

Surrender

Bypassing the surface mind, working from the embodied depth mind

Paintings, collages, and writing

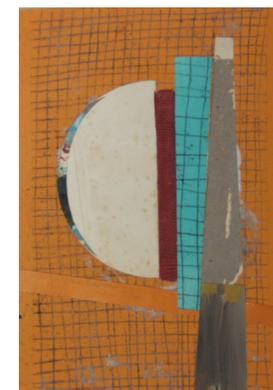
Elise V Allan



Untitled, gouache and collage

Research Output

Paintings, and collages



Collages 2018, made with painted and printed paper.



1st row: The principles of Hypnotherapy collage, 2017

Millport, oil on acrylic on board, 2017

Falling Up, oil on linen, 2017

2nd row: Left, oil on card 2017

But the Walls Weren't Solid All Along, oil on board, 2016

Untitled, collage 2018



3rd row:
Untitled, collage 2018

Know-one, oil on board, 2015

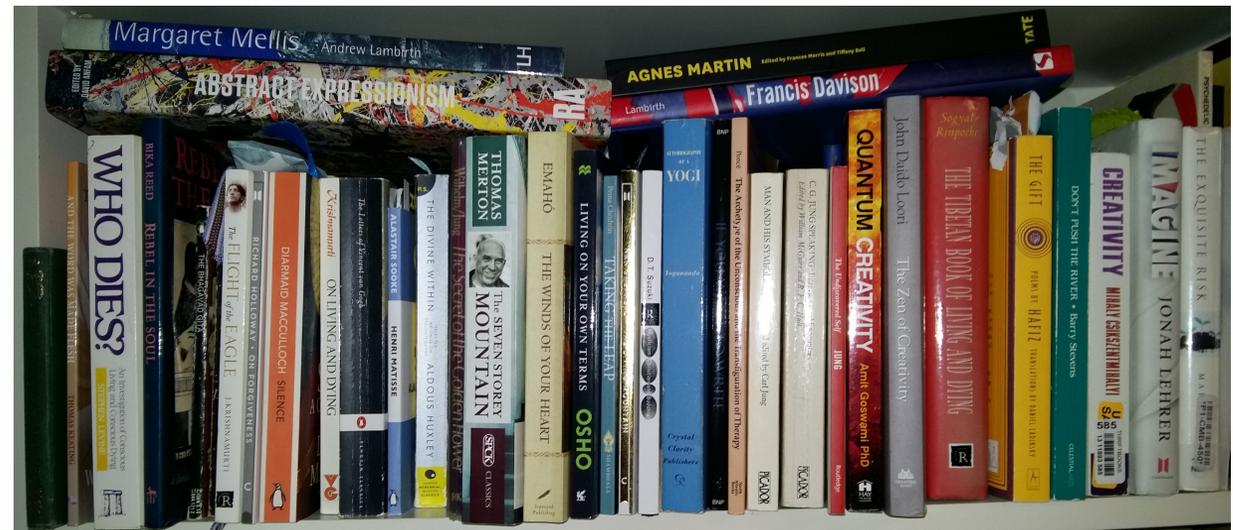
For Theo, oil on linen, 2015

Context

Writers on spirit in creativity include Natalie Goldberg whose Zen teacher suggested using her writing as her daily practice, Elizabeth Gilbert whose Ted talks discuss the Muse, Van Gogh's letters and Matisse's letters to his friend Sister Jacques-Marie discuss the parallels between the religious life and a creative life. The writings of Agnes Martin indicate how the teachings of D.T. Suzuki and of Krishnamurti underpinned her painting. John Daido Looi wrote of The Zen Of Creativity. The poet Mark Nepo wrote of another reality breaking through and changing his relationship to poetry. Aldous Huxley wrote on creativity and is-ness.

Independent mystics, Krishnamurti , Osho, Barbara Ehrenreich, Emaho Montoya, Carlos Castaneda have written about the problems of seeing beyond conditioned mind in contemporary Western society.

Many writers on Creativity have acknowledged the creative 'not self'; Julia Cameron, Mihaly Csikszentmihayi, Carl Gustav Jung.



Some of literature around theme.

Context

Atheist writer Eric Maisel Phd, Physicist and philosopher Amit Goswami Phd, Christian writer Thomas Merton, Buddhist writers D.T. Suzuki and John Daido Looi and psychology researcher Mihaly Csikszentmihayi have many similarities as well as differences in their approach to the ineffable aspect of creativity. They tend to differ more in their approach to evaluating creative output.

Contemporary and 19th-20th Century artists explicitly exploring this territory include John Cage, Bridget Riley, Mark Rothko, Wassily Kandinsky, Hilda af Klint, Agnes Martin, Vincent van Gogh, Matisse, Gary Wragg.

Abstract artist influences are Francis Davison, John Bunker, Margaret Mellis, Wilhelmina Barns Graham, Agnes Martin, Philip Reeves, Mark Rothko.



Hilda af Klint

Context

Previous work. Early work, 1978 – 1992
Symbolic, instinctively working from
subconscious, influenced by writing of Carl
Gustav Jung, Psychosynthesis, delving into
subconscious. Artist influences included Ken Kiff
and Marc Chagall.

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Magdalene Unrepentant Oil on canvas Elise V Allan 1981

Context

1992 – 2007, starting to work with a nomadic shaman brought me from working from inner life to exploring detached witnessing of subjectivity combined with more observation and structure.



Room, Symi Elise V Allan acrylic on canvas 2004

Research Question

To what extent does emptying mental clutter, shifting from surface mind to the embodied depth mind, facilitate creativity?

Does a creative practice in itself enable emptying of emotional and mental clutter (or seeing beyond it) or is acquiring the ability to do so in other contexts more effective?

Is the paradoxical art of combining the maximum of relaxation of the surface self with the maximum activity of the 'not self', experienced similarly by artists and meditators?

What can artists learn from active contemplatives and meditators to support their practice?

What are the roles of will and of surrender within creativity?

How can a secular equivalent of 'working Samhadi' be learned out with 'religious' teaching?

Methodology

Literature

Reflective writing

Centering Prayer practice

Facilitated Reflections Groups

Work with nomadic shaman

Facilitating Creativity Reflections Groups

Facilitating Creativity Reflection, one to one

Painting

Collage

Through the above activities I have tested out my hypothesis on my own practice, confirming that learning to empty mental clutter, and to shift from surface mind to embodied depth mind, in contexts beyond creativity, have facilitated working creatively.

I intend to test it the hypothesis on other people within my creativity coaching practice; I have taken a creativity coaching training over the last two years.

Working one to one with professional artists, writers, and designers, and amateur artists; those who have not been actively creative since childhood, and those who have attended leisure classes regularly or occasionally. From the beginning of coaching I take notes on how clients perceive blocks, resistance, and any other obstacles to their stated goals.

Much of coaching involves enabling the client to find their own solutions, but where there are issues of overwhelm by too many ideas, thoughts, intrusive feelings or inner criticism, I am in a position to support the client to learn ways to quieten the inner dialogue, shift their attention to whole body perception; and I can observe whether from this position the client is better able to make decisions on how to move

forward.

I will rely on clients reporting on their subjective experience of creative flow and changes to their ease in accessing their creativity.

Working also in groups, I am gathering feedback on to what extent learning to empty mental clutter and access depth mind impacts on clients' creativity.

I am also coaching some clients by email, and have a record of feedback on changes experienced. I will have to seek permissions and use information in ways that clients cannot be identified as coaching is confidential.

Any feedback from my blog is less likely to be useful evidence but nevertheless might be worth considering.

Contribution to the field

Existing creativity coaching literature can be overtly religious, spiritual or atheist, although there are some exceptions such as *Writing Down the Bones* by Natalie Goldberg which provides Zen understanding in secular terms to writers. Some creativity coaching literature is concerned with demonstrating a science based approach to psychology, other coaching literature is geared towards SMART goals; there is a rich variety of points of view within the literature.

At present, my contribution to the field is on a very small scale; by taking ways of working with mind and a larger perspective, that might normally be used in a non secular context into a coaching context, avoiding terms with religious connotations, I will have provided clients with ways of learning to shift from anxious or over stimulated surface mind to depth mind, without using Buddhist, shamanic or religious terms and without compromising any client's commitment to religious or atheist beliefs.

Building on what I have taken from learning a Centering Prayer practice, from the facilitator of Reflections Groups, within a brief experience of learning Butoh, and from the teachings of a nomadic shaman who has a unique approach to life and teaching; along with what I have understood from the body of literature that includes writings on Gestalt, focusing, Zen and mystic poetry into my own creative practice, and subsequently into my creativity coaching practice, I am working with a combination of influences that will bring a new approach to the field. The main focus will be on my research question, but will work around it from many angles. From writing my blog, to building up a body of writing, my intention is to produce a book that will bring what I have absorbed from this combination of influences to creativity coaching literature. The intended audience will include both professional artists, (including writers, designers etc.), non artists and amateur or untrained artists.

Dissemination

RGI annual exhibition 2017



Three Kisses, Half Forgotten, painted paper and collage , 2017 : award ceremony : RGI Annual Exhibition 2017.

City of Glasgow College Purchase Prize 2017 RGI Annual Exhibition

Dissemination

RSA Annual exhibition 2017

PAI Annual exhibition 2017

RGI Annual exhibition 2016

RSW Annual exhibition 2016

PAI Annual exhibition 2016



RSA Annual Exhibition 2017

Hiding in the Walls, collage, (shown at RSA)

oil on canvas, PAI Annual exhibition

Whisper the Dive

Dissemination

The Glad, Glasgow

Solo exhibition 2016

Conversation Between Lovers

Title and theme of exhibition from the poem *The Ear That Was Sold To A Fish* by Hafiz, Sufi Master and poet, in *The Gift*, anthology translated by Daniel Ladinski.



Library, collage:



Conversation Between Lovers, oil on linen



Pulse, Oil on Linen:



Brushed, oil on board

Dissemination

The House for an Art Lover

Solo Exhibition 2015

On the Beam

Title and theme of exhibition, On the Beam from an Agnes Martin quotation, Happiness is Being on the beam with life – to feel the pull of life.



On the Beam, collage

Meet, collage

You Make My Heart Sing, collage

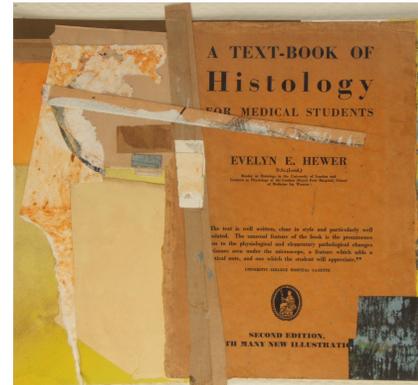
Blessed and Ruined, collage

Dissemination

RGI Kelly Gallery
Solo Exhibition 2015

Notes

Title and theme of exhibition based on painting and collage as a dialogue with the not-self.



Notes, collage

Left, collage

A Thousand promises, oil on canvas

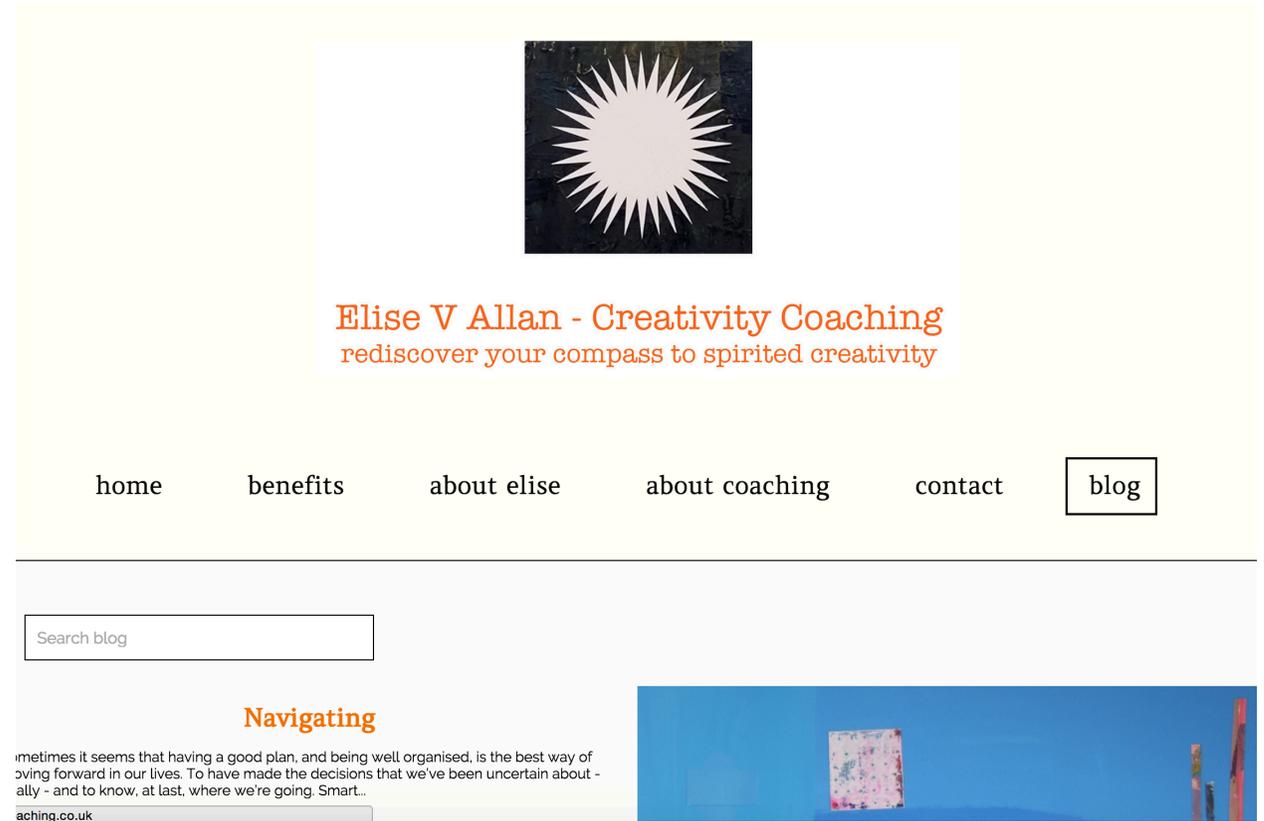
Beneath my Feet, collage

Dissemination

Weekly Blog about Creativity, based on research.

www.elisevallen-creativitycoaching.co.uk/blog

<https://www.facebook.com/EliseVAllancreativitycoaching/>



The screenshot shows the website for Elise V Allan - Creativity Coaching. At the top center is a logo featuring a white sunburst on a dark square background. Below the logo, the text reads "Elise V Allan - Creativity Coaching" in orange, with the tagline "rediscover your compass to spirited creativity" underneath. A navigation menu is located below the header, with links for "home", "benefits", "about elise", "about coaching", "contact", and "blog" (which is highlighted with a black border). Below the navigation menu is a search bar labeled "Search blog". The main content area features the heading "Navigating" in orange, followed by a paragraph of text: "Sometimes it seems that having a good plan, and being well organised, is the best way of moving forward in our lives. To have made the decisions that we've been uncertain about - finally - and to know, at last, where we're going. Smart...". The text is partially cut off at the bottom. To the right of the text is a blue rectangular image showing a colorful abstract pattern.

Blog page is on Creativity Coaching website, and shared on a Facebook Page.