

EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF ART



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A Poetics of Repetition – Theory and Practice in/of Printmaking

What are the methodological, epistemological and practical
questions that arise from a particular aesthetic practice?

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Declaration

I declare that I am the sole author of this thesis and unless otherwise stated, have consulted all references cited. The work of which this thesis is a record has been carried out by myself and it has not been submitted in whole or in part for a degree at this or any other university or institution.

Summary

A Poetics of Repetition – Theory and Practice in/of Printmaking

What are the methodological, epistemological and practical questions that arise from a particular aesthetic practice?

Why 'A poetics of repetition'? At its most crude, 'poetics' suggests a rule book with fixed protocols. The conventional institutional requirements of the PhD format comply with this part of the definition. However, at its best, a 'poetics' may be understood as performing that which it contains or describes. This is how the different elements that make up the present submission are conceived.

The second part of the title identifies this submission within the broader field of printmaking and also emphasizes the main thrust of its contribution to knowledge. It accentuates the input of this project to a critical topology of the discipline through a discussion and development of relevant terms and processes. Above all, the subtitle signals that this PhD is firmly based in practice.

The epistemological assumption of an inextricable link between theory and practice is methodologically demonstrated through the format of the submission. It consists of six parts. These interweave the visual documentation on CD of the production and installation of two solo exhibitions at the start and towards the end of the PhD with written sections which relate to the artistic practice.

'Printmaking' is understood in the particular sense of my own studio practice in addition to its significance as a discipline in the wider artistic and cultural context. In terms of the former, the theory-practice relationship is exemplified through the emphasis on printmaking in the two solo exhibitions. Moreover, five chapters in Parts III and V respectively, including a report on the second exhibition, put printmaking at the centre of the debate.

Another strand of the submission engages with issues posed by research in art and design. The question of the interrelationship between theory and practice is highlighted in two chapters of the submission (III.2 and V.2) in addition to a general contextual chapter on this topic (III.1). The concept of 'post-production' serves to illuminate the role of time, writing, documentation and interpretation in a research process that is primarily focussed on the production of visual art.

A lead-in to the multiple strands of the research is the concept of repetition. At one level, this key word refers to my particular aesthetic programme of the repetition of 'original' hand drawn marks through printmaking and the reproductive nature of prints in general. At another, repetition is understood more broadly in a Deleuzian sense as 'difference' and helps to conceptualise both the format and ethos of the submission.

Part I

Introduction

1. Preface

'Theory without practice is empty; practice without theory blind. The ongoing challenge is to bring theory and practice together in such a way that we can theorise our practice and practise our theories. This is never more important than in the moment of complexity' (Mark C Taylor, 2001, p.233).

'The large print giveth, the small print taketh away' (Tom Waits, 1976, 'Step right up' on the Small Change Album, quoted in Noyce 2006, p.39).

Contrary to Waits' resigned exposure of the quasi biblical law of today's promotional print culture, this PhD submission is based on the premise that the small print (the writing that is part of the research such as this text) does not undermine the 'big print' (the art prints that also constitute a major element in this submission). On the contrary, I hold that they accord with each other. As Tim O'Riley puts it:

'The process of research is productive in that the artwork and whatever is said or written about it are pulling in the same direction. Their purposes are aligned. Thought and action operate in unison and in dialogue' (O'Riley, 2006).

Similarly, 'practice' and 'theory' cannot be separated despite the historically derived institutional and 'practical' organisation of teaching and – at least until recently – research procedures in art. Practice encompasses theory and vice versa. Yet, they may be differently foregrounded in activities such as writing about art and making art. In this submission the term 'practice' will be used as a shortcut for artistic practice and 'theory' for theoretical practice respectively.¹

Practice-based PhDs present the opportunity to 'perform' different practice/theory activities such as producing and exhibiting artistic work and related reading/writing into an integrated whole. They 'exhibit' the different ways in which these activities may occur and how they may be interrelated. Moreover, they also allow a 'meta'-reflection about the methods by which this interrelationship happens. At one level, the different activities (or rather their 'modulation') and the interrelationships they entail are unique to this particular researcher. At another level, they display a

specific model for conceptualising the varying facets of this connection which can be applied by other researchers. In addition to the new knowledge created by the artwork itself and the written texts that accompany it, this methodological aspect of the PhD also represents a contribution to knowledge.

2. Context

This (part-time) PhD was started in 2002 with the aim of investigating my particular aesthetic practice, that is, the possibilities for repetition of hand-drawn marks through the medium of printmaking.

The broader context for my artistic project lies in the critical re-engagement with modernist precedents that follow and extend the critical postmodernism of the 1980s and early 1990s. In my case this re-engagement relates to the history of abstract painting, also termed 'new formalism' (Colpitt, 2002, p.192). This new abstraction tends to erode earlier abstraction's division between geometric and gestural styles. The former had habitually been associated with 'intellectual anonymity' and rationality, the latter with 'emotion and self-expression' (Colpitt, 2002, p.162). As seen in the works of Philip Taaffe and David Reed, such divisions no longer hold. Further reference points for my artistic practice are abstraction's all-over quality or abolition of hierarchical visual structures (as in Pollock's work) and its emphasis on the work of art as a 'thing' (evident in Robert Ryman's paintings). Crucially, my work refigures such allusions to abstraction through the means of seriality and repetition, as in Minimalism. Seriality allows the rejection of the notion of expression that adhered to certain forms of abstraction. In my work this refutation of expression is achieved by the serial and/or multiple repetition of autographic marks or the single line as 'the most fundamental of the classical elements' (of art) (Dillon, 2009, p.13). Printmaking forms both the means and the primary subject of my investigation due to printmaking's vital role 'in the development of serial imagery' on account of its employment of 'mechanisation, standardisation, and successive production' (Hecker, 2001, n.p.).

An additional point of reference is the decorative or ornamental. My work joins in the salvaging of ornament's rejection and the suppression of the decorative in

modernism. This seems especially apt since ornament, as argued by Markus Brüderlin, has been crucial in the development of abstraction (Brüderlin, 2001). Among the numerous artists who engage with ornamentation or the decorative in an abstracted formal language, Richard Wright is probably the artist with whose work I feel the greatest affinity, despite its manifest difference from mine.

There are numerous other artists whose work provides orientation and inspiration in addition to those already mentioned, notwithstanding their dissimilarity from my artistic project. Some of these are: Abstract painters Cy Twombly, Fiona Rae and Christopher Wool who address the interrelationship between painting, drawing and writing; Julie Mehretu on account of her exhilarating semi-abstract drawing style; Abigail Lane and Virgil Marti's wallpaper installations; Jessica Stockholder's ramblingly precise multi-media installations and Jennifer Steinkamp's computer-animated site-specific projections.

At the start of the PhD it was envisaged that my aesthetic practice would be further contextualised. Thus, the author's personal creative work would be located within the wider art world context as well as the more specific field of printmaking. Katy MacLeod has indeed characterised this type of PhD submission as a 'positioning' of a practice 'in historical, cultural or contemporaneous terms', a point which is explored in greater depth in III.2 (MacLeod, 2000). As the PhD progressed, the main focus of the research, while maintaining its basis firmly in my own practice, became the broader contextual reflection of my chosen discipline; printmaking. In addition, the meta-reflection of the theory-practice relationship in the context of my aesthetic research became the other main concern. This positioning of my own practice generated insights about process, content and context of my work through an exploration of other artists in the field. The result is that knowledge of the discipline as a whole has been expanded beyond my own individual aesthetic project.

In the context of the increasingly research-driven culture of Higher Education in Art and Design, there is a pragmatic, even instrumentalist aspect to any PhD submission. At this level, it can be considered as a mere furthering of the researcher's professional status through exhibiting, conference participation and

written academic papers.² In this sense, the PhD serves as a framework, a technology and tool to create, enhance and confirm the candidate's identity as an artist/researcher. Yet, the study for a PhD is also much more. It is a method of investigating what it is that might constitute the practice of an artist/theorist/critic beyond the customary goal of training in research methods. The submission as a whole is both a result and the representation of the former process (albeit one that does not end with the completion of the PhD). The representation of the new knowledge that has been produced in this PhD allows its use and reproduction, and indeed its alteration, by others in the field of its greatest influence, that is, the discipline of printmaking and research in art and design.

3. Format of the submission

The epistemological assumption of an inextricable link between theory and practice is methodologically demonstrated through the format of the submission. It consists of the production of two solo print exhibitions (documented in visual form on the accompanying CD) as well as a substantial written section. The research alternated between a focus on practice during the preparation of the two exhibitions in 2002/3 and 2006/7 respectively and an emphasis on theory/writing in 2004, 2005 and 2008/9.

The question of the interrelationship between theory and practice is specifically foregrounded in two of the chapters: III.3 'Post-production or how pictures come alive or play dead?' (abbreviated as 'Post-production I') and V.2 'Cooking up a storm? Post-production as interpretation' (abbreviated as 'Post-production III'). Alongside this contribution to knowledge of the interrelationship between theory and practice, this submission is also a means to contribute to knowledge in and of the practice of printmaking, as indicated by the title. 'Printmaking' is understood in the specific sense of my own studio practice as well as in the broader sense of the discipline in the wider artistic and critical context. Here, the theory-practice relationship is exemplified through the emphasis on printmaking in the two solo exhibitions: *Trial Run* at Galerie Zement, Frankfurt, 2003 (Part II on CD) and *Schnörkeleien* in the Round Room, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, 2007 (Part IV on CD). Moreover, the documentation of the second exhibition in form of a report,

V.1 *Schnörkeleien* (abbreviated as 'Post-Production II'), as well as three of the chapters put printmaking at the centre of the debate (III.2 'Technology versus Concept'; III.4 'The Discursivity of Print'; III.5 'The Attraction of Print').

My thesis which starts from my experience of practice but is equally grounded in my understanding of 'theory', posits that the practice of all printmaking revolves around theoretical positions that may be tacit and implied rather than explicit and hence open to communication and debate.³ One strand of my inquiry identifies theoretical positions **in** printmaking. The other, complementary strand seeks to develop elements of a theoretical discourse **of** printmaking in the context of my own and other artists' practice.

Four main methods were adopted to develop, present and assess my ideas of the practice and theory in/of printmaking as well as the theory/practice interrelationship. Alongside the production and exhibiting of new artistic work, the key means of research became the written reflection and contextualisation of my own practice of printmaking and its wider implications. This included the examination of the theory-practice relationship as evidenced in the various chapters and the report. The cluster of interconnected ideas that were formed in this way have been tested through participation in academic conferences. In a further step, the conference presentations were expanded into academic papers that were submitted to carefully selected journals and as a result underwent a rigorous peer-review process.⁴ Additionally, the chapter following this introduction locates this investigation within the broader field of research in art and design.

4. Methodological considerations

4.1 The research question

The main title of the PhD is 'A Poetics of Repetition'. The descriptive addendum of 'The epistemological, methodological and practical issues raised by a particular aesthetic practice' was formulated in a way that allowed the inquiry to generate its own subject. The later supplement 'Theory and practice in/of printmaking' after 'Poetics of Repetition' takes account of the more specific trajectory that the research process took over the period of more than six years. It also indicates its

central theme: It identifies my project within the broader field of printmaking and also highlights the main thrust of its contribution to knowledge within the area of its greatest impact. More specifically, it draws attention to the input of my project to a critical topology of the field through a discussion and advancement of relevant terms and processes and signals that the research is firmly based in practice.

Why 'A poetics of repetition'? At its most crude, 'poetics' suggests a rule book with fixed protocols. The conventional institutional requirements of the PhD format certainly comply with this part of the definition. However, at its best, a 'poetics' may be understood as performing that which it contains or describes. This is how the different elements that make up this submission are conceived.

In dictionaries of aesthetics, a 'poetics' is defined as the 'practical instruction' or 'téchne', as well as theoretical engagement with the art form of literature, its ontology and main characteristics, genres and special quality in comparison with other language forms, such as ordinary language (Henckmann and Lotter, 1992, pp.295-297). The poetics that is addressed in this submission is that of printmaking, especially its reproductive and technological character. It is elucidated in its practical as well as its more theoretical aspects, including the meta-reflection of the interrelationship of these two facets. The notion of 'téchne' is especially interesting in this context. Despite its obvious etymological link to 'technology', 'téchne' is often translated as 'art' or 'craft'. But Reilly (2002) drawing on Heidegger, has noted that

'[t]o the Greeks *téchne* means neither art nor handicraft but, rather, to make something appear, within what is present, as this or that, in this way or that way. The Greeks conceive of *téchne*, producing, in terms of letting appear (Heidegger, 1954, p.361)' (Reilly, 2002).

This quotation serves as a fitting description of the twofold research process of this submission, the theoretical as well as the practical aspect of producing art on the one hand and writing on the other and vice versa.

Another lead-in to the multiple strands of the research is the concept of repetition. This key word in the title refers to the particular aesthetic programme which prompted the start of the PhD and which was significantly developed as part of it.

The latter consists of the repetition through printmaking of 'original' hand drawn marks via the principle of seriality.

As the PhD progressed, it became apparent that the meaning of repetition understood in a Deleuzian sense as difference can also be applied to both the format and ethos of the submission (Deleuze, 1983 transl. 1994). It should be stressed that the concept of 'repetition as difference' is employed here in its broadest possible sense as a figure to frame the project rather than with its full Deleuzian significance of a comprehensive and complex philosophical manifesto. The cue comes from Briony Fer (2004). In her book on art of the late 1950s and 1960s that is characterised by repetition and seriality she says: 'Deleuze proposes not one but many registers of repetition' (Fer, 2004, p.3).

Conventionally, in Western cultural history, repetition is thought of in terms of similarity and sameness rather than difference. These concepts have tended to be regarded as inferior to those of uniqueness and identity, to name the two most prominent terms. Yet, it is these 'lesser concepts' that Deleuze 'elevates', as James Williams (2003) stresses in his book on Deleuze's major work on the topic *Difference and Repetition*. Re-thinking these terms amounts to nothing short of an epistemological 'revolution', according to Williams: The full implication of Deleuze's philosophy lies in 'a grasp of the *critical* relation of the main terms of that revolution to what they stand against' (Williams, 2003, p.4).

Moreover, Deleuze's conception of repetition overturns the conventional view of repetition itself and highlights difference rather than, typically, sameness. As Claire Colebrook says in her introduction to Deleuze's work: 'Repetition is not the reoccurrence of the same old thing over and over again, to repeat something is to begin again, to renew, to question, and to refuse remaining the same' (Colebrook, 2001, p.8). If one takes the example of the reiteration of a word, Deleuze's emphasis of repetition as 'difference' alerts us to the changes that the word undergoes in being repeated. These also alter its history and the context in which it occurs each time. By way of a demonstration of this idea, Colebrook refers to Joyce's repetition of the 'voices of Dublin': 'No longer the voices of everyday life that are unquestioned and changing, they become unstable, arbitrary and open to

infinite transformation.' According to Deleuze then, 'real repetition maximizes difference' (Colebrook, 2001, p.120).

Williams's comments also clearly draw attention to the reversal of common sense assumptions of repetition in Deleuze's thought. He highlights the fact that Deleuze is not making the familiar point which assumes an element of difference as a 'way of distinguishing two repeated things.' For Deleuze, 'difference is what is significant in repetition, that is, there is repetition because there is pre-conceptual difference and that difference is what makes repetition matter' (Williams, 2003, p.33).

The 'pre-conceptual difference' Williams speaks of as a vital ingredient of repetition is relevant to art. O'Riley has posited repetition as a general condition of the making of art:

'Artists are embedded in a matrix of institutions, allegiances and acquaintances and much of an artist's work is a form of engagement with, interpretation and repetition of the work of others and indeed his or her own work, both acknowledged, tacit etc.' (O'Riley, 2006).

His description and the role of repetition as outlined here can be applied to the situation of the PhD researcher who is similarly engaged 'in a matrix of institutions, allegiances and acquaintances', yet also produces new knowledge, in other words, repetition as difference. Indeed, taking a broad or 'macro' view, research in art and design could be said to highlight repetition as difference in the context of Higher Research degrees and much of the debate about and resistance to them can be explained in those terms. (See III.1.)

In the case of the present submission, there is an additional level of repetition as difference. Bearing in mind the comments by Colebrook and Williams, the switching between 'phases of artistic practice' and 'phases of writing' can be cast in those terms. More specifically, each of the written texts 'repeats' elements of the other, sometimes literally, yet every time, it does so with a different slant, an altered emphasis, within a changed context. For example, in III.4 the thoughts on the surface are an element in an overall argument as to the discursivity of print in general. In III.5, by contrast, they serve a more specific function as to print's relationship to photography and digital media.

The texts may also be argued to repeat (as difference) the visual work. Conversely, the visual work 'repeats' (elements) of the written. As will be seen, the visual work itself tackles repetition as difference at a 'microscopic' level, as it were. It does so by insisting on multiple repetitions and in this way, paradoxically, emphasises, even generates or 'maximises difference' (Colebrook, 2001, p.120).

To consider the PhD as a whole in terms of repetition as difference also addresses a critical epistemological problem, that of the duration of the PhD project. It makes it possible to perceive the research undertaken for the PhD as a component in a continuum of practice rather than as an isolated, albeit lengthy, event. It allows the location of the PhD project in its relationship to an existing practice which precedes the beginning of the PhD. It also permits a projection of the 'virtual' element of the PhD research into the future – a repetition as difference that will extend beyond the completion and submission of the thesis.

4.2 Methods and Process

The instigation for the research brought together here arose out of my existing aesthetic practice. For this reason the PhD project started with an exhibition and a second exhibition was produced near its end. The development of the project as a whole was driven by my creative goals as well as their broader context and theoretical implications. The analysis of these theory/practice sites identified the following issues that are addressed in the submission in both visual and written form:

- The reproductive nature of the print and the propensity for reproduction/repetition via digital and more conventional print technology.
- The issue of the 'craft' of printing versus technology, both digital and conventional.
- The performativity of art making and its articulation through the instability and viscosity of vision as realised in printmaking. These

concepts are explicitly investigated through attention to the site-specificity of the two exhibition spaces and the art work itself.

- The 'discursivity' of the print, or how prints create meaning.
- Printmaking in the wider cultural context of everyday printed matter; specifically its mobilisation of the cultural trope of the 'surface'.

The three chapters that are mainly dedicated to printmaking (III.2, III.4, III.5) develop these questions within the discourse of printmaking whilst addressing the lack or limitation of such a discourse in the field. The exhibitions are a further manifestation of these issues. Besides, the 'report' on the second exhibition (V.1) allows a tracing of these concerns at a 'micro' level of production in the studio and exhibition space in relation to my work as opposed to the more general debate in the three chapters mentioned above.

Two chapters, one from the earlier phase of the PhD (III.3, written in 2003/4), the other towards the end (V.2, completed in 2008) frame and conclude the above sections. They constitute a reflection on the issues mentioned but also comprise a meta-reflection of the process of research through practice in its interrelationship with theory. In particular, they seek to illuminate the role of time, writing, documentation and interpretation in a research process that is primarily focussed on the production of visual art which constitutes theoretical positions in and by itself.

4.3 Chronology

A note about the chronology and the 'itinerary' of the research may further help to explain the chosen methods and process.

Due to the conventional printed 'book' format required by Higher Education PhD regulations, this submission inevitably implies a linear chronology with the implied proposition that this time frame and progression matches the trajectory of the project. While any structured undertaking inevitably occurs over a period of time, it could be argued that the written representation in 'book' format of visual work (even if supplemented by visual material) insufficiently represents the actual progress and

specificities of this type of research. The 'book' format's suggestion of a logical succession and uni-directional rationality is especially misleading. Not only is such a design cleared of the research project's bricolage character and 'messiness', it also projects a 'false' representation of the actual development of the research in/over time. This may result in a deceptively coherent and logical narrative structure of the trajectory of the research as even rigorous and systematic research procedures may at times be 'untidy'. While this may be the case with most research projects, it is even more so the case with arts-based research. In the present submission, the sequence in which the various sections are presented matches their initial chronological production. However, in the case of the written material, this order does not always coincide with the sequence of the writing process. This factor is not a mere matter of 'presentation', but has epistemological implications. Instead of its ostensibly linear structure, the present compilation of texts and visual documentation ought to be read/viewed as a 'fold' (or 'loop') figure that repeatedly doubles back on to itself even if the format of the submission does not manifest this non-linear path.

The notion of the fold and its verb forms can have multiple meanings which help to illuminate this point: The verb 'to fold' is commonly understood as bending something 'over on itself so that one part of it covers another'; 'to fold' can also mean mixing as with a lighter substance into a heavier one while retaining elements of the original. The result of folding can be a more compact or neater arrangement of an object, such as the folding of a chair. If something can 'fold out' into a larger structure or thing, the reverse is also true. 'To enfold' can be to envelop, to place together and entwine (Oxford Pocket Dictionary 2008).

The most important 'folding' occurs between the writing and the making of the work. This is evident in the chapter which soon followed the first solo exhibition (III.3). But the folding relationship applies equally to the subsequent written chapters and the second exhibition, as well as the chapter that followed it. As already stated, the two exhibitions were held at crucial moments within the period of the PhD research, namely at the beginning (2002/3) and towards the end (2007). Hence, the chapters that followed the first exhibition could be regarded as a 'folding out' of/from the exhibition. The second exhibition, *Schnörkeleien*, is then understood as being

'enfolded' by the written texts that preceded it, while it also constitutes a 'folding out' of these and so on. At the same time *Schnörkeleien* 'loops' back to the first exhibition and is itself 'folded out' in the last two chapters V.1 and V.2.

Further, more specific folds occur in relation to the different written sections: The final version of III.4 'The Discursivity of Print' was written after the first version of III.5 'The Attraction of Print'. The final account of 'The Discursivity of Print' therefore incorporates elements of the latter. Conversely, 'The Attraction of Print' (III.5) was completed after 'Discursivity' (III.4), and could therefore draw on ideas developed in the newer version of that chapter. More obviously, V.2 ('Post-production III') takes up ideas that were introduced in III.3 ('Post-production I') and those that inform and are developed in 'Post-production II' (V.1). V.2 also explicitly refers back to 'Post-Production I' through the direct quotation of sections of the earlier discussion.

These epistemological observations rest on an approach to knowledge that is conceived as 'relational' and 'situated', rather than the objectivist, 'traditional' model, as will be seen in III.1. They should be borne in mind when reading and viewing the different parts of the submission and the following overview of the PhD's structure.

5. Structure

This submission is made up of six parts: In addition to this introduction (Part I), Parts II and IV are the visual documentation on CD; Parts III and V encompass the main text sections in chapter form; Part VI is the conclusion to the submission. It is recommended that the different sections of the PhD should be viewed and read in the following sequential order:

Part II (On CD) Visual documentation of exhibition Nr 1 *Versuchsreihe - Trial Run* at Galerie Zement, Frankfurt, 2003. This includes images of the gallery space before the exhibition; samples of the experimentation in the print studio and the documentation of the exhibition.

Part III consists of the following chapters:

1. Research in Art and Design

This section frames the PhD within the wider context of current debates in and about the field.

2. Technology versus Concept or the Site of Practice versus the Bite of Theory?

This section takes its cue from the creative work for the first exhibition and my experience of the discipline through observations and encounters in the environment of the printmaking workshop and printmaking conferences in which this work was produced and debated. The chapter entails a positioning of myself as a printmaker in relation to the broader discourse in/of printmaking. It also reflects on and accounts for some of the basic underlying, often implicitly or tacitly held views that define the discourse and practice of printmaking. In particular, it examines the notions of theory versus practice, of concept and technology and 'craft' and 'technique'.

3. Post-Production or how pictures come to life or play dead (abbreviated as 'Post-Production I')

This chapter comprises a retrospective examination of the first exhibition. It investigates an aspect of artistic production that is often overlooked, namely the actual installation of creative work in a specific gallery environment. The exhibition itself thematised this issue and, in particular, straddled a line between 'full on' three-dimensional intervention into the space and conventionally hung 'pictures on a wall'. Additionally, the chapter theorizes the 'a posteriori' quality that is an aspect of practice-based research through the concept of 'post-production'. (See MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.7 and III.1.)

4. The Discursivity of Print: Damien Hirst's *The Last Supper* Series (1999)

This chapter seeks to develop specific aspects of the discourse in/of printmaking by means of a case study of a major print series by artist Damien Hirst. In particular, it reflects on the reproductive quality of 'printed matter' and how this quality may be foregrounded in artistic prints, such as Hirst's. The chapter includes a consideration of the role of the viewer in constructing the specific quality of the print and touches on the

Importance of the surface in print.

5. The Attraction of Print – Notes on the Surface of the Art Print

Closely linked to and prompted by my own artistic investigations, this chapter develops the notion of the surface as a vital criterion of the artistic print as introduced in III.4. It considers the changing conception and physical make-up of the printed surface, especially with regard to the prevalence of digital means both within printmaking itself as well as the wider cultural context.

Part IV (On CD)

This is the visual documentation of production and installation of exhibition Nr 2 *Schnörkeleien* in the Round Room, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, in 2007. Included are experiments in the years preceding the exhibition; details of the gallery space and its location; the development of the working process with research into materials and procedures; the provisional and the final installation as well as the exhibition itself. The CD also contains a sketch for future art work in form of an initial attempt at animation.

Part V contains two chapters:

1. *Schnörkeleien* - Report of the production and exhibition of prints for the solo-exhibition in the Round Room at Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, 2007 (abbreviated as 'Post-Production II').

As indicated in the title of this chapter, the text represents a detailed account of the actual process of developing the prints for the exhibition in the Round Room of the Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh during 2006/7. Conceived as a site-specific installation, the report reflects on the conception of the imagery and its practical execution on the computer and in the print studio as well as the final installation in the gallery. In addition to site-specific allusions, the account draws frequent references to previous chapters and the issues raised therein. In contrast to the more heavily theorised sections of the submission the report amounts to an alternative model of 'post-production' through writing. Furthermore, its content provided the 'raw material' for V.2.

2. Cooking up a storm: Post-production as interpretation (abbreviated as 'Post-production III')

The chapter teases out an aspect of III.3 Post-production I, namely the interpretive or heuristic quality of the 'a posteriori' aspect of practice-based research. In particular, it focuses on the role of writing in this process and argues for the close interrelationship between such reflection through writing and the visual work, resulting in a new combined artefact within the context of research.

Part VI is the overall conclusion and examines the contribution to knowledge of the submission as a whole and provides an outlook on future research.

Endnotes

¹ An in-depth discussion of the often confusing issues surrounding these concepts will follow in the next chapter on research in art and design and is also taken up in Chapters III.2 and III.3 and in Chapter V.2.

² For a critical view of research in art and design as a feature of the increasing corporatism and bureaucratisation in art education, see the editorial of *Art Monthly* Nov 2002 Issue 261 p.13; and the more recent editorial of Issue 317, May 2008, p.12.

³ For a general discussion of 'tacit' knowledge, see III.1 'Research in Art and Design', p.41

⁴ Pelzer-Montada, 2004, pp.21-25
Pelzer-Montada, 2007, pp.229-243
Pelzer-Montada, 2008a, pp.81-100
Pelzer-Montada, 2008b, pp.74-91
Pelzer-Montada, 2009, pp.7-36

Part II (On CD)

Visual documentation of exhibition Nr 1 Versuchsreihe - Trial Run at Galerie Zement, Frankfurt, 2003

Basics

Exhibition Versuchsreihe/Trial Run

Stencils and Experiments

Stencils Zement

Experiments Nets

Experiments Butterfly and other Shapes

Installation and Exhibition

Galerie Zement before Exhibition

Installation

Exhibition

Part III

1. Research in Art and Design

1.1 Introduction

Despite the experimental research that was conducted in art colleges from the 1960s onwards, a formal notion of research in art and design can be regarded as a recent phenomenon in Higher Education in the UK, one that is closely connected to changes in funding structures since the 1990s.¹ As already indicated in the overall Introduction (Part I), these changes themselves can be regarded as elements of a wider trend in Higher Education to align itself with market and bureaucratic structures typical of late capitalist societies (Singerman, 1999; Editorial in *Art Monthly*, Nr. 261, 2002 and Nr. 317, 2008). But for art and design these developments are also indicative of larger transformations as to ideas about the arts and their function. These include their consequences for the education of artists and designers (Singerman, 1999; Sullivan, 2005; Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes, 2007). If artists hitherto have often been quite happy to leave others to define and defend (even mythologize) what they do, this is no longer an option. '... the nature of artistic practice has changed the responsibilities of artists as cultural theorists and practitioners', in the words of Sullivan (Sullivan, 2005, p.87). Singerman considers current developments as typically modern. In this sense, Art and Design Higher Education institutions are seen as 'catching up' with structures already in place elsewhere. Singerman comments:

'... the university's demand for knowledge – indeed, its takeover of the training of artists, its fashioning of art as research and art criticism as science – belongs to the specialization, administrative rationalization, and "professionalized treatment of the cultural tradition" that are ... characteristically and familiarly modern' (Singerman, 1999, p.136).

T E Jones (2006) also cites historical reasons for the fact that education in art and design has not been 'imbued with an essential research flavour' as is the case in other disciplines (Jones, 2006, quoted in MacLeod and Holdridge, p.231).

The situation as described above may account for some of the mistrust towards research on the part of educators and practitioners in art and design. Such a reaction is moreover fuelled by the not altogether misplaced suspicion that the last

bastions of a precarious freedom and a relatively undisturbed 'space' from governmental and institutional surveillance are being dismantled through, for example, ever expanding regulatory mechanisms, such as administrative procedures and strict accountability. Yet others see the requirement of research in art and design as an opportunity to contribute not only to an expansion of research but to a whole, new knowledge paradigm (Jones, 2006, pp.237-239; Sullivan, 2005). This is a topic to which I will come back further below.

Feelings of misgiving and distrust do not just arise within the field of art and design. Within the academic community at large, common misconceptions as to the meaning and function of art raise questions as to the suitability and validity of research in art and design, including Higher Research degrees such as the doctorate, with obvious implications for the availability of funding. Jones catches the flavour when he says that despite historical precedents of research in art, 'the idea of art or design practice *as research* can still be said to be monstrous.' [italics in original] In his contribution to MacLeod and Holdridge's book on research in art, published as recently as 2006, he remarks that 'the credibility of research degrees in art and design still seems open to dismissal' (Jones, 2006, p.226).

Nevertheless, the practice of research is now well established in Higher Education institutions of art and design in the UK, but the debate as to its value, its nature and methodologies continues, inside and outside the specialist areas conducting the research. The periodic Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) tends to focalise and intensify the discussion.² As in many new fields, confusion and starkly divergent views are a typical feature. But such difficulties are of a temporal rather than an inherent nature. Jones reminds us that even scientific methods which, at first glance seem solid and undisputed, are the result of conflicting developments that have occurred over a long historical period. Moreover, even they have now become contested and subject to change. He concludes: 'Such a comparison validates the apparent shortcomings of art and design research as being reflective of the current state of development of the field rather than as being intrinsic to weaknesses in the subject' (Jones, 2006, p.229).

An example of the novelty and insecurity of research in art and design are the numerous terms used to frame such research of which 'practice-based' and 'practice-led' appear to be the most popular designations.³ (This is despite the fact that practice-based research is well established in many academic fields, such as healthcare or education, for example.) Recently, it has been suggested that such 'special' labelling of research in art and design is a remnant of the early years of trying to establish art and design's research credentials and that its political function is now obsolete. As a consequence, such 'tagging' which mark art and design research out from research in other fields should be dropped (Rust, 2008). This may be an indication of a burgeoning confidence in the solidity of the field.

As indicated in the headings for this chapter, several key issues are recurring which are the subject of the discussion. These are:

- The question of suitable methodologies which is closely linked to a debate of changing research paradigms. It is argued that art has a particular contribution to play within such an altered framework.
- The role of the art work, that is, the question of how art can be regarded in terms of 'new knowledge' that is a requirement and indicator of research. This includes the role of theory in such work and the thorny issue, unique in research at HE level, of the researcher and the researched being the same in that the artist researches his/her own rather than another's production. As Sullivan has phrased it, the researcher has both a creative and a reflective role (Sullivan, 2005, p.XIX). In MacLeod and Holdridge's words: 'Perhaps, the most tantalising of themes is the self-consciousness of the artist researcher whose identification as artist is bound into the research inquiry and determines its initial critical evaluation' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.4).
- Finally, given that art research usually includes visual objects, the relevance and nature of the requirement of the written component in Higher Degree submissions and its relationship with the art work is a matter of debate.

As MacLeod and Holdridge write:

'The predominant theme ... remains how art and the processes of art might be understood as academic research. Integral to this theme is the function of writing within research practice and whether and how far it can be said to explore, demonstrate and amplify such research. Strongly related is a complex of issues around theory: extant theory; theory within practice; the adaptation and renewal of theory through practice and the production of new theory' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.3-4).

This chapter will explore in more detail the critical issues that are identified above and that are most pertinent to my own research. It will focus on three recent sources in the field which have been published in book format besides conference papers drawn from *Working Papers in Art and Design*, the peer-reviewed published papers of the bi-annual *Research into Practice* conference. This conference is organised by the University of Hertfordshire and is recognised as 'the leading event in the theorization of issues arising from the[se] fundamental questions of research in the creative and performing arts.' (Research into Practice Conference Web site)

The three books are – in order of chronology – Gray's and Malins' (2004) *Visualizing Research*; Graeme Sullivan's (2005) *Art Practice as Research* and MacLeod's and Holdridge's (2006) edition *Thinking through Art*. While there is as yet no established canon of critical sources, the three chosen sources can be considered to make vital contributions to the debates in the field. The book by Gray and Malins is perhaps the most pragmatic, a sound handbook for the beginning researcher; Sullivan's represents a more 'creative' as well as historically contextualised approach. The collection of texts presented by MacLeod and Holdridge are critically wide-ranging with contributions from artists and theorists.

The chapter will not cover important distinctions, such as those arising from the dissimilar, yet related practices of art on the one hand and design on the other, or research practices and Higher Degree regulations in countries other than the UK. While Sullivan's study is premised on arts-based research in the United States and some of its findings may therefore not be applicable to the situation in the UK in every respect, his general suggestions are.

1.2 Methodologies

Sullivan quotes Morrow (1994) on the difference between method and methodology:

‘The term methods refers more specifically to individual techniques (e.g. surveys, participant observation), whereas methodology can be construed broadly to suggest both the presupposition of methods, as well as their link to theory and implications for society. Methodology, in short, more clearly implies a concern, an overall strategy of constructing specific types of knowledge and is justified by a variety of metatheoretical assumptions’ (Morrow, R. A., 1994, p.36; quoted in Sullivan 2005, p.38).

In practice, the difference between the two terms is often elided. Yet, in a new field, like Art and Design Research, it is to be expected that the question of appropriate methodologies and methods is of great importance. According to Jones, due to the novelty of the field, it is not surprising that no ‘comprehensive overview’ as to the ‘principles of inquiry’ exists as yet (Jones, 2006, p.226).

So far, most authors agree that a ‘multi-modal’ approach is typical of art and design research. Jones speaks of a ‘new pluralistic paradigm of art and design research’ (Jones, 2006, p.238). Sullivan also accentuates the ‘need for multiple forms of inquiry’ (Sullivan, 2005, p.XX). Gray and Malins state: ‘Characteristic of the completed research is the use of a range of methods, mostly visual and mostly derived from practice, or adapted from other research paradigms to the practice-based research context’ (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.31).

What is more, such methodologies tend to be uniquely geared to the specific research: ‘... a characteristic of “artistic” methodology is a pluralist approach using a multi-method technique, tailored to the individual project’ (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.21). Jones also emphasises that art and design’s approach to knowledge should ‘allow[s] for situation specific circumstances’ (Jones, 2006, p.239). Furthermore, the novelty of research in art and design lends it an exploratory quality, according to MacLeod and Holdridge: ‘Any such new subject, with no previous academic research history, will, of necessity, be more experimental in its approach’ (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.2).

Gray and Malins explain how such research may be approached: It entails 'making art/design/creative work through specific project frameworks or as a body of work exploring the research questions'. Amongst the list of methods, such as experimentation with materials and processes, critical writing and publications are mentioned (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.30).

MacLeod and Holdridge similarly describe the research methodologies of the different artists represented in their book as multifaceted:

'The processes of thought are spun from multilayered methodologies, employing a range of disciplines, theories and authorial positions. Each is complex as artists have explored the exigencies of written text, realising artworks, representing theory, reworking a technique or any of the hybrid modes adopted' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.9).

Of vital importance is the fact that the creative work should be the central focus of and for the research: If 'visual arts practice is seen as research, it will resist codification and methodological prescription *only* if any inquiry "starts with art" (Sullivan, 2005, p.XX).

1.3 Changing research paradigms

The broader context for the question of methodologies in art and design lies in the weakening of the hegemony of the positivist, scientific research paradigm since the 1960s. Gray and Malins speak of a new 'post-positivist paradigm' whose challenge to the old positivist paradigm arose from 'chaos' and 'complexity' theory in science and 'new paradigm research' in social science, via critical theory and constructivism (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.19).

The positivist paradigm assumed a 'realist' ontology and an 'objectivist epistemology'; its methodology was therefore 'experimental' and 'manipulative'. In contrast, the new 'constructivist paradigm' is based on a 'relativist ontology'; its epistemology is 'subjectivist' and its 'methodologies are hermeneutic (interpretative) and dialectic (discursive)' (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.19).⁴

Drawing on E Guba, Gray and Malins consider 'the choice of methodology' as a 'consequence of ontology and epistemology', in terms of 'what the researcher considers "knowable" (what can be researched, what is an appropriate research question). This includes an awareness of the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the researcher and the "knowable"' (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.19). These points will be further discussed in the sections below.

1.4 The potential of arts-based research

Authors such as Sullivan see the wider potential of arts-based research within the context of a challenge to the positivist paradigm as indicated above. While this destabilization has happened (in the Humanities at least) since the 1960s, Sullivan credits arts-based research with a more comprehensive, if rather vague potential 'that helps broaden the way we understand things and thus can be used to expand how information is gathered and represented' (Sullivan, 2005, p.XIII). The same attention is to be given to 'rigour and systematic inquiry' as in other fields, but with emphasis on 'the role imagination and intellect play in constructing knowledge that is not only new but has the capacity to transform human understanding' (Sullivan, 2005, p.XII). In other words, according to Sullivan, arts-based research is in an exceptional position not only to change existing research paradigms but epistemology itself. It offers 'a broadening of research practices that can take advantage of the way the arts offer unique insight into human knowing and understanding' (Sullivan, 2005, p.XVII).

L Reilly in her 2002 paper 'An alternative Model of "Knowledge for the Arts"' for the *Research into Practice* Conference spells out clearly that the value of knowledge through research in art and design ultimately can have benefits beyond its specific field: '... the arts' experience and understanding of imagination and sensation puts them in a good position to make a contribution to the debates about the nature of knowledge that may be of use to other disciplines (Reilly, 2002). Jones argues similarly: 'Crucial to an epistemology of art is the way or ways in which art, like literature, theatre, cinema and philosophy, expand and extend our understanding of ourselves and the ways in which we know ourselves' (Jones, 2006, p.230)

Moreover, Jones points out that there is even a connection in the arts to the often maligned sciences, such as the new discipline of consciousness studies. 'Artistic knowledge and scientific knowledge emerge as necessarily intertwined' (Jones, 2006, p.230).

However, in the earlier stages of research in art and design, there existed considerable (and justified) resistance against methods imported from other social or scientific research paradigms. Yet Sullivan rightly warns against 'simplistic dichotomies that align kinds of thinking and particular ways of knowing with the sciences, and forms of feeling with experiences in the arts' (Sullivan, 2005, p.XIX). Instead, there exists a strong sense and assertion that art find its own methodologies. Jones, for example, urges 'that we take research to be what we find it to be rather than the embodiment of methodological formula taken from the natural or social sciences' (Jones, 2006, p.227/8). Still, as already indicated, he is open to learning from natural sciences and 'their predisposal for experiment and *blue skies* research' (Jones, 2006, p.227/8).

Nonetheless, Jones has rightly criticised Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) research proposal specifications which define the remit of research in art and design 'in terms of humanities and social sciences style research questions' (Jones, 2006, p.228). Macleod and Holdridge make a similar, if more general point:

'The PhD is subject to the university's rules and regulations and is traditionally examined by written thesis and oral examination. ... However, the introduction of a subject such as fine art, which does not accept the primacy of textual and symbolic representation, will inevitably expose presuppositions in the way that research regulations are written and expectations are formed' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.2).

From these remarks it becomes obvious that not only do existing institutional dispositions and regulations have real consequences, i.e. impose limitations on the potential for researchers in art and design, but also that the more fundamental, even challenging merits of arts-based research have yet to be recognised.

1.5 Knowledge in art and design/knowledge in practice

As already stated, the issue of methodologies in art and design is clearly linked to the question of the type/s of knowledge that art and design is believed to entail or generate. Besides, there is the question of whether existing methodologies may be suitable to research in art and design since they presuppose types of knowledge that may be ill suited to represent knowledge generated by these practices.

Reilly (2002) has expounded the epistemological implications of the 'objectivist model of knowledge' to which I referred already. She also warns that forms of knowledge 'that have been rejected, or subjected to heavy criticism in other disciplines, may persist in the arts' (Reilly, 2002). Her essay gives a glimpse of the mixed history of objectivism in the arts. Yet, like the authors previously cited, she situates research in art and design at the forefront of the challenge to the 'objectivist' model of knowledge. Objectivism 'holds that our lived understanding and experience of the world are either irrelevant or not enough for "knowledge", which is dependent upon something ... which brings with it the possibility of certainty, of "objectivity" (in the traditional sense), and "true belief" (Reilly, 2002). It is especially the latter demand of 'objectivity' and (absolute) 'truth' which accounts for art's exclusion from the domain of knowledge. Yet, 'the challenge to, and arguably ongoing demise of the idea of "knowledge" allows the contemporary arts to enter the debate' (Reilly, 2002).

Reilly also emphasizes that the collapse of 'the traditional definition of epistemology' as 'an autonomous foundational discipline' into 'the nature, sources, and limits of true belief' 'strengthens its relations to other disciplines.' For the arts this means, that they 'need to take responsibility for their own definition of knowledge' otherwise 'they risk having to work with definitions of knowledge that do not relate well to their own working methods' (Reilly, 2002). As already seen, not only is there the danger that the arts end up working with methods that are less than ideal to their purposes, they might even do so unwittingly, unless they engage in a critical analysis of their own knowledge foundations.

The way forward is a turn 'towards natural epistemologies'. This has already occurred in other disciplines such as sociology. In an imaginative re-interpretation of the etymology of the word 'epistemology' as a sensuous act of 'standing over or near', Reilly defines the knowledge base of studio art. Importantly, the metaphorical and physical 'standing over' that is involved in studio practice and which results in the art work 'is not simply an uncovering, it is inventing' (Reilly, 2002).

Reilly's heuristic understanding of epistemology goes to the heart of some of the questions that are crucial to research in art and design in the university context in which practical and scholarly activities were traditionally differentiated. Practice is considered merely as an act of applying knowledge, whereas research is defined by the 'generation of knowledge' (Jones, 2006, p.229). For Jones this distinction is helpful if used to differentiate the professional (artist or designer) from the researcher. Apart from the negative effect on both art and design of this traditional division (which to the non-specialist easily appear as one and the same), its effect has yet different implications for design in comparison to art. While design is more easily seen in terms of the application of knowledge, art's innovative quality situates it in greater proximity to the production of new knowledge than is the case with design. Jones notes this potential gap between research in art and design (Jones, 2006, p.229).

How then may art embody such knowledge? Merely asking this question results, according to Jones, from a confusion 'about the place of knowledge in practice when seen in distinction from that in theory'. Following Donald Schön's well popularised distinction between 'knowledge on reflection' and 'knowledge in action', Jones concludes that art and design are practical but 'also simultaneously theoretically based' (Schön, 1983; Jones, 2006, p.227). 'Knowledge in action' above all entails 'thinking through art'. Thereby it is indicated that 'practical activity is itself intrinsically intelligent' and hence 'stands against the absurdity of the theory/practice dichotomy' (Jones, 2006, p.227).

Jones's arguments tally very much with my own views and serve to dispel doubts as to the lack of art's contribution to knowledge. Less clear are the procedures by which such knowledge is generated and what its focus or nature may be. As Jones

says: 'Recently, there has been increasing recognition that the characterisation of knowledge embodied in or represented by an object needs to be made explicit within a developing research culture' (Jones, 2006, p.228). He suggests an agenda for this, including 'an advanced theoretisation of how knowledge may be embodied in or represented by a work of art' (Jones, 2006, p.230). However, he identifies a problem in terms of how such research may or not maybe linked to other arts-related research: 'It is not fully clear how "practice-based" research should be articulated in relation to "theory-based" or "history-based" research, or research based on other approaches' (Jones, 2006, p.228).

At one level, it may seem obvious that there is an overlap of arts-based research with art historical or visual culture studies. These themselves draw on a significant number of theoretical positions which, besides, are (or should be) under constant revision (Elkins, 2003). Therefore, it may not always be possible or desirable to draw such a clear dividing line as Jones's statement appears to imply.

The major potential difference between 'theory-based' and 'practice-based' research could be located in an emphasis on the process. Scrivener argues: 'I am of the view that description of the creative-productive process should be the principal means by which students demonstrate that they are self-conscious, systematic and reflective creators' (Scrivener, 2000). But even this focus should not be seen as exclusive to practitioner research. MacLeod and Holdrige mention literary and art theorist Mieke Bal's reflections on Louise Bourgeois' *Spider* (1999) (Bal, 2001). Bal not only treats the work as a 'theoretical object' but also puts "'the art first", that is, before "influence, context, iconography and historical lineage"' (Bal, 2001, quoted in MacLeod and Holdridge 2006, p.10). I would like to add a note of caution here. While Bal's project can certainly be treated as a model, it may be advisable to bear in mind that previous training and professional practice, in this case the situatedness of a theorist, may yield a differently inflected type of knowledge compared to that of a practitioner.

The practitioner-authors represented in MacLeod and Holdridge's book are said to concern themselves, in addition to reflecting on 'the procedural form of the fine art doctorate and the complexities of the PhD submission', also with 'the perceptual

and conceptual nature of the processes of making art *per se*, the physical working through of thought involved in those processes and how this might be facilitated' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.1). There appears to be an agreement that research should be focused on what 'goes into' art (i.e. its production) rather than what happens after the event (of its production) such as the viewing of an exhibition. The latter is seen as the domain of art critics and art historians (with the proviso I noted above):

'Artists and the field of visual arts deal primarily with that which happens before artworks are made, this is their specialist arena, what comes afterwards is the arena of the humanistic disciplines. If the field of visual arts wants to establish itself as a profession with a theoretical framework it must, in my opinion, build its theory production on that which happened before art is produced, that is, the processes that lead to the finished objects of art' (G. Refsum, 2002; quoted in Sullivan 2005, p.87).

This emphasis on the process of art as the focus of research does create difficulties, especially in the university research environment. MacLeod and Holdridge comment: 'One of the key findings of our research is that the findings presented through art are always a posteriori and thus, ill suited to the institution's pursuit of prescribed outcomes' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.7).

In contrast to its earlier requirements, the AHRC definition of research is now firmly in line with this emphasis on practice and is 'primarily concerned with research processes rather than outputs' in Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes's view (Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes, 2007, p.13). Jones locates the discipline's own future sense of value here: 'If ... we can ... come to a common understanding of how artistic and design knowledge is formed, that is to say by what processes and with what methods, then our institutional self-confidence should increase ...' (Jones, 2006, p.238).

But the focus on process and the creation of new knowledge necessitates further explanation. Sullivan has (critically!) observed that arts-based research is geared to critique and analysis rather than the 'creation of new knowledge' (Sullivan, 2005, p.XV). This is a justified concern, especially in view of the probably somewhat defensive earlier phase of arts-based research. But surely, both critical appraisal

and the generation of new knowledge are needed, even if the emphasis may be more on one than the other, depending on the individual research inquiry. Yet, it seems to be precisely the nature of this new knowledge that is under discussion. The notion of 'tacit knowledge' as a central criterion of the processes of art (and design) lies at the root of the debate. Some members of the academic arts community tend to see such implied knowledge as sacrosanct and as a necessary mystery best left alone while research-oriented commentators view it as crucial to the research process. Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes refer to the former attitude which assumes that tacit knowledge 'withstands articulation and argumentation (i.e. verification) and thus wider dissemination (Herbig et al., 2001)' (Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes, 2007, p.12). Contrary to this belief, they argue that tacit knowledge should not be seen as exempt from research and that it can be verified. Jones agrees: 'We need to be more explicit about what is meant by an enquiring mind in our subject at university level, and this need is in itself an indictment of the subject's conservatives who argue for a tacit knowledge of theory amongst artists' (Jones, 2006, p.234).

The exposition of tacit knowledge is linked to the recurring theme that arts-based research should not aim for knowledge 'about art' but 'through art' (Jones, 2006, p.228). This axiom is well suited to signal the differentiation between a more art historical or visual culture approach and a process-oriented arts-based research as outlined above.

The title of Macleod's and Holdridge's book *Thinking through art* chimes with Jones's goal of 'knowledge through art'. But in their introduction they adopt the phrase of 'research as art' from Christopher Frayling's foreword to their book. By way of explanation they refer to Frayling's earlier differentiation of research in art and design:

'Crucially it [Frayling's paper of 1992] sought to define the difference between research and doctoral research. Doctoral research is characterised through three categories: research into art and design (historical, perceptual, cultural, iconographic etc.); research through art and design (materials, technological etc.) and research for art (sic). This third type of research is "Where the end product is an artefact – where the thinking is, so to speak, embodied in the artefact, where the goal is not

communicable knowledge in the sense of verbal communication, but in the sense of iconic or imaginistic communication.” Frayling indicated that research for art was the most problematic’ (Frayling, 1993/4, quoted in MacLeod and Holdridge 2006, p.4).

In MacLeod and Holdridge’s conceptualisation Frayling’s earlier ‘research *for* art’ has now been replaced by the less ambiguous ‘research *as* art’ but with much the same rationale: ‘We will maintain that research as art offers the possibility of an interpretation which might lead to art research, even academic higher degree research, adhering more firmly to its own methodological purposes’ (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.4).

The change in wording is, of course, significant: The expression ‘research *through* art’ could be read as putting the emphasis on the research part with the implication that art is secondary, merely the means of research. In contrast, ‘research *as* art’ draws attention to the identity and congruence of both. This point will be further discussed in the next section.

1.6 The artwork and knowledge

It is evident from the previous considerations that a central issue as to the question of knowledge in art and design research rests with the work of art itself, especially with the way in which it can be considered to embody knowledge. A complementary question is the role of the artist as both ‘researcher and researched’ (Sullivan) which will be explored in section 1.7 below.

Harrison (quoted in Jones, 2006) emphasises that ‘the medium of communication (of knowledge) must ultimately be the works themselves, not descriptions of them or assertions about them.’ Jones comments: ‘This would seem to represent a basis for considering works of art as the embodiment, representation or lodgement of the knowledge that art has to bear’ (Jones, 2006, p.236).

These comments imply that art works themselves embody knowledge and that they must not be ‘illustrations’ of theory, a fear that is frequently voiced, and one that I share. However, Jones’s statement that the ‘medium of communication must

ultimately be the works themselves' is less justified if it is taken to mean that in a research context **only** the works themselves may fulfil this role. Such a view, which is not shared by Jones, would represent a short-circuiting of the way in which we encounter and understand art. Taken to its extreme, it constitutes a reversion to the word-image dichotomy that has accounted for so many of the misunderstandings of and fears about research in art and design both from within and outside the field.

Instead, it may be useful to remind oneself of the intertextuality of any phenomenon. As Sullivan points out: '... meaning is not contained within a form itself, say a person, painting, or a poem, but exists within a network of social relations and discourse' (Sullivan, 2005, p.43).

Tim O'Riley's (2006) tellingly subtitled paper 'An Inaudible Dialogue - What are the extents of an artwork, where does it begin and where does it end? To what extent are practice and research entwined as relational objects of thinking?' also alerts us to the fact that some of the controversy about the status of knowledge in and of the artwork is based on a static notion of both knowledge and objects. He proposes a comprehensive dialogic and interrelational understanding of a work of art which encompasses its maker and contexts, including its viewers:

'Art is as much an activity as a thing, in terms of both making things and engaging with things, places or people around it. As artists or viewers we participate in this activity and what we refer to as an artwork may only be an aspect of this activity, an artefact or phenomenon whose significance is bound up with the forms and processes that structure it but which also has a necessarily elliptical and dialogic nature. Choices are adopted in the artwork that differentiate it from its surroundings or from other works but, to borrow Howard Becker's phrase, it possesses a fundamental indeterminacy and incompleteness (Becker, 2001)' (O'Riley, 2006).

This quote stresses both the art work's autonomy as well as its contingency. This double characteristic of the art work is further expounded by O'Riley:

'The external nature of the artwork, 'its capacity to raise questions about itself and the institutions that house it, is necessarily determined by its internal structure and organisation. ... It [the artwork] effectively arbitrates how it is encountered but the implication is also that the work that the artwork does or doesn't do is contingent on a broader concept of the artwork itself' (O'Riley, 2006).

O'Riley's understanding of the artwork's specificity as well as its dependency on factors beyond itself draws on Luhmann's concept of art as 'an autopoietic system ... that is, a self-referential, recursive system that is "operationally closed" and yet shares a "structural coupling" with its environment' (O'Riley, 2006).

The double nature of the art work has implications for the place of knowledge in art research. O'Riley acknowledges that the 'different activities of an artist, such as thinking, writing, looking, making etc' 'remain ... distinct activities, imposing particular demands and working conditions' (O'Riley, 2006). Yet, he takes a comprehensive and holistic view which accords very much with my position as quoted in the general introduction: 'The process of research is productive in that the artwork and whatever is said or written about it are pulling in the same direction. Their purposes are aligned. Thought and action operate in unison and in dialogue' (O'Riley, 2006).

O'Riley can therefore conclude that 'the art work's place or status in terms of research' forms 'an aspect of an activity and a system, but [is] not necessarily confined to it' (O'Riley, 2006). His 'expanded understanding of what an art practice might be' encompasses 'the entirety of the project' and is not confined to 'just those things that have the conventional appearance of art works' (O'Riley, 2006).

The question of how the work of art can be considered in terms of knowledge returns us to the topic, in Macleod and Holdridge's phrase, of research as art. This opens up the possibility of 'identifying art as a theoretical practice'. The issue of theory is closely affiliated with linguistic practice, hence, as already indicated, touches on the assumption of a fundamental opposition between word and image. By drawing on Stephen Melville (2001), MacLeod and Holdridge examine the role of language in visual practice and assert that 'visuality [is] not so much supplanted by language' rather it (visuality) is shown to be 'possessed of an articulation or thinking internal to it.' In the words of Melville:

'This would be what it means to speak in terms of a 'theoretical practice' or a 'theoretical object'. 'Theory' here would be less something a critic or historian brings to the work ... than something to be traced in it, and writing

would belong to such work as a part of its unfolding, a continuation of the conditions of its appearing' (Melville, 2001, p.19, quoted in MacLeod and Holdridge 2006, p.4).

Like O'Riley, MacLeod and Holdridge in following Melville, assert the autonomy of the work of art. It has to 'reaffirm what it is, for example, a piece of sculpture must declare itself as such' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.4). Their comment on Melville's position echoes concerns that apply to my PhD:

'Melville's purpose is to identify the physicality of art, its complex, sensuous and cognitive presence or "entity" and it is this which art as research must claim and explore if research artworks are to be understood as academic research' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.5).

MacLeod and Holdridge also stress, although less strongly than O'Riley, that this emphasis on the materiality and self-referential nature of the work of art (to use Luhmann's term) is not to be understood as a new form of (Greenbergian) modernism:

'... art must provide the grounds for its own interpretation. This does not mean that it is hermetically sealed off from the world or reductively engaged in a self-referentiality, calling up spectres of Greenbergian formalism and the restrictive tenets of certain aspects of modernism. It is simply a question of an academic reckoning with what art is, as artwork and how artwork is dependent upon particular processes of making or realisation' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.5).

It is this concern with the 'physicality of art', its dependency 'on particular processes of realisation', its specificity on the one hand and its contingency on the other that are the guiding principles of this PhD whether these apply to my artistic work or that of other artists. It is here also that the inextricable nature of the practice-theory interrelationship most clearly appears.

1.7 Researcher and researched

One critical issue that distinguishes art research from research in other fields is the fact that to a large extent the researcher is also 'the researched' (Sullivan) in the sense that it is his/her own creation that is the subject/object of the enquiry. The

possibilities for the generation of knowledge may therefore be seriously compromised if one follows a traditional research paradigm.

In the first instance, Sullivan outlines the interconnectedness of the two objects/subjects of knowledge pragmatically in terms of tasks or roles:

'Perhaps the main principle to emerge from the conceptualisation of visual arts as research is the relationship between the practices of creating and critiquing. These are pivotal as they form the basis by which new perception is imagined, relevant information interrogated, and alternative conceptions realized.'

And

'I argue that the experience of the artist is the core element in the creation of new knowledge and the potential for new understanding is further enhanced through research projects that may take varied forms such as exhibitions, performances, and publications' (Sullivan, 2005, p.191).

Along similar lines Gray and Malins plainly state: "The practitioner *is* the researcher; from this informed perspective, the practitioner identifies researchable problems raised in practice, and responds through aspects of practice. The role is multi-faceted' (Gray and Malins, 2004, p.21).

But Sullivan also draws a more complex picture of the interrelationship between the researcher and the artefact within a changing research paradigm. He contrasts the modernist perspective where interpretation was conducted 'as an explanatory process' from the assumption that 'meaning is inherent in a text or artefact that can be revealed by a skilled and knowledgeable reader or viewer' with a view of interpretation today as 'dynamic' and interactive'. Along with most other authors he refers to the contribution of cultural theory which places emphasis on the 'dialogical' aspect of the research process. Moreover, this intertextual notion of maker and artefact 'give[s] voice to the observed as well as the observer, and transform[s] the research artefact "into a speaking subject, who sees as well as is seen, who evades, argues, probes back" (Clifford and Marcus, 1986, p.14)' (Sullivan, 2005, p.22/23).

Scrivener has similarly contended that the researcher must be open to the 'situation's talk back' (Scrivener, 2000). This interactive, dialogic conception of the relationship between researcher and researched can lessen fears and concerns

regarding the feasibility of such 'self' investigation that has little place in conventional academic research.

The problems for research that could be regarded as inherent in the close identity of subject and object are further alleviated if one considers the fact that the adoption and inhabiting of different roles and identities is a general feature of life in contemporary societies.⁵ Sullivan's recognition of the artist as someone who incorporates many different identities in the 'real' world, such as those of creator, critic, theorist, teacher, activist, and archivist could, in my view, be usefully applied at a more 'internal' as well as an 'external' level during the process of research. Those 'patterns of practice that dislodge discipline boundaries, media conventions, and political interests' are actively practised throughout the research process (Sullivan, 2005, p.125; see also Chapter V.2 of this submission). Artists' switching between different internal and external roles and identities may be new to them in terms of the specific identities involved, such as, for example, as critic and curator. In addition to such alteration being a novel aspect of artistic identity, it is equally established as a general feature of living in contemporary society. Yet the former is an identity that itself harbours multiple positions such as those of the creator as well as business person and publicist, each requiring a gamut of practical as well as personal and interpersonal skills and 'attitudes' or intelligences.

Finally, there is another 'curiosity' of art research that may mark it out from research in other fields: Art as research may be indistinguishable from art in a non-research context. As Sullivan says, it

'may involve the creation of texts, objects, images, and artefacts that are indistinguishable, at first glance, from works of art created (perhaps less self-consciously) as explorations of ideas, themes, and issues that matter to us, as ways of theorizing about the world' (Thompson, 2006, p.2).

Putting the emphasis on the position of the researcher, Macleod and Holdridge remark: 'Artists' own sense of themselves ... comes into play when realising research art work. ... research findings are often seen as part of a developing and self-determining practice rather than as research inquiry' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.9).

In other words, artists are reluctant to differentiate their 'usual' practice as separate from research. A closely connected issue is the question of the particular quality or status of the art work in terms of its context. Does or should the art work for the PhD submission be different from work that is made for exhibition purposes only or is it the context that makes such a work of art a piece of research rather than a 'pure' piece of art? The point has also frequently been raised that art made for/as research is often artistically not very striking. MacLeod and Holdridge put an important spin on this:

'What is good art in the context of research? ... For artist researchers this has emerged as the most crucial issue in their research inquiries: if the products of research cannot be identified by them as also art, the cost of undertaking a postgraduate degree is too high' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.6).

They confirm the point made above, namely, that for many artists, including myself, the art which is produced by undertaking high level research must also function as a piece of art in its own right outside of the context of research. They also comment that supervisors do not see this as an insurmountable problem (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.6).

O'Riley's observations shed further light on this issue. As we have already seen, he considers art 'as much an activity as a thing' and refers to 'the artwork's status in terms of research, as an aspect of an activity and a system, but not necessarily confined to it' (O'Riley, 2006). Moreover, 'the entirety of the project is the product of the research' (O'Riley, 2006). This means that research encompasses the whole of a project not just those of its manifestations that appear as art (objects).

While this view may go some way in answering the tricky question of the art work's place within research, another puzzle for many seems to be the fact that most art that is made today functions very well without the label of formalised, academic research. This factor appears to obviate the need for such research in the context of art. In response to this ostensible conundrum it could be argued that research such as the practice-based PhD allows both the work and the researcher to function differently in the future even though the nature of the art and its aesthetic approach may not be (visibly) changed by it. This is one possibility among many others where

there may be a more obvious difference between the two types of practice but it is in the former vein that I view my own project.

Besides, as Macleod and Holdridge comment with regard to the interrelationship and limitations of the different elements of a PhD submission:

‘It is important to understand that ... the writing has been determined by the processes of conceiving and realising artworks. ... The thinking which results from the process of doctoral study ... cannot be fully contained by either the visual or the written alone’ (Macleod and Holdridge, 2006, p.3).

In this sense the written component is seen as an artefact that both encompasses as well as falls short of the visual component and vice versa.

In the present submission the art work was initially exhibited conventionally in two galleries. It has then been documented for the submission in visual form. The context does ‘frame’ the work differently in each case; however, it can be argued that the polysemy of art makes it eminently suited to such different positioning. Moreover, if artistic work as part of a PhD is exhibited conventionally, that is in a gallery rather than in a research environment, it is nevertheless bound within a theory-practice network, as we have seen. This structural relationship may not be evident in a ‘public’ (as opposed to a research) exhibition but underpins it all the same. It is the task of the visual and written documentation and other written components of the PhD submission to elucidate this intermeshing. These observations lead to the last theme of this section on research in art and design, the role of writing.

1.8 The issue of writing

‘The domains of word and image are like two countries that speak a different language but that have a long history of mutual migration, cultural exchange, and other forms of intercourse. The word/image relation is not a master method for dissolving these borders or for maintaining them as eternally fixed boundaries; it is the name of a problem and a problematic – a description of the irregular, heterogeneous, and often improvised boundaries between “institutions of the visible” (visual arts, visual media, practices of display and spectation) and “institutions of the verbal”

(literature, language, discourse, practices of speech and writing, audition and reading)' (Mitchell, 1996, quoted in Nelson and Shiff, p.49).

Mitchell aptly sums up the conflicted, yet interdependent encounter and relationship between the visual and the verbal. Moreover, he considers 'word and image' as 'a pair of terms whose relation opens a space of intellectual struggle, historical investigation, and artistic/critical practice.' His advice is: 'Our only choice is to explore and inhabit this space' (Mitchell, 1996, p.56). Although his words were addressed to a readership that was largely conceived as art and visual historians (the book in which this essay appears is titled *Critical Terms for Art History*) they equally apply to artists undertaking PhDs. In particular they help to explain the broader background to the issues on the role of the written word in such Higher Research degrees. The written part of the submission and its interrelationship with the work/s of art has been and is a subject that has greatly exercised PhD students and supervisors in the field.

MacLeod and Holdridge elaborate on this issue: 'What should be the equivalence between writing and making in terms of a doctoral submission? What kind of written submission is appropriate? Is the comprehensive review of the relevant field essential?' They note that there is no overall consensus between different institutions as to the format of the written element and comment on the typically required 'thesis': '... case studies would seem to indicate that the conventionally written academic thesis does not always seem appropriate for the doctorate in fine art' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.2). Currently, a written component seems to be a prescribed element of the majority of PhDs in art, although the details, such as the length and format may vary from institution to institution.

The debate about the status of the visual and written components of the PhD and other higher degrees has its roots in traditions of institutional procedures and/or practices which are themselves signifiers of epistemological and methodological preferences and which often reveal deep-rooted discursive patterns and practices on both sides. As was detailed above, the major epistemological paradigm/s and the methodologies derived from them have been or are still in the process of being queried. Change only occurs gradually.

As relatively recently as the year 2000 Higher Degree regulations privileged, albeit in very general terms, text over practice (it should be noted that the latter does not necessarily have to be an artwork but in the present discussion 'practice' is usually understood to refer to art). In an article in the *Journal of Art and Design Education*, Fiona Candlin wrote (2000) that the UK Council for Graduate Education 'draws a firm line between theory and practice, places academic research in opposition to practice generally and artwork specifically, and maintains the stereotype of art as anti-intellectual ...' (Candlin, 2000, quoted in MacLeod).

Contrary to what was argued earlier, art, in this conception, would not be 'a theorising practice'; it would merely be 'an illustration' of a research thesis. The (written) text alone constitutes the 'research thesis' according to this logic (MacLeod, 2000). This credence, which is anathema to MacLeod and Holdridge, has its roots in cultural attitudes that have linked writing with thinking (especially 'authoritative thinking') in the history of western thought (Mey, 2006, quoted in MacLeod and Holdridge, p.207). Kerstin Mey has demonstrated how this belief became instituted in undergraduate art and design education by the obligatory 'essay' or 'dissertation' as a required component of the academic validity of art and design in the 1970s. The 'supplementary element of art' is confirmed by the 'instrumental function of writing' (Mey, 2006, p.209).

Such calcified views have not been helped by and can even be said to have been reinforced by equally ingrained, historically derived attitudes in the art 'camp'. Here language in verbal or written form has often been regarded with hostility (often a disguised timidity) and considered to be detrimental to the practice of art.⁶

In contrast, Mey's essay argues against such a juxtaposition, especially in the context of a telematic society.⁷ She draws on the work of Czech-born media theorist Vilém Flusser, especially his idea of writing as the 'phenomenologisation of thinking' (Mey, 2006, p.205). Flusser's phrase of 'the gesture of writing', which includes writing with the computer key board, restores thinking in this particular mode to its sensuous, material embodiment. Writing is thus conceived as a 'specific way of thinking'. This puts it into closer relationship to art making despite its dependence on certain 'literary competencies' (Mey, 2006, p.206). Conversely, 'reflection on practice' through such writing may consist of 'concerns of creative practice,

theoretical speculation, wider contextual issues and historical circumstances'. Writing is conceived here as but one of the multi-modal forms or 'polydimensional performances of thought' (Mey, 2006, p.209).⁸ To frame writing in such a manner allows 'students to focus on the similarities of different resources and modes of meaning making/expression' while recognising the specificity of different modes and the limits of each resource, be it writing or visual production (Mey, 2006, p.209). Suffice it to say, what goes for undergraduates, should equally apply to postgraduates.

Mey aims to dethrone writing from its privileged theorising position and, above all, to demote certain traditional formats of writing, such as the 'traditional' essay or the dissertation, that became established in art education from the 1970s onwards. At the same time she endeavours to advance writing from its marginalised position within the 'internal' arts discourse (as opposed to the 'external' one conducted by art historians and critics). Her essay is a more thorough investigation of O'Riley's assertion, which was quoted earlier, that 'there is no distinction between the activity of making and the activities of thinking, describing, reflecting, writing' (O'Riley, 2006). Against those that see art as an 'internalised practice' that is hampered by too much thinking, especially in the form of verbal activities such as speaking and writing, O'Riley plainly asks: 'Why shouldn't externalised reflection be productive?' (O'Riley, 2006)

Johanna Pentikäinen defines more closely how different types of written discourses (including 'meta-narratives of the production study') 'construct the author's communication and relationship with the artistic activity and its context'. As the writers cited previously, she notes the limitations of each but also holds that they are 'inseparable. (Pentikäinen, 2006). She also reminds us of the constructive nature of thought of which writing is an instance. 'Writing appears as a method that does not only reflect and store the reality but produces it (Richardson 2000) by using its constitutive force.' It does so through metaphors, symbols and narrative structure (Pentikäinen, 2006). This 'constitutive force' of writing can thus be perceived as a further parallel to the creative process of art making.

MacLeod has provided a typology of the function of the written text for different types of practice-based research (MacLeod, 2000).⁹ In particular, she is interested

in the interrelationship between the art work and the written text in terms of the 'thesis' proposed by the submission. ('Thesis' is here the argument put forward by a doctoral submission rather than the eponymous format of writing.)

MacLeod's paper identifies three functions which are explained via examples of PhD submissions: The first or type A, which is referred to in the general introduction of this submission, 'positions a practice' which may be 'historical, cultural; contemporaneous or a combination of these'. The second or type B 'theorises a practice'. Here, a 'conceptual framework' is 'employed in the construction of a research methodology' which 'exposes on-going practice to a theoretical framing and a theory driven investigation.' The central purpose of the research is precisely to demonstrate the theory of a particular type of [painting] practice.' The third, or type C, 'reveals a practice'. MacLeod calls her designation of the latter type an 'in progress definition', in other words, it is a preliminary explanation. In her example of 'type C', 'the written text was instrumental to the conception of the art projects but the art projects themselves exacted a radical rethinking of what had been constructed in written form because the process of realising or making artwork altered what had been defined in written form' (MacLeod, 2000). It is very difficult to judge the last proposition without access to the actual visual example. MacLeod herself acknowledges that not only does the C-type 'approximate to both A and B types of research; there is an obvious overlap between all three.' But she credits type C with 'the drive ... to understand what has been made or realised through art, to find, after the making, ... "logics which match up"' (MacLeod, 2000). This a posteriori quality of arts based research has already been commented upon and is further taken up in three chapters of this submission. (See III.3; V.I and V.2.)

MacLeod's main point is to refute assumptions that the thesis is contained in or confined to the written text which is then 'illustrated by the art work' (MacLeod, 2000). In other words, her concerns are similar to those of O'Riley and Mey, all of whom consider writing as one, if important mode of reflection amongst others in the context of research. In all of MacLeod's cited cases, both the written text and the art work constitute the thesis (MacLeod, 2000).

Of particular interest to my thesis is her suggestion that theory that is 'made or realised through artwork'. She refers to this as a 'matrixial theory, a complex of ideas/matter/form and theory which is external to practice. ... However, this matrixial theory involves a conceptual framing; it is propositional. It may well be dependant upon the relationship between the written text and the artwork but is demonstrative of the intellectuality of making, which is not the same as the intellectuality of writing' (MacLeod, 2000). In the context of a submission on print the notion of a matrixial theory seems particularly apt as it echoes the printmaking process with its double nature of matrix (the etching plate; lithographic stone or stencil/s in case of the screenprint) and image (or final print). Moreover, the notion of a matrixial quality which is 'demonstrative of the intellectuality of making' and is different from the 'intellectuality of writing' could also be said to characterize the double nature of exhibitions and written texts that constitute this submission.

1.9 Summary

This chapter has set out the broader institutional and epistemological framework, namely the debates about art and design research, in which the conception and production of this submission has taken place. It adheres to the view that higher research degrees – while at one level the result of increasing standardisation and regulatory, market-driven systems in Higher Education – also offer opportunities for artists and designers to contribute in unique ways to a new knowledge paradigm that is replacing older objectivist, epistemological models towards a more inclusive, dynamic understanding of humans' relationship with objects and their environments. Drawing on 'multi-layered methodologies' (MacLeod and Holdridge) artist researchers are able to produce new knowledge or contribute to the creation of such knowledge via a process of 'self-conscious, systematic' reflection (Scrivener) centred in/on their artistic work, be this the process of making and/or the finished piece. While such research includes a number of activities and methods, such as visiting exhibitions and libraries, reflection and experimentation at the level of processes and materials, visual documentation and so on, writing is considered as one important means of investigation that operates in conjunction with the visual work. This interrelationship can be conceived as a matrixial figure, as explained above, or more specifically, in the present submission, in terms of repetition as

difference. The following visual documentation and written chapters should be approached with this in mind.

Endnotes

¹ Art and Design had not been eligible for research funding before the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) of 1992. See Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes (2007) p.5.

² For information on the RAE 2008 and the previous RAEs in 1992, 1996 and 2001, see the RAE 2008 web site (RAE 2008).

³ For an overview and classification, see Niedderer and Roworth-Stokes (2007), especially p.10.

⁴ See also Sullivan (2005), especially the chapter 'Contexts for visual arts research', p.51; see Reilly (2002).

⁵ On the topic of identity in contemporary society, see Woodward, K. (ed) (1997); Elliott, A. (2001); Mansfield, N. (2001).

⁶ For a critical engagement with this issue, see Grete Refsum (2002) 'Bête comme un peintre? Contribution to an understanding of the knowledge base in the field of visual arts.'

⁷ The fact that writing is 'losing its stature as privileged gesture and mode in which information/knowledge has been generated, communicated and stored' and the implications that must be drawn from this can not be further explored here. They are highlighted in Mey's paper (Mey, 2006, p.207).

⁸ See also Kress/Van Leuwen (2006) on the concept of multi-modal forms of expression and their different competencies.

⁹ It is unfortunately not clear whether this text, written in 2000, uses the label 'practice-based' research as a catch all for studio art research or regards it in a more specific sense. My inclination is to read it as the former.

2. Technology versus Concept or the Site of Practice versus the Bite of Theory?

2.1 Preface

This chapter, written after the first exhibition, engages with aspects of the broader context of my chosen discipline, printmaking, as a foil to my own project. The chapter identifies certain changes in the printmaking debate that point to a move from an emphasis on 'techniques and processes' to one on 'concept'. The supposed shift from techniques to concepts is paralleled with the often-assumed dichotomy between practice on the one hand and theory on the other. It is argued that the alleged divisions be seen as intersections rather than exclusionary differences. Moreover, theoretical assumptions within printmaking are identified which are often held implicitly, such as notions of technique or craft as being outside of the realms of theory. Esther Leslie's (1998) interpretation of Walter Benjamin's (1936; 1992) essay 'The Storyteller' is utilised to question the opposition between technology and craft, as well as the implicit antagonism between practice and theory. It is argued that a broad, more comprehensive and theoretical understanding of technique/technology is required to question the all-too-easy assessment of these as neutral tools just as theory is implied in practice rather than detracting from it.

2.2 Technology versus Concept, Practice versus Theory?

In recent years there has been a notable change in the discourse of printmaking from a predominant emphasis on the technologies of printmaking to a more conceptual approach.¹ This is to be welcomed as there still seems to exist, maybe inevitably, an over-emphasis on the technical processes of making prints. A review by British printmaker Ruth Uglow of the third IMPACT International Printmaking Conference (Summer 2003) reported on the conference in terms of this more conceptual approach. Uglow commented on the 'shift in discussion from the methodological to the theoretical, with printmaking treated more as a vehicle for ideas than as a process of making' (Uglow, 2003, p.16).

'Methodological' is defined here narrowly as pertaining to technical methods and processes only. The implication of this statement is that the new emphasis on theory sets it apart from, or even replaces the former attention to technical issues. At another level, this division mirrors the relationship, often also conceived as diametrically opposed, between practice and theory which is being vigorously debated in the arts, especially in light of the last fifteen years of 'research into practice'. The stated aim of the IMPACT conference organisers echoed what could be called the division between technology versus concept, yet at the same time, framed the debate in more inclusive terms. In the words of Stephen Inggs and Dominic Thorburn the intention was 'to shift the focus of the debate from the technological to a more comprehensive embracing of theory and practice in relation to global developments'.²

The confounding of terms and the ambiguity of attitudes outlined above are not untypical in recent printmaking debates. My research aims to contribute to the debate by reflecting on the dichotomy of the 'technology-versus-concept' or 'practice-versus-theory' approach. It does not examine printmaking technologies either simply in terms of their technical know-how, important as this is, or as mere tools to achieve the ultimate goal of artistic ideas or concept. It is more fruitful to conceive of the relationship between technology and concept and practice and theory as intersections rather as exclusionary difference.

At the 2003 IMPACT conference, one panel, which focussed on the role of theory in printmaking practice, had the title: 'Foul Biting? Theoretical Diversions in Printmaking'. While ostensibly catering to the need for 'theory', the title sums up attitudes which form part of the unspoken 'rules' or the 'unconscious' of printmaking practice. This framing of the session appeared to mirror, albeit in a tongue-in-cheek manner, the often binary conception of technology-concept and practice-theory. Historically, 'foul biting' can be described as a technical problem of printmaking, whereby the acid used on the plate etches into the metal in a way not planned by the artist. What happens is a transgression, a breaking of boundaries. Similarly the question posed by the title of the panel discussion asked whether theory as it relates to printmaking is a transgression, a spoiling of boundaries. In fact, to quote the title: is it a diversion? Is theory a turning away from the true path of printmaking

which is unsullied practice? If theory in printmaking is equated with 'foul biting', then practice is 'not-foul biting'. Practice then is, by implication, a healthy, an essentially sound, gutsy affair. In contrast, theory becomes the bite/site of the exception, the anomaly to the real task, which is practice. So, theory is a detour, a 'diversion'. It constitutes a binary difference from practice.³

Difference is crucial in establishing identity by defining boundaries, between, say, masculine and feminine, between self and other. 'Difference' operates, or has operated, as a largely binary construction that defines our existence in the world both epistemologically and socially. It typically functions by excluding the second category; by making it 'other' or different. For example, in a male-oriented society females are the second category or the hidden 'other' (Woodward, 1997; Hall, 2000, in Du Gay et al. eds. pp. 15-31).

The debates on difference have also taught us that those characteristics which are unacceptable in oneself, within one's own group or culture are projected onto the 'other'. The late Edward Said used the example of the European view of the so-called Oriental 'other' as lazy, cruel and overly sensuous as a typical form of 'othering' (Said, 1978; 1991). It is the result of the attempted internal suppression of such characteristics in Europeans which then become projected on to 'the other', here oriental peoples. These are then conceived as being totally different from rational, humane Europeans whose dominance is thus justified.

Within the history of printmaking in the last hundred years a related kind of 'othering' can be observed. The historically more central artistic disciplines such as painting and sculpture and, today, installation, video, photography and so on have tended to sideline, if not marginalise printmaking. Like photography in the 19th century, printmaking has, at times, appeared to have the status of 'a handmaiden of art' rather than being recognised as an art in itself. Within the discourse of Fine Art over the last hundred years until the 1960s, printmaking's relatively low status was largely due to its affiliation with technology. In the context of modernist art, the purity of artistic media such as painting and sculpture and their alleged authenticity, originality and uniqueness stood against any reproductive form with its connotations of mass production and mass culture.

Printmakers have also defined their own institutional boundaries over the past hundred years: the discourse and practice of the fine art print, signed individually by the artist, has the construct of the limited edition as a central defining element. The infrastructure to support the limited edition has occurred through the setting of boundaries between the fine art print versus commercially reproduced images. At the same time it differentiates the fine art print from printed matter in the crafts or applied arts.

Among printmakers there are theories on art and on printmaking itself which are implicitly held, yet which may not be acknowledged. For example, there is the continuing emphasis on the 'technical', often in form of demonstrations and workshops. This term covers a cluster of terms such as the 'tools', or 'technical means', the 'machinery', as well as the 'technique' or the skill necessary to employ such technical means. As 'technique', the term can also be argued to encompass the notion of the 'craft' of printmaking. At this juncture, it may help to remind ourselves that the Greek word 'techne' means 'craft, art, skill, science or scientific enquiry' (Pearsall, ed. 2001; Gange, ed. 1998, p.6). For some years, printmaking conferences have attempted to redress the balance between the 'technical' and the philosophical and theoretical, as indicated earlier. In my experience, printmakers attending these conferences, however, are not always so ready to accept the change. To name but one example: At three IMPACT conferences, a number of delegates expressed their disappointment that there were not enough workshops or demonstrations of particular printmaking techniques. One could also cite the example of the UK-based *Printmaking Today*. It mixes art criticism (of print art) with 'technical' information. Yet, *Printmaking Today* stops short of engaging with what one might call the more challenging critical discourses of the last thirty or forty years. This is notwithstanding the fact that elements of this critical discourse, such as race, gender and ethical issues, inform the art criticism that this magazine and other specialist print publications, such as *Print Quarterly* and *Art on Paper* publish. In the case of *Printmaking Today*, one could detect a sign that the 'revision of printmaking', which Kathryn Reeves called for in her timely contribution to the first IMPACT conference in 1999, has not been fully embraced by one of the few influential publications available to the printmaking community (Reeves, 1999).

At one level the attitude I have just described may reflect the gap between the academy and the wider field of practice as well as that between different generations of printmakers. At another level such a stance echoes, ironically so, the technical determinism of the 20th century which has only recently started to be queried. But could it also be a compensation for printmakers' feeling of occupying a marginal status? Further, might this (over)concern with technique/technology/craft result from a lack of theory, a lack of self reflexivity that has occurred or is occurring elsewhere in Fine Art? As psychoanalysis has shown, any form of fetishism covers a sense of lack and a fear.

2.3 Craft/Technique/Technology

But why can the seemingly more reflexive turn and greater openness to more theory be seen as problematic? An examination of Walter Benjamin's (1936; 1992) texts, *The Storyteller* in conjunction with his much-quoted essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproduction*, make a valuable contribution to this question which, in turn, has a bearing on the relationship between practice and theory. The keyword here is 'craft'. Benjamin refers to the fact that pre-industrial practitioners of crafts travelled widely to learn and practice their craft. (Incidentally, the German word for experience 'Erfahrung' contains the word 'fahren', that is, 'to travel'.) Through travelling, craftspeople gained experience which they transmitted through practising their craft. Benjamin uses the examples of pottery and weaving to refer to the way in which the craftsmen incorporated into their work stories gained from their travels. The interaction of hand and mind in this model of experience yields a particular kind of knowledge of the world which becomes incorporated into the finished objects. For Benjamin, this pre-industrial model of experience is translated into the alienated experience in the age of mass production (Leslie, 1998; Leslie, 2000). In this he differs from the most common strand of the critique of technology in the 20th century, including Heidegger and Adorno. This critique, familiar to us from contemporary fears about the effect of the new digital media, maintains that technology leads to alienation. Marxists saw alienation not so much as the result of technology itself but as a consequence of its capitalist application through particular modes of production and labour.⁴ While Benjamin adheres to this view, he nevertheless claims that mass produced objects allow an imaginative experience.

This, he implies, is an intimation of the possibilities of a social utopia, a liberated society. Thus the experience typical of pre-industrial craft is carried into the present. For Benjamin, the word 'craft', as interpreted by British scholar Esther Leslie, is no longer simply related to pre-industrial techniques but is to be understood as imaginative power inherent in technically produced objects. Craft as imaginative power regains in this way the meaning entailed in its etymological root (as in 'witchcraft') (Leslie, 1998).

As we are all too aware, technological media today, such as television, movies or the internet, possess 'craft' in the sense of power. But, as outlined earlier, in complementing or sometimes opposing the emphasis on techniques or print technologies the more 'progressive' attitude in printmaking circles maintains that what matters most is the 'concept' of such a work. In this scenario, technology constitutes the tools, the medium, to execute the concepts which embody the ideas of the artist. Technology is here considered transparent and neutral. What we need to ask ourselves is to what extent tools or the technology entail knowledge themselves (Feenberg, 1999, p.161).

The meaning of the noun 'Technik' and the adjective 'technisch' in German, unlike its more reductive English connotations, is important here. In the words of Leslie: 'The German word *Technik* transmits a more open sense than the English word 'technology' concedes.' '.... *Technik* means technique, technics and technology.' 'In signifying simultaneously technology and technique, *Technik* alludes to the material hardware, the means of production *and* technical relations of production. To accent technical relations of production is to acknowledge that there exist social and political relationships between producers and means of production. *Technik* also refers to the accumulated skill and knowledge, the scientific data necessary for the manipulation of machinery.' The latter in English is more commonly referred to as 'technique'. And 'the word *Technik* has aesthetic resonances too' (Leslie, 2000, p.XII). Here it is useful to remind oneself of the meaning of 'techne' as indicated before. Hence Leslie's point on the relationship between art and 'Technik' as expressed by Benjamin. His 'assessment of *Technik* in art is not a formalist argument about renovation of the laws and forms of art, but connects with the place of *Technik* in the social world' (Leslie, 2000, pp.99-100). [Italics in original]

How is Leslie's conceptualisation of Benjamin's thoughts on craft and the role of 'Technik', both old and new, relevant to printmakers? In the first instance, her contribution defines a changed notion of craft which allows us to rethink the concept in a manner that avoids its standard conception as the 'other' of technology. This has implications for the practice of art, too. Even today, the concept of 'craft', of artisanal quality, is still exclusively affiliated to the disciplines of the crafts and applied arts and not to art. Yet, its revision, which encompasses the technical, is not only useful to crafts practitioners but also to artists, including printmakers. In contrast to crafts-practitioners who have been falsely labelled as NOT being associated with technology, the craft of printmakers has suffered from being too closely intermeshed with technology and therefore not sufficiently 'artful'. Leslie's re-interpretation ensures that the craft of printmaking, especially its technical aspect, need not minimise its status as art.

Despite his somewhat deterministic approach to the potential of technology Benjamin alerts us to the fact that 'Technik' and technically produced images are embedded in a wider discourse of social production. Technology is never neutral. Technology and the techniques that are affiliated with it embody modes of experience, of knowledge. It is part of what might be called 'knowledge in/through practice'. It does not just create or make experience or knowledge possible as the conceptualisation of technology as a mere and therefore neutral tool implies. Or as Andrew Feenberg, a philosopher of technology, writes:

'Technical principles become historically active through a culture of technology; applications are not a function of abstract principles alone but incorporate them only as they are embodied in concrete technical disciplines. As social institutions, those disciplines operate under social imperatives which influence their formulation of technical problems and solutions and show up in the applications they design. Because design is technically underdetermined, this 'blending' of the technical and the social is not extrinsic ..., but is rather defining for the nature of technology' (Feenberg, 1999, p.161).

While Feenberg is referring to technology at large, the relevance for the conceptualisation of technology in art can be explained by, for example, the technique of perspective which has dominated Western notions of vision and

realism for so long.⁵ It is not the simple window on the world as often perceived. The system of perspective and the visual technologies which rely on it, such as the camera, incorporate a particular philosophical and scientific world view. Hence perspective creates a model of reality which is only one of a number of methods of representing the world. Similarly, the question is how the technologies of print take their place within technological systems of visualisation. What is required is a careful consideration of the model of experience these technologies embody. This means more than the consideration of the aesthetic possibilities of prints in a formalist sense. Various types of printmaking embrace particular social forms and permit specific modes of social interaction.⁶ Consider, for example, the square or rectangular format that most printmaking technology promotes!⁷ Such a reflection on the technologies of printmaking should, of course, include the distinction between old technologies and new digital processes and their different potentialities. This is not intended to imply the superiority of one mode over the other, nor is it suggested that new media are a simple extension of the 'tools of the trade', as they are too often portrayed.⁸ A critical examination of the technologies of printmaking in this manner takes into account the distinct sensory properties of both old and new technologies, as well as the institutional, critical and wider cultural discourses that underlie and accompany them.

This examination of the issue of technology/technique/craft serves as an antidote to the obsessive focus in printmaking discourses on the proliferation of techniques including digital technology. The cheerful technical determinism of the Audi car advert's 'Vorsprung durch Technik' or 'advance through technology' is questionable and should equally be so in printmaking. Yet as shown, replacing it with a theory-led approach which treats technology and the related terms as neutral tools is not the answer. In summary, neither the familiar concentration on technology nor the concept-led approach do justice to contemporary practice, if this implies treating techniques/technology as a transparent tool. The discourse of printmaking benefits from seeing the 'bite' of theory and the 'site' of practice as complementary rather than in terms of a binary difference.

The next chapter takes up the challenge expressed here by placing the technology of printmaking within a broader social context and, moreover, demonstrates how

theory and practice are played out via a specific (print) aesthetic in the environment of an exhibition site through a reflection of my first exhibition, as documented in Part II.⁹

Endnotes

¹ See, for example, the report on *Sightlines: Printmaking and Image Culture* (1998) at the University of Alberta's 1997 International Print Symposium.

² Ingg, Stephen, Thorburn, Dominic, 'Preface', Working Proof: The impact of prints in a social, *political and cultural context*, 3rd IMPACT Printmaking Conference, Michaelis School of Fine Art, Capetown and Rhodes University School of Fine Art, Capetown, South Africa, 2003. (Unpublished Conference Documentation)

³ Conversely, in my experience of British art colleges, those departments responsible for the teaching of historical and critical studies or visual culture also frequently conceive practice as 'difference', as the 'other' to theory.

⁴ A general discussion of the conceptualisation of technology can be found in Feenberg (2001), Preface and Chapter I.

⁵ A challenging and stimulating view on established notions of perspective is proposed by Damisch (1994).

⁶ An excellent example of this kind of approach is Reeves (2000).

⁷ A more comprehensive discussion of the 'physicality of the print process' as paradigmatic of the ordering of knowledge is given by Walker (2000).

⁸ In an otherwise useful and differentiated argument, Naren Barfield makes the unnecessarily divisive claim that digital means allow much more readily a 'conceptual' as opposed to a mere 'process led' or technology-led approach of traditional print media (Barfield, 2001, pp.5-6).

Even artists themselves often speak in this vein about new media. An example was the presentation by an artist at the *Digital Surface* International Conference, Tate Britain, London, 27-28 June 2003. This was unfortunate as the conference itself went beyond this all too typical approach.

⁹ The ideas expressed in this chapter were presented at the 2003 IMPACT International Printmaking Conference (Capetown, South Africa) as a contribution to the panel 'Foul Biting? Theoretical Diversions in Printmaking'. The chapter was published in the American print journal *Contemporary Impressions*, Vol 12, #2, Fall 2004, pp.21-25. This bi-annual, peer-reviewed journal is issued by the American Print Alliance, a consortium of non-profit making printmaking workshops and institutions which publishes a mixture of criticism and topical essays.

3. Post-production or how pictures come to life or play dead¹ (abbreviated as 'Post-production I')

3.1 Preface

This chapter constitutes a consideration of the first exhibition, *Trial Run* at the Zement Galerie in Frankfurt in 2003, especially its conception as a print installation. Moreover, the chapter seeks to ground this reflection epistemologically. The term 'post-production' is coined to denote a particular quality of arts-based research, namely the reflection after the event, or its 'a posteriori' quality (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.7). Hermeneutical aesthetics is drawn upon to position this endeavour, as it enables us 'to see more of what has yet to be seen' (Nicholas Davey, 2005). The concept of performativity is deployed to trace the cultural signification of the medium of printmaking in which the work has been made; the exhibition venue which represented a mixture between a workshop/studio and the 'white cube'; the particular works in the exhibition; the role of installation and the place of the viewer. Special attention is given to the hallucinatory quality of the work and the role of repetition with regard to the performative constitution of the viewing subject. It is argued that the insights gained through such documentary post-production become the foundation for further practice, both within the context of the present research project but also for other artists. This is equally true, whether post-production relates to the practice of theory or artistic practice, but ideally both.

3.2 Post-production or the installing of an exhibition

The term 'post-production' acts as a catalyst for the reflection of a particular aspect of my artistic practice, namely, the mounting of an exhibition of prints in the format of an installation. The exhibition took place in April 2003 in an artist-run gallery space, a so-called *Produzenten-Galerie* (literally 'producers' gallery') in Frankfurt. The term 'post-production' has recently gained popularity through the influential French critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud. In his book of the same title, the term serves to designate a particular, and for him, characteristic trend in contemporary art, which he sees represented by the work of Rikrit Tiravanija or Vanessa Beecroft,

amongst others. This art approximates to the service industry whereby artists 'don't create, but reorganize' existing material or types of communication (Simpson, 2001; Bourriaud, 2001). As will be shown later, I have defined the concept of post-production in a different sense from Bourriaud.

Since minimalism, the modernist gallery space has been problematized in and through artistic practice as well as in the theoretical and critical literature. Much of this theorization has filtered through into artistic working practices and now functions at an almost intuitive level. Post-production is a *post facto* reflection on and documentation of this hitherto largely pragmatic part of my practice. The theoretical thrust of post-production becomes part of an ongoing practice and will feed into future work. The interrelationship between theory and practice as once described by Deleuze in conversation with Foucault seems apt here: 'a system of relays within a larger sphere, within a multiplicity of parts that are both theoretical and practical' (Foucault, 1977, p.206). Deleuze's more complex suggestion notwithstanding, the fact is that the concepts of 'theory' and 'practice' are frequently a short cut for theoretical practice and artistic practice, respectively. This is how I will, albeit reluctantly, deploy these words. In an article British philosopher Nicholas Davey has taken up the challenge of the two, often opposing, camps. Not suppressing the conflict, he has argued for a 'fruitful collision' between theory and practice. Although he refers less to the process of artistic production than that of aesthetic experience, his theoretical combination of hermeneutics and aesthetics, or 'hermeneutical aesthetics', is relevant to grounding my concept of post-production. Drawing on Heidegger, Davey asserts that

'Hermeneutics and aesthetics are similarly structured by an unstable synthesis of idea and sense, which is distinctly 'eventual' in character. On the one hand, there is a hermeneutic (interpretive) element in aesthetic experience that brings meaning and content to what is seen. On the other hand, there is also an aesthetic element in hermeneutic experience which gives 'weight' to interpretation, which lends it sensuously to concrete instances (applications) of its thematic concerns' (Davey, 2005, pp.135-49).

The 'eventual' character here referred to by Davey, ties in with Deleuze's 'relay' which similarly suggests a motion in time. Of importance to me is 'the relation of aesthetic experience to language'. As Davey goes on to say, 'Insofar as individual

aesthetic experience is linguistically mediated, aesthetics (can) be conceived ... as an integral part of a shared historical discourse concerning the realization of meaning.' Hermeneutical aesthetics is therefore

'indicative of an attempt to bring into language that which is held within an image, not to the end of surpassing the visual but with the aim of enabling us to see more of what has yet to be seen' (Davey, 2005, pp.135-49).

If one considers the encounter of the artist with his/her production as a proto-aesthetic experience, then post-production can be seen as concerning itself with 'more of what has yet to be seen'. Further, the 'post' in post-production is to be understood in the sense of Deleuze's 'relay' and the 'eventual' character of the aesthetic experience as mentioned by Davey. It implies a temporary 'switching' motion, not a once-and-for-all fixed 'aftermath'.

Judith Butler's concept of 'performativity' can also be drawn upon to inquire into the space and place of the particular aspect of practice under consideration here. Performativity has in recent years emerged 'at the centre of cultural experience', as the British philosopher Peter Osborne has put it (Osborne, 1996, in Osborne ed. p.112). The 'eventual' character of the aesthetic experience, according to Davey, may be linked to performativity. Performativity is differentiated by Butler from 'performance' although both have been sometimes used synonymously – even by Butler herself. Performativity, unlike performance, does not presume an anterior subject but rather stresses its constitution in and through what Butler herself has described as 'a certain kind of repetition and recitation' or 'citationality' of cultural practices (Osborne, 1996, in Osborne ed. p.112; Butler, 1990; Butler, 1992). Butler, while applying citationality to a politics of gender subversion, has pointed out a major problem. Citationality or performativity in terms of cultural practice in and of itself is not subversive, as it 'conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition' (Butler, 1992, p.12). Therefore, there is the necessity to reflect on the specific codes and conventions that a particular practice enacts performatively. In my own example, this implies both the 'siting' and 'citing' of printmaking within the context of visual culture and the way in which my prints occupy the gallery space.

Visual culture, which encompasses art, the media and aspects of consumer culture such as advertising, is the point of reference for much of artistic print practice today. Concurrently, printmaking, as a technical art form characterized by reproducibility, is closely affiliated with visual culture, especially in its manifestation as 'printed matter', in form of the print media or packaging, for example. Printmaking as one of the oldest technologies of mediatization continues to play a cultural role, despite the fact that newer modes of mediatization and visualization, such as film and television and now digital technologies, complement and even supplant it. Artists in the last forty or more years have utilized print processes to comment on the explosive mediatization of the visual after the Second World War, coupled with the spectacle of commodity production, as theorized, for example, by Guy Debord (1967; 1970). This trend is well exemplified by the work of Robert Rauschenberg and Andy Warhol in the late 1950s and early 1960s. While not wishing to suggest an essentialist notion of a medium, the role, in art, of print practices is vital. It could be argued that reproducibility or 'repeatability'/repetition as one major feature of print makes it a 'citational' practice *per se*.

Technology is, with repeatability, the other category that is relevant to a discussion on print. As was seen in the previous chapter, the word *Technik* in German encompasses both the English words 'technique' and 'technology'. This notion of *Technik* can be applied to print practice. Following on from Marcel Mauss, the art historian Didi-Huberman has spoken of technique in terms of 'a tension between its material and its symbolic efficacy' (Didi-Huberman, 1999, p.16). The tension between technique as a mode of artistic skill and technique as 'technology' forms the crucial matrix in print practice. Their respective cultural significations could be said to be played out in artistic print through a tension between touch and surface.² 'Touch' here refers to traditional modes of artistic expression as in the artist's mark or signature style, traditionally the 'facture' in painting. As indicated in Chapter III.2, p.62, in printmaking, an almost fetishistic concern with the sensuous effect of 'techniques' parallels the signifying power of the facture (Buchloh, 1984, pp.82-119). 'Surface' applies to the opposite of individual expression. It refers to the signifiers of technological mass modes of production, or reproducibility. Individual artistic expression and its signifiers, such as the facture, have traditionally connoted

authenticity, originality and the real. Emphasis on the surface implies the superficial, the artificial and the spectacle.³

My own work draws on the cultural connotations of repetition as a short cut to reproducibility in such a way that it conflicts with the 'facture', the expressive hand-drawn mark. The same set of 'expressive' marks is repeated through multiple variations of size, order, placement and colour. (Figures 1 and 2) In this way, varying code-like formations are generated which in their turn are reproduced in numerous (and potentially infinite) configurations. (Figure 3; see also Figures 53-55.) In this way, my work aims to enact the tensions inherent in print as an artistic and cultural practice with their powerful cultural connotations between surface and touch through the citational modus of the seemingly uniquely expressive and authentic in form of the multiple repetitions of autographic marks. The hallucinatory and kinaesthetic effect achieved through this repetition seeks to mirror the function of spectacular commodity fetishism at the same time as calling into play the haptic qualities traditionally associated with the facture, the painted or drawn mark, of traditional aesthetics.

I now turn to a discussion of the installation of my exhibition. How do the discursive and the factual/material intersect at the level of the work, the space and the viewer? What cultural modes of signification are cited or performatively enacted?

My chosen exhibition space was the Galerie Zement in Frankfurt. A former industrial print workshop, this space is now used as a studio by a painter and an animator who also both organize and curate the exhibitions. The space is on these occasions turned into a gallery. Unlike in their earlier phase in the 1970s, when artist-run spaces constituted a crucial element in the institutional critique and commodification of art, they now have to function in a more competitive, enterprise-oriented environment for artists. Today – despite their differences – such spaces continue to provide a semi-institutional framework, especially for younger artists, to establish a 'position', to gain the necessary experience and to win potential critical notice for further 'career opportunities'. As an institutional and architectural formation, some such spaces exist as a hybrid between the studio/workshop and the conventional modernist gallery, or 'white cube', a term which will be discussed

in more detail later. In light of the ambiguous and temporary character of such artist-run spaces, the notion of performativity seems especially apt.

As already indicated, every work of art can be considered performative – what Davey, in reference to Heidegger, calls its 'eventual' character. But performativity understood in a more narrow sense is an inbuilt feature of my work. Prints function potentially as conventional 'pictures', hung in frames on the wall. Mine are mainly conceived as multiples or as a series specifically designed to derive their appearance from the chosen site. Since minimalism, installation refers to 'a four-fold relational dynamic between objects, their surrounding space, its architectural frame, and the body of the viewer, in which architectural form [is] a given parameter of the exercise (even when violated)'.⁴

The 'site specificity' of installation to which Peter Osborne refers in the quote above is applicable to the gallery/workshop of the Galerie Zement with its particular architectural features and discursivity. This is a narrower reading of the term as is often currently the case. Instead of site specificity as pertaining to a specific physical location, it now more usually implies work that occupies a broadly cultural space, such as a shopping mall or other public location (Kwon, 1997, pp.85-110).

In the case of the Galerie Zement, site-specificity entailed the successful negotiation between the workshop aspects and the gallery elements to 'stage' a semblance of the codings of the white cube. Brian O'Doherty's term for the modernist gallery space, has, especially since the publication of his essays on 'The Ideology of the Gallery Space' in 1986, stood as a critical shorthand to denote the reactionary exclusivity of art in its pristine confines (O'Doherty, 2000). While it promises transcendence from the outside world, the white cube as gallery space ultimately disguises its commercial nature. As indicated previously, other forms of 'accreditation' have supplemented and, in some respects, replaced the gallery space, but the white cube – notwithstanding its many variations – remains. O'Doherty's erstwhile critique has been subsequently revised. Daniel Birnbaum, director of the Städtelschule and Portikus Gallery in Frankfurt, stated in 2001 that the white cube 'can be seen as a structure of inclusion' rather than exclusion (Birnbaum, 2001, pp.187-93). This seems wholly apposite, as the assumption of the

exclusivity of the gallery space and the work therein appears to be based on a falsely modernist assumption that art can ever be 'exclusive' of cultural context. Unlike most galleries, the physical characteristics of the workshop at Zement collided with the subtlety of the prints themselves. The work, therefore, could be said to demand the features and rhetoric of the white cube. All the elements, such as heavy electronic surface wiring, rough and dirty stonework, and two rows of striking heating pipes, conspired to create a form of visual noise. Instead of treating this visual noise merely as a disturbance, a performative hitch, the major interruptions were eliminated. Gaps in the stonework were filled in and/or painted over and so on. The prints were then displayed in such a way as to articulate certain 'noise' factors. For example, the horizontal line of surface wiring on the upper part of a wall, ending two-thirds along the wall, was used as the reference point for the format of the work *White on White*. (Figure 4)

This series of single sheets consisted of a particular set of multiple repetitions of the 'original' marks that form the basis of all my work. The particular pattern of *White on White* was, as the title suggests, printed in subtle white and off-white tones, arranged in a vertical, continuous row. The sheets were hung flush with the wall, following its line to floor level and then extended in a rectangular angle out onto the floor into the space. The uppermost horizontal edge of the sheets paralleled the wiring above it. Its right-hand top corner was aligned with the wiring where the cable disappeared into the wall. The disturbance of the wiring was integrated, yet it also conflicted with the work. Similarly, two rows of strikingly shaped grey heating pipes – in the form of discs around a central pipe – both accentuated and disturbed the display of *Grey on Grey*. This large wall piece (with a surface area of 261 cm in width and 304 cm in length) consisted of twelve repeat sheets and was printed with a similar yet different pattern from *White on White*. Aligned at its upper boundary with a pipe running below the ceiling, the sheets adhered to the wall and then loosely curved around the back of the pipes to emerge underneath them into the floor space. (Figure 5)

Noise as excess of information – in the more general sense – is commented upon by Mark C. Taylor (2000) in his book *The Moment of Complexity, Emerging Network Culture*:

'Noise, it is instructive to note, derives from the Latin word 'nausea', which originally meant seasickness. When information becomes the noise that engenders nausea, differences and oppositions that once seemed to fix the world and make it secure become unstable. Lines of separation become permeable membranes where transgression is not only possible but unavoidable.... As these polarities (between order – disorder, organization – disorganization, form – chaos) slip and slide, they eventually reverse themselves to disclose the spectre of dynamics that appear to be fluid' (Taylor, 2000, pp.100-101).

In the exhibition space at the Galerie Zement the two architectural and spatial codings – or polarities – 'slip and slide'. The workspace with its affiliated connotations of honesty, reality and workmanship conflicted with the supposedly neutral white cube with its affinity with the spectacle. One could argue that the citational articulation of these codings through the work only re-enacts or performs 'capitalism's destabilizing, destructive dynamic of dispersal and dissolution' (Potts, 2001, p.16). Yet, I would counter this assessment with the argument that it is precisely the task of art to make such operations visible. The codings of the white cube which differentiate the gallery space from ordinary architecture then become the key to mark this citation as a citation. Alex Potts in his study on the historical continuities between sculpture and installation has said:

'[...] if installation is architecture, it is another kind of architecture from the one we experience on a day-to-day basis Installation isolates and condenses particular architectonic shapings of space and then artificially stages these so one attends to them in a qualitatively different way from the architectural interiors one normally inhabits ...' (Potts, 2001, p.17).⁵

How does the citational quality, the placing and character of the work, affect the viewer? The citational character of the work holds true to the root of its Latin origin 'to cite' which comes from *citare*, 'to set in motion', 'to call' or 'to summon'. Hence citation and interpellation, the summoning of the subject, are closely connected.⁶ Althusser's term of 'interpellation' drew attention to the ideological nature of subject formation and the emergence of identity through language and discourse.

'I shall [then] suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it "recruits" subjects among the individuals ... or "transforms" the individuals into subjects ... by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the

most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: "Hey, you there!"
(Althusser, 1969, in Du Gay, ed. 2000, pp.31-38)

The citational quality of interpellation is obvious in this much-quoted passage of Althusser's definition of his concept.

What particular quality did this 'hailing' assume in my installation? The exhibition at Zement had aspects that are already existent in classical sculpture as well as in installation as suggested by Potts. This is to do with the nature of the encounter staged between the viewer and the work and the 'resulting interplay ... between focused and dispersed apprehension' (Potts, 2001, p.7). Conventionally hung prints, or pictures in frames, tend to invite 'focused apprehension'. The emphasis is on the viewer's gaze, which is attracted by and to the framed object with the surrounding space functioning as a neutral envelope.⁷ Installation interpellates the viewer in a different way. The viewer could be said to be 'called' from all sides and he or she is bodily positioned in the space as opposed to the emphasis on sight in a conventional display. The boundaries of what constitutes the work and the space overlap and may even collide. Therefore, Potts can speak of an 'interplay ... between focused and dispersed apprehension'.

In addition to this general feature of installation, the hailing or constitution of the viewer was played out in the exhibition at the Zement Gallery in a specific way. This is because my pieces had a hallucinatory quality. In the two large wall pieces, *White on White* and *Grey on Grey*, this quality was achieved by printing in duotone colours. The result was that background and pattern are not visible in one glance. Depending on the viewer's position, a different pattern and a differently coloured background come into focus. (Figures 6 and 7)

In a more sculptural hanging piece, *Virtual 9*, the 'interplay ... between focused and dispersed apprehension' operated in another way. The piece consists of nine Perspex panels (each measuring 71 cm × 71 cm), which were hung in a row. The position of the screen-printed pattern that was repeated on each of the panels shifts from one panel to the next. The strength and hue of the semi-transparent colour

also vary slightly. The effect of the hung piece was that the swirl of linear marks that appeared to the viewer seemed, at first, to consist of a chaotic mass. (Figure 8) Only from a certain position, when the viewer positioned him- or herself at a particular distance from the work, did a relatively stable image, extending deep into space, gradually appear. (Figure 9) (It should be noted that this effect is not apparent in a photographic still.) Apprehension in these works is problematized; its performative nature becomes obvious due to the difficulties the viewer experiences. The disorienting, if pleasurable, effect of the work also alludes to the relative loss of control the viewer or subject experiences through its constitution within cultural practices.

Fundamental to achieving a hallucinatory effect is the use of serial repetition. Briony Fer in an essay on female artists of the 1960s (Hesse, Bourgeois and Kusama), notes the connection of serial repetition, as in Kusama's work, to the hallucinatory. She also comments on how such art 'places the subject or spectator, how it might incur the coming-into-being of the subject – in particular the feminine subject' (Fer, 1999, pp.25-36). Its effect is described by her as both an intensification of 'bodily affect' at the same time as a 'blinking or effacing of the subject' (Fer, 1999, p.35). This 'blinking' or 'effacement of the subject' is connected in Fer's psychoanalytically informed interpretation to a particular kind of anthropomorphism. Fer's comments can be applied to an explanation of the effect of the prints in the exhibition. The particular anthropomorphism or 'mimetic compulsion' invoked by her, draws on Surrealist writer Roger Caillois's (1935) 'model of mimicry'. Mimicry explains the

'way an insect which changes colour through camouflage does so in order to become invisible; as it disappears, it loses irreparably its distinctness. Rather than a sign for its surroundings, camouflage acts as a negative signifier, a sign of non-being, which effaces rather than produces connotational value.

This has nothing to do with 'the art object carrying associations to or connoting things in the world' but refers to "the spatial lure of objects" and "the coming-into-being of the subject in the scopic field" (Fer, 1999, p.35).

The two large wall pieces could be said to demonstrate an anthropomorphism of this kind. Ostensibly a reference to decorative schemes such as wallpaper and the

implied idea of art as wallpaper, the shape and colour schemes in both works attempt a sort of camouflage: printed on flat poster paper rather than quality artist's paper, the sheets form a smooth surface with the wall.⁸ The colour scheme extends the play on the work as being identical with the wall, being an addition or even an adornment, or alternatively, an interference, a disturbance. The most basic interference with a white wall is a mark. The colour grey could be considered as the most appropriate manifestation of such a mark. This is due to its intermediate status between black as the colour of inscription and its opposite white, as a non-colour, as the condition of the support, or in this case, the wall. The colour scheme in both *White on White* and *Grey on Grey* makes reference to this basic condition of mark making. Physical make-up and the siting of the works perform both an appearance and a non- or dis-appearance; the works oscillate between wall decoration, interference/noise and camouflage. More specifically, the intricate repetitive pattern of these pieces with its 'now-you-see-it, now-you-don't' quality, as already described, constitutes the viewer in a way which Fer has noted as being characteristic of hallucinations, as 'that swing between an intensification of vision ... to a kind of blanking' or 'effacing of the subject' (Fer, 1999, p.35).

It is this swing to which the second part of the title of this article: 'how pictures come alive or play dead' alludes. As Alex Potts has said of installation art and its relationship to the viewer:

'Installation has become part of the general fabric of things in contemporary culture, and in a way, art feeds on this situation ... lulling us into mesmerized fascination with the spectacle ... at the same time stopping us short, inducing us to reflect on the enticements and disenchantments involved ... it engulfs us at the same time that it can make us aware of the framings and closures that are also part of the substance of contemporary, consumerist spectacles' (Potts, 2001, p.19).

In this way, such work – instead of being wholly entrenched in the spectacle, or totally resisting it – can be shown to have relevance within a broader cultural context.

I have shown how the application of theoretical insights – the 'post-production' of the title – as a form of documentation can assist an artist in elucidating a process that was initially approached in a mostly pragmatic fashion. Nicholas Davey's idea

of a hermeneutical aesthetics was drawn upon to justify the viability of this endeavour. The concept of performativity has been deployed to trace the cultural significations of the medium, the exhibition venue, the particular works in the exhibition and the place of the viewer. Special consideration was given to the hallucinatory quality of the work and the role of repetition with regard to the performative constitution of the viewing subject. In this way, the work is deemed to function as participating in as well as resisting the wider cultural trend of spectacular commodity production and consumption. It is suggested that the insights gained through such theoretically inflected documentation or post-production become foundational for further practice, both for other artists and myself. This is equally true, whether post-production relates to the practice of theory or artistic practice, ideally both.

Some of the issues that are identified in this chapter, as they relate to my choice of printmaking for my aesthetic project, are more broadly expounded in the next two chapters. These topics are the discursivity of print, i.e. the question as to how prints 'mean' and the performative construction of the viewer through prints (III.4) as well as the print's surface (III.5). The present chapter also forms the subtext and reference point for the report on the second exhibition (V.1). Its premise of an a posteriori reflection, through the metaphor and technology of 'post-production' that unfolds meaning is further developed in V.2.⁹

Endnotes

¹ The phrase 'How pictures come to life or play dead' is borrowed from Lane Relyea (1998) in an essay in *Frieze* magazine on the legacy of Michael Fried's art critical writing and seemed to fit the modernist re-writing that my aesthetic project engages in.

² The particular 'turn' this tension has taken in postmodern practice, and more recently, with the arrival and incorporation of digital means remains unexplored here. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, footnote 8, p. 67, *The Digital Surface* Conference at Tate Britain, in Summer 2003 aimed to illuminate some aspects of this tension with regard to printmaking. This subject is taken up in Chapter III.5 (pp. 103-120).

³ The tendency towards surface or 'superficiality' in postmodern culture has been noted by a number of theorists, most notably Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard (Jameson, 1991); Baudrillard (1976; 1988).

⁴ See Osborne (2001) p.149. It is not possible to explore here the historical and conceptual genesis and theoretical problematics of the term, an examination of which has recently been undertaken by various writers. Osborne's article offers a useful critical overview of recent publications.

⁵ As already indicated, this ties in with Butler's suggestion that discourses tend to hide 'their citationality and genealogy, presenting themselves as timeless and singular'. (See also Salih, 2002, p. 95).

⁶ Salih (2002) notes this in her introduction to Judith Butler's work (p.90).

⁷ For a more complex analysis of this viewing situation, see Derrida (1993).

⁸ It was only after my Frankfurt exhibition that I came across an article which included a description of changeable wallpaper in the Prada shop in New York designed by Rem Koolhaas: 'This immense space ... is the site for an installation in the artistic sense of the term: structures and display units are 'hung' like artworks, while the immense wallpaper pasted right along one wall (the width of the block) can also be changed like an artwork' (Béret, 2002, p. 78).

⁹ The current chapter was presented at the Estudios Visuales Conference in Madrid, 2004, on a panel dedicated to visual culture and artistic practice. It has been subsequently published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, Vol 6, Issue 3, December 2007, pp.229-244.

4. The Discursivity of Print: Damien Hirst's *The Last Supper Series* (1999)

4.1 Preface

This chapter extends the broader contextualization of my own practice that was begun in III.2. It was prompted by a gap in critical writing on contemporary artists' prints, namely the frequent omission of a consideration of the printed character of the work. Moreover, the ubiquity of 'printed matter' in art and the broader cultural context has not been matched by a critical discourse on prints and printmaking comparable to that within and about photography since the 1970s. The chapter uses Damien Hirst's *The Last Supper Series* (1999) as a case study to suggest how the critical categories of citationality and performativity which were introduced in the previous chapter contribute to an elucidation of the printed nature of this work. These terms also further help to explain the relationship of print with the wider context of visual culture and the implication of the viewing subject. Particular attention has been paid to the notion of 'surface' in its binary opposition to 'depth' in relation to print. While Hirst's series does not bear an obvious affinity with my own aesthetic project, my interest in it was prompted by its reproduction or citation of pre-existing visual (commercial) forms.

4.2 Hirst's 1999 Print Series

The suite of thirteen prints, *The Last Supper* (1999), by the best known British artist of the 1990s, Damien Hirst, was instigated and published by British print publisher Charles Booth Clibborn and his Paragon Press.¹ This context for Hirst's engagement with print determines its scope: the series falls within the well-established conventional format of an artistic print portfolio, albeit distinguished by an unusually large size for such a project (152.5 by 101.5cm).² As indicated above, my concentration on Hirst's series was prompted by the fact that critical evaluations of it have tended to pay little or no attention to the medium of print. Rather than bemoaning this not untypical lacuna in the critical writing on prints, I aim to begin to address this discursive gap.

Hirst is one of many contemporary artists who use the medium of print, often in collaboration with a 'master printer', alongside other artistic means, be they multi-media installations, more traditional sculpture, painting or even video. Most of the artists who are represented with Hirst in Booth-Clibborn's various print projects fall into this category: Marc Quinn, Peter Doig, Jake and Dinos Chapman, Sam Taylor-Wood to name but a few. Such prints, not surprisingly, tend to be examined alongside the artists' other works, mainly in terms of their iconography, and this is the case for the discussion of Hirst in the publication which documents Booth-Clibborn's print projects.³ Other critical reviews of the *Last Supper* series follow the same iconographical approach.⁴ Attention is drawn to Hirst's staple concerns with death and religion, here filtered through consumption. Hirst's other works involving pharmaceutical material are alluded to, as is his neo-conceptual Duchampian approach. Jeremy Lewison in his contribution to the Booth-Clibborn publication, considers the work as a recasting of modernist ideals where 'the act of representation becomes an act of repackaging' (Lewison, 2001, p.16).

In his general introduction to that publication, editor Patrick Elliott asserts that prints – for the artist unfamiliar with the medium – allow for a new expression and 'form an integral part' of the artist's 'main body of work' executed in other media (Elliott, 2001, n. p.; Saunders and Miles, 2006, p.8). Lewison also stresses that print is 'a vehicle for translation' and further mentions appropriation as a strategy afforded by the medium (Lewison, 2001, p.17 and 20).

It is well known that within the critical debates since the 1960s, especially the critique of authorship and the division between high and popular culture, this propensity (as well as its ease of multiplication) has given artistic printmaking an increased status and critical purchase. In Hirst's case, which can be taken as typical for a broad spectrum of contemporary art practice, such appropriation is affiliated with his Duchampian penchant for the ready-made. Indeed, Lewison calls *The Last Supper* series an 'assisted readymade' (Lewison, 2001, p.16).

The broader cultural context for artistic print practices lies in the explosion of 'printed matter' all around us; not least print media such as advertising, publicity

material and so on. While it could be argued that this increase can be observed from the invention of the printing press onwards, developments in modernity and the more recent glut of printed material signal a qualitative difference. Print media partly constitute the often noted, if problematic, concept of the 'visual turn' in culture and the concomitant rise of visual culture studies since the 1980s.⁵ The ensuing familiarity with print media, as was true earlier of photography, has increased confusion as to the status of the 'art print'.⁶ This situation may be exacerbated by the fact that, in tandem with broader artistic strategies since the 1960s and the use of digital media, artistic print practice now encompasses a broad variety of activities and approaches. The 2006 survey of print practices by Gillian Saunders and Rosie Miles, *Prints Now*, is structured according to such different approaches and lists amongst others print in 3-D; found and appropriated print; site-specific print; print as public art; multiples; new media (Saunders and Miles, 2006, n.p.). As already stated, this broadening of the modes of printmaking and the increased appearance of prints within contemporary art practice has as yet not been matched, unlike with photography, by a consideration of prints in the general critical art discourse, especially outside the printmaking community itself.⁷

The examination of Hirst's prints here will serve to 'infiltrate' the general discourse on contemporary art and visual culture with a reflection on the 'artistic print'. The latter is not understood in terms of modernist medium specificity but in terms of its discursive and performative quality in the wider cultural field. In addition, my investigation aims to contribute to a broadening of the theoretical debate within the academic printmaking community by applying theoretical tools which have gained currency in writing on art and culture. Such a task seems especially appropriate within the British context because printmaking practice and research constitute a vital contribution to British visual culture.⁸ This chapter employs the critical term 'discursivity' and extends the affiliated categories of citationality and performativity which were introduced in the previous chapter. It pays particular attention to the flatness of the print in order to complicate and thus open out the notions of 'appropriation' and 'translation' which have been used to explain the interrelationship of print with the wider culture and within a single artist's oeuvre.

'Discourse and the law operate by concealing their citationality and genealogy, presenting themselves as timeless and singular, while performativity similarly "conceals or dissimulates the conventions of which it is a repetition" (BMT: 12)' (Salih, 2002, p.95).⁹

Judith Butler's conception of citationality and performativity, introduced in the last chapter, may be stating the obvious: Cultural discourses such as the law, but also art, function through the repetition or citation of cultural codes and conventions. These should not just be understood in purely linguistic terms, but in terms of actual practice/s. The quote also points out that the enactment of these codes and conventions or their performativity tends to be obscured. In other words, when we performatively engage with them, whenever we participate in cultural activities such as the making or viewing of art, we do not necessarily reflect on their cultural codedness.

Postmodern art has done much to make such codes and conventions visible. For example, Barbara Kruger's work in the 1980s exposed the linguistic and visual codes that define and delimit gender. Angus Fairhurst's print *When I woke up in the morning the feeling was still there* from 1992 could be read as an exposé of the overlapping discourses of painting, photography and the artist's performativity through the medium of print. (Fig. 10)

These two examples might be described in terms of postmodern quotation or appropriation (Nelson, 1996, in Nelson and Shiff, pp.116-128). Why then the introduction of yet more theoretical terms? The difference between these terms and citationality lies in the performative aspect of the latter. As already explained in Chapter III.3, p.69, citationality and performativity do not assume a pre-existing subject that employs quotation and appropriation. Rather the stress is on their constitutive character. It is through the performativity or citation of cultural codes that the subject is constituted or comes into being. As Judith Butler has said of gender: We are not a certain gender, but we 'do' gender.¹⁰ The flippant tone of this statement belies its complexity. Performativity is not to be confused with a simple 'performing' or performance by choice, but places the emphasis on the repetition or re-citation of cultural codes and practices in the constitution of the subject. This may include the making or viewing of images. Althusser's concept of interpellation, as

detailed in Chapter 3, pp. 75-76, has been used to account for the specific quality or 'hailing' of the viewer through images (Althusser, 1971, quoted in Du Gay et al. eds. 2001, pp.31–38).

But how might citationality be linked to print? The multiple productions of the print media in form of newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, legal and scientific publications could be said to constitute a vital sign of citationality in Western culture. Historically, it is through printed media that the political, scientific, social and cultural discourses of mass society and mass culture were established and maintained. Despite a much diversified media landscape today it could be argued that a citational quality still adheres to printed matter with its potential for reproduction or 'recitation'.

A hallmark of print media, in tandem with their rectangular format and paper quality, is their flat surface.¹¹ While print shares flatness with painting, photography, film, television and computer screens, it possesses its own flatness which can be differentiated from them and – in the context of artistic print-making – be regarded as a signifier of its citational character. Unlike film, television and the computer screen, the flat surface of the artistic print shares with photography a tangible, tactile quality.¹² But compared to photography, printmaking's flatness, which is obviously made more complex by the different printmaking techniques, including digital processes, can be considered as different, more tactile.

Judith Butler's reminder of the concealment of the citationality in/of culture is also relevant (Butler, 1992, p.12). Here, some of the stumbling blocks to the perception of printmaking as an artistic discipline during the 20th century come into clearer focus. Unlike the flatness of the modernist picture plane, the flatness of the art print acts as a signifier for its mechanical nature, its re-productibility, in other words, its potential for repetition, re-citation. This was anathema in the context of modern art and one reason for printmaking's marginalisation.¹³

Printmaking's flatness, its 'surficiality', has too often been read as 'superficiality', casting it in binary opposition to the touch of painting; painting's contactful nature and 'depth'.¹⁴ Touch or contact and depth are terms that become conflated. As will

be shown later, these opposites are also characteristic of the concepts of sense or meaning and the sensory, although they shift and change. Meaning/sense and depth become linked. By contrast, the sensory and touch are regarded culturally as secondary to sense and meaning. It is obvious from these brief remarks that the flatness of the print calls into play powerful cultural signifiers which themselves are indicative of broader epistemological frameworks or discourses, which inform artistic print practice, and are reciprocally constituted by it.

How do these terms function or 'perform' in relation to Damien Hirst's suite of prints? This work does not conceal its citationality – in that sense it is like much postmodern work that deconstructs its own cultural codedness. It draws attention to 'the conventions of which it is a repetition', to refer back to Butler again. How does it discursively enact or perform this citationality? More specifically, what is Hirst's series' status as print and how does the typical binary opposition between surface and touch, between superficiality and depth or between the sensory and sense play out in this work? In what way might a consideration of the work, through the terms used above, alter such dichotomies?

As already indicated, the medical/pharmaceutical theme of Hirst's *Last Supper* series has been an ongoing, often explicit trope in his work, frequently literally involving pharmaceutical packaging. For example, the installation *Pharmacy* of 1992 (now in the Tate Modern Collection) fills a whole room from floor to ceiling with glass-fronted cabinets stacked with cardboard boxes containing medicine. His unfinished series of dot paintings are known by the epithet *The Pharmaceutical Paintings*.¹⁵

The source of the *The Last Supper* prints consists of pharmaceutical packaging, the design of which is almost exactly reproduced – albeit hugely enlarged – but with two important alterations: the logos of the respective pharmaceutical companies bear Hirst's own name in various configurations, such as Damien, Hirst, HirstDamien, Damien & Hirst, Hirst Products Limited. (Fig. 11) In addition, the usual designations of the drugs – which sometimes consist simply of their most potent chemical ingredient, or at other times a more popularized version – have been replaced by those of British foods, namely: Chicken; Beans Chips; Cornedbeef; Salad;

Mushroom; Meatballs; Steak and Kidney; Sausages; Liver Bacon Onions; Cornish Pasty; Peas Chips; Omelette; Dumpling; Sandwich. (Fig. 12) Sometimes the food name is combined with elements of the original drug designation, for example, the superscripted ® of the registered trademark and the amount of the active substance e.g. 200mg appear as *Corned Beef*® 200. (Fig. 13)

In other respects, too, the 'look' of these prints maintains the design schemes adopted by the drug companies, such as the type faces, colours (largely muted with some bright exceptions) and other graphic design features, such as the lay-out. This is based on the simple, clear, geometrical lines of pharmaceutical packaging; for example, in *Corned Beef*® 200, a bright red vertical band of colour is set against a magnolia background of equal size above and below.

These prints, then, appropriate or 'cite' the format of specific, well-recognized consumer products.¹⁶ They also make a textual reference to food. Visual and textual elements of the discourses of food and medicine are transposed to or 'cited' in the discourse of art. Citationality has been linked by Butler – in the context of queer politics – to a critical, subversive enterprise, although she concedes 'that citationality is not necessarily subversive' (Salih, 2002, p.96). Hirst's re-citation could be credited with such a subversive quality. Its humour derives to a large degree from an incongruous *mélange*: the semi-scientific 'look' or 'image' of the drug packaging clashes with the dead-pan linguistic signifiers of food – British comfort foods at that. This matter of fact quality is in strong contrast to the cultural and emotional investment that all cultures bring to the subject of food – or medicine, for that matter. In a Western and specifically a British context, immensely popular media products, such as TV programmes by celebrity chefs, newspaper and magazine features and advertising, turn the commodity of food into a hyperreal spectacle. The conflation of the name of a drug with the word for a particular item of food signals to the viewer that drugs have become the everyday fare of us all. Indeed, the emphasis is here on the so-called 'average' man or woman. In the foods alluded to, there is a strong connotation of the everyday and the working class culture of post war Britain, possibly partly on account of Hirst's own petit-bourgeois upbringing in the Midlands in the 1960s. With the demise of the old manufacturing base, especially since the 1970s and throughout the Thatcher years,

such references seem to have acquired, in the popular imagination, a reassuringly 'old-fashioned' quality. This includes the connotation of 'honesty' and 'directness'. More particularly, the YBA phenomenon of the 1990s, with Hirst as unofficial figurehead, is partly known for its frequent references to the British working class. National and personal allusions to the post-war period in Britain are conjured up on the basis of the 'homeliness' of 'peas' and 'chips'; the slightly more elaborate 'meatballs' and the almost fanciful 'French' 'omelette'. The nostalgic appeal of these foods is reinforced by the 'retro' look of the design, a point to which I will return. Julian Stallabrass (1999) has been particularly critical about the nostalgic element of the YBAs' working class references.¹⁷ A general sense of nostalgia had been noted earlier as a characteristic of postmodernity by writers such as François Lyotard and Frederick Jameson. (Lyotard, 1984, p.79ff; Jameson, 1984, pp.53–92). But the unusual and typically blunt combination of Hirst's citation challenges pure nostalgia.

The mixing of references to food and medicine, especially in the form of its chemical make-up, signals the increasingly chemically enhanced, mass manufacture of food stuffs which places them alongside the more obviously 'artificially' produced drugs.¹⁸ This undermines any comfortable association with 'homeliness' or safe nostalgia. The chemical make-up and potentially powerful effects of all foods is a subject that has been widely popularized in various media, not least in the fitness and dieting sector. A further complication is the wide-spread concern about the negative effects of fast- and mass produced foods.¹⁹ The citational quality of Hirst's references thus alludes to the polarities of the naively good and 'natural' versus the automatically evil and artificial, man-made.

Curator Colin Ledwith's comments give another spin to the medicine/food analogy. Hirst's title, *The Last Supper*, is a replay of his much-commented on references, often in the guise of the prankster, to the 'big' themes of life and death as well as religion. Here is the pat re-iteration of his belief that drugs have replaced religious belief, or at least assumed a similar status. In addition to the title, the number of prints, thirteen, makes obvious biblical (and art historical) reference to Christ's 'last supper'. The popular belief in thirteen as an 'unlucky' number might reinforce this sense of doom. At the same time, Hirst's prints marshal the anti-dote and Ledwith

suggests that his use of colour can be read in this way. The artist conflates the effects of art with the meliorating, even life-giving effects of drugs, religion and food. This places him in the position of 'doctor-priest' who 'prescribes mood affecting colour meditation in the guise of controlled substances.' 'If art can heal', Ledwith asks, 'does Hirst also believe that like food, it can nourish and sustain?' (Ledwith, 2001). He answers this question in the positive. As with the Holy Communion instituted at the biblical 'last supper' in which the ingestion of bread and wine metonymically stands for the body and blood of Christ, art is similarly 'internalised and becomes a source of metaphysical nourishment (Ledwith, 2001). Here the serial quality affiliated with the print coincides with the repetitiveness and seriality of religious ritual: Religious ritual is itself a potent form of recitation. The list of all the foods, combined with the bland similarity of the individual prints, resembles that of an incantation or a litany. It is only through a performative enactment on behalf of the viewer that such citational ciphers attain reality.

Hirst's re-citational operation makes the citational character of the specific cultural discourses, namely those of medicine and food, evident. It could also be said to illuminate the citational or intertextual character of art, its parasitic quality, its dependence not only on the wider cultural context but on art itself. As has been shown, this includes the re-citation within an individual artist's work itself, for which Hirst is a prime example.

In a broader artistic sense, one can argue that the prints 'cite' quite specific artistic precedents. An obvious comparison is to Andy Warhol, especially his late *Last Supper* paintings and print series after Leonardo (Cooke, 1994). Hirst himself has linked pharmaceutical packaging to Minimalism.²⁰ As already stated, Hirst's work is customarily discussed in terms of the now ubiquitous Duchampian ready-made which includes prints. Indeed, Hirst's prints can be compared to Duchamp's 'assisted ready-made' *Pharmacie* of 1914 (a bought commercially produced chromolithograph with two paint dots added) both in terms of their 'sentiment' and citational modus operandi (Lewison, 2001, p.16). Their self-referential character can also be said to echo Duchamp's printed reproductions of his own work, albeit Hirst's prints were made without Duchamp's sustained type of personal involvement in the reproductive process.²¹

What conclusion can be drawn from this mixing of artistic references? Hirst's work can be seen as typical of 1990s neo-conceptualism which tried to differentiate itself, not only from any modernist purity or universalism, but also from the unity of purpose that still characterised its 1960s conceptual predecessors. As already indicated, in the context of the present debate, these references can be read as a basic formula of postmodern art; an indication of the self-referential or re-citational character of art itself. Within the context of print, one is also tempted to read such references as a pointer to the fact that the most frequent encounter with art for most viewers, whether they belong to a general or more professional public, occurs through reproduced images as part of the 'printed matter' of everyday culture, in posters, books, magazines and so on.

A further form of re-citation occurs in the replacement of the pharmaceutical logos with Hirst's name.²² His actual signature appears, following customary 20th century editorial print practice, in the white paper margins of the prints, but the usual information as to the size of the edition and sequential number of the individual print is not included. Swapping the historically powerful graphic convention of the artist's hand-written name with the made-for-multiple-reproduction graphic ready-made creates, of course, an advertising logo. It is another instance of Hirst's familiar, self-ironic comment on his own status as a brand, suggesting the conflation not only of the work of art but also the persona of the artist with the commodity. The art's value is hence guaranteed less by the particularity of the work but contained in the brand name of the artist. Artistic identity itself becomes a discursive convention in the material form of the printed sign. In a curious reversal, the hand-written signature in the margin which constitutes the 'normal' guarantor of such market value for the 'fine art' or 'original' print, appears almost as an after-thought. Overwhelmed by the 'brand', the hand written signature, when viewed within the context of the series as a whole, is itself revealed as a mere convention or citation instead of a sign of authenticity and identity. At the same time the signature continues to fulfil its conventional function of validating the market-value of the print.

Hirst's recitation of mass-produced objects as well as the playful branding of the prints with his name, constitutes a, by now, familiar questioning of artistic originality.

He is no doubt aware that his references to death include, as in Barthes' famous dictum, the author/artist himself. Yet, Hirst's oppositional gestures remain ambivalent. As stated, he ultimately follows the convention of supplying the artist's personal signature and therefore maintains the marketable value of the prints. This is not surprising, given the burgeoning market value of the YBAs in general and Hirst in particular. Indeed, much of the criticism levelled at the YBAs and Hirst specifically, by critics such as Stallabrass, lies with their savvy, media-courting entrepreneurship, to the detriment of a more critical stance. Cultural critique here sits comfortably alongside cultural conformism.

As well as these textual citations, the design of the pharmaceutical products which Hirst has appropriated can itself be defined in terms of citation. The preference in pharmaceutical packaging for simple geometrical graphic lay-outs and 'modern', often sans serif type faces, matches the look of modernist design, as popularized from the 1920s onwards. The connotations of these design codes, which relate to rationality, objectivity, universality and social progress as hallmarks of Western modernity, help to construct and maintain modern science's claim to empirical, objective truth. This is even more so with the medical sciences and the global pharmaceutical industry.²³ The conventional naming of drugs reinforces such assumptions. Based on Greco-Latin derivatives, they suggest a seemingly unbroken heritage of centuries of Western rational enquiry and claims to universal truth. Yet, it could be said that this particular citational quality of the design, combined with the drugs' designations, camouflages medical and pharmaceutical sciences' involvement with the pharmaceutical industry's profiteering. Hirst's re-citation underlines that any notion of a purely value-free science or benignly humane medicine is a fallacy.

This is further proven by the selection of the particular drugs. In addition to their ability to pose as varied design statements, their selection seems to be based on the severity of the symptoms they purport to alleviate or heal. The medicines invariably address serious, even life-threatening illnesses rather than minor ailments. Despite the fact that the drugs were chosen not for their specific properties but for the design, this is what a study of the pharmaceutical information reveals.

'Chicken is based on a pack of Oramorph® (Morphine Sulphate) oral solution. An addictive narcotic analgesic, it is used in the management of severe pain, and is often used to alleviate pain in terminally ill patients. Side effects include constipation and urinary retention' (Elliott, 2002, p.326).

Or take *Steak and Kidney*, which is:

'based on a pack of Ethambutol Hydrochloride (400mg tablets). ...The medicine is used in the treatment of tuberculosis. Side effects include a unique type of visual impairment which is usually reversible on cessation of therapy' (Elliott, 2002, p.326).

Included in Hirst's choice are two anti-retroviral drugs used in the treatment of progressive HIV. All the drugs referred to in the series may have negative side-effects as the quotes above show.

How does the encounter with Hirst's prints further contribute to such a critical reading? As previously indicated, it is here that the notion of performativity assumes significance. As German cultural historian Sybille Krämer has argued, 'Sense/meaning only exists in relation to dealing with [im Umgang mit] something that exists in space and time. Meaning is therefore an event, is "performativity" ["Performanz"]' [My translation] (Krämer, 1998, pp.33-34).

There is an increasing body of critical writing on a variety of subjects which engages in a reconsideration of phenomenology (Woodward, 1997; Entwistle, 2000; Marks, 2002). This extends and, to some extent, rewrites the social-constructivist and semiotic theories of the 1980s and their often perfunctory treatment of the body. It questions the philosophical separation of body and mind which has been so prominent in Western philosophy and the implications this has for an understanding of vision. As Krämer has argued, meaning or sense and the sensory are inextricably intertwined. She quotes Merleau-Ponty:

'To understand a sentence, does not mean anything other than to absorb its existence as sound [sein lautliches Dasein]; meaning does not lie atop the sentence as the butter on the bread or a second level of psychic reality

spread across the sound: meaning or sense is the totality of the said' [my translation] (Krämer, 1998, p.24).

Applied to an image or work of art, one might add that a work of art's meaning, similarly, does not lie behind it, as is commonly asserted, but that its material or sensuous form and its symbolic value or cultural coding together entail (perform) the meaning. This is why it is so striking that Hirst's work is discussed without reference to its printed nature. Krämer again:

'The classical 'window-model' differentiates between two worlds, body and mind. Sense/meaning and the sensory in this model are located differently as indicated by the metaphors of 'above' and 'below', 'in front' and 'behind'; and especially with the preferred 'inside' and 'out' as the respective locations' [my translation] (Krämer, 1998, p.33).

Drawing on the writings of Walter Benjamin, Vilém Flusser and Paul Zumthor, Krämer speaks of a 'third dimension' which avoids such divisions: 'The sensory does not bring forth "sense" or "meaning" and it is not an expression of it – it is the execution ['Vollzug'], the performance of sense or meaning' (Krämer, 1998, p.33). I would like to concentrate on this point to explore how the viewer encounters Hirst's prints sensorily.²⁴ It has been shown how the citation of the discourses of medicine and by implication science and the pharmaceutical industry, as well as the discourse of art, are enacted through the textual and formal aspects of the prints. The sensory resemblance of the prints refers to both art and specific commodities. In particular this holds for the discourse of 'printed matter', which is affiliated with material culture and certain commodities and their packaging. In addition to the formal characteristics already mentioned, the discourse of art in relation to Hirst's print series is also made complicit with that of pharmaceutical commodities through the particular mode of display: the prints are encased in 'white seamless laser cut factory produced Formica frames' (Ledwith, 2001). (Fig. 14) The smooth, shiny, clean, perfect materiality of the framing corresponds with the rationality, purity, neutrality connoted by the design qualities of the packaging.

The size of the prints is crucial to their sensory effect. Their dimensions highlight the design qualities, but above all, they make visible these inconspicuous everyday objects. Pill packages tend to disappear into the clutter of our domestic

environments. When they appear en masse, as in pharmacies, they are either literally invisible, hidden in drawers, or they form the backdrop to the model of efficiency and hygienic and cool neutrality that pharmacies superficially display. This is in contrast to the magnetic potency of their content. A single package similarly does not give the user much clue about the content. A flimsy little cardboard box containing aspirin looks essentially the same as one containing concentrated morphine. The size of Hirst's prints and the concomitant scale of the 'imagery' can therefore be regarded as the sensory staging of the awe-inspiring power, if not necessarily efficacy, of the packages' contents. Yet, ordinarily, the drugs' strength is in strict contrast to the products' minuscule size. Hirst's prints thus prompt other 'big' questions in addition to those previously mentioned, such as: Who is prescribed which medication? What are the factors that determine research, development, production, distribution and marketing of drugs? There are numerous debates related to such issues.²⁵

Size, therefore, is more than a metaphor; it can be regarded as a performative cultural code. With their anthropomorphic scale, the prints leave behind the safety of packaging with its deceptive tactility and proximity to the body. Instead, they intrude on the viewer while remaining distant from the body. Indeed, Ledwith refers to the prints as 'iconoclastic portraits of Christ and the twelve disciples', ... 'adopting surrogate forms for the human body' (Ledwith, 2001). Sensorily encountering the prints, the viewer experiences the physiological and cultural power of the designated foods and medicine, or 'performs' sense or meaning, in the way Krämer has suggested.

In order to talk about the specificity of print, further explanation is necessary as to how a performative model of understanding applies to seeing. Considering vision as embodied and performative implies the notion of touch or 'contact'. In order to consider the latter, it is necessary to examine the surface of these prints, with particular regard to their flatness.

As indicated, a print's flatness mobilises a powerful cultural dichotomy, namely that between surface and depth. The cultural connotations or hierarchy between these two tropes run at many levels through Western thinking. They can be linked to what

Krämer has called the 'Epistemologisierung der Sinne'; the epistemologising of the senses, in other words the prevalence of the mind over the body, as already discussed. In this scenario, the senses and the body become associated with mere surface or the superficial; in contrast, the mind is linked to depth. Paradoxically, alongside these connotations runs the association of the sensory, in as much as it implies touch, with the 'real' and 'authentic'.

The notion of 'surface' while not exclusive to modernity, has been considered as a significant factor in its definition. Various writers have recently paid critical attention to this concept in relation to art.²⁶ Smooth, flat surfaces have attained a specific place in the technologies of vision, as originally in cinema and television, and now on computer screens. Modernity itself, in particular its spectacularisation of society, could be conceived as a turning of the world into surface.²⁷ This seems to have come fully to fruition in postmodernity. Frederick Jameson speaks of 'a new kind of depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense' as 'perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms' (Jameson, 1991, p.60).

In the history of modern art, as we have seen, mechanically produced flatness, like that of the print and the photograph, has been cast in opposition to the flatness of the modernist picture plane. While the former could be linked to the perfection mainly achieved by the machine, the latter still retained the mark of the human hand, of touch. Strictly speaking, one could define all touch as a function of surface, namely a bringing together of two surfaces; hence 'contact', from 'tangere' to touch and 'con' together. But it is only touch which entails evidence of the human hand that is generally characterized as possessing not only depth but also the authentic or the 'real'. Here is true contact, presence and depth. There, in the perfect flatness of the machine, only the most fleeting of touches, mere appearance or superficiality.

Printmakers have countered the print's flatness through a multitude of depth-generating techniques. Examples are numerous. Embossing is one such means, as can be seen, for example, in the portfolio by British artists Langlands and Bell from the Booth Clibborn Editions. Under the title *Enclosure and Identity*, this portfolio from 1996 consists of ten blind embossed prints from zinc line block plates based on the ground plans of world famous mosques. Printmaking conferences feature

numerous technical workshops, many of which are dedicated to enhancing the printed surface.²⁸ Even Andy Warhol, the deadpan broker of the flattest of print techniques at the time, tampered with the uniform evenness of certain printed surfaces of his work. In his screenprinted self-portraits from 1967, resin was applied in 'expressive', non-descriptive strokes to the surface before printing (Elger et al. eds. 2004). This yields a slightly rugged, 'deep' texture, instead of the usual flat veneer of the screenprint. Of course this is only evident when one encounters the 'originals' rather than the reproduction. Warhol possibly owed this method to Rauschenberg's early 1960s habit of painting 'real', 'expressive' marks onto his screenprinted collages in, for example, *Press*, 1960. Warhol reverses this process, as it were, by applying the expressive marks *before* the printing. Thereby the expressiveness of the painted mark, which had already been problematised in Rauschenberg's method, becomes playfully obscured.

Despite the complexity of the printed surface, the supposed lack of touch or presence in printmaking is due to the perceived excess of the print's surface. With its fateful connection to reproducibility – fateful in the context of modernist art – its 'sur-ficiality' has both marred and, since the 1960s and the subsequent re-working of the modernist idiom, furthered printmaking's artistic status.

There may be another reason for the artistic print's relative marginalization on account of its 'surficiality'. It functions as an uncomfortable, albeit unacknowledged reminder – especially in the seamless expanse of the screenprint – of the sense of loss that has accompanied the changes in bodily contact or tactility as a result of industrialized mass production. This cultural trauma manifests itself in a paradoxical fascination. On the one hand, the perfection of gleaming surfaces is coveted (as with plasma screen televisions). On the other hand, there is a craving for authenticity which manifests itself in a variety of ways. Take, for example, the wide spread predilection for seemingly hand-crafted objects such as ceramic pottery, which exhibit the cultural markers of 'touch' even though the items have been mass produced.²⁹ As to Hirst's *Last Supper* prints, there exists no version in another medium.³⁰ These prints are not a 'translation' from painting as with many other artists who are not primarily printmakers, although Hirst has of course made paintings, such as his 'dot' and 'spin' paintings, which also tackle 'surficiality'. In

such paintings, the power of the image rests on difference, the difference of 'superficial', utterly mundane, even arbitrary subject matter coupled with an anti-painterly, mechanical and flat use of the medium transposed to the history-laden, high art medium of painting. This has been a familiar strategy amongst painters from Pop art onwards: Warhol, naturally, but also Richard Estes, and more recently, German painter Neo Rauch, to name but a few. From the Cubist works of Picasso, Braque and Juan Gris, from Duchamp through to Sigmar Polke, this approach has been complicated by the adoption of 'mundane' painting materials. Whether this be household paints or decomposing substances, Duchamp set the tone for the now explosive broadening of painting's (really, art's) substances, with his early *Apolinère Enameled* of 1916/17 and later his notorious semen painting *Paysage fautif* (Wayward Landscape) in 1946. This extension of painting media has found its parallel in printmaking. For example, some of Ed Ruscha's prints from the early 1970s, such as the screenprinted portfolio *News, Mews, Pews, Stews and Dues* (1970), use unusual, visceral printing 'mediums': Hershey's chocolate syrup, coffee and squid ink in *Pews*; crushed baked beans, caviar, strawberries, cherry-pie filling, mango chutney, tomato paste, leaves and crushed daffodils and tulips – not surprisingly – in *Stews* (Marshall, 2003, p.111). Among the numerous contemporary examples are Sarah Lucas's set of twelve fruitcakes with images of some of the artist's previous works in edible ink (2001). Lee Wagstaff's self-portrait *Shroud* (2000) was printed in his own blood and Scottish artist David Faithfull's *Pieces of Silver* series (2000/2001) includes shredded banknotes. Such strategies clearly aim to recuperate some of the loss in bodily contact referred to above.

The screenprints that constitute Hirst's *The Last Supper* are printed conventionally without the telling materiality of the examples mentioned above. Moreover, the surface of Hirst's series can be said to be another incidence of citation: It cites not only the 'imagery' of pharmaceutical packaging, but also alludes to the latter's smooth appearance and implicitly references popular print media such as magazines and publicity material. Hirst's prints 'work' on the viewer through their similarity or sameness with their 'originals' in the form of pharmaceutical packaging. Printmaking serves here not only to guarantee the citational character of the work itself, but to foreground the citationality, or the codedness, of these other products of culture. In this process the flatness or sur-ficiality/superficiality so typical of

packaging and the screenprint, is shown to be at the very heart of our mediated consumer culture. In the density of the artistic screenprint, which to some extent depends on the material quality of the support which in Hirst's case is high-quality art paper, there may also be an element of the recovery of the sense of tactility that these other printed matter surfaces lack.

The reference to pharmaceutical packaging in Hirst's work becomes more than just a metaphor for the bodily embeddedness of medicine. With their human scale and uniformly smooth surface, the prints literally 'work' on our bodies as do the drugs they refer to. The discursive or representational structures of the packaging as embodied in the flatness of the print mesh with the molecular structures of our body and mind. Hirst's work succeeds in bringing into focus the falsity of the dichotomy of flatness/sur-ficiality/superficiality versus depth and presence. At some level, everything is surface and nothing but surface. While the outer body may be one surface, the inside of the body is not **not** surface but consists of multiple further surfaces which in their turn consist of yet further surfaces and so forth. As Gilles Deleuze (1990) has said, "Surface" does not imply mere appearances, a Platonic notion that would oppose false surfaces to true, abstract depths or heights. Surface is all there is.³¹ Nevertheless, the complexity of the changing surface in modernity and postmodernity and its concomitant cultural tropes require careful examination, as my investigation of Hirst's prints has shown.

This chapter asked how prints 'mean' by examining the print's discursivity in relation to everyday printed matter, such as medical packaging as instantiated by Damien Hirst's print series. Its discussion in/of printmaking argued for the print's sensuous, performative quality of which the flatness of the surface is a prime factor.

The next chapter continues these reflections and develops the culturally highly significant trope of the surface. It extends the debate of the surface of the print within a historical as well as a current context, especially in relation to new media.³²

Endnotes

¹ This was only the second time that Hirst engaged in printmaking. His first, a single screenprint, was made for Booth Clibborn's *London Portfolio* in 1992. See Patrick Elliott in the publication which documents Booth Clibborn's print projects (Elliott, ed. 2001, p.326).

² Elliott mentions in his introduction that 'Booth-Clibborn's original stipulation was that they [the prints] should be able to fit into the boot of a New York cab'. One can only speculate on the reasons: was it to allow the publisher to transport such work more easily for participation in fairs such as the New York Art Fair? Be that as it may, both Damien Hirst and Gary Hume 'persuaded the publisher otherwise and made much larger prints' (Elliott, ed. 2001, n p).

³ See Elliott (2001) and the essay in the same publication by Jeremy Lewison, 'Contemporary *British Art in Print?*' (Elliott, ed. 2001, pp.13–21)

⁴ See curator Colin Ledwith's essay for the British Council which owns a set of the prints (Ledwith, 2001). See also Elizabeth Manchester's 2002 essay which accompanies the individual prints of Hirst's series in the Tate Modern Collection (Manchester, 2002).

⁵ There is a plethora of books on the subject, for two excellent introductions, see Sturken, M. and Cartwright, M. (2001) and Barnard, M. (2001).

⁶ Saunders and Miles (2006) in their recent survey report: 'There has been some debate about whether prints produced by artists such as Damien Hirst, through the mediation of print publishers such as the Paragon Press, can be considered the equal of prints that are not only conceived by the artist, but also worked on and printed by them.' (Saunders and Miles, p.10) Such attitudes clearly draw on outdated notions of artistic practice and may explain why even in the wholly print-oriented Booth-Clibborn publication Elliott feels compelled to point out that: 'Rather than simply being flat reproductions, they [the prints] have the same integrity and weight as the artist's main body of work' (Elliott, 2001, n. p.).

⁷ See Kathryn Reeves's (1999) contribution to the first IMPACT Conference at the University of the West of England, Bristol, cited in Chapter 2, p.60. As Reeves' paper shows, there has been an awareness of a need for a more theoretically inflected approach. Printmaking conferences, such as IMPACT, have been addressing the issue through appropriate panels. The current chapter, for example, was presented to the panel 'Printmaking and an Enlightenment Aesthetic' at IMPACT IV in Berlin-Posznan in 2005. (Impact IV) Another acknowledgement of this need for a direct theoretical engagement is the theory section in the recently re-issued international printmaking journal *Grapheion*. (See issue 1/2005.)

⁸ In the academic context, see the Centre for Fine Print Research (CFPR), University of the West of England. (Centre for Fine Print Research) In contrast to other European countries which do not possess such facilities, Britain's public access printmaking workshops represent a rich cultural resource. The best known of these are the London Print Studio and Spike Print Studio in Bristol and Scotland alone boasts four large print studios of a similar kind at Dundee Contemporary Arts, Peacock Visual Arts (formerly Peacock Printmakers) in Aberdeen, Glasgow Print Studio and Edinburgh Printmakers. All of these workshops provide essential facilities for artists and numerous and lively outreach programmes for the general public. In addition, there are smaller community-, as well as private, commercial print studios. The changing financial and institutional circumstances and impact of these on British Visual Culture in the last fifty years, especially in the context of

recent cultural policies still awaits to be fully researched, but see Turner (1992); Phillips (2005) and Edinburgh Printmakers (2007).

⁹ BMT refers to Butler's (1992) *Bodies that Matter*.

¹⁰ '... both Butler and de Beauvoir assert that gender is a process which has neither origin nor end, so that it is something we „do“ rather than „are“' (Salih, 2002, p. 46).

¹¹ See Chapter 5, pp.101-117.

¹² Anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards (1999) has explored the tactile properties of the photograph (Edwards in Kwint, ed. pp.221-237).

¹³ See, for example, Sioban Piercy's (2001) paper 'Centre/Periphery – The Predicament of Fine Art Printmaking' at the second IMPACT conference in Helsinki for one analysis of the marginalization of printmaking. (Impact 2)

¹⁴ See Chapter 5, especially Endnote 19, pp.116-117

¹⁵ Hirst's 2005 exhibition *New Religion* at the Paul Stolper Gallery in London extended the blend of pharmaceutical references and religion of the *Last Supper* series through forty-four screenprints and four sculptures in an integrated display. For images of this show, see <http://www.paulstolper.com/>. [Accessed 2005, October/20]

¹⁶ 'cite' from C15: Old French *citer* to summon, from Latin *citare* to rouse, from *citus* quick, from *ciere* to excite (Collins Dictionary Online. Available: <http://dictionary.reverso.net/English-definition/cite>) [Accessed 2007, October/12]. It is tempting here to link the connection of 'citer' with the verb 'excite' to Althusser's 'hailing' of the subject in interpellation. Despite the linguistic character of interpellation in Althusser, the term is now more broadly used for the address extended by products of culture, such as images, to the viewer or subject of culture. (See also Salih, 2002, p.90 and Chapter 3, pp.73-74.)

¹⁷ See especially the chapter 'The Britishness of British Art'. His views led to a public spat with John Roberts (1996) in the critical journal *Art Monthly*. Roberts, amongst others, attempted a more positive assessment of this aspect of YBA art through the category of 'philistinism'. (Roberts, 1996, pp.3-4 and Roberts, "Mad for it!', Philistinism, the everyday and the New British Art', in: *Third Text*, no. 35, Summer 1996, pp.29-42.) For Stallabrass's (1997) response to Roberts under the title 'Phoney War', see *Art Monthly*, 206, 5/1997, pp.15-16.

¹⁸ Much publicized in the late 1990s was Hirst's co-ownership with the restaurateur Marco-Pierre White of the restaurant *Quo Vadis* in London, followed by Hirst's own, short-lived restaurant, called *Pharmacy* (it closed in 2003) which was decked in medicine cabinets full of drugs as well as his trademark animal or animal parts preserved in formaldehyde. See Elliott (2001) p.326; for an (unauthorized) update, see the entry on Damien Hirst in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damien_Hirst. [Accessed 2005, October/20]

¹⁹ Examples abound. See Alex Renton's (2005) article 'If MSG is so bad for you, why doesn't everyone in Asia have a headache?' in *The Observer's* 'Food Magazine' which examines the effects of monosodium glutamate in both 'natural' and prepared food. Another example is the popularity of Morgan Spurlock's 2004 film *Super Size Me*, a documentation of a self-inflicted experiment in which the filmmaker adhered to a strict diet consisting entirely of McDonald's food. The connection between class and health concerns in the UK is a constant feature of the public debate and governmental initiatives.

²⁰ 'A lot of the actual boxes of medicines are all very minimal and could be taken directly from minimalism, in the way that ... minimalism implies confidence' (Hirst quoted in Manchester, 2002).

²¹ On Duchamp's engagement with the printing process, see F. Naumann (1999). See also Ecke Bonk (1989). Paul Thirkell has commented on the particular reproductive print technology adopted by Duchamp. He opted for the collograph, a photomechanical technique, as opposed to a more autographic, traditional one (Thirkell, 2005).

Hirst's working process for this project is described by Elliott: 'Hirst photocopied the original drug packets, indicated changes of text and other details, and passed the instructions to Jonathan Barnbrook, who had designed Hirst's book *I Want to Spend the rest of my Life Everywhere, with Everyone, One to One, Always, Forever, Now*. Barnbrook created new versions on computer, and the digital information was output onto full-scale film. The screenprints were made from these films by Brad Faine at Coriander Studio, London: each print is made from between four and seven separate stenciled screens, plus varnish' (Elliott, 2001, p.326).

²² Hirst's immediate role model, Andy Warhol, had included corporate logos in some of his *Last Supper* series. Although by no means the only artist to engage in such self-reflexivity, Hirst's self-branding brings the Warholian project – here as in other respects – to its logical postmodern conclusion.

²³ Hirst's reference to minimalism with regard to pharmaceutical packaging, quoted in note 20, hints at this.

²⁴ This approach goes beyond the more usual notion of metaphor in relation to images. See Ledwith: 'Metaphorically, ingested food and medicine parallel images that are visually and mentally absorbed by the viewer' (Ledwith, 2001).

²⁵ To name but one example: In recent years, the pricing policy of Western drugs companies for anti-retroviral medicines is said to have increased the death rate, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, by millions (See Boseley, 2002).

²⁶ See Chapter 5 (pp. 103-120) and Smith (2001).

²⁷ See Guy Debord (1968; 1970).

²⁸ One such example presented at the Fourth IMPACT conference in Berlin-Posnan in 2005, was a particular silkscreen printing technique invented and promoted by the so-called 'Hand Print Workshop' in the USA. The printing with various coats of wax results in a deeply rich surface. As the chosen name of the workshop indicates, this type of printmaking seeks to counter the seeming inauthenticity affiliated with the purely mechanical. It caters to the yearning for authenticity by the implication of the notion of 'touch' that is connoted by the involvement of the hand and can be communicated through the surface of the print.

²⁹ This dilemma has had its effects and has been the subject of much debate in craft circles. (See Greenhalgh, ed. 2002).

³⁰ Hirst's only other version of *The Last Supper* was also a screenprint, created for his exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in autumn 2000 in New York and subsequently destroyed. It consisted of 'thirteen silkscreened packaging covers ... mounted on aluminum panels and hung as one large piece nearly ten metres long. It covers another list of potentially fatty foods, which combine such English favourites as 'Cornish pasty, 'Cauliflower cheese' and 'Toasted cheese sandwich' with such imports as 'Vindaloo', 'Duck liver', Foie gras' (staples of internationally influenced, post-colonial British cuisine) and such American cuisine terms as 'Eggplant', 'Vongole' and 'Zucchini' (also internationally influenced)' (Manchester, 2002). While it is doubtful that 'Foie gras' constitutes a staple 'of internationally influenced post-colonial British cuisine', as Manchester claims, it is interesting to note the change in Hirst's references. In the first instance, this was to suit the American market no doubt, but at the same the internationalization of food, its

status as an aspirational and fashionable sign are also indicated. Further, Hirst may signal his own 'arrival' on the international scene. There is also a portion of Hirst the prankster evident in the doubling of the fancy 'foie gras' by the mundane 'duck liver'.

³¹ Gilles Deleuze (1990), 'Second Series of Paradoxes of Surface Effects', pp. 4-11, quoted in: Laura U. Marks (2002) p.218; see also Richard Shusterman's (2002) comment: 'There is some depth to any surface, and what lies beneath the surface – the undersurface – both has a surface and *is* itself a surface of some kind' (Shusterman, p.3).

³² The ideas formulated in this chapter were presented at IMPACT IV International Printmaking Conference in Berlin/Posznan in 2005 on the panel: 'Printmaking and an Enlightenment Aesthetic' and published in the peer-reviewed journal: *Visual Culture in Britain*, Vol 9, Nr 1, 2008, pp.81-100.

5. The Attraction of Print – Notes on the Surface of the Art Print

5.1 Preface

Although this and the previous chapter make no explicit references to my own work, they were not only prompted by my experiences but also relate closely to my interests as a printmaker. This chapter examines the surface of the contemporary art print as a means to position printmaking in relation to contemporary painting, photography and new media. Terry Smith's (2001) differentiation between 'viscerality' and 'enervation', Richard Shiff's (2001) account of the changing perception of the surface of painting in modernity and the concept of the *haptic* as developed by Laura U. Marks (2002) with regard to experimental video will serve to trace similarities and differences between print and other contemporary media and to conceptualize aspects of the surface of print. In particular, I shall be asking whether there is a distinct haptic quality or haptics of/to the print.

5.2 Surface in Print

The word 'printmaking' is used here as a shortcut for a practice that encompasses different constituencies and institutions, from printmaking taught and increasingly researched in institutions of higher education; open access workshops; print publishing and gallery art. The latter two seem to bifurcate into the work of well-known, 'blue chip' artists on the one hand (usually executed by 'master' printers or technicians) and artists working exclusively as printmakers. As noted in the previous chapter, the former mainly work in other media and printmaking constitutes only one mode of their artistic production. The latter tend to represent a constituency of their own with exhibitions, galleries and publications that may intersect with high-end art. And yet, as one of the educational guides at the Kassel *Documenta* 12 (2006) put it in a private conversation: 'I don't know of one well-known artist who is exclusively a printmaker.' It is, of course, a moot point whether any artist today can (or should be) categorized by his or her medium alone even if such medium-specific definitions still persist. Rosie Miles and Gillian Saunders point out in their 2006 survey of the contemporary art print, 'Print is

now a central part of many artists' activity, the equal of their output in other media, conceived as integral or complementary to it.¹ Such popularity of printmaking notwithstanding, in critical writing on prints, the printed nature of the work is often taken for granted, as explained in the previous chapter. I am therefore concerned with the theorizing of art print from 'within' printmaking and in locating printmaking and the art print within the current media debate. This chapter aims to contribute to raising the critical profile of printmaking in contemporary writing on art.

Chapter 3 argued that printmaking, as an art of the surface, may be closely affiliated to the everyday of printed matter such as posters, advertising, packaging. It both draws on and seeks to differentiate itself from such surfaces. The flatness of the printed surface activates influential cultural associations and attitudes that identify 'surface' with the superficial and the artificial. But these notions are not only distinguished against 'depth' with its affiliated implication of 'the real', they are also privileged over the former.² Take, for example, the often almost hysterical pronouncements regarding the loss of depth or the 'real' in the face of spectacularization, especially in the context of new media.³ Print can be therefore considered as a site in which cultural debates about surface and depth and their associated connotations are played out. Paying attention to the surface of the print will lead, I hope, to a more differentiated assessment of the often merely dystopian views that are typical of such discourses. An examination of this kind is based on the assumption that 'systems of meaning [are] coded in [these] materials and means of production' (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p.216).

Generally, recent writing on the subject of the surface in art and culture does not consider the artistic print. Marks' work on the surface, as already indicated, concentrates on video art and experimental film, while Joselit (2005) is primarily focused on the trajectory of modernist painting's purported 'flatness' in postmodernism. Within printmaking there is awareness of the importance of surface, especially in light of printmaking's intersection with digital media.⁴ Accompanied by a renewed flaring-up of the question of the 'originality' of the print (thought buried since the 1960s), the flatness of the inkjet printed surface has been above all a matter of concern. Paul Coldwell, for example, has noted the 'uniformity of the surface' of digital prints in comparison to traditional forms of printmaking due to the fact that the technology of

such printers is 'aimed at matching the surface quality of analogue photography' (Coldwell, 2001). He also speaks of the 'need' of his own prints to 'have rich physical qualities' and 'to create a physical presence within the print' (Coldwell, 2001). The latter is achieved by using 'traditional' printmaking methods, such as etching or lithography in a practice that encompasses digital methods. His 'mixed' approach is characteristic of that of a large group, if not the majority, of printmakers today, including myself. There has also been an argument for a more conceptually driven practice facilitated by digital media.⁵ But, as Kevin Haas has argued: 'Debates over how an image exists within culture and how it signifies its meaning, have typically taken place outside the discourses of printmaking.' He also confirms my earlier point about the necessity for a theorisation of print when he notes that, 'Despite the significant role printmaking has played in art throughout the 20th century and currently, it has not shared the outpouring of theoretical writing which has been devoted to photography in the last several decades' (Haas, 2006). At the same time, Haas expresses concern that the discourse of printmaking must not simply converge into the larger discourse of photography and digital media. My discussion of the surface of prints aims to tease out some of the intricacies of the relationship between these fields.

Despite their differences and the changes they have undergone within their own history, 'traditional' printmaking processes are characterized by a flat surface. As indicated in Chapter III.4, p. 85, modernism contrasted printmaking, not least its mechanically produced flat surface (a signifier of its reproductive character), with the 'full' flatness of the surface of the modernist painting. Pop art made a virtue of the superficiality of the print's surface by adopting the flattest of commercial printing techniques at the time, screenprinting, thereby aligning itself with the culture of mass production and the commodity. Subsequent practice can be characterized as veering between two main 'poles.' One strand foregrounds printmaking's imitative structure, often rejecting autographic means in favour of reproductive ones. Here, one can detect a strong convergence with the photographic. (Fig. 15) The other strand attempts to suppress flatness by emphasizing the materiality or 'touch' of the surface.

A significant proportion of the content of a number of printmaking magazines and conferences consists of reports and demonstrations of new or altered techniques of the surface. This is understandable, even necessary, and while new techniques often

go hand in hand with critical social or aesthetic concerns (see, for example, the 'Events' and 'Demo' sections of the 2009 *Southern Graphics Council* Conference in Chicago), I wonder whether this preoccupation with technique/s may also be regarded as an inheritance of and compensation for printmaking's marginalisation within the larger context of art within modernism (*Southern Graphics Council* Conference web site). In this argument, the indicators of the 'craft' of printmaking, its enriched surface qualities, would signal the superior values of the artist's touch and, by implication, the authentic and the 'real'.⁶

While it is true that, for some printmakers, the concern with the surface and its complexity serves as a route to authenticity, this need not be so. Here, a comparison with the materiality of the modern painted surface is helpful, for both its actual make up as well as its connotations have experienced multiple shifts, especially as a result of the emergence of photography. With reference to the artistic surface in the twentieth century, the art historian Terry Smith (2001) speaks of a trend towards 'viscerality' on the one hand, and 'enervation' on the other. Viscerality is understood as the emphasis on the materiality of the artistic surface while enervation describes its opposite, represented by the preponderance, especially in the latter half of the twentieth century, of images on screens or screen-like images (Smith, 2001, in Smith, pp.1–39).

How may the artistic print be located between the viscerality and enervation of the surface as suggested by Smith? An article by the art historian Richard Shiff (2001) about the surface in the work of Georges-Pierre Seurat and Chuck Close proves instructive in this regard. The main gist of Shiff's argument is that both the construction as well as the perception of the materiality of a surface changes historically. His investigation explains how this change has occurred in modernity in relation to the painted surface of certain realist painters: A painting or drawing by Seurat, for instance, appeared wholly mechanical to his contemporaries. (Fig. 16) The question was even raised at the time as to whether the work might have been executed 'automatically', as with the surfaces of photography or printmaking, namely the then hugely popular lithography. This conflation of printmaking with lithography, which was a predominantly, if not exclusively commercial process at the time, may appear absurd to a contemporary printmaker working in lithography today, but it indicates the perception of the method at the time as an altogether technical, hence 'automatic'

mode of image production. Yet today, when screen surfaces abound, Seurat's painting, in Shiff's words, 'becomes subject to an ironic reversal'; it appears 'organic' rather than 'automatic', imbued with presence or the evidence of the artist's individual marking (Shiff, 2001, p.141). Further, as Shiff argues, the modernist suppression of the hand in painting or 'the realism of low resolution' does not necessarily have to result in the 'dematerialisation' of the painted surface, as in Seurat's or in Close's more recent work, but can equally rest in such 'noisy' surfaces as Jasper Johns' encaustic paintings of, for example, the American flag.⁷ Shiff concludes: 'The meanings of photography and painting evolve as a result of their interaction.' And now the 'interference' comes from electronic media 'to which all other media must be compared.' 'Video exposes the material thickness of thin photographic emulsion and does the same to any thin, emulsion-like surface of painting. Our response is a changed sense of the materiality of images' (Shiff, 2001, p.156).

The implication of Shiff's analysis for the construction and perception of the printed surface is that, today, the formerly mechanical surface of the print can appear similarly rich in presence. Following Shiff, one can apply his general remarks on the changed perception of the materiality of the painted image through new image technologies to the different modes of printmaking: newer printing technologies, such as the advent of 'enervated' screen-printing, made the surfaces achieved by the older techniques look 'visceral' in comparison. If we simplify, for the moment, the differences in printmaking techniques and the varying consistencies of printmaking inks, then its multiple, complex layering is what constitutes the particular surface of the print. It is the condensation through different layers that accounts for the materiality, even tactility of the print. Today, older technologies of print (including, ironically, screenprinting) yield a tactile, 'fleshy' surface in comparison to the mean slimness of the digital print.

In the digitally printed image, the construction of surface through layering that is so familiar to printmakers becomes virtual and assumes a greater dematerialisation than ever before experienced in print. Yet another ironic reversal arises, especially given the popularity of the once 'enervated' screenprint today: When a digitally produced image takes on material form, it is *not* the materiality of the surface that is subject to contention as in modernism. Now it is the fact that there is not enough materiality, not enough substance compared to conventional printmaking modes. One only has to

recall the 'dead' flatness of certain ink jet prints. The print curator and art historian Stephen Goddard (2001) has also raised the question whether the possibilities of a purely digital output as opposed to paper may indicate the potential emergence of a 'rift' within the printmaking community. He concluded that it seems unlikely such a chasm would arise; a more likely development – for multiple economic, social and cultural reasons – would be the co-existence of both output modes and he predicted: 'In all probability printmaking's centre will hold ...'.⁸ Subsequent developments so far appear to prove him right. Much of the research carried out by the Centre for Fine Print Research (CFPR) at the University of the West of England, in Bristol, has concerned the adaptation or alteration of commercial technology, such as digital printers, to suit the needs of artists both in the scale and quality of the output (Centre for Fine Print Research). The exhibition *Committed to Print* in 2007 at the Royal Academy of the West of England in Bristol, curated by Dr Paul Thirkell from the Centre for Fine Print Research (CFPR), demonstrated the 'facticity' of digital prints which are now often almost indistinguishable from traditionally printed work. (Fig. 17) Steve Lovett, senior lecturer in printmaking at Manukau School of Visual Arts in Auckland, New Zealand, told me that, technical changes notwithstanding, his students overcome the 'thinness' of a digitally produced work by using digital printing techniques in a manner similar to traditional modes of printing, i.e. by digitally printing separate layers rather than outputting a digitally created image as a single file and one image.⁹ No doubt, many printmaking artists and tutors will come across the same, or similar, creative adaptations in their own or their students' practice. Despite such wide-spread enhancements as well as improvements in the output capabilities of digital printers and appropriate papers (here too, undoubtedly more will follow), Jo Ganter, printmaking leader at Edinburgh College of Art, has expressed a different kind of reservation: Digitally produced and printed images which appear to adopt the syntax of, say, a wood cut or a lithograph still only *look* like the real thing and function merely as a quotation of said techniques. More importantly, in such digital prints, she noted the paucity of the more subtle codings and unique syntax that the traditional modes allow.¹⁰ In contrast, the impact of large-scale woodcuts of printmakers such as Thomas Kilpper and Emma Stibbon is closely affiliated with the exploitation and foregrounding of the technique's material semiotics. As Shiff comments towards the end of his essay, while new materials 'unmask[s] the imperfections' of the previous ones, 'touch returns' (Shiff, 2001, p.144).

One way to speak about touch in regard to the surface of the print is by considering it in terms of its 'haptic' qualities. This expression, originally conceived by the art historian Alois Riegl, has been taken up by the American film and video critic Laura U. Marks (2002). She differentiates between haptic and optical modes of seeing:

'Haptic perception is usually defined as the combination of tactile, kinesthetic, and proprioceptive functions, the way we experience touch both on the surface of and inside of our bodies. In haptic visuality, the eyes themselves function like organs of touch. Haptic visuality, a term contrasted to optical visuality, draws from other forms of sense experience, primarily touch and kinesthetics' (Marks, 2002, p.2).

It is not surprising that in haptic visuality the viewer's body is 'more obviously involved in the process of seeing than is the case with optical visuality'. In Marks' interpretation of Riegl, optical representation is seen in contrast to haptic visuality. Accordingly, it represents

'a general shift toward an ideal of abstraction. The long-term consequences of this shift include Renaissance perspective, which reinforced the visual mastery of an individual viewer. ... optical representation makes possible a greater distance between beholder and object' (Marks, 2002, p.2).

Marks stresses that the difference between these modes is a 'matter of degree'. Not only are the haptic and the optical both involved in most processes of seeing, we also need them equally. As she says in her book: 'It is hard to look at a lover's skin with optical vision; it is hard to drive a car with haptic vision' (Marks, 2002, p.3). More recently, she has added that we can choose between haptic and optical looking. In her example of driving a car, this would be focussing on the windscreen itself (haptic) as opposed to looking through it to focus on the road (optical) (Marks, 2004). This example further demonstrates the need for (and the alternation between) both modes.

Of interest here is the notion that visual images themselves may have haptic qualities. However, as in her general remarks about haptic and optical visuality, Marks says that with regard to film and video there are none which are totally haptic. She also points out that historically, since the Renaissance, optical representation has been the norm. Added to this is the fact that vision has conventionally been considered as disembodied, affiliated with post-enlightenment rationality. It continues to be so. This is

a point to which I will return. According to Marks, optical viscosity in the form of a particular photographic look, or 'the photogenic', as Smith calls it, pre-dominates: most digital images, even if they are wholly computer-generated rather than derived from camera-based ones, adopt a 'photographic look' (Smith, 2001, in Smith). Hence it can be argued that the majority of mainstream computer-generated images tends towards optical viscosity. An example might be the photographic realism of a computer-generated animation film such as *Toy Story* (1995. Directed by John Lasseter. USA, Pixar) or the ever-increasing realism of computer games. As Marks comments, today, optical viscosity 'is refitted as a virtual epistemology for the digital age' (Marks, 2002, p.XIII).

But she detects an 'undercurrent of haptic viscosity' in recent art, manifested in, for example, contemporary experimental video works (Marks, 2002, p.XIII). Haptic viscosity here is manifest in 'the desire to squeeze touch out of an audio-visual medium, and the more general desire to make images that appeal explicitly to the viewer's body as a whole'. As one of her examples, she cites Mona Hatoum's seminal *Measures of Distance*, 1988. Footage of Hatoum's mother in the shower are overlaid with her letters to her daughter (Hatoum) who, on visiting London for a brief period, was unable to return to Beirut due to the outbreak of the war in Lebanon in 1975. (Fig. 18) The beginning of this video shows 'still images so close as to be unrecognizable, overlaid with a tracery of Arabic handwriting' (Marks, 2002, p.16). Marks regards this trend as an indication of 'a cultural dissatisfaction with the limits of [optical] viscosity' (Marks, 2002, p.4). Thus, in countering the photogenic or photographic, some film and video makers create a haptic image. Yet, as Marks has to concede in her more recent writing on the haptic, increasingly a tendency towards the haptic image can also be observed in popular cinema, advertising, music videos and video games. (See, for example, the rotoscoping effects of films such as Richard Linklater's 2006 version of Philip K. Dick's 1977 novel *A Scanner Darkly*. USA, Warner.) In light of this increasing mainstream popularity of the haptic she retreats from her claim of a liberatory force that she affiliated with it in her earlier conception.¹¹

The qualities that attract a haptic look when watching film and video – ignoring for the moment the differences of these mediums – are, according to Marks, achieved through techniques such as the speeding up of footage, enlarging the grain of the film,

changes in focal length, over- and underexposure, and so on (Marks, 2002, pp.8-9). Their haptic quality is defined by the effect they create, the look they invite: 'Haptic looking tends to rest on the surface of its object rather than to plunge into depth, not to distinguish form so much as to discern texture. It is a labile, plastic sort of look, more inclined to move than to focus' (Marks, 2002, p.6). She even refers to it as a 'caressing look' (Marks, 2002, p.7).

Following Riegl, Marks connects the historical undercurrent of the haptic to the minor arts – as opposed to the optical in the major arts. Textile art, the ornament, embroidery, weaving etc. invite the haptic look. Ignoring the gendered implications of the haptic that are suggested here, we might productively add printmaking, for it is this kind of 'labile, plastic' or 'caressing' look that the printed surface, more often than not, also generates. This is readily observed in printmaking exhibitions where viewers press up close to the prints, their eyes pulled towards the surface, scrutinising its concatenations, delighting in its variegated fabric, puzzling as to its sensuous fusion ('How is it done?').

If there is a 'haptics of the print' of what might it consist? Crudely speaking, an image that is based on a 'photographic look' lends itself to an optical mode of reception. But the 'photographic' alone is insufficient to define the 'optical' in print, even if one ignores the additional complexity of how such so-called 'optical' elements are actually employed in the work in question. (Figs. 19 and 20) Although it might be constituted by photographic or enervated images, such a print can be argued to possess haptic elements that distinguish it from a photograph – even if we disregard the additional complexity of the surface of digital or analogue photographs. The multi-layering that is characteristic of the print process, however different it may be in each of the various techniques, and the dragging of (multiple) deposits of inks (of varying density depending on the technique) yield a surface that resembles no other image due to its particular haptic quality. Of crucial importance here is the support, or the material onto which the image is printed. This may deny or enhance the haptics of the image. For example, Perspex or glass as opposed to the specific haptics of different types and qualities of paper necessarily redraw the haptics of the print. UK-based artist Marilène Oliver's figural recreations of MRI scans of the body are printed on to 'enervated' slices

of Perspex, only to be returned to a haptics by their three-dimensional weightiness and volume when assembled to form a three-dimensional sculpture.

Yet however minuscule or large the different surface characteristics of print in actual fact are, in contrast to the enervated images that surround us, the condensed composite that is the print induces a 'micro-haptics' that we can typify as 'an excess of surface' or a 'surface in excess'. What is conceived as excess varies historically, as we have seen, but the propensity towards greater density in comparison to 'enervated' screen images is what gives the print its haptic quality today. Recalling the historical and relational quality of (the perception of) the haptic surface, it is interesting that, as already discussed, the early debates regarding the use of digital printers and subsequent alterations to them or use of them in printmaking have been geared towards a re-creation of this 'surface in excess'. Simultaneously, the flatness of such works (in tandem with other enervated images and commercially printed super-flat surfaces) creates a greater acceptance for the more eviscerated print as art. (Fig. 21)

Prints based on photographs may exemplify today the surface-in-excess quality of the printed image or its haptics more obviously than its 'straight' photographic counterpart, but the changing status of other types of artistic prints is similarly aligned with the changing cultural acceptance of the enervated surfaces of modernity and postmodernity. As already stated, viewers in the early 1960s perceived the screenprint as lacking the visceral depth and reality not only of the dominant form of art, painting, but also of its printed predecessors. Today, in contrast to inkjet prints, the now 'traditional' screenprint demonstrates a 'surface in excess' or the relational quality of haptics although the gap between traditional modes and digital output is constantly closing, as we have seen. The emphasis on the micro-haptics of prints can be seen as an attempt to maintain a competitive edge at both the aesthetic and market levels, while a new print flatness yields the simultaneous acknowledgement of art's proximity to the surfaces of consumption and the media, of joining the enervated screens of the late 20th and early 21st century.

In other respects, printmakers or artists producing prints have opted – as in different fields of visual production such as graphic design – to 'dramatize' (Shusterman, 2002) a haptic look or create a 'macro-haptics' by introducing 3D elements such as

embossing (Fig. 22) or collaged cut outs – even if this viscosity is achieved by technical rather than 'hands-on' means, as in the image by the 2006 Jerwood Drawing Prize winner Charlotte Hodes. (Fig. 23) These techniques are only the tip of the iceberg of a macro-haptics in print.¹² Such procedures aim to counter the loss of touch and of the real brought on by the relentless mediatisation that characterises the contemporary. In the words of Steven Connor,

[We] continue to depend upon an opposition between things which are felt to be immediate, original and "real" on the one hand, and the representation of those things, which we conceive of as secondary, derived and therefore "false" on the other' (Connor, 1997, pp.173-4).

Yet the shifting history I have outlined indicates that the recuperation of the 'real' occurs even within those representations that are considered to be the root of the loss in the first place, for the same trade-off between optical and haptic image modes that Marks observes in video and film occurs in print. Jacques Derrida has commented on the haptic as a 'smooth space of close vision' as defined by Deleuze and Guattari:

'There is never any pure, immediate experience of the continuous, nor of closeness, nor of absolute proximity The relation between the smooth and the striated, therefore, does not constitute a reliable conceptual opposition, but rather an idealizing polarity, an idealized tendency, the tension of a contradictory desire (for pure smoothness is the end of everything, death itself) from which only a mixed given, a mixture, an impurity comes forth in experience' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1997, quoted in Derrida, 2005, p.124).

Derrida's emphasis on the impossibility and undesirability of a pure haptics notwithstanding, one can perhaps observe a greater tendency towards the haptic look with its close mode of viewing in the now so-called 'traditional' modes of print practice with small-scale (or at least 'smallish') framed work that are still the criterion for numerous printmaking competitions and exhibitions.¹³ Yet on examining the variety of print practices today, a much more complex picture emerges. Whereas painting trades on the tradition of its viscosity in tension with enervation (the now 'classic' example being the work of Gerhard Richter), prints flaunt their proximity to optical image modes or enervated surfaces on the one hand and open out into a micro- or macro-haptics on the other, more often than not all in one work, vice Charlotte Hodes's prints which 'lace', literally and metaphorically, photographic and drawn image fragments with

hand- or laser-cut forms that create a giddy shuttling between the enervated and the haptic. (Figs. 24 and 25)

Another case in point is Anne Rook's *The Book of Golden Delicious 4021 and 4020*, 2002. (Fig.26) This work employs different visual codes and semantic registers and presents a dizzyingly complex meditation on viscosity and enervation. With a nod to the optical, the representation of the subject of the title consists of an ostensibly photographic rendition of an apple. Yet the latter is no ordinary apple (whatever that would be) but a constructed ready-made, just as its eponymous 'real' counterpart, its viscosity is fashioned from the multiple, enervated surfaces of a logo. Rook's intricate processes underline the intertwining of the visceral and the optical: 'Using a scanner and computer she [Rook] reproduces multiple sheets of labels, which she then cuts out individually by hand. These are pasted over the surface of fruit ... and made up into illustrated 'recipe books' or wallpaper patterns, where labels substitute for depictions of fruit, flowers and trees' (Saunders & Miles, 2006, p.64). Through their complex sampling of different image modes these works constitute an acknowledgement of print's irrevocable enmeshing with the surfaces of consumption. Their presentation in form of a box/book recovers the haptics that the image skilfully alludes to and playfully undercuts.¹⁴

Although he is not a printmaker, a public work by sculptor-photographer Alex Hartley, *Elevation 1:1*, on view in Edinburgh in summer 2007, further demonstrates my argument, for Hartley covered the modernised façade of the former fruit market with a commercially printed, one-to-one-scale replica. (Fig. 27) The gallery brochure described the work:

'The work that exemplifies his practice most comprehensively is *Elevation 1:1*, in which Hartley writes instructions for climbing The Fruitmarket Gallery on to the building itself. The instructions are listed as eight individual climbs ... The base for this image is a smooth surface [print!] covering the building's front elevation. Ironically, in order to represent this climbing route, Hartley levels the very elements which would be used as footholds for a climb – the building's cornices and pilasters. The method by which the route is delivered cancels out the possibility of climbing it. Hartley's decision to produce a full-scale image of the gallery challenges the conventions of architectural plans, drawings and photography, in which images are always reduced in scale. Seen from up close, the photograph's

pixels further emphasize the distance between the architectural image, with its potential for dissolution and the actual building, with its embraceable, solid mass.¹⁵

At first glance, this work dramatises optical viewing: Seen at a distance, the photographic reproduction of the façade that constitutes the 'image' allows a gaze of mastery or surveillance. The enervated commercial screenprint that 'imprints' the building seemingly suppresses the haptic. Yet the haptic is re-covered by the fact that the image becomes the building's skin just as the building becomes the haptic counterpart of the artist should he decide to actually scale it. The text superimposed on the replica architectural features evokes this proximate encounter between artist and building for the viewer, just as the image/building as a whole restages its optical/haptic unity. Besides, the printed surface seen at close quarters matches Marks's haptic look in other respects: not only is it *not* possible to recognize the image, the pixellated surface requires the 'labile, plastic sort of look' mentioned earlier. (Fig. 28) In gazing up close, the viewer experiences the equivalent of the experience of the climber, a kind of haptic vision whose 'orientations, landmarks and linkages are in *continuous* variation' and which 'operates *step by step [de proche en proche]*' (Deleuze, 1997, quoted in Derrida, 2005, pp.123-4).

While *all* looking is currently discussed in terms of embodiment, the haptical-optical model contributes to the debate on visuality a definition of different types of looking which particularly focuses on the spatial dimension of vision.¹⁶ It is important to regard the model's two-fold structure as non-hierarchical, as Derrida and Deleuze have argued. Marks has also stressed that both modes are complementary, and although in her book of 2002 she appears to privilege the haptic with a politically radical force, in a later article, written in 2004, she clearly retracts this earlier position.¹⁷ Here it becomes once again evident that no visual forms per se can be politically radical on behalf of (the right kind of) political value system. Critical writing on photography in the 1980s proves a case in point. It had championed the implicit critical potential of certain types of avant-garde practices, such as photomontage, and bemoaned their application for propaganda purposes by such diverse political systems as Stalinist Russia, Fascist Italy, and later the US Government.¹⁸ The on-going attraction for commercial advertisers of such visual models has further challenged any revolutionary promise of a particular visual form per se. It would therefore be a mistake to credit the haptic with

immanent critical 'talent'. Nor should it be seen, as already discussed, as in any way superior to the optical. Nevertheless, I believe it is important to consider the haptic visuality that is instantiated by the surface of the print in terms of a '*volitional, deliberate* vision', as stated by theorist Vivian Sobchack in her exemplary phenomenological study of film (Sobchack, 1992, p.93). The viewer 'has to bring it forth from latency', explains Marks. 'Thus the act of viewing, seen in the terms of existential phenomenology, is one in which both I and the object of my vision constitute each other' (Marks, 2002, p.13). While all seeing is embodied, the haptic could be considered as a kind of looking that makes the embodied aspect of vision more obvious. Its 'volitional' quality, or its attribute of progressing step by step (Deleuze and Guattari) highlights vision's performative or constitutive, provisional character.¹⁹

Moreover, Marks finds in this 'mutually constitutive exchange' 'the germ of an intersubjective eroticism'. She insists that 'haptic images have a particular erotic quality', one that involves 'giving up visual control' (Marks, 2002, p.13). By 'interacting up close with an image ... the viewer gives up her own sense of separateness from the image' (Marks, 2002, p.13). Haptic images 'move eroticism from the site of what is represented to the surface of the image. Haptic images are therefore erotic regardless of their content' (Marks, 2002, p.13).²⁰ Here one may be able to locate some of the attraction, in the original sense of the word, of (not only) 'traditional' print making techniques and the specific ways in which individual artists employ them. As techniques of the surface, prints invite the viewer to 'interact up close' with the image and, with the exception of the miniature print, to 'give up visual control'. In addition, the variety of current printmaking approaches and their specific take on the haptic bring the complexities of looking, the different operations that are involved and the instability of its performative character, to the surface (in both senses of the word).

As seen in the exhibition *Versuchsreihe - Trial Run* (Part II on CD) and Chapter 3, the notion of surface is thematized in my own prints at the level of the imagery as well as their installation or display. Hence my aesthetic practice and these earlier reflections can be regarded as the start and substrate for the ideas developed in this chapter. Moreover, this section is a demonstration of a culturally inflected approach to technology and technique that was postulated in Chapter 2. As will be seen, the theoretical considerations developed here also inform and permeate the exhibition

Schnörkeleien that followed the writing of this chapter and are taken up in last written sections (Part V, Chapters 1 and 2).²¹

Endnotes

¹ Saunders & Miles, R. (2006), p.8. On the concept of new media, see Gauntlett, D. and Horsley, R. eds. (2004).

² See Chapter 4, pp.85-86 and pp.94-98. Interestingly, the famous examples that Jameson uses to demonstrate his point of the flatness and depthlessness of postmodernity, are a painting by Van Gogh of peasant shoes (no dates are given as to which of Van Gogh's peasant shoes paintings the work represents) and Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes* of 1980. The latter belongs to a series of works made by employing acrylic paint, silkscreen and diamond dust. In contrast to the photographic negative as a source and striking visual attribute of the image, the role of the print as a crucial feature of flatness is not mentioned by Jameson (Jameson, 1991).

In addition to the sources mentioned already, for a discussion of the topic in relation to art, see Richard Shusterman (2002) and David Joselit (2005).

³ On the notion of 'spectacularization', see the familiar concept of the 'spectacle' in Guy Debord's (1968) eponymous *Society of Spectacle*. 'The spectacle is a society which continually declares: "Everything that appears is good; whatever is good will appear"' (Debord quoted in Sadie Plant, 1992, p.13). 'Appearance' here implies the rising to the surface (of visibility).

⁴ See, for example, Paul Coldwell's (2001) 'Interrogating the Surface' paper presented at 2nd IMPACT International Printmaking Conference, Helsinki, Finland, Aug 29 – Sept 2, 2001. See also the exhibition with the same title as the conference paper which was curated by Coldwell at the Atkinson Gallery, Somerset, UK, in November 2001. Coldwell was also instrumental in the 2003 *Digital Surface* International Conference at Tate Britain. Coldwell has just completed a large research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) with the title *The Personalised Surface in Fine Art Digital Printmaking*. (Coldwell and Rauch, 2009) In the US, see the exhibition *Digital: Printmaking Now* at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, curated by Marion Kushner (2001). See also dedicated panels at the annual College Art Association (CAA) Conferences. (College Art Association)

⁵ See Coldwell (2001). In the United Kingdom, the argument for a more conceptually driven digital practice has been made by Naren Barfield and others (2001) as discussed in Chapter 2, Endnote 8, p.67. Ruth Weisberg, in her influential paper from 1986, has argued that the process of (what is now) 'conventional' printmaking lends itself to a conceptual or 'cerebral' approach (Weisberg, 1986, p.58). While there may be a rationale for this argument, in my view, a conceptual approach does not rely on the medium or the media an artist chooses, technical or otherwise, however crucial to his/her concept they may be. I concede that my concept of the 'conceptual' may be narrower than that of the authors mentioned.

⁶ Examples are numerous. See the demonstration of a wax silk screen technique which creates beautifully rich and dense surfaces mentioned in Chapter 4, Endnote 28, p.100.

⁷ Schiff, 2001, p.150. This was possible because the imagery was already familiar.

⁸ Goddard (2001). For further examples of the interrelationship between new and older print technologies in the US, see the exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art mentioned in footnote 4 and also the contribution of Dorothy Simpson Krause to the panel 'Convergent Theories, Printmaking, Photography and Digital Media' at the 2006 annual College Art Association (CAA) Conference in Boston.

⁹ Conversation at IMPACT IV, Berlin-Posznan 2005.

¹⁰ Conversation at Edinburgh College of Art in Summer 2007.

¹¹ In a web article of 2004 Marks says that the 'radical potential' which she initially affiliated with the haptic, needs 'to be motivated by something radical'. One ought to add, the right kind of 'radical' at that. She is at pains to distance herself from 'what seem [to her] proto-fascist, new-age celebrations of feeling, irrationality and primordial ooze' and 'beseech[es] those who are newly encountering haptic thinking to keep alive the dialectic with the optical!' (Marks, 2004).

¹² For more examples, see Saunders and Miles (2006) and the projects undertaken at the Centre for Fine Print Research (Centre for Fine Print Research).

In the US, the The Print Center in Philadelphia staged an exhibition in 2003 with 3D prints. (*Extra! Extra! 2D and 3D Graphic Work by Red Grooms; Sculptural Prints: A group show of 3D prints and photographs; see The Print Center web site.*) Rapid prototyping and laser cutting are also technologies with 3D potential which are hotly pursued.

¹³ The 2007 Summer Exhibition of the Glasgow Print Studio omitted the requirement for framing but coupled this innovatory step with limitations in scale (56 x 76 cm) and therefore restricted the scope of potential prints for submission. Even if one accepts that some guidelines need to be adhered to, especially for such annual survey shows, it is lamentable that similar restrictions still characterize numerous printmaking competitions and exhibitions. See the Glasgow Print Studio Summer Show Entry Form http://www.gpsart.co.uk/mailout/may_ssenryform.pdf [Accessed 5 June 2007]

¹⁴ Following Kress and Van Leeuwen, art such as Rooks' could be considered as a contribution to 'a theorizing of a new stage of semiotic practice, namely synthesis, through new practices of construction and production.' They see this 'new stage of semiotic practice' or 'synthesis' as a result of the increasing abolishment of 'recording technologies' (e.g. photography) through 'synthesizing technologies' (digital means) where previous notions of referentiality 'give way to "signification". ... This does not mean that representation has ceased. Rather, the formerly ... naturalized relation, the identity of representation and reference, has broken down irreparably for the time being.' (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006, p.218)

¹⁵ *Alex Hartley*, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Festival Exhibition, July 26 – October 21, 2007, Exhibition Leaflet (Fruitmarket Gallery, 2007).

¹⁶ In addition to the writings on embodiment mentioned in Chapter III.4, such as Krämer (1998), see the ground breaking phenomenological study of film by Vivian Sobchack (1992). Marks gives a brief summary of different theoretical positions which challenge optical viewing with its implied mastery, Marks, 2002, pp.6-7. On visuality see also Foster, H. ed. (1999; originally published 1988).

¹⁷ See Endnote 11.

¹⁸ As argued by Benjamin Buchloh (1984).

¹⁹ A good introduction to the concept of performativity which has been influential in a range of academic disciplines is James Loxley (2007). Performativity in art is discussed by Barbara Bolt (2004). The essay by David Joselit is also relevant here. Although he does not discuss the print as such, he relates models of identity to the modernist and postmodernist surface in works by Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns and African-American artists David Hammonds and Kara Walker. His welcome and necessary differentiation of the modernist surface to its often binary casting within modernism and postmodernism also ties the changes to/of the artistic surface to a 'transformation in spectatorship' whereby flatness becomes a 'powerful metaphor

for the price we pay in transforming ourselves into images'. He speaks of 'compulsory self-spectacularization' as a 'necessary condition of entering the public sphere in the world of late capitalism' (Joselit, 2005, p.293).

²⁰ Marks tentatively identifies a particular gendered quality in the haptic. Not surprisingly, she suggests that it is 'a feminine form of viewing'. But she cautions against associating a 'feminine quality in particular' with it and 'prefer[s] to see the haptic as a feminist visual *strategy*, an underground visual tradition in general'. [original emphasis] (Marks, 2002, p.7). It would be equally tempting to relate a gender element to the hapticity of the print: In its affinity with the surface; the multiple/reproductive and its (relative) marginalisation print could be regarded in gender terms as 'feminine' or, better, 'feminised' in contrast to more 'masculine' practices.

²¹ An early version of this chapter was presented at the annual College Art Association (CAA) Conference in 2006 in Boston (Panel: Printmaking, Photography and Digital Media). A much expanded version was published in *Art Journal*, the CAA's peer-reviewed periodical (Vol 67, Nr. 2, Summer 2008, pp.74-91). A shorter version is published in Coldwell and Rauch (2009), pp.55-65.

Part IV (On CD)

Visual documentation of production and installation of exhibition Nr 2 Schnörkeleien in the Round Room, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, 2007

Experiments in Photoshop between 2004 and 2006

Experiments in 2004

Earlier lines

Experiments in 2005

Earlier marks

Single line

Talbot Rice Gallery Exhibition

Exhibition Space

Empty Gallery Spring 2006

Georgian Gallery Décor

Work in Progress

Stencils

Earliest Stencils

Stencils August 06

Line

Acanthus

Palmette

Stencils from October 06

Rough Line

Acanthus rough

Palm rough

Deconstructed Acanthus

Deconstructed Palm

Conglomerates

Coloured Forms

Experiments with Imagery Summer 2006

Experiments with Dayglo Colours

Printing on press

Invite Card Photos

Installation

Viewing prints from Phase I in the Round Room 18 Dec 06

Provisional Installation 5 February 07

Selection of sheets

Final Installation

Exhibition

Animation Sketch 1
Animation Sketch 2

Part V

1. Schnörkeleien - A report of the production and installation of prints for the exhibition in the Round Room, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, 20th April to 2nd June 2007 (abbreviated as 'Post-production II')

1.1 Introduction

The first phase of the PhD was focussed on the production of art, culminating in the exhibition in the Galerie Zement. During the period that followed this exhibition, the practice of writing was foregrounded as an alternative mode of thinking about the issues that had been identified. The final phase of the PhD emphasized art practice again which culminated in the exhibition at the Talbot Rice Gallery. The reflections through writing 'in between' the two exhibitions allowed a clearer overall conceptualisation of the second exhibition, in addition to functioning as stand-alone theoretical investigations. While the first 'post-production' chapter (III.3) focussed on the exhibition in Galerie Zement, especially its installation, the current text examines the whole production process from the securing of the exhibition site, the development of the imagery through the printing phase to the final installation.

The aim of this second 'post-production' report is to show how the elements of my individual practice that were identified in Chapter III.1 and the theoretical reflections in the following three years are taken up or 'enfolded' in the second exhibition project. This is not to say that the outcome of the exhibition was predetermined from the outset as a demonstration of 'theory'. But it is only through the process of post-production that certain links and insights emerged. In this sense, the present chapter proves my view of writing as a productive technique, akin to the creative process, as highlighted in Chapter III.1 and further explained in the next chapter, V.2.

The following questions are explicitly or implicitly addressed in this report:

- How have the insights drawn from the first exhibition and the reflections, as documented in the previous chapters, had an impact on the second

exhibition?

- More specifically, in which way did the exhibition in the Round Room utilize the insights of Chapter III.3 in terms of concept, execution and final installation? How does it develop the claims made for the first exhibition?
- Moreover, can this second exhibition be said to test the claims made for the usefulness of theoretical reflection, as developed in the preceding chapters, such as the seeming dichotomy between craft and technology (Chapter III.2); the discursivity of the images as prints (III.4); the challenge of the surface (III.5)?
- Can Post-production II in turn be considered to become the foundation of the next phase of both artistic/theoretical work? If so, how?

The report follows a chronological time line which mirrors the sequence of the production of the work and the installation of the exhibition. Its (relative) completeness or logical progression should be considered in terms of a construct after the event rather than a 'true picture' in absolute terms, albeit a useful one as argued in Chapters III.3 and V.2.

The format of the quite loosely configured 'report' with its emphasis on practical procedures constitutes an alternative model of 'post-production' through writing in comparison to the more finished and thoroughly theorised chapters. It is important to note that the more factual nature of the report also includes the account of creative developments and procedures that were rejected for this particular undertaking due to practical difficulties or time constraints. Nonetheless they have been included here as from such 'failures' creative ideas and future projects arise. They constitute an element of the virtual quality that is more thoroughly discussed in the next chapter, V.2.

I would like to add a brief note here on screenprinting as my chosen method of printmaking. My choice of the process, apart from practical considerations such as the relative ease of use and the large potential printing area, are its affinity with the production of multiples, originally in the commercial context. In addition, screenprinting as the potentially flattest mode of printmaking is a fitting means to

address the issues of surface and depth that are played out in printmaking in general (see Chapter III.5) and in my own work, as will be shown.

A full explanation of the screenprinting process is given in the Appendix on pp. 245-247.

1.2 The Exhibition Space¹

1.2.1 Reflections on the exhibition venue

After the first exhibition, while mainly focussed on writing, I had taught myself to use the software *Photoshop* and started to experiment with the creation of new patterns/motifs/animations on the basis of my previous aesthetic approach. However, it would require a specific exhibition project to allow these experiments to take shape.

In April 2006, the curator of the University of Edinburgh's Talbot-Rice Gallery, which is based in the now largely administrative complex of the University's neo-classical Old College, agreed to make available a slot in the gallery's small, experimental exhibition space, the so-called Round Room.

Why the Round Room? Various venues had been considered, such as the Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop gallery and the exhibiting venue of the Visual Research Centre (VRC) of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design (DJCAD), the Centrespace Gallery, located in the Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre, Dundee. Apart from pragmatic reasons, such as the relative proximity of the gallery to the Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop which provided the necessary printing facilities, the deciding factors were the anticipated audience and, above all, the nature of the space. Compared to the Visual Research Centre in Dundee, the choice of the Talbot Rice Gallery provided the better public visibility since the gallery, although affiliated with the University of Edinburgh, functions as an independent exhibiting space. It presents a 'mixed' programme of local, national and international artists. In 2007 David Batchelor was the Edinburgh Festival exhibitor; Glasgow-based Alan Michael was shown in 2008; as was Monika Sosnowska, Polish representative at the 2007 Venice Biennale. The artist showing

in the main or 'White Gallery' in conjunction with my exhibition was Alex Pollard, one of the four Scottish representatives at the 2005 Venice Biennale.

The Round Room in particular, although only an adjunct to the main gallery with no funding to speak of, is run by curator Pat Fisher as an 'experimental' space which is used irregularly, if not as an extension to the exhibition in the main gallery.

Nevertheless it has attracted a roll-call of young Scottish artists with a burgeoning reputation such as Keith Farquhar or Lucy McKenzie. The internationally best known of these is 2009 Turner Prize nominee Richard Wright.

On a practical note, after the experience of planning and mounting an exhibition at a long distance, as with my first solo exhibition in Frankfurt, the prospect of working in a space that was more easily accessible throughout the production period seemed a sensible alternative, especially as one of my aims was to increase the site-specific aspect of my work.

The factors that were alluring, even seductive, about the Round Room were its location within the neo-classical Old College and its particular architectural features. Fellow practitioners of different artistic persuasions agree: it is a 'beautiful' space. The adjective 'beautiful', in contemporary art circles only hesitantly or ironically employed due to its affiliation with 'traditional' art history on the one hand and its thoroughly consumerist appropriation on the other, is used unreservedly in this instance.

Not just the aesthetic properties but also its location endow the Round Room, a domed rotunda, with a wonderful surprise factor. Sandwiched between the huge modernist white cube of the main exhibiting space or 'White Gallery' and the neo-classical opulence and elegance of the eponymous 'Georgian Gallery', which houses the University of Edinburgh's art collection, the Round Room combines elements of both (Talbot Rice Gallery web site). (Fig. 29) Its most prominent and arresting features, defined by the huge astragal, domed window and the simple circular frieze below it, are neo-classical, whereas its white walls define it as a modern(ist) exhibition space and link it with the principal gallery. Moreover, its small size with a diameter of just over four metres, together with its location on the

second floor, create the impression of its being suspended between the two large spaces that adjoin it. The Round Room is situated at the ceiling level of the main exhibiting space and the Georgian Gallery and connected to them by balconies on either side. Its main point of entry is the balcony off the White Gallery. Conversely, the Round Room can also be accessed through the upper balcony of the Georgian Gallery. On this upper tier, just below the ceiling, the visitor comes into an unusually close contact with the Georgian Gallery's splendid neo-classicist ceiling and cornice decoration. (Fig. 30)

The experience of the quasi sculptural sensuousness of the décor at close quarters proved to be important in the construction of the 'imagery' for the installation in the Round Room. Under normal circumstances this ornamentation can only be viewed as 'mere' imagery from the distance of the ground floor. Being able to see it up close highlights its individual elements in a way that the overall impression from the usual perspective of the floor of the Georgian Gallery does not. (Fig. 31) As will be seen, this visceral visual encounter constitutes one element in which the specificity of the site/sight entered into the project.

The reaction to this particular feature followed the 'law' of intuitive attraction and was at first only indirectly conceptually motivated. From the beginning, as already indicated, I wanted to make reference to the site in a specific but at the time undecided way. In terms of a 'post-production' point of view, this spontaneous response gains another dimension. As will be seen, it fitted very well within the overall aesthetic (and theoretical) project. At one level, the direct reference or reproduction of single decorative features draws attention to (or repeats) the postmodern re-cycling of past styles, albeit through a quasi modernist agenda by employing the single drawn line or mark. At another level it draws attention to the dematerialisation of our environment by printed and digital media forms through the translation of a semi-three dimensional physical form into a flat surface.

The 'intermediary' and lofty siting of the Round Room lends it a transitory atmosphere, a quality that is emphasised by three passage ways and doors, leading into and traversing the space. (Figs 32 and 33) This idiosyncrasy interrupts the perfection and potential completeness of the rotunda and adds an element of

the mundane to an otherwise intensely charged, almost enchanted atmosphere. I am tempted to refer to the fashionable notion of 'hybridity' as a means to capture this 'impurity'. Popular in postcolonial and hyperreality studies, the 'hybrid' has a much broader appeal, especially as an anti-essentialist term.

'... the term indicates a broader insistence in many twentieth-century disciplines, from physics to genetics, upon "a double logic, which goes against the convention of rational either / or choices" In this sense, as in much else in the structuralist and post-structuralist legacy, the concept of hybridity emphasizes a typically twentieth-century concern with relations within a field rather than with an analysis of discrete objects, seeing meaning as the produce of such relations rather than as intrinsic to specific events or objects' (Young, R J C, 1995., quoted in Ashcroft et al. 2000, p.121).

In addition to such architecturally 'spoilt' or 'impure' features as the multiple doors, the hybrid qualities of the Round Room in terms of its 'relations within a field' are manifold. They stem from its overtones of the public and institutional (it was, for a large part of its existence, a science teaching room of the University) to the domestic (its intimate, non-public scale, signalled by its designation as a 'room'). As will be seen shortly, the space has a past affinity with science (albeit only as a memory) in addition to its current one with art. It 'incorporates' past and present institutional regulations and even funding policies, visibly evident in its design, such as the dated-looking maroon linoleum flooring and, for example, contemporary safety regulations (the latter conspicuously evident in the form of brightly coloured safety instructions and signs). (Figs 34 and 35) It constantly and variably re-incarnates itself as a work or container of (contemporary) art and, in the guise of the latter, assumes fullness as a space in contrast to the 'emptiness' in between exhibitions. To these attributes one might add the common associations of harmony and order with (neo)classical architecture, popularised by countless period TV programmes and the marketing of heritage sites such as stately homes. They fashion the nostalgic re-packaging of history that Frederic Jameson has characterised as a typical feature of postmodernism (Jameson, 1991). In the case of the Round Room, it could be said that the 'brutalist' contemporary institutional doors with their passage ways undermine the lure of a purely nostalgic historical amnesia and, moreover, let us not forget culture's 'others'. It may therefore not be too far-fetched to regard the surfeit of doors as a kind of 'abject' (Kristeva, 1982).

Even if merely considered accidentally 'ugly', they counter the facile, seemingly harmonious beauty of a simplistically or incontestably recycled past.

Against the objection that it may seem fanciful to discuss mere architectural features in 'heavy' theoretical terms, stand the efforts of architectural writers and theorists of material culture, as well as the, admittedly, more poetic, phenomenological studies of space by Gaston Bachelard. His images of the cottage and the manor, albeit applied to domestic living spaces, feel equally apt in describing elements of the fascination of the Round Room due to its double structure of the domestic, even homely, and the public, or representative: 'The two extreme realities of cottage and manor ... take into account our need for retreat and expansion, for simplicity and magnificence.' Ultimately, Bachelard adds, these 'alternating daydreams cease to be rivals' (Bachelard, 1958; 1994, p.65). This reference to the private and the public respectively may be one attraction of the Round Room, particularly its ability to hold such apparently opposed materialisations of space in suspense, or even balance.

Bachelard's reflections on 'nests', too, resonate with the Round Room, 'nested' as it is between the two larger spaces.

'Our house, apprehended in its dream potentiality, becomes a nest in the world, and we shall live there in complete confidence. The nest, quite as much as the oneiric house, and the oneiric house quite as much as the nest – if we ourselves are at the origin of our dreams – knows nothing of the hostility of the world' (Bachelard, 1994, p.103).

Connotations of nostalgia aside, the Round Room does indeed possess or at least exude a sense of safety, which may lend it the permission to dream; its 'nestling' condition allowing the imaginative, even utopian projection into spaces, times and scenarios, both personal and political, that counter present realities.

In particular, I have tried to identify what the effect of a domed window that defines a 'room' may be. (Figs 36 and 37) Natural light and its constant changes – accentuated by the whiteness of the walls – are a striking attribute of the Round Room and a further element of its appeal. What is more, the light pours in from above, as it were, enveloping the visitor of the space. Indeed, my first impression on

entering it, on an admittedly bright spring day, after I had learnt that I would work in it as opposed to just visiting it, was of being overwhelmed by its vivid luminosity and airiness. Here, Bachelard's words come close to what may fuel the space's pull:

'The image of these houses that integrate the wind, aspire to the lightness of air, and bear on the tree of their impossible growth a nest all ready to fly away ... is of value for a general thesis on the imagination, because, without the poet's knowing it apparently, it is touched by the attraction of opposites' (Bachelard, 1994, p.52).

Bachelard's words not only touch on the hybrid quality of the space, they also capture its definition, as it were, by light which results in its propensity for a kind of utopian breeziness.

A contradictory note may be struck by remarks in Bachelard's last chapter 'the phenomenology of roundness'. Although it makes reference to 'images of roundness' rather than actual spaces, an echo of his words can be detected in the effect that the windowless circular walls of the Round Room have:

'These images (of roundness) blot out the world, and they have no past. They do not stem from an earlier experience. We can be sure that they are quite metapsychological. They give us a lesson in solitude. For a brief instant we must take them for ourselves alone. If we take them in their suddenness, we realize that we think of nothing else, that we are entirely in the being of this expression. If we submit to the hypnotic power of such expressions, suddenly we find ourselves entirely in the roundness of this being, we live in the roundness of life, like a walnut that becomes round in its shell' (Bachelard, 1994, pp.233-4).

The self-contained air that Bachelard alludes to forms another facet of the space that accounts for a sense of satisfaction felt by the visitor. Yet this sensation of rightful being in the fullness of the world is complicated by opposing features, such as the doors, as explained earlier, as well as the space's flight-like airiness.

These post-productive musings have tried to account for the impressions and initial 'vision' for the exhibition after some time spent in the space. The resulting idea for the project was to create a possibly slightly overwhelming sensation of the complexity of the space for the viewer, an acknowledgement of its beauty, indeed, harmony or 'roundness' while not disregarding the conflicting features or disturbances that also define its presence.

1.2.2 Historical Research into Exhibition Venue

In order to understand the exhibition space better, research was conducted into the history of Old College and the origins of the Round Room and the Talbot Rice and Georgian Galleries. Due to time constraints this contextual research was limited. Of the two books consulted, Andrew G Fraser's (1989) *The Building of Old College, Adam, Playfair & The University of Edinburgh* proved to be the more productive, as it provided information on the spaces themselves. The other, Robert D Anderson's (2003) *The University of Edinburgh, An illustrated history* contained, as the title suggests, relevant visual illustrations.

Both sources discuss the building in the context of the history of the University and the changing philosophy of and demands on education as well as local, national and internal politics especially during the late 18th and early 19th century. The original design, including the interior decoration, by Scotland's foremost neo-classical architect Robert Adam (1728 - 1792) was later changed and completed by his local successor, a young William Playfair (1789 – 1857).

The following quote indicates the origin of both the White Gallery and the Round Room:

'What is now the Talbot Rice Gallery appears to have been a Chemistry classroom – 'a huge top-lit hall able to seat well over 500 students'. ... 'The Chemistry classroom ... was much the largest in the College and was used for many years for the annual graduation ceremonies (it has since been stripped out and refitted as a modern exhibition space for the Talbot Rice Gallery). The linking part of this building beside the Museum was given over to Professor Jameson and Natural History, with the classroom upstairs and the Natural History stuffing room below' (Fraser, 1989, p.191). (See Fig. 38)

These remarks by Fraser lead me to the conclusion that the current Round Room was originally the Natural History classroom. This assumption is confirmed by the caption accompanying a drawing of the section of the buildings in the south-west corner of Old College which mentions 'the Natural History Classroom under a cupola in the upper storey' (Fraser, 1989, p.192/3). The current Georgian Gallery

seems to have been the upper part of the Natural History Museum which the University assigned to house the substantial natural history collection of its eminent member, Professor Robert Jameson (1774 – 1854). In spite of its eclecticism, which is reminiscent of the (much older) Wunderkammer rather than a modern scientific museum, Jameson's collection became the basis for what is now the Royal Museum of Scotland (University of Edinburgh web site).

As will be seen, the scientific provenance of the Round Room, especially its connection with 'natural history' permeated my project. (See also Thirkell, 2007. In: Montada)

1.3 Phase I Summer/Autumn/Winter 2006

1.3.1 Research on Ultra-violet Paints

In the early stages of the project it was envisaged to base the aesthetic concept on the use of light-sensitive colours/paints to make maximum use of the special light conditions in the room. Ultra-violet paints dry to an invisible film when viewed under normal light conditions with the result that the imagery would only be visible in sufficiently bright light. This effect would allow a gradual, even partial illumination depending on weather (and light) conditions. Yet, research into the possibilities of such so-called 'black light' paints showed that the colours would not simply become visible after adequate exposure to natural light. As their name suggests, special 'black light' was needed. This alone would not have deterred me. Neither would the challenge of a printing process that involved colour layers which dried to an invisible film and which would have made it extremely difficult to register each layer during the printing process. (See Appendix on screenprinting.) Before this particular problem could be resolved, I learnt that the currently available paints, in addition to the presence of black light, also require absolute darkness to be visible, rather than merely reacting to a localised exposure of black light, as had been hoped. The plan envisaged a system where, in the naturally lit room, black light would be projected onto different areas, maybe circulating or moving to illuminate diverse parts of the space. In this way the hitherto invisible colours would be brought into existence in an allusion to the Wunderkammer associations of the early scientific collection and the space's multiple identities.

The technical requirement of a completely darkened space meant that this idea had to be rejected altogether. Proceeding with the plan would have implied that the wonderful and architecturally dominant feature of the room, the domed ceiling window, would have to be covered up. Given my personal delight in the 'lightness' of the space as well as the intention to create a site-specific work, such a procedure would have constituted a misuse of the room's particularity and a failure to respond to the planned site-specificity.

With the initial opening date of the exhibition in early summer, it seemed imperative to make use of the brilliant and varied light conditions that the Round Room affords. As it eventually turned out, the opening took place in April 2007 and the exhibition lasted until the beginning of June. Although not quite yet summer, the usual opening hours for the gallery from ten in the morning to five in the afternoon meant that the exhibition would be seen during day light.

The interest in the use of colours that dried to an invisible film was related to my concern of dramatising the white space of the gallery. It would result in the viewer not seeing anything upon entering the room. Thereby the white 'neutral' space of the modernist cube, as in the adjacent main gallery, would be alluded to or 'repeated'. The gradual emergence of the colours would appear as a kind of phantasmagoria or fake. Yet it would not be clear which was the fake, the colours or the blankness. This approach appeared as a fitting continuation and development of my concerns in the Zement exhibition, especially the creation of an uncertainty or instability of the image, and thus vision itself. (See Chapter III.3 and Chapter V.2.) It would also hint at the spectacular display effects of consumerist culture and thus take up and intensify the references already present in the Zement exhibition. Another reason for this shape-shifting was my wish to highlight the ephemeral or performance character of my own but also any exhibition as well as the interstitial quality of the Round Room, which can be almost regarded as a space in parenthesis. See Section 1.2, pp. 126-131 above. Sections 1.3.2, pp.135-156, on the creation of the imagery and 1.4.2, pp.158-161, on the installation of the exhibition will demonstrate how such an effect in the absence of black light paints was achieved.

In the actual installation, the temporary character of the space was emphasized by the method of attaching the printed sheets relatively loosely to the wall instead of a more permanent or 'firm' fixing, such as a wallpaper-like pasting onto the wall. This 'intermediary' or hybrid position of the space was also accentuated through an aesthetic which can be described as a sort of 'inscription' on to white paper rather than a coloured background. By preserving the white 'ground' of the modernist gallery space in this manner, the pattern/inscription could be argued to function in the manner of temporary writing, even graffiti-like scrawling, as will be seen later. Indeed, the title of the exhibition, the German word 'Schnörkeleien' which denotes an artful doodling, plays on such connotations.

1.3.2 Creation of Imagery

New Forms/Patterns

In the work that preceded the exhibition in the Round Room, the 'patterns' that form the basis or 'principle' of my aesthetic approach were executed by printing individual 'motifs' in the print workshop. These were then arranged and photocopied on to acetate to form the stencils or basic matrices for printing. (See Appendix on screenprinting.)

In the autumn of 2005, before it was known where the second exhibition which was to form the final part of the PhD would take place, I had experimented in Photoshop with a new basic form instead of the amalgamation of lines that had been the principal underlying unit of all the previous work. (Fig. 39) A new single line was selected from my 'original' source of forms and marks. (Fig. 40) 'Playing' with this line yielded some intriguing possibilities, but without a specific project in place, it was not practicable to take these experiments any further. (Figs 41 & 42)

After the Round Room exhibition space had been secured, it was possible to develop these tentative forms. Struck by the physicality of the decorative patterns seen up close from the balcony of the Georgian Gallery (Fig. 31), two of the decorative plant-based reliefs, the familiar palmette and its close relative, the acanthus or lotus of the Georgian Gallery were re-created in Photoshop. The choice

of these motifs seemed fitting as my work to date had an affinity with the decorative. Moreover, the simple, 'drawn' quality of the décor lent itself to being replicated by the 'ready-made' lines that had been a feature of previous prints as will be further explained in the section on 'The Line or Mark' below.

To base the imagery on Playfair's design from the 1820s with its overtones of biological forms not only complied with the goal of site-specificity, it could also be said to represent a playful recycling of Edinburgh's Georgian history. It functioned as a general reference to the neo-classical roots of Old College while its plant-based forms evoked the specific use of the Round Room itself as part of the Natural Science tract of the University well into the 20th century.

In this way, the self-conscious repetition of the selected motifs hints at the virulent recycling of history via mass media and consumerist modes that is a feature of recent times, despite the fact that historically such recycling is nothing new. The neo-classical motifs themselves, after all, are a re-fashioning of earlier classical forms. The work thus aimed to pose questions as to our relationship to history and the values we attach to its physical manifestations, such as buildings and their design.

The history of ornament provides another reference point (Riegl, 1893, 1992; Gombrich, 1979; Grabar, 1992; Frank & Hartung, eds., 2001; Raulet & Schmidt, eds., 2001; Trilling 2003). One thinks of its strong presence as part of the primitivising strain of early Modernism as observed in the work of Gauguin and Matisse. This is in contrast to its absence in modernist design and high modernist painting despite the fact that often such hostility was more of an attitude rather than reality, vide Pollock or Frankenthaler. Postmodernism's reaction to modernism was partly fuelled by a rediscovery and revelling in the ornamental and decorative as in the much-quoted example of James Stirling's architectural design of the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, Germany. Subsequent developments in art include a recovering of the decorative and ornamental as part of postmodernism's emphasis on play and the seemingly superfluous (Brüderlin, ed. 2001; Husselsin-Arco & Vogler, eds. 2009). My own interest is driven by this postmodernist re-engagement with ornament, affiliated with a critique of the decorative's association with the

merely superficial, even frivolous and feminine. In contrast, ornament can be seen to possess deeper meaning as a metaphor for artistic invention, as a signifier of individual and national values as well as abstract principles underlying the familiar, visible structures of the world (Frank & Hartung, eds., 2001, pp.7-10). Moreover, in the work of female artists of the 1970s, most notably Miriam Shapiro and Joyce Kozloff, ornament's supposed (feminine) excess can and has been pitched as a reaction to and against (masculine) high modernist and conceptual art which appeared to its critics to be indicative of socio-technical rational instrumentalism. (See Swartz, ed. 2007, especially Balducci, in Swartz, pp.43–48)

Research into the acanthus and palmette seems to indicate that the two motifs not only have a history that dates back to classical times, but even further to Egypt (Riegl, 1893, 1992). Their close affinity with the arabesque also connects them to Islamic and Chinese art, in other words, despite their 'classical' inheritance – and the implication of a 'pure' Western trajectory - they are hybrid or impure forms (Riegl, 1893, 1992; Schimmel, 2001, in Brüderlin, ed. pp.30-35). The relevance of this concept to the site and the project has already been discussed.

In the first reproduction of the two motifs in Photoshop the earlier set of marks was used, but soon only a one line mark was employed. (Figs 39 and 40) After creating the stencils in Photoshop, the first printing experiments focussed on the individual figures and the possibilities of organizing them into sequences or overall patterns. They could be arranged as a continuous pattern via multiple repetitions that add up to an all-over designed sheet which in itself could then be repeated. (Fig. 43; Figures 7 and 9 show such examples from the exhibition in the Galerie Zement.) With this approach there were potentially a huge number of modifications in how individual sheets could be designed, such as reversing the image form, repeating it with each figure at a varying distance from the next, or repeating it but with differently spaced overlaps with the adjoining figure and so on. Another variant of the all-over pattern can be created by scaling the basic figure up or down and creating new composite figures from the differently sized versions as done previously in the 18th century look-a-like *Prototypes* of 2002. (Fig. 3)

During these early experiments it became evident that the palmette figure needed to be re-worked. The repetition of the individual lines that produces the shape had resulted in a 'bunching' or merging of the lines so that these could not be read separately. (Fig. 44) Not only were they unsatisfactory as image forms, it was also not possible to perceive clearly the repetition that was crucial to the ethos of the project. Constructing a less fused shape meant that the individual marks could be better distinguished. (Fig. 45)

The repetition of the single line which made up an individual motif was amalgamated into a single shape or stencil for printing. This meant that the whole shape could only be executed in one colour. In a later step the same shape was digitally created in such a way as to explore the potential of using different colours for each individual line. (Figs 46 and 47) This avenue of investigation was not further pursued as the introduction of differently coloured individual lines would have overcomplicated the project. It was obvious from the brief digital experiments that appropriate colour schemes would have to be executed through time-consuming actual trial printing in the workshop as the limitations of Photoshop made it unsuitable to work out such intricate colour schemes on screen.

Colours/Pigments

In the exhibition for Galerie Zement so-called interference colours had been applied as a background. Their main characteristic is that the colour, depending on the light conditions and the viewer's position, 'flips' between two shades. For example, the so-called 'Magic Blue' that was used as a background in this image from the Zement exhibition, appears as a silvery grey in one direction, a brilliant blue in the other. (Figs 6 and 7) When it became clear that it would be unfeasible to use photoluminescent colours, as explained in Section 1.3.1, the interference colours were investigated extensively. These colours had the potential to introduce an aspect of the instability of vision and the spectacular condition that had been the goal of the research into blacklight paints although the result is not quite so dramatic as initially envisioned. Moreover, a characteristic of some of the interference colours approximates to those of the blacklight paints in that they also dry to an almost invisible hue when printed on to white. This feature was used to create a 'background' as will be explained further below.

Keen to develop the chameleon-like qualities of the paints, the interference acrylics by the American company Golden were tested. The much larger transference pigment range of the German specialist colour manufacturer and distributor Kremer was also analysed. On a practical level, the Golden acrylics were ready mixed and easy to use, but offered a limited palette of primary colours only. By contrast, the Kremer pigments had to be made up into a paste for printing, each reacting slightly differently and yielding very disparate results. There is hardly any information available on these colours, therefore much trial and error was involved, especially since the colour chart (an actual as opposed to a reproduction chart) was unreliable. This part of the experimentation had to establish the most appropriate pigments for the project.

Another feature of the transference pigments is that in order to be clearly visible, they call for a darker underprinting, ideally black. Instead of the harsh black underprinting, a range of alternatives were examined, such as different greys and the ordinary base colours to which the interference paint was related, such as viridian green under a green interference ink and so on. However, it turned out that black was the most effective underpaint to bring out the transference effect.

It was also detected that the Golden acrylics had limited covering power and were too delicate for the intended purpose of printing the image forms. They were best suited to cover subtle, large area effects rather than the fine lines of the re-created acanthus and palmette since they lacked the substance that was necessary to make the 'filigree' quality of the marks legible. But their very lack of effect (compared to the metallic glitter and brightness of most of the Kremer pigments) made them very suitable to being used as a 'back-' or 'underground'. They dry to an almost invisible pale yellow-brown and, depending on the viewer's angle of vision, they appear non-existent at first glance, only to reveal themselves as a shimmering translucent film on closer inspection. In this sense, they came closest to the original intention of creating an effect of a white ground which merges with the whiteness of the white cube gallery space and only reveals itself at a second glance.

In the earlier phase it was even considered to print the whole show exclusively in pearlescent white Golden ink. As with other Golden transference inks, the image is only visible when the sheet is viewed at an angle against the light. The trial sheets that were executed with this idea in mind, were, however, not brought to a resolution as the interest in the potential of the spectacular Kremer pigments became an overriding concern.

The faint visibility of the Golden acrylics and pearlescent white led to the idea of their being used as a 'background'. The notion of 'background' usually implies the existence of a 'middle' and a 'fore ground' in the language of perspectival visual representation. However, as the visual forms of the first layer were virtually 'flush' with the paper, there was very little sense of depth added through their presence. This was quite important as the 'imagery' on the whole was intended to retain the quality of a 'mere' surface, or a single layer of one tumultuous plane - albeit one that was 'complicated' by the 'shadow', as will be explained further below. It is immaterial that in order to achieve this seemingly single plane multiple printing layers were necessary. The motivation for this emphasis on the mere surface was as a comment on the superficial quality of contemporary visual culture which, moreover, can to some degree be affiliated with the culture of printed matter as discussed in Chapters III.4 and III.5 respectively.

What was the rationale for the adoption of the striking Kremer pigments? As already indicated, they have a dramatic quality. Their metallic sheen even implies a metaphorical 'brassiness'. Such colours have become ever more popular in the everyday consumer environment in recent years whether it is in the appearance of cars or paper products such as birthday cards or marketing material. The latter especially play on the 'now you see it, now you don't' quality that new commercial colour printing techniques allow. While the effects may be similar, the reason for the use of such pigments in the art context – apart from the surprise factor due to the relative novelty – is because the gallery space allows for a reflection on the very spectacular nature that the pigments create. In the everyday context of consumption such effects serve the respective marketing purposes of the product in question, or enhance its desirability as a commodity by giving it a 'cutting edge look'. While art is certainly not free of similar traits, and may even trade on them,

the gallery context isolates seemingly everyday objects and images from their usual environment, lends ambiguity and, hence produces a different kind of affect and the potential for reflection. In the final installation, the pigments produced a dramatisation of this spectacular quality in quite a visceral way.

For the final prints the choice of colours consisted of the most effective variations of green and red which were selected from the previously tested pigments. This restriction aimed to link the colour scheme of the project to the dominant colours of the decoration in the roof area of the adjoining Georgian Gallery. In addition to plaster white and gold, these consist of a turquoise green and a strong, almost oxblood red. (Fig. 30) The planned colour scheme had initially included gold but the experiments with gold pigments and acrylics during Phase I did not yield a gold that integrated well with the other colours. The tried pigments were either too 'yellow', too bright and metallic, unpleasantly green or muddily black. Gold was therefore omitted from the final colour scheme.

The limited basic colour palette for the final prints is, in fact, doubled, due to the dual colour quality of the interference pigments. A golden red becomes a rose red. A metallic 'grass' green turns into a bright red. Pale watery blue green converts to pallid purplish red; turquoise green to an eye-catching blue-green; a dark, brass-flecked gold yields yet a different green and red. These striking effects, in addition to their reference to the surfaces of consumption, result in a demonstration of the instability of vision, ultimately a visceral proof of the performativity of vision.

The Line or Mark

In constructing the new imagery, it seemed a logical step to reduce the previous 'set of marks', which had formed the basis of all my work since 1999, including the prints for Galerie Zement, to a single line. Both the conglomeration of marks as well as the single line were hand drawn pencil marks derived from a drawing which had been turned into a screenprint in 1995 (Pelzer-Montada, 2001; Thirkell, 2007). (Fig. 48) These lines were not entirely abstract or random. In the 'original' drawing they had had an illustrative function. But when taken on their own, these autographic marks simply carried connotations of 'expressiveness'. They developed into the basic 'morphemes' of my work in a procedure of deconstructing the print made in

1995 by enlarging and remixing the formal elements/stencils that constituted it. (Figs 49 and 50) Eventually in 1999, owing to a process of further reduction, only individual lines or combinations of lines from the source forms were isolated. One of these conglomeration of lines became the basis of the future prints. (Fig. 39)

The instigation for this procedure was the desire to drive the possibility of repetition to an extreme point. The main reason for this strategy lies in the fact that repetition is inherent not only to the concept and function of the print but also in the printing process itself. This occurs in the form of newsprint sheets that are used to test colour; ink consistency; the quality of the stencil, correct registration and the adjustments of the printing press to ensure even printing. (Fig. 51) Evidence of this repetition or reproducibility is more often than not suppressed in the final print, but it is these test sheets with their multiple repetitions that had led to the idea to exploit the repeat imagery as the conceptual basis for the work. This fascination with repetition is, of course, nothing new in art. Apart from the obvious example of Pop artists Warhol and Rauschenberg, Conceptualist Mel Bochner and postmodernist Thomas Bayerle come to mind. Yet, as far as is known, the repetition of a single line or lines in the manner illustrated in this thesis is unique.

The decrease in the recent work to the single line is therefore a self-conscious harking back to a tenuous moment of origin. Given the importance of the artist's marks in art history, this reduction constitutes a more obvious, if tongue-in-cheek option for the 'founding' element of an aesthetic project than the multiple marks with which I had previously worked. Traditional art history's obsession with authenticity and originality is closely affiliated with the artist's 'mark' or signature style at the level of the brush stroke or line – albeit not literally, in the sense of the isolation of a single mark or line. While some strands of modernism tried to efface this fetishisation of the mark or line, others sanctified it. In the case of Surrealism, the suppression of the loaded mark of art history as a case of 'self-expression' happened via automatism, while Abstract Expressionism in its heroic phase of Pollock's 'drips' seemingly exalted it. The demise of modernism is closely affiliated with a querying of the artist's singular autographic mark as in the work of Rauschenberg, Johns, Stella, Warhol and others. Lichtenstein's familiar series of works of the mid-1960s not only repressed the autographic mark through its

adoption of the graphic language of comics but he also expressly isolated the individual brush stroke of modernism as one of his themes. (See, for example, Lichtenstein's *Big Painting*, 1965.)

In addition to such art-historical references, the repetition of a seemingly expressive mark by technical means raises questions as to its authenticity and ultimately points to the ever spiralling technologisation or semioticisation of aspects of nature and social life. The processes are similar. Particular elements are firstly selected or isolated and then reproduced, be they genomes or 'news events'. A further escalation in repeatability occurs through the multiple direct accessing points that digital technologies have made possible on the internet. This is the broader context in which the procedure described above may be read.

The adoption of the single line for the Round Room project entailed a number of practical/theoretical problems, such as the size and 'look' of the line. The original single line measured only a few centimetres. What size should it be to suit the current project and space? A similar question arose as to the dimensions of the image forms that were comprised of the line. This issue was related to the size of the paper and the overall concept for the show, as will be illustrated in the section on the installation further below.

As to the 'look' of the line, the following problem arose: The first digital enlargement of the original pencil line showed up the texture that becomes visible when a pencil is drawn across the grain of high quality art paper. Its slightly jagged, 'imperfect' quality was welcome as it carries connotations of the 'hand-made' as opposed to the technologically created. (This is despite the fact that it is possible to simulate such textured effects digitally.) When the size of the line was further increased digitally, its edges became pixellated. The digital elimination of the pixellation produced a smooth, perfect looking line. However, after actually screenprinting the cleaned up line and contrasting it with the 'rougher' one, it was the latter that was ultimately chosen as it seemed to retain the 'look' of a pencil line where the different pressure of the hand creates a mark that varies in density and smoothness. (Fig. 52) My concern was to preserve this suggestion of the hand-made and 'haptic' as it is, after all, associated with the unique. In making this line the basis of multiple

repetitions an element of contradiction was injected into the image forms that were created in this way. With their contrasting associations of technically perfect reproduction on the one hand and the uniquely hand-made on the other, these attained a Sisyphusian, compulsive quality, perhaps even a 'ludicrous' one – in the sense of the eccentric or exaggerated as well as the word's derivation from 'ludere' – to play.

The hand-drawn element in combination with its multiple repetitions can be related to the often futile or cumbersome attempts of preserving older forms of technology. This is in contrast to the escalating digitisation at so many levels of our daily environment that it is often impossible to even be aware of them. More specifically, in relation to printmaking, the multiplied 'hand-drawn' line alludes to the older forms of printmaking, especially the emphasis on the autographic mark in its modernist phase. Connotations of 'craft' and 'skill' affiliated with the hand-made contrast with the seemingly cold mechanics of mere digital technology.

The adoption of the single line also made it more feasible to 'control' the visual forms or shapes that were created with it. Whereas the earlier 'conglomeration' of marks almost created its own 'imagery' (an element that had been part of the fascination of working in this manner), the single line functioned more unequivocally as a basic 'ready made' drawing unit. It also minimized, if not totally avoided, the inevitable 'fuzziness' that the repetition of a set of drawn lines involves as one can never control every aspect of the shape. It further evaded the anthropomorphic quality that the previous assemblage of marks had entailed. These had been deliberately foregrounded in earlier work, such as the *Cyborg Series* of 1999. (Figs 53 - 55) By contrast, this quality was obscured in the more pattern-like designs, such as the works for the Zement exhibition. (Figs 5 and 9) As the next section shows, the creation of the imagery yielded both intended as well as unintended, yet welcome 'effects'.

'Deconstruction' of Imagery/Pattern

The imagery of the Round Room project consists – in addition to the full acanthus and palmette motifs and the single basic line as explained earlier – of 'deconstructed' elements of both of these motifs. These are largely randomly

configured, partial versions of the complete forms which variously miss elements of the full design. (Figs 56 and 57) These deconstructed components emerged through the somewhat tedious making process of the acanthus and palmette in Photoshop. The layering function in Photoshop bears a similarity to the different layers in printmaking, except that it allows an infinitely easier 'stacking' of different image elements than printmaking does. In assembling the acanthus and palmette out of the repetition of the single line by working with layers in Photoshop, it became apparent that rather than merely using the whole image/pattern, each could be deployed in various stages of completion.

This 'fitted' my project for a number of reasons. Due to the provenance of the basic motifs of acanthus and palmette from plant-derived sources, the incomplete shapes take on the connotation of 'growth'. Moreover, the sinuous, yet 'spiky' and rigid appearance of the incomplete elements bears reference to life forms such as crustaceans or microscopic details of plants or minerals. At the same time, there is a sense of 'artificiality' in the visual appearance of the forms which do not resemble clearly any familiar plant or animal species. These factors point to the proliferation of genetic processes that augment or generate new forms of life out of existing ones, such as the growth of human organs from cells of the 'original'.² In relation to the discipline of printmaking, the overt repetition of fragmented forms ties in neatly with the reflection on the reproductive character of the different stages of the print making process.

In the immediate context of the Talbot Rice Gallery space and the neo-classical derivation of the basic motifs the deconstruction carries another allusion. Viewed in terms of a de-composition, the partial elements, literally and metaphorically, take on a ruinous, stultified air. The sheer profligacy of the multiplied forms may point to the, albeit piecemeal, incorporation of what were once elevated and 'high cultural' signifiers into the recycling of 'history' by popular postmodern culture and its consumer economy. (Jameson, 1991)

In relation to the critical engagement of my work with modernism, the self-conscious taking apart of autographic marks represents a belated deconstruction of

expressionist painting. At a purely pragmatic level, the decomposition of the shapes increased the potential 'vocabulary' for the design.

The 'Shadow'

The pattern-like designs that had been created for the first exhibition tended to be flat although multiple superimpositions of the configuration of lines were employed to introduce an element of depth. In fact, this suggestion of depth or a three-dimensional aspect through pure repetition is one of the features of this earlier work. (Fig. 58) This simulation of depth was enhanced in the new work by the creation of an apparent shadow through the repetition of the self-same line.

Drawn lines as such tend to be flat. Their angle or direction, their varying thickness or combination with other lines may hint at depth or serve to fashion it, but as such, the drawn line resolutely adheres to the surface of the paper or support. It does not cast a shadow as of itself. The introduction into the linear patterns of a (repeated) greyish line at a distance from the 'main' line therefore creates an inconsistency, a visual incongruence. Still, this 'shadow effect' results not only in the suggestion of a three dimensional appearance. In conjunction with the precision of the linear design the shadow assumes an aspect of the 'photographic'. Paradoxically, the desired effect is most strikingly evident in photographs of the prints. (See Fig. 57.) This photographic connotation functions as a self-conscious, yet playful acknowledgement of the dominance of camera-based images in art/printmaking in contrast to the 'hand-made' quality of much drawing and painting. Simultaneously it is a nod in the direction of the erosion of those differences which especially digital media have made possible. Although the comparison may be far-fetched: The shadow effect in this new work is a crude manifestation of a digital aesthetic that can, for example, be observed in the film *Toy Story* (John Lasseter, 1995). *Toy Story* is a mixture of 'traditionally' painted or drawn animated forms that appear 'photographic', an effect that is achieved by means of smoothly toned three dimensional shapes. Today the creators of video games constantly aim to move nearer to closing the gap between the hand-drawn and the photographic. But technology also makes the reverse possible: the appearance of the hand-drawn in a conventionally camera-based film like *A Scanner Darkly* by Richard Linklater (2006) with the aid of rotoscoping, as explained on page 110.

These examples typify contradictory pleasures that new technologies make possible and which my aesthetic choices imply: On the one hand, digital perfection satisfies the desire to surpass through technology that which is achievable by the mere effort of the human hand or older forms of technology, either in terms of complexity, appearance or sheer quantity. On the other hand, current visual forms technically re-create what has been lost in the inevitable destruction or obsolescence of older forms of production and/or representation. In the case of the animated film, rotoscoping recovers the enjoyment that could be had from line-drawn cel animation.

On a practical level I experimented to find out just how wide the distance between the main line and the grey 'shadow' line had to be for the latter to be read as 'shadow'. A printing of the shadow too close to the main image form was visually as unsatisfactory as a distance too far. In either case, the desired three-dimensional effect did not sufficiently materialise. The most convincing gap turned out to be approximately five to six millimetres. For the prints that eventually made up the installation this fissure was maintained.

Yet there was a hazardous element to estimating the distance of the shadow. Unlike in Photoshop which allows pixel-wide, precise measuring, the gap had to be judged each time across the whole image layer/stencil on the printing bed by eyesight alone. This resulted in a disparity or variation that ideally should have been eliminated for the sake of greater consistency and precision with their connotation of technical perfection.

Notwithstanding this illusion of depth, a flat surface effect was desired for reasons already mentioned. In the trial phase until Christmas 2006 all the shadows and all the layers of black had been printed first, 'in one go', before the colour layers, for the simple reason of speeding up the printing process. This resulted in the effect that all the subsequently printed colours appeared as lying on the same pictorial plane, making the image look too flat. Subtle as it was intended to be, pictorial depth was thus too much minimised. In the penultimate printing phase, this unwanted, overly flat effect was avoided by a different sequencing of the printing of

the different colours with their black underprinting and the shadow. Each colour with its 'shadow' was printed separately, first the 'shadow', then the black, and last the actual colour. Hence, the next layer of colour/pattern, which inevitably traversed parts of the previous colour/pattern, read more clearly in terms of relative pictorial depth.

Material Support for the Imagery

During Phase I a variety of sizes and types of paper were tested as the basis for the imagery. Water colour paper is the customary material in most printmaking despite the fact that a huge variety of supports are now typical of an 'extended' notion of printmaking practice (Saunders and Miles, 2006 and Chapter III.5, p.103-104). Even so, a whole chapter could be dedicated to the medium of paper, its broader cultural and art historical significance and the difference it can make to the appearance and perception of a print.³

Although good quality water colour paper is a hugely satisfying surface to print on, it was not employed in the final print run for the exhibition. This was due to its associations with the 'fine art' print as I will explain further below.

Two semi-transparent papers were assessed, one the so-called 'bread and butter' paper which is a brownish coloured, almost translucent, very cheap and therefore not very durable material. The other was tracing paper which is similarly transparent and cheap. Ultimately these types of papers were also not utilized for reasons that I will explain below. This was quite apart from technical problems, such as the creasing of the tracing paper with the impact of the water-based, non-toxic screenprinting inks that are mandatory at Edinburgh Printmakers.

The reason for trying out these particular types of semi-translucent papers was tied to an idea for the final installation. This envisaged the hanging of the paper sheets from the rotunda ceiling window across the circular space. Viewers would then have to trace their way around and through the suspended pieces much as one passes through rows of closely hung washing lines. Such a concept for the final exhibition would have been a translation into room size of a smaller piece, the *Specimen Series*, for the Zement exhibition. Transparent and semi-transparent small sheets

hung in three rows at different heights in front of the wall to simulate an experimental environment such as a laboratory, or indeed, an artist's studio. (Fig.59) The rationale for such a display, albeit at room size, in the Round Room, was linked at one level to the idea of a laboratory due to the affiliation of the space with science, as explained earlier. At another level it was connected to creating a disorienting situation for the viewer, linked to the notion of the performativity of vision, as explained in Chapter III.3, especially pp.76-78. However, this idea was abandoned for practical/aesthetic reasons. The diameter of the rotunda of approximately four metres was insufficiently large to hang rows of paper that would possess enough physical presence to function as a semi-sculptural intervention **and** simultaneously leave adequate space for viewers to walk around and through the piece.

The paper that was eventually employed was a so-called 'poster paper'. Its advantages, when compared to most water colour paper, were its availability in a relatively large size (119 x 154 cm) as well as its special surface quality. It is slightly coated on one side with a shiny, smooth and plastic-like appearance. In other words, it is as far removed from traditional 'art print' paper as possible. While distancing the prints from being an incarnation of the 'fine art print', paper remained the preferred support for the Round Room project, so as to relate the work to the most prevalent medium of printed matter, both within the art context as well as in everyday life. Despite the increasing importance of digital communication, printed material has not disappeared in spite of the early promise of a 'paperless' office, for example. On the contrary, both the quality and the quantity of printed matter appear to expand. Printed surfaces extend beyond the traditional newspapers, magazines and brochures to designs printed on shop fronts, commercial banners and packaging to all types of fabric and manner of decorative or useful objects. One thinks of the ever more prevalent banners on the facades of inner city buildings which are being refurbished, some consisting of advertising. Others carry a trompe l'oeil reproduction of the façade behind them. Both examples serve to highlight print's role as spectacle. (The latter reference was taken up in the final work by the fact that the installation, together with the eye-catching colour display, functioned as one single piece and hence created an arresting, even spectacular impression for the viewer.)

An additional motivation for the choice of paper as the basic material for this project, and more specifically the poster paper, is connected to a sense of the ephemeral that the installation was intended to suggest. The transitional status of the room, its location between the two large exhibitions areas, its intermittent functioning as a gallery space, its multiple contradictory references seemed more aptly conveyed by this 'insubstantial' type of paper. It signals non-permanence in contrast to the archival durability of the more weighty water colour paper.

The installation also demanded a 'light' touch that did not distract from the (literal) lightness of the room. (This is not to say that the communication of such lightness necessarily implies 'light' materials, if one thinks of some steel works by sculptor Richard Serra, for example, his *Promenade* at the Grand Palais in Paris in 2008, that appear almost weightless. (Section 1.4 on the final installation will show that a 'heavier' mode of display was investigated, but ultimately rejected on this occasion.) To accentuate this weightlessness the 'look' of my work needed a provisional quality, of a mere visit paid to the space, almost a mirage. This short-lived attribute of the installation was intended to underline not only the temporal nature of exhibiting itself but also the evanescent in contemporary culture of which printed matter is a prime example.

To Wallpaper or not to Wallpaper?

As already with the work for the Galerie Zement, the pattern-like imagery of the current work makes an obvious reference to wallpaper despite the modular display of its unique sheets. Many wall papers do not have an overly three-dimensional quality as this can result in a potentially perturbing distortion of the actual architectural space. There are however exceptions, most notably the pictorial wallpapers of the 18th and 19th century and recent post-modern wallpapers that deliberately and wittily confound the actual with an illusionary space and vice versa (Saunders, 2002). The decorative quality, as well as the minimal depth of the imagery of what was to become *Schnörkeleien* recalls conventionally designed wallpaper, whereas the lack of repeat patterns and the modular format of the display counteract this impression.

There was the question whether to make this reference to wallpaper more manifest. The planned 'look' of the final installation determined the design of the imagery and the format, including the size of the support, in which it was going to be printed. In the earlier work for the installation in Galerie Zement large, wall-hung pieces had been constructed through a modular structure from single repeat sheets or 'units'. While not strictly speaking a wallpaper design, the repeat pattern in these created a wallpaper-like effect. The Round Room presented the option of making 'proper', that is, continuously patterned paper that would be pasted to the wall like ordinary wallpaper. The comparatively intimate atmosphere of the Round Room in contrast to its two adjoining public spaces seemed to lend itself to such an approach. Apart from its historical precedents, the notion of art as wallpaper has been a popular mode of installation display in recent art (Saunders, 2002; Saunders & Miles, 2006). Nonetheless, I chose not to proceed in this manner. There was the fear that a 'wallpaper approach' would turn this public space into a domestic environment. This would not have been wholly unwelcome, as it would have extended the decorative references of previous work, even brought them to their logical conclusion. After all, today the gallery in general has been re-conceived by certain artists as a 'home from home'. One thinks of the striking and often confrontational interventions of artists such as Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Barbara Bloom, Martin Kippenberger and, more recently, Cosima von Bonin. Artists have also commented on the position of the gallery (and by implication art) between shops/shopping and domestic spaces (Grunenberg & Hollein, 2003). Yet, despite its positive potential this approach was rejected as there was the apprehension that a 'wallpaper treatment' for this particular space might collapse it into the appearance of a domestic drawing room due to its small size. Thus there was the danger that the hybrid quality between the public and the private, as explained earlier, would become obscured rather than enhanced.

Serious thought was given to a manner which would have allowed the wallpapering of the room and prevented its concomitant 'domestication'. This consists of wallpapering **over** the cornices and the skirting board. The very precise conventions that regulate the social domestic practice of wallpapering, which exclude features such as skirting boards or door frames, would thus be overturned. Even so, this plan was dropped due to a significant practical problem, namely the circular shape

of the walls and the ensuing difficulty of pattern-creation to accommodate the geometry of the space.

Imagery and Printing

The majority of prints for the Zement exhibition were based on an all-over repetition. In each of the three large pieces on paper the individual sheets were identical. (Figs 4 and 5) *Virtual 9*, printed on nine Perspex panels, contained only one tiny alteration of a few millimetres in each panel to enhance the 3d effect of the whole set when viewed as an ensemble image. (Fig. 9) The prints for the Talbot Rice Gallery exhibition picked up on an earlier mode of constructing imagery through repetition. It had consisted in the varying recombination of the same number of different elements for each printed sheet. This had resulted in a series of unique prints (Thirkell, 2007, in: Montada). (Figs 49 and 50) The major difference of the new work compared to the earlier method consisted in a radical simplification. It was founded on the one single line as the source for all the different shapes/units/image forms and it was the repeated rearrangement of the latter that resulted in each image being 'unique'.

In order to achieve this recombination of shapes, I had to construct stencils where the image forms were spread out in such a way that they could be repeatedly printed. (Figs 60 and 61) The result should be an image that was based on repetition where the latter would only be apparent at second glance. Therefore each stencil was set in a – if necessarily undetermined – resonance with the other stencils. In addition to using the stencils in varying sequences, this 'repetition with a difference' was achieved by re-positioning the paper on the bed of the printing press. (Figs 62 and 63)

My manner of printing is quite different from the way in which many printmakers work, usually by making an edition. The latter entails a period of experimentation which results in a number of artist's proofs that have served the artist to establish the right components, colour and printing method for each element or layer. A suitably high number of sheets are initially worked on to make sure that the sample image which serves as the basis for the final printing of the edition is satisfactory. In addition to the finalised proof, often, the printmaker also keeps individual sheets of

each stage/layer to allow the recreation of a print at a later point in time. A print can be made up of any number of layers from one to twenty or more. (See Appendix on screenprinting.) In contrast to the usual procedure, my work for the two exhibitions consisted not of an edition produced in the manner described above. The prints were generated in two distinct stages which were characterised by a similar working process with the second phase building on the experience of the previous, experimental one. Phase 1 occurred from the summer of 2006 until December 2006; Phase 2 or the final printing round took place between January and April 2007.

The Practicalities of Printing – Randomness as an Approach

As mentioned above, the change in the positioning of the shapes on the printed sheet is achieved through an alteration in placing the sheet of paper on the printing press rather than the preparation of a different stencil as would usually be the case.

Keeping track of the positioning of the stencil (and hence the individual image forms) ensured that no single sheet looked identical to another. This tracking became a matter of intuitive reckoning. No mathematical formula was involved but a much vaguer system whereby a number of sheets was selected from the sum total of pieces. For each of these sheets the position of the paper was varied before printing. In this way a different positioning for the image elements was achieved by any one stencil that was being used. Thus an element of arbitrariness was introduced to the procedure. Yet, the process was not totally random as in many conceptual art practices. Some aesthetic criteria invariably came into play. Whether these were the gauging of the weight, shapes and sizes of the image elements in relation to each other and the 'ground' or in respect of the support/canvas/paper, the colours, their hues and so forth and the connotations of these elements taken altogether. (See Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006.) In this sense, the object 'speaks back'. (See chapters III.1 and V.2.) The decision making based on such 'intuitive' aesthetic and dialogical criteria may have been partially overridden by the limitations of the physical equipment and the make up of the printing stencil with its fixed distribution of forms as described above. The ensuing semi-instantaneous reaction which was necessitated by the complexity of the process became another element in the production principle of the work.

Although slightly far-fetched, the arbitrary aspect of the decision making process aims to hint at the apparent multiplication of possibilities at every level in contemporary culture, whether this applies to the choice of commercial products when shopping or even 'life choices' such as the selection of a professional path. This is despite social, cultural and economic limitations due to geography, class, race, gender and so on.⁴

As already explained, the alternative route would have been a working out of a number of designs in advance which is the more usual way of approaching a print. But following the customary procedure would have made it impossible to generate the multitude of different sheets that are essential to my methodology. There were approximately fifty different sheets printed in the experimental phase before the end of 2006. The final printing round covered nearly ninety different sheets. It is evident from these figures that an a priori working out of the design of each print would have been a Sisyphean task. The adopted methodology worked on a differently effortful level. It pitched the low key technology of screenprinting against digital technology with its potential of variability-at-infinity. This is not a totally far-fetched claim, as was borne out by the reaction to the exhibition of an art college student who was a computer-literate viewer. He commented that the experience of visiting the installation was like being in a giant screen saver.

Large format digital printing is common place today, if not necessarily so in the open-access workshop environment such as Edinburgh Printmakers. Would this have been an alternative that should have been investigated? For the following reasons I do not believe this to be the case: The pigments that were being used are not (yet) printable with the currently available large format printers. Moreover, digital printing would have posed similar problems as the conventional printing did. Since the goal was to generate multiple variations, it would have required the design of a new computer stencil for each and every individual sheet on the computer, up to ninety in total, as explained above.

Besides, there are the typical problems as to designing on a small screen. It is impossible to ascertain how the design and colour scheme work out on the large scale. The ultimate appearance of the prints therefore has to be determined in the workshop rather than on screen. In my case this would have involved the impossible task of editioning at least twenty-seven sheets – the minimum number of covering the three main circular wall sections of the Round Room.

A real digital alternative would be a completely self-generated computer design with its own in-built propensity for alteration, similar to Harold Cohen's purely computer-generated prints based on his programme AARON (Saunders and Miles, 2006,

p.11). If I had adopted such an approach in my exhibition project, there may still have been the issue of creating an output large enough to match the space.

Problems with the printing of the imagery

Analysis of the sheets printed in Phase I revealed a problem with the imagery. Many of these entailed a central 'island type' shape that did not stretch to the borders of the paper. (Fig. 64) This meant that these prints could function and be 'read' as individual images but that they did not sufficiently meet the envisaged goal of forming a continuous whole. The use of the 'island type' prints to cover the rotunda's walls would have created a totally different visual effect from the one that I had planned. Instead of placing the emphasis on the continuity across different individual pieces, the 'island' prints would highlight the modular structure and individuality of each sheet. To amend this problem during the final phase of printing I paid closer, consistent attention to the 'borders' of each sheet. In this way, the imagery in each sheet, while being different, also made possible a visual connection to the sheets surrounding it.

In case of a single large wall installation, the size of the sheets had to be resolved in advance to allow a matching between the imagery of different prints across the whole wall. As the imagery on each sheet was to be unique, it would not be possible to cut individual pieces down to the required size **after** printing, as this would have resulted in 'cut off' elements. Such examples can be seen in the first series from Phase I. (Fig. 65) Although these prints are visually effective as individual sheets, I did not deem them suitable to create an overall image-effect across the wall-space. Any cut-off part would have necessitated the continuation of the motifs on the next sheet. Such pattern continuity is most easily achieved either in a repeat pattern **or** between small numbers of individual sheets as each adjoining sheet has to be carefully balanced with its partner. As Phase II involved printing up to ninety sheets, the task of matching two or even three elements on each side of a sheet of paper to its adjoining neighbour would be gargantuan. The final printing therefore carefully avoided any 'cut-off' figures while ensuring that they did run close to the edges of the paper so as to make a visual correspondence across sheets possible.

1.4 Phase II Winter to Spring 2007

1.4.1 Final Prints

As indicated in the previous section, Phase II involved printing approximately ninety sheets according to a set of principles which had been determined after the analysis of the prints made during Phase I. There was no fixed 'sample' print which served as the blueprint for all ninety prints as each sheet underwent a similar process. The final printing followed the parameters as explained in the previous section. Specific attention was paid to the image boundaries, the distance between the shadow and the main figures, the overall distribution of the shapes and the sequencing of printing the individual layers and colours.

Having decided on the size of paper before the start of the final printing round, the size of the different pattern/image elements had to be determined. This depended on how the scale of the shapes or motifs would relate to and be 'read' in the actual exhibition space. At various stages throughout the preparation period the printed sheets were taken to the gallery to cross-check how they related to the physical space of the gallery. (Figs 66 and 67) The question arose as to whether their size should be so large as to approximate the scale of the 'originals' in the adjoining gallery. The acanthus plaster frieze just outside the Round Room on the balcony of the Georgian Gallery measured approximately forty-five centimetres. Printing the figures as large as this 'original' decor seemed inappropriate as I feared that scaling them up too much would compromise the drawn character of the line. There appears to be a limit as to the semiotic viability of the size of a drawn line if it is to carry the conventional affinity with the human hand. For reasons outlined earlier, it was important to maintain this connotation and therefore I decided to make the printed scale smaller than that of the actual decor.

The final sets of stencils also contained a greater diversity in the dimensions of the individual image forms compared to those from Phase I. The latter had been too similar in size which resulted in a lack of variety and visual interest.

The rigidity of the printing process, together with the randomised approach mentioned earlier, inevitably produced sheets with 'awkward' passages that did not

read as well as a carefully designed lay out would have. As will be explained in the next section, the final selection had to determine which ones were overall most 'successful' in terms of relating to each other and the gallery space.

1.4.2 Installation

Provisional Installation

During the final printing phase, from January to April 2007, the assumption had been that the final installation would consist of individual sheets which most likely would be fixed to the three walls that comprise the circular space of the Round Room, albeit interrupted by three doors and passage ways. The sheer quantity of prints that were being produced would hopefully allow for an alternative presentation mode should this method turn out to be unfeasible.

The majority of the sheets measured 104 x 117 cm and were calculated to cover the whole of the semi-circular main wall. Eighteen sheets, hung in three rows, six sheets to the row, were necessary to comprise the entire wall. For the two smaller walls I had calculated and marked off the appropriate area to be printed but not cut the sheets to a specific size. This was deliberate so as to accommodate the variation in the dimensions of the two smaller walls. Keeping the sheets uncut would provide flexibility to fit them to these walls.

Approximately three weeks before the final installation period all sheets were loosely stuck to the walls on a trial basis. The coverage of the largest wall created a satisfactory overall impression (Fig. 68). This was not the case in the two smaller wall sections. In retrospect, it is easy to see why this might have been so. The sheets that had been pinned to the smaller wall sections were as yet not cut to the appropriate size. (Fig. 69) The result was that this area of the installation created an effect that simply did not seem to possess enough substance to function as a valid part of the installation. This was true even though I had mentally allowed for the fact that the sheets were uncut and that the covered walls would appear unfinished. As a solution to this problem I anticipated the possibility of restricting the installation to the large wall section only. A reduced installation would result in a different piece and mood from the one that had been planned. Most regrettably it would imply forfeiting the emphasis on the interrupted circular quality of the room, as explained

earlier. I resolved to find an alternative installation method to covering the walls with the prints.

Alternative Installation Methods?

For the reasons explained in the previous section, after finishing printing at the beginning of April 2007, the search for an alternative installation method was uppermost on my mind. Instead of making the hanging as invisible as possible, as intended, alternative modes of display were researched. The first option was to attach three extravagantly decorative hanging devices, like curtain poles for example, to the main wall and hang the sheets curtain-fashion in such a way that viewers could flick through them almost as in a wallpaper or (very large) flip book. In order for the envisaged display to be effective, the devices would have needed to be designed in correspondence with the imagery and be specially crafted. This approach, however, was inadequate on this occasion. One of the pleasures of working in/with this unique room was to operate within the parameters given by its rotund shape. The pole-like contraptions would have had to be horizontally affixed to the large wall and would create three rigid lines rather than accentuating the gentle curves of the wall. Further research into this display method was therefore abandoned.

The second route that was explored consisted in finding a way of exposing the wall fixtures by which the prints were attached to the wall. Telephone calls to various distributors of magnets had established that there were magnets that worked through paper and reacted to a magnetic strip on the wall. An order to a Sheffield manufacturer for both the magnetic strip and a variety of powerful magnets in various strengths and shapes was placed to test whether this was a feasible option. There was the danger that the magnets alone would look too much like an office or commercial trade exhibition display. This would have clashed with the whole tenor of the project. To counteract this undesirable effect the fixtures would be made to look quite industrial as if the prints were bolted to the wall. A search of a number of general and specialist hardware stores resulted in the right kind of bolt, with a beautifully blue-grey, chunky octagonal metal top. The ever helpful sculpture technician at Edinburgh College of Art agreed to saw off the bolt part so that only

the head was left. This would sit on top of the flat magnet and create a 'faux' bolt. Such a simulation would satisfyingly match the mock quality of the design/images, in my view. (Figs 70 and 71)

In the event, the magnets were not used. Apart from some technical problems which could have been solved, the overall impression was that the bolts would simply be too overpowering, especially if every corner of the sheets was to be 'bolted'. Rather than highlight the ethereal quality of the paper and brightly lit room through contrast, they would heavily punctuate and detract from the rhythm of the image forms.

Final Installation

The first task consisted of choosing the best matching sheets for the large wall from the sixty or more full scale sheets. An empty main gallery space made it possible to lay out a large number of the prints on its sizeable floor. For the first time there was the chance to view a large number of the prints as an ensemble in order to determine how they related to each other. Standing on the balcony above the main gallery floor, it was possible to make a selection for the eighteen sheets required for the main wall. (Fig. 72) Viewing the images from this height afforded a comparison that would simply not have been possible by examining the images solely one after the other or in a smaller space. This comprehensive overview made it possible to 'weed out' images that were too much alike. Similarly, those that did not allow the eye to connect the patterns with those of the adjoining prints were also rejected. The selected prints were clearly labelled to allow them to be hung in the established sequence.

In order to comply with the intended ephemeral quality of the installation, a light touch was adopted in the choice of the means of fixing the prints to the wall. This was done without the interference of frames and glass. I used a technique which is well known to anyone who has passed through the doors of an art school in the late 20th century but which to the best of my knowledge does not have a name. I refer to it as the 'masking tape roll' method.⁵ This minimal technique consists of folding the adhesive side of a small piece of ordinary masking tape on to itself to form a hollow tube. By attaching several tubes created in this way to the reverse side of a drawing

or other light weight object, it can be attached to many surfaces. In this way, my prints could be fastened directly to the wall.

When the sheets for the two smaller walls were cut to size and affixed to the wall, worries that the room as a whole would not 'read', prompted by the provisional installation, proved incorrect. There were still a number of minor details which disturbed the delicate nature of the work, namely the brownish skirting board with its beading created ugly edges and marred the vertical sight lines. (Fig. 73) Once these interfering elements were painted white, the installation resolved itself into a coherent and fitting overall impression within the space. Masking tape and white paint were also used to cover ugly electrical wiring above one of the smaller wall sections and in other areas of the room. These distracting features then also merged into the surrounding space and the cohesion of the installation was enhanced. (Fig. 74)

One big concern had been the maroon linoleum flooring on a first visit to the gallery. Part of the funding obtained from the Scottish Arts Council was planned to be spent on temporary flooring as the strong colour would be too dominant and distract the viewer from the light and 'airy' atmosphere of the room which the work was going to complement. When the floor on the adjoining balcony of the main gallery was scheduled to be renewed, the curator managed to persuade the University to replace the flooring in the Round Room at the same time. As hoped, the new light floorboards turned out to be much more sympathetic to the mood of the installation.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has recorded the planning and creative development of the preparation and installation of a site-specific exhibition. In the narrative reconstruction of this process it represents an account of a specific aspect of research into practice, namely reflection 'in and on action', as explained in Chapter III.1. It entails the consideration of the venue, printing procedures, research into materials, such as pigments and papers, as well as the conception and construction of the imagery. These were investigated in relation to the aims for the exhibition, especially the goal of a site-specific installation, and the broader as well as the

more specific issues addressed in this PhD, especially those highlighted at the beginning of this chapter.

The next chapter traces the process and insights gained from this report and theorises them in terms of a post-productive interpretation. It also considers the role of writing in this process.

Endnotes

¹ See illustrations of the empty space and the adjoining Georgian Gallery in Part IV on CD.

² See, for example, BBC 4's 'Visions of the Future' programme on such developments, broadcast on 12th November 2007. One example was the growth of a human bladder from organ tissue.

³ Juliane Bardt's (2006) iconographical study of art made from paper does not cover prints. Such a study of paper in the context of print with additional insights from a material studies perspective could be highly productive.

⁴ A newspaper article by Umberto Eco (in his column for *The Observer* in the 1990s) recounted the difficulty of writing a paper in one area of his expertise, on medieval literature, given the vast amount of material available through the internet (and this was written more than ten years ago). He mused that ordinarily he would have been confident in putting the paper together quite easily by consulting the relevant sources. However, the incremental availability of source material and secondary literature on the internet left him in a state of near paralysis. I do not recall how he resolved his dilemma. How much bigger would it be now or has he/have we developed better 'coping strategies'?

⁵ Although he does not exactly use said technique, Martin Creed has made – amongst other references - a wonderful comment on the ubiquity of masking tape in art with his *Work Nr. 81, a one inch cubic stack of masking tape in the middle of every wall in the building*, 1993 consisting of masking tape in 276 parts, each part measuring 1 x 1 x1".

2. Cooking up a Storm? ‘Post-production’ as interpretation (abbreviated as Post-production III) ¹

2.1 Preface

This chapter develops the idea of post-production as a concept and technology, which was first introduced in Chapter III.3, by examining the double nature of interpretation at the level of the production and exhibiting of artwork in the context of doctoral research. It further extends the earlier chapter’s application of hermeneutical aesthetics by Nicholas Davey (2005) through his concept of ‘theoria’. In particular, the different elements of interpretive work and the productive nature of post-production are highlighted. Also, not only is the positive value of writing in the context of research argued, but its role in the creation of a (new) art object is underlined. Specific emphasis is placed on the materiality of the art work, the performative and dialogical quality of interpretation and its inter-relationship with the different identities of the artist as producer/maker and viewer/critic/writer.

The chapter draws its ideas from the experience of my second exhibition, *Schnörkeleien* (Part IV) and the report that documents its production and installation in the previous chapter. It also references the first exhibition (Part II), Chapter III.3 (or ‘Post-production I’) and the introductory chapter on research in art and design (Chapter III.1). It argues that the second exhibition advanced the ideas established for the first exhibition.

2.2 Post-productive interpretation and writing in art as research

The aim of this chapter is to consider the interpretive status of a written reflection as part of research into practice. I found, at various stages of this PhD, that the term ‘post-production’ stimulated in-depth consideration of my art practice in the form of the two solo-exhibitions.

Post-production constitutes both a metaphor as well as a productive ‘technology’

within the context of research into practice. It designates the post-facto reflection on and interpretation of the often pragmatic part of artistic practice and its tacit knowledge. As a metaphor, post-production applies to those aspects of research that are distinct temporal and pragmatic activities. This holds true for writing in relation to making and vice versa. Yet, writing will be foregrounded in this chapter. Post-production can be also considered as a productive technology in that writing not only illuminates the making through its interpretation but, in conjunction with viewing the artwork, writing forms a new object. This productive aspect of post-production as interpretation will be the prime focus of the chapter. It will concentrate mainly, but not exclusively, on the written form after the production of the artwork.²

In the present discussion, the usage of the term post-production is different from that of Bourriaud, more akin to its common use in reference to film where it means the finalizing of the film through editing and 'laboratory work' (Monaco, 1981, p.104). It could be described as a 'tidying', analyzing, synthesizing and, hence, the interpreting of accumulated 'data'. These have, of course, not been 'collected' without prior research and interpretation in the case of film or art.³

My decision to isolate writing as an element of interpretation in post-production, as set out above, also takes into account the fact that 'the different activities of an artist, such as thinking, writing, looking, making etc. (...) remain ... distinct activities, imposing particular demands and working conditions' as O'Riley has noted (O'Riley, 2006; see Chapter III.1).

Post-production consists of a double move: on the one hand, it refers to the recovery – through memory and/or various formats of systematic or more intuitive documentation – of the interpretive process at the level of making and, on the other hand, it implies the interpretation after the completion of the work at the level of writing. In some instances these will overlap. For example, the writing may consist of a 'reporting' of the interpretive process at a certain stage in the making as it is remembered. In other instances, such interpretation may only occur at the writing stage. I will demonstrate these points later with examples from my own 'post-productive' writing.⁴

The wider context for post-production lies in the debate on knowledge in art, especially the hitherto 'tacit knowledge' as a central criterion of the processes in/of art, as discussed in Chapter III.1, p.42. It is the elucidation of tacit knowledge that forms the vital core of interpretation within research in art.⁵

The debate on postmodernism has raised awareness of the problematics of the prefix 'post'. The 'post' in post-production is neither to be understood as fixing a final result, nor as coming after an originary event. Yet, if there is 'post-production' there must be a pre-production. Post-production may best be seen as a cyclical or loop structure. Most commonly, the actual production of the artwork constitutes the pre-production for the (written) post-production. But the fabrication of the artwork can also function as the post-production of prior (written) (pre) production and so on. If these diverse possibilities appear to deprive the term of its value, we should remind ourselves that an 'a posteriori' quality is considered by MacLeod and Holdridge as typical of art research in general. These authors have also spoken of the notion of 're-reading' as a central feature of artistic research.⁶ It is in this sense of a re-reading that post-production as interpretation comes into its own.⁷

In order to locate and draw out the interpretive work of post-production, both at the level of the making of the artwork and the level of its interpretive construction through writing, the insights of hermeneutical aesthetics are helpful. Its highlighting of the experiential in the encounter with the finished artwork, can, in my view, be mapped on to the experience of the artist as maker. It further allows us to trace the interpretive work of the artist during the making and after the completion of the work.

'Post-production I' drew on Nicholas Davey's discussion of hermeneutical aesthetics and especially the work of Hans Georg Gadamer in relation to art practice. Yet, his analysis, although directed at practitioners, is rather vague as regards the positioning of the artist, the viewer and/or the critic respectively. Are they conceived as separate individuals or, indeed, different identities which the same person adopts? Notwithstanding Davey's ambiguousness on this matter, I believe hermeneutical aesthetics can be made fruitful for the interpretive process in which the artist is engaged at the making stage.⁸ Davey defines hermeneutical

aesthetics thus:

'The end of hermeneutical aesthetics is not to arrive at a concept of art but to deepen our experience of art. In hermeneutical aesthetics, theory is deployed to deepen contemplation of artworks rather than to categorise their nature' (Davey, 2007).

As this quote indicates, hermeneutical aesthetics characterizes the aesthetic encounter as experiential. The 'deepening of contemplation of artworks' nevertheless could suggest that the experience of art subsumes its meaning under the conceptual. Yet Gadamer's ideas allow for a more comprehensive notion of understanding that ties in with 'material thinking' at the level of making. Barbara Bolt contrasts this term – which she borrows from Paul Carter (2004) – with conceptual thinking: 'Material thinking involves a particular responsiveness to or conjunction with the intelligence of materials and processes in practice.' And 'The materials and processes of production have their own intelligence that comes into play in interaction with the artist's creative intelligence' (Bolt, 2006).⁹ As a move to counteract the denigration of knowledge in the making process, Bolt's emphasis is understandable. I would, however, include the theoretical in the artist's 'creative intelligence'. In the language of hermeneutical aesthetics, the encounter between the artist and the (yet to be realized) artwork is described thus:

'Hermeneutic involvement is required because the meaning transmitted can never be fully complete and is unambiguous...The task of interpretation is to probe the possible meanings held within the experience of a work, and by drawing them to bring that experience to greater completeness' (Davey, 2007).

If one follows phenomenology's understanding of thinking as always grounded in a sensuous encounter, these remarks allow (us) to locate the interpretation of 'possible meanings' during the working process. What is the constant questioning by the artist during the making procedure as to how a certain way of using materials, of creating imagery may 'appear' to the spectator if not a 'probing of possible meanings held within the experience of a work', even if that work is still incomplete? 'Hermeneutic involvement' is indeed 'required' as the artist is constantly aware of possible alternatives and 'ambiguities'. And is his/her goal not to bring the (different possibilities of the) work to 'greater completeness'? And can

such fullness not (only) be understood in terms of a predetermined goal but also in relation to the very act of interpretation while making the artwork? In effect, the artist functions as a temporary viewer and critic during this process, as well as a maker. I will shortly return to this point.¹⁰

Conversely, Gadamer also speaks of the 'address' of the work of art. Art 'has the power to affect us immediately' (Gadamer, 1993, Vol 8, p.374, quoted in Davey 2007). It may be stretching his ideas a bit but the idea of 'address' seems to me to capture very much the engagement an artist has with his/her work during the process of making it. The word 'address' connotes the active aspect that materials and processes exert in the encounter with the artist, much in the way that Bolt has defined it. Moreover, like many other authors, Gadamer considers the aesthetic experience as dialogical, in terms of a conversation.¹¹ This implies that the 'object speaks back', even at the different levels of its genesis/making, as my earlier quotation by Bolt showed. The dialogical also allows for the unexpected to happen as in a conversation. Again, the dialogic engagement of the viewer and the art object that is inferred in Gadamer's suggestions applies to the artist in relation to his/her materials and processes. Comprised therein are historical and contemporary conventions both at the level of materials and concepts invoked. Instead of different persons 'playing' the spectator and the producer respectively, in the case of the making of the work, it is the artist him/herself who unites them, although he/she may inhabit each of these different identities at different times and for differing durations.¹² These may last from a fraction of a second during the making to an extended time period, especially in the case of 'reflection on action' which may occur at the end of a working day or during a specific 'phase' in the making process (Schön, 1983, p.26).¹³

Davey's remarks regarding the spectator in Gadamer's propositions are further applicable to the artist as spectator or viewer during the making of the work: 'The aesthetic spectator is swept up by her experience of art, absorbed in its play and potentially transformed by that which spectatorship helps constitute' (Davey, 2007). The artist, likewise, is 'transformed' in the process of making. I suggest that this transformation through the interpretive encounter during making may be enhanced through the process of research and, in particular, the technology of post-

production.

Unlike the notion of a 'transformation' which assumes a given that is then altered, the concept of performativity emphasizes the erstwhile constitution of the identities of the artist as maker/viewer/critic through the enactment of these different, yet overlapping 'performances'. As argued in previous chapters, especially Chapter III.3, performativity, unlike performance, does not presume an anterior subject but rather stresses its constitution in and through what Judith Butler has described as 'a certain kind of repetition and recitation' or 'citationality' of cultural practices (Osborne, 1996, p.112).¹⁴ These terms may refer to the conventionality of interpretative structures such as the format of the 'report' and the broader framework of Higher Education guidelines regarding PhD submissions. They also imply the theoretical thrust of interpretation with its reference to existing theories or analyses; yet, as we have seen, 'repetition and recitation' of cultural practices at the level of making also allow for the new and unexpected to emerge.

While art is bound into something larger than itself, in Gadamer's view, this quality does not detract from art's 'artness'.

'A work does not simply refer to a meaning which is independent of itself. Its meaning is not to be grasped in such a way that that it can be simply transferred to another idiom. Indeed, because it invites many interpretations, an artwork acquires an ideality of possible meanings which cannot be obviated by any possible realisation' (Gadamer, 1986, p.146, quoted in Davey 2007).

This property of the finished artwork, that its meanings are always more than its interpretations, also functions at the level of process. It allows us to account for the multiple choices the artist faces at every stage during production, including the awareness that a given decision may not necessarily be the only one. Any attribution of meaning is provisional, it could be different. The upshot of this: no maker is totally in control of the meaning of the work (or its parts). This is quite apart from the fact that the interpretation by a viewer other than the artist, allows for yet additional layers of meaning.

But the above quote asserts a further important facet of Gadamer's ideas that are

relevant in regard of interpretation 'in action'.¹⁵ That which points beyond the work (be it historical, social, cultural factors, other artistic works or procedures), the meaning/s that it invites, manifest/s only in/as the artwork. In this way interpretation is inextricably bound with the specificity of the artwork.¹⁶

And it is here that interpretation in the context of research should be located.

In hermeneutical aesthetics, the process of interpretation or engagement with the artwork is furthermore framed as an unfolding of the 'subject matter'. Subject matter is not seen as a given that is merely 'uncovered' in the process of interpretation. However, there does seem to be a lurking essentialism in Gadamer's/Davey's expounding of subject matter. ('What is seen as a particular is always a specific particularisation of an unseen totality of meaning' Davey, 2006, p.33.)¹⁷

From the perspective of the maker, the notion of a subject matter is not inevitably a given, but is (or can become) the result of an (ongoing) interpretation. In fact, to establish a subject matter, to identify what the subject matter is that the art/process is engaged in, may indeed be one of the main purposes of that process. This interpretation entails 'norms, values and assumptions': social, historical, cultural matters, personal interest; accumulated 'skills' etc. As we have already seen, a subject matter may not even be what the artist thinks it is.

Davey seems to suggest that a two-pronged approach is necessary in bringing practical and theoretical concerns to bear on subject matter. In this way, 'unseen or overlooked aspects of a subject matter come to light' (Davey, 2006, p.24). While this is true, from the point of view of the producer, it could equally be argued that it is only by bringing the two interpretive approaches into a conjunction that a (new) subject matter is created.

The fact that the work of art is open to an unlimited semiosis, that it is able to generate 'ever new integrations of meaning' designates the artwork's virtual quality, its potential for inexhaustible interpretation (Gadamer, 1976, p.98, quoted in Davey 2007). If a virtual quality inhabits the finished artwork, then this is even more so the case during the process of production where/when, as already indicated, every

decision is based upon an interpretation in the form of imaginatively ascertaining how a choice to do something this way or that will affect how the work 'reads' or 'to understand that which shapes, lies beyond but only "shows" itself in aesthetic experience' (Davey, 2007).

Such speculative effort – as in the encounter with a completed work of art – can yield surprises, even shocks (according to Gadamer). This quality of the unexpected applies also during the process of making. Today there is a greater emphasis on the rupture of meaning that interpretation can encompass, rather than the extension of meaning that was the aim of interpretation according to earlier hermeneutic approaches. (Butzer, 2004, p.172). This makes the project of interpretation particularly amenable to (contemporary) artistic production where a 'rupture of meaning' has tended to be emphasized.

As already noted, Gadamer rejects a reduction of art to philosophy or the reduction of the hermeneutical encounter to a translation into concepts.¹⁸ Language is incapable of 'exhausting' art due to the latter's complexity. But this limitation is considered merely as an instigation to further attention and engagement with the artwork, or, in my argumentation, both with the process of generating the artwork as well as its final appearance.¹⁹

It could be argued that the notion of 'material thinking' has put theory in inextricable connection with making. It appears to signal a 'warming up' of (cold) theory which has often been perceived (especially by artists) as the killing off of anything resembling life, a mere 'taxidermy' in Nietzsche's words (Davey, 2006, p.25).

If the section above uses hermeneutical aesthetics to highlight the interpretive encounter during the making of a work and the artist's identity as maker/viewer, its insights apply even more so at the level of post-production through writing. This is, of course, not surprising since both Gadamer's and Davey's observations are conceived with a finished work in mind (although the latter's more implicitly so). Davey's expounding of the Greek concept of 'theoria', although ostensibly directed at artist-researchers, has a lingering sense of the split between maker and theorist, or artist and critic. I intend to extend his ideas more properly from the perspective of

the artist-maker.

The difference in applying Davey's approach within research in art and design, and especially in post-production, is that the interpretive emphasis lies both in the reconstruction of the (interpretive process of the) making as well as the interpretation of the final work. As we saw, Gadamer's phenomenological emphasis on the experiential in the aesthetic encounter puts sense and meaning together in the interpretive act of the spectator. When this process is made transparent through interpretive action in post-production, the artist is cast as researcher.

As with hermeneutical aesthetics in general, *theoria* – although not a theory as such as Davey emphasises – locates the place of theory 'as a mode of participation in practice' (Davey, 2006, p.20). It does not conceive of 'theory as detached observation' but as contributing 'to the emergence of the event participated in' (Davey, 2006, p.20). Theorizing thus takes its cue from the process of the making of the work and/or the experience of the finished work. Davey notes that the 'primitive meaning' of *theoria* entails a 'being given away to something; taken up by it' (Davey, 2006, p.26). This remark testifies to the bodily and indeed, emotive, import of the activity of theorizing, in terms of its engagement with the artwork and the sensuous quality of that engagement. It also guards against conceiving 'theorizing', or the interpretive work of post-production, as a sort of icing of the cake, a later addition that makes the interpretive work of the work of art (or research) merely 'acceptable' or academically 'digestible'.

Hermeneutical aesthetics assumes that 'what the artwork deals with, transcends the way it is handled' and it is through 'reflective consciousness' that its virtual potential ('that which is not initially seen but nevertheless implied') can and needs to be activated (Davey, 2006, p.33). 'The theoretic stance only makes us reflectively aware of what is [already] performatively at play within the practical experience of understanding art' (Davey, 2006, p.30). In addition to defining the place of theory, the remarks above describe the a posteriori quality that is a criterion of research in art as earlier discussed. The quotes also hint at the fact that often, for artists, intuitive practice is 'ahead of us', and can only be understood – interpreted – reflectively, retroactively.

The retrospective quality of interpretation is further emphasized by Davey in the following remarks: 'Like all conversable activities, theoria is an activity begun without premonition of where it could lead but acquiring for itself in the course of the engagement a specific character and manner.' Gadamer notes accordingly that 'the ability to act theoretically is defined by the fact that in attending to something one is able to forget one's purposes' (Gadamer, 1989, p.124, quoted in Davey 2006, p.30). This again ties in with the post-productive mode in that theoretical engagement is driven by the process of the making or by the engagement with the completed work. It is not merely an 'application' of theory after the event. Rather, it is letting art decide on the engagement with theory.

How then does post-production's interpretive activity work? According to Gadamer, 'speculative thinking is that mode of thought which lights up or actualises the substantive horizons of meaning which inform it' (Gadamer, 1989, p.467-70, quoted in Davey 2006, p.34). Moreover, the 'speculative moment' consists of 'a disclosure of the virtuality of meaning which surpasses at any given moment what has been said or shown' (Davey, 2006, p.34).

The productive and temporal reach of post-production now becomes clear: it points into the past as well as the future. Interpretation that 'lights up or actualises horizons of meaning which inform it' refers into the past, here understood as the reconstruction of the processes of making and the values or knowledge that inform them. In retracing the work's meaning thus, its virtual dimension as that which 'surpasses what has been said or shown' emerges. This could surely also be read as implying a future moment. In revealing or rather extending what initially 'has been said or shown', post-production shows its productiveness as 'a means to and the occasion of art's perpetual and inexhaustible unfolding' (Davey, 2006, p.34).

As already noted, it has become a commonplace assertion that the meaning of a work of art is in excess of a particular artist's or viewer's understanding.²⁰ How then can theoria work if the artist is also the theorist?

Here, Davey's remarks on unreflective and reflective consciousness are helpful:

'In unreflective consciousness ... although what I see may be an aspect of an entity that transcends the aspect that I see, I remain unaware of the more beyond what I see. In other words, unreflective consciousness can succumb to the heady illusion that things are as they appear. In reflective consciousness, we learn that things are always more than they appear in any one instance' (Davey, 2006, p.33).

The practice of *theoria* engages the artist in just such reflective consciousness. As was already stressed previously, this entails unpredictability. Just as the interpretive activity during making brings unexpected, even unwanted possibilities to the fore, so does the conversational engagement between 'theory' and 'practice'. This, in my view, is enhanced in the process of writing, a point to which I will return shortly.

From a traditional academic perspective with its demand of objectivity, such (self) interpretive action may be regarded as endangering the validity of the research enterprise. In particular, this could imply the risk of 'over-determining' the artwork in the interest of validation. However, following the guidance of hermeneutical aesthetics, rather than submitting to 'intentional fallacy', the artist as researcher recognizes that his/her own voice is one amongst others. Scrutinising what is considered tacit in one's practice helps not only to clarify one's own project but also to communicate vital aspects of creative research.

The following section draws on the insights gained in the previous chapters and revisits them from the perspective of post-productive interpretation. I will quote from two types of post-productive writing:

- The first kind derives from the previous chapter, Post-production II, the narrative reconstruction from memory about the working process for my exhibition in the form of a chronological 'report'. In addition to the memorized trajectory, the art itself, in form of working proofs, and the material and documented residue of the exhibition, plus further (unsystematic) documentation in the form of photographs and notes, constituted the substrate of this endeavour. The visual documentation in Part IV represents a highly condensed version of these elements.
- The second quoted elements of post-productive writing stem from Chapter

III.3, Post-production I, which extends the kind of ruminative reflection affiliated with the report into a more theoretically founded consideration. As with the first example of writing, the visual work and its experience are crucial – hence, the importance of illustrations. While the first type of writing, the ‘report’, tends towards a reconstruction and expansion of interpretation at the making stage, the second, in the form of an academic investigation, may be more typical of interpretation at the writing stage, including theoretical research. However, I am not arguing that the latter has inevitably to take the form of such conventional writing.

[Please note that the quotations from the previous chapters will be set in New Times Roman type face to differentiate them from the rest of the text.]

At this point, I would like to explain my personal interest and investment in language and writing. It is partly the consequence of my earlier training and professional life. Before training as an artist I studied and taught German Language and Literature. My subsequent teaching position in a historical and critical studies department at an art school further necessitated the development and practice of my own (and my students’) writing skills. But my interest is also as a result of my own difficulties with writing as well as my enjoyment of it. Writing assists me in ascertaining and developing my thoughts. In that sense, writing is not the application of already existing thinking but supports the creation of thought. In this regard, it is not dissimilar to the process of making where one is giving oneself over to the materials and process, as already discussed. This is a point that has now been taken up in the teaching of writing in art and design education.²¹

My argument is that the insights of hermeneutical aesthetics as outlined above also apply to the writing process. The latter is another experiential encounter of the artwork and operates as a hermeutic endeavour. Moreover, writing allows for intuition; it is dialogic. It is not just another way of looking at the art object or process; it generates new insights. Although the artist as interpreter, just as the critic, has no full control over the meaning of a text, the co-responsibility that Bolt and others argue vis-a-vis the artwork also comes into play with regards the writing of the text. Here, both the art object and the text itself ‘talk back’. (This triangular

situation deserves more attention than is possible here.)²²

The following summary of my aesthetic project acts as a reminder of its main concerns.

Schnörkeleien (2007) was based on the particular aesthetic approach that I have developed since 1998 and which represents the focus of this PhD. This aesthetic project can be described as an on-going investigation into 'a poetics of repetition'. Put simply, it consists of the repetition of autographic, 'original' marks through digital means and printmaking. The format and 'look' of the patterns/images that are generated in this way are changed depending on the environment and specific undertaking. (Figs 75 and 76)

Conceptually, the work acts as a contribution to the shifting notion of originality through the possibility of repetition by digital means and mass production. It refers to the artistic and cultural discussion on new versus old media (especially, but not only within printmaking) and aims to situate itself within and contribute to this field. It also draws on and adds to socially and culturally grounded notions and the experience of visuality and touch, identity and the body.

In recognition of its printed quality, the work addresses these issues besides its repetitive nature through a particular attention to the surface of the print and materials that are light-sensitive and which are therefore experienced as unstable. A surface created by such means refers to the quick magic of the ever-increasing screens and dematerialisation that surround us. At the same time, the images' sensuous and viscerally printed quality invites (visual) touch and brings us back to our bodily identity, while simultaneously challenging any certainty of vision. (Fig. 9) At the level of image construction, the connotations of the 'real' and of 'presence', which are affiliated with the 'hand-drawn' mark, are subverted through the conspicuous repetition of the self-same line.

The exhibition in the Round Room of the Talbot Rice Gallery was site-specific in two ways: The installation used the actual space of the gallery – a rotunda situated in and constituting a detail of the neo-classical architecture of the Old College of the

University of Edinburgh – as part of a quasi ‘decorative scheme’. (Fig. 77) The ‘imagery’/pattern of this ‘decoration’ was based on details of Playfair’s neo-classical ceiling design in the adjoining Georgian Gallery which originally formed the upper part of the Natural History Museum and now houses the art collection of the university. (Fig. 31) I will shortly return to the relevance of the site-specificity in relation to interpretation.

Various passages in the previous chapter reflect on aspects of the production and installation of the work which initially may have proceeded intuitively. By reconstructing – from memory – various procedures and deliberations, the report shows not just reflection but interpretation ‘in’ and ‘on action’.

One example of such a text passage is the selection of motifs for the imagery/pattern as a result of a visceral encounter with the environment of the space. The report retrospectively interpreted my intuitive choice within the context of my overall project and its cultural references.²³

The next retrospective section of the report considered and interpreted the specificity of the location, especially the ‘contamination’ of the neo-classical rotunda by ‘brutalist’ contemporary institutional doors with their passage ways and the hybrid quality they lent to the space. (Figs 29 and 33) This spatial fusion of the ‘beautiful’ and ‘abject’ was ‘repeated’ at the level of the imagery and the surface quality of the work. (Figs 78 and 79)

The reflections on the single line or ‘mark’ attempted a broader contextualisation of this choice in the context of art history. (See Chapter V.1, pp.141-144)²⁴ Furthermore, the deconstruction of the motifs was also motivated within wider cultural terms. (pp. 144-146)²⁵ A similar, correlated reflection was dedicated to the choice of the particular type of paper chosen for the installation (pp.148-150) and the specific quality and connotations of the interference inks that were employed to print the imagery (pp.138-141).

The earlier chapter, Post-production I, which considered the installation and specific attributes of my work on the occasion of the solo exhibition in the Galerie Zement in

Frankfurt in 2003, approached post-production in a more theoretically 'heated' manner. The rationale for referring to the analysis in the earlier chapter here is that the comments made in respect of the exhibition of 2003 apply to a much greater degree to the 2007 exhibition. The latter especially encompassed the site-specificity claimed for the earlier work in a more 'complete' way. The exhibition of 2007 in the Round Room could therefore be said to bring the subject matter of the work to a greater completion in a Gadamerian sense, as discussed earlier. Moreover, if the exhibition of art or its curation includes an interpretation in its own right, this interpretive level is shown here as being integral to the artwork itself due to its site-specificity.

Post-production I drew on Althusser's concept of interpellation and its 'hailing' character in order to define the 'address' of the work to the spectator. It then linked the hailing to the particularity of an installation, especially Alex Potts' notion of an 'interplay ... between focused and dispersed apprehension' that he regards as typical of installation.²⁶

The hailing or constitution of the viewer with its hallucinatory quality in Galerie Zement relied on individual pieces despite the close attention that was paid to their siting in the space. This property of the work was achieved more comprehensively in the exhibition in the Round Room least of all through its treatment of the space as a single entity. More specifically, a phantasmatic effect was the result of the following three means:

1. The scale of the installation surrounded and even dwarfed the viewer. (Figs 77; 80 and 81)
2. The display of the multiplied linear motifs created a giddy sensation. (Fig. 82)
3. The glittering transference inks changed colour, depending on the actual position and view point of the spectator, his/her movements and/or the quality of light and thus created a sense of instability. (Fig. 83)

The following excerpts from Post-production I are particularly pertinent to the Talbot Rice installation:

Apprehension in these works is problematized; its performative nature becomes obvious due to the difficulties the viewer experiences. The disorienting, if pleasurable, effect of the work also alludes to the relative loss of control the viewer or subject experiences through its constitution within cultural practices.

Fundamental to achieving a hallucinatory effect is the use of serial repetition. In an essay on three significant female artists of the 1960s, Hesse, Bourgeois and Kusama, Briony Fer (1999) notes the connection of serial repetition, as in Kusama's work, to the hallucinatory. She also comments on how such art 'places the subject or spectator, how it might incur the coming-into-being of the subject – in particular the feminine subject' (Fer, 1999, p.25–36). She describes this effect as both an intensification of 'bodily affect' and, at the same time, as a 'blanking or effacing of the subject' (Fer, 1999, p.35). This 'blanking' or 'effacement of the subject' is connected in Fer's psychoanalytically informed interpretation to a particular kind of anthropomorphism. Fer's comments can be applied to an explanation of the effect of the prints in the exhibition. She invokes a particular anthropomorphism or 'mimetic compulsion' that draws on Surrealist writer Roger Caillois's (1935) 'model of mimicry' (Fer, 1999, p.31). Mimicry explains the

way an insect which changes colour through camouflage does so in order to become invisible; as it disappears, it loses irreparably its distinctness. Rather than a sign for its surroundings, camouflage acts as a negative signifier, a sign of non-being, which effaces rather than produces connotational value (Fer, 1999, p.31).

This has nothing to do with 'the art object carrying associations to or connoting things in the world' but refers to 'the spatial lure of objects' and 'the coming-into-being of the subject in the scopic field' (Fer, 1999, p.35).

(III.3, p.77)

The installation in the Round Room can be said to demonstrate an anthropomorphism of this kind and even increase it due to the all-over quality of the display.

The imagery in the form of marks, hinted at in the German title of *Schnörkeleien*, embellish or alternatively, infiltrate and disturb the whiteness of the wall.²⁷ They may even perform a camouflage in the sense described by Fer, as argued in Post-

production I:

Physical make-up and the siting of the work perform both an appearance and a non- or disappearance; the works oscillate between wall decoration, interference/noise and camouflage. More specifically, the intricate repetitive pattern of the piece with its 'now-you-see-it, now-you-don't' quality, as already described, constitutes the viewer in a way which Fer has noted as being characteristic of hallucinations, as 'that swing between an intensification of vision ... to a kind of blanking' or 'effacing of the subject' (Fer, 1999, p.35).

[...]

As Alex Potts has said of installation art and its relationship to the viewer:

Installation has become part of the general fabric of things in contemporary culture, and in a way, art feeds on this situation ... lulling us into mesmerized fascination with the spectacle ... at the same time stopping us short, inducing us to reflect on the enticements and disenchantments involved ... it engulfs us at the same time that it can make us aware of the framings and closures that are also part of the substance of contemporary, consumerist spectacles (Potts, 2001, p.19).

In this way, such work – instead of being wholly entrenched in the spectacle, or totally resisting it – can be shown to have relevance within a broader cultural context.'

(III.3, p.78)

These remarks functioned originally as a 'pre-production' to the 2007 exhibition. The exhibition itself can therefore be considered as the 'post-production' to the earlier text.

Yet in the context of the present chapter, written towards the completion of the PhD, the reflections above temporarily 'complete' the interpretive task of post-production. The loop or cyclical structure of post-production, of which I spoke earlier, comes into focus here.

The details of the production and subsequent installation of the exhibition exemplify my arguments, namely, that the reconstruction or post-production through the written reflection of both the production and installation of artwork can demonstrate the interpretive activity at work during these different, yet related processes. While already at play 'in action', the interpretive quality may be more fully realized through

the post-productive activity of the writing process. In this way, the written post-production functions as another interpretive level that proves Davey's point of *theoria* as 'a mode of participation' 'in a process of the unfolding' of the artwork (Davey, 2006, p.34).

Moreover, it is argued that in the example of my own exhibition the instability of vision created by the installation itself mirrors the ambiguity of interpretation and the multiple roles of the artist as viewer/critic/maker.

I hope to have shown that post-production as metaphor and productive technology can locate the work of interpretation within practice-based PhD research.

Notwithstanding post-production's highly fertile contribution to knowledge, it also conceptualizes interpretation's ambiguity. Like its common usage in film, post-production encompasses its object as artefact literally and metaphorically. As argued in *Post-production I*, the theoretical, interpretative thrust of post-production becomes part of an on-going practice and feeds into future work, both theoretical and practical.

What are the implications of the interpretive work of post-production for research in art and design at doctoral level? In the first instance, post-production can help to identify the different levels of interpretation at work in the research process. It also serves to sharpen awareness of the different elements of performativity and dialogue at play. Post-production therefore promotes a more conscious exploitation and development of those elements, especially (but not only) through writing.

Does it matter whether post-production is based on specific forms of writing and documentation or not? All (including a poetic engagement as advocated by Iain Biggs, for example) are interpretive, yet they will differ in terms of their interpretive dimension and the possible problems that are encountered (Biggs, 2006. in MacLeod and Holdridge, pp.190-200). The examples of my own writing referred to here are based on the established modes of a report and academic exposition. In this chapter, the specificity of their written nature and the interpretive value of these particular formats have not been evaluated. As stated in Chapter III.1, modes of writing in the context of art and design research do merit, and have already

received, close examination.²⁸ The nature of such writing is a matter of considerable debate, as the title of Biggs's essay 'Hybrid texts and academic authority: the wager in creative practice research' indicates (Biggs, 2006).

I have argued above that post-productive writing is a fecund interpretive method that supports the completion of an artwork, notwithstanding the rigid forms it has taken in art education in the last thirty or more years as shown by Kerstin Mey. (See III.1, pp.52-53.) The continued relevance of writing for art students (and by implication artists-researchers), as argued by Mey, is in contrast to the view of those who 'dread the contamination of the visual by the verbal' (Fiona Candlin, quoted in Biggs 2006, p.195). As has been discussed already, in addition to assessing traditional written formats such as the 'essay' and the 'dissertation', Mey stresses the necessity of new and different modes of writing, in combination with or as part of multimedia forms. This issue has begun to be addressed at a variety of art and design institutions. The website *Writing Pad* and its affiliated journal *Writing in Creative Practice* document and provide resources for such revised educational approaches (*Writing Pad* Web Site). In addition to *Writing Pad*, the necessity of art writing that takes its cue from the materiality of doing and from the artwork itself is being taken up by, for example, the MFA in Art Writing course at Goldsmith's.²⁹ From a post-productive point of view there are several potential prospects for further exploration. These include the nature of the new object that is created through the combination of art and writing, the role of memory, the narrative and dialogical element of such writing as well as the development of formats that match their object/s.³⁰

This chapter re-visits and 'cooks up' several concerns of this PhD, such as the a posteriori quality of knowledge, the role of language and writing in arts-based research, the issue of 'self' interpretation, or the self-same identity of 'researcher' and 'researched'. By drawing on the insights of phenomenology, the different levels and temporalities of post-productive interpretation were traced through reference to two types of writing, the post-facto report on the second exhibition, and the more comprehensively theorized Post-production I in Chapter III.3. It is argued that in these examples the instability of vision created by the installation itself mirrors the ambiguity of interpretation and the multiple roles of the artist as viewer/critic/maker.

Like its common usage in film, post-production encompasses its object as artefact literally and metaphorically. It furthermore shows how the subject of the debate is paralleled in the artistic work itself. This chapter therefore encapsulates the methodology of the PhD as a whole.³¹

Endnotes

¹ The first part of the title was (negatively) inspired by Geertz's suggestion that a 'battery of intellectual armoury' was necessary with which to 'attack the issue of meaning' (Geertz quoted in Howells 2003, p.123). Instead of the openly masculinist-militarist metaphor here, the means of arriving at meaning are linked to the more mundane, yet transformative activity of preparing food – executed 'in an energetic fashion'. This is with the proviso that cooking - in all its cultural, social, economic and political entanglements – is, of course, not the innocent, homely activity as which it is often represented. The first part of the title not only hints at the participatory aspect of interpretation, it also points to the lively debate that occurs in and through and around it in the context of research in art and design, both at the individual and the disciplinary level.

² MacLeod and Holdridge have noted that there is no overall consensus between different institutions as to what constitutes the written part of a PhD and comment on the typically required written format of a 'thesis'. They state: '... case studies would seem to indicate that the conventionally written academic thesis does not always seem appropriate for the doctorate in fine art' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.2). Even Iain Biggs, in his otherwise critical assessment of many of the parameters of academic arts research, concedes that 'creative practice research at doctoral level will ... almost always involve producing a written text. To load the whole weight of doctoral examination onto exhibition and viva ... will normally place too great a burden of interpretation on examiners and too great an emphasis in getting it right on the day on the candidate' (Biggs, 2006, in MacLeod and Holdridge, p.197). This is not a unanimous viewpoint. Biggs quotes Sally Morgan who has argued that for a doctoral degree in art a 'substantial one-person-show accompanied by a viva' should be regarded as the equivalent of a published dissertation and the viva in other fields (Biggs, 2006, p.197).

³ Although the definition of post-production in regard to film speaks of a 'finalising', as we know, this is not to be understood in an absolute interpretive sense. Just as the film after post-production enters another form of production in terms of its dissemination and reception by an audience, so the written post-production, in the context of research, may be understood as 'finalising' or 'completing' the artwork albeit not in a total sense.

⁴ Post-production does not necessarily need to refer to the written part of art research. It could, for example, also imply the studio scenario that may constitute an element of a PhD Viva. This may contain exhibited work even if not necessarily in form of a (public) exhibition. By the same token, the artwork in the context of research may be considered as the post-production to a theoretical 'pre-production'.

⁵ In terms of research procedures, 'reflection on action' has been differentiated from 'reflection in action'. Both have received much attention, especially in terms of the role that documentation plays. For the former, see, for example, MacLeod and Holdridge 2006; for the latter, see, for example, the special issue of the *Journal of Visual Arts Practice* (2007, 6:3) dedicated to the question of documentation (Fortnum and Smith, 2007) and the *Visual Intelligences Research Project and Symposium 'The Documentation of Fine Art Processes and Practices'* at the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts, University of Lancaster in December 2005, <http://www.visualintelligences.com/documentation-fine-art-processes-practises.html>. [Accessed 2008, September/12]

Both 'reflection on action' and 'reflection in action' have in common the bringing to the surface, or to attention, what has remained hidden in the processes of a particular practice. It is this aspect that links such procedures to interpretation. Interpretation can briefly be defined as the attribution of sense and meaning. The etymological link between sense and its sensuous, corporeal quality is very much attuned to a phenomenologized notion of knowledge and understanding in recent years that has been widely debated in research in art and design. (See introduction in MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006.) The German word for 'interpretation' itself, namely 'Auslegung', bears in its literal meaning of 'a laying out' the hallmark of corporeal activity.

⁶ They ask: 'Indeed, where do we find sustained analysis of art's internal organisation, the fact that it can, like poetry, only be reread not read, since some of its structures can be perceived only retrospectively?' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.9).

⁷ Post-production accentuates the temporal delay that is entailed in interpretation. This may even apply in the case of *reflection in action*. The data gathered through documentation of *reflection in action* demand interpretation, or 'post-production'. Yet, there are cases of collapsing the two. Examples of the latter come under the label of *research as art*, as discussed in Chapter III.1, pp.42-43. See also MacLeod and Holdridge (2006), p.4. Further examples of art as research are provided in the 2007 issue of the *Journal of Visual Arts Practice* (JVAP) mentioned in endnote 5. Here, the consideration of the process 'produces texts and images as art themselves', as editors Fortnum and Smith explain in their foreword (Fortnum and Smith, 2007, p.171). Supervisors of PhDs in art and design will have many more examples. Fortnum and Smith also point out that a symposium held in 2007 'Did Hans Namuth kill Jackson Pollock?' The problem of documenting the creative process' moved from 'methodologies of documenting fine art processes to the relationship between the artist's work and the documentation of its process, exploring their mutual dependency' (Fortnum and Smith, 2007, p.170). The symposium was a collaboration between the Visual Intelligences Research Project at the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts and the University of the Arts London (Camberwell College), <http://www.visualintelligences.com/did-hans-namuth-kill-jackson-pollock.html>. The focus of this conference clearly marks a hermeneutical shift.

Fortnum and Smith also answer the question of why the documentation of the creative process is useful: 'As artists how we voice what we do, both to ourselves and others, necessarily feeds into what we make' (Fortnum and Smith, 2007, p.171). Interpretation captures the more specific flavour and the work that is entailed in 'voicing what we do'.

⁸ This may be permissible as Gadamer himself, according to Davey, 'attributes a non-purposive rationality ... to the playful process of art practice itself' (Davey, 2007).

⁹ On the concept of material thinking, see Carter (2004).

¹⁰ Davey: 'Gadamer's aesthetics is properly concerned with *experiencing* what underlies its more abstract concepts. This is not a matter of naming or describing the reality which manifests itself in aesthetic experience but of trying to say something about the experience an individual has of it' (Davey, 2007, original emphasis).

¹¹ Both the dialogical and conversational quality of art have become staple terms of the debate in art and design. See Fortnum and Smith's introduction in *Journal of*

Visual Arts Practice (2007, 6:3); see introduction in MacLeod and Holdridge (2006); see O'Riley (2006).

¹² Gadamer's idea of art as putting something 'in play' further illuminates this point: 'The overall argument is not that the game or artwork cannot be reduced to intention, material or convention but rather that each of these elements comes into their own when taken up within the *playing* of the game or in the *practice* which is art. It is the playing that draws spectator, player, intention, equipment and convention into the one event. This promotes an interactive view of art as a communicative event. It lends a dialogical dimension to art. An artwork involves more than one voice as, indeed, the word *inter-pretation* implies' (Davey, 2007). Davey's take on Gadamer's notion of play clearly indicates the different parameters that operate in the making of art.

¹³ See endnote 7 for more details.

¹⁴ Barbara Bolt, amongst others, has developed the insights of performative theory for creative arts research. See her contribution to the 2008 *Research into Practice Conference: 'A Performative Paradigm for the Creative Arts?'* and her book: Bolt, B. (2004), *Art beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris (Bolt, 2008; Bolt, 2004).

¹⁵ For more references to the notion of 'reflection in action', see endnotes 7 and 10.

¹⁶ Davey: 'The aim is seemingly paradoxical: to understand that which shapes, lies beyond but only "shows" itself in aesthetic experience' (Davey, 2007). As was seen in Chapter III.1, MacLeod and Holdridge stress that such emphasis on the materiality and self-referential nature of the work of art is not to be understood as a new form of (Greenbergian) modernism (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p.5).

¹⁷ Phenomenology's 'unfolding of subject matter' appears similar to the virtual quality of the Deleuzian 'becoming' here, although the latter differs from phenomenology's assumption of an already existing 'unseen totality of meaning'. This is a topic that cannot be explored in any detail here. See Claire Colebrook on Deleuze's concept of becoming: 'Becoming in its true force is not bounded by what has already become or is actualized, but it is spurred on by perceiving the virtual powers that are expressed in actions' (Colebrook, 2002, p.136).

¹⁸ He says that art 'cannot be satisfactorily translated in terms of conceptual knowledge' (Gadamer, 1986, p.69, quoted in Davey 2007).

¹⁹ As Davey says: 'In Gadamer's thought these negative aspects incentivise further hermeneutic involvement in aesthetic experience' (Davey, 2007).

²⁰ Davey: 'The meaning of the ideas or subject matters which inform an artwork are always in excess of a painter's or writer's (authorial) understanding'. (Davey, 2006, p.33); see also introduction by MacLeod and Holdridge (2006); see also O'Riley (2006).

²¹ See the paper by Susan Orr and Margo Blythman (n.d.) 'The process of design is almost like writing an essay' with practical suggestions published on the Writing Pad site,

http://www.writingpad.ac.uk/index.php?path=photos/20_Resources/05_Case%20Studies/&keyword=Design. [Accessed 15 August 2008]

There is not the space here to delve into the source of artists' difficulty with words and its long and complicated heritage within philosophy and cultural practice, as well as common-sense beliefs. For a discussion of the philosophical and cultural aspects of the assumed word-image dichotomy, see Mitchell (1994); see also Manghani, Piper and Simons (eds.) (2006). While not denying the reality of these

difficulties, the traditional split between the artist-producer and the interpreter or critic/theorist only rehearsed such cultural divisions and their affiliated assumptions.

²² Also of particular interest is the narrativity of such writing and its interpretive function. Although not all writing in research in art and design has narrative dimensions, a great deal does. Beyond Literary Studies, the subject of narrativity has been a recognized issue for a number of years in the areas of Visual Culture and Material Studies, but is still in its infancy. As an example of its increasing popularity in Research in Art and Design, note the event: *The Art of Research: Research Narratives*, practice-led doctoral/post-doctoral symposium and exhibition Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, 28–30 October, 2008. (The Art of Research, 2008)

²³ Quotation from Chapter V.1 Post-production II:

‘The experience of the quasi sculptural sensuousness of the décor at close quarters proved to be important in the construction of the ‘imagery’ for the installation in the Round Room. Under normal circumstances this ornamentation can only be viewed as ‘mere’ imagery from the distance of the ground floor. Being able to see it up close highlights its individual elements in a way that the overall impression from the usual perspective of the Georgian Gallery does not. As will be seen, this visceral encounter constitutes one element in which the specificity of the site/sight entered into the project.

The reaction to this particular feature followed the ‘law’ of intuitive attraction and was at first only indirectly conceptually motivated. From the beginning, as already indicated, I wanted to make reference to the site in a specific but at the time undecided way. In terms of a ‘post-production’ point of view, this spontaneous response gains another dimension. As will be seen, it fitted very well within the overall aesthetic (and theoretical) project. At one level, the direct reference or reproduction of single decorative features draws attention to (or repeats) the postmodern recycling of past styles, albeit through a quasi modernist agenda by employing the single drawn line or mark. At another level - through the translation of a semi-three dimensional physical form into a flat surface - it draws attention to the dematerialization of our environment by printed and digital media forms.’

(V.1, p.128)

²⁴ For an earlier examination of this aspect, see my paper at the second IMPACT International Printmaking Conference in Helsinki, Finland, 2001 (Pelzer-Montada, 2001).

²⁵ Quotation from Chapter V.1:

‘In assembling the acanthus and palmette out of the repetition of the single line by working with layers in Photoshop, it became apparent that rather than merely using the whole image/pattern, each could be deployed in various stages of completion.

This ‘fitted’ my project for a number of reasons. Due to the provenance of the basic motifs of acanthus and palmette from plant-derived sources, the incomplete shapes take on the connotation of ‘growth’. Moreover, the sinuous, yet ‘spiky’ and rigid appearance of the incomplete elements bears reference to life forms such as crustaceans or microscopic details of plants or minerals. At the same time, there is a sense of ‘artificiality’ in the visual appearance of the forms which do not resemble clearly any familiar plant or animal species. These factors point to the proliferation of genetic processes that augment or generate new forms of life out of existing ones, such as the growth of human organs from cells of the ‘original’.²⁵ In relation to the discipline of printmaking, the overt repetition of fragmented forms ties in neatly with the reflection on the reproductive character of the different stages of the print making process.

In the immediate context of the Talbot Rice Gallery space and the neo-classical derivation of the basic motifs the deconstruction carries another allusion. Viewed in terms of a de-

composition, the partial elements, literally and metaphorically, take on a ruinous, stultified air. The sheer profligacy of the multiplied forms may point to the, albeit piecemeal, incorporation of what were once elevated and 'high cultural' signifiers into the recycling of 'history' by popular postmodern culture and its consumer economy. (Jameson, 1991) In relation to the critical engagement of my work with modernism, the self-conscious taking apart of autographic marks represents a belated deconstruction of expressionist painting. At a purely pragmatic level, the decomposition of the shapes increased the potential 'vocabulary' for the design.'

(V.1, pp.145-46)

²⁶ Quotation from Chapter III.3:

'What particular quality did this 'hailing' assume in my installation? The exhibition at Zement had aspects that are already existent in classical sculpture as well as in installation as suggested by Potts. This is to do with the nature of the encounter staged between the viewer and the work and the 'resulting interplay ... between focused and dispersed apprehension'. (Potts, 2001, p.7) Conventionally hung prints, or pictures in frames, tend to invite 'focused apprehension'. The emphasis is on the viewer's gaze, which is attracted by and to the framed object with the surrounding space functioning as a neutral envelope. Installation interpellates the viewer in a different way. The viewer could be said to be 'called' from all sides and he or she is bodily positioned in the space as opposed to the emphasis on sight in a conventional display. The boundaries of what constitutes the work and the space overlap and may even collide. Therefore, Potts can speak of an "interplay ... between focused and dispersed apprehension".'

(III.3, p.76)

²⁷ This is how Post-production I explains this aspect:

'Ostensibly a reference to decorative schemes such as wallpaper and the implied idea of art as wallpaper, the shape and colour schemes in both works attempt a sort of camouflage: printed on flat poster paper rather than quality artist's paper, the sheets form a smooth surface with the wall.²⁷ The colour scheme extends the play on the work as being identical with the wall, being an addition or even an adornment, or alternatively, an interference, a disturbance. The most basic interference with a white wall is a mark. The colour grey could be considered as the most appropriate manifestation of such a mark. This is due to its intermediate status between black as the colour of inscription and its opposite white, as a non-colour, as the condition of the support, or in this case, the wall.'

(III.3, pP.77-78)

²⁸ See the authors cited in Part III, Chapter 1 on research in art and design, such as Gray and Malins (2004); MacLeod (2000); MacLeod and Holdridge (2006); Mey (2006) in: MacLeod and Holdridge; Pentikäinen (2006) and others on the *Working Papers in Art and Design* website, http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/index.html. [Accessed 15 February 2008]

²⁹ For information on the MFA in Artwriting at Goldsmith's, London, <http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk/pg/mfa-art-writing.php>. [Accessed 20 August 2008]

³⁰ For one such initiative, see the discussion paper on 'Situational Fiction' for artists' writing by Research Fellow Mary-Anne Francis, Project Leader of the *Situational Fiction Working Group* at Chelsea College of Art. Available from: m.francis@chelsea.arts.ac.uk.

³¹ These reflections were presented at the biennial international *Research into Practice* Conference, hosted by the University of Hertfordshire in London in October 2008. The chapter has been published in the *Journal of Visual Art Practice* Vol 8, Issue 1+2, 2009, pp.7-36

Part VI

Conclusion

1. General

This submission argues against the 'absurdity of the theory practice dichotomy' (Jones, 2006, p 227). It demonstrates the 'multi-layered' approach for practice-based research that MacLeod and Holdridge have identified and that, moreover, 'starts with art' (Sullivan, 2005, p XX). The research, therefore, literally began with an art exhibition. But the primacy of artwork has been shown to apply in a more comprehensive sense in that the traditionally written reflective parts were driven by the concerns of my aesthetic concept and programme. The premise underlying the project as a whole is that art practice as research extends beyond what is commonly understood as a work of art and encompasses a whole range of activities, including writing (O'Riley, 2006). The submission therefore complies with the notion of 'research as art' rather than 'research through art' where the latter could be misunderstood as being mere means towards a result that lies outside the art (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p 4). It demonstrates the 'physical working through of thought involved in artistic processes' (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p 1).

2. Structure

The structure of the submission reflects how thinking and the making of artistic work are interrelated. The visual documentation in Parts II and IV mirrors the chronological production of artistic work at crucial junctures of the duration of the project. A chronological order was adopted for the sequencing of the different written sections of the submission, with the exception of Chapter III.1 which starts off the written sections of Part III. It provides a broadly drawn contextualisation of the whole project, but was composed towards the end of the PhD, therefore exemplifying the 'a posteriori' quality of arts-based research (MacLeod and Holdridge, 2006, p 7). Chapter III.2 presents a broader contextualisation of aspects of the main area of my practice, the discipline of printmaking. III.3 homes in on my own artistic practice within the context of the setting up of the first exhibition. The next two chapters branch out again to reflect on wider issues in and of printmaking

today. If the first of these two chapters (III.4) concentrates on the particular ways in which prints construct meaning, the second, III.5, pinpoints and examines a crucial signifier of print, the surface in its literal, physical make-up and cultural significance.

Chapter V.1, a report on the second exhibition, occupies a central position within the submission as a whole, as will be explained further below.

Chapters III.3 and V.2 offer a meta-reflection of aspects of arts-based research at important stages of the project, that is, in the early phase and towards the end.

The visual documentation on CD of the two exhibitions is broadly divided into details of the space, experimentation at the production stage and final installation. The documentation of the second exhibition is more extensive than the first. This was largely due to the aim of testing the findings of the first exhibition as detailed in Chapter III.3.

3. Contribution to knowledge

The 'texture' of the submission, as summarised above, demonstrates the complex interweaving of a multi-dimensionally understood 'practice' and 'theory' relationship. The latter is moreover encapsulated in the Deleuzian notion of 'repetition as difference'. This sees repetition not only as **not** the same but endows it with the power to create difference. With regard to the submission this means, for example, that the documentation on CD allows a processual insight into the course of the studio-based research, while the same images when they appear in the text sections are closely interlaced with the writing. This is one way in which repetition as difference is demonstrated.

Repetition as difference is also shown to be the driving metaphor and rationale of the aesthetic programme, by means of the spiralling, virulent repetition of the self-same marks or lines. This creative agenda tackles the reproductive nature of print and its predisposition for repetition in a head-on way. The reduction of the basic aesthetic signs to an identical single line for the second exhibition is especially important. The latter's affiliation with uniqueness and originality in the history of art

serves to underscore the point of the cultural value attributed to these concepts. At the same time, these cultural tropes imply the devaluation of repetition. The adoption of the single line therefore questions this depreciation by relaying it as difference via manifold repetition.

In addition to the contribution to new knowledge of this methodological framing and the aesthetic programme, the most prevalent new inputs of the submission are its conceptualisation of an aspect of studio-based research through the concept of 'post-production' and the PhD's contribution to the theory and practice of printmaking, as stated in the title.

The concept of 'post-production' serves to theorise and investigate the 'a posteriori' quality of arts-based research, both the reflection **on** and the making **of** art, or practice and theory respectively. In this respect, the PhD as a whole may be understood in terms of a post-production. Chapter III.3 develops the concept in contrast to its popularisation by Nicholas Bourriaud. Instead, the PhD utilises this notion to conceptualise the micro-analysis of the reflection in and on action in the studio, and more specifically, in the art gallery. This chapter thereby elucidates an aspect of art practice, the installing of an exhibition, which is often overlooked.

The model of post-production is 'repeated' in the final chapter, V.2, which extends the earlier analysis through a focus on interpretation at the level of production in the studio and writing in the context of research. In addition to grounding post-productive interpretation theoretically by drawing on phenomenology it complicates its 'a posteriori' aspect. It does this through an interlooping of the writing on both exhibitions in chapters III.3 and V.1. This process not only makes the creative development of the artistic practice transparent, it also proves the productive quality not just of writing but also of the methodological technique of repetition as difference.

While all chapters (with the exception of III.1) touch on the topic of printmaking, the following sections explicitly deal with particular aspects of the theory and practice in/of printmaking, as stated in the title.

III.2 identifies diverse implicit and explicit assumptions held (with)in printmaking and suggests alternative ways of conceptualising technique and technology on the one hand and concept on the other. The former notions and affiliated practices are neither to be regarded as transparent tools nor in opposition to concept, craft or theory for that matter. Instead, they should be held as culturally inflected and complementary rather than as oppositions.

III.4 employs an embodied concept of discursivity to reflect on how prints create meaning. It enriches print discourse by examining prints in terms of a culturally grounded citationality and performativity through a case study of Damien Hirst's (1999) *The Last Supper* print series. In addition to providing an in-depth analysis of Hirst's print series as prints rather than merely as an aspect of his oeuvre, such an approach constitutes a model as to how the particular quality of prints as printed matter may be experienced and understood.

III.5 theorises the complexity of the print's surface through the concept of haptics and argues that contemporary prints stage and renegotiate the cultural designation – and denigration – of the notion of surface as being identical with superficiality. It is demonstrated how prints achieve these aims through both digital and conventional print techniques.

In conjunction with the visual work, these chapters contribute to a theorising of the discipline by identifying gaps in the existing discourse and practice of printmaking and by developing concepts, ideas and practices that further its understanding for practitioners and in terms of the general arts and cultural debate.

V.2, *Schnörkeleien* or Post-production II, the report on the making and installation of the second exhibition, carries special significance for the submission as a whole. It acts as a synthesis of the previous chapters and demonstrates not only the fruitful aspect of post-production through the format of the report, but also exemplifies the general theoretical and practical points made about printmaking by means of my own aesthetic programme or practice and therefore proves the fallacy of the theory-practice divide. As an account of practice this chapter refers to the merits of digital

versus traditional printmaking methods by analysing the specific techniques or craft that the creative work marshals. The report also analyses my prints which reveal the double nature of the cultural and artistic qualities that can be ascribed to prints in general. This element of my own work is connected with the notion of surface and citationality. The imagery and installation of my prints also constituted a unique interpretation of an approach to site-specificity. The latter encompassed the history and close attention to architectural and decorative features of the exhibition space and its surrounds. At the same time the exhibition as whole encapsulated the temporality of its own staging through an instability of vision. This was in recognition of its own performativity in relation to the viewer. These procedures draw on, yet change – or repeat as difference – particular image modes and practices in culture at large as well as the work's aesthetic references.

In its entirety the submission demonstrates the multi-faceted character of art as research that includes reasoning, intuition, sensuous perception and production through a poetics of repetition that embodies what it describes.

4. And again: Future Projects

In terms of research into practice alternative modes of writing and the representation of research in art, including their implications for education, are going to be an on-going matter of interest and study.

In my own practice I aim to extend the present aesthetic approach of the multiple repetition of hand-drawn marks through research of scientific phenomena such as autopoietic systems (Maturana/Varela, 1980) in the context of cybernetics. Another strand of research is to investigate decorative formats such as wallpaper in combination with unusual and/or public exhibition sites and modes of display. Furthermore, I plan to develop the work's techno-aesthetics through digital animation and projection along with traditional print techniques and continued research into print materials, such as inks and pigments as well as uncommon surfaces. The increasing popular methods of rapid prototyping and laser cutting constitute another direction of exploration well suited to my interests due to their ability to re/create intricate visual forms.

The submission has proved that the field of printmaking can benefit from a reflection on its own practice/s through a theoretisation of aspects of print. Such research that arises out of practice contributes to more in-depth knowledge and understanding of print within the context of art as a whole and may also contribute to changing theories in/of art. This theoretisation of printmaking from the place of practice may be expanded by greater reflection on the issue of technique/technology. This is vital in the context of rapid change through digital means. Among the writers and theoreticians whose work I plan to consider in the future is Czech media theorist Vilém Flusser (1917 – 2000). I believe that the theoretisation of printmaking may be further enriched by the notion of the 'imprint' as developed by Georges Didi-Huberman (1999). In the area of visual studies, the emerging field of 'Bildwissenschaft' in Germany (only insufficiently translated as 'Image Studies') can also contribute to illuminate print's broad potential as image (Bredenkamp, 2003; Manghani et al, 2006). An expanded practice of print may also benefit from the multi-modal socio-linguistic approach to communication as suggested by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) as well as insights from cognitive sciences and scientific imaging practices (Stafford, 2007). All modes of printmaking can profit from the anthropologically grounded field of material culture studies (Miller, 2005; Howes, 2005). In addition to expanding the embodied, performative view of the interrelationship between humans and their objects, this new discipline promises to assist in the investigation of the print as an object on the one hand and, given its integration with digital means, as 'screen' on the other. An attention to these approaches may well contribute to a re-writing of the materiality of the print, especially its role in the creation of knowledge. Besides, in the context of an increasingly globalised art world, challenges to Western hegemonic visual and cultural practices and theories are to be welcomed. Critical disputes are pertinent in a field like printmaking which has played such a crucial role in cultures across the globe both historically and in the present day (Belting/Haustein, 1998; Elkins, 1998 and 2003).

Illustrations

Please note: The author's own work is indicated by the initials R.M.
(Ruth Montada).

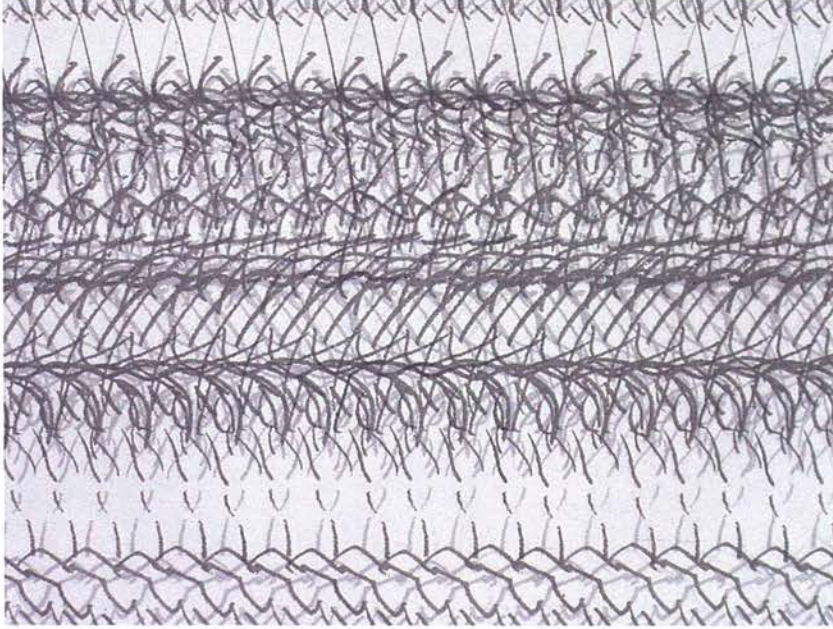


Fig. 1 R.M. *Positive-Negative I*, Detail, 1999, screenprint

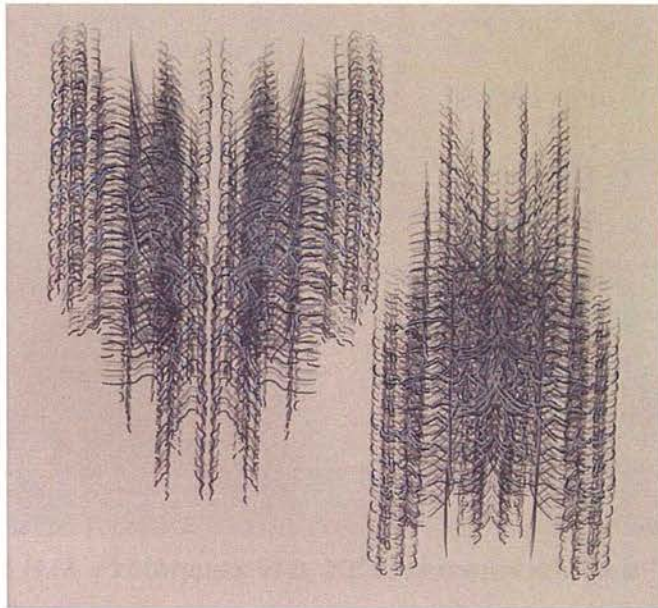


Fig. 2 R.M. *Double Specimen*, 2003, screenprint, 35 x 38 cm



Fig. 3 R.M. Prototypes VI b, 2000, screenprint, 54 x 76 cm

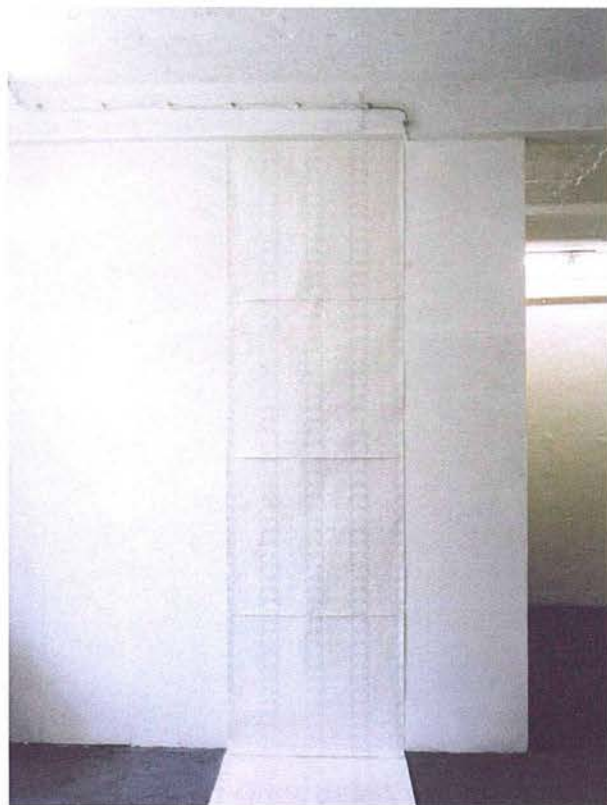


Fig. 4 R.M. Installation *View White on White*, multiple screenprints, 87 x 380 cm, 2003, Galerie Zement, Frankfurt

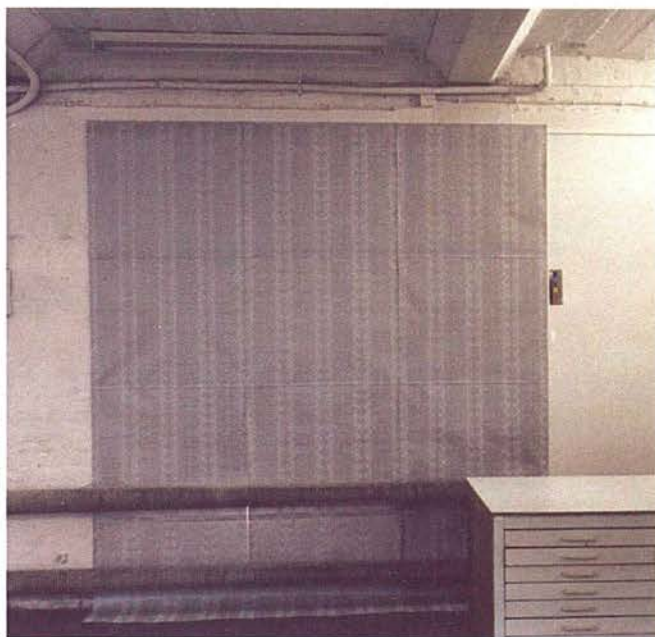


Fig. 5 R.M. Installation *View Grey on Grey*, multiple screenprints, overall dimensions ca. 261 x 304 cm, 2003, Galerie Zement, Frankfurt

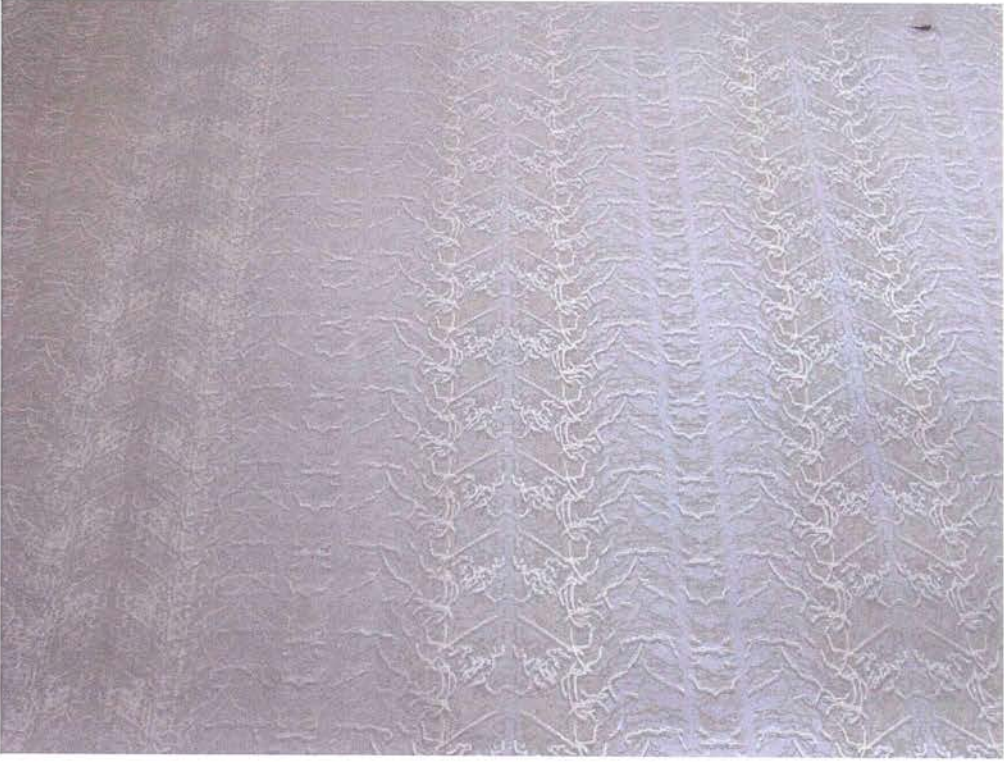


Fig. 6 R.M. *Grey on Grey*, detail, transference effect



Fig. 7 R.M. *Grey on Grey*, detail, front view



Fig. 8 R.M. *Virtual 9*, detail, screenprint on nine perspex panels, overall dimensions ca. 71 x 71 x 240 cm, 2003, Galerie Zement, Frankfurt

Please, note: The still photographs on this page give an insufficient impression of the effect of the imagery's visual mobility.

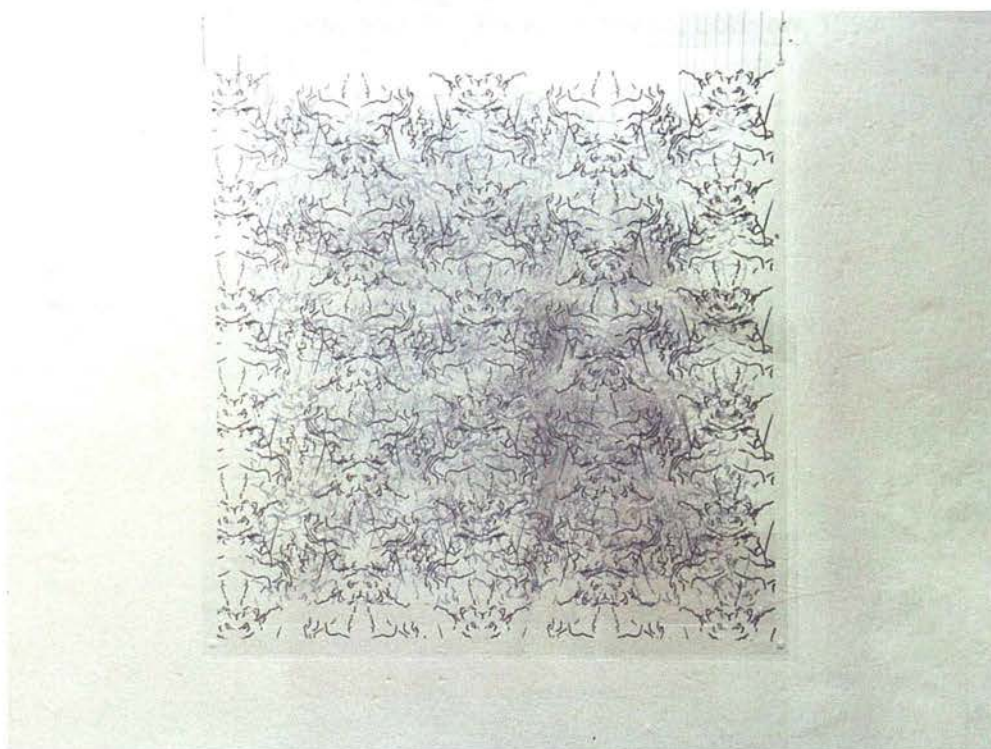
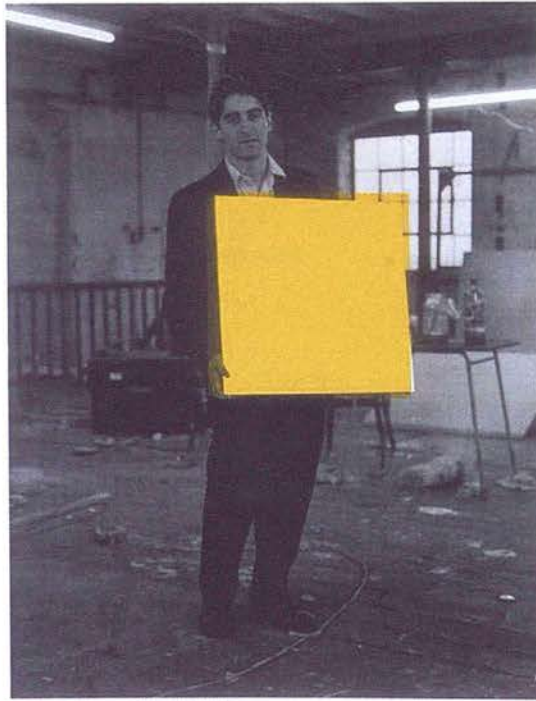


Fig. 9 R.M. *Virtual 9*, installation view, screenprint on nine perspex panels, ca. 71 x 71 x 240 cm, 2003, Galerie Zement, Frankfurt



When I wake up in the morning, the feeling was still there

Fig. 10 Angus Fairhurst, *When I Woke Up in the Morning, the Feeling Was Still There*, 1992, from the London Portfolio, Published by Paragon Press, screenprint on paper, image: 867 x 659 mm, on paper, print © Angus Fairhurst and The Paragon Press, London, 1992



When I wake up in the morning, the feeling was still there

Fig. 11 Damien Hirst, *Omelette, The Last Supper*, 1999, screenprint, 108 x 99 cm © Damien Hirst

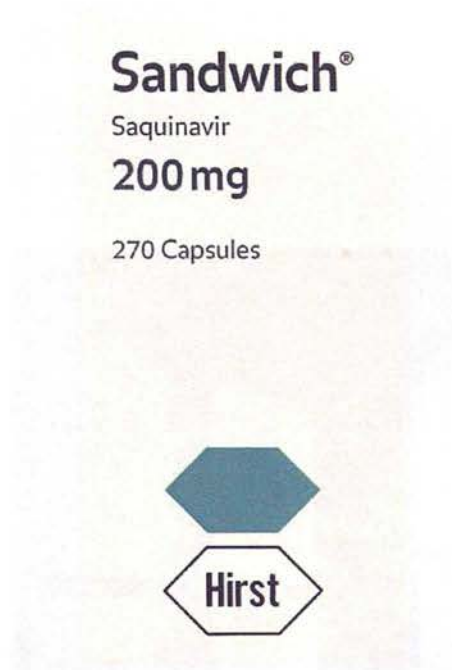


Fig. 12 Damien Hirst, *Sandwich, The Last Supper*, 1999, screenprint, 149.5 x 76cm © Damien Hirst



Fig. 13 Damien Hirst, *Corned Beef, The Last Supper*, 1999, screenprint, 153 x 101.5 cm © Damien Hirst



Fig. 14 David Levene, Installation of Damien Hirst's *The Last Supper Series* (1999) in the Saatchi Gallery at County Hall, London, 2003 © David Levene 2003

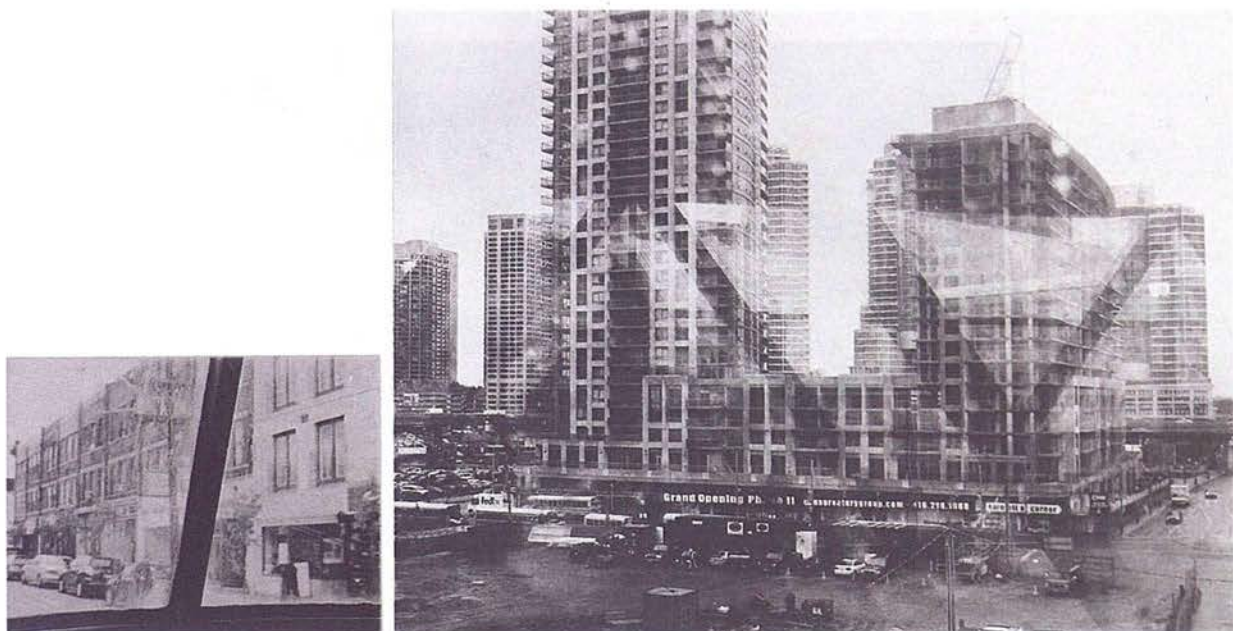


Fig. 15 Kevin Haas, *YYZ06-14*, 2006, photogravure, 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 in. 29.8 x 58.4 cm) (artwork © Kevin Haas)



Fig. 16 Georges-Pierre Seurat, *Le Pont de Courbevoie* 1886-87, Oil on canvas 18 x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ (46.4 x 55.3cm) Courtauld Institute, London (artwork in the public domain, photograph provided by the Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery)



Fig. 17 Paul Thirkell, *Tree of Life Number 2* (Alchemy and Botany Series), 2007, photopolymer gravure, 16 7/8 x 12 1/4 in. (43 x 31 cm) (artwork © Paul Thirkell)

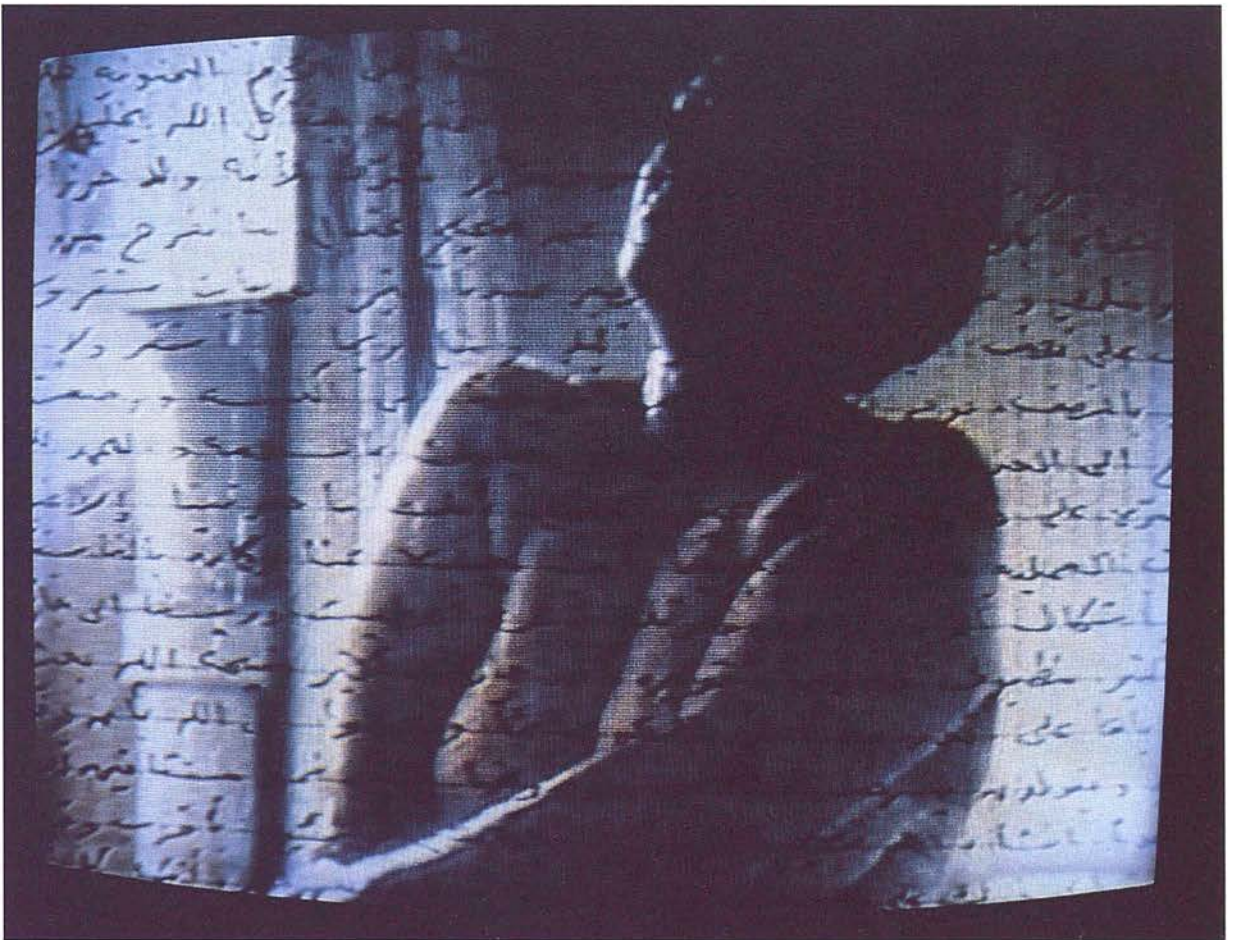
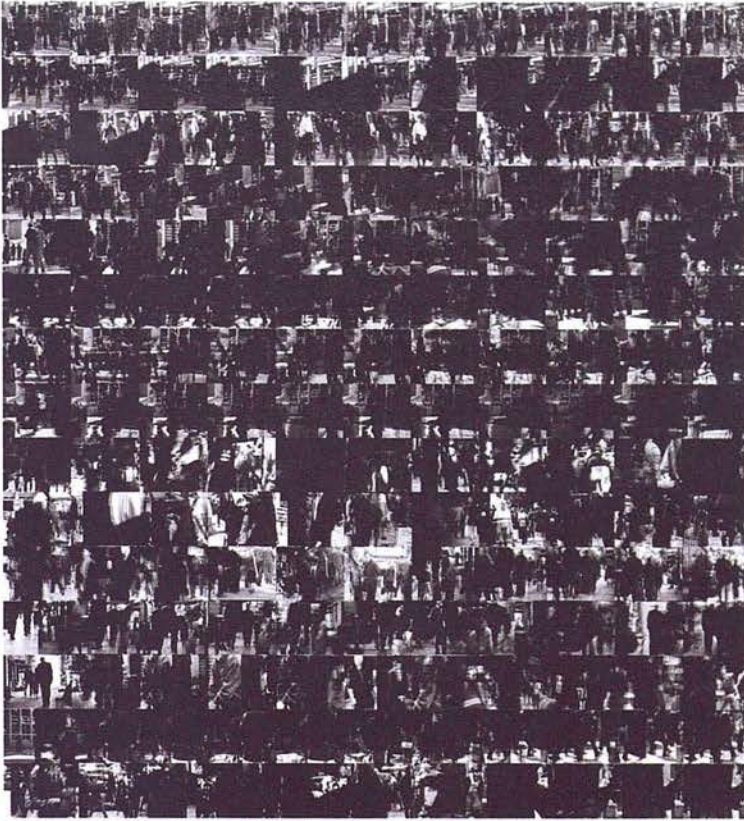


Fig. 18 Mona Hatoum, *Measures of Distance*, 1988, still from colour video installation, sound, 15 min., produced by Western Front Video, Vancouver (artwork © Mona Hatoum; image provided by Jay Jopling/White Cube, London)



Figs 19 & 20 Steve Lovett, *Uprooted*, 2007, full view and detail, 7-colour pigment print on 350 gsm archival paper, 47 ¼ x 43 ¼ in. (120 x 100 cm), edition of 3 prints and artist's proof (artwork © Steve Lovett; photographs © P. Burns)

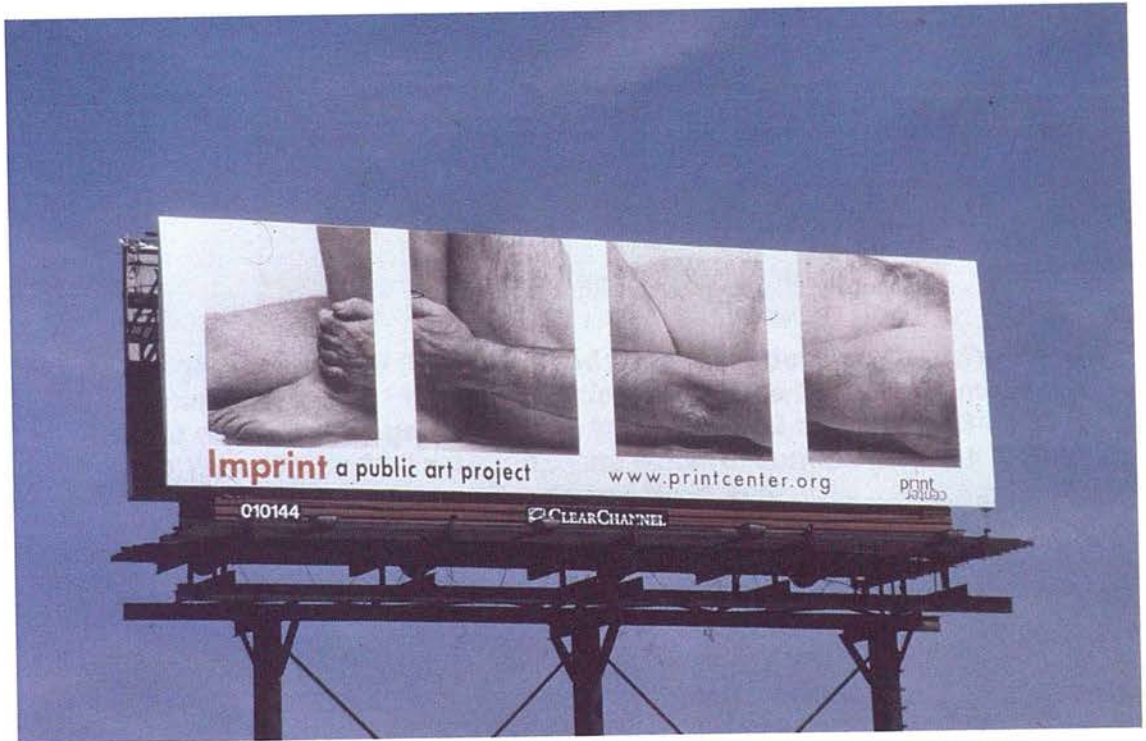


Fig. 21 John Coplans, *Self Portrait*, 1988, billboard created for Imprint, Interstate 95, Pennsylvania (artwork © John Coplans; photograph provided by the Print Center, Philadelphia)

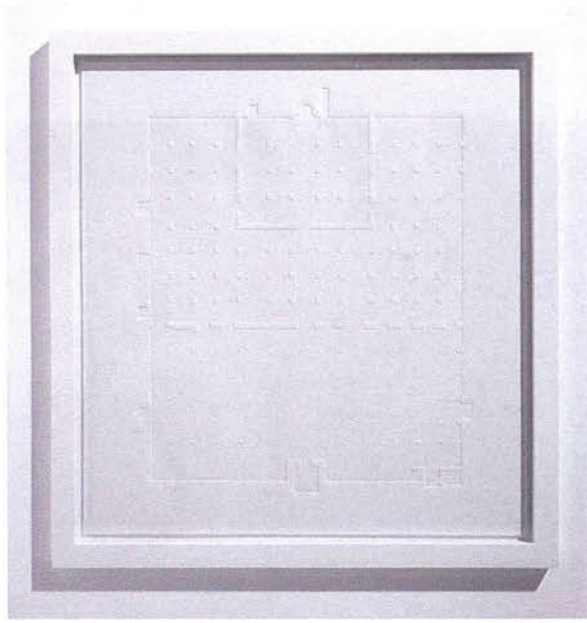


Fig. 22 Langlands and Bell (Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell), *Qal'a of the Banu Hammad, Algeria*, 1996, from *Enclosure and Identity*, blind-embossed print on paper, image: 29 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 29 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (76 x 72 cm), frame: 34 x 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (86.5 x 82.5 x 3.7 cm). Tate Modern, London (artwork © Ben Langlands and Nikki Bell)



Fig. 23 Charlotte Hodes, *Untitled*, 2007, inkjet with lasercut, 27 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (70 x 40 cm), printed and lasercut at the Centre for Fine Print Research, University of the West of England (artwork © Charlotte Hodes)



Fig. 24 Charlotte Hodes, *Fête Galante IV*, 2005-6, digitally manipulated drawing, inkjet and collage, 51 3/8 x 36 in. (130.5 x 91.5 cm) (artwork © Charlotte Hodes). This papercut is a section of the sequence of eight *Fêtes Galantes* exhibited in *Fragmented Images* at the Wallace Collection, London, in 2007.

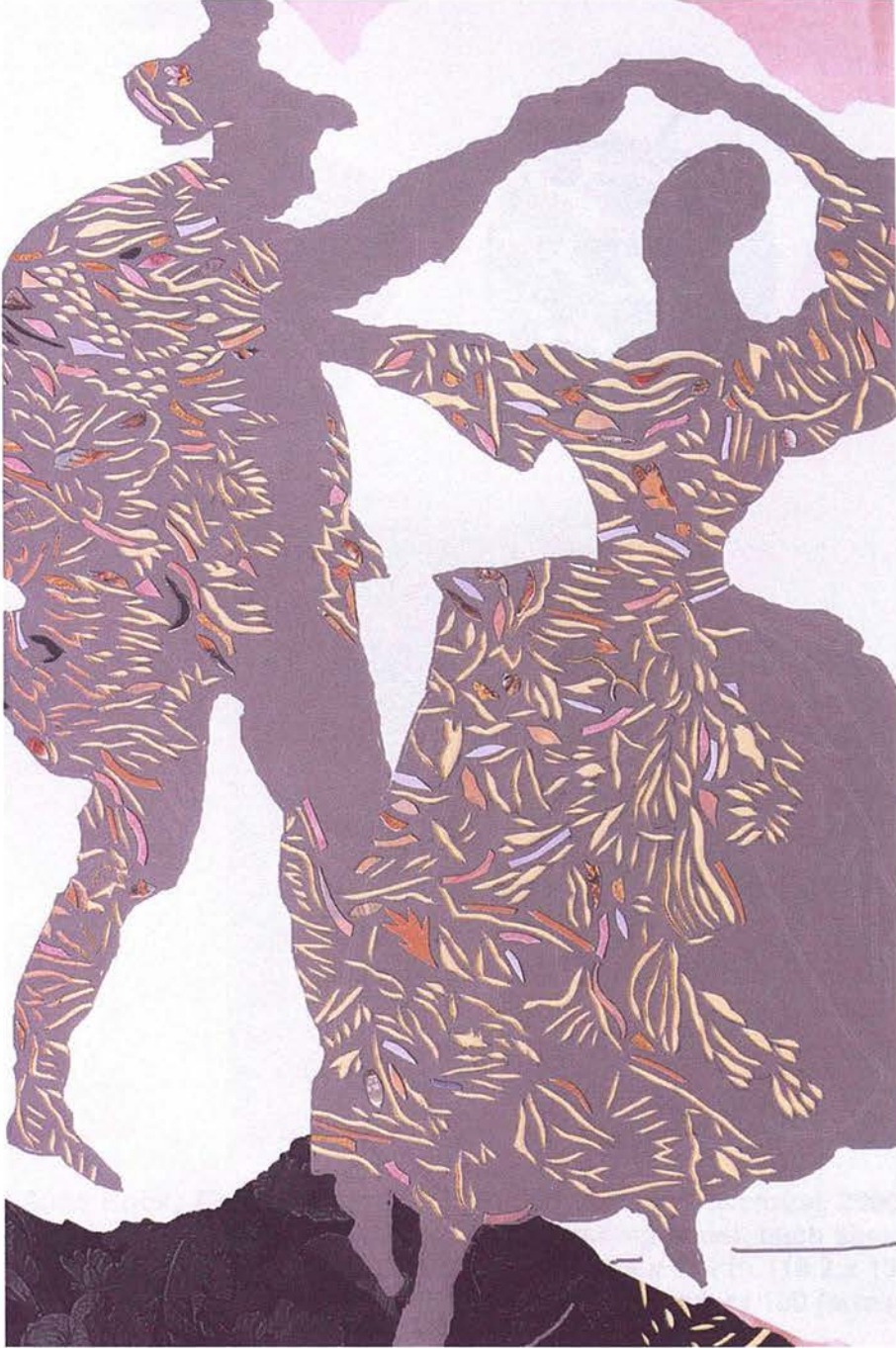


Fig. 25 Charlotte Hodes, *Fête Galante IV*, 2005-6, detail showing the cut fragments collaged back onto the figures.

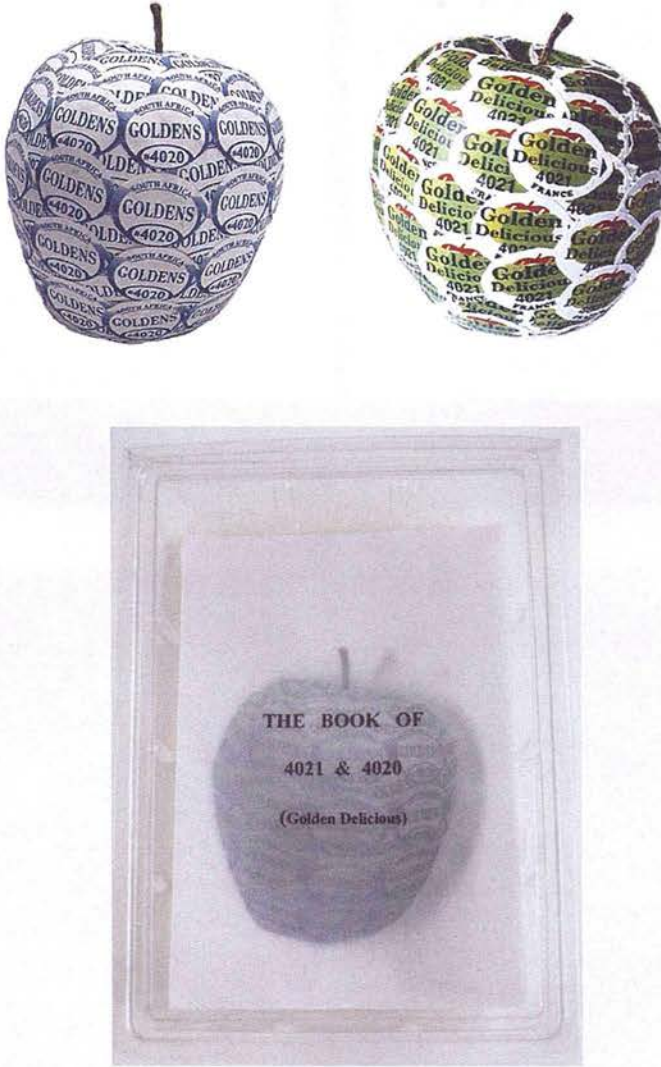
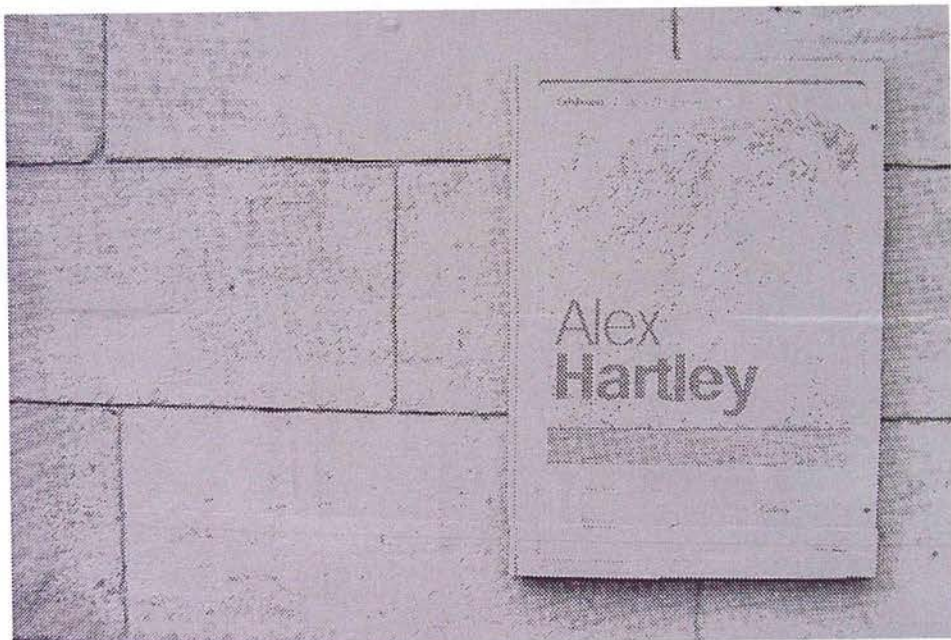


Fig. 26 Anne Rook, *The Book of 4021 and 4020 (Golden Delicious)*, 2000, clear plastic food container, inkjet prints on tracing paper, each sheet 5 5/8 x 4 1/8 in. 914.9 X 10.5 cm), Box 7 1/8 x 5 1/8 x 1 3/4 in. (18.2 x 13 x 4.5 cm), 8 pages printed by mm. Visual Catering, ed. of 100 (artwork © Anne Rook)



Figs. 27 and 28 Alex Hartley, *Elevation 1:1*, 2007, installation view and detail, plywood and printed posters, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh 2007 (artwork © Alex Hartley; photographs by the author)



Fig 29 Round Room, Talbot Rice Gallery - View upon entering the space from the White Gallery



Fig. 30 Neo-classical décor in the Georgian Gallery of the Talbot Rice Gallery



Fig. 31 Acanthus and Palmette (or Anthemion) Frieze in the Georgian Gallery



Figs. 32 & 33 Entry to the Round Room from White Gallery looking towards Georgian Gallery (image on left) and door on left of Round Room with Safety Instructions and Emergency Exit Signage (image on right)



Figs. 34 & 35 Detail: Fire Exit Signage and Safety Instructions in Round Room



Fig. 36 Cornice in Round Room

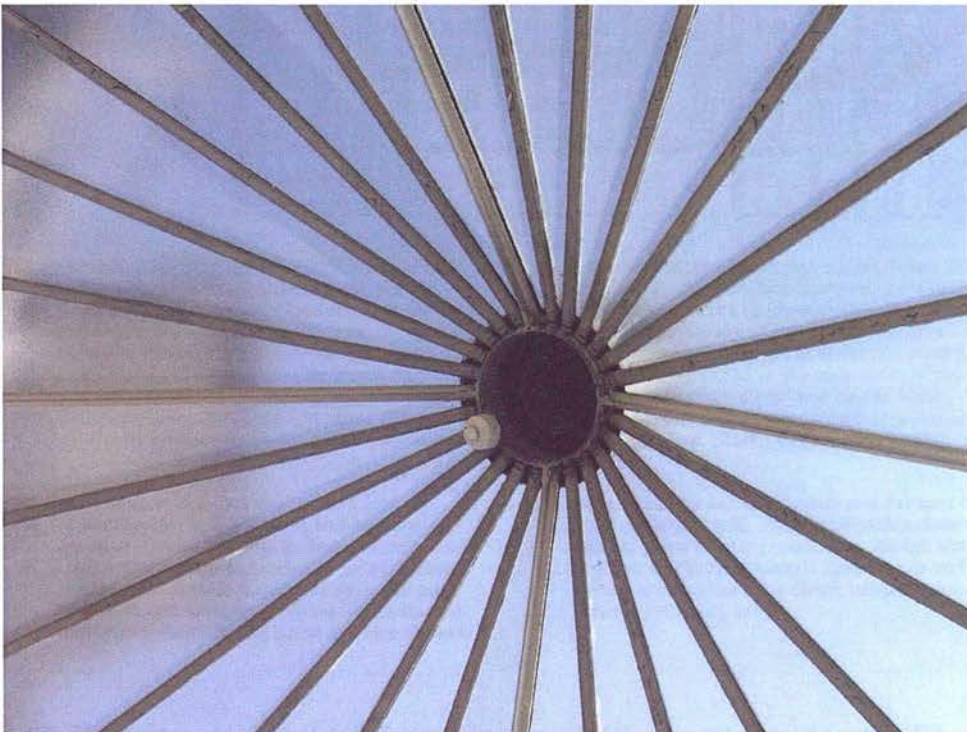


Fig. 37 Domed window in Round Room

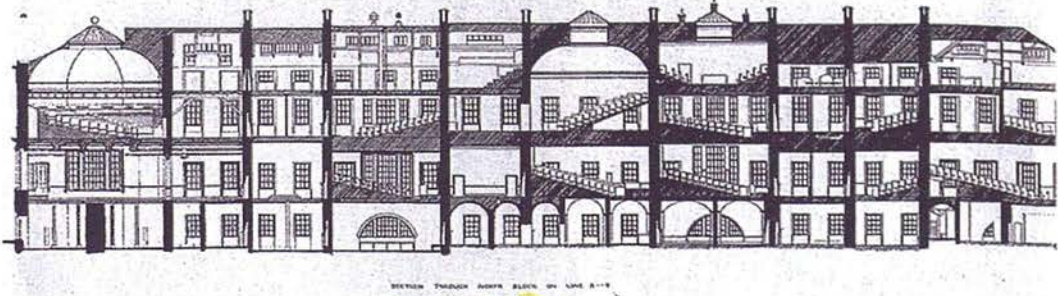


FIG. 9.25. Longitudinal section through the north side of the College in 1895. This drawing gives a good impression of the variety of sizes and shapes of lecture theatres and other rooms that Playfair fitted into this part of the building. The old Anatomy Theatre (now a Law lecture theatre) is at the left end, and the Natural Philosophy classroom under the cupola in the centre. Most of the tiered lecture theatres in

the upper storeys were stripped out in the 1970s when the greater part of this side was reorganised for the Law Faculty library and teaching areas. This cross-section explains the puzzling variations in floor level that resulted when old rooms in different areas were linked together, and helps to make sense of the odd skylights in the modern attic corridor. (EUL; 1895 survey, in SRD.)

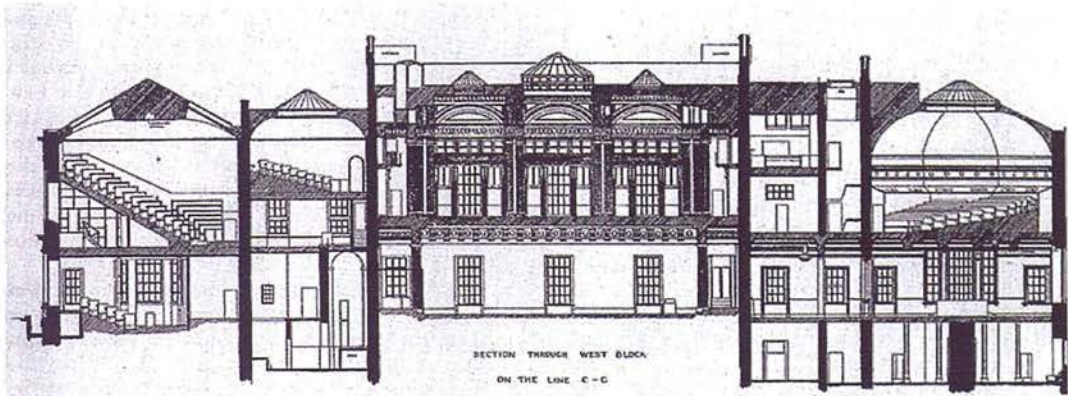


FIG. 9.26. Longitudinal section through the west side of the College in 1895. On the right, the old Anatomy Theatre in the upper storey at the north-west corner. In the centre, the Upper and Lower Museums, at this date used as laboratories for Natural History. The Upper Museum now houses the Torrie Collection in the Talbot Rice Art Centre; the Lower Museum (here apparently without its flanking Doric columns)

has been converted into the present Senate Hall. On the left, the old Chemistry classroom in the upper storey of the south-west corner is now the large White Gallery of the Art Centre. The stove-room in the basement of the south-west corner was abolished in the early years of the 20th century when a new rear exit to West College Street was driven through this section of the building. (EUL; 1895 survey, in SRD.)

FIG. 9.24. The changing face of Playfair's Lower Museum. *Above*; as a student common room in the 1950s (looking south). A bottle of milk with a straw was a popular lunch-time refreshment, but the architectural features of the room seem unnoticed and irrelevant. (Photo in Estates and Buildings Office.) *Below*; converted into the new

Senate Hall by Ian G. Lindsay and Partners in 1973 (looking north). Playfair's striking decoration is given greater prominence, though the problem of choosing electric light fittings and seating appropriate for a Greek temple remains. (Photo, Joe Rock, 1989.)

Fig.38 These image captions from Fraser (1989) do not mention the Round Room but his main text refers to it as the 'Natural History Class Room' which can be seen in Fig. 9.26 on the left hand side next to the 'old Chemistry Class Room' (now the White Gallery of the Talbot Rice Art Centre) (p. 305).



Fig. 39 R.M. Earlier set of marks used for *Trial Run* Exhibition and prior to *Schnörkeleien*



Fig. 40 R.M. Single line used for *Schnörkeleien*

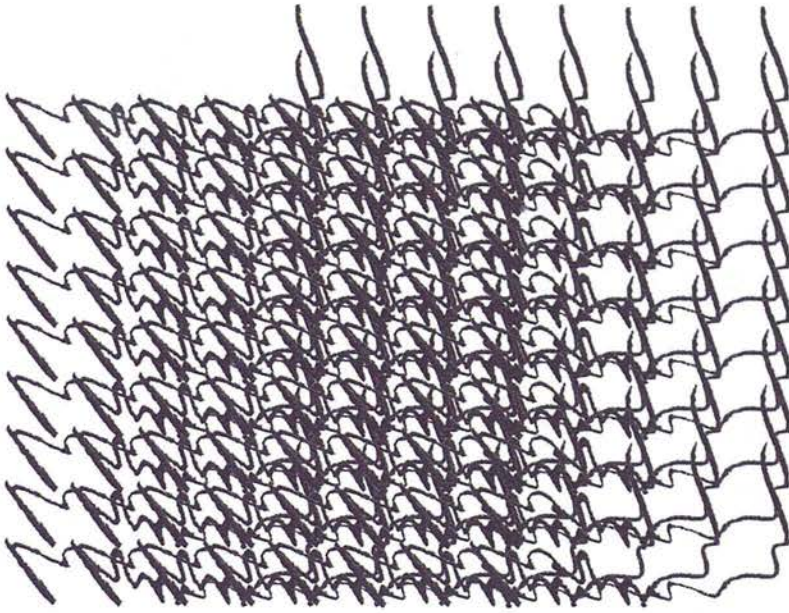


Fig. 41 R.M. Experiment with single line, Summer 2005

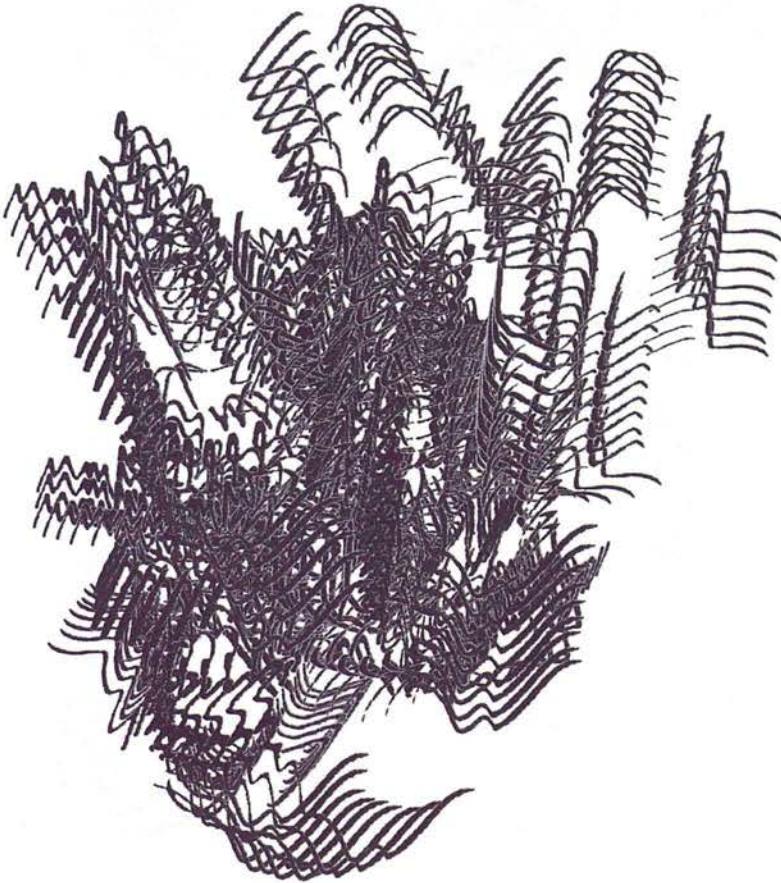


Fig. 42 R.M. Experiment with single line, Summer 2005

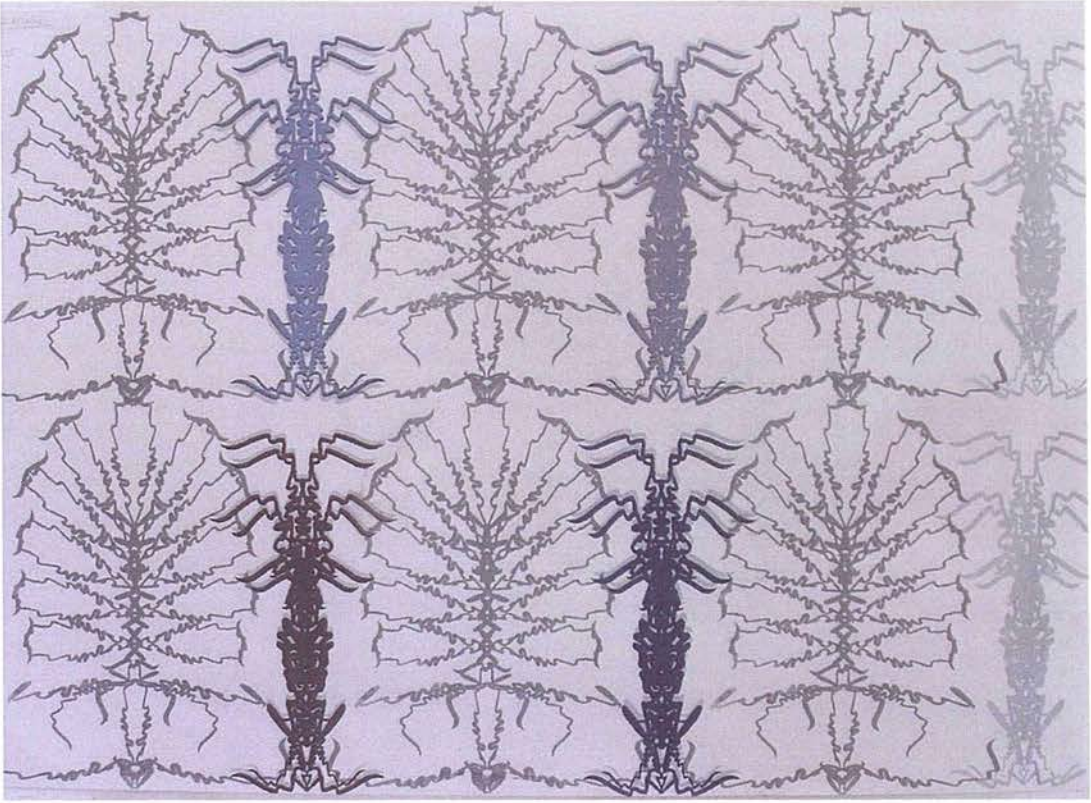
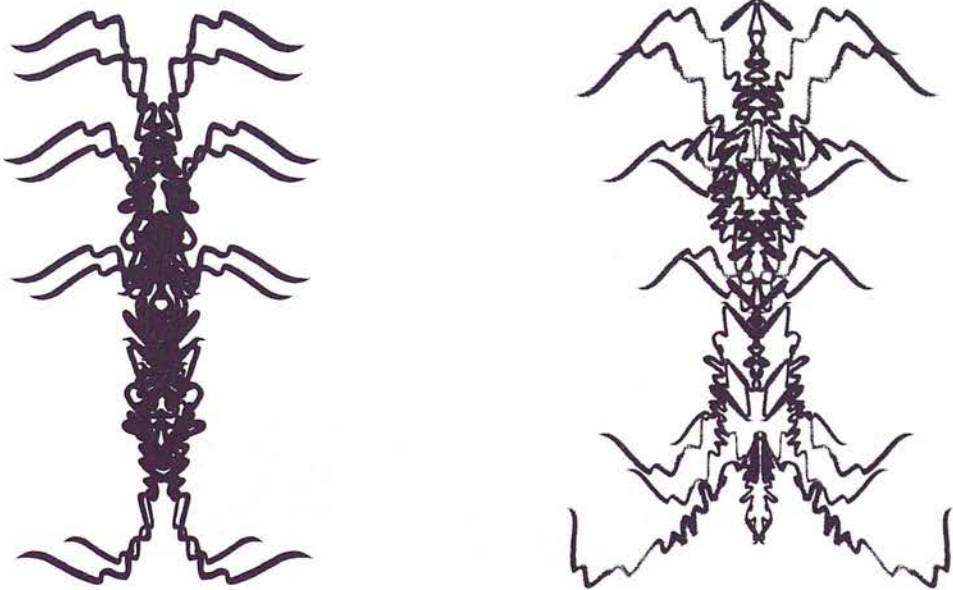


Fig. 43 R.M. All-over distribution of pattern for Round Room, Summer 2006



Figs. 44 & 45 R.M. Acanthus with 'bunched-up' lines (left) New Acanthus (right)

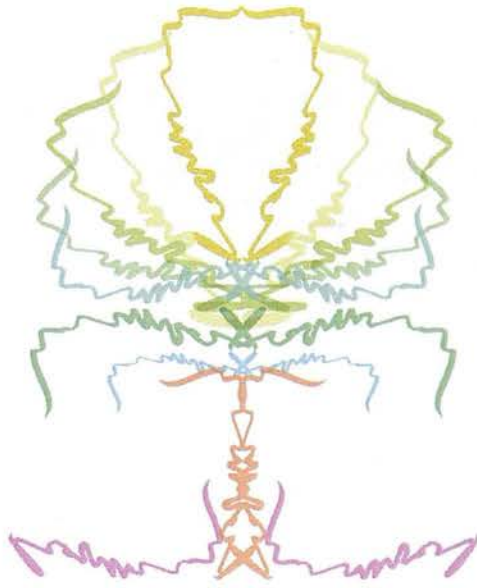


Fig. 46 R.M. Palmette – coloured lines in Photoshop

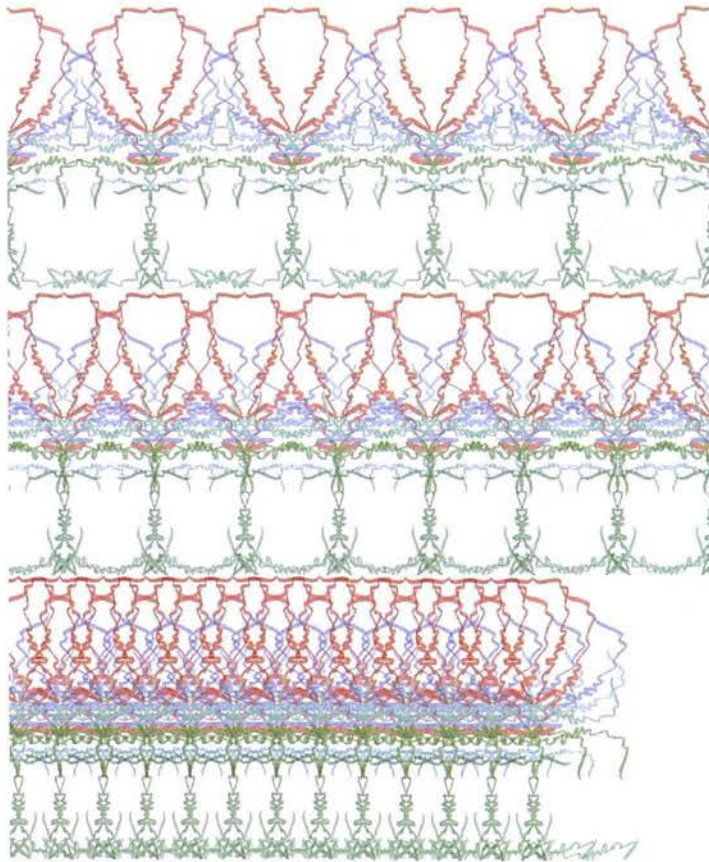


Fig. 47 R.M. Pattern in Photoshop consisting of palmette with coloured lines



Fig 48 R.M. *In Limbo*, 1995, screenprint, 23 x 22 cm from *Underwired in Print*, Portfolio Edinburgh Women Artists Group



Fig. 49 R.M. *Remix Large Grey*, 1999, from a series of six unique screenprints each measuring 90 x 62cm



Fig. 50 R.M. *Continuous Horizontal II*, 1999, from a series of eight unique screenprints, 90 x 62cm



Fig. 51 R.M. *Newsprint 1995* with multiple print outs



Fig. 52 R.M. The 'uncleaned' line

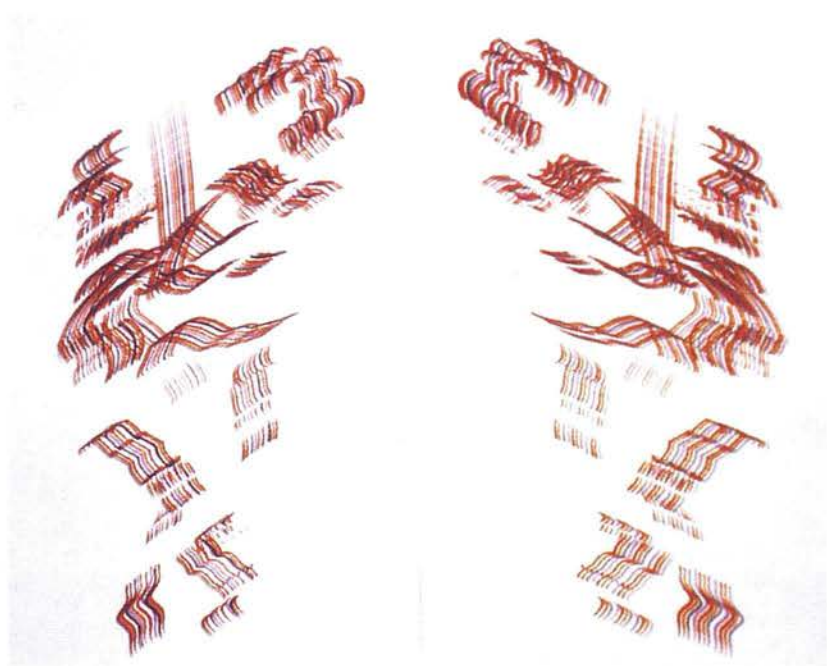


Fig. 53 R.M. *Cyborg-Series 2*, 1999, screenprint 200 x 150cm

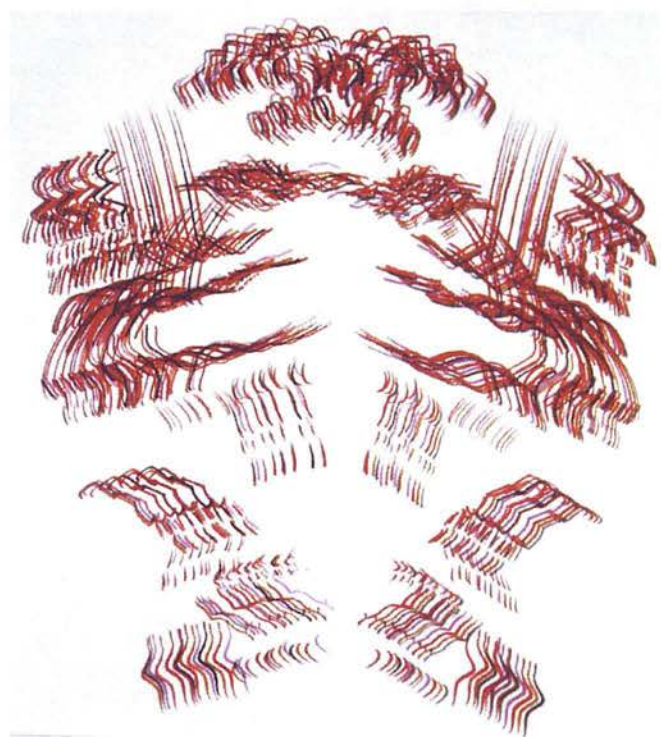


Fig. 54 R.M. *Cyborg-Series 3*, 1999, screenprint, 150 x 150cm

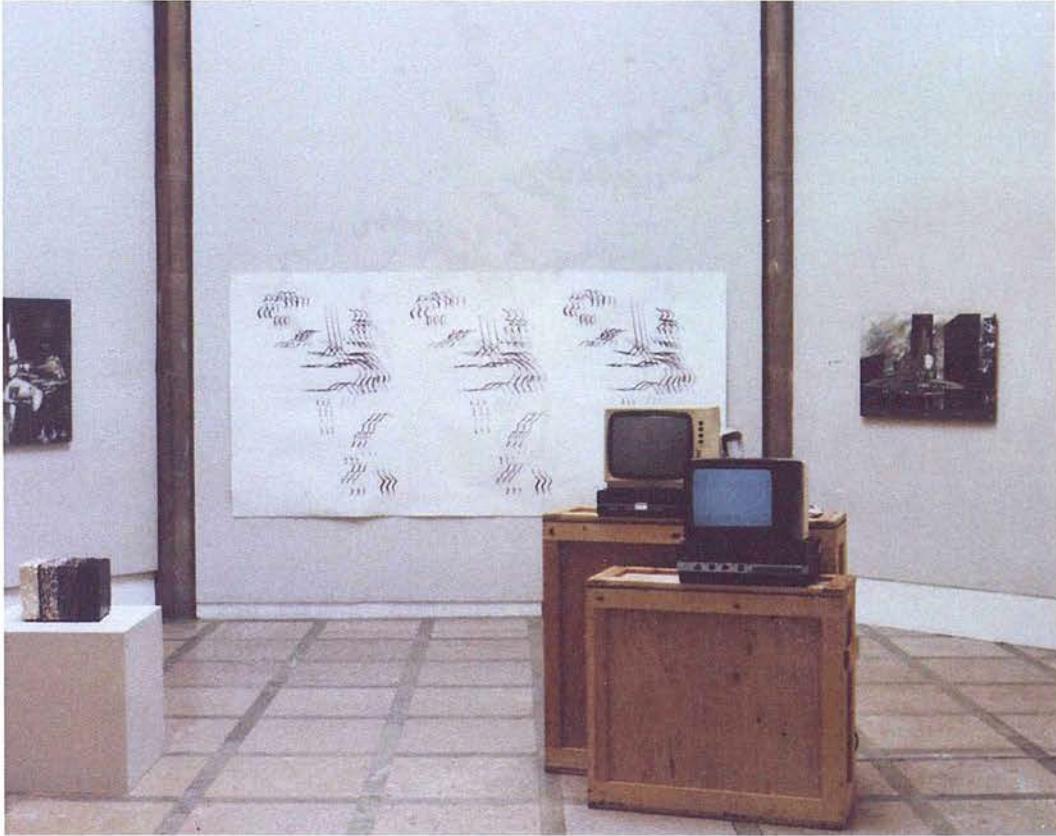


Fig. 55 R.M. *Cyborg-Series 1*, 1999, screenprint, 180 x 90cm - Society of Scottish Artists (SSA) Annual Exhibition, Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh

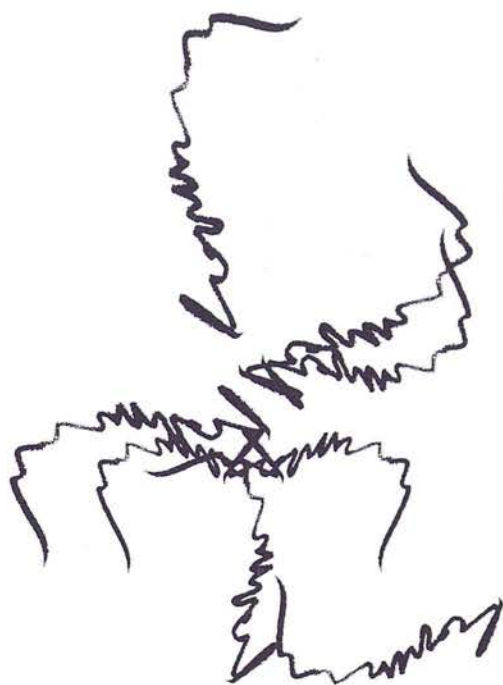


Fig. 56 R.M. Palmette deconstructed – Stencil

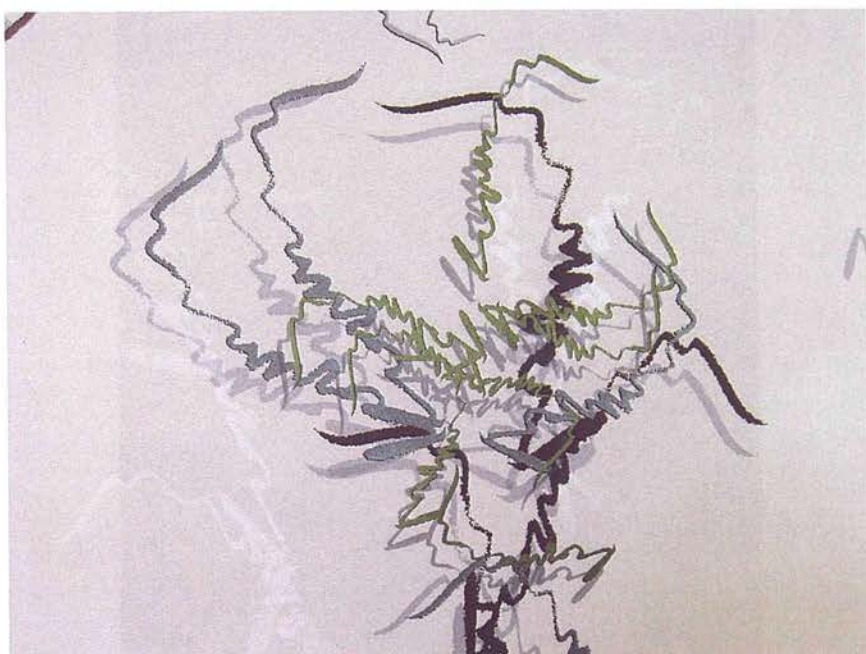


Fig. 57 R.M. Deconstructed printed image detail



Fig. 58 R.M. *Horizontal*, 2003, screenprint, 174 x 156 cm – Detail showing depth created through repetition

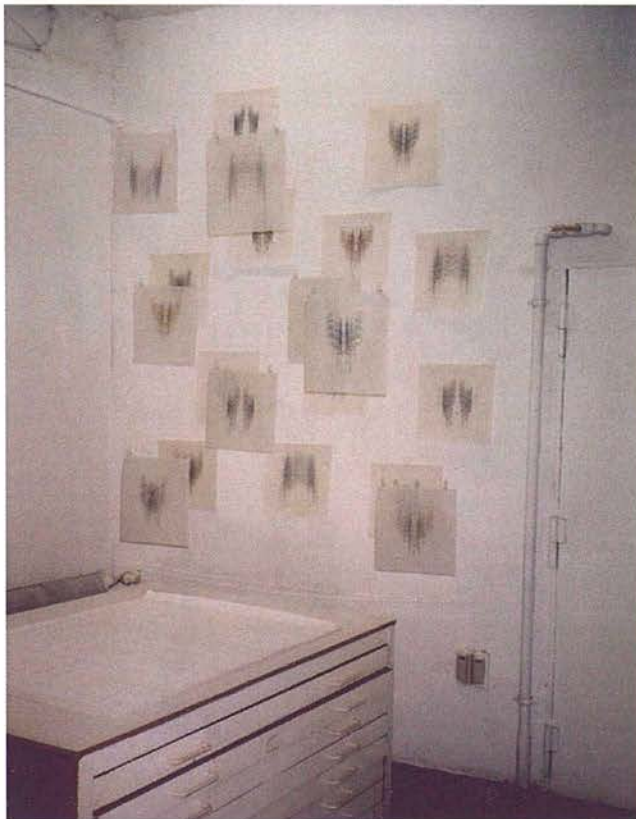


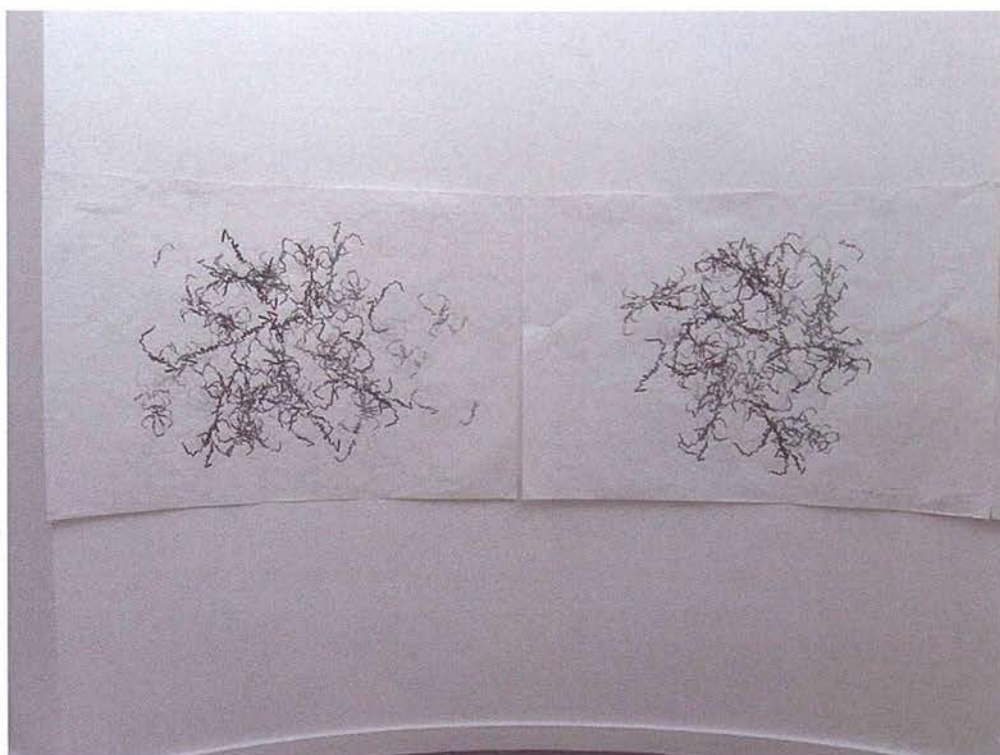
Fig. 59 R.M. *Specimen 1-24*, 2003, in Galerie Zement, 12 screenprints on opaque, 12 on transparent Japanese paper, each print 30 x 30 cm



Figs. 60 & 61 R.M. Palmette (top) and Acanthus (bottom) all-over stencil



Figs 62 and 63 Printing by moving the position of the sheet on the press



**Fig. 64 R.M. 'Island' shape of imagery from Phase I; Display in Round Room
18/12/06**

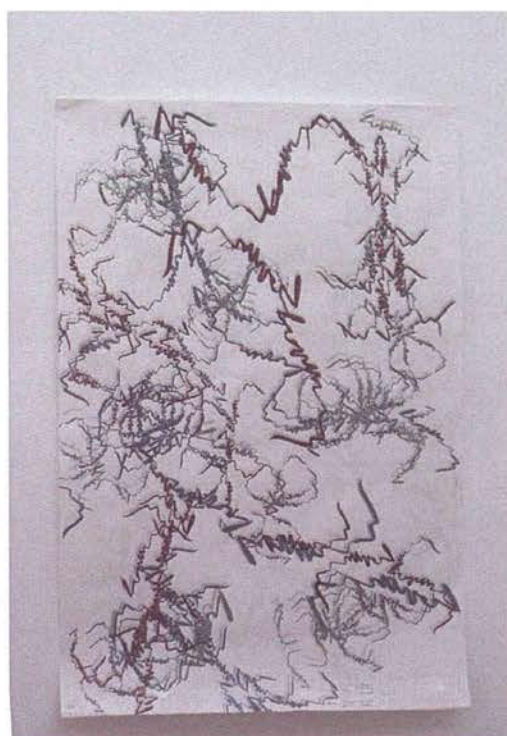


Fig. 65 R.M. Sheet with cut-off image elements, November/December 2006



Fig. 66 Provisional display in Round Room 5 February 2007



Fig. 67 Provisional display on smallest wall section of Round Room



Fig. 68 Provisional display on main wall section of Round Room



Fig. 69 Provisional display on two small wall sections



Fig. 70 Alternative display mode: Using 'bolts'

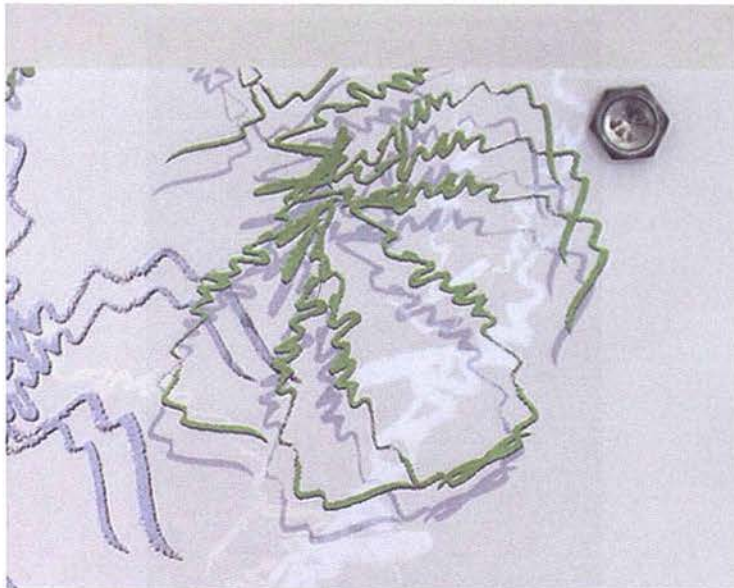


Fig. 71 Detail of 'bolt'



Fig. 72 Laying out of sheets on floor of White Gallery for selection



Figs. 73 & 74 Round Room details (skirting board on top, electric wiring on bottom) BEFORE being painted white

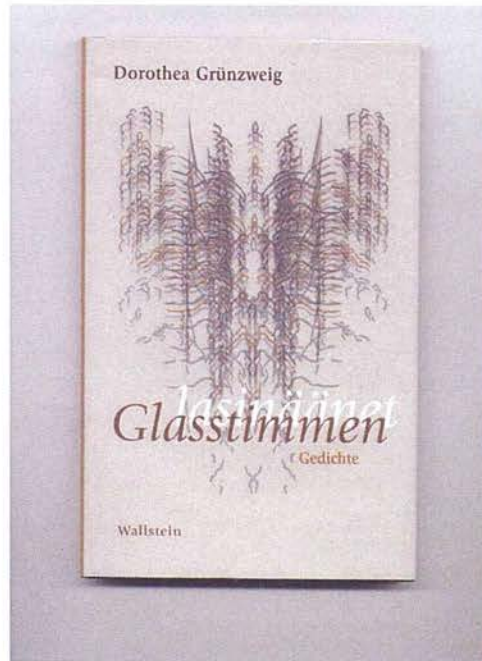


Fig. 75 R.M. Cover design for Dorothea Grünzweig's (2004) volume of poetry *Glasstimmen/lasinäänet* (Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen)

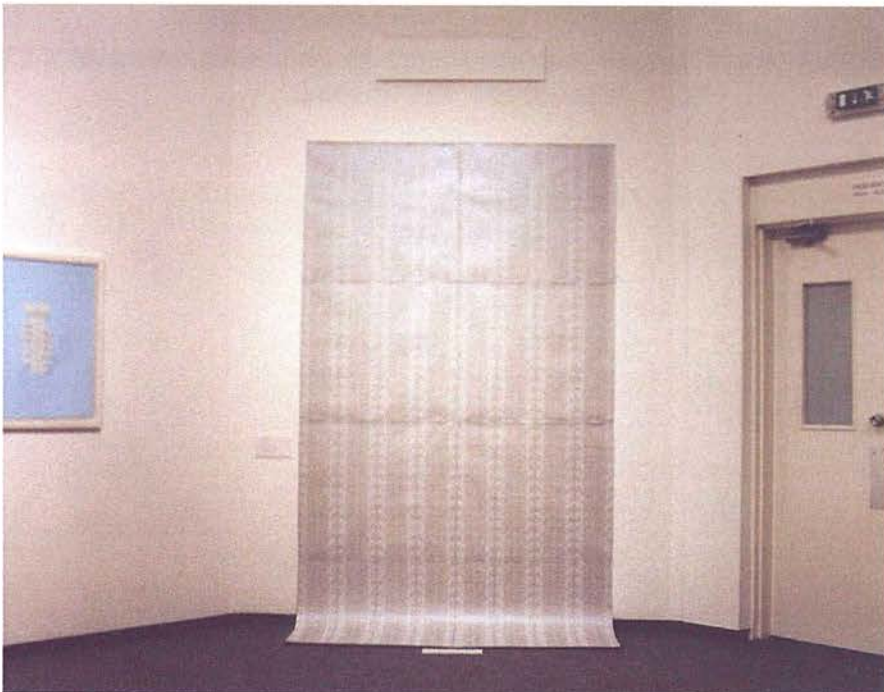


Fig. 76 R.M. *Grey on Grey*, 310 x 174 cm, eight screenprints measuring 76 x 87 cm each; Installation View in *Pressing Forward, Contemporary Printmaking in East Scotland*, Crawford Arts Centre, St Andrews, 2004

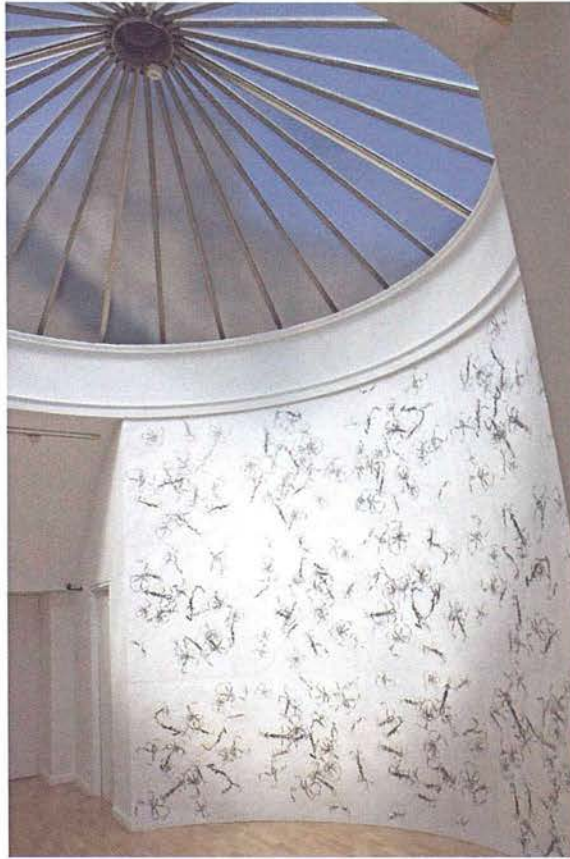


Fig. 77 R.M. Installation view of *Schnörkeleien*, Round Room, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, April 2007



Fig. 78 R.M. Installation view of *Schnörkeleien* (Detail)

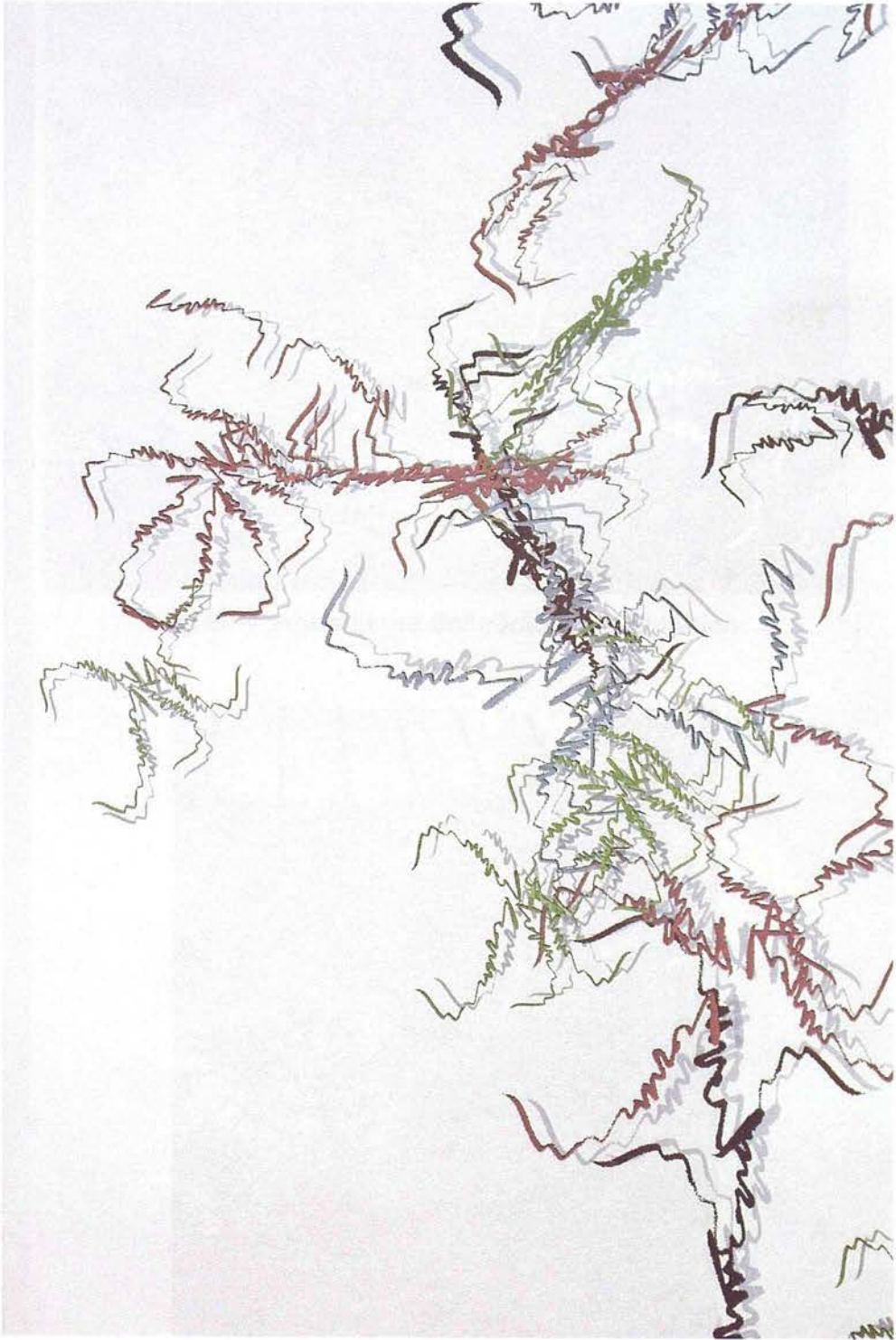


Fig. 79 R.M. Detail of imagery of *Schnörkeleien*

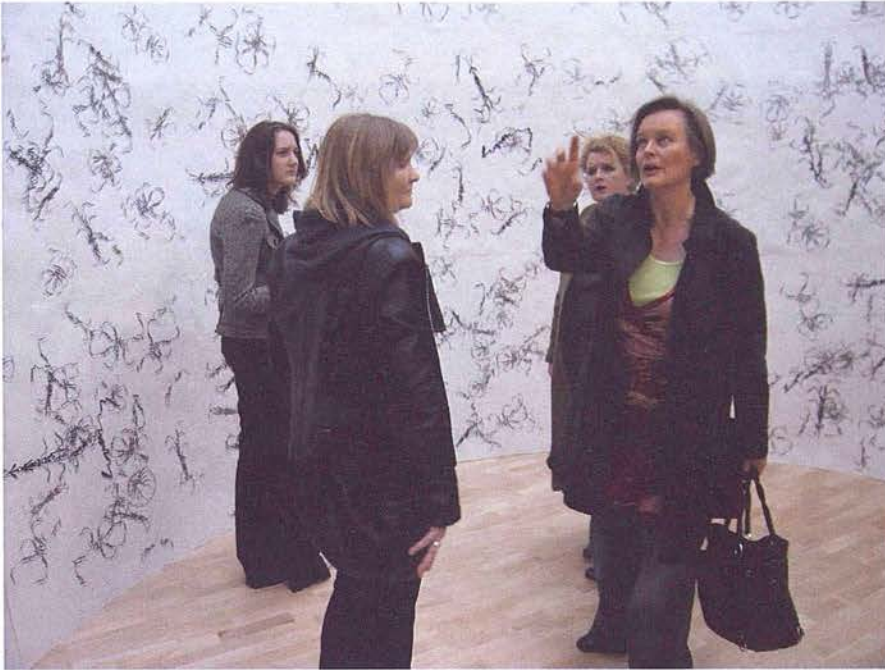


Fig. 80 Viewers in the *Schnörkeleien* exhibition



Fig. 81 Viewers in the *Schnörkeleien* exhibition

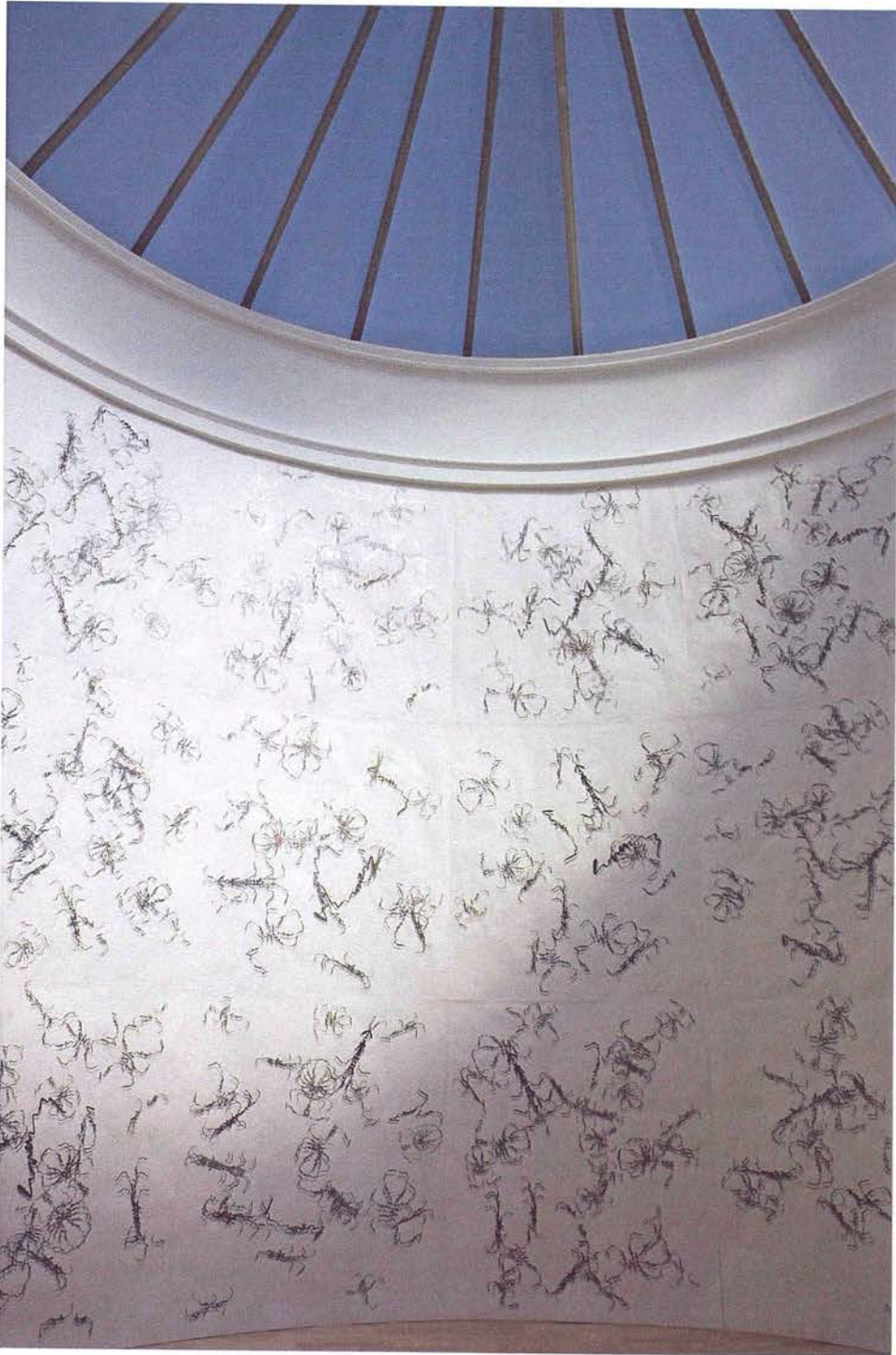


Fig. 82 *Schnörkeleien* Installation view – large wall



Fig. 83 *Schnörkeleien* Changing colours – effect of transference inks

Appendix: A Brief Explanation of the Screenprinting Process¹

The process of screenprinting is also known by the terms 'silk screenprinting' and 'serigraphy'. The latter term is popular in France and Germany. 'Seriegrafie' in German differentiates the method used by artists from the mere 'Siebdruck', printing through a 'sieve' or mesh, which constitutes a more popular, low key hobby or commercial application.

Conventional screenprinting today relies in a number of ways on photomechanical as well as digital processes. Like other printmaking techniques, most notably lithography, it basically consists of the accumulation of different elements, or printed layers, to form the final image. In this respect, digital imaging software, such as *Photoshop*, bears a strong resemblance to printing processes.

In the first stage of making a screenprint, the elements of the planned image are isolated and photocopied onto acetate, whether they are hand-drawn, painted or of photographic provenance. There is also the possibility to generate the different layers, or 'stencils', that make up the final image entirely by painting or drawing directly onto transparent or semi-transparent material, such as acetate. Whether this method is employed, or a mixture of the latter and photographic elements, or exclusively photographic material depends entirely on the practitioner's aesthetic aims. Increasingly, printmakers prepare their work at this stage on the computer. Drawn or painted image elements can be imported or digitally created in dedicated programmes. The material can be outputted directly on to acetate (as long as the available printing equipment can accommodate the desired size of the different elements).

During the next phase, a wooden or metal frame, the so-called screen, over which a strong plastic (originally silk) mesh has been permanently stretched, is covered in a film of photo-sensitive emulsion. After the screen has been dried, it has become photo-sensitive. The transparent sheets bearing the image elements, or stencils, are then laid onto the screen and exposed on a light box. Thus details of the image-to-be-made (or layers) are photomechanically transferred to the screen. Following

exposure, the photo emulsion is washed off and the screen now shows the chosen image elements as open areas on the mesh through which the ink can be pressed. The rest of the screen, namely the areas that are not to be printed, have been sealed off by the dried emulsion which will prevent ink from being pushed through.

Depending on the size and complexity of the final image and the size of the screen that is being used, several screens which have been exposed in this manner may be necessary to complete the image. The image components of an image of, for example, 30 x 20 cm, may well be accommodated on a single screen, although each component or layer will be printed separately from the others. The elements for an image with the size, let's say, of 90 x 70 cm may have to be distributed individually on to several screens, each screen bearing one or two layers at most, depending on the size of the individual layer/component.

The application of ink or the actual printing is done by dragging the ink with the help of a squeegee across the gaps in the mesh of the screen. This needs to be done with a certain amount of pressure. The word 'ink', suggesting a liquid, can appear misleading here. Screenprinting ink resembles a paste rather than a fluid substance. The result is that the squeegee forces the paste through the mesh onto the paper as an even, flat deposit rather than sinking into the fibre of the paper or substrate as would be the case with liquid ink. This can be observed in the flat areas of often monochrome colour of earlier screenprinting, typically in the work of Warhol, to name but one example. For large image areas the printing press has a built-in mechanical arm into which the squeegee can be fitted to enable and facilitate the printing process. Smaller areas can be printed purely by hand. The size of squeegee that is being used obviously depends on the size of the area to be printed.

Various methods of registration have been devised to ensure the difficult matching of the appropriate part of the image on screen to its exact location on the paper.

All the individual components of the image are produced in the way described above. Although a print may consist of not more than one or several of such layers, there is no set upper limit. A complex image may easily be made up of over twenty

layers or ink deposits. This process allows the printmaker to generate a great variety of colour effects, through the process of layering. For example, the water colour effects in Fig. 48 rely on over twenty semi-translucent, overlapping layers of ink.

Such effects are in contrast to screenprinting's common association with large, bold areas of flat colour. This connotation is due to screenprinting's industrial roots and application. It started as a commercial print process in the early twentieth century although it was known previously. Until today commercial screenprinting is used to produce product labels, posters, textiles, even electronic circuit boards and so on. Screenprinting's mercantile provenance gave its adoption by artists in the 1960s a certain notoriety and critical kudos in the context of the emergence of Pop art. These connotations no longer apply, although in printmaking circles there still seems to adhere an element of the 'facile' to screenprinting compared to the other, more venerable printmaking traditions.

As this account has detailed, screenprinting can be considered as the flattest of all printmaking techniques. Lithography's flatness is moderated by its much finer distribution of pigments and potential for painterly effects which yield a 'rich' surface. Etching and related processes, even the now popular photoetching, possess a similarly dense surface quality that is the result of the direct application of ink to the stone or plate and from there to the paper without the interference of the, relatively speaking, coarse screen mesh as in screenprinting. While these effects may be not apparent at first glance, especially to the non-specialist viewer, they form a substrate of the discourse of printmaking.

¹ For a comprehensive account of the method of water-based screenprinting which is now increasingly employed by printmaking workshops and which was used in the production of the works for my two exhibitions, see Adam (2003) and Hoskins (2007).

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