

1-1-2002

An exploration of the transcending experience in the art-making process

Veronica Aldous
Edith Cowan University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses>



Part of the [Philosophy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Aldous, V. (2002). *An exploration of the transcending experience in the art-making process*.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/744>

This Thesis is posted at Research Online.
<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/744>

Edith Cowan University

Copyright Warning

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorize you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. Where the reproduction of such material is done without attribution of authorship, with false attribution of authorship or the authorship is treated in a derogatory manner, this may be a breach of the author's moral rights contained in Part IX of the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth).
- Courts have the power to impose a wide range of civil and criminal sanctions for infringement of copyright, infringement of moral rights and other offences under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth). Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE TRANSCENDING EXPERIENCE IN THE
ART-MAKING PROCESS**

by

Veronica Aldous, Dip. Art and Design (Fine Art), Grad. Dip. Ed.

The Written Component of a Creative Project Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements of the Award of
Master of Education (Visual Arts Education)

Faculty of Community Services, Education and Social Sciences

Edith Cowan University
Western Australia

September 2002

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

ABSTRACT

This study explored the transcending experience as described by visual artists that sometimes occurs during the art-making process. The exploration was conducted within a philosophical framework informed by the researcher's practice of Transcendental Meditation (TM). From this perspective, transcending is related to personal, inner (subjective), and ephemeral aesthetic experiences which never-the-less make a powerful contribution to the visual artist's experience of the creative process and to a lesser extent, the final product. The focus of the study was on the identification and documentation of the personal and subjective aspects of art-making.

The study consisted of two parts; (a) this written thesis that elucidates and supports the argument, and (b) an exhibition of paintings, drawings, and journals which represent a personal narrative. The research questions for the written document are directed towards extracting artists' statements that describe the nature and benefits of transcending during art-making. Document analysis techniques were employed to study the writings of a variety of artists and to create a mosaic of insightful commentary.

As a visual arts educator, the significance of the study related to the benefits of the art-making process for students of all ages. Both the exhibition and written document are presented to demonstrate that art-making and the viewing of art can provide access to silent (inner) experiences of the human mind. Strengthening the students' spiritual/aesthetic experience through art-making may bring the benefits of personal enrichment for some students by promoting the development of stronger self-concepts and self-esteem.

This study presents research about an aspect of visual arts education that has to date been largely ignored. Arguments for the development of self-realization and a fuller understanding of the aesthetic experience may contribute to a case for strengthening the place of the visual arts within the curriculum.

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
- ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
- iii. contain any defamatory material.

Signed:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Anthony Monk and Dr. Judith Dinham for their encouragement, support and practical guidance throughout the three years of activities and study culminating in this Masters of Education Creative Project. I would also like to thank Dr. Geoff Lummis for his appraisal of my written work at various stages. I would further like to acknowledge the support by all members of staff in the Art in Education Section for assistance, both practical and philosophical in nature. And I would specifically like to thank Vicki O'Shea for her practical assistance with the hanging and shipping of my art at the exhibition stage. My husband Richard and son Guy deserve special praise for their constant support and particularly for their help with computer skills I was required to learn for this creative project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
LIST OF TABLES	6
LIST OF FIGURES.....	6
1.0 Introduction	7
1.1 Description of the Creative Arts Project.....	7
1.2 Philosophical framework	8
1.3 Research questions.....	11
1.4 Key terms	12
2.0 Research Question 1	38
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 TM Model (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi).....	15
2.3 The Vertical Axis of Creativity (Abbs, 1989)	17
2.4 Creativity and the unconscious mind – historical context	18
2.5 Transcending, and spirituality – clarification of terms	20
2.6 Beyond postmodernism – art-making and viewing.....	24
2.7 The relationship between self-expression and transcending in the visual arts.....	27
2.8 Expressive-Psychoanalytical Model (Efland, 1990).....	27
2.9 Rasa experience.....	29
2.10 Benefits of spirituality.....	30
2.11 Outcomes – Exhibition and Thesis	33
3.0 Research Question 2	38
3.1 Introduction	38
3.2 Methods of transcending	38
3.3 Ideologies and personal narratives	41
3.4 Analysis of documents	42
3.5 Examples of personal narratives from artists.....	43
3.6 Comparison of artists’ statements.....	67
4.0 Research Question 3.....	71
4.1 Introduction	71
4.2 The Curriculum Framework K-12	71
4.3 The potential of transcending experiences within visual arts education as discussed by art educators	72
4.4 Art and Science and their shared role in education.....	75
4.5 A discussion about contemporary art education	76
4.6 Two perspectives on visual arts education in Australia	80
5.0 Conclusion	85
5.1 Closing statement.....	85
5.2 Implications and Recommendations	85
REFERENCES	88
APPENDIX 1.....	94
APPENDIX 2: EXHIBITION DOCUMENTATION	97

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Methods of Transcending (Adapted from Singh, 1999, <i>Vijnana Bhairava</i>).....	41-42
Table 2 - Comparison of Artists' Statements	70-71

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Individual and Collective Consciousness (after Maharishi Mahesh Yogi).....	17
Figure 2 - Vertical Axis of Creativity (Abbs, 1989, p.10)	18

1.0 Introduction

This Creative Project was primarily an exploration of the transcending experience in the art-making process. This introductory section provides a description of the project as a whole including (a) a philosophical framework for the project, (b) an account of my personal context, (c) and an explanation of the various outcomes that make up this Creative Project.

1.1 Description of the Creative Arts Project

This Creative Project for the MEd. (Visual Arts Education) consisted of an exploration of the transcending experiences that may occur during the art-making process and the links between these transcending experiences and visual arts education. The focus of the project was on advanced research in the areas of painting and drawing. Links are also established between my artwork, visual artists' statements and visual arts education. This written document provides a record of the structured journey, which was undertaken, and the accompanying journals include personal information and exploratory work. The research questions are therefore answered through studio practice, research, and discussion of the issues embedded in the Creative Project as a whole.

The Curriculum Framework for Kindergarten to year 12 Education in Western Australia (Curriculum Council, WA, 1998, p. 19) in the Overarching Learning Outcomes statement highlighted the need for “practices that promote personal growth and well being”. The second Appendix in the Curriculum Framework called Values (Curriculum Council, WA, 1998) introduced the topic of spirituality in education in the section entitled Self Acceptance and Respect of Self:

The acceptance and respect of self, resulting in attitudes and actions that develop each person's unique potential – physical, emotional, aesthetic, spiritual, intellectual, moral and social. (p. 324)

The development of a sense of self through visual arts education is not a new topic. My approach in this study however, sought to analyse the art-making process as a means of exploring how this development may take place. Ontology as the study or consideration of the reality of *being* has been for me, an area of interest for all of my life. In my view, the underlying drive to create art is related to the individual's sense of being and the individual spiritual experiences, which occur during the art-making process. When reading about art and artists I often find myself seeking out those statements describing the moments of the art-making process that are of a more transcendental nature. This study was focussed specifically on the simple spiritual experiences, (transcending experiences), that may occur during art-making. I felt this focus may add to the understanding of the benefits of visual arts education in order to achieve the Overarching and Learning Area Outcomes of the WA Curriculum Framework.

1.2 Philosophical framework

A philosophical framework outlining the practice of Transcendental Meditation (TM) has provided the structure for examining spiritual experiences within art-making. I learnt TM in the last year of my art school course in 1977. Daily TM enhanced my experience and understanding of the spirituality in my art-making and other areas of my life. So from this perspective, the spiritual and aesthetic experiences that may occur during art-making are related to the experience of transcending that occurs more systematically as a result of the TM technique. Transcending or the settling down of the mind, is a simple and natural experience triggered methodically during TM and to varying degrees during various life experiences like enjoyment of the arts. Traditionally, these aesthetic experiences connected with art have been thought to occur through the adoption of a “disinterested interest” stance to aesthetic phenomena.

TM is used in educational institutions around the world from pre-school to university level. I have visited several of these institutions and have some appreciation of the range of benefits for the students. Roth (1994, p.179) stated the research on TM has been

conducted in “210 independent universities and research institutions in 33 countries during the past 25 years” and compiled in six volumes. (For an example of recent research see Appendix I). There were more than 500 research studies that indicated the incontrovertible benefits of this technique. I have taught TM to all age groups in several countries, in community centres, in business and medical settings, to very ill people and very fit athletes and as Step 11 in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) programs. I believe change and diversity are part of the nature of life but the experience of the silent, transcendental area of the mind can be experienced as a source of non-change, the regular experience of which can create balance in active life and is a daily way to release stress and fatigue. I believe that art practice is one of the other areas of life that can greatly enhance the quality of life and aid the search for meaning through individual and collective enjoyment.

In 1996, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney held a large group exhibition called *Spirit and Place* which was supported by a publication called *Spirit and Place, Art in Australia 1861-1996*. This publication included essays and interviews with a cross-section of artists representative of indigenous groups and diverse philosophical positions. Spate (1996) wrote a “sceptical” essay in which she argued that the word “spiritual” is often misused and “abused”. She reviewed the use of the word *spiritual* from various angles such as; modern art movements, religious significance, and philosophical positions. Spate (1996) stated:

Many artists speak of the experience when the material (their art) shapes itself – in the common phrase, it ‘takes over’ – and tells them what to do next. The forming of the material seems to act as a conduit for some force larger than themselves. This kind of experience is often described as spiritual. (p. 78)

Spate (1996) also considered the many reasons and understandings of these experiences, some of which are traditionally to do with divine inspiration and others with the workings of the subconscious mind, both individual and collective. She questioned if this experience could provide a form of spiritual experience for the viewer as well. Some of

Spate's (1996) comments in this arena of discussion are concepts that I explored in this study:

The kind of experience I am trying to describe is not a human-centred one – such as one might find, for example, in contemplation of the marks of age in a Rembrandt self-portrait. Here the perceptual experience is as intense as in the abstract works I have discussed, but it conveys something that is more profound in a very different way. The miracle of paint, which is manifestly paint but which manages to convince one that one is looking into an aged face, allows one an intense empathy with another's human-ness that can scarcely be matched with the real body (one can scarcely look with this intensity and lack of self-consciousness even at someone one loves deeply). I know many people think of such a work as spiritual, but it seems to me that the word should be kept for that experience where the mind breaks through into a sense of the unity of being ... there can be in painting moments of perceptual experience so intense and so joyous that one has to think why this should be so – and of the mystery of our being that can respond with such intensity to matter. (p. 79)

Spate (1996, p. 80) posited that artists seek “the spiritual through their work” and that the viewer may also at times find something that may be called *spiritual* in art works. She concluded:

As a spectator, it seems to me that the spiritual experience in art somehow make one conscious of one's beingness on earth and of feeling one with its wholeness, both human and natural ... The experiences given by intensive involvement in the materiality of painting and sculpture may explain the continuing significance of what is increasingly presented as demoded modes of expression. Materiality and stillness still have a role to play at a time when technology drives us ever more towards dematerialisation, towards the loss of consciousness in the infinitely mobile. (p. 80)

Spate's (1996) discussion provides additional supports for this study to make a strong case for and promote visual arts education as a major tool in education. It is claimed that in schools, and in art education, there is not much emphasis on the development of the student (except perhaps for TM based schools, Montessori, Steiner, and other specialist

schools). I feel what is missing in visual arts education is an emphasis on the personal benefits of art-making although this may change to some degree with the introduction of outcomes-based education. The emphasis in visual arts education experience could include more study of the aesthetic experience especially as it relates to individual students' cultural and artistic experience. The study of art from other cultures could aid this process.

My TM background has allowed me to realise that the art-making experience can provide an opportunity for an approach to education that is more focussed on subjective experience, self-discovery and the personal development of K-12 students as well as adults. Art-making can be a life-skill, timely and applicable in our lives and in an education system which can be disturbingly impersonal for some students. Compounding this sense of impersonality or alienation, is the focus within visual arts education on the art produced (product) rather than the art-making process. This study explored the benefits of transcending during the art-making process to develop a justification for the visual arts in education and an approach to fulfilling the Curriculum Framework requirement for the development of the students full spiritual potential.

It is argued that the ideas expressed in relation to my own art making and interests may have implications for the wider community and for education in general. The next section provides further insights into my experiences of art making.

1.3 Research questions

This creative project presents an exploration of the transcending experience that may occur at times during the process of art-making and includes an exhibition and written document. The written document component of this creative project involved the consideration of research questions and provided a theoretical study in the same area of interest.

The three questions considered were as follows: (1) Does art-making provide a transcending experience similar to that achieved in TM? (2) Do visual artists across times and cultures agree on the nature of spiritual and transcendental experiences during art-making? (3) Does a focus on spiritual and transcendental experience have a place in contemporary visual arts education?

The exhibition component of this creative project is closely linked to the first research question as a personal response and research into this field. The concluding statement of the written document includes some implications for art studio practice and art education.

1.4 Key terms

Absolute value – unconditional, without restraint, not dependent, pure. Absolute consciousness is transcendental, not relative and pure, the mind awake and alert but without thought content.

Aesthetics – ideals, laws or principles that give descriptions and perspectives of beauty and values in creative expression that are individually and culturally based. The philosophy of art.

Aesthetic experience – subjective experiences during the viewing or making of art.

Disinterested interest described by Kant.

Art – (n) art objects. (v) Various skills related to making art.

Artist – one who practices art-making and is applicable to people of all age, cultures and levels of applications and interests. The idea that everyone is an artist is the most inclusive value of this concept and is the meaning that I wish to apply to the term.

Collective consciousness – individual consciousness is the unit of the collective consciousness of any society. The underlying field of collective consciousness can be experienced by individuals and influences the structure of society.

Consciousness – the state of being mentally awake to one's surroundings or having the fullest use of one's faculties.

Creativity – original thought and creative expression.

Culture – cultivation, civilisation, mental training and development.

Hermeneutics – Crotty (1998): described as a theoretical perspective that stemmed from historical origins in biblical studies in the seventeenth century. Etymologically means to interpret or understand. The hermeneutic mode of understanding assumed an affinity of some kind between the text and the reader, not just semantics and of shared and applied meaning. It involved understanding context, being and the influences of the author and interpreter's influences on the text.

Ideology – the body of the beliefs of any group, visionary theorizing and with reference to philosophy, the science of ideas.

Intuition – instinctive and immediate perception of a truth (without reasoning), direct understanding, knowingness arising from the pure consciousness level of the mind.

Pure consciousness – transcendental and absolute consciousness, awareness without thought content.

Relative – not absolute, dependent on relation to something else, comparative, connected, related.

Spiritual (ity) – the aesthetic experience created through art-making, and viewing, related to inner, subjective, personal and transcendental experiences; can vary in description due to varying cultures, life experiences and frames of reference.

Talent – faculty, ability or natural physical function, individually and culturally measure or gauged.

To transcend – to go beyond all levels of knowledge in the mind to experience pure consciousness.

The arts – certain branches of knowledge and learning that are distinct from natural sciences e.g. visual art, music, literature, and drama.

The process – the actions or steps taken during the art-making process.

The product – the art object.

Transcendental consciousness – experience of the mind due to transcending all active states of consciousness, see pure consciousness.

1.5 Personal context

From time to time experiences during the art-making process have reminded me of experiences that are similar, yet different, to experiences in Transcendental Meditation. During TM the transcending process is systematic and repeatable within both subjective and objective parameters. Clear moments of transcending are subjectively experienced as the mind awake and alert but without thought content. At times, during art-making I have been reminded of these transcending experiences by similar moments of silence and expansion in the mind and emotions. These moments in art-making are experienced during an activity so they are experienced alongside the thoughts and feelings that are part of the art-making.

This creative project, including an exhibition and this written document, incorporate the concept of an exploration of this transcending experience in the process of art-making as well as exhibiting art products. The exhibition component attempted to present the viewer with a visual account of various experiences related to transcending that can occur at times during art-making. The journals that accompany the exhibition document glimpses into the art-making process and experience over the last year. The written document component of this creative project involved the consideration of research questions and provided a theoretical study in the same area of interest as the exhibition. The three questions considered were as follows: (1) Does art-making provide a transcending experience similar to that achieved in TM? (2) Do visual artists across times and cultures agree on the nature of spiritual and transcendental experiences during art-making? (3) Does a focus on spiritual and transcendental experience have a place in contemporary visual arts education? The concluding statement of the written document includes some suggested implications for art studio practice and art education. This approach presents my personal frames of reference and links my artwork with the art education issues discussed in this written study.

2.0 Research Question 1

Does art-making provide a transcending experience similar to that achieved in TM?

2.1 Introduction

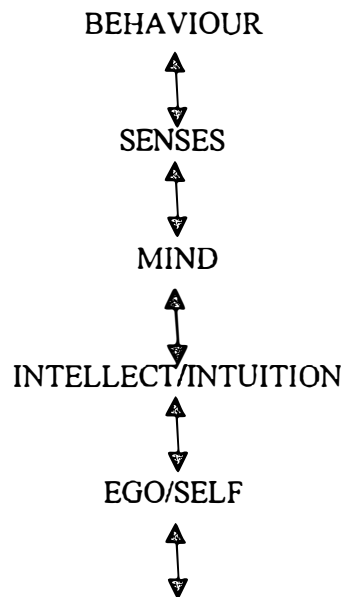
This research question poses a key question for the project as a whole. This section will provide background information on several key areas, (a) the Transcendental Meditation (TM) model, (b) Abbs' view of the vertical axis of creativity, (c) creativity and the unconscious mind, (d) clarification of the usage for this study of the terms *transcending* and *spirituality*, (e) a consideration of post-modern practice in the arts, (f) relationship between self-expression and transcending, (g) Efland's Expressive-Psychological Model of visual arts education, (h) the Rasa experience, and (i) a discussion about the benefits of spirituality for individuals and the wider community. This section will conclude with a report on the exhibition of my art works.

2.2 TM Model (Maharishi Mahesh Yogi)

TM comes from the techniques and knowledge revived from the ancient Vedic culture by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who is the founder of the worldwide TM organization. Many educational institutions around the world that incorporate TM into their education systems use the motto *knowledge is structured in consciousness* which acknowledges the importance of the development of the student. Roth (1987) quoted Maharishi as describing the experience of transcending:

The conscious mind comes to a state of self-referral awareness, which is the simplest form of human awareness where consciousness is open only to itself, it is the unified field of natural law, the total potential of nature's intelligence. (p. 37)

The following model illustrates my interpretation of Maharishi's Vedic Science approach to individual and collective consciousness.



TRANSCENDENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Figure 1: Individual and Collective Consciousness (after Maharishi Mahesh Yogi).

There are three major states of consciousness that we experience as (a) the waking state, (b) the sleeping state and (c) the dreaming state. A fourth distinct major state of consciousness is experienced during the TM technique and is called *transcendental consciousness*. This model assists us to explain the sense of spirituality or inner experience that is experienced during the TM Technique and that may be experienced to some degree during the art-making process. The transcending experience is beyond individual ego or sense of self. By becoming used to transcendental consciousness through regular TM practice, subtle realizations about transcending through other activities become apparent. The transcending during TM is regular and systematic due to a structured technique. The regular experience of TM has allowed me to realize that

during other activities, including art-making, some degree of this inward process is also experienced and that activities that facilitate transcending may also facilitate and culture self-realization.

2.3 *The Vertical Axis of Creativity (Abbs, 1989)*

Another model, well known in arts education is by Peter Abbs, an exponent of aesthetic learning in education and a Professor at the Institute of Education at the University of Sussex in England. Abbs (1989, p.10) described a “vertical axis of creativity” as the movement between the conscious and the unconscious levels of the mind.

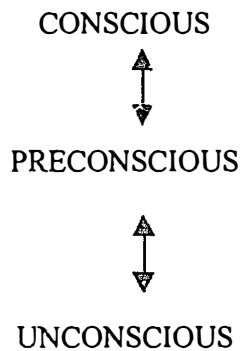


Figure 2: Vertical Axis of Creativity (Abbs 1989)

Abbs (1989) related this axis to the transference of night-time experience of dreams into the “day-time work of culture-making. In this transference the powerful unconscious patterning processes of the psyche-soma are used and elaborated in the creation of art, theory and science” (p.10). Abbs referred to Einstein’s understandings that for creative thinking to occur “one must constantly step *sideways* out of the tracks set by logic and *downwards* into the unconscious”.

In this model there was also a description of a horizontal axis that referred to the inherited culture or the symbolic field in which the creativity or the symbolic transformation take place. I believe Abbs’ model of two axes represented innovation and

tradition and they have constant interaction. The unconscious mind discussed in the Abbs model could also be seen within the TM model at the finest level of subtle activity of the collective self just above the line that delineates Transcendental Consciousness, (see Fig: 1).

2.4 Creativity and the unconscious mind – historical context

Although it may seem unwise to embark on a discussion of such a complex and specialised area, there are some basic concepts, which need to be considered. Inevitably, Freud's work springs to mind when the conscious or unconscious mind is discussed. Freud is well known for his development of psychoanalytical method, involving techniques such as dream analysis and free association. Using these techniques, he attempted to gain knowledge about an individual's unconscious or to make the unconscious conscious.

Jung, a younger contemporary of Freud, further developed the concept of a collective unconscious. He founded the discipline of analytical psychology and established the concept of archetypes that he believed were universal symbols present in the collective unconscious. The concept of the *unconscious* mind is of interest to many people. Boeree (2002, p.1) described Jung as having "a capacity for very lucid dreaming and occasional visions" and as making "the exploration of his *inner space* his life's work". He went on to depict Jung as being:

Equipped with a background in Freudian theory, of course, and with an apparently inexhaustible knowledge of mythology, religion, and philosophy. Jung was especially knowledgeable in the symbolism of complex mystical traditions such as Gnosticism, Alchemy, Kabala, and similar traditions in Hinduism and Buddhism. (p. 1)

In Jung's *Collected Works* he referred to the understandings of "inner" psychology in China and India and felt that these cultures had been able to maintain what our western religions and cultures had lost.

In the East, the inner man has always had such a firm hold on the outer man that the world had no chance of tearing him away from his inner roots; in the West, the outer man gained the ascendancy to such an extent that he was alienated from his inner most being. (1939, p. 785).

Jung (1939, p. 935), provided a useful description of the nature of consciousness and its evolution from childhood:

Consciousness is a precondition of being. Our consciousness does not create itself – it wells up from unknown depths. In childhood it awakens gradually, and all through life it wakes each morning out of the depths of sleep from an unconscious condition. (1939, p. 935)

In addition Jung (1939, p. 183) emphasised the relationship between individual and collective consciousness:

Our personal psychology is just a thin skin, a ripple on the ocean of collective psychology...where there are laws entirely different from those of our consciousness. The archetypes are the great decisive forces, they bring about the real events, and not our personal reasoning and practical intellect. (1939, p. 183)

In a discussion regarding the vertical axis of creativity and its relationship to the “unconscious” Abbs (1989, p. 12), listed writers such as Suzanne Langer, who were also interested in the emergence of imagination from the dream-state of consciousness and the “creative regression” back into the unconscious and dream state. Langer (1975) developed and wrote extensively about a philosophical understanding about form and structure, both natural and created within, our lives, and in culture. For Langer, *form* was not just physical or material, but could be a sense of order within related items, like a scale in music. She also wrote about symbols, rites and art. Ward la Cour (1989) cited Langer’s belief that art was the objectification of feeling and had a kinship with the collective natural world.

The concepts and research about the more subtle areas of the mind by these three writers, Freud, Jung and Langer, represent understandings that live on in western

cultures. Some of their ideas, like the Abbs model, can be related to the TM model. The individual unconscious, the collective unconscious and the feeling level of the artist are within the TM model just slightly above the line, which indicates the transcendental consciousness area.

Transcending is a spontaneous and natural experience that allows moments of silence in the mind. TM facilitates systematic transcending while during art-making transcending may occur from time to time. We have religions and philosophies but desire more experiential modes of knowledge for deeper, richer and more satisfying experience in our lives. Art-making can facilitate subjective experience and personal development.

2.5 Transcending, and spirituality – clarification of terms

In this Creative Project, transcending means to go beyond all levels of knowledge in the mind to experience pure consciousness or the silent area of the mind. Transcending, in theory could occur at any time, as it is simply the gap between any two thoughts. Transcending can occur at the junction point between the major states of consciousness, for example on falling asleep or waking up from sleep. At these times there can be a few pleasant moments of silence in the mind, which can be simple yet profound and enjoyable. This can also occur spontaneously during art-making. Therefore the spirituality being referred to in this study and as discussed by Abbs (1989) is the aesthetic experience created through art making and viewing, which is related to inner (subjective), personal, and transcendental experiences.

If the arts may then be said to be forms of representation of the inner experience of the artist, then spirituality is an intrinsic attribute of art and the art-making process. Artists working within various cultures throughout time have described the experience and role of art as being concerned with spirituality. Both art-making and the viewing of art can give access to a silent, inner experience of the human mind and being.

The term spirituality can be loaded with religious or new age connotations but I would like to focus specifically on the transcending aspect of the art-making process. In this Creative Project, input from artists and art educators have built a mosaic of understandings about the spirituality available through art-making.

Huebner (1999) is Professor of Philosophical Theology and Fellow of Berkeley College, in the United States and is author of *The Lure of the Transcendent*, a collection of thirty-five of his essays from 1959 to 1995. Throughout his career, he has sought to enliven debate about education and curriculum through continuing research in the areas of politics, phenomenology, aesthetics and theology.

Huebner (1985) explored issues concerning spirituality and knowing. He stated:

People experience moments when present forms of behaviour are somehow transcended. These moments might be explained or depicted as growth, education, insight, intuition, power...knowledge of oneself accompanies and follows these experiences...these moments have been stored within various traditions of these people. (pp. 166-167)

Huebner (1985, p.159) acknowledged in the past the tendency in education was to “distance” language and philosophy from the Christian traditions and merge them with scientific and more technical language. This is a complex issue, which encompasses many historically important value changes that are continuing, such as, multiculturalism, comparative religions, addressing gender imbalances and renewed interest in indigenous cultures. In this article Huebner (1998, p.163), tackled the question of how the words *spirit* and *spiritual* can be used in education. He also acknowledged the interest in “the west”, since the 1950s, in the “suprasensory” and eastern meditative traditions:

Talk of the ‘spirit’ and the ‘spiritual’ in education need not, then, be God talk, even though the traditions wherein ‘spiritual’ is used most frequently are religious traditions. Rather, the talk is about lived reality, about experience and the possibility of experiencing. (p. 164)

Huebner (1985) found support for his position on spirituality in Heidegger's (1962) concept of truth as openness to being. Heidegger developed this understanding as the field of Hermeneutics that is concerned with methods of knowing and understanding of the whole person and extracting knowledge about dimensions of human experience from historical religious texts. Huebner (1985, p. 172) believed that religious traditions keep spiritual aspects of life alive in human consciousness but the openness to continual recreation of "qualitative and sensory aspects of the world" was most important. Huebner (1985) stated what he perceived as a problem in education in the 1980s:

Every mode of knowing witnesses to the transcending possibilities of which human life is a part. All knowing requires openness and vulnerability. ...The problem of course, is that schools and other institutions of education are not places of knowing, but places of knowledge. Knowledge is the fallout from the knowing process. ...To bring knowledge to life, to enliven it, it must be brought into the living form of the human being, into the form that is a form of the transcendent. ... By enlivening knowledge, the student is also empowered. (pp. 172 - 173)

The philosophy of hermeneutics is further discussed by Patrick Heelan who is a Professor of Philosophy, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. Heelan has a background in both art and science with: a Ph.D. in philosophy, Louvain; Ph.D. in geophysics, St. Louis University; post-doc in high energy physics at Princeton; also research fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies, Dublin, and the Center for the History and Philosophy of Science, Pittsburgh University. Heelan has published articles in both philosophy and science, and consults for many journals and publishers. I found his description of hermeneutics to be precise, lucid and supportive of the subjective nature of this study. In his website, Heelan (2002) described hermeneutics (interpretation) as concerned with the generation, transmission, and acceptance of meaning within the lifeworld and was the original method of the human sciences. According to Heelan, hermeneutic philosophy followed Heidegger's perspective of analysis of meaning and interpretation. Heelan and Schulkin (1998) posited the purpose of hermeneutical philosophy was to:

Incorporate into the philosophy of science those aspects of historicity, culture, and tradition that are absent from the traditional analysis of theory and explanation, to re-orient the current discussion about scientific realism around the hermeneutics of meaning and truth in science and to establish some relationship between the current philosophy of natural science and hermeneutical philosophy. (p. 269)

Hermeneutics has also been more directly related to education. In *Applied Hermeneutics*, a website devoted to interpretational applications across disciplines (1999) the relationship between education and hermeneutics is discussed. In an overview of post-modern education the concept that all understanding is interpretive with many types of texts and media being available is clearly established. One writer, Haley (1999) stated:

Education is all around us. It is what socially promotes, it is the vehicle to Enlightenment. ... A hermeneutical approach to understanding education and learning ... incorporates many perspectives that allow people to have a more complete understanding of education. (p. 1)

The main approach in this study is to consider personal, subjective written material from artists about the silent, subjective and transcendental experiences during their art-making. This approach emphasised the need for considering the less tangible or quantifiable aspects of the artist.

Transcending in art-making may be understood more clearly if it was seen as being necessary in the process of intuitive insights that can also occur at times during art-making. Intuitive response could also be seen as very much a part of the art-making process for some artists. Arnheim (1985) traced the history of intuition and the intellect to establish the primacy of intuition in arts praxis. As a Gestalt psychologist, Arnheim is interested in perception and how art works to communicate meaning to viewers. He referred to Descartes as believing that intuition was more certain than deduction.

Arnheim (1985, p.79) described the phenomenologists of the Husserl School ideas on intuition as “the royal road to truth”. Intuition is part of the decision-making process that occurs during art-making and is silent, non-linguistic and self-referral. In his discussion, Arnheim (1985, p.81) argued that “aesthetic perception is a very special case...the arts only...offer us the experience of watching intuition at work”. The training of the mind to function more intuitively can be the purpose of regular art-making.

Arnheim (1985, p.84) asserted that in art and science, or intuition and the intellect, it was important not to “neglect one in favour of the other or to keep them apart” because such neglect “cannot but cripple the minds we are trying to assist in their growth.” This point highlights the ongoing relevance for balance in curriculum.

2.6 Beyond postmodernism – art-making and viewing

Bonshek (1996), an exhibiting artist and art lecturer at Maharishi International University in Fairfield, Iowa, in the United States, wrote a PhD dissertation based on Maharishi’s Vedic Science about art being a “mirror” of consciousness. In her dissertation, Bonshek (1996, p. 75) reviewed a range of concepts and writers in the area or situation she termed *Beyond Postmodernism*. In common with other socially aware art theorists and writers such as Gablik, Bonshek believed that there was a need for art to have some “social, moral, ecological or spiritual purpose to be meaningful and to influence collective awareness”. Bonshek saw the artist as struggling to communicate profundity and contribute to society and culture.

Bonshek (1996, p. 79) provided the example of Kuspit as a person who applied a psychoanalytical understanding of aesthetics to arts response. This understanding was based on Kant’s descriptions of a *disinterested attitude* as a type of direct awareness that is inherently subjective. Kuspit (1990b) called it “aesthetic transcendence” like the “non-attachment” of Eastern religion and “it is not the exclusive preserve of art, state or religion”. I believe that this aesthetic attitude can be experienced in response to anything

but can be facilitated by regular art-making and responding to art works. As other aestheticians have established, Bonshek (1996, p. 80) reported that art and art-making “is a deliberately designed means of aesthetic transcendence”.

There can also be an aesthetic transcendence for the viewer. Winterson, a novelist, described her discovery of what it means to have an response to artworks in her book *Art Objects: Essays on ecstasy and effrontery*. Winterson (1995) described her aesthetic experiences as a viewer of art and recommended that as viewers, people needed to learn about aesthetics. She described the benefits for the viewer who facilitated the creation of dialectic between themselves and an artwork. Winterson highly valued the richness of the constant exchange of emotion between the viewer and the art object. This aesthetic experience for the viewer and the aesthetic experience of the art maker are both valued elements that can be available through visual arts education.

Winterson (1995) described the benefits she perceived were available for the art viewer:

We know that the universe is infinite, expanding and strangely complete, that it lacks nothing we need, but in spite of that knowledge, the tragic paradigm of human life is lack, loss, finality, a primitive doom saying that has not been repealed by technology or medical science. The arts stand in the way of this doom saying. Art objects. The nouns become an active force not a collector's item. Art objects. (p. 19)

She stated that art was in this sense a “biological necessity.” The experience and understanding of the aesthetic experience available to the artist and viewer were the basis for the experience and development of a sense of spirituality in life.

2.7 The relationship between self-expression and transcending in the visual arts.

It has been established that a number of writers believe that for many artists, the art-making process encompasses what might be described as a spiritual and transcendental dimension. For the artist, art-making can be stimulated by visual experiences but also from a need for self-expression. Perhaps both experiences are deeply related. Perhaps the realist and the self-expressionist art-makers are equally experiencing and being driven by an inner urge for self-expression. From this perspective, art could be seen as essentially a spiritual experience in the life of the artist.

These ideas are not new and are often found in books written about the lives and philosophies of artists. Modjeska (1999) has written a significant novel called *Stravinsky's Lunch* in which she collected anecdotal material and retold some of the remarkable stories of the generation of Australian women artists, who emerged around 1910. *Stravinsky's Lunch* included a range of comments about the spiritual experiences of these artists during art-making.

For example, Modjeska described Stella Bowen as avoiding the “prevailing taste for abstraction” (1999, p.98) while continuing her love and preference for figurative art and the formality in the ancients, in order to work with convention and “penetrate further”. Bowen wished to capture inner qualities like personality and emotions rather than get caught up in meaningless detail. Later in life Bowen wrote an art column in which it was obvious that she did not admire innovation for its own sake but preferred artists who were “at home in themselves” (Modjeska, 1999, p. 134).

Another artist mentioned by Modjeska (1999, p. 115) was Gwen John whose vision was important because she was “patient and recueilli” which meant “to gather in, to be

collected.” This related to John’s sense of gathering in the “inner self”, the feminine experience and expressing it on canvas.

Later Modjeska (1999, p. 195) described Grace Cossington-Smith as wishing to paint “things unseen ... this other, silent quality which is unconscious, and belongs to all things created.” Modjeska (1999, p. 308) said that this artist saw the essence of life around her through “reverie”, like a meditative state, “evoking in us a state of contemplation, opening us to another kind of thinking and being in the world.” This is a very clear description of the transcending experience during art-making.

An extension of this glimpse of the variety of perspectives from artists and visual arts educators about what makes art spiritual and descriptions of various experiences similar to my definition of transcending is developed throughout this study.

2.8 Expressive-Psychoanalytical Model (Efland, 1990)

Modernism and post modernism have created a culture where a person needs to understand the theory that is behind the aesthetic experience of the artist. Arthur Efland, Emeritus Professor of Art Education, Ohio State University, has written extensively about art education and most recently about cognition and the nature of learning in art-making. Earlier, Efland (1990) reviewed the diverse concepts related to aesthetics, within the context of what might be called, late post-modernism. His comparison of viewpoints was particularly relevant as artists and educators started to interact globally in the late twentieth century. Efland (1990, p. 11) created a timely summary of what he perceived to be the most recent prevalent and dominant aesthetic theories. One of his assumptions was that the study of art theories and philosophies “plays a role in determining the character of art instruction.”

Efland (1990, p. 13) tabled four main historic aesthetic theories in the field of art, (a) Mimetic, or art is imitation, (b) Pragmatic, or art is instrumental conveying values of

solutions to problems, (c) Expressive, where art is primarily self-expression, (d) Formalist, art is formal order or “significant” form. Each of these aesthetic theories was further discussed in relation to respective learning theories and implied ideologies. They varied in terms of their practical application for behavioural educational theory and their influence is seen in teaching practice. Efland’s (1990) recommendation was that a successful art education program would endeavour to include and be open to all these aesthetic theories for the benefit of all students.

Efland’s (1990) Expressive-Psychoanalytical Model dealt with themes such as expressive aesthetics, where art is produced from within the artist’s imagination and knowledge and education are personal constructs validated in the subjective feelings of the student. The art-making process could therefore be seen as therapeutic, facilitating personal growth and personality integration.

Although my study is closely aligned with Efland’s Expressive-Psychoanalytical Model philosophically, it recognises diverse individual and culture-based modes of thinking and expressing. So I would go further to expand these concepts to incorporate the other three Efland models and the eclectic nature of late, late post modernism. The experience of transcending during art-making could naturally occur in students and artists involved with any of these models or combinations of them.

One of Efland’s (1990) conclusions seems appropriate and simply fuses the diversity into “the present”.

It could be argued that an art curriculum reflecting the conflicting diversity in the nature of art, would not be eclectic at all; it would simply represent the state of art at the present time. Understanding this diversity and its historical and social bases is the challenge confronting the learner and the curriculum maker alike. (p. 20)

The consideration of aesthetic theories from non-western cultures is timely and more relevant than ever in order to facilitate enquiry into the increasingly multi-cultural

environment in which we live. It is logical to understand art-making as being open to the diversity of theories and models from diverse sources for the following reasons (a) better personal understandings and outcomes in art education, (b) to become aware of personal narratives in art-making, (c) to allow for the continuing development of a sense of self and well-being and (d) to allow for individual creativity and the development of intuitive response.

2.9 Rasa experience

The Rasa Theory of the ancient Vedic culture of India explained that when art making the artist transcended the thinking level of the mind and experienced an expanded and transcendental level of the mind. Artists from different cultures have described this experience in different ways. The word *rasa* could be described as an equivalent for the western concept of an aesthetic experience. To explain this concept Bonshek (1996, p.46) quoted from Pandit, a *rasa* aesthetic writer, “the role of art is to relate human life to cosmic life through fleeting moments of *rasa* by engaging the viewer in life, and not attaining the permanent nature of *moksha* through renunciation of life (as does the religious person or *yogi*).” Bonshek (1996, pp. 45-46) stated that the Indian artist may express individuality while at the same time, experience a taste of *rasa* that is universal. According to Bonshek (1996), art also had a moral purpose through its ability to culture a healthy civilisation and to create *moksha* or spiritual liberation.

The relationship between individual experience and universal significance was also explained by Lifschitz (1999) in his PhD dissertation. For Lifschitz, *rasa* aesthetic theory and experience may be seen as a mode of self-realisation and therefore a forerunner of spiritual realisation. More importantly, Lifschitz (1999) argued that *rasa* theory could provide a foundation for the global vision of art educators and the development of cross-cultural art education. (p. 13)

Three PhD dissertations that relate specifically to the field of *rasa* theory (Ferguson: 1991, Bonshek: 1996, Lifschitz: 1999), all discuss the connection between the aesthetic experience and transcending experience in art-making as understood from the historic Vedic culture of India. The *rasa* theory of the Vedic culture of India explained that when making art, the artist transcended the busy thinking level of the mind and experienced an expanded and transcendental level of the mind. The three writers' understandings are similar to the paradigms that I bring to this study.

Fergusson (1991) explained in his PhD thesis, also from Maharishi International University, that through the repeated experience of transcending in TM, and through research developing a theoretical understanding of this experience, a person could develop measurable benefits of enlightenment or higher states of consciousness. Fergusson (1991, p. 367) stated, "Cosmic Consciousness is that level of awareness in which the individual can maintain unboundedness along with the ability to focus sharply".

Fergusson based this understanding on his study of eighteen undergraduate and two graduate students following an academic six-week art course based on the group practice of TM and advanced techniques called the TM-Sidhi program. Included in the art course was an introduction to the broad underpinnings of art study that was both practical and theoretical. The students were assessed at intervals throughout their study for the progress of their art outcomes and personal development traits. Fergusson reported positive results in the areas of self-development and the enhancement of the quality of life of students. Fergusson (1991) endorsed the incorporation of the practice of TM and associated techniques into visual arts education to fully facilitate students' personal and art-making potential.

2.10 Benefits of spirituality

The Okinawa Centenarian Study that was commenced in 1976 by Suzuki. Found that the Okinawa community to have the highest mortality rate in the world with the lowest number of health problems. An interview with Willcox (2001, p.2) explained that this Japanese community “where people have longer and healthier lives than anywhere else in the world” have been studied for twenty-five years. Their “healthy longevity” was based on four key elements that connected the mind, body and spirit. These elements were diet, exercise, emotions and spirituality. Many cultures have maintained “spiritual” techniques as an aspect of their daily routine.

The psychologist Steve Biddulph (1995) discussed religion and spirituality in his book titled *Manhood*, which is one of a series of books he wrote about raising boys and being male in contemporary society. Biddulph (1995, p. 191) cited the cave paintings of Lascaux, the earliest records of art making, as “our earliest records of masculine ritual ” and discussed Aboriginal society where “religions and cultural practices took up seventy percent of the time of the mature men”. Biddulph (1995, p. 192) stated “the forces of good” and “the most potent and effective men and women...are those with religious underpinnings in their lives”. He argued that the style or technique of rituals, religion or spiritual activity varied but that “to not have some kind of spiritual practice in one’s life, however, is a serious mistake” (1995, p. 192).

In contemporary society, the spiritual practices associated with the great traditional religions can be considered from contradictory perspectives and questioned. The undermining of traditional religious beliefs means that to some extent many people feel like they are “on their own”. In many western cultures, religion has become like history without experiential practices. Such causes such as ecology, feminism, the men’s movement and anti-globalisation can inspire a sense of community which some people consider is similar to being a member of a religious community.

Suzi Gablik is an artist, writer and teacher. Through her extensive writing Gablik (1995) has established a connection between visual art and ecology and proposed that the word *ecological* will become equated with the word *metaphysical*. Art practice, in all its applications, needs to be reinforced for its important role as a stimulator of individual and collective consciousness, rather than being sidelined. Gablik (1991, p.11) discussed the *re-enchantment* of art as being a “release from the affliction of nihilism, which David Michael Levin has called *our culture’s cancer of the spirit*.” She goes on to describe a change in society “toward a new pragmatic idealism and a more integrated value system that brings head and heart together in an ethic of care, as part of the healing of the world”. Gablik (1991) described the role of art as being part of this growing understanding and sense of spirituality, which is part of a world movement drawn from diverse cultural backgrounds to establish consciousness of interconnectedness that is needed for human survival.

Historically, various cultures, aesthetic approaches and many artists have described spiritual elements in art-making and viewing as a means of enhancing a sense of self or spirituality that can be useful in all aspects of life. Individual artists and groups of artists have been involved with specific spiritual organizations and practices, from mainstream religions through the gamut of philosophical and theosophical organizations.

Tuchman (1988) discussed the “spiritual” in abstract painting between 1890 and 1985 in a lecture he gave on the effect of various spiritual movements on the development of 20th century western abstract art. Some of these movements were involved with the symbolism, the occult, Theosophy and Anthroposophy. He presented a large selection of artists employing a variety of forms of art who researched spirituality through their art. Tuchman argued that the selected artists’ work nourished understandings of the spirituality of life for the viewer. Art can be understood as an expression of the

consciousness of the artist giving understanding and bringing more of their inner values into the outer world set in the context of the life experience of the artist.

This study about the inherent spiritual experience in the art-making process may be seen as dealing with the contemporary issue of curriculum relevance with repercussions and influences felt in the areas of the enrichment and the personal development of students. I believe the wider community is well aware of these issues as contemporary visual culture becomes more complex. Artists throughout time have described this aesthetic experience of transcending in many different ways and from varying perspectives. A study of artists' statements in the area of spirituality in art and art-making follows.

2.11 Outcomes – Exhibition and Thesis

The exhibition component of this study reflects my personal experiences of the spiritual aspects of the art-making process discussed with particular relevance to the first research question of this written document. The exhibition includes multimedia paintings, drawings and journals that express elements of my personal frame of reference and to some extent, documents my research in the area. Each aspect of the exhibition contributes to a composite statement about my experiences during art-making.

There are parallel themes in each area of this project as the topic is considered from various viewpoints. In this document, the first research question is answered through a discussion of my personal frames of reference and my understandings of the experience of transcending during art-making. The TM Model, the Abbs Model, and the overview of spirituality in art-making relate directly to the philosophies that inform my art-work.

The second research question involving the study of a number of artists, expands the topic to cover a variety of perspectives which, I believe, strengthens the validity of the

creative project as a whole. Further, the study of artists' statements demonstrates that my experience as a viewer involves an interest in the underlying motivations of artists.

The third research question grounds this study within an educational context with consideration of the relevance of spirituality and transcending in visual arts education. This project taken as a whole, has given me greater confidence to describe what I believe to be the main focus of my art-making process at present.

Over the last two to three years while working for this MEd creative project I have been contemplating and analysing what I am trying to achieve with my art-making. As part of this process I have listened intently to input from others (which has been extremely helpful). I have also studied the writings of other artists narrating or describing their experiences of the art-making process and I have learned to notice and capture my own experiences during art-making in order to focus my thoughts and feelings.

The journals accompanying the exhibition have been used to capture and record the influences and thinking behind some of the artwork and the art-making process that has occurred during the last twelve months. The journals give some detail to the experiences of transcending during art-making and some of the drawings developed into final drawings themselves. At times the journal entries were a *warm up* for the larger art - works in the exhibition. On other occasions, I stayed with the journals and the drawings became small scale works in themselves.

In some places, the journals contain drawings and notes that reflect the value of pre-planning for larger works although planning doesn't normally play a dominant role in my art-making. Planning occurs in the documentation of the ongoing process of development from piece to piece and the identification of, and reflecting on, the issues to be resolved or focussed on in the next works. The journals also reveal an openness to the idea of new solutions or ways to resolve and finish a piece. Visual statements in the journals plus the

larger works, collectively present an exhibition reflecting openness to the possibility of the experience of transcending during art-making.

The general process of my art-making involves the ongoing steps of *planning*, then *doing* and later *reflection* to facilitate further steps of planning. This process is a type of research in studio practice but also research into my own consciousness. Sometimes the resultant art may appear to represent symbolic and/or ethereal spaces. At other times the image is more crude with more active textured areas or line work. If art could be seen to be a reflection of the state of consciousness of the artist, then both the process and product will reflect the variations of consciousness of the artist. Some of my images are subtle while others are more crude, affronting or evocative.

In my art-making I attempt to capture the emergence of consciousness *after* transcending may have occurred during the process of art-making. I have been practising TM for twenty-five years at least twice daily, plus periods of extended meditation during conferences and courses. The ongoing result of this for me is that there is a heightened awareness of transcending at other times of the day. At times during art-making I am aware of more settled, expanded or meditative moments or periods of time which I believe may be a common experience for many artists. Therefore there is a *planning* element involved in my art-making but in the *doing* phase I am open to, and allow for, spontaneous and fluid changes as further ideas emerge due to transcending.

It is also possible that art-making occurs concurrently with transcending and perhaps this accounts for the feeling that a particular painting “just produces itself” in a flow of expression that is spontaneous and automatic. This is one of the categories of experience I became aware of when studying other artists for the second research question (see 3.4 Analysis of Documents). Later there is reflection and further planning and so on.

I believe the intellect can know about the transcendent area of the mind and that artistic feeling is one manifestation of it. In this context, art is an expression of the transcendent and reflects the consciousness of the artist. The art produced may not be a literal representation of the transcendent as this experience may apply to artists working within any artistic style.

As a result of this process, I sometimes find it hard to continue to work on some paintings or rework images. Sometimes I don't finish some paintings and drawings but at other times continuing work can lead to a new level of involvement with that painting or drawing.

In preparing for an exhibition, I have become increasingly aware that art works on walls are generally looked at by viewers with certain aesthetic expectations. For this reason, some pieces that are part of the body of work over the last year may be excluded from the exhibition. I don't necessarily abandon the works that have been excluded because they represent a level of validity of expression which is not dependent on formal aesthetic standards or subject matter.

Not all of my art is serene or beautiful in the sense of directly representing the silent transcendent of the mind. The range of paintings exhibited represents the journey and process over the last year. Some convey more silence, others more activity with only a hint or memory of any silence. The selection of colours relates to various stages in the progression of art works and because I have an interest in texture, colour and line and there is a constant play between these elements. Particularly when I look at slides of my art from many years ago, I see these three elements have always been a significant part of my visual vocabulary.

While the emergence of these personal understandings about my art-making is partly a process of self-awareness and self-disclosure, these understandings may assist other

people to discuss and come to terms with my exhibition. There are perspectives to do with viewing art that are known to the artist, others perceived by the viewer and still others that might be like blind spots for both the artist and viewer. The personal value of this course and resultant process of exhibiting has been to uncover more of the blind spots. The transcending experience that may occur at times, during art-making has always been of great interest to me and a fuller understanding of this experience has developed during this study. This in itself has been a substantial personal achievement in the process of this MEd in Visual Arts Education.

A final point of discussion about my exhibition relates to the media that I have used over the last year. I have always used a variety of paints but have increasingly focussed on the use of spray cans for paintings and dry pastels for most drawings. In both cases the speed and ease of the mark-making process has driven this choice. In creating a volume of art-work for the exhibition, the spray can allowed me to work easily from piece to piece and to take advantage of the short drying time. I believe this shift to spray cans may also be due in part to the focus of this creative project. There has been an extra emphasis on immediacy in my art practice during this project due to increased attention on documenting the process of art-making. These direct media (pastels, spray cans) have facilitated the creative process and direct response. The marks produced by the spray can are immediate and allow for expressive response and rapid change of colour. The spray can method has assisted me to represent the more lively changes in the nature of my life, returning to a big city after three quiet years in Perth. I felt a culture shock moving to Western Australia and returning to Victoria has been yet another culture shock. Both changes were as stimulating as travelling to a foreign country.

The toxicity aspect of spray paint needed to be taken into account during the art production. Health and safety measures I incorporated included the use of a very good air filter mask, fully covering my skin with hat, gloves and long sleeves and always working outside to allow the wind to move the fumes away. I have also used natural

therapists to check for any chemical build up in my system and have taken their remedies and advice to remove any toxic build-up. I am aware that for some viewers, the use of sprays cans and their colours may be brash and crude. Environmentally spray cans are quite toxic, although improved over recent years with the exclusion of hydrocarbons as propellants. As the media I use is often expanding and changing these issues may bring about a change of direction in my work.

In the last two months of this project I have been revisiting earlier journals to make sure that all the main threads of my work in the last year are represented in my exhibition. Some of the earlier entries in the journals were more monochromatic and created a more ephemeral space in the image. Other work over this year has been less restrained and more complex. The range of art exhibited overviews the last twelve months and this range of artworks.

3.0 Research Question 2

Do visual artists across times and cultures agree on the nature of spiritual and transcendental experiences during art-making?

3.1 Introduction

The history of art reveals that to varying degrees, artists and writers who have considered various aspects of spirituality in the visual arts. My study will focus on the personal and spiritual benefits of art-making connected with experiences similar to transcending as defined in this discussion. During the process of art-making, and the viewing of visual art, aesthetic experiences occur. From my viewpoint, these experiences are derived from the experience of transcending. When the mind is transcending it is not focussed on outward, activity oriented thoughts, but is experiencing a more self-referral state in the silent areas of the mind. This experience is very expanding for the mind and

can produce a feeling of well-being and inner stability. Regular art-making may therefore facilitate spiritual self-development.

To answer this research question “Do visual artists across times and cultures agree on the nature of spiritual and transcendental experiences during art-making?” the writings of a number of artists were analysed to find accounts of their personal experiences during the art-making process and the benefits *they* felt they derived from this process and experience. Artists’ accounts of their personal experiences during the art-making process present insights into the transcending experience and the spirituality embedded in the process.

3.2 Methods of transcending

In researching this idea, I was interested to find a study that focussed specifically on the rasa experience and the transcending process that may occur in activity, not only in meditation. I located an English version of a book called *Vijnana Bhairava*, a textbook from the 8th century A.D. This book is a commentary on the ancient literature of the Vedic tradition of knowledge that gave rise to TM. It sets out a system of the various ways that transcending could occur in various areas and activities in life. This source aided my analysis of the transcending that can occur during art-making.

Singh (1999) listed one hundred and twelve ways of transcending. This list was divided into seven categories: (a) to do with breathing techniques (Prana), (b) recitation techniques (Japa), (c) use of imagination (Bhavana), (d) the void state in which no object is experienced (Sunya), (e) the experience of vastness or extensive space, (f) the intensity of experience (g) and yogic postures (Mudras).

After listing the one hundred and twelve reasons for transcending, I scanned them to see what activities and experiences naturally could occur during the art-making process. Many of the reasons are techniques that would be consciously applied by meditation

and yoga practitioners. Others are descriptions of experiences that naturally occur at times during art-making. I have summarised the English translation of each of these methods and then related each method to possible experiences that might occur during art-making.

These methods or activities that encourage transcending would not be noticed or even considered by most people during art-making because they could occur without any specific intention. This analysis (Table 1) could also be applied to many activities in life but I thought it might be useful to use this framework in order to accentuate the underlying aesthetic experience or transcending during art-making. Regularly practised techniques that encourage transcending (like art-making), enrich other activities. From this perspective, an ongoing visual arts education can have a beneficial part to play in a balanced educational framework.

Table 1 - Adapted from Singh (1999), Vijnana Bhairava.

Method No.	Method of transcending (summary of the English translation).	Art-making application.
50	When a person experiences incomparable joy due to a song or object and then experiences expansion of the mind.	Aesthetic experience: for the artist due to the subject and process of art-making, for the viewer, when responding to the art object.
51	Wherever the mind of the individual finds satisfaction and concentrates on that.	Concentration for periods of time, often hours, during art-making allows transcending.
53	Fixing one's gaze on a portion of the space that appears variegated with the rays of the sun, lamp etc.	All visual art (and some artworks in particular) is focussed on the effect of light in nature and their artwork.
54	At the moment of the (intuitive) perception (of the universe).	Perceptions, intuitive responses and insights are common during art-making.
57	Concentrating on a gross object and then directing the attention inward.	When making art there are moments of intense concentration and then rest periods that may facilitate transcending.
72	Considering and understanding the limitations of perceived realities.	Many modern art movements have challenged perceived realities.
76	Contemplation of all knowledge as being without cause, without base and deceptive.	Psychoanalytical art ideologies can challenge parameters of art studies to adopt a more phenomenological approach.
84	Having freed the mind of all supports (perceptions/imagination) and thought constructs.	Artists often strive to challenge usual parameters of understanding and extend imagination.

Method No.	Method of transcending (summary of the English translation).	Art-making application.
91	Realization that everything (in essence) is the same (consciousness).	In some environments and during art-making the artist may feel unified with the object or topic of her attention.
92	Every sensory experience should be considered not only as a psycho-physical fact but also as an expression of the Universal Consciousness.	Through the sense of sight an artist or viewer may experience feelings of expansion and pleasure.
93	Whenever the ordinary normal consciousness receives a jolt or shock it is thrown back to its inmost depth or source of being e.g. terror, sorrow, during keen curiosity.	During moments of breakthrough or inspiration an artist might experience expanded awareness.
94	At the sight of a land (or an object) concentration on the experience that was the basis of the memory.	Aboriginal artists and many landscape artists have a spiritual relationship with the land that can be deeply embedded in culture and consciousness.
96	Intuition that emerges from intense devotion.	Devoted absorption to the subject of the art process can lead to insights and intuition.
97	Contemplation and perception of a particular object so that vacuity is established regarding all other objects.	Intense focus on the subject of art-making can create expansion of the mind when not focussed on that subject allowing transcending.
98	Mental purity by being freed of thought constructs.	Mental expansion experienced after intuitive or creative insights during art-making.
110	This (universe) appears as a reflection in the intellect.	Frames of reference construct art and understandings of others' art.
112	Contemplation on the knower and the known as one and the same.	Realizations: the artist's consciousness is interrelated with the subject of their art; the viewer consciousness constructs the art.

3.3 Ideologies and personal narratives

Eagleton (1991, p. 3) the literary theorist and critic, stated “there is no such thing as pre-suppositionless thought”. From this standpoint it is possible to say that all thoughts, responses and opinions about art (and any field of life) are ideologically loaded and personal. While it is understood that the artist brings to the art-making process thoughts, skills, knowledge and technical expertise, the art works produced by the artist may be seen as social products and therefore reflections of prevailing ideologies.

The philosophy of Existentialism proposes that we are all responsible for what we make of ourselves and for our own sense of truth. In opposition to this view, metaphysical thought (that is concerned with the most general or abstract concepts like time, space, God, matter, laws of nature or cause and effect) as explored in philosophy since Aristotle's time, views truth as timeless and unchanging, where we are all subject to underlying realities. We live with the tension between the possibilities of both belief systems

What is experienced subjectively by the artist while following the technical steps of art-making can at times be a silent time of inner, self-validating subjectivity which can be observed, recalled, forgotten or not even noticed or cared about. This silent or transcendental period can occur naturally between any two thoughts at any time of the day. This silent or transcendental experience in the usual outwardly focussed thinking during the art-making process can provide the artist with distinct experiences. In the section which follows, I will focus on accounts of these experiences to ascertain the range of benefits that may be available.

My own art-making provides me with silent time that is both a distraction from other areas of life and equally an absorption in the present experience of art activity. During art-making a person's consciousness can at times be altered. After attending an art gallery one's consciousness can also feel altered.

3.4 Analysis of documents

Human consciousness can be described in varying ways and has several components. One called the *id*, can be found in the etymology of the word ideology. This was described by Freud (1982, p.615) as the "collection of all parts of the mind present at birth, part of which develops to form the ego" and "contains parts of the psychic make-up" such as emotions and instincts. All of these areas of the individual are less

transcendental than the purely subjective experience of absolute individual consciousness. These accounts of experience of spirituality during the art making process will be presented as direct quotations to maintain the integrity of the artists ideas and the reasons for the researcher's choice of the material included is noted.

Fielding (1996, pp. 11-12), a qualitative researcher, posited that humanistic research, and particularly research in the arts must be based on different premises and different goals in contrast to the more objective or qualitative styles of research. Fielding recognized "the usefulness of subjectivities in both the subject and the researcher" and that "the aim is to provide an account of the subject in such a way that others who may wish to understand it and use the information in their own context, may be enabled to do so." He found support in the opinions of several writers who discussed the role of human consciousness as an active participant in the dynamics of physical and psychological life so that consciousness actively created reality. Fielding's ideas acknowledged the reality and value of self-education and the participation and dialectic between the text/art work and the reader/viewer.

Further support for this approach is found in the work of Abbs (1989). He described the use of autobiography in the climate of a tired civilization "as mostly ignored" even though as a genre, it "positively invites fresh acts of imagination and intellectual attention"(p. 164). Abbs (1989, p.150) also noted that autobiography involves the process of "self-definition and for authenticity of being."

Some twenty years earlier, Wolff (1975) wrote a book about *Hermeneutical Philosophy and the Sociology of Art* in which she argued that the subjectivity of researchers often uncovered material that would otherwise be overlooked in quantitative research. Her book was originally a PhD thesis in sociology and considered individual and collective consciousness within the study of art. Wolff (1975, p. 1) argued that the study of art

“necessarily includes aesthetics” as part of a phenomenological approach with its refinement in hermeneutical philosophy and sociology.

Later Wolff (1975, p.10) stated, “The sociology of art, as a special branch of the sociology of knowledge, is re-defined as a phenomenology of artistic consciousness”. She also believed that the study of art involves transcendental subjectivity, philosophy and ontology or the philosophy of being.

3.5 Examples of personal narratives from artists

This collection of statements, in alphabetical order, is artists’ statements about their experiences during art-making and in some cases the benefits they feel that they derive from art-making. Some of these narratives describe moments of transcending or transcendental consciousness. Some descriptions are like the definition of the Rasa experience. Some are related to, or similar to one or more of the descriptions of the methods of transcending from Table 1, Singh (1990), Vijnana Bhairava and others are more individual or related to particular cultural paradigms.

My method in research was to find direct quotations from artists. I would then read all entries in order to locate those about the art-making process and include those that seemed most relevant to this discussion. They are assembled as direct quotations with minimum commentary to allow the individuality and authenticity of meaning to be preserved for the reader. An occasional comment is added to assist with the context and timeframe of the comments. It is in a sense an ongoing and seemingly limitless study. This selection was determined due to time restraints not due to the selection or non-selection of material.

After each writer’s statement I have made a brief analysis of their thoughts on the nature of their art-making experience. What I have been looking for when seeking these

quotations is primarily their individual description of the transcending experience during art-making. Some of the descriptions were clear and direct. Other comments were indirect and spoke more about the consequences or benefits of personal and spiritual experiences. I have made a brief comment after each quotation to pinpoint specific concepts available. Also, in order to present any areas of commonality in these writings I have created a table following these excerpts, as a final statement for this research question.

It is acknowledged that the process of selecting quotations on the basis of their immediate application to this study may misrepresent the artists' intended meanings because pieces of text have been removed from their context. An effort has been made however, to ensure that the quotations are somewhat representative of each artist's thought.

Binns (b.1940)

Vivienne Binns worked as an individual artist but was also regularly involved with group community based art-making. Sullivan (1994) in *Seeing Australia, views of artists and art writers*, quoted Binns:

I could have gone in many different directions but the central means of processing and expressing my interests was through the art. I have always had wide interests and my approach involved political, aesthetic and cultural choices. Those features are still central to my work today. (p.55)

Also Sullivan (1994, p.55) wrote that after studying at the East Sydney Technical College in the early 1960s Binns “underwent a period of profound change in which she grappled with the problems of being an artist while dealing with the daily demands of an independent life”, about which Binns stated:

That was a very intense psychological and emotional period of about three years where I virtually cut myself off from the world. I was engaged in a powerful internal journey and had the most intense perceptual kinds of experiences and came to understand the process of personal exploration so much better. (p. 55)

Regarding her collaborative artwork Sullivan (1994) quoted Binns:

My position is that there are many paths and positions and I will equally support the person who wants to work in the more esoteric zones, as I will the person who works in the backyard. For years I tried to work out what motivated me and what it always came down to was difference, variety and the fascination with the way things could differ and be similar at the same time. That difference has always interested me. (p. 56)

[The artist described a *powerful internal journey, looking for knowledge within and personal exploration*. She referred to these as a *process* from which I would infer that there was direct experience of her inner world and possibly transcending experiences.]

Dali (1904-1989)

Salvador Dali is quoted in a book called *The Dali universe* Levi (2000):

I am perfectly aware that my enemies, my friends, and the public generally protest that they do not understand the meaning of the emerging images that I transform into my paintings. And yet, how are they supposed to understand me, since even myself, their “creator”, do not understand them? The fact that I myself, in the act of painting, do not understand the meaning of my paintings does not mean that they have no meaning: on the contrary, their meaning is so inscrutable, so complex, so coherent, and so involuntary, that it is beyond the simple analysis of logical thought. (p. 14)

Art is a weapon of war engaged by desire in its battle for supremacy against the principles of reality. (p. 126)

[Dali here discussed his art as *involuntary, beyond logical thought* and as being the *creator* of his art. He infers direct experience of transcending or intuition but it is not clearly stated.]

Dumbrell (b.1941)

In the early 1960s Lesley Dumbrell completed a Diploma of Fine Art at The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Sullivan (1994) quoted Dumbrell:

There was no abstraction taught and in a way I think it was a really good education because it allowed me to work through all those traditional, formal structures. By the time I had left art school I realized that I was not interested in figurative painting. I could do it, but it was not what I wanted to do. On the other hand I found the abstraction of Kandinsky, Mondrian and Malevich almost incomprehensible and I wanted to know more about it.

One of the things that I think painting can do is lead you into such an ambiguous area that it reminds you of a number of things but it does not necessarily become specific. Just like molecules, they make up every structure we have around us but we cannot see them. Yet they are the underlying patterns of how this reality comes forward. I have always been fascinated by the underlying structure of things and in a way I have always played with the same kind of shapes or linear structures because I think they relate to a number of different possibilities.

... It is a very intuitive process, although obviously there is a conscious intellectual structure in it where you have to think everything through. The best times are, when having gone through the more structured process, it all comes together. That is when it is exciting. (pp. 114-115)

[Dumbrell discussed her *very intuitive process* during art-making including *playing* and being led into *an ambiguous area*. Though her comments are in terms of experience there was not enough direct description of what this intuitive process entailed in terms of clear transcending. Transcending or experiencing silent moments could well be part of this process but would need discussion.]

Ernst (1891-1976)

Max Ernst recounted the birth of the frottage technique in his autobiography as recounted in *Max Ernst, beyond painting* by Bischoff (1994).

On the 10th August, 1925 ... It all began with a memory from my childhood, when my bed used to stand opposite panels of imitation mahogany. When I was half asleep, these panels would act as a kind of optical 'provocateur' and conjure up visions. I was staying at a small hotel at the seaside and it was a rainy night. While I was thinking back to my childhood, a vision befell me, forcing me to look at the floorboards full of marks and scratches in utter fascination. I decided to delve deeper into the symbolic content of this vision. In order to encourage my meditative and hallucinatory powers, I made a series of drawings from the floorboards by laying pieces of paper over them quite by chance and then rubbing them with black pencil. When I looked at the resulting drawings, with their 'dark parts and others of clear but subdued dimness', I was surprised by both a sudden increase in my visionary faculties and by the hallucinatory succession of contradictory and superimposed images which had the intensity and suddenness characteristic of memories of an earlier love. This aroused my curiosity and in amazement, I began to experiment, carefree, yet full of hope. I made use of every kind of material within sight: the veins of leaves, the rough edges of a piece of linen, the brushstrokes of a 'modern' painting, a piece of loose thread, etc. The first results of the frottage were gathered together under the heading of natural history. (p. 34)

[Ernst discussed his *meditative and hallucinatory powers* and the automatic nature of some of his art-making process. This clearly inferred the possibility of transcending.]

Gascoigne (b.1917)

Rosalie Gascoigne was born in New Zealand, received a Bachelor of Arts from Auckland University and taught secondary school English for a few years before moving to Canberra, Australia. Sullivan (1994) quoted her as stating about these years: "University was something I could adopt, art was something I was." (p. 18)

Sullivan (1994) stated that Gascoigne had always made art, often inspired by collecting and contrasting natural *things* with discarded junk, but didn't exhibit until her late 50's. She studied Japanese flower arranging, called *Ikebana*, which meant awareness of nature.

In her interview with Sullivan (1994), Gascoigne spoke about personal meaning in her art:

I looked at everything and knew every type of grass, (when living in a very barren hillside) every type of grass, every native flower, every stone. I used take it all inside because I liked it so much. I got into flower arranging and would use very wild stuff from the mountain – branches, grasses, stones and whatever. ... I was very much aware of nature. ... I love things. I like driving into the country, ... I collect anything I like the look of. Usually I don't know what I am going to do with it and I don't care.... My pieces can be looked at in different ways. I try to provide a starting point from which people can let their imaginations wander – what they discover will be a product of their own experience as much as of mine. My aim is to be both allusive and elusive. ... I think the whole thing with art is that it moves from the hand of the person that does it with an identity and spirit of its own and critics need to have patience to stand and let it come to them a bit rather than superimposing their words on it. (pp. 19-21)

[Gascoigne discussed the *spirit* of her art and her close relationship with her immediate environment and nature. She described being her art and an intuitive working process. Her spirituality is inferred and transcending is not clearly mentioned.]

Kandinsky (1866 – 1944)

Kandinsky (1972) wrote *Concerning the spiritual in art* in 1912. He described his perspective on materialism, the soul, the spiritual turning point, a pyramid of spiritual development, painting, the effect of colour, the language and form of colour, theory and the artist and work of art. He also presented some poems.

When he discussed the soul and art he said:

If the emotional power of the artist can overwhelm the “how” and give free scope to his feelings, then art has started on the path by which she will not fail to find the “what” which forms the spiritual necessity of the nascent awakening. This “what” will no longer be the material, objective “what” of a

stagnant period, but an artistic substance, the soul of art, without which the body (i.e., the “how”) can never be healthy, whether an individual or a whole society. (p. 29)

Later Kandinsky (1972) wrote about his art concept of The Pyramid to describe the movement away from representationalism towards abstraction and the benefits this might have for the artist:

In each expression is the seed of an effort toward the non-representational, abstract and internal structure. Consciously or unconsciously they are obeying Socrates’ advice: “Know thyself.” Consciously or unconsciously, artists are studying and investigating their material, weighing the spiritual value of those elements with which it is their privilege to work. (p. 39)

When he discussed colour Kandinsky (1972) posited that:

If you let your eye stray over a palette of colours, you experience two things. ...*A purely physical effect*, namely the eye itself is enchanted by the beauty...satisfaction and delight...physical sensations, limited in duration...superficial. ... But to a more sensitive soul the effect of colours is deeper and intensely moving. ...the second result of looking at colours: *their psychological effect*. ...a correspondent spiritual vibration, and it is only as a step towards this...that the physical impression is of importance...*It is evident therefore that colour harmony must rest ultimately on purposive playing upon the human soul; this is one of the guiding principles of internal necessity.* (pp. 43–45)

Later in his chapter about *The Language of Form and Colour*, Kandinsky (1972) stated:

The choice of an object (i.e., one of the elements of form) must be decided by a purposive vibration in the human soul; therefore, the choice of the object also originates from the principle of internal necessity... .In short, the effect of internal necessity and the development of art is an ever advancing expression of the eternal and objective in terms of the historic and subjective...The artist must ignore distinctions between “recognized” or “unrecognized” conventions of form ... He must watch his own inner life and harken to the demands of internal necessity...to express the mystical necessity...Everything is at first a matter of feeling. Even though the general structure may be formulated theoretically, there is still an additional

something which constitute the soul of creation...The artist must train not only his eye but also his soul. (pp. 45–67)

In the chapter about the Artist and Work of Art, Kandinsky (1972, pp. 75-77) wrote: “That is beautiful which is produced by internal necessity, which springs from the soul... We have before us an age of conscious creation, ... going hand in hand with thought towards an *epoch of great spirituality.*”

[Kandinsky clearly described moments of spiritual experience during art-making. His discussion is an intellectual understanding linked to his theories about art so it does not recount his direct, personal moments of transcending.]

Magritte (1898 -1967)

Magritte, as stated in Gablik (1976) has written that:

Surrealist thought, as I conceive it, must be imagined but is not imaginary – its reality is of the same ‘kind’ as that of the universe. That reality is irrational. Its irrationality is not imaginary, but it must be imagined. (p. 68)

In Gablik (1976) there was a translation of an autobiographical text by Magritte that was published in the Belgian Magazine *L'Invention collective* No. 2 (April 1940).

In 1925, I decided to break with this passive attitude as a direct result of an intolerable meditation in a popular saloon in Brussels: the mouldings of the door seemed to me to be endowed with a mysterious existence, and for a long time I was in touch with their reality. A feeling bordering upon terror was the point of departure for a willed action upon the real, for the transformation of life.

Finding the same will, moreover, in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but allied to a superior method and doctrine, and making the acquaintance, about the same time, of the Surrealists who were violently demonstrating their loathing of all the bourgeois values, both social and ideological, that have maintained the world in its present ignoble condition, I became certain that I would need to live with danger, so that the world, and life, would correspond more closely to thought and to feeling.

I made paintings where the objects were represented with the appearance they have in reality, in a style sufficiently objective so that the subversive effect, which they would reveal themselves capable of evoking through certain powers, might exist again in the real world from which these objects had been borrowed – by a perfectly natural exchange.

In my paintings I showed objects situated where we never find them. It was the realization of a real, if not actually conscious desire existing in most people.

The cracks and creases we see in our houses and on our faces, I found much more eloquent in the sky. Turned wood table-legs lost the innocent existence usually ascribed to them as soon as they appeared dominating a forest. A woman's body floating above a city acquainted me with some of love's secrets. I found it very instructive to show the Virgin Mary in flattering *deshabille*. I caused the iron bells hanging from the necks of our admirable horses to sprout like dangerous plants at the edge of an abyss.

The creation of new objects, the transformation of known objects, the change of material for certain objects, the use of words combined with images, the putting to work of ideas offered by friends, the utilization of certain visions from half-sleep or dreams, were other means employed with a view to establishing a contact between consciousness and the external world. The titles of paintings were chosen in such a way as to inspire in the spectator an appropriate mistrust of any mediocre tendency to facile self-assurance. (p. 182)

[Magritte described *contact between consciousness and the external world* in an intellectual sense as the goal of his art-making techniques. *Visions from half-sleep or dreams* also is linked to the possibility of transcending during art-making.]

Mahoney Griffin (1871-1961)

Marion Mahoney Griffin was described as an architect, writer, artist, theosophist, follower of Steiner, builder of alternative communities, “public spirited and ecological, spiritual and non-materialistic, and in tune with the essential rhythms of the land” in an essay by Rubbo (2001) who also quoted the artist's writings about art-making and her mural *Fairies feeding the heron*:

Again we must convince the minds of the children, warped by the superficialities of our present day thinking, that they can see and hear and touch with their physical senses aided so wonderfully as they are these days by mechanical instruments to extend their field of operations but which are also surrounded by another world, the world of causes just as diverse, just as rich, just as full of adventure, which they can learn to perceive and in perceiving to enter, and in entering to become a creator in this realm of criterion, the world of life.

...For this human beings must develop their spiritual powers of perception, the basis of which will enable them to know causes as precisely as at present they know effects. (p. 128)

When writing about the same mural and art education she quoted Steiner:

By art alone is intellect awakened to true life giving joy in earnestness, and strength of character in joy; for knowledge to be of value, must be permeated with a love of knowledge, and to say that is why it is so important for children from seven to fourteen to be taught only from the imaginative point of view – through the Arts. (p. 127)

[Mahoney Griffin discussed *spiritual powers of perception* and the awakening of the intellect but direct experience of the mind transcending is not the focus.]

Hester (1920 – 1960)

Burke (1989) in *Joy Hester*, a biography about this lesser-known member of the intellectual and creative culture of Melbourne and Australia in the 1940s and 1950s. Living and working in Heidelberg, Hurstbridge and the Blue Mountains, Hester did not travel overseas but was nevertheless well aware of modern art movements like Surrealism and philosophical debate about Freudian and Jungian philosophy. Burke (1989, p.106) described Hester as having an interest in the unconscious, dreams and psychic phenomenon while her drawings “can be read as the parallel expressions of psychological exercise and visual representation.”

Burke (1989) recorded a letter Hester wrote around 1945, where she:

Discovered for the first time that there is an occult and my mind has been sort of groping around the outskirts of these subjects for some time now. ... I feel that my whole life has been waiting to stumble on these things and particularly my painting has been all geared up to it but has never really put its finger on the spot so to speak – for my work (to me at any rate) has been always a groping for an expression of the psychological and psychic aspect of a moment but a split flash that half a moment can give. (p. 106)

In the late 1940s another letter from Hester discussed her “aussi” feeling that influenced her art, in Burke (1989). She defended Australia strongly by stating:

I think about people who go to another land – it seems an awfully long way to go to realize the end is where we start from – both inside and out ... If we don't hold what we have we may never find it again, so delicate a thing it is, yet it gives the appearance of being overpowerful on close examination – and I think it frightens people off when they realise the smallness of its actual presence – and from within? I don't think a change of location can change or answer our questions. (p. 116)

[Hester, in her first quote described what might be a transcending or *psychological and psychic moment*. Her second comments give insight into her subjective relationship with the land that enriches her art.]

Matisse (1869 – 1954)

Flam (1973, p.31) in *Matisse on art*, related Matisse's influences, the various techniques and philosophies of other contemporary artists and “ancient masters”. Matisse described his art-making as a process of “self-discovery” which involved “intuition” and studying his own art to focus on “fundamentals” that were from his own personality.

In an interview with Matisse in 1909 with reference to photography:

The painter no longer has to preoccupy himself with details...the photographer is there...the object of painting is no longer in narrative description...the artist expresses his inner visions...it is a long process of reflection and amalgamation...Suppose I want to paint a woman's body: first

of all I mirror her form in my mind...I will condense the meaning of this body by seeking its essential lines. (p. 48)

In 1925:

I decided to take a year off, avoid all hindrances, and paint the way I wanted to. I worked for myself. I was saved. Soon the love of materials for their own sake came to me like a revelation...I also discovered Japanese woodcuts! What a lesson in purity, harmony, I received! To tell the truth, these woodcuts were mediocre reproductions and yet I did not experience the same emotion when I saw the originals. Those no longer brought with them the newness of a revelation. Slowly I discovered the secret of my art. It consists of a meditation on nature, on the expression of a dream which is always inspired by reality...each time I stand before a canvas, it seems that I am painting for the first time. (p. 55)

Flam (1973, p.112) asked Matisse "Do you believe in God?" Matisse said:

Yes, when I work. When I am submissive and modest, I sense myself helped immensely by someone who makes me do things by which I surpass myself. Still, I feel no gratitude toward *Him* because it is as if I were watching a conjurer whose tricks I cannot see through. I then find myself thwarted of the profit of the experience that should be the reward for my effort. I am ungrateful without remorse. (pp. 112-113)

[Matisse *expresses inner visions* and related his art as being *meditation on nature* and clearly wishes to describe the spiritual nature of art-making.]

Miro (1893-1983)

In *Miro, The Man and His Work*, Taschen (1992) overviewed Joan Miro's lifetime of art and discussions about his and others art. In the 1930s during a conversation Miro commented:

The main thing is to lay bare the soul. Painting and poetry are like love – an exchange of blood, a passionate embrace, without restraint, without defence...The picture is born...an overflow of emotions and feelings. It is

nothing else than the product of an act of self-expression to which we never again return. (p. 202)

In discussion about one of his paintings called *The Harlequin's Carnival* he spoke of inspiration from music:

Bach gives me a magnificent lesson in architecture. Mozart conjures up love with his purity, his magnanimity and his tenderness. They all help us to be able to live in the midst of so much baseness and meanness! (p. 206)

Regarding a painting called *Constellation*, 1974 Miro wrote:

It sometimes happens that I illustrate my pictures with poetic sentences and vis-versa – did not the Chinese, those *grand seigneurs* of the spirit, proceed in the same manner? (p. 214)

In 1939 Miro wrote:

Unless we make an effort to find out the religious essence, the magic meanings of things, we will only add new sources of stupefaction to the one that are already being offered so abundantly. (p. 224)

[Miro discussed *the religious essence* of things and therefore directly poses the concept that art-making is a spiritual endeavour.]

Monet (1840-1926)

Claude Monet protested about commentaries on his art in 1909 as documented in *Monet, waterlilies* by Stuckey (1988):

People who hold forth on my painting conclude that I have arrived at the ultimate degree of abstraction and imagination that relates to reality. I should much prefer to have them acknowledge what is given, the total self-surrender. I applied paint to these canvases the same way that monks of old illuminated their books for hours; these owe everything to the collaboration of solitude and passion, to an earnest, exclusive attention bordering on hypnosis... I set my easel in front of this bit of water...its images evokes the idea of infinity for you; you ascertain to it, as in a microcosm, the existence of the elements

and the instability of the universe that changes from minute to minute under our eyes...The richness I achieve comes from nature, the source of my inspiration... (p. 29)

Later discussing his large *Water Lilies paintings*:

At one point I was visited by the temptation to use the theme of nymphs for a decoration. Carried the length of the walls, enveloping the entire interior with its unity, it would attain the illusion of a whole without end, of a watery surface without horizon and without banks; nerves overstrained by work would be relaxed there, following the restful example of the still waters, and to whomsoever lived there, it would offer an asylum of peaceful meditation at the centre of a flowery aquarium. (pp. 29-30)

[Monet referred directly to his own experiences described as *exclusive attention bordering on hypnosis* and may indeed be describing the silent, wakefulness of the mind while transcending.]

Morgan (b. 1951)

In *The Art of Sally Morgan* (1996) the introduction discussed her art from 1986 to 1995 and included some direct quotations from the artist. In the dedication of the book Morgan said: "To my Nan who taught me the earth was art." In the introduction she stated:

I need to paint and to write... I paint so I don't have to explain.... Some things are best expressed in art, others in writing or even performance. I also teach now and that is another way of telling the story. (p. 3)

When she discussed life as a child she said:

I was obsessed with drawing. When I couldn't find paper and pencils, I would fish small pieces of charcoal from the fire, and tear strips off the paperbark tree in our yard, and draw on that. I drew in the sand, on the footpath, the road, even on the walls when Mum wasn't looking. One day a neighbour gave me a batch of oil paints left over from a stint in prison. I felt like a real artist. (p. 4)

When she discussed her art she said:

As the firstborn, there is not one centimetre of this continent that does not hold our spirit. Our music is the sound of this land. Our art is the colour of this land. (p. 8)

What I paint about doesn't really change. I have a sense of coming from a long line of artists, of people who drew to tell stories. A line of women. I feel that I am the culmination of all this inheritance. I am part of a great family circle that comes out of and goes into the land. I am tied to those before and after me. I am the one who has been recognised, but my mother and my daughter also paint and write and teach.

Art goes back to my beginning. Western art is a far more linear progression. For me it is circular. I look at my latest paintings and think that when I am drawing on a wet canvas with a pointed palette knife I am again a child drawing on wet sand with a pointed stick. (p. 9)

[Morgan's sense of spirituality is interwoven with *telling the story* of her inherited knowledge, still lively in her own mind and life and spiritual connections with the land. Transcending is not directly described but would need discussion to clarify.]

O'Keefe (1887-1986)

Late in her life Georgia O'Keefe discussed her ability to switch between seemingly contradictory approaches in her artwork documented in a biography about the artist by Mintz Messinger (2001):

It was surprising to me to see how many people separate the objective from the abstract. Objective painting is not good painting unless it is good in the abstract sense. A hill or tree cannot make a good painting just because it is a hill or a tree. It is lines and colors put together so that they say something. For me that is the very basis of painting. The abstraction is often the most definite form for the intangible thing in myself that I can only clarify in paint. (p. 95)

Later, O'Keefe stated why she painted:

One works because I suppose it is the most interesting thing one knows to do. The days one works are the best days. On the other days one is hurrying through the other things one imagines one has to do to keep one's life going. You get the garden planted. You get the roof fixed. You take the dog to the vet. You spend a day with a friend... You may even enjoy doing such things... But always you are hurrying through these things with a certain amount of aggravation so that you can get at the paintings again because that is the high spot – in a way it is what you do all the other things for... The painting is like a thread that runs through all the reasons for all the other things that made one's life. (p. 182)

[O'Keefe discussed an *intangible thing in myself that I can only clarify in paint*. This again infers a sense of spirituality in the art-making process but would need resolution regarding her experiences of transcending.]

Olsen (b. 1928)

John Olsen commented about his art-making in the Pacific Loan Exhibition catalogue in 1956 as documented by Hart (2000):

My painting takes on its particular abstract quality because it is only in this way that I can express my search for direct mystical experience. There is the feeling of the abyss and a void between oneself and everything outside, and one has the impulse to bridge it. The thing I always endeavour to express is an animistic quality – a certain mystical throbbing throughout nature. (p. 28)

In a journal in 1958 Olsen wrote:

Zen realises that our nature is at one with objective nature...in the sense that we live in nature and nature lives in us. (p. 33)

Later in 1959 he wrote:

I used to worry a good deal about reaching a point of figuration quickly, then I understood that nature does not understand how it grows but grows and

continues to grow silently, patiently – until fruition. Perhaps we are getting closer to nature when we begin working in this manner, putting something here and there, black, heavy – strange thing with a meaning I can't exactly say what...- and much to my surprise figuration is there like the Zen monks say, 'like a flash of lightening', without me even knowing. (p. 47)

[Olsen mentioned *mystical experience* which may mean moments of personal experience and also related this term to *a mystical throbbing through nature*. Clearly his comments are not only intellectual understanding but experiential.]

Pollock (1912-1956)

In 1947 Jackson Pollock discussed his art-making in an article called *Possibilities* reprinted in a book by Frank (1983):

When I am *in* my painting, I'm not aware of what I am doing... I try to let it come through. It is only when I lose contact with the painting that the result is a mess. Otherwise it is pure harmony, an easy give and take, and the painting comes out well. (p. 109)

In 1951 he was interviewed answering a variety of questions with some relating to the art-making process and experience:

All cultures have had their means and techniques of expressing their immediate aims – the Chinese, the Renaissance, all cultures. The thing that interests me is that today painters do not have to go to a subject matter outside of themselves. Most modern painters work from a different source. They work from within... (p. 110)

The modern artist is living in a mechanical age and we have a mechanical means of representing objects in nature such as the camera and photograph. The modern artist, it seems to me, is working and expressing an inner world - in other words – expressing the energy, the motion, and other inner forces... with space and time, and expressing his feelings rather than illustrating. (p.110)

I don't care for "abstract expressionism"...and it's certainly not "nonobjective," and not "nonrepresentational" either. I'm very representational some of the time, and a little all of the time. But when you're painting out of your unconscious, figures are bound to emerge. We're

all of us influenced by Freud, I guess. I've been a Jungian for a long time...painting is state of being...Painting is self-discovery. Every good artist paints what he is. (p. 111)

[Pollock described *painting out of your unconscious, expressing an inner world and self-discovery* and appears to feel very comfortable with this as the regular experience for him during art-making. These terms may infer a link to transcending experiences at times.]

Rees (1895-1988)

Lloyd Rees described his painting called *Solitude* which was painted in 1978 in a book called *Lloyd Rees, an artist remembers*, Rees (1989):

There are some pictures I feel that have to speak or even whisper for themselves, because they belong to a mood of contemplation and thoughtfulness that almost defies description. There's no doubt that Balls Head, Sydney had an effect on me from the day's drawing of it in the early '30's, but the connection with it was on the headland itself in the later years, right into the 40's and 50's. And with my friends Wakelin, Lawrence and Santny, I spent many a long afternoon or even morning right through the day (we'd have lunch out there) into the dusk. It must have been one of those very calm, still evenings you get in autumn, more than at any other time, that gave me the mood of that picture, but it was painted in the studio. I made no attempt to be true even to the rock forms or tree forms that I used; they more or less came of their own volition, and for that reason the picture remains to this day something of a mystery, even to me. But perhaps I may be permitted to say that I can recall no other picture of Sydney in which the feeling almost of Gray's 'Elegy' has come into one of my paintings.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight

And all the air a stillness holds. (p. 121)

[Rees described a mood in the mind of *contemplation* and may infer the conditions for transcending or the quietening of the busy thought level of the mind in the direction of transcending.]

Tolson Tjupurrula (1920-2001)

Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula is a member of the Western Desert art movement called Papunya Tula that formed in the Papunya compounds around 1972 and moved westward as its members settled in their homelands near Kintore and Kiwikura west of Alice Springs.

Papunya Tula's meaning refers to the smaller of two hills in the area – a sight of the honey ant ancestors. Excerpts from an interview with Turkey's at Kintore, in 1999 in a book called *Papunya Tula, genesis and genius*, Perkins and Fink (2000).

And painting that tjukurrpa helped you to remember those stories?

No, tjukurrpa (*our culture*) I already knew. That one I learnt at Aboriginal school, in the bush.

You learnt all that stuff in the early days?

All this I learnt early days at the maliyarra place in Papunya. I was there for three months. We sat down in the bush at the business camp and then came out after. And another law was sorry. We had to go into the camp again for that law. We were trying to open our mind you know. That's why we always went into camp. Might be for four weeks, might be for six weeks or six months; after that we would come out again... Olden days. That's why all the old people sat down. Colour, light. They were teaching us and teaching us, ...Last time we were in for one straight year. One year in the bush at the maliyarra place. Big ceremonies. (p. 164)

Do you think that the way people make a canvas has changed from the early days?

Yes, people are changing but they're working from the early days. The stories are still the same...Like when we started in the maliyarra you can still do the same story. This one. Same business.(p. 170)

So when people are painting do they talk about their own tjukurrpa, while they're painting their own story?

Yes. You might think about, 'what is my story, my tjukurrpa?' See? Someone else might paint Kungka, another might paint bush turkey – there look [points at someone's painting]. These women are making them. And after finishing they might tell you one name of a place...all this mob is secret.

That one's their own [points at someone's work] and that one's their own. See? That one is for one place. After it's finished they take it up and talk about their own tjukurpa.

Why do you think people like painting?

Power we think about. We can't sit down at home when we're not singing in the bush camp, or we'd sit down lonely. We need company, tjukurpa. We want to try and make the whole lot. Work, work and sit down happy. Palya.

Makes you feel good?

Yes, painting's good.

Helps you think about stories?

When you sit down with no painting you get lonely. (p. 171)

[Tjupurrula described spiritual and cultural links with the land, his place and Aboriginal school in the bush where he and others learnt about what to express in their art-making.]

Tuymans (b.1958)

Luc Tuymans by Loock, Aliaga and Spectar (2000) includes a transcript of a lengthy interview with the artist. Aliaga, the interviewer, often mentions the banal handling of serious topics in the images of the paintings to which Tuymans answered:

I would say if you look carefully at my paintings there is also pleasure, which may not be apparent but is there in the making of the painting...But there is pleasure when I paint. The act of painting itself is so concentrated. There is a sort of ease when I work, a directedness. Every painting is made in one day, never more than that. In long or short sessions, it depends. Four hours, eight hours...it can go up to thirteen hours or more but it has to be finished in one day...I cannot work otherwise. It's about truly focusing, and that is sexually loaded. Its true concentration, true intensity. When I fail to reach that breaking point it is not accurate and never will be. That's why it is very sexual. It's another type of arousal. (p. 27)

Aliaga asks Tuymans about the objects in his paintings being more communicative than the people. Tuymans replied:

It could be anything. It's just that there's the element of someone using the object in its portrayal. The physicality of the painting as an object is important, whereas I don't think the depiction of psychological states can give the same impact, the same strangeness, the same directness - or indirectness. It's more photographic this way. Objects enable me to create a message not on a moral level but on an instantaneous level. Paintings have a long life span which turns them into very abstract elements. Paintings were the first transmitters. No matter how long they are hung in a museum, three years or 400 years, they still give you something. Every image has this disconcerting element of going further in time, into magical time. Some may think it is naïve to think that by depicting something you capture its soul or that you have control over things. But it really does have something to do with that. (pp. 27-29)

[Tuysman described capturing the soul of objects in his painting and the moments of *pleasure, concentration and arousal*. He was clearly describing personal, meaningful experiences but the concept of transcending is not clearly stated.]

Van Caeckenbergh (b. 1960)

In *Abracadabra- International Contemporary Art* a Tate Gallery (1999, p.86) publication described Patrick Van Caeckenbergh's art as "hybrid assemblages, collection cabinets and elaborate pseudo-scientific drawings". Van Caeckenbergh then discussed his art-making directly:

What I have been doing up until now represents itself in highly baroque forms, held together in extremely complex and intimate genealogical tracks (the genealogist being someone who draws connections between living structures). I lose myself exploring these connections within the boundaries of my own created nest (like a domestic animal). This pure, everyday spot is the ideal place to explore and reinforce my inner island.

I am looking for the extreme pleasure of moments when thought exists purely within itself. I cherish these short-lived moments, formed as bubbles – a fraction of immense beauty until it bursts against a tiny bit of reality. These are the moments when all thoughts are completely without control, function or communication. The life of a thought extends to the edge of words; there it stiffens and dies. To put it more plainly, I speak in terms of censorship. To communicate with words is to censor. (p. 86)

[Van Caekenberg clearly described transcending during art-making as *moments of extreme pleasure where thought exists purely within itself*. He also discussed exploring his *inner island* and *connections between living structures*.]

Van Gogh (1853-1890)

In *The Illustrated Letters, Vincent Van Gogh, Letters from Provence*, Bailey (1990) the artist at times described experiences and benefits of art-making. In 1988 he wrote:

The imagination is certainly a faculty which we must develop, one which alone can lead us to the creation of a more exalting and consoling nature than the single brief glance at reality – which in our sight is ever changing, passing like a flash of lightning – can let us perceive. (p. 32)

I am doing very well down here, but it is because I have my work here, and nature, and if I didn't have that, I should grow melancholy. (p. 38)

I have done, still for my decoration, a size 30 canvas of my bedroom ...well I enormously enjoyed doing this interior of nothing at all...By means of all these diverse tones I have wanted to express an *absolute restfulness*. (p. 71)

For I often don't know what I am doing when I am working almost like a sleep-walker. (p. 73)

Between 1889–1890 while institutionalized in an asylum, Van Gogh wrote several times to his brother Theo:

My health is all right, considering; I feel happier here with my work than I could be on the outside. (p. 111)

It would perhaps be a good thing if you wrote a few words to Dr. Peyron to tell him that working on my pictures is almost a necessity for my

recovery...Work distracts me infinitely better than anything else, and if I could once really throw myself into it with all my energy, possibly that would be the best remedy. (p. 118)

Only when I stand in front of an easel do I feel somewhat alive. (p. 121)

My work was going well, the last canvas of branches in blossom – you will see that it was perhaps the best, the most patiently worked thing I had done, painted with calm and with a greater firmness of touch. (p. 130)

Around the same time, in a letter to his sister in Plazy (1998), *In the Footsteps of Van Gogh* the artist wrote about his art-making:

One gets the feeling of being present at a rebirth, total but benevolent, of all the things one should have believed in, should have wished for – a strange and happy meeting of very distant antiquities and crude modernity. *A few days later, he confided to his mother that painting was not just the process of manufacturing images, representing things we see: it is creation, the building of a world; a poetic and spiritual adventure.* (p. 28)

[Van Gogh discussed *calm* experiences and the *spiritual adventure* that is his art-making. There was a real sense of benefit for him derived from his art practice.]

Viola (b. 1951)

Bill Viola is a significant American contemporary artist who has investigated themes like consciousness, time and emotions, through visual artwork. His video and installation art *The Messenger* was part of the Perth International Festival in 2000. In the accompanying leaflets he was quoted as studying “human consciousness and sense perception as a language of the body and avenue to self-knowledge” and he felt knowledge was to be inhabited and experienced from the level of human consciousness rather than being purely in the domain of the intellect (Perth International Arts Festival, 2000).

In *Bill Viola*, by Ross, (1997) the catalogue book that accompanied Viola’s touring exhibition of 1997–2000, the artist was asked about the spiritual traditions that mattered to him. His lengthy reply began with a sense of spirituality instilled in him by his

religious mother and encounters with Eastern religions at university in the late 1960s. He read widely (about Buddhism, The Upanishads and other Indian texts, Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching, Ouspensky's writing and had an interest in Asian music) and went to Japan to study Zen meditation. In Ross (1997) Viola stated:

I guess the connection ultimately...has to do with an acknowledgment or awareness or recognition that there is something above, beyond, below, beneath what's in front of our eyes, what our daily life is focussed on. There's another dimension that you just know is there, that can be a source of real knowledge, and the quest for connecting with that and identifying that is the whole impetus for me to cultivate these experiences and to make my work. And, on a large scale, it is also the driving force behind all religious endeavours. There is an unseen world out there and we are living in it. (p. 143)

When discussing childhood experiences of spirituality and authenticity or verification of experiences Ross (1997) quoted Viola:

Well, I believe that the feelings that I had when I was a child are authentic and universal; that is, they are not just about my own particular feelings of that place and time. Carl Jung might call them archetypes... Many other people have had these feelings before. Sometimes that's resulted in organized institutions... but the point is that, as Mircea Eliade said, "the sacred is a part of the structure of consciousness and not a stage in the evolution of consciousness."... There wasn't a time when things were any more spiritual than they are now. ... It's always there. We happen to live in an age that doesn't reflect or encourage it or focus it in the way that cultures have done in the past... But that doesn't mean it's not there. (p. 147)

Later regarding questions about contemporary art that is very self-conscious and cynical about authenticity or genuine in age that has photography Ross (1997) again quoted Viola:

In the course of working, I've felt all along that I never lost faith in the image. My faith was never undermined in terms of an image's ability to engage you in some genuine, real way, on some deep level that's connected to your inner self and that you can effect some kind of change or realization. It's easy to be cynical, to say, "I've seen a zillion pictures of the Grand Canyon. Oh, that's

just another image.” “This is not a pipe.” Then you actually go to the Grand Canyon and you walk out there and step out on that rim ... and you experience something that you’ve never seen before in all those photos. They just fall away.

The issue of “being” is the key here. The connection is made through being. If you take the approach of knowledge, which we’ve done in Western history, you end up with the word “information” to describe this array of events. If you go through being, you arrive in another place, rich in subjective experience, which is in a very basic way the primary difference between the Eastern and Western approach. (p. 150)

[Viola referred to knowledge that was *experiential* and *philosophical* therefore making the distinction between the two. He does not use the term transcending but his general descriptions of personal experience may include the silent experience of the mind. He had an interest in meditation and universal consciousness and posited *all aesthetic experiences are linked through being.*]

3.6 Comparison of artists’ statements

In this comparison of the main themes, artist’s statements were ordered chronologically rather than alphabetically. Attention was given to the writers’ specificity in their description of transcending experience and the main focus that appears from these few excerpts of chosen texts.

When considering themes that emerged from this study there has been a variety of language used by the artists/writers concerning their subjective and spiritual experiences. Although their thoughts are distinctly individual, I felt that several broad groupings or themes could be determined: (a) descriptions of the transcending experience during art-making, (b) the artwork just produced itself, as directed by their consciousness, (not dictated by the techniques or materials), (c) discussion about the art-making being linked to the artist’s inner world or soul, (d) personal or subjective experience, and (e) art-making being linked with the spirituality of the land or environment.

Table 2 – Summary of themes derived from sample excerpts of artist quotations.

Artist, dates, type of writing	Descriptions of transcending during art-making	Artwork produced itself	Art-making linked to the artist's inner world or soul	Personal or subjective experiences	Art-making linked to relationship with the land or environment
Monet 1840-1926	Exclusive attention bordering on hypnosis		Goal of his art to offer an asylum of peaceful meditation	Total self-surrender, water evoked idea of infinity and instability of the universe	Subject matter water, garden, nature source of inspiration
Van Gogh 1853-1890 Letters to family	Absolute restfulness, calm		Spiritual adventure	Distraction and remedy, only when at ease feel alive	Subject matter nature, blossom
Kandinsky 1866-1944 Book written by artist/art theory			Soul of art, internal necessity, spiritual necessity, springs from the soul	Consciously or unconsciously, know thyself	
Matisse 1869-1954 Book written by artist			Expresses inner visions	Revelations, Sense of God when he works	Meditation on nature
Mahoney Griffin 1871-1961 Her writings			Intellect awaken	Spiritual powers of perception	Perceive and become creator in the world of life
O'Keefe 1887-1986 Interview			Intangible thing in myself that I can only clarify in paint	Painting is like a thread running through all other things in one's life	
Ernst 1891-1976		Quite by chance, resulting drawings	Meditative, hallucinatory powers	Linked with memory from my childhood a vision befell me	Used every kind of material in sight
Miro 1893-1983 Conversation/ interview			Lay bear the soul, religious essence		
Rees 1895-1988 Autobiography	Mood of contemplation and thoughtfulness, air of stillness holds	Came of their own volition, whisper for themselves		Feeling came into one of my paintings	
Magritte 1898-1967 Autobiography			Visions from half-sleep or dreams	Contact between consciousness and the external world	Transformation of known objects
Dali 1904-1989 Interview		Art is inscrutable, involuntary	Beyond the simple analysis of logical thought	"Creator" of his art	

Artist, dates, type of writing	Descriptions of transcending during art-making	Artwork produced itself	Art-making linked to the artist's inner world or soul	Personal or subjective experiences	Art-making linked to relationship with the land or environment
Gascoigne 1917- Interview for group book		Collects <i>things</i> often doesn't know what she will do with them	Art has the artists own identity and spirit	Art was something I was	I was very much aware of nature
Hester 1920-1960 Letters	Psycho-logical and psychic moments				Subjective relationship with the land in Australia.
Tjupurrula 1920-2001 Interview for exhibition catalogue			Aboriginal school in the bush culture learnt, trying to open our mind.	Stories in the art from own tjukurpa or culture, early days	To do with land where born, name of a place
Olsen 1928- Exhibition catalogue interview	Mystical experience	Like a flash of lightening, without even knowing	Search for mystical experience		A mystical throbbing through nature, Zen- we live in nature and nature lives in us
Binns 1940- Interview for group book	Powerful internal journey		Looks within for own knowledge	Personal exploration	Political, aesthetic and cultural choices
Dumbrell 1941- Interview for group book		A painting can lead you into an ambiguous area	Very intuitive process	Very intuitive process	Plays with shapes or lines found in her environment
Morgan 1951- Interview			Art goes back to my beginning, culmination of all this inheritance	Telling the story	Earth was art, our art is the colour of this land
Viola 1951- Interview for touring exhibition catalogue	Knowledge is experiential and philosophical		Interest in meditation and universal consciousness underlies artwork	Personal spiritual experiences shared by many people throughout time	All aesthetic experiences are linked through "being"
Tuymans 1958- Interview			Capture objects soul in painting	Pleasure, concentration, intensity, breaking point, arousal	
Van Caackenbergh 1960- Catalogue interview	Moments of extreme pleasure where thought exists purely within itself		Lose myself ... to explore and reinforce my inner island	I lose myself in a pure, everyday spot	Draws connections between living structures

In summary, this study of quotations from twenty-two artists has greatly enriched the original concepts brought to this creative project. The quotes used, although brief offer some insight into the broad spectrum of subjective experiences that can be derived from the art-making process. Although representative of different art movements and philosophies the artists' descriptions of spiritual experiences go some of the way towards answering the research questions.

When seeking a clear description of the possibility of the transcending experience in written material from these artists I became aware of the need to be able to pinpoint exact descriptions of transcending. All the artists listed in the themes other than the first category may have had transcending experiences but their descriptions of spiritual experiences were not precise enough for this purpose. Often the artist gave an intellectualised statement or generalised description of their experience rather than a direct description of the moments of their experience. The notes after each artists' contribution discussed this aspect more specifically.

The summary table produced above delineates general groupings. A discussion with each artist would more fully clarify if they could identify particular moments of transcending. Of the twenty-two artists, eight clearly described transcending during art-making in their own words in various ways. Seven artists spoke about artworks being produced in ways that inferred that the art-making was automatic or went by itself. Twenty artists referred to their art-making as being linked to their inner world or soul. Nineteen artists described what could be categorized as personal or subjective experiences, although these were very diverse in nature. Fifteen artists described links with their personal relationship with the land or their natural environment.

From this study it may be said that all these artists have individual subjective and spiritual experiences during art-making and that some have described moments of particular experiences that appear to be transcending.

4.0 Research Question 3

Does a focus on spiritual and transcending experience have a place in contemporary visual arts education?

4.1 Introduction

In answering the third research question regarding the relevance of this topic in contemporary art education, the following areas of discussion will be dealt with in turn: (a) a discussion of the relevance of this topic to the stated goals of The Curriculum Framework K-12, (b) a review of the philosophies espoused by visual arts educators of the past will be conducted to provide support and importance for this topic, (c) the balance of art and science in the curriculum, and (d) two perspectives from contemporary educators.

4.2 The Curriculum Framework K-12

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Curriculum Framework K-12 in WA (Curriculum Council, WA, 1998, p.19) in the Overarching Learning Outcomes statement highlighted the need for “practices that promote personal growth and well being”. The second Appendix in the Curriculum Framework called Values (Curriculum Council, WA, 1998) introduced the topic of spirituality in education in the section entitled Self Acceptance and Respect of Self:

The acceptance and respect of self, resulting in attitudes and actions that develop each person’s unique potential – physical, emotional, aesthetic, spiritual, intellectual, moral and social. (p. 324)

Clearly, the Curriculum Framework contains a focus on those educational practices that nurture a sense of self, resulting in the development of each student’s

potential. This developmental goal is qualified further in terms of physical, emotional, aesthetic, spiritual, intellectual, moral and social. I propose that a rich, stimulating and relevant art program in schools would certainly enhance each student's spirituality (the focus of this study), but it would also fulfil most of the Curriculum Framework's goals as well.

Abbs (1995, pp. 22-23) stated that art offered "sensations of the soul" and that "if spirituality concerns the deepening of consciousness then both the creation and appreciation of art are essential to its task, for the arts provide the distinctive metaphors and technical means for reflecting the invisible life of human experience." Abbs went on to explain that that visionary art educators could assist in the development of spirituality.

4.3 The potential of transcending experiences within visual arts education as discussed by art educators

Current tertiary art education courses have extensive recommended reading lists full of references with positive concepts, philosophies and recommended classroom applications. The structures to create meaningful art educators are in place and continue to re-inspire me as an artist and art educator. The repeated practice of the art-making process can be self-validating and confidence building and can be part of necessary steps in a natural and fully balanced development for young students. The benefits of art-making has been well researched, well documented and well known. Following is a literature review of the views presented by art educators regarding the relevance of the study of art particularly in the area of spiritual and aesthetic experience during art-making.

According to Linderman (1997), art practice increases sensitivity, aesthetic experience and understandings of subtle and imaginative solutions that distinguish some activities

from more mundane functional activities. He stated “encouragement of the student to listen to his intuition during the art process is an important part of learning creative behaviour” (p.5). On this basis, regular art-making for students of all ages is highly recommended.

Eisner (1972) in his classic text, *Educating artistic vision*, proposed two concepts that seem still relevant and equally important today. According to Eisner, the *contextualist* position in art education he discussed is based on the needs of particular students and their particular societies. Contextualism in art education is related to stimulating creativity, personality development, concept formulation, right brain activity and the individual needs of children. Instrumentalist purposes were felt to be of primary importance.

On the other hand, the *essentialist* position is based on the precept that visual arts education, like the study of sciences, is essential to understand and interpret the world and is therefore based on a universal language. The development of a child is related to existentialist ideas. Art practice helps to develop a sense of who one is and the response to others’ artworks provides further understanding of, and relationship with, others. These two conceptual positions have relevance not only in junior education but were important for a lifetime of education.

Schirmacher (1988, p. 53) in *Art and Creative Development for Children*, considered a variety of definitions of creativity and then linked these to their consequences for visual arts education. His summary included: “the ability to see things in new ways, boundary breaking and going beyond the information given, thinking unconventionally, making something unique, combining unrelated things into something new”. He further developed an expansive explanation of creativity that had direct application and implications for understanding art, art making and art education. This explanation included five factors of creativity that are the product, the process, the skill, the set of personality traits and the set of environmental conditions. The creative process preceded the creative product and

contrasted with the production of art to please the audience. And the artistic process may not always produce “a souvenir” either. Schirmacher (1988) recommended:

Young children should engage in artistic processing and product making for themselves. The child who fails to bring home a finished painting may be no less productive or creative than the one who insists on finishing a picture. (p. 55)

He argued also that creativity as a skill developed through practice.

When a discussion of creativity arises, many adults are prone to state, I’m just not creative... not all people believe themselves to be creative...this relates to the old ideas of a creative elite and a product explanation for creativity. (p. 55)

Related to this is the lack of confidence that children can have about their art. Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987, p. 10) in *Creative and Mental Growth*, stated, “Each child reveals his interests, capabilities and involvement in art, although these may in some cases bear little relationship to “beauty”...Art education, therefore, is primarily concerned with the effect that the process has on the individual”. The authors further stated that it is important that the students strive towards their own answers rather accepting and being guided by an adult’s solution. Throughout history, people have always found avenues in their lives and environments through which they could experience the stimulation of feelings and senses, which developed creativity. They built their homes, grew food, practiced art, music and dance. These activities gave significance to life. Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987, p.14) further added that, “Art education has the special mission of developing within the individual those creative sensitivities that make life satisfying and meaningful”.

Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) criticised the subordinate role that art is given in the secondary school setting “Whereas within our society it is playing an increasingly large one”. Senior students preparing for jobs are within a system that relies heavily on sciences and technology whereas “art may be the only field within the framework of our

school system where the development of feelings and emotions is given proper recognition” Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987, p. 266).

Similarly Linderman (1997, p. 1) criticized the development of art education as being “under the influence of industry...more concerned with the production of products than with a regard for why the product was made”. She wrote a great deal about creative thinking, creative exploration and creative functioning and listed narrative vignettes from well-known science and visual arts practitioners and commentators to convince the reader of the worth of creative activity. These covered concepts like inventing new symbols, requiring freedom, inquiring, seeking the truth in life and welcoming opportunities.

I believe that self-actualisation or development of a sense of self is a desirable life skill. And that it can be fostered in students of all ages through regular art-making. Making art increases sensitivity, aesthetic experience and understandings of subtle and imaginative solutions that distinguishes it from more mundane functional activities. Linderman (1997, p. 5) stated “encouragement of the student to listen to his intuition during the art process is an important part of learning creative behaviour”.

Support for inclusion of the arts in the curriculum is provided by two qualitative researchers in the field of education, Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 175) made clear distinctions between theory and practice or “modes of knowing” and “teaching and learning or aesthetics and art practice. They believe that teachers teach from “their own narrative unities” and that students experience their own learning from their own narrative unities. Therefore education cannot “occur unless it calls up and makes use of some aspect of each student’s dominant narrative unities” (1990, p. 191). For Connelly and Clandinin (1990), individual narratives expressed in art, state “who” that student is, create relevance, and encourage aesthetic understanding.

4.4 Art and Science and their shared role in education

Elliot Eisner is Professor of Education and Art at Stanford University. The E. W. Eisner Web page (2002, p.1) stated he was trained as a painter and originally taught art in high school and then university settings and now focuses on “ways in which schools might improve by using the processes of the arts in all their programs”. Eisner (1985, p.32) compared art and science and the contribution of the aesthetic in education. He stated that the undermining of aesthetic knowledge has come about by looking for knowledge “out there” instead of realising that it is constructed by each person. He compared the activity of the artist and the scientist.

Eisner (1985, p. 27) quoted Alfred North Whitehead as saying “Most people believe that scientists inquire in order to know. Just the opposite is the case. Scientists know in order to inquire”. Knowledge comes from the world around us, from our own life experiences and intuition but is constructed within our own consciousness. Eisner (1985, pp. 26-27) also quoted Herbert Read in extending the view of the aesthetic as creating coherence and form in “every sphere of life” and that: “All faculties, of thought, logic, memory, sensibility and intellect are involved...And they are all processes which involve art...The aim of education is therefore the creation of artists - of people efficient in various modes of expression”.

Earlier when clarifying the terms I have discussed in this study I referred to Arnheim’s ideas about the field of intuition in education. Arnheim (1985, p. 84) argued that in art and science, or intuition and the intellect, it was important not to “neglect one in favour of the other or to keep them apart” because such neglect “cannot but cripple the minds we are trying to assist in their growth.” This point again highlights the ongoing relevance for balance in curriculum.

4.5 A discussion about contemporary art education

In recent times, the Getty Institute in Manhattan, New York has encouraged the study of aesthetics in art education. The Getty Institute and the Artsednet websites are substantial resources for art educators incorporating and extending their skills. The website contains copious lesson plans for all year levels that represent diverse perspectives and concerns within visual arts education. It should be noted however, that the Getty Institute promotes discipline-based art education which defines the “disciplines” of art in opposition to outcomes-based curricula with their focus on the individual learner.

The Lincoln Center – Institute for the Arts in Education, in the United States has also provided a working model of arts education based around the philosophy of aesthetic education. The Lincoln Institute’s agenda is based on the writings of innovative educators such as John Dewey, Maxine Greene, and Howard Gardner. The Lincoln Center’s approach has extended aesthetic education from the realm of progressive education into the arena of the arts.

John Dewey (1938) is well known as a philosopher interested in experience, interaction and reflection in education in order to connect with the real significance of the multifarious richness of human experience. He worked against narrow ontological presumptions by describing the variety of human experience, events and processes. Dewey (1929) in *Experience and Nature* discussed the mind as being not solely individual but part of natural processes acting between humans and their world. Dewey (1931) in *Art as Experience* (The John Dewey website, 2002) also extended his ideas into the field of aesthetic theory. He felt that the roots of aesthetic experience lie in commonplace experience and that elite art movements had no legitimacy. He wrote about an aesthetic experience that has a relationship with previous experiences that give life an “aesthetic” quality. This type of “experience” could be developed in many fields of life

and can be related to all our life experiences. He further acknowledged the participation of the viewer and the social implications of art.

Maxine Greene, Professor of Philosophy and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, is also founder of the Center for the Arts, Social Imagination, and Education. Greene (2002) wrote:

Aesthetics, after all, involves an exploration of the questions arising when people become self-reflective about their engagements with art forms. ... The burning questions, the significant questions probably arise after privileged moments of encounter with works of art. The content of such questions may well be derived from theory. (p. 1)

Greene (1995) emphasised both the experience and the understanding of aesthetic experience:

Aesthetic experiences require conscious participation in a work, a going out of energy, an ability to notice what is there to be noticed ... Knowing 'about,' even in the most formal academic manner, is entirely different from constituting a fictive world imaginatively and entering it perceptually, affectively, and cognitively. To introduce students to the manner of such engagement is to strike a delicate balance between helping learners to pay heed—to attend to shapes, patterns, sounds, rhythms, figures of speech, contours, and lines—and helping liberate them to achieve particular works as meaningful. And it is perhaps the refusal to control what is discovered as meaningful that strikes traditional educators as at odds with their conception of norms or their notions of appropriate cultural literacy. (p. 125)

Howard Gardner is a Professor in Cognition and Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and in 2000 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. During the past fifteen years, he and colleagues at the Research Unit, Project Zero have been working on the design of performance-based assessments, education for understanding, and the use of multiple intelligences to achieve more personalized curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Gardner is best known in educational circles for his theory of multiple

intelligences, a critique of the notion that there exists but a single human intelligence that can be assessed by standard psychometric instruments.

Gardner (2002) was trained as a developmental psychologist and later as a neuropsychologist. He had two streams of research; one with normal and gifted children, the second with adults who suffered from brain damage. Through this he developed a theory of multiple intelligences. Gardner (2002, p. 1) suggested that our culture and educational system “teach, test, reinforce and reward primarily two kinds of intelligence: verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical.” He proposed that there are at least seven kinds of intelligence including visual/spatial, bodily/kinaesthetic, musical, interpersonal and intrapersonal. Most recently he has added another called naturalist. His education reform includes regular and integrated use of the arts.

Gardner’s emphasis of the importance of the use of the arts in education is supported by the Lincoln Center’s website (2002) which describes art as:

An inexhaustible resource for exploration, reflection, and understanding... Without the limitations imposed by ‘right’ or “wrong” answers, this process of response builds cognitive abilities in powerful, fundamental ways. ... At the same time, aesthetic education develops an inside understanding of the artistic choices that contribute to any given work of art. Students develop a deep appreciation for the arts, gain practical insights into specific artworks, and strengthen core skills—such as abstract thinking and problem-solving—that readily apply across the curriculum and throughout life. (2002. p. 2)

For the authors of the Lincoln Center (2002) website, aesthetic education is an approach to teaching and learning which is based on creating encounters between the students and the range of works of art. Such encounters ameliorate the separation of consciousness from the world around because those objects that are considered works of art, become objects of experience. Situations are created to allow reflection and to allow for increased imagination and perceptual awareness. The experience goes beyond merely private

pleasure when consummations of such experience occur in open, shared spaces, and participatory communities take shape.

Graeme Sullivan, originally from Sydney, now Associate Professor of Art Education at Ohio State University with links to The Lincoln Institute, has written extensively about cognition in the art-making process and also about research methods to study the visual arts. Sullivan (1994, p.5) stated “art is one of the most important means of learning about ourselves and the world around us” and “when people create or respond to art, they make connections between themselves and the experiences of others”. Sullivan (1994, pp 5-6) discussed the many purposes of art-making: (a) for personal reasons, (b) for social and political expression, (c) to heighten the capacity to “think feel and respond to visual experience”, (d) religious purposes, (e) for functional reasons, (f) for educational reasons and (g) the development of “human imagination.” The most salient aspect of his writing relevant for this study is his conviction of the importance and essential nature of art practice and viewing for fully developed individuals and society. Art-making and the study of aesthetics underpin his understanding of how cultural heritage is understood and how thinking for the future can be developed.

Clearly there are various ways to develop and evolve philosophies and methods to include the study of aesthetics in art and wider curriculum areas. The outcomes based art education system allows for this possibility. My study proposed to bring perspective to the established understandings about the value of subjective experiences during the art-making process.

4.6 Two perspectives on visual arts education in Australia

A short while after stepping down from her position as Chair of the Australia Council Dr. Margaret Sears addressed the National Press Club. In this presentation Sears (2001) criticized the place of the arts in Australia as “benign neglect”. Her emphasis was

focussed not so much on the financial support for the Arts in Australia but the neglect in the understanding of the benefits of the arts by the “decision makers”. The thinking behind policymaking that is undertaken by the Australian Government and the CEOs of associated media and business groups directly affected the attitudes adopted and direction taken in art education. She referred to research, attitudes and programs from the United States, UK, Canada, Singapore, New Zealand and the Netherlands. She contrasted these to the attitudes to art education in Australia to construct her model of “benign neglect”. Key points included broadening the “catchment” for decision makers along with attention and responsiveness to the research on the benefits of the arts and curriculum development in line with this research.

Sears (2001) cited the support that the English Prime Minister, Tony Blair, gave towards the development of the arts in a recent green paper called “Culture and Creativity the Next Ten Years”. He valued “immersing young people in creative pursuits” and that “creative talent will be crucial to our individual and national economic success in the economy of the future”. Sears (2001) argued that the key role and the connections being made between creativity, culture and innovation just do not seem to be made in Australia. She stated that the response to other research in the areas of diet and sport resulted in a quick response and changes in our education system with the addition of compulsory sport and diet education. When research on the benefits of the arts has been made available, it is ignored.

According to Sears (2001), in the United States recent research covered twenty-five thousand students over a ten-year period. One finding was that students in low socio-economic areas who were heavily involved in arts programs scored consistently better across standard testing than those middleclass students who were “arts deprived”. Benefits found in other research cited were in the areas of education, health, crime, social rehabilitation, community building and social identity. Sears (2001) believed that individual Australian schools have developed strong arts programs but that there was “a total lack of recognition for the potential of the arts in the areas of communication skills,

literacy, teamwork, problem solving, risk taking and so on". Spending on literacy and sport was up and spending on the arts was reduced with fewer specialist teachers.

Sears (2001) use of the term "arts deprived" was significant and one of her final statements was poignant and reflected my concerns for art education.

I look around at our community, the situation of young people and regional communities crumbling around them...it is morally irresponsible not to use one of the most powerful weapons in our armoury, the Arts, to improve the quality of the lives that are leading so many Australians nowhere. (Transcription)

Further she stated that art needed to be "positively" taught and appropriate to each group so it is not perceived to be for the nerds. The evidence and research are there and what is needed is "lateral thinking and not the traditional mindsets". I have felt encouraged by this quite recent presentation because I felt it explained current relevance for my proposed study of visual artists that presented their spiritual and personal benefits from their visual art practice.

Lillico, the City Beach Secondary School Principal, used his Churchill Fellowship to test his research conducted in Australia and New Zealand, in school systems in the USA, Canada, Europe and the UK. Lillico (2000) investigated the "disengagement of boys in their schooling". He listed primary factors that contributed to young people (particularly boys) feeling that they were facing a bleak future because: (a) technology and "the greedy employer" have created a less permanent workforce causing an increase in the number of temporary and casual jobs, together with, (b) general depression among our youngsters, (c) slow disintegration of the family, (d) lack of role models, (e) boys needing to think and reflect more before they act, and finally, (f) girls needing to "speculate" more and take risks.

Lillico (2000) analysed peer group pressure and contrasted it with the "not cool to be smart" attitude prevalent in boys peer groups in Australia. He developed fifty-two recommendations that included the following.

21. Schools must emphasize The Arts ... there are many talented boys who don't fulfil their dreams because they consider artistic pursuits are weak or feminine. Sometimes making these subjects compulsory for a year group allows these boys to participate in these areas without fear of ridicule. (p. 16)

Lillico (2000) further recommended attention be given to aspects of student experience that are naturally covered by the process of art making such as proximal learning, teaching less and doing more, praiseworthy activity where the student can achieve success and express thoughts and feelings.

Surely anything that assisted the establishment and nurturing of students' sense of self and self-esteem (as art making can do) should not only be part of the primary and secondary curricula but also be a major corner-stone. The experience of art making and the understanding of the associated aesthetic can be an ideal vehicle to assist this process. I believe that ideally, education should not only fill a student with information but also facilitate their self-development and teach life skills.

After the student years, art practice and appreciation can continue to be vehicles for fulfilling experiences. Routines of life, difficulties and lack of fulfilment can cramp individual fulfilment in life. Experiences that allow a person to step out of the ordinary and experience more unbounded or expanded fields of the mind and recharge the emotions and the spirit, would be a legacy of which an inspiring art education could be proud. This is the basis of a potential life skill that has been part of cultures throughout world history. Therefore it might be useful to focus on the spiritual benefit of art-making to emphasize the potential benefits of art education.

Secondary school students can have a great number of pressures in their lives. Many people are aware that substance abuse and youth suicide are issues for this age group. At this age students need to create their own identity as an individual and build a sense of self as separate from their parents. The pressure of this process can see students looking outside of themselves for their identity. The confidence and nurturing of their own and

inner resources needs to be encouraged by their closest contacts. Teachers, mentors and role models in various areas of their lives may become important. I believe that the art-making experience can give an inner, subjective experience that can assist some students to understand their own subjectivity. Also that studying the lives of other artists can provide opportunities for stimulating role models.

I believe that there is a need to focus on art and its subsequent benefits throughout primary and secondary education so that a valuable personal resource is in place when students encounter difficulties in their lives. Art becomes an elective subject after Year 8 in some schools. This could be postponed as suggested by Ian Lillico (2000). There could also be an increased focus on the teaching of an understanding of the aesthetic experience in art-making. Also students who feel alienated from art-making need to be encouraged and inspired to regain their confidence in the regular participation in the visual arts. Significantly this Creative Project supports ongoing campaigns by visual arts educators who may feel that visual arts education is continuing to be marginalized and sidelined.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Closing statement

This study of artist's and art educator's experiences have shown that art making can at times facilitate individual artists to progress in their sense of self, personal development and assist the development of natural and individual forms of spirituality. Also that art making and appreciation can lead on to many areas of creativity and can create a lingering memory of enjoyment and self-confidence.

Some artists and art educators believed that art could be for self-realisation and was deeply personal and fulfilling. Some artists and the wider community reported enhanced quality of life due to art making and viewing. The understanding and development of self-expression can be said to at times be related to the growth of a sense of subjective, transcendental or spiritual experiences that sometimes occurs during art-making.

5.1 Implications and Recommendations

The sort of learning structures, or suggested areas of future activity, that could be derived from this study have been summarized as following:

- (i) Heightened acknowledgment of and exposure to the study of the aesthetic understanding and subjective experiences that can at times occur during art-making and may strengthen students' understanding of creativity and knowledge from within one's own consciousness.
- (ii) Focussing on the process, as well as the product could be a desirable outcome: being aware in art classes to allow time for self-discovery; not only adult directed product; value of some undirected time, to experience materials; student solution

to the analysis or problem at hand; student based analysis and feedback of results /discussion of steps of progress.

- (iii) Awareness of learning through action: unfolding the solution or result through personal planning by the student, instead of necessarily a desired result set by the teacher; the value the art journal; self reflection and personal engagement in goal and task setting (The Getty Institute and the Lincoln Center)
- (iv) Awareness of the four models of education as posed by Efland so as to be open to the use of the Expressive-Psychoanalytical model and the nature of activities that may support openness to a balance of all models.
- (v) School exhibitions can create a sense of pressure in creating a need for professional/technically well done art products. Awareness to exhibit art from all students rather than a chosen few. Labelling of artworks at school exhibitions could also indicate the intended outcome was to do with the aesthetic process rather than a planned product outcome. This might help to shift the emphasis from a *best* product. Group work, such as, murals allow all to participate and assist lack of space issues.
- (vi) Awareness of diverse artworks and art-making techniques and aesthetics. Visual art works are produced by a variety of people; children, IT artists, graffiti artists, indigenous artists, fringe artists, folk artists, street artists and more. There are also multicultural influences in art and shifting frames of reference due to feminist and ecological viewpoints. People from the disparate groups within Australian society have produced a myriad of forms of self-expression and social statement. What I believe art education needs is to be able to *on deliver* this diversity in both skill and aesthetic understanding so that it meets the current needs of primary, secondary, tertiary and adult students. Little (1990, p.251) challenged art

educators to respond to the needs of the changing cultures with new technologies, retraining and “partial or complete shifts in direction from time to time”.

- (vii) Suggestion that art be kept as a core subject for longer than it is (Lowenfeld, Lillico, Sears, The Lincoln Institute).

- (viii) Non-western cultures and their understandings of aesthetics can be utilized to greatly enrich art philosophies and methods that have been available in the past. The addition of their extended study, rather than cursory lesson, multiplies the diversity and the depth of spiritual understanding available in the field of aesthetics and art education. The bringing of specialists from cultural or specific art groups into the classroom may facilitate the depth of understanding for students.

- (ix) Ferguson recommended that the experience and systematic study of the development of individual and group consciousness, through the TM and associated programs, be incorporated into art education programs. From my viewpoint this would be the most successful way to comprehensively study the transcending experience, which occurs systematically during TM and at times during the art-making process.

REFERENCES

- Abbs, P. (1989). *Aa is for aesthetic*. Sussex: The Farmer Press.
- Arnheim, R. (1985). The double-edged mind: Intuition and intellect. In *Learning and teaching. The ways of knowing. 84TH yearbook of the national society for the study of education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bailey, M. (1990). *The illustrated letters. Vincent van Gogh. Letters from Provence*. London: Collins & Brown.
- Beaufort, M., Bonshek, A. J. & Fergusson, L.C. (1997). The holistic education of artists through Maharishi Vedic Science: unfolding the infinite reservoir of creativity in individual awareness. *Modern Science and Vedic Science*, 7(1). 268-295.
- Biddulph, S. (1995). *Manhood: An Action Plan for Changing Men's Lives*. Lanecove, N. S. W., Finch.
- Bischoff, U. (1994). *Max Ernst 1891-1976 Beyond Painting*. Kolh: Bendikt, Taschen.
- Bonshek, A. J. (1996). Art-a mirror of consciousness: Applying universal principles in art and theory on the basis of the description of pure consciousness, the universal source of individual consciousness, history, culture, language and art, according to Maharishi's Vedic Science-with an analysis of the Vastusutra Upanishad. *UMI Dissertation Services. UMI Number 9701127*. (UMI Microfilms).
- Boeree, C.G. (2002). *Carl Jung* [on line}. Available WWW: <http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/jung.html> [2002, 4th April].
- Bruner, J. (1985). Narrative and paradigmatic modes of thought. In *Learning and teaching. The ways of knowing. 84TH yearbook of the national society for the study of education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Burke, J. (1989). *Joy Hester*. Elwood, Vic.: Greenhouse Publications.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Personal practical knowledge and the modes of knowing: Relevance for teaching and learning. *Educational Researcher*, 19 (5), pp. 2-14.
- Cortazzi, M. (1993). *Narrative Analysis*. London: The Farmer Press.
- Cresswell, J.W., (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five traditions*. California: Sage Publications.

- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research, meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Dewey, J. (1929). *Experience and nature*. New York: Dover (Dover first edition published in 1958).
- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Collier Books (Collier edition first published in 1963).
- Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology: An introduction*. New York: Ueroo.
- Efland, A. D. (1990). Change in the conceptions of art teaching. *Australian Art Education*, 14(3). 11-21.
- Eisner, E. (1972). *Educating Artistic Vision*. New York: Macmillan.
- Eisner, E. (1985). Aesthetic Modes of knowing. In Learning and teaching. The ways of knowing. 84TH yearbook of the national society for the study of education. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fernand, D. (2001). Master Class. *The Australian Magazine*, July 21/22, 2001. 26 – 29.
- Fielding, R. (1996). A justification for subjectivity in art education research. *Australian Art Education*, 19(2). 11-16.
- Fergusson, L. C. (1991). Maharishi's Vedic Science and post-secondary art education. *UMI Dissertation Services. UMI Number 9205205*. (UMI Microfilms).
- Flam, J. D. (1973). *Matisse on art*. London, Phaidon.
- Frank, E. (1983). *Pollock*. New York: Abbeville press.
- Freud, S. (1982). Freud. In *The Concord Desk Encyclopaedia*. New York: Time. Concorde Reference Books.
- Gablik, S. (1976). *Magritte*. Boston: New York Graphic Society.
- Gablik, S. (1991). *The reenchantment of art*. New York: Thames and Hudson.
- Gablik, S. (1995). *Conversations before the end of time*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Gardner, H. (2002). The building tool room [on line]. Available http://www.newhorizons.org/trm_gardner.html [2002, 16th April].

- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the Imagination*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass, Inc.
- Haley, R. (2002). Introduction to education and Hermeneutics [on line]. Available <http://www2.canisius.edu/~gallaghr/ahed1.html> [2002, 16th April].
- Hart, D. (2000). *John Olsen*. Sydney: Craftsman House.
- Heelan, P. (2002). Peter Heelan [on line]. Available <http://www.goergetown.edu/heelan/> [2002, 16th April].
- Heelan, P. & Schulkin, J (1998). Hermeneutical Philosophy and Pragmatism: A Philosophy of Science. *Synthese*, 115(3). 269-302.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and time*. (Translation Macquarrie, J. & Robinson, E.). London: SCM Press.
- Huebner, D. E. (1985). Spirituality and knowing. In *Learning and teaching. The ways of knowing. 84TH yearbook of the national society for the study of education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Huebner, D. E. (1999). *The Lure of the Transcendent: Collected Essays by Dwayne E. Huebner*. Mahaw, NJ, USA: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Jung, C. (1967). *Collected works*. (Read, H., Adler, G. & McGuire, W., Eds.). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Hoy, D.C. (1982). *The critical circle. Literature, history and philosophical hermeneutics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Kandinsky, W. (1972). *Concerning the spiritual in art*. New York: George Wittenborn, Inc.
- Langer, S. (1975). *Philosophy in a new key – the symbolism of reason, rite and art*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Levi, B. (2000). *The Dali Universe*. London: The Times.
- Lillico, I. (2000). *Churchill Fellowship* [on line]. Available WWW: <http://citybeach.wa.edu.au/ian-lillicos-churchill-fellowship.htm> [2001, 24th June].
- Linderman, M. (1997). *Developing artistic and perceptual awareness: Art in the elementary school, 5th edition*. Dubuque: WmBrown.
- The Lincoln Institute (2002). <http://www.lincolncenter.org/lci/index.htm> [2002, 16th April].

- The John Dewey website (2002). <http://www.utm.edu.research/iep/d/dewey.htm> [2002, 16th April].
- Little, B. E. (1990). *Secondary art education: an anthology of issues*. Reston, Virginia: The National Arts Education Association.
- Lipschitz, S. (1999). Self-realization through aesthetic experience: An examination of rasa theory with implications for aesthetic enquiry in discipline-based art education. *UMI Dissertation Services. UMI Number 9919691*. (UMI Microfilms).
- Loock, U., Aliaga, J.V. & Spectar, N. (2000) *Luc Tuymans*. London: Phaidon Press.
- Lowenfeld, V. & Brittain, W.L. (1987). *Creative and mental growth, 6th edition*. New York, Macmillan.
- Mintz Messenger, L. (2001). *Georgia O'Keefe*. London: Thames & Hudson.
- Modjeska, D. (1999). *Stravinsky's lunch*. Sydney: Pan McMillan.
- O'Connell, D. F. & Alexander, C. N. (1995). *Self recovery. Treating addictions using Transcendental Meditation and Maharishi Ayur-Veda*. New York: The Hamworth Press.
- Packer, M. J. & Addison, R. B. (1989). *Entering the circle. Hermeneutical investigation in psychology. Introduction*. Albany, State University of New York Press.
- Perkins, H. & Fink, H. (2000). *Papunya Tula, genesis and genius*. Sydney: Art Gallery of New south Wales.
- Perth International Arts Festival*. (2000). [Leaflet]. (Available from Perth International Arts Festival, http://www.linnet.net.au/~stgeorge/The_messenger.html.)
- Plazy, G. (1998). *In the footsteps of Van Gogh*. New York: Penguin Studio Books.
- Plummer, K. (1983). *Documents of life*. London, Unwin Hyman.
- Read, H. (1956). *Education through art*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Rees, L. (1989). *Lloyd Rees, and artist remembers*. Seaforth, NSW: Craftsman House.
- Ross, D.A. (1997). *Bill Viola*. New York: Whitney Museum of Modern Art Publications.
- Roth, R. (1994). *Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation*. New York: Primus, Donald I. Fine.

- Rubbo, A. (2001). The numinous world of Marion Mahony Griffin: architect, artist, writer. *Spirit and place, art in Australia 1861 – 1996*. Sydney: Museum of contemporary art.
- Saito, Y. (1997). The Japanese aesthetics of imperfection and insufficiency. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 55(4). 377-385.
- Schirmacher, R. (1988). *Art and creative development for young children*. Albany, Delmar.
- Sears, M. (2001). *Benign Neglect*. [Audio Tape]. Address to the National Press Club aired on 20th June, 2001 on ABC Channel 2.
- Singh, J. (1999). *Vijnanabhairava or divine consciousness*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Spate, V. (2001). 'Concerning the spiritual in art'. A sceptical Essay. *Spirit and place, art in Australia 1861 -- 1996*. Sydney: Museum of contemporary art.
- Stuckey, C. F. (1988). *Monet, waterlilies*. New York: Macmillan.
- Sullivan, G. (1994). *Seeing Australia, views of artists and artwriters*. Annandale, NSW: Piper press.
- Suzuki, M. (2001). *The Okinawa centenarian study: health, diet and ongoing research*. [on line]. Available WWW: <http://okicent.org/> [2001, 18th July].
- Taschen, B. (1992). *Miro, the man and his work*. Köln, Germany.
- The Art of Sally Morgan*. (1996). Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Book Australia Ltd.
- Thevanaz, P. (1962). *What is Phenomenology?* Chicago: Quadrangle Books.
- Tuchman, M. (1988) *The spiritual in art: Abstract painting 1890-1985*. Perth: The Christensen Fund.
- Von Wright, G. H. (1971). *Explanation and understanding*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Wallace, R. K. (1991) *The Neurophysiology of Enlightenment. How Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi Program transforms the functioning of the human body*. Fairfield, Iowa: Maharishi International University Press.
- Ward La Cour, D. (1989). *Artists in quotation*. Nth Carolina: McFarland & Co.

- Winterson, J. (1995). *Art objects. Essays on ecstasy and effrontery. Part one. Art objects.* London: Jonathan Cape.
- Wolff, J. (1975). *Hermeneutic philosophy and the sociology of art. An approach to some of the epistemological problems of the sociology of knowledge and the sociology of art and literature.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Wallace, R. K. (1993). *The physiology of consciousness. How Maharishi's Vedic physiology and its application, can solve the problems of individual and collective health and raise life to a new level of fulfilment.* Iowa, USA: Maharishi International University Press.
- Willcox, B. (2001). *Age defying lifestyle: The Okinawa program.* [on line]. Available WWW: http://oprah.com/tows/pastshows/tows_past_20010502_.html [2001, 18th July].
- Yates, S. (2001). Arts funds oil community works. [Newspaper article]. *Weekend Australia, Saturday 7th July.*

APPENDIX 1

Students' Intelligence and Creativity Improved by Transcendental Meditation Technique. Intelligence (September/October 2001), Vol. 29/5, pp. 419-440.

Findings from Three Randomized Experiments Reported in the Leading Journal on Intelligence.

At a time when U.S. schools make you think of metal detectors, falling test scores and attention deficit disorder, imagine students closing their eyes to meditate for 15 minutes twice daily, and then, as a result, showing more intelligence and creativity, less anxiety, and increased alertness and ability to focus.

An article in the September/October issue of *Intelligence* reports on three randomized studies that found these results in students who learned the Transcendental Meditation® technique, an age-old practice for developing mental potential.

"We found increases in creativity and intelligence that you don't typically expect to see," said principal investigator and co-author So Kam Tim of Hong Kong, who conducted the experiments to earn his doctoral degree in psychology at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa. "Many researchers feel that it's not possible to significantly improve basic cognitive ability once a person reaches adolescence, but our findings challenge that theory."

Dr. So's research was designed to determine whether different meditation procedures and rest could affect several types of cognitive processes. "We compared the Transcendental Meditation technique, contemplative meditation and napping, which some believe produce similar effects," said Dr. So. "Our findings showed that these three have significantly different effects on cognitive function."

Significant improvement on seven measures of cognitive function.

Dr. So used seven standardized tests to measure a wide range of cognitive, emotional and perceptual functions of 362 students participating in the three studies at schools in Taiwan. In one study, conducted at a private high school, 154 seniors (78 boys, 76 girls) from four classes were randomly assigned to the TM® program or to a napping group. In the second study at a national junior high school, 87 girls were randomized by class to either a TM program group or a no-treatment control group, and were also compared to 41 girls in a third class who learned contemplative meditation from the Chinese tradition. The third study consisted of 99 boys in two classes at a vocational training school who were randomly assigned by class to either a TM program group or no-treatment control.

The results of the three studies, which ranged from six months to one year, showed that taken together the TM program groups had significant improvement on all seven measurements compared to the no-treatment and napping control groups. Contemplative meditation showed a significant result in two categories, and napping had no effect.

Whole-brain functioning

"The TM technique had the unique effect of simultaneously improving all measures, indicating that it integrates many different brain functions," said Dr. So.

The greatest improvement in the TM program groups was seen on a creativity measure called Test for Creative Thinking–Drawing Production. According to its developers, the test measures "whole brain creativity," which requires a balanced use of intellect and feelings.

Improvements in the TM program groups were also found in practical intelligence (Constructive Thinking Inventory), indicating increased non-intellectual abilities, such as optimism and the ability to work with others. Whereas IQ tests predict only academic success, the practical intelligence test predicts success in work, love, and social relationships. However, IQ also increased, as measured by the ability to reason in novel situations, called "fluid intelligence" (Culture Fair Intelligence Test). Increased IQ was also indicated by a purely cognitive measure called Inspection Time. "The Inspection

Time result indicates improvement in basic aspects of intelligence, such as alertness and ability to focus, which are essential for learning," explained Dr. So.

Improvements were also found in "field independence," indicating growth in perceptual ability as well as inner-directedness, flexibility in seeing others' perspectives, and resistance to peer pressure (Group Embedded Figures Test).

Participants in the TM program groups were also significantly less anxious as measured by the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, whereas the contemplation meditation group tended to show an increase on this measurement. Dr. So explained that an anxious mind is typically one that isn't capable of thinking clearly, so researchers on cognition consider it an important variable to study.

Results expand on studies on brain physiology

"These effects of the Transcendental Meditation program on cognitive processes expand on earlier studies which show how it affects brain physiology," said co-author Dr. David Orme-Johnson, former chair of the psychology department at Maharishi University of Management, who was Dr. So's thesis advisor. "Research has found that the TM practice increases blood flow and EEG coherence in the frontal brain areas. This part of the brain integrates intentions, goals and emotions, as well as perceptual, motor and intellectual resources into focused thought and action. So, to see all these abilities increasing in a holistic way now in these studies in Taiwan is a very significant finding."

According to Dr. So, research has found that the Transcendental Meditation technique produces a "wakeful hypo metabolic state"—where the body is resting deeply but the mind remains alert. "Scientists report that this is a unique state of mind and body, a fourth major state of consciousness, that's different from sleeping, dreaming or being awake. It's a fascinating new area of psychology," said Dr. So.

APPENDIX 2: EXHIBITION DOCUMENTATION

This selection of paintings represents about fifty paintings produced from December 2001 to October 2002 and exhibited in September 2002, as part of the practical component of this creative project, submitted as part of the requirements of the award of the Master of Education (Visual Arts Education).



Two thoughts in consciousness 2002
mixed media on canvas-board 50 x 60 cm



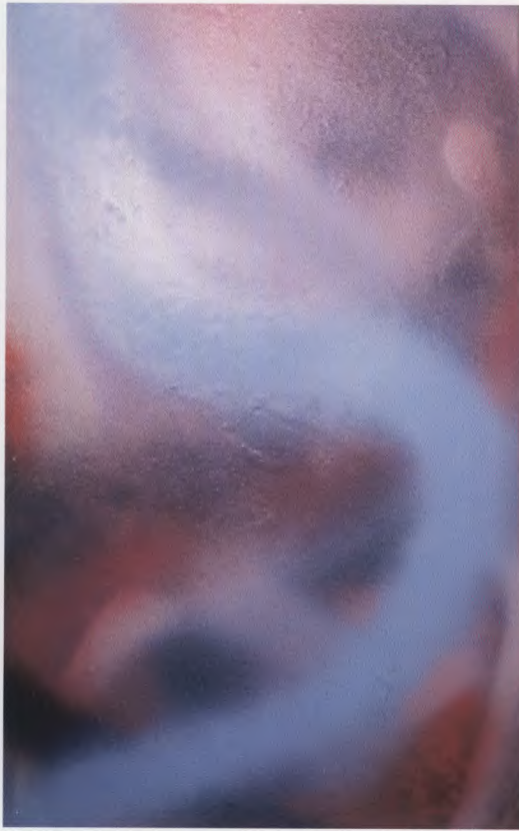
Left behind 2002
mixed media on canvas-board 50 x 60 cm



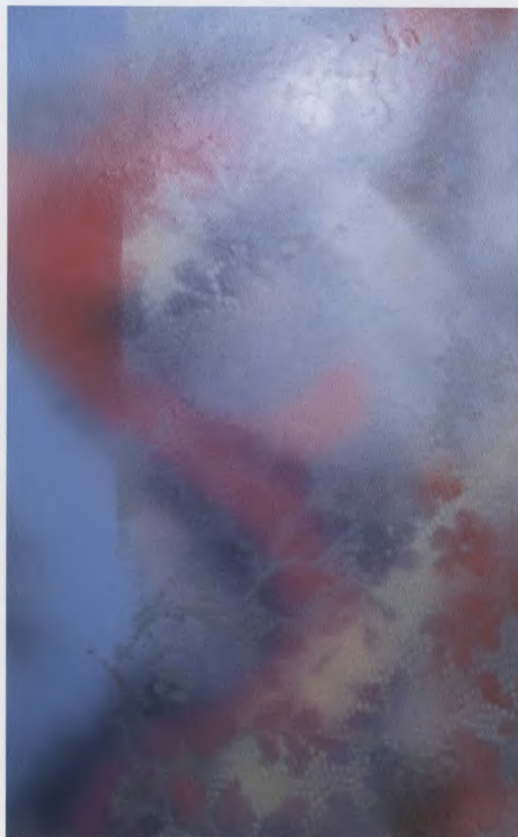
Passionate windows 2002
mixed media on cardboard 50 x 60 cm



Self-referral 2002
mixed media on canvas-board 60 x 50 cm



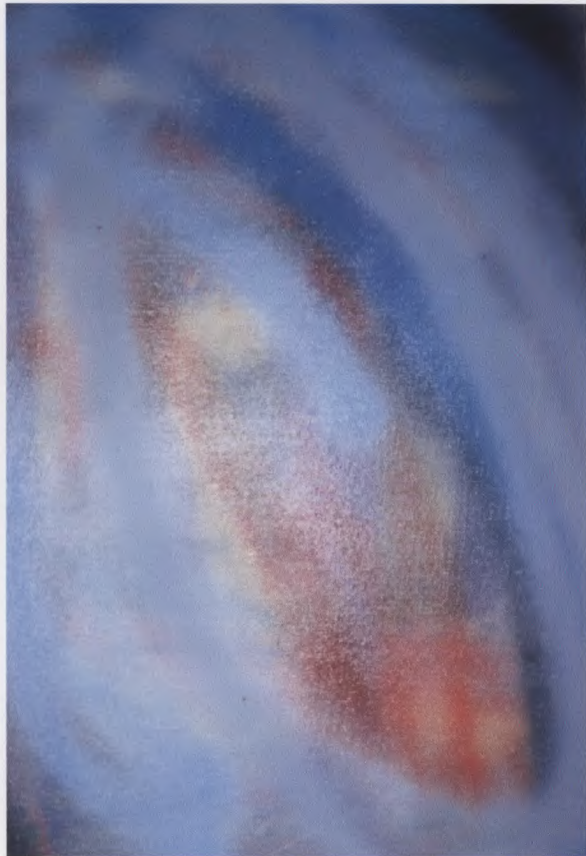
One thought amongst others 2002
spray paint on wood 15 x 40 cm



I feel good 2002
spray paint on wood 15 x 40 cm



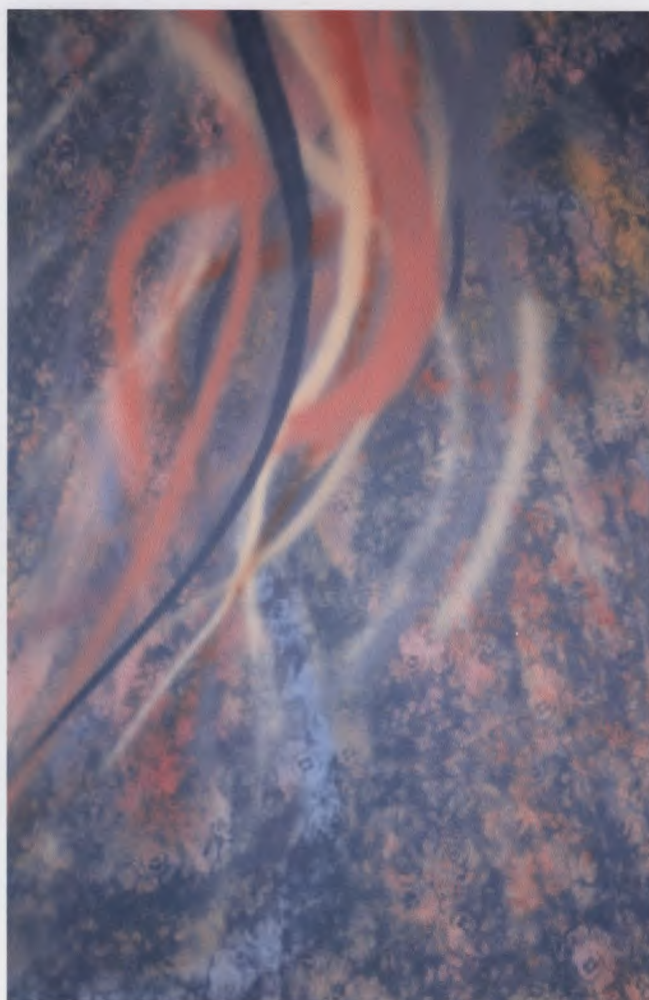
One feeling emerging 2002
mixed media on canvas-board 40 x 50 cm



Transcending 2002
spraypaint on canvas-board 40 x 50 cm



Quietly here 2002
mixed media on wood 20 x 30 cm



Waves 2002
spraypaint on canvas 60 x 80 cm



Relaxed 2002
spraypaint on canvas 60 x 60 cm



Space inside 2002
spraypaint on canvas 60 x 60 cm



Being alive 1 2002
spraypaint on canvas 60 x 60 cm



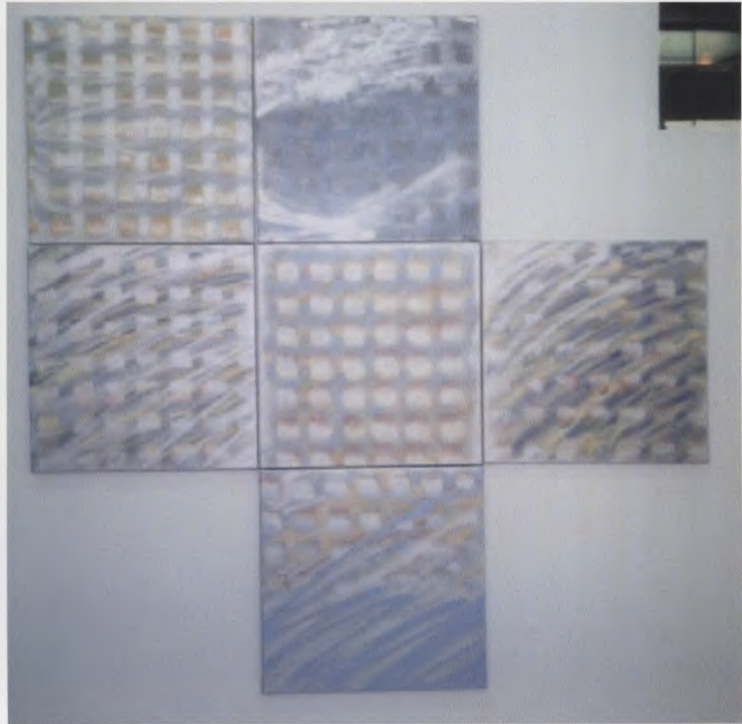
Feeling alive 2002
spraypaint on canvas 60 x 60 cm



Exhibition View 1



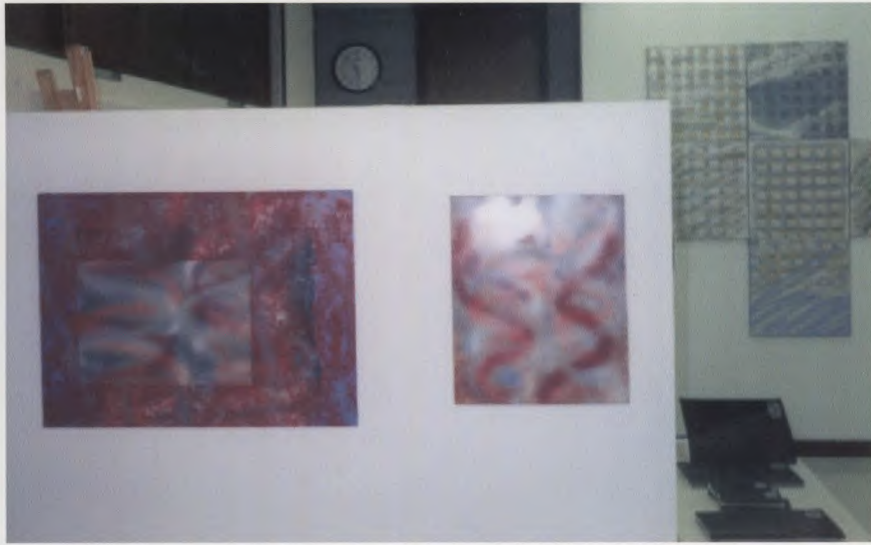
Exhibition View 2



Exhibition View 3



Exhibition View 4



Exhibition View 5



Exhibition View 6