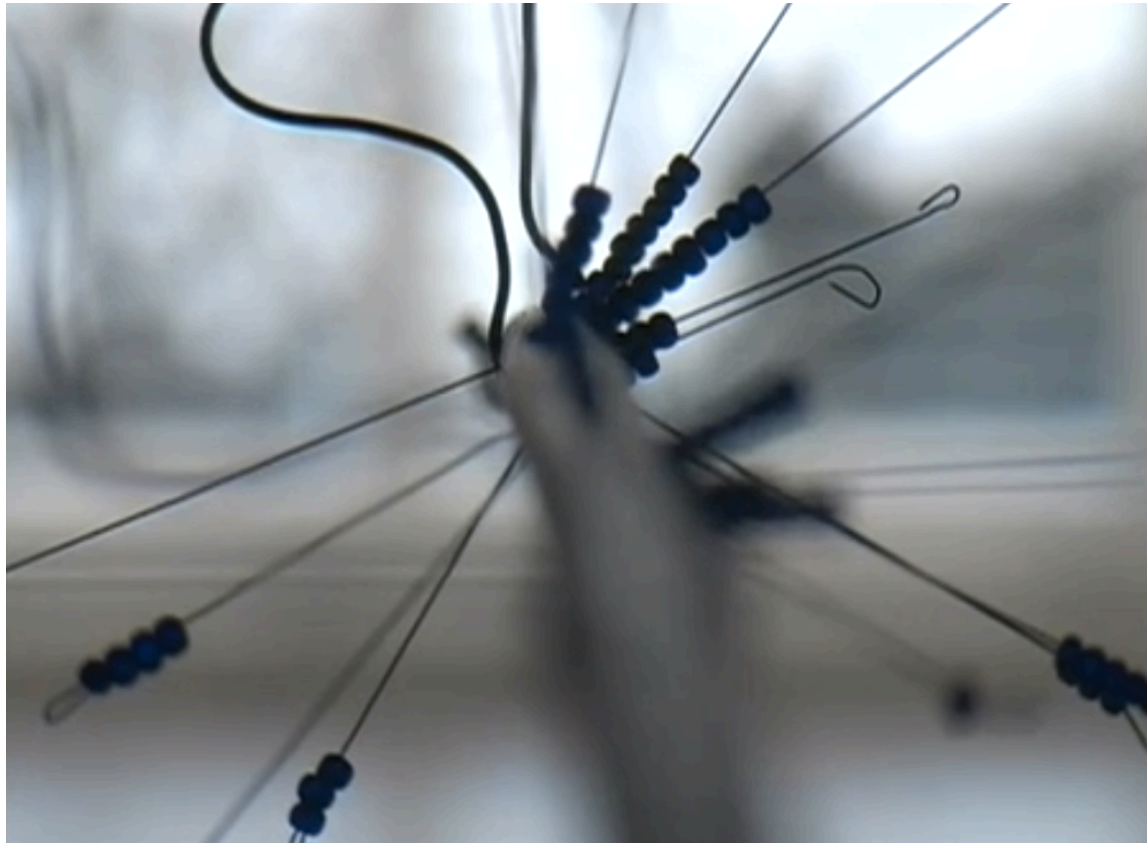
<sup>124</sup> Ann Veronica Janssens, text, Galerie Micheline Szwajcer, Brussels 2014

<sup>125</sup> Max Eastley, Interview, *The Wire*, Issue #265, March 2006

<sup>126</sup> Max Eastley, Email correspondence with Christine Simpson, March 2014

<sup>127</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc6DSFNLSg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc6DSFNLSg), Max Eastley, *Clocks of the Midnight Hours*, Anothertimbre, 1986





Max Eastley, *Kinetic Drawings*, May 2008, Video still  
Metropole Gallery, Folkstone. Film by Helen Retts<sup>128</sup>

Eastley's aeolian-inspired external sonic works seem to be an accepting rather than a making, an invitation for natural phenomena to find its own expressiveness before thinking has its way and turns the process into something logical or symbolic. Like John Cage's chance systems, Eastley's art projects appear to be a move from arranging things to facilitating processes, "when art is process rather than object, time becomes less meaningful" muses James Pritchett.<sup>129</sup> These systems allow for, as Pritchett contends, "a totality of possibilities, since thought or accumulated knowledge creates prejudices and excludes possibilities".<sup>130</sup> By emptying our mind of thoughts about sounds we identify with infinite space, Eastley's aeolian works trace the traceless path of

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<sup>128</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6WHdZPzfW8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6WHdZPzfW8) 18/09/2008

<sup>129</sup> James Pritchett, *The Music of John Cage*, ed. Arnold Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). P 147

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.* P 76

unknowing: Krishnamurti's intelligence, constituting a continuum that perceives the flow of timeless insight.<sup>131</sup>



Max Eastley, *Kinetic Drawings*, May 2008 Video still  
Metropole Gallery, Folkstone. Film by Helen Retts<sup>132</sup>

David Bohm's Implicate and Explicate Orders of constant change through movement seems to be a consistent field of enquiry for this artist. According to Eastley the process of movement and change in the natural world is happening quite rapidly, an infinite multiplicity of simultaneous activities, yet he feels that "reality, whatever that is, we are missing it all the time."<sup>133</sup> This reality seems to be recorded by Eastley as events of erasure<sup>134</sup>: resonating layers of texture intermingling to produce what appears to be some sort of consistency, yet the layering is never the same<sup>135</sup>. There is reference to what is unseen, whether that be the internal universe of the body or the invisible forces of nature: "the

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid. P 77

<sup>132</sup> [www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6WHdZPzfW8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6WHdZPzfW8), Kinetic Drawings, 2008

<sup>133</sup> Max Eastley, *Speakgreen*, *Max Eastley Soundings* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lG8tfXNXgp4> 18/01/2011

<sup>134</sup> Max Eastley, *Clocks of the Midnight Hours*

<sup>135</sup> Max Eastley, *Speakgreen*

sightless stone, the enquiring hand”<sup>136</sup>, the animate, inanimate and artificial, kinetically merging to produce a synthetic organic art form<sup>137</sup> comprising largely what Eastley terms “sound marks, not drawing marks”<sup>138</sup>. Eastley’s kinetic and sonic spectres of matter moving with space act as some sort of meditative enigma, vital and untranslatable, to still and empty the mind, where, as Pritchett states “no-mindedness is a state of non-attachment to thoughts”<sup>139</sup>

Tao gives life to all things  
    Te gives them fulfilment  
Nature is what shapes them  
Living is what brings them to completion  
Every creature honours Tao and worships Te  
    Not by force  
    But through its own living and breathing  
  
Though Tao gives life to all things  
    Te is what cultivates them  
Te is the magic power that  
    Raises and rears them  
    Completes and prepares them  
    Comforts and protects them  
  
To create without owning  
To give without expecting  
To fill without claiming  
    This is the profound action of Tao  
    The highest expression of Te  
  
*Tao Te Ching, Verse 51*

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<sup>136</sup> Max Eastley, *Clocks of the Midnight Hours*

<sup>137</sup> Max Eastley, *Future Applications of Sound Art and Design to Architectural and Natural Environments*, *Contemporary Music Review*, 1996, Vol 15, Parts 3-4, P 143

<sup>138</sup> Max Eastley, *Sound Waves*, 2007, Cybersonics Festival, Kinetica Museum, Video Lisa Devaney [http://www.mashpedia.com/Max\\_Eastley](http://www.mashpedia.com/Max_Eastley) 21/05/2007 #19.

<sup>139</sup> Pritchett, op cit. P 76



Max Eastley, Soundings, Speakgreen, Cape Farewell, 2011 Video still showing vibrating string.<sup>140</sup>

## The Shimmer

I paint the whole lot.

Emily Kame Kngwarreye <sup>141</sup>

Max Eastley's ghostly artworks of kinetic movement and spontaneous happening, mediated by the feedback of textural sound waves<sup>142</sup> act as a type of "gradual awakening"<sup>143</sup> to an underlying reality: Merleau-Ponty's shimmering. This shimmering can also be witnessed via the embodied visual language of artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye. Through Kngwarreye's body there is a synthesis of her country's movements and the orally chanted permutations of her

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<sup>140</sup> Max Eastley, Speakgreen 2011

<sup>141</sup> Boulter. M, *The Art of Utopia: A New Direction in Contemporary Aboriginal Art* (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1991). P 61

<sup>142</sup> The Wire, Issue #265, March 2006

<sup>143</sup> Grigg, op. cit. P 38

ceremony. This synthesis became a visual intermingling of totem, body, country, ceremony and dreaming. “Fluidity as a structure”<sup>144</sup> as expressed by Professor Terry Smith, was the process of Kngwarreye’s art, as colours interacted like reflective planes to obscure the boundaries of any given thing, interconnecting the wholeness of experience in the seen world of matter and the unseen world of spirit consciousness<sup>145</sup>.

To experience Kngwarreye’s art is to perceive spontaneity and energy, achieved via the visual manifestation of her totem, the yam: a plant that swells as it grows under the ground<sup>146</sup>. In a significant shift from traditional indigenous art, Smith notes that whilst the traditional process appears as “linear tracks or designs followed by a screen of dots-laid on in successive dry states with discernable separations of level, shape and colour”<sup>147</sup> Kngwarreye’s painting was conceived “as a wet interactivity of all elements”<sup>148</sup> This wet overlaying and intermeshing of the figurative, the symbolic and the non-conceptual was at once representational and abstract, secular and sacred. Lines and dots morph to create images of the shimmering vastness of Emily’s place: Utopia in Central Australia and the timelessness of ancestral time. Kngwarreye’s artwork became a bridge between indigenous and non-indigenous art, a link that Terry Smith credits with taking “artistic individualism further than any other Aboriginal artist living in a traditional situation to reach a level of achievement beyond Aboriginality itself.”<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Emily Kame Kngwarreye, 1910-1996, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye Paintings with contributions by Jennifer Isaacs* (Sydney: Craftsman House, G and B International, 1998). P 32

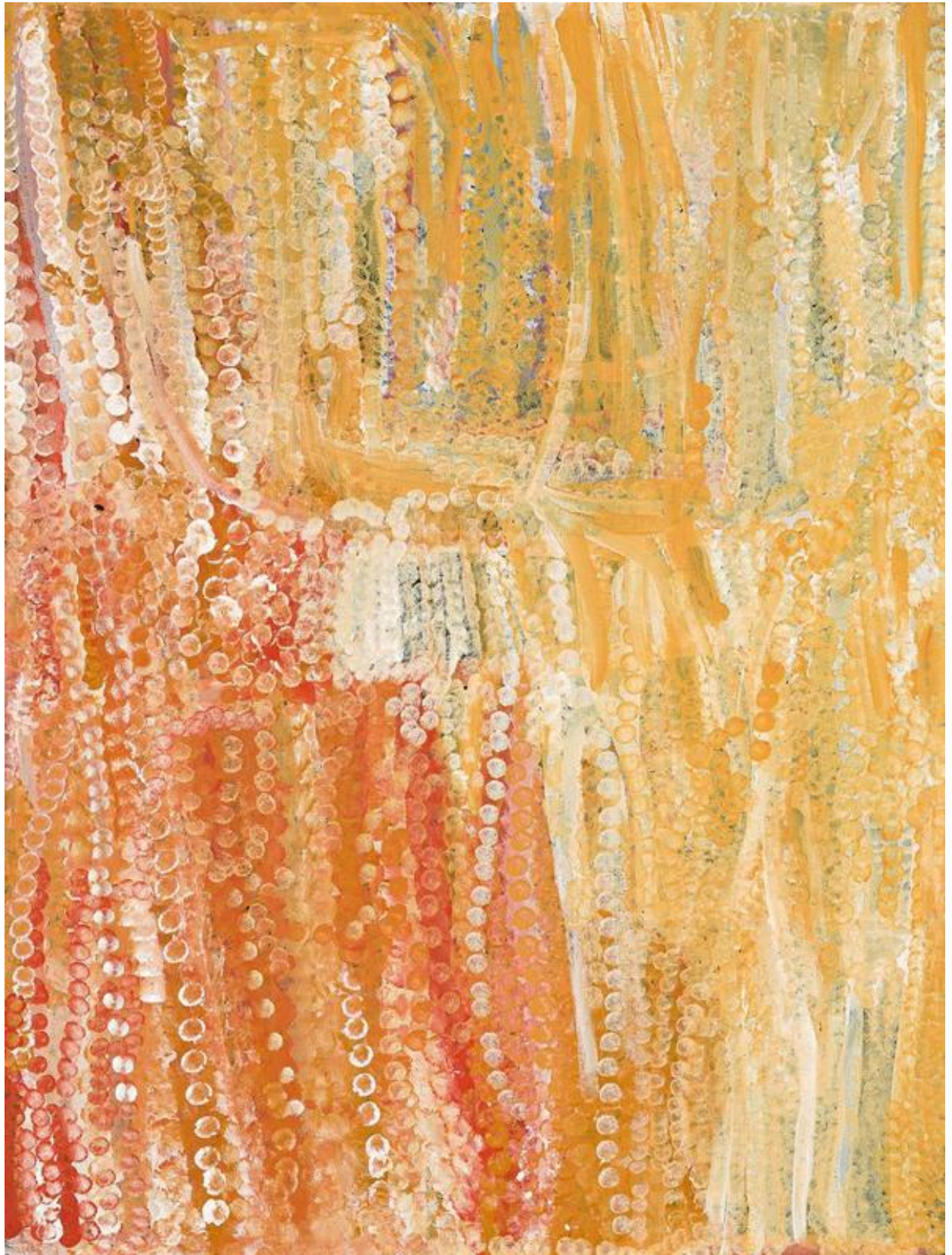
<sup>145</sup> Judith Ryan, *Spirit in the Land, Bark Paintings from Arnhem Land* (Victoria: National Gallery of Victoria, 1990). P 76

<sup>146</sup> Kngwarreye, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye Paintings with contributions by Jennifer Isaacs*. P 23

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. P 32

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. P 32

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. PP 26-27



Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Untitled, 1995  
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 122cms x 91.5cms, Delmore Gallery

Although differing in their inception, Emily Kngwarreye and Agnes Martin's paintings conveyed a universalist and mystical tone, both possessing a transcendental awareness, which Smith interpreted as a "state of flowing conscious perception"<sup>150</sup>. Neither artist's processes solidified into what Martin referred to as the outer mind: the mundane shapes of everyday volition and adapted thought. Their visual outcomes oscillated between the transparent and the opaque as background and ground engaged in some sort of cosmic, osmotic exchange: clearly providing something more than any concrete factual existence. Kngwarreye's and Martin's connectedness/obedience to the conscious experience was a visual metaphor for their painting as they made markings guided by what Agnes Martin described as the infinite sublimity of reality, as "awareness to Life"<sup>151</sup>.



Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Yam Dreaming [Arlatyere]*, 1995  
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 210cms x 150cms, Nangara Gallery, Melbourne

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<sup>150</sup> Kngwarreye, op. cit. P 32

<sup>151</sup> Barbara Haskell, *Agnes Martin* P 108

From Kngwarreye's art to David Bohm's suggestion of an Implicate and Explicate Order there appears to be change through movement. Like Eastley and Jannsens who investigate permeable shifts from the sensible to the intelligible, Kngwarreye's paintings also reveal a constant shift from the visible to the invisible. Eastley's thresholds of perception seem to emanate from distillations of natural phenomena and Jannsens' from scientific phenomena, whereas Kngwarreye's emerge from a secret inheritance of ancestral dreaming, yet all three artists come to render the past, present and future irrelevant. In this state of flow, distinctions of matter emerge and dissolve, intermingling to give a holistic view to the interconnectedness of everything <sup>152</sup> revealing Krishnamurti's intelligence and timeless insight.

For the onlooker, the interconnectedness of Kngwarreye's abstract markings make for ambiguous readings as they encourage the sensation whereby one image turns into another through some sort of mystical process of visual transformation: this ambiguousness does not allow for a rationalization as to what the thing is. Take for instance *Emu Woman* 1988-9: breast shapes are painted as a positive/negative reversal, the emu's footprint is also the shape for women's ceremony seating, and so on. Terry Smith expresses this visual exchange as "iconomorphism"<sup>153</sup> whereby abstruse markings produce "spectral after images of intuitive colour engagement"<sup>154</sup> providing access to endless visual readings of all things and no things all at once.

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<sup>152</sup> Kngwarreye, op. cit. P 32

<sup>153</sup> Kngwarreye, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye Paintings with contributions by Jennifer Isaacs*. P 29

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. P 33





Emily Kame Kngwarreye, *Travelling Emu*, 1989  
Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 149.5 x 122cms, Delmore Gallery

Kngwarreye's art was made whilst seated on the earth, her canvas on the earth in front of her. The meditative repetitions of strokes and dots, were accompanied by constant cycles of sacred chanting: song cycles of the Awelye-women's ceremonies, primordial rhythms which acted to permeate Kngwarreye's bodily experience of country into the invisible world of the spirit.<sup>155</sup> It is here that we find reference to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's being-to-the-world as Kngwarreye

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<sup>155</sup> ———, *Fluent: Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Yvonne Koolmatrie, Judy Watson: XLVII esposizione internazionale d'arte La Biennale di Venezia 1997* (Sydney: AGNSW, 1997). P 8

was observed to move bodily across the canvas whilst in the fundamental act of painting, echoing her country. As Terry Smith states Kngwarreye's was "not primarily an optical activity of seeing the actions of natural forces and matching this experience in paint".<sup>156</sup> Kngwarreye's art activity flowed out from her body and back into her body as her arms and breasts stretched forward and then backward impregnating the canvas with an esoteric layering of ancestral continuity, a bodily reenactment of the land.<sup>157</sup> In so doing, Kngwarreye's art could be sensed as a manifest interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's reversibility of the flesh, as subject, object and ground no longer carry any distinction: the seer, the seen and the unseen are as one, every thing interwoven into a painted metamorphosis of bodily and esoteric experience from the living to the spirit world.

The spirit world for Kngwarreye was accessed, according to Yvonne Koolmatrie, through the ancestral dreaming tracks: "fluid rivers of spiritual power interconnecting indigenous people and country"<sup>158</sup>. These spiritual connections are yet another layering, as it is the responsibility of the artist that the sacred continuity of the life force of each Dreamtime Being is carried forward in their work. Without the continuation of this painting ritual or ceremony the Dreamtime Beings' presence will cease to exist.<sup>159</sup> Therefore Kngwarreye's visual imagery is also, as Margo Neale interpreted "akin to a visual prayer"<sup>160</sup>. In some instances these visual prayers could be arguably likened to the metaphysical abstractions of Meister Thomas Eckhardt's outer to inner man. Via Kngwarreye's cultural narrative of the yam totem<sup>161</sup>, the outer man is bridged by the Divine Logos of the Ancestral Dreamtime to become the yam dreaming or inner man<sup>162</sup>. As Eckhardt's religious belief was one of detachment from the outer man and the sensible world so as to realise the sacred energy of the inner man, he therefore departs company here with Kngwarreye whose spirituality was one of holistic

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<sup>156</sup> Kngwarreye, op cit. P 37

<sup>157</sup> Kngwarreye, op cit. P 72

<sup>158</sup> Kngwarreye, *Fluent: Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Yvonne Koolmatrie, Judy Watson: XLVII esposizione internazionale d'arte La Biennale di Venezia 1997*. P 8

<sup>159</sup> ———, *Emily Kame Kngwarreye Paintings with contributions by Jennifer Isaacs*. P 18

<sup>160</sup> Margo Neale, *Utopia, The Genius of Emily Kame Kngwarreye* (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2008). P 72

<sup>161</sup> Kngwarreye, op. cit. P 15

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. Plate 71, *Big Yam Dreaming* 1995 PP 168-169

interconnectedness to the sensible and the spiritual, her artwork an expression of the whole of everything<sup>163</sup>.

Endlessly creating  
Endlessly pulsating  
The Spirit of the Valley never dies  
She is called the Hidden Creator

Although she becomes the whole universe  
Her immaculate purity is never lost  
Although she assumes countless forms  
Her true identity remains intact  
Whatever we see or don't see  
Whatever exists or doesn't exist  
Is nothing but the creation of this Supreme Power

Tao is limitless, unborn, eternal-  
It can only be reached through the hidden Creator  
She is the very face of the Absolute  
The gate to the source of all things eternal

Listen to Her voice  
Hear it echo through creation  
Without fail, She reveals her presence  
Without fail, She brings us to our own perfection

*Tao Te Ching, Verse 6*

## SECTION 3

### The Order of Being

I'm interested in energy, the energy between beings and nature and the universal.<sup>164</sup>

My past art practice has been a process based largely on intuition, tending towards a sense of rhythm, an innate quickening perhaps to the pulse of life and unencompassable energy. It is an art practice that has attempted to make perceptible this energy via heat, light, colour, sound and movement with the artwork developing into some sort of expression of sensory vibration,

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<sup>163</sup> Neale, op. cit. P 40 [Notes Yasuyuki Nakai]

<sup>164</sup> Kate-Louise Williams, quoting Simpson, *Christine Simpson, Exhibition Notes: Long Days Journey*, 2014

illumination and disintegration. The work I produced for the MSA: *Carbon Waves III*, related directly to heatwaves and the phenomena that heat energy invokes. Manifesting as a mirage-like shimmer, heatwaves distort and interrupt our visible understanding of matter, seemingly fraying the discernable edges of things to bleed them into surrounding space. It was during this period of making that I awakened to the sense that I was creating wave-like forms constituting energy fields. In some ways this making has unwittingly echoed Ann Veronica Janssens' immaterial sculptural abstractions as I played with the reasoned assumptions that belie matter. It could also be argued that I was intuitively creating the sensation of something rather than the thing itself; innocently hovering around David Bohm's Implicate and Explicate Orders and his musings on essence and appearance.



Christine Simpson, *Carbon Waves III/ Detail*, 2011

Car air filters, steel frame, monofilament, cord 3.5m h x 1.5m w x 600mm d

This current period of research for the MFA has made for deeper connections to Spinoza's underlying reality and I find that I am creating art that is grounded in a kind of dynamic stillness, reflecting an infinitely resonating universe that exists beyond the Cartesian mind/body division, religious dogma and reason. This is in accord with Mondrian's suggestion that "one feels oneself surrounded by the

sparkling stillness and the rhythmic movement of some boundless continuum”,<sup>165</sup> with the exception that I would replace the word surrounded with permeated. I have realized this research as something like a spiritual quest and a philosophical awakening: an attempt in part to reconcile the Christian teachings of my childhood with various philosophical and scientific speculations that address matter and consciousness. The artwork I have produced for the MFA honours unseen energy, inspired in some ways by David Bohm’s theorizing about “the Holomovement: the unbroken wholeness of the totality of existence as an undivided flowing movement without borders”<sup>166</sup>.

No doubt one has heard it said: you can’t do it in your head, in other words you need to get out of your head or you will not be able to make anything<sup>167</sup>. This advice has led me to a letting go of thoughts/actions that may hinder or block the natural and spontaneous flow of events: an acceptance that may be key to accessing an underlying reality. Taoism refers to this acceptance as *wu wei*, effortless and spontaneous movement: “when non-doing appears as inaction it is peaceful, silent and still; when it appears as action it is thought-less, reflexive and intuitive. As selfless action, it arises spontaneously out of the flowing continuity of events, like the movement of water is always appropriate to the circumstances of the moment.”<sup>168</sup> Here we find links to Agnes Martin’s untroubled mind and Jiddu Krishnamurti’s intelligence: when thoughts are stilled and no images are formed the self is no longer in operation and is emptied to flow with universal energy.

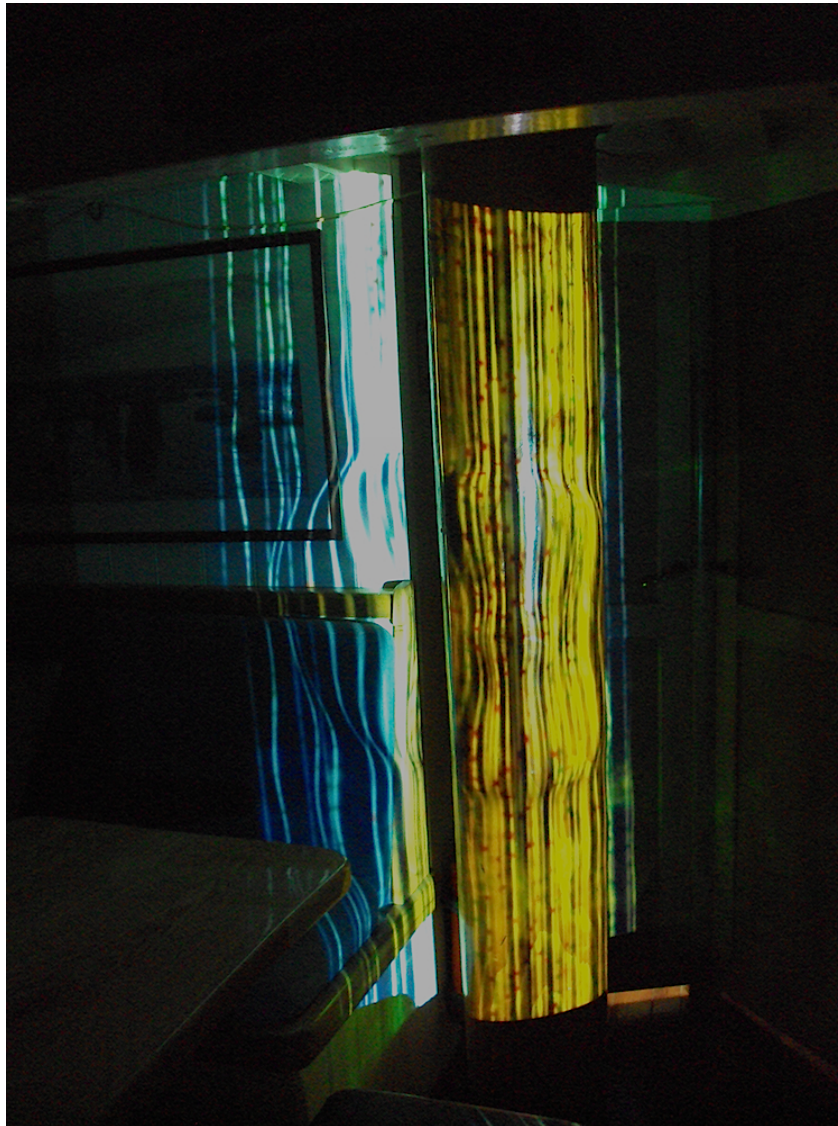
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<sup>165</sup> Bridget Riley, *Mondrian : nature to abstraction, from the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague / Bridget Riley*. (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1997). P 12

<sup>166</sup> Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. P 172

<sup>167</sup> Michael Goldberg, SCA Meeting, 2013

<sup>168</sup> Grigg, *The Tao of Zen*. P 280



Christine Simpson, *The Metaphysical Experience of Being at Sea: Metaphysical 1* 2014  
Art and About Sydney: Video still, audio-visual collaboration with Cade Turner<sup>169</sup>

This flow of universal energy or the *flow*, is an experience of being which was formally proposed by psychologist professor Mihály Csíkszentmihályi in 1975 regarding a phenomenon that occurs when one has mastered a set of skills. When in the flow we no longer need the thinking mind to carry out a honed activity and are able to enter a place of effortless doing. The hallmark of flow is a feeling of spontaneous joy, even rapture, while performing a task, although flow is also described as a deep focus on nothing but the activity – not even oneself or

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<sup>169</sup> Simpson, Turner: *Metaphysical 1* <https://vimeo.com/108774262>, Note: this work was viewed vertically for exhibition.

one's emotions<sup>170</sup>. It has been my experience that once a task has been mastered, for instance: 15 years of life modeling, the brain is no longer needed to problem solve, to copy, or guide bodily movements. "Draw bamboo for 10 years, become bamboo, then forget all about bamboo when you are drawing"<sup>171</sup>. As a child I experienced this flow when shooting goals whilst playing netball. After practising over many years, shooting became an effortless, automatic experience and it was only when I started to think about it and the consequences of not scoring a goal that my movements became mechanical and stilted. This free flowing, automatic response can be witnessed in basketballer Kobe Bryant's performance: 81 Points<sup>172</sup>

In response to my current research, the artwork for *The Order of Being* began as a diarized documentation of driving through Sydney traffic to and from the Sydney College of the Arts for one year. I find driving to be an interesting conundrum in relation to flow, because after a certain period of time the act of driving becomes automatic and yet we are seemingly making many decisions whilst in the flow. It is an activity that blurs the distinction between intentional and unintentional actions. Perhaps we are touching on an experience to counter the question posed by Jiddu Krishnamurti: can we empty consciousness of its content so that the mind can reflect timeless insight and yet have a brain functioning as a marvellous machine?

Initially the making process began with a documented record of traffic lights, whether they were red, orange or green as I passed through them during this year of driving. I then felt the need to create a visual and audible instrument to record the colours of the traffic-light diary and to investigate the possibility of making sounds reminiscent perhaps of the hum of distant traffic. The resultant work, *Long Days Journey*, has developed as a kind of industrial aeolian harp: predominately made of steel [like the car] and tensioned with Dacron threads which have been impregnated with the colour dashes from my traffic-light diary.

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<sup>170</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper and Row.

<sup>171</sup> R.H. Blyth, *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics*, New York Dutton 1960, P 5

<sup>172</sup> Kobe Bryant 81 points [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeXZY4eVLlo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeXZY4eVLlo) 22/01/2008

In so doing, this artwork has become a sensory apparatus to perceptibly convey a shift from a repetitive activity in the everyday to an energy/flow experience, making perceptible the unseen interconnectedness of matter, sensation, sound, space, maker and spectator.



Christine Simpson: *Long Days Journey*, 2014

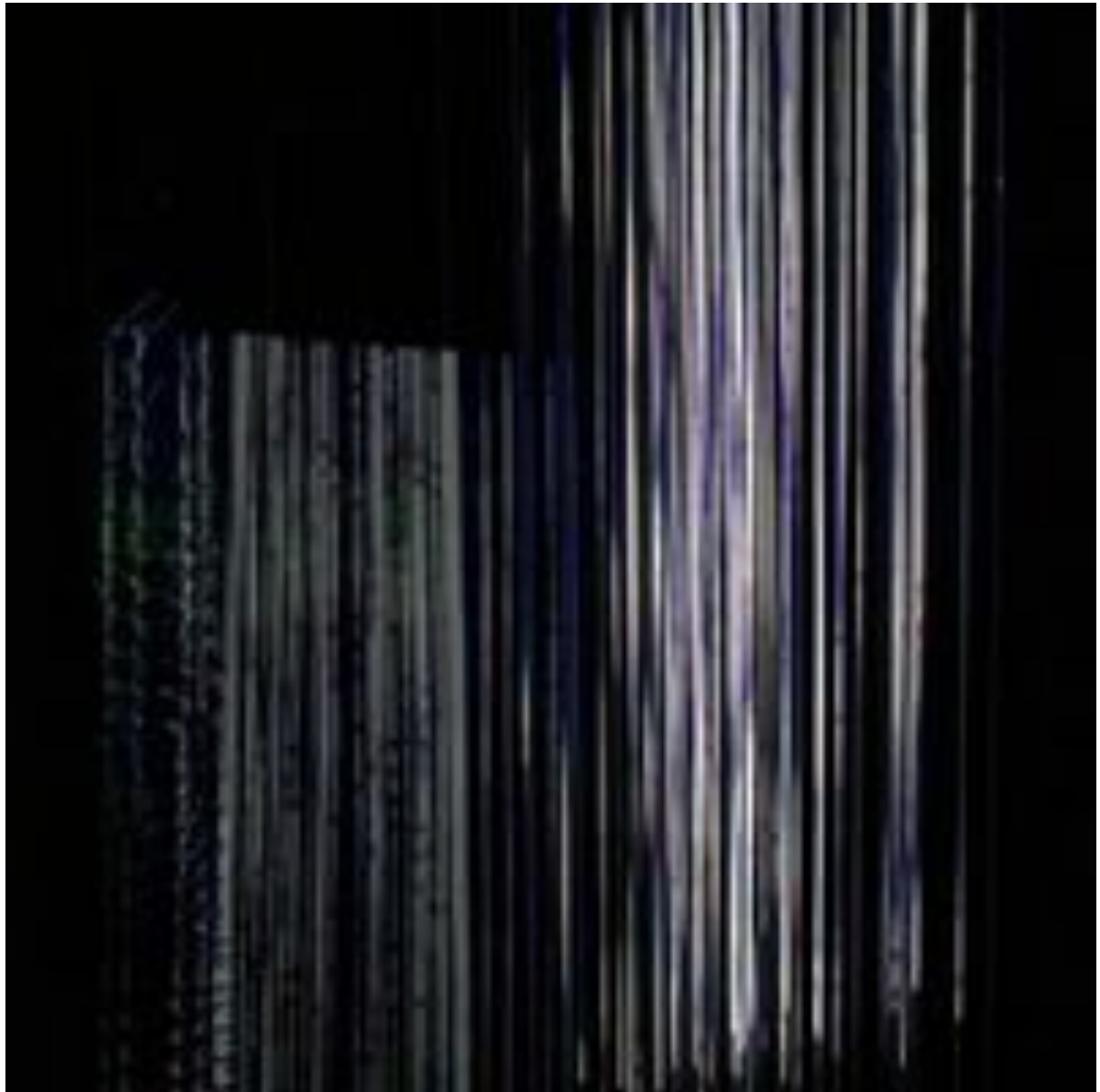
Steel pipe, mild steel sheet, steel eye screws, dacron threads 4m h x 1.2m diameter

The low frequency sound waves that have been extracted and distilled from *Long Days Journey* have been composed to intermesh with still imagery taken from this said work, the outcome being the audio-visual piece *Metaphysical 1*. After *Metaphysical 1* was realized I sensed the need to cast this somewhat



supernatural highway into an internally darkened space, a space of no discernable dimensions, to be captured and partially revealed by a vertical, wave-like string arrangement. These string elements are comprised of Dacron threads, echoing the verticality and materiality of *Long Days Journey* and yet transcribing into some sort of Bohmian Implicate and Explicate Order, positioned as they are to fold in and out, simultaneously creating and disintegrating form. Interestingly for me, as I roughed out a two dimensional drawing as seen from above for this installation, it occurred to me that I had realised the placement of the threads as a raw, subconscious connection to the dreaming tracks of Emily Kngwarreye's people. I also felt further connection to Emily with the physicality of this installation, my body and its movements acting as a synthesis for my own experiences and realisations during this period of research.

As the artwork continued to develop as a site-specific installation, fifty two horizontally orientated glass planes were arranged in an alternating wave-like stack to counterbalance the wave of vertical threads. The glass planes reflect and refract the audio-visual interplay of *Metaphysical 1* as it projects into the threads, bouncing off into spaceless space to strike these glass planes. Luminescent energy is cast from these planes across the darkened void to visually communicate with another form that appears to hover within the dark nothingness. Comprising twelve glass planes and ten glass strips and a corresponding wave of vertical Dacron threads these elements receive and respond with ghostly pulses of light as *Metaphysical 1* intermeshes form and space. The outcome is *Untitled*, an intricate, organically precise weaving of threads, planes, light, sound and space that manifests as a seemingly fluid microcosm embodying the dynamic stillness of infinite space: a simultaneous experience of intimacy and expansiveness.



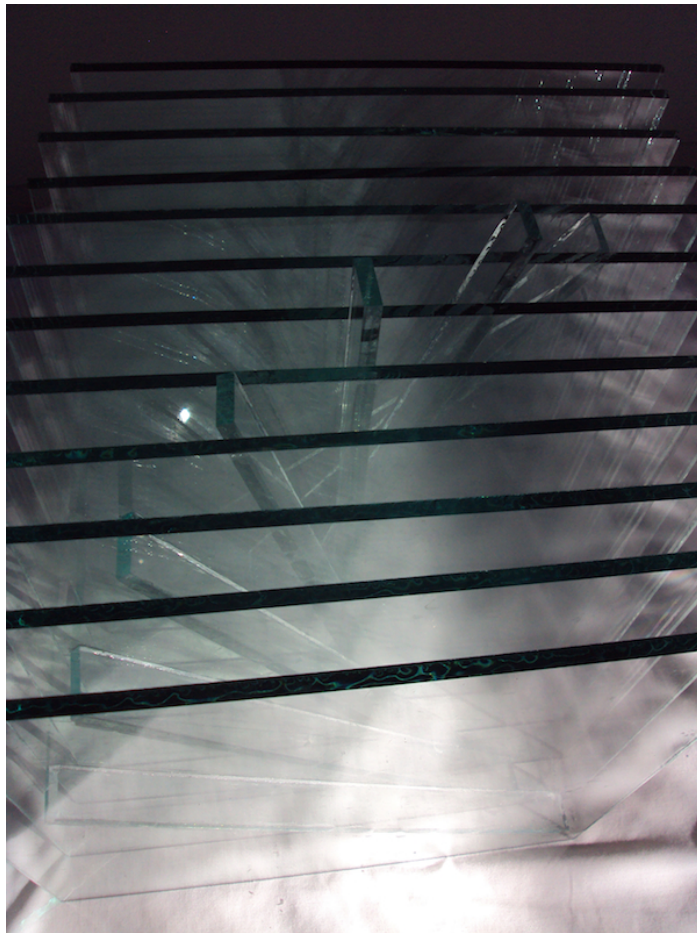
Christine Simpson, *Untitled*, 2014

Glass planes, Dacron thread, audio-visual component *Metaphysical 1*, blackout material, dimensions variable

In some ways I feel I have unknowingly created a kind of primordial, amniotic universe, somehow recreating Merleau-Ponty's reversibility of the flesh: folding in on itself to become the turning point of neither identity, nor non-identity or non-coincidence? *Untitled* is open to Merleau-Ponty's consideration that it is in the present moment that we encounter the flesh of the world: the senses intermingling as they translate into each other to become a holistic, vibratory experience. I suppose that it is only in having the immediate experience of this

work that one can assimilate their own feelings and findings, in the forever new and always the same.

As artist and writer Kate-Louise Williams states, Simpson's artwork "activates the spectator to come into 'presence' in a non-hierarchical way with that [universal] energy. To experience it within oneself, not above or below, but to become entangled with the whole ecology of forces, rhythms and vibrations. To experience the unseen forces that she intuitively comprehends."<sup>173</sup>



Christine Simpson, *The Metaphysical Experience of Being at Sea: SpacedCube: Detail* 2014  
12 glass planes, 10 glass strips, glass silicone 30cms x 30cms

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<sup>173</sup> Kate-Louise Williams, *Christine Simpson, Exhibition Notes: Long Days Journey*, 2014

The great Tao flows everywhere  
It fills everything to the left  
And to the right  
All things owe their existence to it  
And it cannot deny any one of them

Tao is eternal  
It does not favour one over the other  
It brings all things to completion  
Without their even knowing it

Tao nourishes and protects all creatures  
Yet does not claim lordship over them  
So we class it with the most humble  
Tao is the home to which all things return  
Yet it wants nothing in return  
So we call it "The Greatest"

*Tao Te Ching, Verse 34, Paragraphs 1,2 and 3*

## CONCLUSION

Knowledge always deceives,  
It always limits the truth, every concept and image does  
Meister Thomas Eckhardt<sup>174</sup>

It would seem to me that what I have uncovered in this period of postgraduate research; to be as one with Spinoza's underlying reality, we need to find ways to turn off the reasoning brain and the vice-like grip of will as it largely controls our day-to-day existence. We are primarily beings that exist as some sort of sensorial intelligence, but it is our innate perceptions that allow access to that which is limitless, unborn and eternal: Tao. The findings of this paper indicate that it is only when we are in this prediscursive state, that are we capable of perceiving infinite energy and our connectedness to, as stated by Emily Kame Kngwarreye, the whole lot.

Pure existence: that which is infinite, formless and modeless is reflected in Meister Thomas Eckhardt's essential intellect. Eckhardt regarded the essential intellect as an immaterial existence, only accessible after the sensible conditions of reason are stripped away. But Eckhardt felt that this innate state could only be reached through complete detachment of the self to mirror the character of Jesus Christ: the authentic conduit to pure existence. Only then could one reach the immaterial reality of the inner man. Faith, like universal energy is a mysterious thing and I am in no qualified position to disregard Eckhardt's belief system.

Jiddu Krishnamurti contended that our will is dependant on reason and is an impediment to Intelligence: timeless insight, Eckhardt's pure existence. Like Eckhardt, Krishnamurti regarded the reasoning mind as a limited sensibility, locked into a pattern of action, reaction, linear time and the past, Eckhardt's creature intellect. Yet Krishnamurti had a strong aversion to any sort of hierachial religious order, denouncing for himself any type of title, as this way of being was imprisoned by the will and humanity's misuse of power.

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<sup>174</sup> Meister Thomas Eckhardt,, excerpt from the poem *Intimate, Love Poems from God*, Daniel Ladinsky, Penquin Group, New York, 2002

Consciousness according to Krishnamurti was a receptacle that contained the concept of thought, memory, knowledge, experience and time, and only after emptying itself could it become as one with infinite energy.

Quantum physicist David Bohm, held that infinite energy was the only substance of the universe. From this neutral ground the animate and inanimate, the seen and unseen were to be experienced as unfolding and enfolding waves of particle movement: Bohm's Implicate and Explicate Orders. These visible and invisible derivatives also included our thought processes. Not unlike Krishnamurti, Bohm suggested consciousness contained thought, feeling, desire, will, awareness, attention, perception, acts of understanding and perhaps more. But rather than having to empty ourselves of this content to gain Krishnamurti's freedom of mind, consciousness, for Bohm, could be experienced as reverberations of visual, sonic, sensory, memory or logical qualities whose outcomes allow us to gather a sense of movement, flow and continuity. And for Bohm, movement was key to connecting with an underlying reality.

David Bohm and philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty agreed that the mind, body and bodily situation: the-body-as-it-is-lived-in-by-me, was engaged in fluid interactions linked to consciousness, in some kind of immanent and transcendent relationship with the ground of being itself: Merleau-Ponty's flesh of the world. This relationship was a raw, non-dualistic ontology, the visible and invisible engaged in a primary experience of reversibility, a place where nothingness might be. Reason, according to Merleau-Ponty, was felt to be an acquired secondary system, always preceded by the clarity of natural thought.

Artist Agnes Martin's transcendental experiences were in accord with Krishnamurti and Merleau-Ponty and all felt the act of thinking belonged to a secondary and limited experience, natural thought was a raw experience beyond time, dimension and form. Martin's sense of perception as process and Merleau-Ponty's views on consciousness are possibly one and the same: an innate function of receiving and responding before the thinking mind takes hold. Martin's artworks mirrored this sensibility as they unfolded from the canvas to

reveal shifting visual transformations, kindred spirits to Bohm's orders of movement and flow.

Ann-Veronica Janssens is a contemporary artist concerned with distorting time, dissolving space and destabilising matter. Like Bohm and Martin all these elements seem to be engaged in some kind of essential motion to reveal the instability of what is understood, to be seen. Again, perception is addressed as a primary process with Janssen's multi-sensory environments intentionally confusing the boundaries of the visible and invisible, releasing the participant from engagement with the restrictive, thinking brain to connect with an inborn sensibility. These ungraspable interventions are a reflection of the never-ending, perceptual experience of place: Janssen's take on the true nature of physical reality.

Through soundwaves and movement artist Max Eastley assists natural and man-made phenomena to provide experiences that are at the threshold of perception. Like Martin's innate, inner mind, it is an awareness close to the state of life itself. Eastley's creative outcomes run in tandem with Janssen's perceptible investigations, revealing the permeability of the visual, audible, sensory and the intelligible to provide access to unexperienced perceptions. Eastley's trance-like offerings attune the experiencer to an innate and empty awakening: linear time dissolves to become perhaps a reflection of Krishnamurti's timeless insight.

Interconnecting the permeable experiences of Eastley, Janssens and Martin, Emily Kame Kngwarreye's art process is another state of flowing conscious perception, the reasoning mind superfluous to raw intelligence. Her paintings are fluid movements of timelessness, the visible and invisible via the flesh of the world conveying the intermeshing of everything. Merleau-Ponty's body-as-it-is-lived-in-by-me is exemplified through this artist's embodied visual language, the outcome a shimmering flow. Kngwarreye also pays witness to Bohm's Implicate and Explicate orders as her painted waves of movement mysteriously transcend the two dimensional surface to reflect an enigmatic, underlying reality.

Kngwarreye and Bohm's timeless, oscillating waves that shift from the sensible to the intelligible have inspired an immersive, interrelated, wave-like experience for the onlooker with the artwork *Untitled*, created after my completion of research for *The Order of Being*. What has become clear to me is that if one is to perceive and embrace the infinite energy of a foundational reality we must find ways to release ourselves from reason and will. Eckhardt did this through religious faith, Krishnamurti: meditative observation, Bohm: scientific experimentation, Merleau-Ponty: perceptual philosophy, Martin: transcendental awareness, Janssens: destabilizing materiality, Eastley: facilitating phenomena and Kngwarreye: the interconnectedness of everything.

In a time of great technological advancement, where we seem to have an explosion of materialistic information, we also seem to experience so very little sensory and spiritual awareness; where is our connection to the humble and mighty Tao? Shackled, as we are by the limitations of thinking and our knowing so much, perhaps we have put our innate Tao awareness into a deep sleep. To become the process of becoming itself, the process of change and movement, to relate to our order of being as being indivisible from universal energy, possibly it is only then that Krishnamurti's Intelligence will blossom.



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