

# **Painting and Materiality: Three Creative Strategies for Transformation**

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## Abstract

This thesis proposes potential material devices to transform the concerns of painting within an expanded field. It suggests that new knowledge is produced in material and subjective relationships. The research began with a propensity towards the subject of drapery and evolved into finding other material conditions that could create a new space for painting. This investigation is conducted through three distinct Creative Strategies, where each one informs methods of thinking for practice. The overarching themes of the individual strategies are:

*Creative Strategy 1:* proposes a new theory of prosthetics to transform the physical constraints of painting. I argue that the frame is the crux for expansion and physical transformation. It is achieved through a reductive approach to the physical and material elements of painting within a spatial context.

*Creative Strategy 2:* explores the material agency of fetish and fabric in making processes and uncovers the underlying fetishistic meaning of the materials associated with my practice.

*Creative Strategy 3:* reveals the cultural and social significance of drapery in contemporary painting. Significantly, that desire can instigate politicised transformation in painting.

The Creative Strategies provoke a series of linkages between subject and object, which progress through specific analysis on fetishism, femininity, desire and materiality. These explorations advance through the transformative effects of hybridity and multiplicity on expanded painting practices.

Crucially, Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt's concepts concerning material practice and emergent methodologies underpin the practice-led research. Bolt's idea of a double articulation between practice and theory (2002), is further amplified through the addition of feminist empiricism and feminist autoethnographic methods. These methods are critical lenses in which to examine the research. Moreover, Elizabeth Grosz' notions on materiality structure the philosophical foundation, which evolved from an initial investigation into Gilles



Deleuze's theories on non-linear thinking. These approaches allow generative and additive challenges to the construction, assumptions and principal forms of painting.

Through the three Creative Strategies, this PhD delivers a progression of material thinking that will impact upon knowledge around critical modes of enquiry in relation to expanded painting. As an in-depth study of the significance of purposeful tools to enable transformations, the research examines, clarifies and highlights agency in processes and practices. While significant studies have been carried out on materiality, there are few empirical investigations from within the medium of painting with a focus on drapery and that of an expanded field. Therefore, to summarise, this research contributes to current discourse on material thinking by synthesizing three distinct modes of enquiry, which propose a new approach to contemporary painting.

## Acknowledgements

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## **Note to the Reader**

This dissertation compliments the practice rather than being an explanation or a descriptive documentation. The practice, as documented in the portfolio and sketchbook, runs chronologically with the dissertation. The parallel nature of the outputs means that they are reciprocal in triggering and reflecting ideas in both the practice and theory. This double articulation affirms that knowledge is generated from the creative artefact. The findings of the research are presented in the portfolio, which is further supported by the sketchbook by exposing the mechanisms of investigation and thought processes. It is edited to give an overview of the range of experiments and considerations that went towards the enquiry and finished artworks. The three components: dissertation, sketchbook and portfolio, replicate the same format as the three Creative Strategy sections, and are intended as three books that inform each other.

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## Introduction

While acknowledging that the subject of materiality in painting is complex, this PhD examines possible materials to transform the concerns of painting in an expanded field. The research began from an established study of drapery and progressed into proposing other materials that could potentially create a new space of painting. The enquiry is realised through three distinct Creative Strategies.

- *Creative Strategy 1*: proposes a new theory of prosthetics<sup>1</sup> to transform the physical constraints of painting. It aims to reveal the frame as the crux of exploring form and structure, therefore, activating a space for the material transformation of painting.
- *Creative Strategy 2*: explores the material agency of fetish<sup>2</sup> and the subject's relationship to objects in making processes. It proposes a material ontology where the object and its objecthood (as discussed through ideas of the *thing*) are positioned for fetishisation and therefore can challenge agency in painting.
- *Creative Strategy 3*: demonstrates that the drape as the desired object can enable politicised transformation in painting. These considerations aim to expose the rationale for, and impact of, the material agency of drapery in methods of transformation in an expanded painting practice.

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of the prosthetic by Elizabeth Grosz (2005), reveals that the activation of a body by a prosthetic, whether technological, physical or mental, transforms the body spatially, aesthetically and culturally (Grosz 2005 p9). Taking on board these ideas, I propose in this research that the prosthetic can be a device for transforming painting, as it can physically transform painting from a two-dimensional surface to a three-dimensional form.

<sup>2</sup> Fetish is a psychological term initially defined by Freud in 1927, where the fetishisation of an object was a replacement for a lack brought on by the castration complex (See p91 for more detail). The fetishist imbues powers and desires onto an object and therefore elevates its significance. The appropriateness of fetishism in my research relates to how the fetishist is fixated on a certain object, and once this object is discovered they see no reason not to enjoy it. The fetish is manifested through fantasies, urges and behaviours. These ideas are adapted into painting through the fixation on the materiality of paint itself, and by concentrating on individual materials and their uses in the construction of fetishistic behaviours.

These Creative Strategies answer my overarching research question: *What material propositions can I cultivate to expand painting beyond the frame? And how is this transformative within painting?*

My experience as an artist predicated the development of this practice-led research. Questioning my relationship with the materials of my practice prompted investigating these hypotheses. It began from an enduring fascination with the subject of drapery. Through my career as an artist, this subject has grown in significance, to the point where this investigation is at the core of all my research and my primary subject matter. In 2012, I discovered Gen Doy's book, *Drapery: Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture* (2002). This comprehensive publication was transformative for both my attitude to and relationship with drapery. Doy not only describes its historical background in art but she also examines connections with other crucial conceptualisations, such as, drapery's link to crafts and labour that are associated with women.

This book forced me to question my motivations for engaging with drapery and its material function in my practice. However, I also queried if I agreed with all of Doy's assertions and if I, as a practitioner, could offer any further insights into why artists have such a lengthy history with the use of drapery and what is their fascination with it. I wanted to further research specific topics highlighted in the book, in particular, the relationship of drapery with the body. Thus, a consideration of the male gaze and processes of concealing and revealing are contended in this thesis. Further provocations about the physical and psychological relationships that the artist has with physical objects and the chosen subjects they wish to represent become a recurring topic in the material enquiry of this research.

I wanted to contribute to the discourse on material thinking through my extensive practical experience with the physicality of fabric and painting. As a practitioner, I think through the material and expose connections between concepts and mediums. These considerations triggered a series of questions about my work that were enmeshed with my studio practice and in exhibiting the work regularly in public galleries. The main question being:

- How could I resolve the interior with the exterior of a painting?

There was a disjunction between what I was thinking and what I was making in the studio. I struggled resolve the flat surface and image with the painting's three-dimensionality. My



exhibition, *Further Complications of Hybrid Notions*, 2014, Claremorris Gallery, was pivotal in addressing this concern. I embraced and tested my ideas around how the painting exists in a space and how it can perform as an installation.<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, it became apparent that I needed to question the self-imposed limitations of the painting's surface, image, physicality and materiality in order to fully expand my practice and give equal importance to the interior and exterior of the paintings.

Initially, the key ideas I wanted to address in the PhD were between the image and the surface phenomenon of paint with the material limitations of painting's rectangular form. These thoughts shaped the research in discovering ways to merge and resolve critical and theoretical conceptualisations of form and image that were historically in opposition in terms of definitions and appearances. The research led to a transformation in the work, where I needed to create a method of application that would allow its development to be multi-layered and expansive yet an autonomous whole. These ideas are tested and discussed through the three different approaches of the Creative Strategies.

The first Creative Strategy, *One Way to Shed Excess*, investigates through the physical structures of painting and asks: *how can a consideration of prosthetics enable painting's frame to expand beyond its conventional form?*

By studying the physical and material elements of painting, I pinpoint the frame as the crux for exploring form, structure and possibilities in activating painting. This is the point where transformation is possible. In this instance, the transformation is the shift in emphasis from painting as a two-dimensional surface to a three-dimensional object. To begin the process, I investigate the structural fundamentals of painting to expand it from within. I achieve this by reducing it to an essential component – the frame. Then, I structurally change and manipulate its form. The strength of this reductive method is that it simplifies the structure of the artwork and therefore, displays the support structures of the painting. This reveals the limitations of the artwork, whilst cancelling out the history of the picture plane and the image.

Critical to this conceptualisation, is Deleuze's theory of the fold (1993), for it provokes discussion about what is inside or outside the frame and non-linear structures. The fold is a way of thinking in a cyclical mode about painting. Thinking about how this mode could be

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<sup>3</sup> This exhibition is discussed in the Context Review, where I detail the individual artworks that demonstrate these ideas from prior to beginning the PhD (p14-18).

applied in the practice, leads to investigating appendages and forms that could activate painting's form. This investigation situates the idea of prosthetics as a means to enable expansion beyond the frame. From this point, I can analyse how the structure reacts to, or, is impacted by the space. These spatial concerns lead to developing a concept of the prosthetic as an activator in transforming the paintings form, structure and stability.

Creative Strategy 2, *One Way to Take Control*, addresses the question: *how can the fetishisation of materiality challenge agency in painting?* This second Creative Strategy uncovers the fetishistic meaning of the materials used within my practice and looks at how the agency of fetish can enable other material conditions to transform painting.

To answer this question, I propose a strategy of fetishisation of materiality, where I aim to give agency to the fetishised object. Here, the material dictates the fetish, whether satin, velvet, silk or other material and therefore the manipulation and outcome of the painting. Significantly, the primary logic or interpretation of fetish is established from a phallogocentric point-of-view, which is not sufficiently adaptable to my practice. Therefore, I reposition this logic to a feminist autoethnographic<sup>4</sup>, personal, and female context. This shift is a pivotal moment in the research, as I actively challenge the problem of gendered bias in material discourse through theory and practice.

Creative Strategy 3, *One Way to Become Too Fat*, asks: *how can the subject of drapery be transformative in expanded painting practices?* The questioning investigates the cultural and social significance of drapery in contemporary painting by focusing on its desirability as an object. Discussions on the object of desire continue from those proposed in Creative Strategy 2, but with a specific focus on drapery. By instilling a personal and female position to support the application of productive forces of desire, I aim to investigate possible socio-political interpretations, not only, of drapery, but also of the painting of drapery. The drape is a multiplicitous form, loaded with history and meaning. Therefore, the focus of this research is

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<sup>4</sup> Feminist autoethnography is a method for questioning normative and prescribed research methods. It is person-centered and gives insight into women's lives and experiences. The researcher herself can use her own histories, feelings, emotions and standpoints in the research. '(1) Autoethnography creates transitional, intermediate spaces, inhabiting the crossroads or borderlands of embodied emotions; (2) autoethnography is an active demonstration of the 'personal is political'; (3) autoethnography is feminist critical writing which is performative, that is committed to the future of women and (4) autoethnography helps to raise oppositional consciousness by exposing precarity' (Ettorre 2017 p4).

not simply on the drape as painting or a painting of drapery; it is the combination of intentions and interruptions that activate this material. In understanding that drapery is defined by what it does, it exposes relationships, tensions, spaces and forms, I can argue that conceptual readings of drapery can transform its internal rationale and the interpretation of the artwork. I will further demonstrate that as the desired object, it can break the frame of painting through ideas of excess.

These three Creative Strategies deliver a refined theory of agency in expanded painting. Whilst, primarily, the practice leads the investigations in the dissertation, the reciprocal nature of research means that the theoretical gives a more in-depth understanding of each investigation. The consequence of this is multi-layered, which is addressed by dividing the dissertation into three distinct parts. Each part is individual and can be read as such. However, when reading concurrently, the three parts make up a strategy for researching in a multi-layered manner. Thus, this thesis offers a significant and unique contribution of methods and a new approach for practice-led research.

Furthermore, the analysis positions the artist and the viewer as active participants in the expansion of painting. It proposes through a practice-led enquiry that in painting the agency for expansion is not only empirical and theoretical but also verifiable through metaphysical (societal, cultural and fetishistic) relationships. Along with these conceptualisations, the role of literature is crucial to my research. Outlined in the following section are key texts and theoretical fields of enquiry that the study responds to and is influenced by. This is followed by the methodology, the series of methods used to investigate this research, and finally, the Creative Strategies, where I consider alternative contexts for painting and propose ways of thinking that explore ideas that have transformation in painting at their core.

## Context

This context review maps the research that informs this PhD. Central to this investigation are discussions and artworks that embody ideas of an expanded painting practice. Specific aspects of painting as object and painting's materiality shape the discourse of the thesis. I begin by fore-fronting my practice and the initial explorations that led up to this research. In the subsection *Painting as Object*, I analyse painting's form. The key attributes I address are: the frame, the surface, space and installation, and paint. This enquiry is continued through investigating painting in alternative situations or 'networks' (Joselit). The discussion progresses through ideas of expanded painting, which establishes the foundations for the individual Creative Strategies. The *Philosophical Enquiry* considers the theoretical underpinnings of the project by discussing Gilles Deleuze (1977, 1987, 1989, 1993) and Elizabeth Grosz (1994, 2001, 2005, 2013). Here, I explain key terms that are essential to, and developed upon, in each Creative Strategy. Finally, *Framing Drapery* explores the subject of drapery as a concept, and for its physical attributes, in painting. This subject is the significant thematic interest in my practice and the principal subject-matter of this research.

Additionally, critical contemporary artists that I align with this research are Katharina Grosse, Jessica Stockholder, Simon Callery, Fabian Marcaccio and Angela de la Cruz. These artists are hugely influential in their handling of fabric and their use of the materiality of painting. Crucially, a common factor to each artist is their utilisation of space, whether physical or imaginary space. Their works have from the on-set played a part in shaping my creative and critical understanding of this research. I mention more artists in the body of the thesis; however, they are discussed concerning specific contexts.

The background of this research came from my practice, which explored ways of emphasising space by the painting of fabric. To do this, I examined the binary between the real space and the illusionary space created on the surface of a painting. Two paintings that are critical to this discussion are: *Ballinglen Drape* 2014 and *Black Satin in Blue Light Exposed Stretcher* 2014. These two works are part of a series where I focused on capturing

coloured light, specifically blue light, on drapery, which I then represented through paint. The lighting conditions created a spatial element in the work that marked the trajectory into an expanded practice. In these works, the paintings of the drape, their structure, form, colour and coloured lighting are material agents that break the conventional frame.



**Black Satin in Blue Light Ballinglen Drape 2014**  
Painting Installation; Wood, Oil on Linen and Lighting, 300 x 300cm

The painting *Black Satin in Blue Light Ballinglen Drape* comprises of linen draped from a baton with blue lights illuminating its painted surface and filling the space with a blue haze. My intention for this piece was for the change in lighting conditions to bring awareness to the entire space of the gallery rather than simply focusing on a singular painting. The blue light created a colour seepage that extended the painted edge beyond its rectangular form, and into the whole space. This blue-lit space replicated the set up I had in the studio when making it. This body of work was painted under restricted light source conditions. The controlled light meant that only the colour blue was present, and I could investigate the subtleties of the colour while testing the abilities of the pigment and paint. This control allowed me to operate within the conceptual and technical parameters of the medium and the colour blue, while also, replicating the experiential reality of the set-up when bringing it to the exhibition where I was able to transfer the experience of the studio into the gallery.



**Black Satin in Blue Light Ballinglen Drape** in progress at the Ballinglen Arts Foundation 2014

In *Black Satin in Blue Light Exposed Stretcher* the ripped canvas exposed the stretcher beneath, bringing attention to the physicality of the traditional structure of a painting and not just the image of drapery represented on the surface. At the point of painting this, I also used the fabric as a veil or barrier. It caught and reflected light, thereby allowing a demonstration of the intricacies and beauty of the light, on the fall of the fabric. This body of work, therefore, explored ways to engage with externality through the physical manipulation of light and structure, while at the same time, replicating an image on canvas, thus creating dual happening within the work. These ideas formed the initial thoughts that both the materiality of painting and representations of drapery were agential in facilitating transformations in painting. The critical concepts that were instigated by this work include: the purpose and potential of the drape and the physicality of its structure in challenging and transforming the conventional rectangular form of painting.



**Black Satin in Blue Light Exposed Stretcher 2014**

Oil on Linen  
140 x 150cm

The focus on the drape brought a subject that was traditionally a backdrop, to the foreground. The restructuring of the role of drapery within the painting opened up far-reaching possibilities concerning theories around revealing and concealing. It set in place a narrative that questions what hides behind the drape and the stages of revealing. Moreover, the development exposed the consideration of materials, structure and the uncovering of hidden supports, as well as, advancing my technical ability to use paint to create a barrier or a veil through the imagery. A key concept borne of these ideas was the notion of the fetishisation of drapery by depicting the sensuousness of fabric and the obsessive nature of reproducing light on the folds and creases.

By exploring what is potentially behind the veil questions of painting's objecthood, its support and the function of the frame emerged. It brought attention to the duality of the interior and exterior components of painting. These investigations generate experiences for

the viewer and affect how they interact with the painting and its objectness. It was these questions that helped shape the Creative Strategies<sup>5</sup> in the early stages of the project.

## Painting as Object

This section identifies and charts the transformations in painting's discourse, where the focus went from the two-dimensional surface to addressing the three-dimensional object. The propositions include investigating the physicality of painting, a result that was catalysed by modernist painting critique, Clement Greenberg<sup>6</sup> (1960) and Leo Steinberg<sup>7</sup> (1972), the re-articulation of the space of painting, and the influence of the frame in recontextualising this space. The research project, and specifically this section, assess the boundaries of painting by

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<sup>5</sup> The term Creative Strategies is explained further in the *Methodology*.

<sup>6</sup> Clement Greenberg's essay *Modernist Painting* (1960) is an essential point of reference as it examines the change in formal painting methods that came about with the development of modernism. Greenberg's opinion is that modernism defined a purity of medium and therefore purity within each discipline of art. For Greenberg, the formal qualities that constitute painting, 'the flat surface, the shape of the support, the properties of the pigment' (Greenberg 1960 p86) are what set it apart from other disciplines, for example, sculpture. He argued that the essential element of modernist painting was its flatness. He looks inwardly at painting, he looks within the frame, and within this, he describes the difference from the illusions used in Old Master paintings to the flat Modernist paintings. Greenberg claims the Old Masters' concerns were with the subject matter and in creating an illusion of a world within the painting. Because of this, the viewer is only aware of the dimensionality of the physical painting after looking inside the picture, whereas with modernist painting, the viewer is aware of the dimensionality and physicality first (Greenberg 1960 p87). Confronted with a flat two-dimensional painting the viewer observes this flatness and is made aware of the surface and the materiality of the paint. In removing the representation of an image and figuration, interpreting the painting opens up. This is how Greenberg contends that modernist painting is self-critical and that the paint is referencing itself. To reinforce his position, he references Kant and his idea that a subject can self-criticise (Greenberg 1960 p85). Greenberg considers painting as inward-looking and internal. By considering the form, Greenberg suggests that the eye stops at the surface, as there is no identifiable imagery (Greenberg 1960 p87). He thinks that visually, the viewer takes in the painting as an object. The painting is the object and that is how it is experienced. The surface and its objectness exist in the same space as the viewer. In modernist painting, the removal of imagery created a space for an exploration of the object and the formal potential. Greenberg is of particular relevance to this research project as the first creative strategy began with an enquiry into an essentialist investigation of form.

<sup>7</sup> Steinberg (1972) proposed that the change from the upright vertical picture plane changed to the horizontal or 'flatbed' picture plane in the 1960s, which in his opinion, was instigated mainly by Rauschenberg (Steinberg 1972 p61). He considers the way of viewing the picture plane had remained unchanged since the Old Masters through subsequent genres of painting. This position was that there is one perpendicular viewpoint from the 'erect human posture' (Steinberg 1972 p62) to the picture on the wall, and during this time, it remained a constant. The reasoning was that it replicated 'nature' and how the viewer could have seen it originally. The 'implied acts of vision to something that was once actually seen' (Steinberg 1972 p61), the viewer shares the viewpoint of the artist, a preconditioned mode of viewing the world. These conditions of painting that were initially critiqued from the 1960s, point to when painting looked towards an emphasis of its objectness. In doing so, it articulated a context for expanded painting by changing the focus from the pictorial to its physical form.



examining its physicality and the space it occupies. As the Creative Strategies will show, these ideas have ultimately shaped the project to culminate in addressing materiality in painting by, the application of prosthetics, through the lens of fetishisation, and the logic of female desire.

A fundamental aspect of this research was defining the physical and material concerns of painting. The physicality of painting, or the painting as object, is a crucial factor in applying expanded concepts to painting. Key to understanding this idea is defining what is meant by the term and what are the significant components of its objecthood. Intrinsic to form are four separate and distinctive elements that exist within my practice; these are:

1) The frame

*The conceptual frame:* the frame as a critical and historical context, the overarching framework of established and understood ideas pertaining to the development of painting as a practice and cultural object. The constructs that shape the interpretation of a painting. With further concepts established through notions of the spectator (Rancière) and the engagement of the audience. Tied into the conceptual frame is the cinematic frame.

*The cinematic frame:* the frame that decontextualises the content from the world going on around it. This idea is elaborated through Deleuze (1983) and is relevant to discussions around alternative media and surfaces in expanded painting practices.

*The painting's frame:* the physical frame or edge of a painting. The parameter of the interior space of the painting, as the boundary that sits between the paint and the wall and viewer. This frame is the distinction between the interior painted world of the illusion and the exterior physical world.

*The material frame:* the materials that go into making the artworks, their limitations are also framing the works. Oil paint can only depict or represent; the fabric can only fold a certain amount or have so much tension applied. The material constraints become increasingly crucial in Creative Strategies 2 and 3.

*The spatial frame:* the space in which the object occupies, this includes the architecture, wall, floor and support/pedestal (depending on whether or not the pedestal is part of the artwork).

## 2) The surface

The idea of what a surface can be is multiplied once it is articulated and used within an expanded practice. Ideas of expansion, offer limitless possibilities for the potential of a surface.

## 3) The site and installation of painting

Site and installation bring into question the space in which the painting is located. The influence that the site can have on a painting can be read as a neutral or passive site, such as, the white cube gallery, or as an active site, such as, an exterior public space. The site will be discussed further through ideas by Miwon Kwon (2004). How the work is installed defines the condition of the painting, whether that is conventional wall-hung paintings or painting as installations.

## 4) Paint

Within *paint*, there are questions of material colour such as pigment and painting mediums, and the morphology of gesture or the impression that the painting gesture makes. Paint is pigment suspended in a medium. In expanded painting practices, this medium can be anything, any material that can hold colour, thus making colour in some cases intangible and ephemeral. This improvisation of colour directly affects the gesture and the tactility of it. The gesture 'as an expression of intention' (Flusser 2014 p1) morphs with the changing medium.

Considering these criteria for investigating the physicality of painting, communicated a clear baseline for structuring this research.

To begin the investigation, I analysed the frame, structure and surface. Two essential references are *Object Painting* (1994) by Andrew Benjamin and *Notes on being framed by a surface* (1998) by Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe and their discussions on painting's form. Benjamin believes that the point of spatial activation is the frame, and at this point, questions of painting as object occur (1994 p73).

Gilbert Rolfe observes that:

'Painting's historically acquired morphology as a skeleton with a skin may provide a clue to the stretched canvas – and, by comparison with it, the

unstretched canvas, the panel, the fresco and fresco-like – can persist as a place where the body may think itself – not as a volume containing and occupying space but as surface and space' (1998 p17).

If painting is not thought of in terms of the space it occupies, then what does it become? Where does it begin and end? These questions along with questions of the expansion of painting, parameters, structures and surfaces pervaded the research; Gilbert-Rolfe's analogy of a skeleton and skin, but not as a volume, shaped the studio enquiry. Simply put, the skeleton is the stretcher frame or support, the skin is the canvas or other painting surfaces, and removing ideas of volume means spatially un-restricting the potential of the surface, to the point where colour could be the surface. Gilbert-Rolfe continues:

'Similarly, its dependence on surface and support as a fundamental opposition – which means they can be collapsed into one another as well as held apart – physically reconstitutes the ideational or perceptual separation of the painting's space from that of its physical location' (1998 p17).

The tension between the surface and support constructs a perceptual division between surface and site, one that can be supported through the application of alternative surfaces. Beyond the consideration of conventional surfaces and structures, Gilbert-Rolfe proposes technological surfaces as the new surface of painting. According to Gilbert-Rolfe, the surface of painting has transformed and is now open to new technologies (1998 p17). 'With the surface, a morphological parallelism allows painting to engage the three primary surfaces of the age: cinema, television and computer screens' (1998 p17). The correlation of painting to the surface of technical media asks questions of the formal concerns of painting in an expanded practice. Nevertheless, by acknowledging the parallels of painting with digital surfaces, it allows painting to expand into these disciplines. Overall, these ideas by Gilbert-Rolfe indicate that the surface is more than a screen: it is the potential of different materials and techniques for generating images within the language of painting. Therefore, acknowledging the limitless possibilities of surfaces that can be acquired and utilised by painting. However, the expansion of painting's parameters is not just the electronic surface, but also crucially, that of the environmental surface.

Establishing the parameters of painting is complex, and the consequences of this infinite potential can be assessed through Mick Finch's assertion that the dematerialising of the painting's structure destabilises the pictorial (Finch 1998). To understand the mechanisms of an expanded practice and its effects, Mick Finch, in his article *Supports/ Surface* (1998), uses

the group Supports/Surface and the art in France of 1970/71 as a means of contextualising and framing expanded painting practices. The artists Supports/Surface<sup>8</sup> (1969-72) and BMPT<sup>9</sup> (1967-present) questioned the theoretical and practical concerns of what is indicative of painting and broke away from historical sensibilities. Finch indicates the critical attribute that made up the positions of Supports/Surface was the dematerialising of the painting structure, which 'destabilises the optical condition of the work as a picture' (Finch 1998). By destabilising the pictorial, it allows painting to move or transform into another condition. I can also align this idea to Leo Steinberg as it is destabilising the 'erect human posture' and the prescribed notion of viewing a painting (Steinberg 1972 p62).

One condition where painting transforms is through ideas of installation. Finch analyses installation through the context of painting and the work of contemporary installation artists Jessica Stockholder and Polly Apfelbaum. He achieves this by applying the language of painting – namely, the frame, to analyse their work. Concerning Stockholder, Finch asserts that, as the viewer moves through the installation, they are confronted with a series of viewpoints. Certain established angles give, 'a sense that a series of frames are determining the encounter' (Finch 1998). The only way to get a full impression of the installation is by moving through it, as there is no one point where the whole installation is visible. This assertion is the antithesis to John Berger's idea of that perspective in painting establishes a fixed viewpoint<sup>10</sup>, and this is the entry into a painting (Berger 1972). Finch contends that Stockholder's work, through its construction and form, lies within the realm of painting.

However, there are many other artists, such as Katharina Grosse, that confront Gilbert-Rolfe and Finch's assertions. Grosse's approach to the surface is through embracing the physicality of pigment and colour. Colour is the surface in many of her works, therefore subverting the formal attributes of painting. The skeleton of the works can be architectural spaces, interiors, swathes of fabric, or sculptures. The colour marks the surface and defines the area of the painting. Craig Staff describes Grosse's painting a 'spatialisation of colour' (Staff 2013 p129).

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<sup>8</sup> The artists of Support/Surface are: Vincent Bioulès, Louis Cane, Marc Devade, Daniel Dezeuze, Noël Dolla, Jean-Pierre Pincemin, Patrick Saytour, André Valensi, Bernard Pagès and Claude Viallat.

<sup>9</sup> The artists of BMPT are: Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset, Michel Parmentier and Niele Toroni.

<sup>10</sup> John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (1972) explores the interiority of painting. Berger's writings describe a world that exists within a painting's surface. This world is an optical or visual investigation of the subject matter and imagery. Within this context, Berger suggests that the viewer is transposed within the painting. The visual examination suggests an exploration through the senses; however, it is only observational. Classical, genre and portrait painting explored ideas of the world and senses through the subject matter and representational style.

Grosse associates her application of paint with the mark-making of graffiti, in that her gesture and use of spray paint claim the space. Spray paint as a medium is identified with graffiti and can socially and environmentally alter a space; thereby, it 'redefines and shifts the function of the site' (Grosse 2006 p63).

This association to the site could mean that Grosse's work falls within the domain of painting as installation. The term 'installation' is developed by Claire Bishop in *Installation Art* 2005, who acknowledges the difference between artworks installed in a space and installation art. This is most pertinent to painting, because painting as installation is not just the paintings installed on the wall, but how painting can be immersive, theatrical and experiential.

'The installation of art is secondary in importance to the individual works it contains, while a work of installation art, the space, and the ensemble of elements within it, are regarded in their entirety as a singular entity' (Bishop 2005 p6).

Installation art 'presupposes an embodied viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision' (Bishop 2005 p6). While, according to Bishop, there is no one definitive meaning or history to installation art, it does cause a 'different approach' that focuses on 'viewer's experience' (2005 p8).

The viewer enters into a Grosse painting with the whole body. This action is a crucial point for understanding installation art. As Bishop suggests, the viewer completes the experience of the artwork.<sup>11</sup>

'Because viewers are addressed directly by every work of installation art – by sheer virtue of the fact that these pieces are large enough for us to enter them – our experience is markedly different from that of traditional painting and sculpture. Instead of representing texture, space, light, and so on, installation art presents these elements directly for us to experience. This introduces an emphasis on sensory immediacy, on physical participation (the viewer must walk into and around the work), and on a heightened awareness of other visitors who become part of the piece' (Bishop 2005 p11).

A pivotal opposition to considerations of painting as theatrical experience was Michael Fried in 1967. His essay *Art and Objecthood* attacks the movement of modernist painting towards literalness and the theatrical. He criticised art that was an event, as the viewer could not appreciate the artwork for itself; instead, it led to being thought of in its broader cultural

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<sup>11</sup> The discussion on Grosse and site continues on p64.

context. For Fried, the artwork was compromised as it was conditioned and affected by the surrounding situation (Fried 1967 p17-19). Nevertheless, these ideas were subverted through the conceptualisation of expanded and installational practices.

However, this research is not solely about painting as installation. It is concerned with an expanded notion of painting, a position that centres on conceptions of painting and expands into other networks. It simultaneously explores painting's outer limits within and around the medium, which leads to spatial investigations of the medium and support.

Benjamin, in *Object Painting* (1994), analyses materiality, time, matter and painting as object. His material concerns and objectification of painting are played out through a discussion on Ryman and the painting-sculpture condition. Benjamin suggests that it is each discipline's relationship to space that differentiates it as a discipline. However, in defining the medium, he states that at no time does painting become sculpture,

'They [Ryman's paintings] work within the possibility of the sculptural while remaining distanced from it. The condition allows for this link to sculpture is their presence as paintings' (Benjamin 1994 p92).

Though paintings may incorporate spatial concerns into their physicality, they still remain as paintings. While both painting and sculpture deal with an external space, this new condition of painting does not mean a negation of each other (1994 p93). In fact, there is an 'effective presence of an irreducible origin' (1994 p93). The significance of this statement is that it clarifies how a painting can exist as an object with spatial and external concerns.

The work of Angela de la Cruz, specifically the broken stretchers works and the painting *Larger than Life* (1998), are fundamentally paintings that are broken in a gallery space. They are working within the possibility of the sculptural but are remaining distanced from it. The boundary of the support is discarded, and the paintings are freed of their usual formal constraints. The paintings adjust and adapt to the space allowing them to be a deconstructive method of repositioning painting. The material dynamic of the work has not changed, and they retain their condition as painting; however, its physical and spatial dynamics have changed radically. This change impacts the viewer's encounter and how they can move around the space. Cruz's work establishes and acknowledges an externality; it looks outward rather than inward by reconstituting the objectness of itself. Cruz challenges the rigidity of formal definitions and parameters by reworking the materials

and medium. She rearranges the matter of painting. Through this action, the primary formal attributes of the medium are destabilised and, in doing so, creates a reconsideration for the interpretation and encounter.



Angela de la Cruz  
*Larger than Life (Knackered)*, 2004  
Oil and acrylic on canvas  
260 x 400 x 1050 cm  
102 3/8 x 157 1/2 x 413 1/2 in  
© Angela de la Cruz; Courtesy Lisson Gallery

These works are not about brushstrokes and paint or representing an image of an external instance. They instead disrupt the borders of the body of the painting while operating within the conventions of the medium. The paintings leak, extend out and impact on how the viewer navigates around them. The work of Cruz is one example of the painting's ability to still be within the margins of the medium whilst expanding the operation of painting. The work shifts painting by challenging its formal constraints and repositioning them.

David Joselit in *Painting Beside itself* 2009, defines the concept of painting entering networks external to itself as transitivity. His ideas on transitive painting presume an external to painting, an overarching language on the conditions of production that exist within. Joselit

asks the question: how a painting could belong to a network? Demonstrating an ever-increasing enquiry in painting, one that is continually evolving with the involvement of new digital technologies. He contends that painting as a medium does not exist in isolation, but it can be supported through 'shifts of emphasis' and 'reformation' (2009 p125). Crucially, he acknowledges that painting has always belonged to a network, but 'by the early 1990s, individual painting should explicitly visualise such networks' (2009 p125). This work in the last thirty years has expanded and transgressed uncurbed, meaning, my concerns are not only those external possibilities and networks but also what a painting with permeable boundaries could look like?

Joselit acknowledges this problem of trying to delineate networks. Instead, he contends that Julie Koether, the artist he uses for exemplifying his idea, demonstrates the transitivity of the object through the rearranging of the object in a new context or network. The behaviour and status of the object are captured in this transitive circulation. Therefore, the object is in a state of passage (2009 p128). He sees Koether's work as a 'diachronic axis of painting-as-medium is joined to a second synchronic kind of passage which moves out from painting-as-cultural artefact to the social networks surrounding it' (2009 p128). This axis crosses the exploration of the materials of painting with the cultural impact of the outcome of such work. The ramifications and results of exploring the painting-as-medium alongside painting-as-cultural artefact allowed an investigation of social, political, formal and environmental significance and impact of both materiality and the pictorial. The crossing of the axis of medium and artefact is evidenced throughout this thesis, and significantly in Creative Strategy 3.

Joselit continues to define transitive painting. It has the,

'capacity to hold in suspension the passage internal to a canvas, and those external to it. In this regard, painting since the 1990s has folded into itself so called 'institutional critique' without falling into the modernist trap of negation, where works on canvas are repeatedly reduced to degree zero while remaining unique objects of contemplation and market speculation' (2009 129).

The painting is the nodal point for this passage, where it extends into social networks and back into painting (Joselit 2009 p131). This theme is critical in this research, for the cyclical impact of the painting in a space and a space on a painting<sup>12</sup>. On analysing transitivity in

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<sup>12</sup> The space of painting is further explored in the next section through expanded painting theory – Barragán and Krauss.



painting, it instigated the enquiry to find the crux or place of this transitivity as the junction between the picture plane and the space around it. Therefore, not only does this research presume an external, but also it investigates ways to expand painting externally. Hence, I sought to find a way to interlace surface and image in each of the strategies.

When paintings incorporate external materials, they move into networks outside of the realm of painting. Transitivity, he describes as 'actualising the behaviour of objects within networks [...] which are defined by their circulation from place to place and their subsequent translation into new contexts' (Joselit 2009 p128). He sees it as a 'form of translation: when it enters into networks, the body of painting is submitted to infinite dislocations, fragmentations, and degradations' (Joselit 2009 p134). This notion is attributed to Duchamp and the Dadaists, though not explicitly, whereby their movement into other networks beyond painting was made possible by including ready-mades. The artwork transitions from an internal model to an external.<sup>13</sup> For Joselit, the transformation is not only describing a change in form, but the work is also now in a new network that is a moving, transforming state.

In applying Joselit's theory, this leaves the painting open to dislocations, fragmentations and degradations. The painting is now made of many parts. It extends through this fragmentation. In contrast, it is also possible that when the components are brought together, the networks construct, generate, build and potentially hybridise the objects and paintings, which is significant for creating multiple ways of thinking about painting.

The multiple dimensions of the painting, or the numerous objects, as they come together, have the potential to create a singular entity, an entity that comprises many things. I can apply this to thinking about possible historical readings of painting. For instance, painting as a high art had a vital function politically and socially.<sup>14</sup> Greenberg in *Modernist Painting*

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<sup>13</sup> A historical connection between the material and fetishisation can be seen in the work of the Dadaists and Surrealists, where their work combined radically diverse materials and actions. This was a pivotal movement and moment that shaped the history of contemporary painting. These ideas come under the umbrella term assemblage, the importance of which to this research is that it was foundational in establishing additive object-based expanded painting practices. Assemblage is a term that brings in other tropes of painting such as Dada, Cubism, Surrealism and artists such as Rauschenberg. The artists involved in this movement incorporated real objects into the picture plane objects that were not initially intended for that use. Through the incorporation of the matter, it resulted in bringing alternative realms of meaning and significance to the painting. The combination or multiplicitous situation can be described further through assemblage. Assemblage is a completed finished whole containing contradictions, agencies and disparate elements. At this moment, time and space come together and simultaneously disappear.

<sup>14</sup> Further discussion on the socio-political function of painting is discussed in the section *Politicised Drapery and Alison Watt* p135.

1960, suggests that in accepting the medium the history goes with it (Greenberg 1960 p85). Greenberg describes this as 'continuity' in the history of art and what drives progression. These realms of meaning are just one example of what is bound up within the process of painting.

In his essay *Reassembling Painting* 2016, Joselit expands his ideas on transitivity. This essay adds further complexity to the theory on transitivity, while also bringing in the idea of the 'passage'. The passage is 'a force exerted through paint, whose unfolding resists representation' (Joselit 2016 p178). Joselit is calling the mark itself an object and a thing that can be commodified. Not only is this inextricably linked to the subject-object relation, but it also ties into the notion of the fetishisation of the materiality of paint<sup>15</sup>. Joselit is describing the force from the body through the paint that creates a mark on the canvas.

The relevance of this theory is particular to Creative Strategy 2 and on the fetishisation of the material and the investigation into the subject-object relationship: 'The transitive actions of subject-object painterly marks on pictures, and [...] transitive actions of human subjects onto picture (including paintings)' (Joselit 2016 p178). Both these ideas suggest the extrasensory connection between the subject and object through the event or process of painting. Joselit takes this further by suggesting that transforming material states creates motion. The motion is not only in and around the painting but also regarding its potential to influence the viewer. The materiality of the painting alters its space to exist in real space. The transitioning of illusionistic space to real space results in potential consequences for the viewer, the viewer becomes activated and if they wish to engage, has the possibility of challenging any conceptions of painting as solely a two-dimensional object.

The examination of networks external to painting also means a rejection of the conventional art space and art language. Greg Lindquist in *Network of Relative Objects: Transgression + Painting* June 2013 suggests that a painting transgresses other networks,

'Transgression, like the experience of art, is relative to its context, whether it be political, formal, environmental or institutional. Still, painting has yet to exhaust its transgression possibilities. By recombining, recasting, and recontextualising its identity with other mediums, actions, and places of dissemination and display, painting can still transgress its normative historical position' (Lindquist 2013).

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<sup>15</sup> The fetishisation of the materiality of painting is discussed through Paul McCarthy's *The Painter* (1995) on p110.

This reading of transgression in painting asserts methods for creating such paintings that purposively go against the normative. Lindquist suggests actions that I can employ in my practice towards this aim, by physically implementing porous parameters in the painting and site it can activate a reaction against some-thing. As will be described in the Methodology, I employed feminist methods<sup>16</sup> to react against patriarchal ideas of materiality. These contexts I implement in my practice to demonstrate formal, political and environmental transgression.<sup>17</sup>

The environment, site and space are significant constraints in identifying spatial networks and the physicality of the painting. In *One Place After Another: site-specific art and locational identity* (2004), Miwon Kwon sets in place distinctions, commonalities and differences in the interpretation of site relating to art and art objects, and explores the terms used in describing them namely:

- Site-specific
- Site-orientated
- Site-determined

Each mode demarcates how the work responds to, or is affected by, the site it is made or exists within. The relevance of distinguishing these terms is to alert to the impact of the site in making artworks. Firstly, Kwon describes how the site holds a history, culture, identity within it, and that the artist works with it or against it (2004 p14). The implications are that it creates definitions that can alter how an artwork is perceived. Perception is of particular importance when considering ways in which ideologies, sociologies and cultural constructs are instrumental in reframing painting through an expanded field. The site is fundamental to establishing the network and possibilities of transitivity and transgression.

An example of an artist who uses the site to substantial effect is Simon Callery. He makes his work outdoors and on the ground. He then constructs the piece inside on the gallery walls, though rearticulated as Spine paintings that are installed perpendicular to the wall.<sup>18</sup> Callery

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<sup>16</sup> Feminist methods are research methods that use an explicitly feminist standpoint. They are tools for a feminist methodology which questions normative research methods, where the research aims to overcome biases and acknowledge the position of the researcher. It challenges the notion of scientific objectivity, thereby critically questioning the canon.

<sup>17</sup> As the PhD progresses, the examples of a transgression get more defined, please see Creative Strategy 2 and 3 in both dissertation and portfolio.

<sup>18</sup> This work demonstrates the pertinence of Steinberg, and his ideas of the flatbed picture plane. Leo Steinberg in *Other Criteria: Flatbed Picture Plane* (1972) contradicted Greenbergian theory on modernist painting in the 1970s. According to Steinberg, the move away from the internal surface and the image gave painting a new format, the tableau or flatbed. Rather than the painting being self-

is considered within the broad context of landscape painting. His work folds in ideas of the genre of landscape, environment, process, community and society. In his project at Dolphprojects London 2016, he walked through Streatham with his canvas in tow, letting the urban environment impact on and get absorbed into the canvas. He marked, cut, punctured and distressed the canvas with the physicality of the landscape and the site of the city. The canvas through the stains and tears physically took in the streets of Streatham. Here, the physical and conceptual dialogue folds in matter that is external from painting. Thereby, he folds in ideas of society, community and place into his paintings. Callery's work embodies painting as object due to the manipulation of canvas, support, pigment, and the rearranging of materials and painting's form. These ideas link to Joselit's transitive painting where not only the painting extends into other networks and back, but the painting-as-medium is joined to the painting-as-cultural artefact. The artefact is the trace of the processes the community left on the canvas, therefore, it enables the painting to exert social and environmental impact.

### **The Expanded Field and Painting**

In 1979, Rosalind Krauss popularised the term 'expanded field' (Krauss 1979) regarding the condition of sculpture in the modernist era. The expanded notion of sculpture as a practice evolved out of a set of ideas established during modernism, expanding 'physically into space (Krauss 1979) and conceptually into ideas (LeWitt 1967)' (Breen Lovett 2011). These ideas filtered through other media and disciplines, including painting. Donald Judd, who began his career as a painter and moved to sculptural work, articulated this in his essay *Specific Objects* (1965) that minimalist and modernist artworks were true to their physical presence<sup>19</sup>. His ambition was to remove the artist's trace in the artwork. In doing so, the painting would only allude to its physicality. This notion was echoed in the writings of Greenberg (1960). The purity and autonomy of these modernist works were further enforced when sculpture was taken off the plinth and brought into the same space as the viewer, as acknowledged by

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referential and particular to its discipline, as with Greenberg, the painting was now a place of 'operational processes' (Steinberg 1972 p84). For Steinberg, there was literalness to the work, and the divide between painting and sculpture broke down.

<sup>19</sup> Judd at the beginning of *Specific Objects* declared that 'half or more of the best new work (in the last few years) is neither painting or sculpture' (Judd 1965). Judd reinforces the notion that there was a break-down of distinctions and painting began to be recognised for its objectness. For Judd, the art object existed in a real space.

Krauss (1979 p34). These ideas resulted in an expanded field of sculpture and the conceptualisation that the viewer confronts the artwork in a shared space between object and subject. Krauss continued the discussion about the changing space of sculpture through its expansion and movement into the environment, architecture and site. The significance of this is that it challenged the discourse on the specificity of media, reframing practice as multidisciplinary.

The apparent physicality of sculpture and its three-dimensional form means it has a relationship with the spaces and places it occupies. This spatial relationship is also true of painting, as once paint was applied to a canvas or panel rather than a fresco (14th Century) it became three-dimensional. However, rather than the consideration of canvas painting being three-dimensional, the focus centred on the image, the two-dimensional. With the development of modernism, the examination of the physicality and three-dimensionality of painting meant the pictorial plane was no longer be confined by the internal, but it could extend out and become external. Because of this extension, it challenges the viewer to enter into the painting solely through the illusion of the image. The results are a changing space for painting and an altered space of interaction or engagement.

This change in space is a reflection on the changed form of painting, where the painting is hybridised with something other, such as sculpture, architecture, technology, or photography. The process of this hybrid in painting was a response to the changing 'visual complexities of the political, commercial and social world' (Wallis 2001 p7). Wallis is referring to certain movements in painting such as Abstract Expressionism, Post-painterly Abstraction and Pop Art. Within these movements, artists were responding to the new material cultures of the time (1960 onwards). The hybrid became a way for them to interpret the world and reflect on new circumstances as it pulled together different narratives and generated a new account for the language of painting (Wallis 2001 p9). The hybrid is one physical embodiment of expanded painting and a method that I employ as a means of transformation in the work as it disrupts the pictorial.

Sarah Breen Lovett in *Defining the Expanded* (2016) illustrates the depth and range of this expanded field. Through tracking the use of expanded art as a term, she defines it as 'an umbrella term to include not only various types of media, but also assorted content, intents, and experiences.' She continues,

'it does not refer to an indefinite expansion into other disciplines. Rather, it is used to refer to an internal and interdisciplinary interrogation of one's own discipline through the lens of other disciplines [...] It is an eternal expansion of depth into the unknown that can be considered infinitely richer than expanding in all directions' (Breen Lovett 2016 p23).

Applying a lens of one discipline on another reinforces and structures my enquiry. The interrogation of painting through architecture or sculpture, for instance, enables painting to expand into those arenas and enrich painting's form and conceptuality.

### **The Site of Expanded Painting**

Painting as a practice has appropriated and restated the theories of expansion so to potentially respond to space with the same criteria as sculpture. As Benjamin stated, painting will remain painting but has gained some sculptural attributes; however, neither the painting nor sculptural elements will negate each other (Benjamin 1994 p93). An example of where painting responds to the space it is presented in, is found in the work of Fabian Marcaccio. Marcaccio uses the site of the gallery to determine the paintings' form. The paintings twist and curve around walls, without a rigid structure. The painting *Tingler*, which is addressed in more detail in Creative Strategy 1, is a collaboration with the architect Greg Lynn (see *Tingler*, 1999, Secession Museum Vienna, p69-71). This collaboration is important as it is embodying the ideas of expanded painting and painting as object. The revelation of this collaboration is that it changes the situation of painting. The painting is both architectural and a painted surface, and not a negation of either (Benjamin 1994 p93). Traditionally the majority of painting was portable, made on an easel, keeping it apart from architecture. Marcaccio and Lynn situate the painting within the site forcing the painting and location together.

The kernel of Marcaccio's work is that it is both a two-dimensional surface and a three-dimensional object at the same time. His work is a hybrid of both. The canvas came off the stretcher, yet it still contains the traits of painting through its materiality and format. Marcaccio exaggerates form and creates opportunities to link or bridge two disciplines. This linkage is evident in more ambitious structures that disrupt or re-orientate the architecture of the space. Moreover, the work is not just responding to the site through specifics or

orientation as Kwon suggests, but it is now re-imagining the site and destabilising the place it exists within. The artworks create new routes and experiences through the buildings.

The act of destabilising the site brought about by Marcaccio's painting, possibly redefines the impact of the painting, (which could be further related to any art form that can create this effect.) The possibility is that it transforms the architecture of the space. As discussed by Breen Lovett (2011, 2016), expanded practices mean that one discipline is interrogated through another. Here, Marcaccio's painting is interrogated through spatial practices and architecture. There are similarities between painting and architecture in that they can be considered to look inward while simultaneously looking outward. Also, the structure, or support, of painting, can be re-configured to be the structure of the site or gallery. This formation is evidenced not only in Marcaccio's work but also in other artists work such as Jessica Stockholder.

Stockholder's work *Sweet for Three Oranges* (1995) emphasises the architectural space by breaking away from the wall and physically pulling the hardboard from the interior wall. Hence this work changes or destabilises the architecture and the navigation of the space. There is a physical transformation of the space and an ideological shift. The painting is the wall, yet it is not a fresco or mural. It is somehow both the wall in the middle of the room and the hole it has left behind. The work plays fervently with the notions of painting, objecthood and architectural space. In doing so, it destabilises and transgresses the position of conventional painting theory.

Other crucial examples of expanded painting can be tracked through several pivotal exhibitions. This is not an exhaustive list, but these exhibitions chart moments in time that were innovative and experimental in advancing modes of expansion: *Unbound: Possibilities in Painting* Hayward Gallery 1994, *Hybrids: International Contemporary Painting* Tate Liverpool 2001, *Painting at the Edge of the World* Walker Art Centre 2001, *On Painting: Division and Displacement* Wexner Centre for the Arts 2001, *International Painting Prize* Castellón County Council Spain 2001 – 2006 (curated by Paco Barragán), and more recently *Painting 2.0: Expression in the Information Age* Museum Brandhorst Munich 2016. Within these exhibitions, painting revealed its many variations and complexities; in doing so, they achieved a marking of a moment in expanded painting history.

Ultimately, as this research progressed, I challenged Greenbergian and modernist ideas of purity and the essence of the object as it became restrictive to understanding the processes and potential outcomes in painting. Drawing on the ideas of the expanded field and interrogating the paintings through other disciplines, contexts, cultural conditions and social networks, enabled an opening up of the practice resulting in the development of the three Creative Strategies. I am proposing in this research that these Creative Strategies offer alternative ways to transform painting from a two-dimensional surface to a three-dimensional structure.

### **Mapping Expanded Painting**

Stating what exactly expanded painting is, goes against the very idea of an expanded practice, 'to attempt to define, control, and monitor the term could negate its very potential' (Breen Lovett 2016). Since Krauss' seminal essay on the expanded field, many theories and writings have tried to encapsulate what exactly it means to 'expand painting'. Paco Barragán, in his essay *The Advent of Expanded Painting* (2008) defines what he thinks expanded painting to be:

'expanded painting can be understood as the relationship and interaction of painting with other media – such as photography, video, installation, sculpture or digital technology – and on any kind of support' (Barragán 2008 p62).

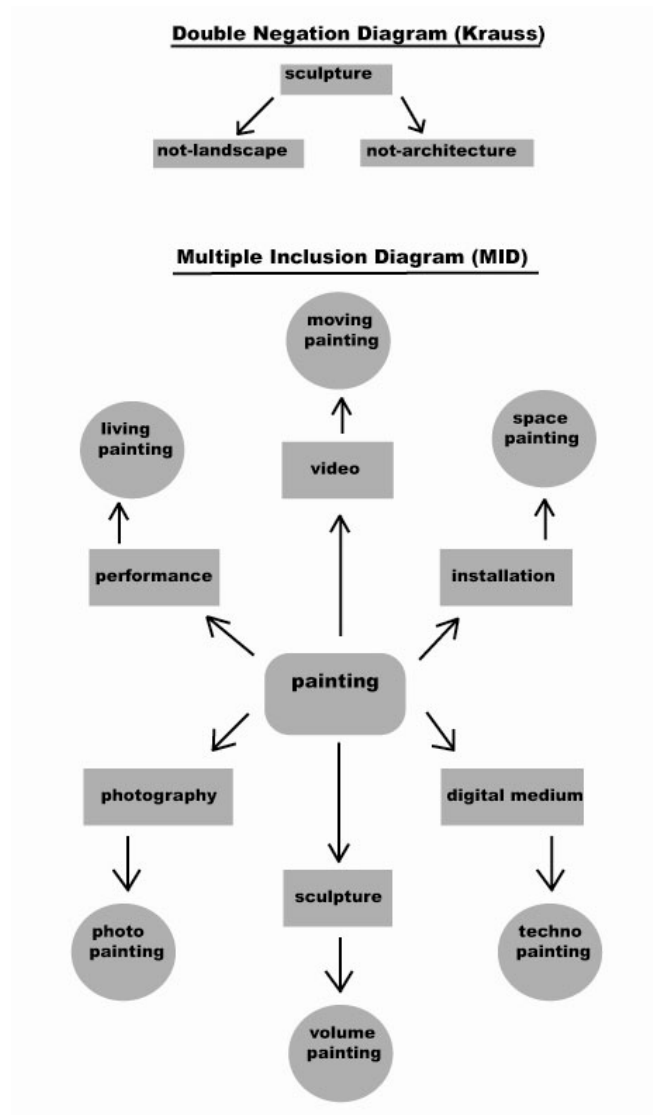
His definition comes from a mapping of the historical sources of expanded painting, from Duchamp, Maholy-Nagy, Picasso and other modernist artists (Barragán 2008 p62) and also from referencing Krauss and her essay the *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* (1979).

Interestingly, Barragán charts the negative of Krauss' theory; due to her emphasis on the reductive and the negation of space. However, Barragán sees expanded painting as a 'positive condition that extends the limits of its traditional place' (Barragán 2008 p63).

Barragán created a diagram that shows the generative potential of expanded painting in opposition to Krauss' theory on expansion. He describes this as the '*Multiple Inclusion Diagram MID*' (Barragán 2008 p63). This diagram brings attention to the possible external links that painting can adopt to make it extend and transverse other networks.



Compared to Krauss' theory, Barragán is also discussing what the convention is not, thus revealing the primary discipline as no longer being the conventional form of itself. The *Multiple Inclusion Diagram* is an exciting proposal by Barragán, where Krauss had opened up the discussion and theoretical debate on the expansion of a discipline, Barragán is advancing the argument with painting specifically.



Paco Barragán *Multiple Inclusion Diagram* 2008 (Barragán 2008 p63)

Throughout this research, I thought about strategies to develop upon Barragán's *MID* ideas. How else can painting extend? Barragán's list is comprehensive; however, there are still possibilities. Barragán understands expanded painting to be 'the relationship and interaction of painting with other media' (Barragán 2008 p62) and relative to the current cultural context,

he quotes Mick Finch as stating that painting expanded 'in light of new technologies' (Barragán 2008 p60). New technologies also involve new materials, and because of that come alternative responses and interrogations. Rather than a definite addition of media to painting, this research utilises Breen Lovett's argument, that it is 'an interrogation of one's own discipline by reframing it through another' (Breen Lovett 2016 p23). This interrogation questions the intent and content of painting. It is not simply painting plus something, but it is multiple and open to interrogation from other disciplines. In this manner, it is rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), there is not one singular point of reference, but multiple entry points and states. A product of this reframing revealed and highlighted a strong emphasis on spatial and architectural practices within my work. This is first discussed in Creative Strategy 1 regarding the work from *Whereabouts You Are* exhibition 2016, and in subsequent sections on the work *Fabricating Fantasy* series 2019.

Discussing an expanded notion of painting means an opening up of a conventional two-dimensional form, whether this is through adding an alternative technology or object, or by reframing through another discipline. This transformation means that in a physical sense, it could be through manipulating the form and breaking the frame or support. The implication being that it transforms from a two-dimensional surface to a three-dimensional object or possibly hybridising both. In this physical state, the painting has seeped into what is external from it. Crucially, in this alternate space, it transforms painting into something else, as it is neither a conventional painting nor a sculpture though it resembles both.

## **Philosophical Enquiry**

The primary philosophical underpinning is from Elizabeth Grosz, with the initial research beginning with Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, leading into notions of becoming. From which point, I started to identify with the current thinking of Grosz. The key texts leading this enquiry are *Volatile Bodies* (1994), *Architecture from the Outside* (2001) and *Time Travels* (2005), which progresses into an engagement with feminist<sup>20</sup> thinking, and methodologically

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<sup>20</sup> Feminism is a constantly evolving movement that focuses on equal social, economic and political rights for women. It acknowledges the perceived social constructions of masculinity and its implications on interpretations of female sexuality. The general consensus is that Western feminism had three waves of evolution. First-wave feminism occurred during the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th. Its main concerns were women's suffrage, voting rights, equality in marriage,

underpinning the research with increasing attention. It is important to add that the context of Grosz' thinking is not solely reliant on the writings of Deleuze, at points this thesis outlines her re-thinking of other concepts, such as Heidegger's discussion of the thing.

The initial philosophical framework began from a selective reading of the broad range of concepts put forth by Deleuze, including the concepts of the fold, rhizome and multiplicity, and becoming (Deleuze 1987, 1993). Deleuze's philosophies are generative for cultural and political thought. The potential of these ideas is that they allow a break from binary thinking. They let the research develop in a non-linear form rather a prescribed format and trajectory, which gives the art practice agency in leading and informing the research. This idea translates into a method of working and researching where agency is beyond the personal and subjective but is in the multiplicities that arise while undergoing practice-led research. The multiplicities are detailed in the Creative Strategies; however generally they are, multiple methods, processes, concepts, conceits and agencies. The significance of this underpinning is that it adds a critical theoretical framework to the individual Creative Strategies. The first concept I will examine is the fold, followed by the rhizome and becoming.

The concept of the fold (Deleuze 1993) characterises the world as a twisting and folding system of surfaces and processes through time and space. He describes the fold as a compression of this time and space. Within which there is an infinite number of possibilities of folds within space and matter. The fold (1993) is a concept that enables Deleuze to reposition the production of subjectivity in relation to non-human forms. There are many types of folds, from our material selves (our bodies) to the fold of time and memory. Deleuze uses the example of the Baroque House to example the fold in action. The Baroque example is an 'operative function' that is infinitely bound up in producing folds. He divides the Baroque into sections: the fold, the interior and exterior, the high and the low. These two distinctions, or two floors, are on the bottom 'the pleats of matter' and on the top 'the folds of the soul', the unfold; that is seen as an expansion rather than the opposite of fold, texture, and

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property ownership and economic matters. This was followed by second-wave feminism, which begins in the 1960s. It concentrated on furthering the initial concerns along with social and cultural issues including reproductive rights, workplace rights, and domestic violence. This movement was criticised for focusing on white middle-class women over other groups. Third-wave feminism, which began in the 1990s, addresses the concerns of the previous movement by bringing in non-white ethnic groups. It further challenges definitions of gender and advocates sexuality as female empowerment (Harley 2015).

the paradigm; 'the point is that the composite materials of the fold (texture) must not conceal the formal element or form of expression' (Deleuze 1993 p42).

In an attempt to associate it to painting, I can analyse the baroque house as a diagram of subjectivity in applying it to painting. I propose that the ground floor is principally the matter of painting and that it is in, and of, the world. The matter of painting is an imprint on the world. However, the matter is folded. The painting is a window into another world, within that world is another world, which still contains more worlds, ad infinitum. There are no boundaries and no limits between the real and representational forms contained within. The upper floor of the Baroque House is a closed chamber. It contains ideas and conceptual forms. There is a fold between these two floors where the style or concept is folded within the matter of the work of art. This project analyses individual folds and methods for the production of subjectivity in an expanded practice as the fold provokes a turning away from the significant and dominant conventions of painting. Through analysing text and artwork from art history, philosophy, architecture and gender studies, it is a means of recontextualising painting concerning the predetermined limits of the discipline. The resulting outcomes explore the idea of folding painting out into the world. This idea leads into an exploration of painting beyond the frame and considerations of the external space, which develop ideas of encountering an art object (Greenberg 1960, Steinberg 1972, Gilbert-Rolfe 1998, Finch 2013).

The next key concept is the rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari use the concept of the rhizome as a way of conceptualising history and culture. Rather than an organised chronological structure, where there is a source and a trajectory that then reaches a conclusion. The rhizome gives entry points into the research that are non-hierarchical and multiple. The rhizome is the connection between things. The 'rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p25). The middle is where it picks up speed. It is the in-between; it does not divide or binarise. The rhizome is the nomadic system of growth and generation and resists a narrative of organisation and chronology.

'A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organisations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p7).

Therefore, the rhizome maps rather than traces (1987 p12). Throughout the research, I question binaries and look to ways of implementing multiple methods. The rhizome allowed me to see interconnections rather than separations. It is not based on binary thinking; rather, it is a way of thinking that is non-hierarchical. It is thinking that is multiple and made up of many parts (Deleuze 1987 p21) as well as a way of thinking about the whole that is at once one and many. The inference to be drawn from this is that expanded painting is not just the physical artwork but also the site it exists in and concepts that are folded within it. The rhizome in expanded painting is a way of describing the conceptual and physical interrogation of painting through another discipline<sup>21</sup>.

Deleuze also exercises caution in thinking through ideas that are without limits, asserting that this caution should be about destratisfying or deconfiguring subjectivity. He suggests finding creative lines of flight that led somewhere and from where we can return. The deterritorialisation means there is always a reterritorialisation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p9).

The rhizomatic process that is a non-linear, complex and decentred method became a way of encountering the artwork differently, as well as my approach to creating them. Painting allowed a disruption of the theoretical ideas around my practice. I, along with my work, entered into a state of becoming different – different spaces, processes, thoughts and body. The process of becoming is that as one thing adapts and it becomes another.

Deleuze's ideas of becoming are present throughout this PhD. These ideas tie into the emergent methodological framework employed in this thesis. Deleuze asserts that becoming is generative ways of being that is a function of influences rather than resemblances. Becoming is intrinsically tied into time and temporality, rather than ask: what is becoming? One can ask: when is becoming?

Becoming is the unfolding of being in time. It promotes a way of seeing reality that is new and opens new ways of thinking. Becomings expose new possibilities that are provocative and refreshing. It is the relationships between discrete elements of things and being rather than a singular whole. It is a process of movement where one element converges into the

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<sup>21</sup> This interrogation occurs when discussing the prosthetic in Creative Strategy 1, the fetish in Creative Strategy 2 and politicised drapery in Creative Strategy 3.

territory of another, thereby changing its value and identity. Becoming is generating something slightly transformed and producing a space where practice can be thought anew.

The constraints and affordances of the materiality of painting allowed me to engage with the complexities of the theory through dealing with affect, encounter and process. The artworks become a lens for which to engage with Deleuzian theory. Significantly, Deleuze's theories create a space for painting that is open-sourced and not influenced by a fixed or prescribed identity. By appropriating these ideas into the expanded field of painting, it enables a new positioning where anything, any form and any circumstance is possible. From underpinning the research with Deleuze, it adds a critical theoretical framework to the individual Creative Strategies.

Crucially, the idea of the transformative effects of becoming became a lingering thought, especially Deleuze's focus that the origination of all becomings is through becoming-woman. To analyse this idea further, I lean towards Elizabeth Grosz' interpretations of becoming and Deleuzian theory. Grosz challenges Deleuzian theory through feminist methods and questions the Deleuzian idea of becoming-woman (Grosz 1994).

In her book, *Volatile Bodies* (1994), Grosz aims to displace the centrality of subjectivity, by removing the binarised configuration of the subject and the materiality. Grosz opens up new ways of conceiving subjectivity through materiality, sexuality and difference. Grosz re-figures the body as central to understanding subjectivity. Therefore, and key to this thesis, it re-orientates women's submersion under patriarchal definitions (Grosz 1994 ix).

'The subject, recognised as corporeal being, can no longer succumb to the neutralisation and neutering of its specificity which has occurred to women as a consequence of women's submersion under male definition' (1994 ix).

These ideas are hugely influential, in the progression of this research and the establishment of a feminist autoethnographic positioning. Grosz inspired my questioning of Deleuze and patriarchal understanding of painting. She deals with problems in theory, such as Deleuze, in that they leave female specificities unexplained (Grosz 1994 xiii). The body is assumed as the male body. Grosz created a different perspective for my research that I based on woman's specificities, experiences and positions; thereby, allowing and enabling a shift in the framework of the thesis. The major shift in this research project is in Creative Strategy 2, where I implement feminist methods.

Due to Grosz' interpretations of Deleuze, I was able to align some of the considerations I was having in the research with her perspectives. In particular, Grosz' concepts on material ontology, non-binary structures and their alignment with notions of feminism. Grosz complicates these ideas rather than replacing or negating them. This complication is a method that opens possibilities for becomings, transformations and the production of knowledge. It is a model that signals an open-ended becoming, a mode of potentially infinite transformation. Transformation is helpful in feminist struggles, so it can transform existing social relations and their accompanying value systems.

The practice of becoming in the Creative Strategies, changes in line with the Methodology, as the Methodology creates the overall system of thought. Further ideas of Grosz' feminist thinking is tied into ideas by Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray; these are explicitly explored in Creative Strategy 3.<sup>22</sup>

### **Framing Drapery**

A principal thematic focus in this research is drapery<sup>23</sup>. I implement this subject because of its ability to be considered as multiple, by having both internal and external attributes. External uses of drapery are demonstrated through the work of Marcaccio, and Angela de la Cruz, where the drape is physical and sculptural, which is counterbalanced by internal analysis is achieved through the painting of drapery, as illusion and representation, in the work of Alison Watt. Using the concepts of Deleuze (1993) and Grosz (1994, 2005), this research analyses what happens between the folds of the draped material; what ideas are embedded within drapery and what are the ramifications. The principal concerns are investigating materiality and structure, followed by conceptual, cultural and societal constructs such as fetishism, psychoanalysis and gender. Critical literature for this subject includes, Anne Hamlyn *Freud, Fabric, Fetish* (2003), Anne Hollander *Fabric and Vision* (2002), and Gen Doy *Drapery: Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture* (2002) and Joan Copjec *The Sartorial Superego* (1990) for their interpretation of Gaëtan Gatian de

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<sup>22</sup> The themes of Grosz rethinking or responding to other writers and theorists occur throughout, Grosz on Deleuze is in Creative Strategy 1, Grosz on Heidegger is Creative Strategy 2 and Grosz on Kristeva is Creative Strategy 3.

<sup>23</sup> Drapery is extensively elaborated on in Creative Strategy 3.

Clérambault. De Clérambault was a psychoanalyst that specialised in treating women who fetishised silk (Doy 2002 p102).

Key themes in Joan Copjec's *The Sartorial Superego* (1990) are de Clérambault's relationship to drapery and her attempt to emancipate him from the commonly perceived image of his perversion with drapery (Doy 2002). Copjec sets about reframing the interpretation of him and the obsession of fabric (Copjec 1990 p58). She points out that de Clérambault's interest is in the structure of drapery. I later explore the structure of drapery in Creative Strategy 3, as understanding the structure is key to convincing representations.

De Clérambault's photographs that are throughout the text (Copjec 1994) demonstrate the sculptural aesthetic of drapery and folds. De Clérambault captures the movement and structure of the fabric draped on the figures, through the black and white tonality of the photographs. These figures wrapped in Moroccan dress, let the fabric describe their form while simultaneously concealing their personality and face. The figures float like ghosts on a black background. The black and white photographs emphasise the sculptural and spatial form through the weight, structure of the fabric, and the fall of the drape. My interest in Copjec's article and de Clérambault is not only in the ideas but also the images. I am drawn to the aesthetic qualities of the photographs that are throughout the text (Copjec 1994) and the black and white tones and shading captured in the photographs.

My interest in the possibilities of drapery being a device for enabling physical and conceptual expansion in painting was intensified on discovering the contemporary dancer Loïe Fuller (1862-1928). Her innovative performance of the *Serpentine Dance*<sup>24</sup> 1890 captured dynamism and uncanniness within her handling of the swathes of fabric. This piece is still profoundly relevant today, due to her use of coloured light, mirrors and fabric to fill the space, it extends her movements beyond the discipline of dance and into an expanded field. In this space, other disciplines can adopt her intentions and aesthetics and reinterpret them through other media, such as painting.

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<sup>24</sup> The context of this work was the time of Art Nouveau in Paris at the turn of the twentieth century, when nature and ideas of femininity significantly influenced art. The Lumiere Brothers recorded the *Serpentine Dance* in 1896, viewable on YouTube at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zkXb4aWVZs&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zkXb4aWVZs&feature=emb_title)



Fuller used drapery and coloured lighting in her performances to emphasise movement and the spatiality of movement. This pioneering work is hugely influential in the considerations of this research project. Core to interpreting Fuller's dance is recognising the relationship of the drape to the body. The movement of the drapery in-line with the body instigated a focus that is transformative, which allowed me to think of how the subject-object relationship could transgress other networks. Furthermore, this process of aligning drapery with the body allowed me to probe into the role of the subject in activating material agency in an artwork.

The result of these investigations supported that drapery is defined by what it does (Copjec 1990). Drapery exposes relationships, tensions, spaces and forms, all of which are developed in this thesis.

A prominent artist that deals with the genre of drapery painting is Alison Watt. She is explored in detail in Creative Strategy 3. I chose Watt as there are commonalities in the subject-matter and aesthetics in both our painting practices. Watt's approach to drapery stems from the draped figure and 'suggest the pleasures of the flesh' (Doy 2003 p73). These themes of the figure and the relationship of the drape become critical to this thesis. The relationship demonstrates the possible linkages subject matter can have with what is external to it, and the other networks it can penetrate.

## **Summary**

This context review constructs a field of thought that positions my practice conceptually, theoretically and thematically. It provides a list of artists of whom I align my work to or are vital influences in the practice. This list is by no means exhaustive. However, it demonstrates that within my practice, there is more than one aesthetic, theme and visualisation. In analysing and introducing these artists, it provokes gaps and linkages between the works. The context in which I am referencing for the PhD forced questions for the investigations that are taken in the Methodology and therefore enable new knowledge. The Methodology constructs a system of thought that allows challenges to contemporary painting practices through the different Creative Strategies.

# Methodology

## Methodology

This chapter describes the methodological strategy for this PhD. It begins with the overarching methodology and follows with the individual methods that I employed throughout the research. The Creative Strategies, by the very nature of their compartmentalisation, create natural subsections. However, though they are discrete and individual, they, at times, overlap and influence each other. This cross-pollination is vital for comprehending that this is one body of research developed under a core methodological approach.

I employ a practice-led methodology in which artistic practice is understood as the principal method of critical enquiry. It is the 'basis upon which visual arts practice is proposed as a form of inquiry that is sound in theory and robust in method and can generate important creative and critical outcomes' (Sullivan 2010 xxiii). The new knowledge is generated through the cross-pollination of processes and methods – practical, theoretical and conceptual. The reflection and evaluation enrich the practice-led approach. The specific material, conceptual and theoretical lenses applied in each creative strategy cultivate new and transformative effects on painting's discourse. As the methodology evolved out of my established art practice, the insight gained through being a practitioner offered originality and awareness in shaping the research process. This approach is further embedded with ideas of emergence (Barrett 2007, Bolt 2007), which facilitates the implementation of a suite of methods to conduct my research through practice. To achieve this end, I put in place a series of processes within my studio practice to investigate each research question<sup>25</sup>:

- Collecting preliminary ideas and materials.
- Compiling visual, written and theoretical data.
- Selecting intentions through material sketches and experiments.
- Synthesising ideas and defining aims.
- Installing the works for evaluation.

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<sup>25</sup> Research questions are defined on pages 9-12.

- Completed artworks exhibited for a public audience.
- The evaluation and reflection drive the production of the following creative approaches.

Crucially, this process is by no means fixed or linear, as it is continually evolving and responding. However, by underpinning the practice with an emergent framework, it enables the research to demonstrate 'the double articulation between theory and practice, whereby theory emerges from a reflective practice at the same time that practice is informed by theory' (Bolt 2007 p29). This reflection enables the artefact to be the source of new knowledge.

### **Emergent Framework**

The principal references on emergence that I employ in this thesis are from Estelle Barrett (2007) and Barbara Bolt (2007). They advocate that knowledge is gained through artistic processes. By utilising the emergent model of reflexivity in my practice, it forms and effects the movement of thought. Typically, this reflective process adjusts and adapts throughout the process of enquiry (Barrett 2007 p6). This movement is tracked through the written dissertation, as it is not merely description or explanation; it is the ability to sustain the knowledge after the artefact, and beyond the practice, so it can be used in the wider knowledge economy (Bolt 2007 p34). The accompanying sketchbook and portfolio are instrumental in revealing the processes of knowledge-making and revealing the handling. They expose the production of artworks by experimenting with materials. They show the outcomes and practical investigations that lead to the creation of the work of art. The sketchbook and portfolio are crucial tools in knowledge-making and transferring, and the entire research process.

Emergent methods consider the critical connections, those that are in the handling of material to generate knowledge through 'the material nature of visual thinking' (Bolt 2007 p29). Bolt, in *The Magic is in the Handling* 2007, suggests that materials are not just passive objects, rather, 'the materials and processes of production have their own intelligence that comes into play in interaction with the artist's creative intelligence' (Bolt 2007 p30). Emergent methods allow for this relationship between subject and object, and by handling the original material, it enables the artists to learn more about it. Emergence facilitates methods that are responsive and exploratory. It grounds the research in a 'material practice' (Bolt 2007) and 'material

thinking' (Carter 2005). This thinking is embedded in the handling of materiality, that adapts and transforms with each intention of the practice.

Emergence allows complex forms to develop, due to the increasing level of complexity within such research; therefore, new properties emerge (Barrett 2007 p6). By understanding the processes and material of my practice I can engage in and reveal complex relationships in the artworks. Tacit knowledge generates a specific way of understanding the relationship between theory and artwork. My engagement with the tools of painting produces insight and logic that makes my particular tacit knowledge unique to answering the research questions.<sup>26</sup>

Emergence advocates for creative, inventive and experimental approaches to research, as it opens up generative and transformative modes of understanding (Bolt 2007). By foregrounding the innovative and the creative, the enquiry is situated in doing and the process. From within that process and the creation of the creative artefact knowledge emerges. Estelle Barrett suggests that 'innovation is derived from methods that cannot always be pre-determined, and outcomes of artistic research are necessarily unpredictable' (Barrett 2007 p3). This idea of the unpredictable compliments my research into an expanded practice as it is, by its very nature, generative, multiple and without restrictions. Therefore, the processes I use as an artist in the studio are often intuitive and experimental. These studio experiments challenge the conventions<sup>27</sup> of painting by adopting the inventiveness of form and methods for working from the expanded field, which at times require radical and dramatic interventions. The intention is to generate innovative methods that explore painting's structure, form, subject matter and spatial relationships.

By measuring the wide-ranging qualitative criteria involved in an art practice, such as the processes mentioned earlier (p44), it advances the artistic practice's emergent potential. This potential is also far-reaching in social sciences, which supports the impact of this research.

Adrienne Maree Brown in *Emergent Strategies: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* 2017 re-

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<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the primary materials involved in this project are oil paint, painting mediums, wood, fabric, painting supports, and diverse three-dimensional forms.

<sup>27</sup> Throughout this dissertation I refer to conventional or normative painting, by this I mean a paradigm of painting that is established as a support and a surface with colour, whether that is gesso panels, canvas, walls, paper, or boards, and pigment suspended in a medium, whether, oil-based, water-based or acrylic. These would traditionally hang on a wall. Further considerations of the elements of painting are set out on pages p19-20. By setting in place this baseline, it creates a challenge to ideas of transformation and expansion.

iterates a definition by Nick Obolensky that 'Emergence is the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions' (2014). Maree Brown suggests that 'existence is fractal' and analyses Octavia Butler's stance that it is adaptive, non-linear, iterative and resilient that is in a practice of being transformative (Brown 2017 p6). Maree Brown argues that an emergent strategy is learning how to be fractal, which is learning that small scale reflects large scale. It shows people how to be adaptive in the right relationships, to change and with intention. Maree Brown's ideas are necessary for understanding the broader context of my practice and research. The practice-led methodological process demonstrates the significance and capacity of the creative object in generating new knowledge. Therefore, where, and how, the work is situated can have transformative effects on the piece and its agency, therefore demonstrating social and practical impact.

Furthermore, the practice-led methodology underpinned by concepts of emergence enables a research process that is shaped by artistic activities that incorporate a double articulation between practice and theory. The emergent methods are reflexive, responsive, exploratory, and advocate the experimental. They explore the handing of materials and the relationships between subject and object. In the forthcoming sections, I analyse in further detail the methods that went into each creative strategy.

## **Structure**

The structure of this project is derived from the methodology. The thesis is in three sections, where each section develops a specific Creative Strategy comprising of preliminary research, written theoretical work, synthesis of conceptualisations and artworks, presentation or exhibition, reflection and evaluation. The sections build complex systems and relationships which generate several outputs: Creative Strategy 1 – develops ideas of the prosthetic as an appendage for expanding painting: Creative Strategy 2 – challenges ideas of fetish and positions femininity<sup>28</sup> as agential in expansion: and finally, Creative Strategy 3 – posits

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<sup>28</sup> It is necessary to distinguish the differences and how the terms feminist, feminine and female are used within this thesis. As a primary understanding, Toril Moi (1989) describes 'feminism as a political position, femaleness as a matter of biology and femininity as a set of culturally defined characteristics' (Moi 1989 p117). Simone de Beauvoir initially suggested this sentiment in 1949 when she declared that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (Beauvoir 1973 p3). Further

drapery as a politicised object of desire that can transform interpretations of painting. These Creative Strategies create space to contextualise the material compositions that arise from an active and additive approach to the studio practice. The outputs are adaptive and non-linear, and enable multiple readings and considerations. To complement the individual Creative Strategies, I put in place a suite of methods to address the individual research sub-questions, which are detailed in the next section.

The term *Creative Strategies* materialised in the second half of this research project. The word strategy comes from military terminology, meaning 'A plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim' (Oxford Dictionary 2019)<sup>29</sup>. It comprises of tactics or actions taken to achieve an end. The definition goes towards understanding emergent methods and the stream of decisions made concerning the practice-led enquiry. The Creative Strategies are the processes, developments, and interpretations in which these ideas are applied. They developed through the methodology to establish complete and individual ways for painting to engage with ideas outside of itself to activate difference.

Johanna Bosch explains the strategy in her doctoral thesis *The Strategic Studio: How to Access and Assess Decision-making in Visual Art Practice* (2009). Firstly, she clarifies that creating art is a 'decision-making process' and secondly, that it is a result of 'a combination of experiences and artistic, personal and financial urgency, and gut feeling' (Bosch 2009 p36 – 37). Bosch's assessment of strategy is compelling in the context of this project as she mentions similar threads that appear throughout this dissertation, the financial, which is discussed through commodity and consumption, "gut feeling" through the intuitive methods of process, as well as, the emotive and experiential themes such as fetish and feminist methods of researching. More importantly, core to my methodology is that the experimental is a driving force and that the originality emerges from my particular creative practice. My strategy is from my artistic perspective and responds, adapts and addresses the research questions through the development of the practical research in the studio.

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theorisation came from Judith Butler who states that gender is not fixed but is culturally constructed over time and is defined by class, ethnicity and sexuality. These constraints create the distinctions of feminine and masculine (Butler 2007 p6).

<sup>29</sup> Oxford Dictionary Online accessed July 2019 <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/strategy>

## Methods

In an endeavour to answer the primary research question, which is to propose materials that can expand and transform painting beyond the frame, I considered and implemented the following methods and concerns.

Estelle Barrett in *Materiality, affect, and the Aesthetic Image* (2012) examines both the practice of art and the experience of art as modes of 'knowledge production that is rooted in material and subjective processes' (2012 p63). This idea, which she refers to as 'New Materialism', is the epistemological basis for the production of my Creative Strategies. Barrett distinguishes arts practice and experience as equivalent to the sciences in generating new knowledge, to do this she mainly draws upon Julia Kristeva's ideas of experience-in-practice and how knowledge is gained through interaction and action with materials and objects. This engagement with the objects allows for new experiential understandings to emerge, understandings that disrupt the 'established codes of language' (Barrett 2012 p64).

Barrett emphasises throughout this text that the experiential understanding of material is gained from both encountering and physically working with it. The process of manipulating and transforming an object into an artwork, results in alternative logics in understanding. Aesthetic experience comes before signs and symbols, according to Barrett, as language has a material and aesthetic dimension, which is subject to reduction through the vernacular (Barrett 2012 p65).

In Creative Strategy 1, I question how a consideration of prosthetics can enable painting's frame to expand beyond its conventional form? This spatial questioning enabled the conceptualisation of the prosthetic as an activator in transforming the paintings' form, structure and stability. In this Creative Strategy, the practice leading the research is evidenced through the theoretical and conceptual outcome of the prosthetic. In manipulating the frame, I attached appendages to transform the shape and form of the structure. This addition to the painting's structure challenges its formal concerns. The handling of materials, in this case, the stretcher frame, made the conceptualisation possible. This practical investigation is followed by a textual response, which is the primary critical vehicle through which to reflect and evaluate research outcomes. The concept of the prosthetic evidence that new knowledge is

generated through the handling of materials, and it creates a space for interrogation within an expanded field of painting.

Crucially, I engage with the theorist Elizabeth Grosz throughout this research. Her ideas on the *thing* are central to the formation of the theories on prosthetics (Grosz 2005). Using Barrett's and Kristeva's discussion on experience-in-practice, I can extract ideas from Grosz' concepts on the thing (2005). Grosz challenges the subjective response of the body to the object. With bringing in the subject, she adds another layer to the understanding of the thing. She brings in subjective experience or experience-in-practice, where the experiential and the embodiment of the object further the understanding of it and its potential. Understanding the influence of the object to the subject leads to a deeper material engagement in my practice. The artworks from Creative Strategy 1 are radically different in form and appearance to my previous work. The emergent method proved the creative, inventive and experimental opened up generative and transformative models of understanding in my practice.

In Creative Strategy 2, I consider how the fetishisation of materiality can challenge agency in painting? The proposition that fetish, as a strategic discourse, can direct agentive artistic devices to potentially shape my relationship to the material, required a significant shift in research. The agency makes obvious the situated knowledge and issues with the hypothesis as I, the subject, intersected with material and cultural tropes.<sup>30</sup>

During this section of the investigation (2016-2017), I brought in feminist methods to address some of my concerns, as a feminist autoethnographic position was necessary to investigate fetish. I perceived a culturally accepted phallogocentric bias on fetish, which I challenge by engaging with feminist ways of thinking. Sandra Harding suggests that:

'The researcher appears to us not as an invisible, anonymous voice of authority, but as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests [...] The best feminist analysis goes beyond these innovations in subject-matter in a crucial way. It insists that the inquirer her/himself be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject-matter, thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of research [...] We need to avoid the 'objectivist' stance that attempts to make the researcher's cultural beliefs and practices invisible while simultaneously

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<sup>30</sup> Graeme Sullivan in *Art Practice as Research* 2005, explains situated knowledge and suggests that new knowledge is 'generated by and through the intersection with other cultural practices' (Sullivan 2005 p85).



skewering the research objects beliefs and practices to the display board'  
(Harding 1987 p9).

This stance, where the 'inquirer' legitimises the research by including a personal position allows me to make visible the subversion of the phallogentric fetish and open it up for scrutiny through painting. This idea actively shapes Creative Strategy 2 and the overall material enquiry. By employing emergent methods that are responsive and reflexive, I realised a profound insight into the research. Johanna Frueh, who asserts that research is done with the whole body, enforces the method:

*'Erotic Faculties* emphasises art, sex, and pleasure, especially as they grow out of and affect women's lives. As these subjects intertwine, they create a densely layered picture of ways in which beauty, ageing, women's bodies, and sexual practice and experience can influence making, interpreting, analysing, and theorising about contemporary art' (Frueh 1996 p13).

This perspective allows multiple voices (Frueh 1996) and, significantly, a personal voice in the research. These voices are alternative to that of an established patriarchal position and therefore, allow an experience of fetishising material from within rather than from a voyeuristic viewpoint. This realisation is significant in the direction of the practice and dissertation for it re-orientates the theoretical to *the body* as central to practice. Thus, making the practice embodied, relational and purposive.

Concerning this research, feminist methods and Barrett's ideas of experience-in-practice, create a way for the fetishisation of material to be understood as something that generates or increases meaning through challenging patriarchal positions. The fetishisation of material allows for an understanding of excess through the effect and sensation of the materials involved. Rather than abbreviating the communication, by creating an excessive environment of materiality it triggers an equally sensational response in the viewer. This response is brought from their encounters with objects in the world and then reintroduced by the artist in a different situation.

The different situation, where the artist reintroduces the object, plays with the subjective agency of the object. What the subject knew previously of that object, their understanding of it, is challenged. The effect of the subjective agency is linked to pleasure and displeasure, according to Kristeva (Barrett 2012 p65). Pleasure and sensation in the subject are associated with the material. The experience of these sensations shapes their understanding of the object.

This context reveals the possible disruption of codes employed by the artist in creating work and an important strategy in my studio practice. The body of work made in Creative Strategy 2 challenges the codes and systems of fetish. The artworks can generate responses in the audience through the dichotomy of familiar objects and new situations. This fabrication of experience creates a new knowing of the object, a visible knowledge that communicates experientially. According to Barrett, the experience strengthens the value of the artwork beyond the limits of traditional aesthetics (Barrett 2012 p66). Barrett contends that 'knowledge is dependent on interactive experience – a fluid movement between the viewer's feelings, thoughts and the art object within a social context' (Barrett 2012 p67). The outcomes of creative practice, through process and interaction, broaden the knowledge of the object. Therefore, it is the materialisation of the experience-in-practice in the artwork that makes it a new object of knowledge (Barrett 2012 p68).

Within this Creative Strategy, I aimed to emphasise the pleasure and displeasure of the material, so to contribute to the fetishisation of the material where the experience of that material exacerbates the inane want for the material. The agential experience of the material is manifested through fetishistic tropes such as obsession and desire<sup>31</sup>. From these material realisations, a position emerged from which I could make the artworks.

Feminist empiricism and feminist autoethnographic positions are crucial lenses to question and critique my inquiry. The influence of a feminist lens on the work shifted it significantly in appearance and form. This lens is embedded in Creative Strategy 2 and 3. It critiques normative painting materials and methods, and creates an authentic space for this research.

I approach Creative Strategy 3 from the feminist empirical position established. With a female perspective on desire, I ask: how the subject of drapery can be transformative in expanded painting practices? Here, the philosophical underpinning is from Luce Irigaray, in *The Sex Which is Not One* 1985 (Eng. Ed.), where she asserts that 'Female sexuality has always been conceptualised on the basis of masculine parameters' (Irigaray 1985 p23). She continues that women's,

'desire is often interpreted, and feared, as a sort of insatiable hunger, a voracity that will swallow you whole. Whereas it really involves a different economy more than anything else, one that upsets the linearity of a project,

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<sup>31</sup> Obsession and desire are recurring themes in the research and are explored in detail in Creative Strategies 2 and 3.

undermines the goal-object of a desire, diffuses the polarisation toward a single pleasure, disconcerts fidelity to a single discourse' (Irigaray 1985 p29-30).

By aligning Irigaray with Frueh, it emphasises the need for the body to be at the fore of this research. In doing so, I intentionally adapt to subject-orientated, multiplicitous and transformative processes within the practice.

I enforce tacit knowledge (Bolt 2013), or the experience from within the medium, through an investigation of drapery as a desired and politicised object in painting. The tacit knowledge comes from my experience of working with oil paint, wood, photography and lighting in realising painting installations. Crucial to my practice, is that oil paint allows a render of a representation of drapery that is realistic on a two-dimensional surface. Paint, as a medium, facilitates the fabricating of scenarios through its application of chosen subject-matter. It enables a re-interpretation of the swathes of fabric, one that emphasises its sensuousness and provocativeness. Through painting, it is possible to map the drape's form and mass, defining its curves and lines, to reveal something of what is beneath.

In Creative Strategy 3, there is an emphasis on representational painting as a process. Concerning this method as a form of knowledge-making Graham Lister in his PhD thesis, *'Altermodern Painting: Network, Non-Place, Fragment. Toward a New Method of Representational Painting in the Space of Flows'* 2016 writes,

'A painted representation repeats the real, draws influences from its visual and contextual form, and is then positioned as an unreal reflection of reality which was at one point an experiential reality [...] That the representational painting can be understood as a product of an interrogation of the real means that it is legible to others besides the artist' (Lister 2016 p43).

The interrogation that Lister describes is a way of accessing knowledge embedded in the practice, specifically through representational painting<sup>32</sup>. In the studio, I paint from a set-up. I install drapery and light it with its own source of lighting. This set-up creates a fixed still-life from which I replicate in paint. The representations that I paint are repeats of the real and my experiential reality.

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<sup>32</sup> Throughout this dissertation, there are references to representational painting, the reason for not using other terms such as figurative is that the method of my practice is painting from 'real-life'. The oil paintings of drapery are painted from a set-up in the studio; it results in a representation of the chosen subject. Representational painting is a style used in my practice and at various stages of this research project.

This engagement with the real, through painting representationally, situates knowledge in a context that can be interrogated. The representational method becomes a tool for discovery and tracing the subject-matter. It allows an investigation of the interior of, or the image within, a painting and makes it available to intersect with other cultural practices. The engagement of painting with theory allows a fresh perspective on drapery as a subject.

Ideas relating to this subject can be read through Barrett's concept of the aesthetic image, which she defines as 'a structural aspect of the artwork that emerges as an outcome of the grafting of affect to the symbolic through artistic practice' (Barrett 2013 p63). Therefore, by taking the subject of drapery, which is loaded with symbolic associations, I can analyse subjective and material processes as an active and performative part of the subject-matter.

'Unlike images that operate via established symbolic codes and that serve to communicate information, the aesthetic image is 'performative': it emerges through sensory processes and gives rise to multiplicity, ambiguity and indeterminacy. Out of this, meanings that fall beyond the codes of a given sign system (visual or verbal) may be accessed' (Barrett 2013 p63).

By proposing Barrett's ideas of the aesthetic image and new materialism, where 'there is no opposition between inside and outside: conscious and materiality are mutually constitutive, enfolded and emergent' (Barrett 2013 p72), it enables ideas of drapery as a desired object to be performative. In doing so, it opens a space for hybrid and transformative forms of painting. This transformation is a form of transposition<sup>33</sup> (Rheinberger 2018) that is proposed in a new context of a fantasy scenario, which is explored in the artworks and gains new knowledge on the representation of fabric in painting.

The shift to a feminist lens is also reflected in the philosophical underpinning of the thesis. Initial investigations were grounded in the philosophical texts of Gilles Deleuze (1997). However, with the feminist empiricist reorientation, the research administers Grosz' interpretations of Deleuze. Grosz' ideas on the thing, prosthetics, thinking beyond the frame, interdisciplinarity, and artistic practice are particularly influential in this project.

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<sup>33</sup> Rheinberger composes a system that acknowledges the experimental as intrinsic to knowledge production and the epistemic object: 'Transposition basically means that things are taken out of a particular context of use – or out of their absence in that particular context for that matter – and brought into a constellation where we can marvel at and do things to them... [Which leads to] the creation of an experimental context in which epistemic things can be explored for the sake of gaining knowledge about them' (Rheinberger 2018 p215).

## Summary

The methods employed in this research project demonstrate the creation of new knowledge through a practice-led methodology. Throughout the research, I engaged with a series of events to broaden the opportunities for critical feedback. Through exhibitions and publications, I created possibilities for audience engagement with the research<sup>34</sup>. Alongside the visual, writing as an art process is another means of articulating and reflecting on the practice and theory. For example, the performance/text piece *Action as Agency* 2016<sup>35</sup>, defines writing as a foundational method to explore concepts and practice that is not only analytical but also creative. The written expressions in this piece shaped the early stages of the dissertation. The text, in this case, was not only a tool for reflecting but also the artefact.

The Creative Strategies proposed in this research project are alterable within the cultural and intellectual context in which they are framed — taking a position from Breen Lovett (2012) and that an expanded discipline means interrogation through another and not total removal of the core discipline of painting. As well as Rheinberger's ideas of transposition (2018) and Sullivan's ideas of situated knowledge (2005), each of the strategies suggests that one thing can be reframed through alternative contexts.

The significant findings from this research are: First, the propositions of the concept of prosthetics as a method for transformation. Second, the fetishisation of materiality as an agential method in the expansion of painting. I frame this proposition within a personal context and a lens of female fetishisation. Third, I question drapery as a politicised object of desire that can transform interpretations of painting. The practical explorations of this Creative Strategy spurred an authentic approach to the investigation of drapery and its representation through paint. This approach manifested as an empirical and autoethnographic position on fetish and materiality. Employing feminist methods into my practice is one of the significant outcomes of this research project, which will be discussed further in Creative Strategy 2 and 3.

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<sup>34</sup> I undertook two substantial exhibitions, one of which doubled as a curatorial project. I also participated in many group exhibitions; Vava Collective curated one key exhibition on the theme of femininity. I participated in two residencies and one doctoral internship, where I focused on making and process rather than exhibiting. Finally, I had the essay on prosthetics published in an artist book. These events were fundamental in the development of the research. They enabled dissemination and testing of ideas outside of the studio and to a wider audience.

<sup>35</sup> See page 77 for an in-depth discussion of the piece.

From applying feminists' methods, I can reflect on Creative Strategy 1 and what the idea of the prosthetic means through this new lens for the work. The prosthetic challenges the reductive and mostly patriarchal history of modernist painting (Greenberg 1960), as the prosthetic is a visual and conceptual tool that disturbs the narrative of a reduced form. Applying a lens of feminist objectivity enables a deciphering and learning from the practice. I challenge the patriarchal and reductive norm through the application of prosthetics and created something generative out of something reduced. The feminist lens enables a questioning of the canon and a critique of the cultural hierarchy in modernist painting.

## **Creative Strategy 1: One Way to Shed Excess**

## 1.1 Introduction

In *Creative Strategy I*, I conceptualise a notion of prosthetics as a method for transforming painting, by asking: *how can a consideration of prosthetics enable painting's frame to expand beyond its conventional form?* The aim is to devise a critical material concept of prosthetics that leads to the expansion of painting through its physical alterations.

To achieve this aim, I will:

- 1) Propose a reductive analysis of the frame to enable a consideration of the objecthood of painting, thus generating a concept of three-dimensionality. The rationale for a reductive approach is to understand painting's core structure and to examine its physicality.
- 2) Question the potential of the frame to be the point where expansion can be actualised, by utilising Andrew Benjamin's (1994) analysis of the frame.
- 3) Investigate the theories of Gilles Deleuze and the frame (1983, 1993).
- 4) Explore these concepts of three-dimensionality that link painting to site and architecture, which I investigate through the work of Katharina Grosse.
- 5) Thereupon, introduce the notion of prosthetics as a mechanism for transforming painting. I propose this concept as a device for enabling a transformation of painting from a two-dimensional surface to a three-dimensional form. Not only will I examine its potential to expand painting physically, but I will also show how it can be utilised conceptually through engaging with Elizabeth Grosz' notions on the prosthetic (2005).
- 6) Suggest that this appendage can alter the structure of a painting and therefore, create a new form of support.

This hypothesis may seem a contradiction: how can a reduction lead to an expansion?

However, as this research will show, by minimising the physicality of painting, it reveals a basic form that can be reworked and manipulated. Through these manipulations, I transformed the construction and resulting space of the paintings, by adding extra structural components to enable re-shaping and alternative spatial concerns for the works. The practical



investigations coincide with the development of the conceptualisations and are evidenced in the accompanying portfolio.<sup>36</sup>

The reductive method investigates details within the work, and it allows for a focus on critical elements that can offer or suggest transformation. Reductivity is, in part, taken from Clement Greenberg's ideas of modernist painting and the purity of the medium (1960). However, it is also highlighting other aspects of painting: the elements within its structure – the traces of construction, or the gesture that is implied, or the corner joints that stabilise or move. By searching out these individual nuances, they provide an array of visual materials to put into action. As even in reduction, there is still something there. The reductive method details these elements that become very specific to making and changing the work. In this research, I identify particular aspects of painting: the frame, the painting as object, the object as three-dimensional, the relevance to site and architecture, and the application of the prosthetic, and expand the structure of painting through these ideas, as such, it transforms into new spatial configurations.

Following on from the analysis of the frame in the context review, this Creative Strategy not only considers theories by Deleuze and Grosz but also the practice prompted an investigation into Jacques Derrida's ideas on the trace and the hinge (1976) and Henry Lefebvre's ideas around gesture (1991), as methods for thinking about the elements of painting that remained once the painting was taken back to what I perceived as its core elements.

Two critical rationales of painting's objecthood and the definitions of its interiority and exteriority, that were a precursor to Benjamin (1994) and Gilbert-Rolfe (1998), were from Greenberg (1960) and John Berger (1972). Berger in *Ways of Seeing* (1972) acknowledged that the viewer not only looks at the surface but also looks through it (1972 p7-21). Berger's view was that the painting was a window into another world, where the viewer looked through the picture plane into an illusionistic space. This idea indicated that the viewer could not take in the painting's totality, the picture plane, image and surface, in one moment. This theory referenced painting's relationship to the illusionistic space within the surface, thereby opposing the possibilities of painting's objectivity and its relationship to real space. Alternatively, Greenberg in *Modernist Painting* subverted the idea of painting into real space (Greenberg 1960). For Greenberg,

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<sup>36</sup> Please refer to the portfolio p5 – 25 and the sketchbook p5 – 19.

the viewer sees the picture plane and its surface all at once, which means the viewer acknowledges the reality of its surface and, in turn, recognises it as an object. Greenberg acknowledged that it was a painting, and this was an object. The painting, referencing its materiality, also referenced its interiority. The edge or frame set the boundary, and the focus was brought to the flatness of the surface. Fundamentally, this could be painting looking inwardly on itself. Nevertheless, Greenberg's rationale fits within the constraints of painting, however, beyond the illusionistic space and the picture plane.

Benjamin (1994) and Gilbert Rolfe (1998) extend these considerations and expand painting three-dimensionally. To go beyond Greenberg and Berger's constraints and reconsider painting as object and the potential space it can occupy, requires extending beyond the surface and the frame. Benjamin and Gilbert-Rolfe pointed to the frame for activating new considerations of painting. By actively changing painting's form through breaking the constraints of the frame, it amplifies its three-dimensionality. Once this happens and painting exists in real<sup>37</sup> space, the potential of its changing form and being, unfolds through new ways of thinking. It transforms the painting from the inward-looking two-dimensional surface to an outward-looking three-dimensional object, while at the same time retaining elements of its two-dimensional configuration. From this point, the potential of transforming through thinking shifts it physically from surface and frame to object and form. With this shift comes the possible redefinition or re-distinction of the parameters and constraints of this form.

The constraints of painting can be surpassed through expanded painting practices. There have been constraints within the practice of painting established through guidelines, rules of practice, and critical thinking<sup>38</sup>. However, in permitting the expansion of painting; the constraints become multiplied and more complex. Once these constraints, or boundary of a surface, are surpassed, the physical limitations of the work can change. They can become the site where the painting is installed or presented or the totality of its location rather than the limits set by the frame. By linking painting to space, it extends it beyond the frame and into the actual architectural and environmental space. The painting now

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<sup>37</sup> Throughout this research 'the real' refers to the material and reality by sense perception, rather than the philosophical real (the imaginary, the symbolic and the real) as described by Lacan and others, where it is referring to the authentic truth.

<sup>38</sup> For example, Vasari *The Lives of Artists* originally published in 1550.

exists in the space differently, as the constraints have been removed. There is potential to construct new forms.<sup>39</sup>

## 1.2 On Framing

In this research, the frame is considered as the primary point of focus for analysing the boundaries of painting. The theories by Deleuze are significant in this Creative Strategy, as many of them reconceptualise ideas of space and movement. He positions the inside as that which is known, the familiar, understood and accepted. Conversely, the outside is the unknown, where thought and conceptual transformations or change can occur (Grosz 2001 p64). For Deleuze, the dichotomy of the relationship between the inside and outside is bridged in the in-between space by the rhizome or the fold (Deleuze 1987, 1993). The in-between space is where the challenges to painting can be applied, and where it can be determined through new networks and transitions (Joselit 2009). These ideas align with the intentions of expanded painting, whether utilising Paco Barragán (2008) or Sarah Breen Lovett's (2016) description, that an external element transforms the body of the painting thereby, making it available to be interrogated through another positioning or discipline. Conceptually and physically, the interior/exterior is both divided and brought together by a threshold, link or bridge, which I would argue in expanded painting, it is the frame.

The frame has a fundamental position as being a point where transformation can occur (Benjamin 1994), as it has the duality of being both the inside and the outside of the painting. The physical frame has the potential to delineate and contain matter. Change creates transformations, whether through spatial manipulation or shifting surfaces and tensions. The frame can be considered as the object that establishes stability and content. However, when the frame is broken, rearticulated or extended, it is no longer a stabilising force for the painting. The painting has the potential to be in flux. Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe (1998) summarises the potential for the frame of painting:

'[Paintings] dependence on surface and support as a fundamental opposition-  
which means they can be collapsed into one another as well as held apart –

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<sup>39</sup> The new forms of constraints can include the constraints imposed by fetishism, desire and gender, which are discussed in Creative Strategy 2 and 3.

physically reconstitutes the ideational or perceptual separation of the painting's space from that of its physical location' (Gilbert-Rolfe 1998 p17).

The perceived opposition, where the frame can 'collapse' into its surroundings while also hold the painting apart from it, emphasises the duality of painting's frame.

Different types of framing are developed by an artist: geographical framing, the limits of the medium, physical structures and the limits of thought. According to Daniel Buren, the preliminary impulse for an artist to make work is 'to frame'; the frame of the studio, the frame of the work, and the frame of thought (Buren 1973 p51, 54, 55). These contexts shape the process. Rather than seeing these as rigid organising principles, I extend these concepts to:

- framing place and geographical limits that effect painting as installations
- framing as setting limits and boundaries in both physically and structurally in painting
- framing by the limits of history, sociology and thoughts in painting practices.

Paintings' frame was redefined with the invention of photographic and digital technology (Gilbert-Rolfe 1998 p17). This was the provocation to incorporate new technologies. The geometric and aesthetic parallels mean that they interweave naturally through the utility, theory and conceptuality which complement and fit with painting. This redefinition links to Barragán's ideas of expanded painting practices, where technology creates a relationship with the painting that transforms it beyond the boundary and the imposed or perceived limits of the painting<sup>40</sup> (Barragán 2008). These ideas extend the surface of painting through other technologies, which results in other methods of framing, such as digital screens, that can be utilised by painting. Moreover, they are external technologies that come into painting, changing its form and adding to its three-dimensionality.

The three-dimensionality creates challenges to the site and the viewer, and the encounter has transformed from that of a flat picture plane. However, three-dimensionality creates another set of challenges. It proposes mass, weight, volume, form and possibly a reverse. The painting has become something other than what had been before, which was defined by its flatness, surface and interiority. What might have logically, and previously, been considered its essential structure has been transformed. This transformation results in

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<sup>40</sup> Paco Barragán is explored in *Mapping Expanded Painting* p34-36

forcing the viewer into a different way of encountering the painting. The encounter that was a surface image is now changed, and the encounter is now an acknowledgement of a painting that has pronounced physicality. It creates issues that question its frontality and how to move around the object come into play.

Furthermore, the painting as object activates the viewer through disrupting the established codes of experiencing painting. The painting becomes a moment in an elongated process that involves the viewer and their engagement with it. It generates a new interaction or experience-in-practice (Barrett 2012), as the established codes of experiencing a painting have changed, which potentially means for the viewer that the aesthetic experience is performative and subjective. The potential impact could be that the paintings evoke questions in the viewer of how they, as people who are sharing this space with the object, now occupy the space and how it can influence their relationship to the world.

### **1.3 Conceptual Framing**

Theories relating to framing are a consideration in many cultural and social fields. It is not only that of painting – it is the domain of many others, including the cinematic and the architectural. Architecture frames space and the built environment. Various theories help define structural framing and how the parameters can change depending on the theory and the framing device. Certain theories such as, Deleuze and the rhizome (1987), restructure the conceptualisation of what a frame can be and how it can connect spaces and places. It can mean a place where oscillation between states occur, therefore enabling a porous fluidity between the inside and outside.

To examine the conceptual frame, Deleuze in *Cinema I The Movement Image* (1983), suggests that the cinematic frame is a way of understanding life around us,

'the frame teaches us that the image is not just given to be seen. It is legible as well as visible [...] if we see very few things in an image, this is because we do not know how to read it properly' (Deleuze 1983 p12-13).

To understand it fully, we must be able to read the signs in the out-of-field. It has transformational potential. It is a moment or still, a closed system that can be removed from its original context and re-situated elsewhere. This can be further produced in motion through

a series of frames. Deleuze sees that the frame's function is to contain all the information, visual and others, and record that information for later use. 'Framing is the art of choosing the parts of all kinds which become part of a set' (Deleuze 1983 p18). He sees the cinematic frame as the art of choosing, of telling a story or narrative, and setting limitations to the surface and space. The frame implements a set of constraints, whether visually or conceptually. These constraints manifest a narrative, which chronologically leads the viewer through it. Everything out-of-frame brings the work closer to the viewer. The image within a frame is removed or distanced from the viewer; therefore, once something is outside of the frame, it is brought closer, the barriers are physically and experientially removed. This experience potentially empowers the viewer with a new identification of the object. The act of taking the frame and repositioning it elsewhere is described through deterritorialisation.

Deterritorialisation undoes what has already been done; reterritorialisation is the act of re-doing but in a different manner and with different results. Deterritorialisation can be read as the weakening of ties between culture and place. As the world is fundamentally in motion, the subject and cultural aspects can transcend specific territorial boundaries or habits. It is a process of constant transformation. The territories can be seen as habits: cultural, social and environmental. The process of deterritorialisation is breaking these boundaries or distinctions, with a transformation or departure from these habits. This inevitably leads back to a reterritorialisation, though the act of re-doing, results in something different to what it was initially.

#### **1.4 Architectural Framing and Katharina Grosse**

Architecture challenges spatial constructs through framing and reforms or transforms the topology and surface relations. According to Grosz, the frame is the point where the spatial constructs of the space are challenged. Architecture explores this spatiality. It is 'the first art form, the most primitive and elementary form of framing' (Grosz 2001 p140). Architecture frames the lived-in space. It is a direct imprint by the subject on the topology and surface relations. According to Paul Harris in *Deleuze and Space* (2005), Deleuzian theories of folding created linkages and fluidity between the site and the structure, which is best exemplified in architecture. The interpretation and convergence of inside and outside are both physical and psychological (Harris 2005 p37).

Is it possible to consider these structures of architecture through painting? By analysing and utilising frames within painting (structure, stretcher, concept, medium, material), it can potentially transform its own surface relations. Painting can be investigated through architectural constructs of space, linkages, thresholds and transformations. The surfaces of painting can seep out into its surroundings, transforming the space and the space of the painting. This seepage creates new constraints which are now porous, as the edge of the stretcher frame no longer confines them. In considering this spatial shift, the emphasis goes onto the complete installation, which means a compression of space, site and the environment with the painting—the internal and external elements of painting collapse into one another.

The work of Katharina Grosse activates ideas by Deleuze and Grosz. By positioning her paintings in terms of difference rather than a confirmation of an expectation or a suppression of structure, these paintings disturb the assumed expected form and processes of painting. These works produce a new understanding and conceptual development in expanded painting.

Grosse's practice deterritorialises painting through a re-framing of the medium, site and methods. Her exhibition in the South London Gallery 2017 and the work *This Drove my Mother up the Wall* (2017) is an example of a painting as installation that challenges architectural constructs and the limits of painting. Grosse has eliminated the stretcher frame entirely and opens the painting up for new formal challenges. The frame of the painting, as both a support and a container, is the gallery itself. The site, in defining the space of the painting, contains the materiality of the paint. The viewer walks in and through the painting and is surrounded by colour. This piece reflects a relevant component of immersive spaces, which is that of scale. Grosse furthers the scale and scope of the painting and extends it beyond the gallery walls onto the ceiling and floor. This demonstrates or pushes beyond the idea of painting as object, as the space defines the painting and holds the pigment and colour. Grosse's work, by emphatically existing in real space, re-articulates the space of painting and destabilises the site, territory, encounter and framing. The painting envelops the viewer; on the floor, the walls, the ceiling. They walk on the paint. The experience becomes that of a

world that is not initially familiar, constant or reliable. The painting interferes with the site of the work,<sup>41</sup> with that, the artist rearticulates painting's architectural impact.

Grosse's works have architectural and spatial considerations that take it into new networks, which could be a demonstration of a reterritorialisation. Essentially, she is using the matter of painting (paint, support, gallery) yet she has rearranged them and created something anew. These artworks create a mode of thinking that considers painting as external or outward-looking in the space, the paintings have a surface, but the attention is not on the image, it is on the painting as installation. The work engages with the land or architecture and becomes part of it; the links or thresholds are less visible, if there at all as Grosse's work extends into networks outside of the gallery and painting.

In 2009, David Joselit articulated the theory on how painting can become part of a network once it seeps out beyond its boundaries. It is possible to apply this concept of transitive painting in this context:

'Transitivity is a form of translation: when it enters into networks, the body of the painting is submitted to infinite dislocations, fragmentations, and degradations' (Joselit 2009 p134).

This assertion suggests a coming apart, or dismemberment, however fragmenting or dislocating the painting also adds and builds on its possibilities. Grosse's move into the networks beyond the gallery or even just beyond the painting's structure, can visually and theoretically magnify paintings network or boundaries.<sup>42</sup> Significantly, her work is usually temporal. These paintings as installations have a short time-frame, as they usually only exist for the duration of the exhibition or commission. Interestingly, they degrade and fragment physically during this time, as the viewer's encounter erodes some of paint marks, especially those on the floor.

Grosse's works respond to the site as the frame while maximising the potential of the medium and site. These paintings are explicit examples of the materiality of paint framing space. The paint and pigments are the physical constraints of the work. They delineate the space of the work and the surrounding space. The paintings penetrate architectural space, making it

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<sup>41</sup> Fabian Marcaccio also destabilises the site through painting interventions in architecture.

<sup>42</sup> Transitivity is further explored in p26 – 27.



possible for the viewer to walk through them. Not only do they unfold optically in the space, but they also destabilise the traditional idea of a painting as a two-dimensional surface. These works can be seen as immersive, in that they, due to scale, can envelop the viewer. The work calls into question the conventional forms of painting and breaches the limits of the pictorial plane.

There is an embodied experience for the viewer on entering many of these paintings as installations or immersive spaces. These installations have different boundaries, constraints, and viewpoints. When the inside seeps out, and the outside comes into the space, a phenomenological experience occurs for the viewer. This experience enables a different action for the viewer that is not just the straight-on viewpoint set by perspective in representational painting, as described by John Berger (1972) or the 'erect human posture' as stated by Steinberg (1972). The painting as installation gives agency to the viewer to experience it in a bodily or holistic way. It reaffirms the liberation of the space of painting from the two-dimensional surface to the three-dimensional object, thereby creating an interconnection between the painting's interior to its exterior networks. The space is both of the painting as the physical object and of its surface. The experience puts the viewer in motion, and they must navigate the surrounding space.

The painting as installation creates an immersive space for the viewer that they become yielding participants/performers (Bishop 2005) in the work. It challenges not only two-dimensional formal relationships of composition, light, colour, and illusionary depth, but also three-dimensional relationships, including light and colour, and even depths of the real space where the viewer engages in an increasingly active and experiential manner. The space immerses the viewer and challenges the notions of the physicality of painting. What's more, the immersive environment can be immaterial or non-tactile. The operation of the immersion gives the viewer agency in the total experience of the installation. It is an experience that utilises the senses more so than solely relying on the optical.

In the next section, the focus is on methods to extend ideas of the frame further by the inclusion of the prosthetic. It continues from the theoretical foundation developed here, where the frame is the point where transformations can happen. I explore the methods of extension and transformation through notions of prosthetics and hybridity (Grosz 2005, Payne 2008). In aligning the practical element of the research, this concentration on the

possibilities of extending the frame and creating an immersive space in painting as installation broadens the theoretical intention and impact of the artworks.

## **1.5 Propositions for Prosthetics and Painting**<sup>43</sup>

In this section, I propose a way of thinking about painting that investigates the parameters of the medium and theory by engaging the writing of Elizabeth Grosz (2005), Andrew Benjamin (1994), Suhail Malik (2002), and David Ryan (2001). I extract ideas of the prosthetic from Grosz and reinterpret them through the medium of painting. I consider how the prosthetic as a concept can transform thinking relating to painting. I discuss methods of expansion and the embodiment of the *thing* in creating transformative models, such as hybridity and multiplicity. As previously mentioned, contemporary painting practices may strive to appropriate the mechanical, digital, sculptural, three-dimensional, installational, and the performative, so that painting can expand into them and outside of itself (Barragán 2008, Joselit 2009). The section continues with an investigation into the transformative effects of a thing<sup>44</sup> (Heidegger 1971, Grosz 2005) or a thought, that takes the painting to a state beyond itself. This proposition is beyond the image, beyond the surface and the frame. Prosthetics, practically and conceptually, is a model of alteration that can enable transformation and create a way for painting to expand.

From considering the objecthood of painting, discussions open up to the potential expansion of painting beyond its internal constraints. The ideas that follow investigate prosthetics as a replacement or as an enhancement for a host.

## **1.6 Prosthetics and Transformation**

Real objects are part of the world we inhabit. The human body utilises, incorporates, manufactures and functions with the use of objects, and therefore establishes experiential

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<sup>43</sup> This section was published in an exhibition catalogue for Leontios Toumpouris in 2018. It is re-edited for this thesis.

<sup>44</sup> The thing is discussed again in *Creative Strategy 2 Agency of the Object and the Thing* p98

familiarity with these objects. The tools associated with the medium of painting are mostly physical extensions that enable the act of painting. The brush extends the arm. It becomes part of the body and connects the painting with the surface becoming involved in the act of painting. The body is the artist, and the tools become part of the body of the artist; they are extensions of the body for making the work. The tools are invented with a function in mind and are part of the materials of the medium.

Transformation in painting extends beyond these materials or the medium. The transformation occurs when adding other objects into painting, objects that may not have any previous association to painting. Incorporating a real object reconfigures the painting's topography and perspective. The mechanics, impact and alterations of this appendage affect the understanding and encounter with the painting. Not only does the appendage help to activate the painting, but it can also simultaneously activate the viewer by requiring the viewer to move around it or to interpret it. This is a transformation that activates a change of the painting's space while impacting the viewers' engagement with it. As a result of appropriating real objects into the painting, a cyclical connection, or practical reciprocity, between viewer and artwork, artwork and viewer is created. The extension, or ready-made, is a way of entering the networks outside of the painting (Joselit 2009), as the shifts of emphasis oscillate between that which is inside the painting and the network beyond that is instigated by the object. Beyond this notion of extension and appendage, the idea of prosthetics can further invigorate the painting's transformation.

Moreover, prosthetics are generally perceived in connection with the human body, as an addition, extension or appendage to something, or a replacement for a limb that is missing. The potential of the notion of the prosthetic concerning painting not only means that it can replace something that is missing, but in this context, it can also be an addition that allows or enables the painting to be something else, whether this change is mechanical, physical or conceptual. The prosthetic becomes the moment at which the painting becomes more than itself, a moment when it can be transformed, morphed, or hybridised. Simultaneously, the painting retains what it was, and the prosthetic retains some of what it was, but now the hybridised form has a new identity that is both and more than what it was. Alistair Payne in *Painting as an Interdisciplinary Form* (2008) suggests that a hybrid 'can be seen as a sudden

rupture, or a combination of two, a synthesis between two distinct elements' (Payne 2008 p134). In that respect, the painting hybrid is generated by the incorporation of prosthetics.

Elizabeth Grosz in *Time Travels* (2005) theorises on prosthetics as both a concept and as an object. It is important to note that Grosz' definition relates to the human body and adding something to the body to actively transform it, whereas the focus of this section is the relationship between a non-living thing and the appendages that can transform it. The body is interrelated to the act of making. According to Grosz,

'[It is] the capacity of natural and cultural organisms to adapt extrinsic objects, things, into their bodily operations through prosthetic incorporation, an accommodation that actively transforms those bodies' (Grosz 2005 p9).

While Grosz' definition of prosthetics activates the body, I contend that the prosthetic can activate the painting, presuming the painting as the body. This activation changes the space that the painting occupies, both culturally and aesthetically. The prosthetic extends the painting outwards and creates a link to external networks. This can be linked to Joselit's suggestion that there is an axis between the painting-as-medium and the painting-as-cultural artefact and this axis enables the painting to move within the social network surrounding it (Joselit 2009 p128). The results are that many will encounter the work differently and within different spatial parameters than when encountering a conventional rectangular flat painting installed on a wall. The viewer, in turn, is activated spatially and navigates the space to encounter the painting differently to the single-point perspective. In this regard, being able to break the parameters or confines of painting potentially influences cultural transformations of its understanding and position. Grosz states that:

'Prostheses indicate the porous relations between inside and the outside of the living subject, [...] to incorporate into its organic functions all kinds of artificial or cultural inventions and the things in the world which function otherwise through the living subject's intervention' (Grosz 2005 p9).

Transformative painting practices can extrapolate Grosz' ideas of a cultural organism's ability to adapt to its surroundings through prosthetic incorporation. As this theory indicates, there is interpenetration between the painting, the prosthetic object and the environment. That incorporation of the environment into the painting initiates the painting's ability to move outside itself. The prosthetic not only enables extension and

advancement of the body but, according to Grosz, it furthers the understanding of 'the relations between the inside and the outside of the body and how we understand the complex relations between nature and culture' (Grosz 2005 p146). Grosz describes this border as 'porous', which suggests fluidity and embodiment.

Grosz' writings generate questions about objecthood and identity. Expanded painting practices adapt ideas of the three-dimensional and sculptural, and reinterpret the notions of the inside and the outside in their terms. The prosthetic's inherent function is based on and determined by its relationship to the body. According to Grosz, this material relationship to the organic host can be achieved through thought structures, technological developments and physical enhancements that have the intention to advance living and social practices and to extend the body's abilities (Grosz 2005 p148). The body magnifies its abilities with the incorporation of the prosthetic. Grosz argues that the prosthetic can transform something or someone and for it to be transformed, the prosthetic loses something of its original identity. It is now valued by its relevance to, and the ability for, the body (Grosz 2005 p151). The prosthetic enables whether it is a permanent or temporary attachment to the mind, the body, or to a living thing or inanimate object. According to Grosz,

'we make objects in order to live in the world [...] Humans produce technologies, and especially instruments that are detached and different from their own bodies, instruments which the body must learn to accommodate, instruments which transform both the thingness of things, and the body itself' (Grosz 2005 p136-137).

This further implies that the prosthetic is not only a physical appendage but also an intellectual development: that the body learns to adjust, to familiarise and to incorporate.

Prosthetics can be thought structures that are conceptual extensions of being. Grosz expands on this idea that intelligence grows out of invention and through manufacturing (Grosz 2005 p138). Human beings have the intellectual capacity to overcome inabilities, whether to benefit either the individual or, the collective. As Grosz points out, these prostheses are put in place for evolution. They include, but are not limited to, architecture, technology, tools, limbs and intelligence (Grosz 2005 p148). The prosthetic motivates progress by giving the ability to do more than what was originally conceived or intended. Therefore, the acquisition of knowledge can be considered as incremental or

developed upon, as the invention is re-invented, development is re-developed, and each time the function is advanced and perfected enabling continuing evolution and adaption.

### **1.7 *Tingler* Fabian Marcaccio and Greg Lynn**

The outcome of the collaboration between painter Fabian Marcaccio and architect Greg Lynn, *Tingler*, is a radical example of the idea of prosthetics. The painting has an architecturally developed skeletal structure that becomes the prosthetic through which the painting, the skin, is carried through the building. Marcaccio and Lynn re-invent the notion of a support structure and engage a complex framework that occupies the space. This structure constrains and influences an alternative way of encountering and looking at the work. The painting has a surface, it has paint, yet the structure that supports it redefines its parameters. The architecture of the building sets the constraints of this piece. The architectural space is rearticulated in order to build the prosthetic as a reimagined framing device. The prosthetic is a reformatted frame of the space. The painting is both architectural and painterly. This makes the painting a hybrid, whereby the extension and incorporation of the prosthetic structure mean that the painting has the potential for multiple identities.

Simon Wallis in the catalogue for *Hybrids: International Contemporary Painting* (2001) exhibition describes Marcaccio's work as seeking 'to become porous and embrace technology in developing visual thought that consistently allows further mutations to occur in the practice of painting' (Wallis 2001 p29). The mutations that Wallis is describing are brought about when Marcaccio breaks the constraints of the painting and incorporates structures and appendages to facilitate this transformation.

The collaboration demonstrates an interrogation of one discipline through another: painting through architecture and architecture through painting. The architecture is pushing the constraints of the painting support, and the painting is obstructing the architectural functions of the space.



Fabian Marcaccio and Greg Lynn

*Tingler*, 1999

Pigment inks, oil, acrylic, silicone, and polymer on vinyl and metal structure  
Vienna, Secession Museum

© Fabian Marcaccio

## 1.8 Hybridity

Potentially, the prosthetic is an addition that can transform not only the physical space of painting but also its conceptual and theoretical space. According to Suhail Malik, this transformation destabilises the theory of what is now a complex structure, 'prostheses destabilise and alter traditional theoretical and historical categories' (Malik 2002 p36). By destabilising the theoretical structures between object and host, it triggers reinterpretations and new understandings for what it can become. It appropriates the traditional and cultural theories of their individual elements and combines them, making them more than what they were. Destabilising, in this case, is not a negative situation as it evidences a transformation and marks the moment of change.

In addition, an identity emerges that can be actualised in form. It is the composite of both the body and the prosthetic, which is characterised under hybridism. The hybrid is composed of different identities that come together to make a new identity. This coming together of matter means the points of intersection are critical moments of change. For the structure of the hybrid, it means that there is a point where it can be destabilised or deconstructed. There is a hinge, or, a fold, or, a pivotal point where it challenges the frame of the painting. It is a nexus of syntheses, improvisation and rearrangement. Andrew Benjamin, in *Object Painting*, states that the frame is the site of activity for this objectification of painting. That at this point, it can 'shift from static and the substantive' to the active (Benjamin 1994 p72). Significantly, this argument distinguishes a moment when the painting transforms from static to active, and that crucial to this transformation is the frame itself. This transforms how painting sits in the physical space, the theoretical space, and within the medium. The hybrid structure has particular elements, along with the relations of the external parts, that are in flux and capable of different things.

David Ryan, in *Hybrids: International Contemporary Painting* (2001) exhibition catalogue essay, articulates that the potentiality of the hybrid in painting is that it 'picks up and uses' objects external to it to extend its 'language and re-engag(e) the viewer with everyday life' (Ryan 2001 p9). The opportunity that this implies is not only that the viewer can have a broader experience in viewing the painting hybrid, but it also redefines the parameters of painting through the appropriation of external elements. These external 'everyday life' objects, these prosthetics, generate this transformation of viewing. The



viewer's familiarity with the object and experience of the object creates a strategy for understanding. Objects that suggest function, external to painting's fundamental function, also increase this familiarity. The associations of the objects are understood but still questioned concerning the artwork. Ryan further explains that 'hybridity allows different cultural and technological issues to be explored through the language of painting' (Ryan 2001 p9). The hybrid can be a means of funnelling or distilling the artists' world and experiences, and the incorporation of physical objects is one way of visually expressing cultural and technological changes.

This cross-culture and cross-pollination of disciplines facilitate an expanded field of operation for painting, where the prosthetic and resulting transformative models, such as hybridity, are a way of contextualising the shift in the mode of operation in which painting exists. As mentioned earlier, Grosz discusses cultural organisms' ability to adapt extrinsic things to their bodies to transform the understanding and to augment cultural tropes (2005 p145). Ryan suggests that visual culture is a complex structure that is already bound to the visual (Ryan 2001 p9). He considers hybrids to 'open out the prescribed limitations of inherited traditions' (Ryan 2001 p17). The nature of the hybrid is that it questions status, rigidity and borders, which is achieved through 'working on, and through form itself' (Ryan 2001 p17).

By proposing the concept of prosthetics, it creates an opening for questioning contemporary painting practices surrounding the possibilities of the transformative. The proposition is that the painting becomes something else yet retains its own identity, but an identity with its constraints shifted. It has morphed into a more hybridised model. The hybrid is not painting; it is not sculpture; the hybrid allows the artwork to be seen and interacted with in a different spatial context. The prosthetic is a way of thinking that creates hybrid tendencies, but is essentially forced out and through itself into an engagement with the world. An engagement that is facilitated through prosthetic shifts of thought, physical prosthetics, or, a combination of both. The prosthetic not only puts in place a framework for explaining and understanding the relationships of painting and the object, but also the impacted interrelationships of cultural transformations. The prosthetic's future potential is that it can revitalise painting by offering transformative models that continually incorporate new technological and cultural developments into painting processes.

Furthermore, the notions of prosthetics can be taken beyond the medium of painting and into other disciplines. The theory of prosthetics can contribute to the knowledge of transformative models within other expanded art practices; such as when mentioned earlier, Grosz discusses architecture and technology (Grosz 2005). This theory investigates the limits of cultural and aesthetic paradigms. It interweaves extrinsic networks on established frameworks, incorporates the object with the organic, and generates the potential to transform the overarching relationships of external forces on the internal. Moreover, the concept of prosthetics offers a blurring of disciplinary boundaries as it redefines constraints and extends related thinking that may not have been possible before.

## **1.9 Practical Explorations**

This section discusses the practical element of the research that is aligned with Creative Strategy 1. The investigations reveal what underpins the research and how the progress of the practice ultimately shaped the research project. The initial origins of this work were based on studying the formal concerns of the form and structure of painting and my perceived limitations of painting critique. As a practitioner, I wanted to investigate through the plasticity, or stuff, of paint, the theories on materiality, spatial restrictions and constraints of the medium. The application of *Creative Strategies* in the practice began as an organic implementation of emergent and exploratory methods, which evolved into an underlying structure for production. The three elements of the thesis – portfolio, sketchbook and dissertation, run in tandem. Key to understanding the format and sequence of the three Creative Strategies is through the practice.

Initially, a fascination or obsessiveness to get to the core of painting's materiality drove the studio work. By starting with the initial support of painting, I was able to explore key issues with the edge, frame and activation, and their relationship to the surface. Through the practice, I wanted to unpick the context established in *Painting as Object*, Greenberg (1960), Berger (1972), Benjamin (1994), and Gilbert-Rolfe (1998). Therefore, the chronological development details the circumstances of the critical revisions taking place in the material and theoretical discourse. Detailed below are the personal motivations negotiated in the studio.

The most significant moment in the early studio explorations was breaking away from an aesthetic that was familiar and thoroughly established in my art career. The rationale for doing this was to implement the methods mentioned earlier, where the double articulation of theory and practice could co-exist and give form to the research. To identify and structure the double articulation, I created a template or framework. In 2016, I devised a list of phrases to be this framework, as well as a stand-alone performance piece.

*FOLDING AS ACTION*  
*PROSTHESIS AS ACTION*  
*PAINTING AS ACTION*  
*TENSION AS SURFACE*  
*ARMATURE AS ACTION*  
*ITERATION AS ACTION*  
*CHAOS AS ENABLER*  
*PAINTING AS PERFORMATIVE*  
*POROUS AS PARAMETER*  
*MOVEMENT AS STRUCTURE*  
*ENCOUNTER AS PERFORMANCE*  
*MATERIALITY AS REDUCTION*  
*DETERRITORIALIZATION AS METHOD*  
*ACTION AS AGENCY*  
*PAINTING AS BECOMING*

Keehan, A. *Action as Agency* 2016

The *Action as Agency* phrases are catalysts for thinking and researching painting through words and performance.<sup>45</sup> The phrases describe ways in which to activate the expansion of painting. Activating the structure and essence of painting was one of the primary concerns in the early work, which was a too broad and somewhat abstract approach. It eventually shifted to focus on proposing devices and methods to expand painting.

At this early stage, the significant theoretical positions awakened by these phrases analysed the approach of action as the agency for thought and practice. It was valuable as a conceptual exploration into breaking the frame and how painting, in its broadest term, could be explored

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<sup>45</sup> Sketchbook p7

through a conceptual piece.<sup>46</sup> By compartmentalising the research through these phrases and using them as subtitles to instigate reflection, it allowed individual analysis of each term. For example;

*Painting as action: performance*

*Folding as action: ingestion*

*Prosthesis as action: enabler*

*Armature as action: stabiliser*

The application of these phrases prompted a conceptual investigation into painting materials. This investigation followed physical ways in which ideas such as performance, stabilisation, ingestion, and expansion could be explored in the work. The rationale for this was to test what might contribute to transforming painting. The work that was created at this time included stretchers and structures that folded<sup>47</sup>. Though they are static forms, they have moveable joints that change their form and how they behave in the space. This suggests that the paintings occupy a different space from those that are exclusively wall-based. The process allowed a spatial interrogation of the work, which became increasingly physical. With this, it brought the considerations of this physicality with it and furnished ideas on expanded processes.

This initial trajectory, aligned to the fold (Deleuze 1993), had the potential to create paintings that were a folding system of surfaces that opened out externally, whilst also having alternative positions of an inside and an outside. In a reduced format, I saw the inside as the internal armature that would support a surface. This support, the stretcher frame, was crucial to activate painting's form for transformation. I was using the stretcher as the internal armature interlinked to the ideas of the prosthetic. The prosthetic highlights the inside and the outside divide as it is taking what is inside outside. Therefore, the stretcher, as a support for a

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<sup>46</sup> Joseph Kosuth analysed the role of the proposition in art, saying 'that a work of art is a kind of proposition presented within the context of art as a comment on art' (Kosuth 1969). For him, the conceptual proposition is what makes a piece of art, art. However, Carolyn Wilde refutes this idea in her essay *Matter and Meaning in the Work of Art: Joseph Kosuth's One and Three Chairs* (2007) where she found 'the idea that any work of art 'proposes a thesis' or 'presents a proposition' is problematic' (ed. Goldie, Schellekens 2007 p133). It is possible to say that Kosuth's ideas have particular relevance to conceptual art. But, considering this research project, I propose challenges to prescribed modes of process that enable the breaking of conventions and traditions of painting.

<sup>47</sup> Portfolio p14-15.

surface, could potentially take any number of forms or formats. I analysed these formulations through experience-in-action (Barrett 2012) and engaging with the materials of the stretcher frame, mainly wood. By taking the aesthetic experience of the wooden batons before any implied or perceived signs and symbols, I was able to think through what a stretcher and frame could be. The types of frames included spatial frame, conceptual frame, painting's frame, and the material frame.<sup>48</sup>

Not only did these preliminary practical explorations directly reference painting's materials and construction, but they also echoed concerns of modernism in terms of a reductive and minimal approach to the image and materiality. In questioning the painting's materials, support, frame, and surface, it led and forced a re-direction in the practice. This re-direction involved coming from a spatially orientated perspective rather than the conventional single-point perspective of image and surface (Berger 1972, Steinberg 1972). What emerged were stand-alone three-dimensional structures that had elements of both painting and sculpture, that:

- advanced towards hybridity and transformation.
- proposed spatial potentiality, set in place by the folding structures.
- re-orientated and rethought the structures and supports to specific functions prompting alternative spatial considerations.

To further challenge the geometric wall-based frame, I incorporated the action of folding and movement, to the frames by applying a hinge or fold in the structure. Because of the complexity of creating folds in three-dimensional form, I used an intuitive experimental method for the production of these structures. The extension and mobility of hinges and folds were tested through wooden prototypes<sup>49</sup>. Some of these incorporated canvases and others involved other materials such as electrical tape, metal and rope. The critical outcome of these prototypes was distinguishing between a fold and a hinge, in both, challenging the function of the structures and the theory. The works created an expanded notion of painting by entering space differently to a two-dimensional painting. By analysing the skeletal substructure of painting, I could see a point where the transformation of its physical form was possible.

The result of this transformation was hybridity. The objecthood of the hybrids ruptured the structure and the three-dimensional space that they occupied, as such, bringing attention to

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<sup>48</sup> The explanations of the types of frame are on p19.

<sup>49</sup> Sketchbook p17.

the space of the installation, the painting's surface with the space of the viewer and their engagement with the work. These works rearranged spatial and material constraints through the use of prosthetics, whether they were external armatures, or hinges, applied to the joints.

Concerning framing and the spatial context of the works, there are a few different situations that the works exist within. These works explore the boundaries and edges of both painting and sculpture's histories and conventions. The frames that are operating blur the lines of each accurate description. Similar to Grosz' assertions that the frame is porous and allows fluidity between the inside and outside (Grosz 2005), they create holes that intersect spaces and concepts. With this in mind, I could think about networks and the passage that these works created (Joselit 2005).

The following works question the material components of painting and lead to thinking about how materials are rearranged to transform their constraints.

### **1.10 Parallelogram No. 2**

The pivotal moment in the practice was curating and exhibiting in the exhibition *Whereabouts You Are* (Glasgow 2016)<sup>50</sup>. The work exhibited and explored the notions of structure and folding. The wall piece, *Parallelogram No.2*, wooden frame with electrical tape, was a prototype for testing hinges and frames, where the electrical tape was a device used to explore surface, line and function.

This piece is wall-mounted and geometric, which directly relates to painting. The frame is both the support and the surface. The corners of the piece are hinged, thus giving the potential to move in a sideward motion. Though this piece is mostly static unless the viewer intervenes by physically touching it, it has the potential to change shape and to create a range of spatial alterations. To further extend this spatial movement, the lines of the electrical tape break the edge of the frame. The materiality and structure of the tape mean that it lacks tension and the hanging pieces are simply held in place by its gum. The gum attracts dust

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<sup>50</sup> Please refer to portfolio p22-27 and sketchbook p18-19.

from its surroundings and paint chips from the wall behind it; the gum absorbs or consumes its environment until it is full and no longer tacky.



Parallelogram No.2  
30 x 40cm frame, wood and electrical tape. 2016

The electrical tape and its gummed surface, by its very nature, wants to fold in on itself and attach to what is around it. It is an active material that can transform into something else; it is functional and sticks one object to another, or, it can fold in on itself and become useless and cease to function. This would suggest that the materiality of the tape invites external ideas of construction and utility. Though it is not a usual element of painting it is a useful prosthetic that can transform the surface, structure and space.

### **1.11 Folding Structure No.1**

The work *Folding Structure No.1* interwove ideas of the physical components of painting such as frame, support, canvas and paint, with ideas of pushing or breaking the boundaries of painting. To enable painting to extend beyond its frame, I took a reductive approach to its

materiality to reorient and reformat the framing device. The obvious exclusion from the work is paint; the rationale behind this is to allow the work to engage with the language of painting through materials and signs associated with painting.



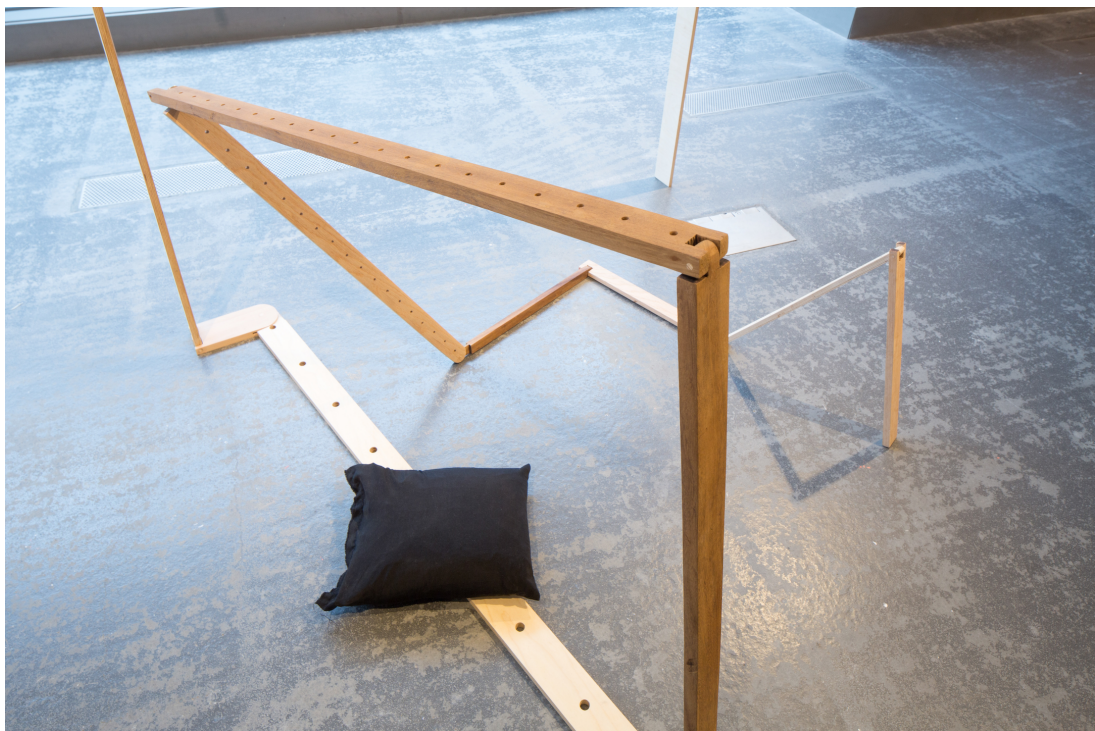
*Folding Structure No. 1*  
Wood and sandbag in black silk. 2016  
200 x 170 x 200cm  
Exhibited in *Whereabouts you are* Reid Gallery 2016  
Photo credit: Alan McAteer

The conceptual ideas brought about from this piece led an investigation into the hinge (Derrida 1976), the fold (Deleuze 1993) and the space of the work (Lefebvre 1991). The hinge allows a mediation of ideas between the real object and the space it occupies, working as a link between the conceptual and the real. Furthermore, the open structure of this piece allows the surrounding space to fold into the work, through a motion coming inwards or extending outwards, thereby leaving an imprint of what was folded (Deleuze 1993).





*Studio test for construction of Folding Structure No.1 2016*



Folding Structure No.1 detail  
Wood, Sandbag in Black Silk  
200 x 170 x 200cm  
Photo credit: Alan McAteer

The piece went through various formulations<sup>51</sup> to investigate these material shifts. These experiments adopt Bolt's handling of materials (2007) to discover new contents, intents and experiences from the materials used in the work<sup>52</sup>. My intention was to create an open space within the painting, so there was fluidity between the inside and outside. I had to remove the canvas to release the tension. Remaining in the piece is a trace of a painting; the absence of the stretched canvas with the marks of where it was removed. This is what Derrida might have referred to as a hinge or *brisure* that the trace is mediating rather than a fragmentation or separation (Derrida 1976). This implies that there is evidence of the canvas that cannot be erased, and the wooden structure remains connected to painting.

The rationale for this work was to make a linear structure that incorporated ideas of folding, of spatial shifts and new considerations for movement and engagement (Deleuze 1993). It would, therefore, interfere with perceptions of the space of the artwork. The line made by the wooden structure relates to perspective and composition, two concerns that are particular to painting. The piece also had the potential to move; however, it required a viewer to interact physically and to move the actual pieces of wood, though this is contradicted by the precarious nature of the piece and its instability. The hinges aided the continuity and flow of the sections. They generate and set limits on potential movements and gestures of the wooden sections, which would suggest that the piece can fold in on itself and close off or fence off the body.

Previous experiments with hinges and dowels made it possible for me to construct it intuitively and to extend the work through each joint and link of wood (Barrett 2012). The reduction of the materials to just the wood enabled me to focus on its intention. The major issue that occurred while making the piece was with its stability. I added a purely functional sandbag as a weight and stabilised the piece.<sup>53</sup> The sandbag is the prosthetic, and it enables the frame to stand and embrace its three-dimensionality. However, the sandbag negated the potential of audience interaction. The black silk cover links to my interest in fabric and drapery, and the concealing of what's beneath. The fabric changed the appearance of the

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<sup>51</sup> Various stages of development are documented in the accompanying sketchbook.

<sup>52</sup> As discussed in the *Methodology* section.

<sup>53</sup> The potential movement and stability of the piece became an on-going issue for the course of the exhibition. Due to the nature of the piece being a work that relies on balance, any light touch can knock it over. The collapsing of the piece resulted in fractures, as they are not robust enough to withstand falling at force.

utilitarian object and softened its impression. The silk began the investigation into the fetishisation of materials, which formed Creative Strategy 2.

To interrogate the spatiality of the piece, I aligned it with the scale of my body. The realisation of referencing the body's scale connects with the viewer and creates an inside space to move into. Tall vertical lengths of wood destabilised the structure and enabled awareness of our self with it, our safety, our own space, the space of the work and what was beyond it. These physical constraints of size and dimension, with the line of the wooden beams and movement of the hinges, can be read in relation to Lefebvre's idea of gesture (Lefebvre 1991). Direction comes from the body and that this directionality is a motion or action, our interpretations of left and right, up and down, etc. are actions that are relative to the body. These are what Lefebvre calls *gestures*. I activated the directionality through scale, adding the taller vertical extension to extend just beyond the height of my body.



Installation view of *Whereabouts You Are* Reid Gallery 2016  
Photo credit: Alan McAteer

The skeletal frame challenged conventional and personal ideas of placement, frontality, the medium and the architectural space of the work. The results showed that the materials of my practice had shifted and conventional painting materials no longer constrained it, but it was now open to other materials from a wider territory of disciplines and sources. These are prosthetics. Therefore, the works successfully challenge ideas of space and structure and transform the form, skeleton and skin of painting.

This body of work embodied and tested many of the ideas on painting as becoming, prosthetics and hybridity. It incorporated folding, movement, prosthetics, objects, tension and surface, which are all key components in this particular exploration of painting. It further opened up other possibilities in developing the exploration that includes the hinge and how it can link to the trace, deconstructed, or removed elements of painting. The trace of painting can be seen in the sculptural component of the work and related to the Derridian notion of the trace (Derrida 1976). Painting is both present and absent, and both are interwoven in the work, evidence of elements of painting are traceable in the work, and there is a slippage between sculpture and painting.

## **1.12 Conclusion**

In Creative strategy 1, I devised the critical concept of the prosthetic to expand painting through physical and conceptual alterations. It began by using a reductive method to focus on the frame as core to its structure, which allowed an interrogation of the crux where expansion could be actualised. This position generated physical and conceptual transformations. I proposed the theory of prosthetics as a method of transforming painting from a two-dimensional surface to a three-dimensional form. Conceptualising this element, unfolded a discussion on Deleuze and Grosz' theoretical notions regarding the frame. It is through these manipulations that I transformed the construction and space of the paintings. From utilising Grosz' concepts on the prosthetic (2005), I suggested that this appendage can alter the structure of a painting and create a new form of support. I added external structural components to enable re-shaping and alternative spatial concerns for the works. The practical investigations coincide with the development of the conceptualisations, which are evidenced in the accompanying portfolio.

The focus on the frame allowed a historical and critical analysis of painting as object. Essential texts by Greenberg (1960), Benjamin (1994) and Gilbert-Rolfe's (1998) positioned the painting as object and the ideas on the frame. Demonstrating the considerations of what exists outside of the frame. In turn, this was challenged through expanded painting processes. Thinking spatially and architecturally, brought in consideration of immersive spaces and ideas of the encounter for the viewer.

These concepts of three-dimensionality were explored through a discussion on architecture and Katharina Grosse. Grosse deterritorialises painting from its typical constraints of gallery and form. She transforms painting's parameters through processes and engagement with space. This emphasises the fact that the work is overtly three-dimensional and explains, through the medium, how painting can be hybridised. The inference taken from this is that she has rearticulated and rearranged the encounter for the viewer, which challenges ideas of perspective (Berger 1972) and erect human posture (Steinberg 1972).

This example of a rearrangement of spatiality and encounter can be further influenced by the prosthetic. Taking Fabian Marcaccio and Greg Lynn's painting hybrid, *Tingler*, as a suggestion, it demonstrates transformation from the collaboration between two forms and disciplines. The architectural frame of the painting, by Lynn, is the prosthetic that activates the painting in and through space. This painting actively engages with networks outside of itself, as it physically breaks into the public domain by emerging onto the footpath outside of the gallery. The collaboration of disciplines breaks each one of their frames or constraints. This would suggest that they activate each other to expand beyond their boundaries through the use of prosthetics.

The proposition of prosthetics as a means of expanding painting practices emerged through the practice and theoretical investigations. The investigation of the frame developed through the practical explorations in the exhibition *Whereabouts You Are in* 2016. This shift in theory and practice created a tangible method for transformation in painting. The prosthetic brought in ideas of hybridity and a new form of support as a means of transformation

This Creative Strategy contributes to the field of expanded painting practices through proposing a new approach to material and conceptual intentions in painting. It draws together the theories of Barragán, Krauss and Breen Lovett in defining concepts of expansion and by extrapolating these ideas, it enables this research to impact on both physical and theoretical transformations in contemporary painting.

## **Creative Strategy 2: One Way to Take Control**

## 2.1 Introduction

*Creative Strategy 2* proposes a material ontology where the object and its objecthood are positioned for fetishisation.<sup>54</sup> The aim is to investigate personal impulses to paint – fetishisation and obsession, and my fascination in materials, with the intention of harnessing these traits as conduits to transform painting practices and processes. The primary focus of this text utilises the fetishisation of materiality as the agent for broadening existing modes of expanded painting practices by imbuing value or power to an object. It achieves agency through acknowledging fetishistic tropes: the subject, form and materiality, all of which are embedded with processes of labour and conditions of the real<sup>55</sup>. The research question proposes: *how can the fetishisation of materiality challenge agency in painting?*

To achieve these aims, I will:

- 1) Begin by defining the fetishisation of materiality. It will show the historical bias that contextualises fetish from a male position, specifically Freud in 1927.
- 2) Rearticulate this position to that of the female, creating possibilities for female fetishisation, as explored in texts by Elizabeth Grosz (1994) and Lorraine Gamman (1995).
- 3) Apply a feminist autoethnographic method in the practice and theoretical positioning.
- 4) Consider the agency of fetish through hermeneutical analysis of artist, object and spectator. I suggest that the fetishisation of materiality is part of the artistic process and also provides the impetus for the subject-matter. This assertion is not to suggest that the fetishisation of material is a clinical condition.
- 5) Discuss through the theory of the *thing*, the fetishisation process that takes place upon an object and how the relationship to that object changes for the subject. This relationship between subject and object, and the agency imbued in the object by the subject.
- 6) Discuss the fetishisation of painting.
- 7) Posit abjection, fantasy and ugliness as modes of fetishisation.
- 8) Investigate materiality through ideas of containment and the pocket.

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<sup>54</sup> Please refer to portfolio p29-47 and sketchbook p21-65.

<sup>55</sup> Throughout this research 'the real' refers to materiality and reality by sense perception, rather than philosophical real (the imaginary, the symbolic and the real) as described by Lacan and others, where it is referring to the authentic truth.



- 9) Discuss the practice and the formulation of the *Fabricating Fantasy Series* 2018 in direct relation to this Creative Strategy.

The fetishisation of materiality describes an obsessive want for the essence and tangibility of an object. The subject's desire for the physicality of the object establishes it as the conductor of energy. This energy, often erotic or sexualised but not exclusively, transverses the body, creating a fetishised relationship to the object. These objects are given superfluous meaning and power to accommodate the subject's fantasies and aspirations for it. As a consequence, the object generates the fetishistic tropes of desire, fantasy, abject and obsession, in the subject.

The expressive capacity of the materials can result in their becoming conduits for aesthetic and fetishistic props. This subjected matter is loaded with the individual's beliefs. These materials indexical of the fetish become the material repertoire used in my practice and are the conduits or agents I employ to expand painting. They are materials or objects that are external to the form of painting. As materials explored in this research are not only those of oil painting; they are also alternative materials and fabrics chosen to exude sensuality and tactility. The rationale for selecting these types of materials is explained in the following section.

The context for this research comes from three distinct definitions of fetishism. The relevance of these distinctions is that they shape the understanding of fetish in contemporary western culture. It could be argued that the word fetish is overused, and as a result, it has lost some of its meaning. This research investigates the validity of using this term within an art practice while showing how the boundary of its definition is now blurred and overlaps with other ideas on sexuality, erotica and obsession.

## **2.2 Fetish, An Overview**

The first use of the word fetish came from the Portuguese word *feitiço* meaning charm, which related to the attribution of religious or mystical meaning to an object. This became the first interpretation of anthropological fetishism. A pathological or sexual fetishisation followed, as discussed initially by Alfred Binet in *Le Fétichisme dans l'Amour* (1887) and further developed by Sigmund Freud in his seminal essay *Fetishism* (1927). This essay has, whether

rightly or wrongly, become the cornerstone to the psychological understanding of fetishism, and in turn, the more common understanding of fetish in contemporary western culture. The main difficulty or failing of this interpretation is that it is phallogentric and dismisses the possibility of female fetishisation.

As in Freudian theory, the primary context of fetish comes from the domain of masculine sexuality, it insinuates that its predominant understanding is that women are the passive object of men's fetishisation. According to Freud, the fetish derives from a male seeing his mother 'castrated', and perceives this as a 'lack' (Freud, Strachey, and Richards 1991 p353). This castration complex transpires in substituting the lack with an alternative object. The object then becomes the implementation that he needs for sexual fulfilment. For Freud, the fetish object 'remains a token of triumph over the threat of castration and a protection against it' (Freud, Strachey, and Richards 1991 p353). Moreover, the significant element of this perversion (Freud thought it was a perversion) is that, as the fetishist has found his object, he is content and feels there is no need to correct the behaviour (Freud, Strachey, and Richards 1991 p351). The fetishist is aware of reality and understands the consequences of his actions, though he is in denial of reality. Octave Mannoni phrased it as "*Je sais bien, mais quand-même...*" or I know very well, but nevertheless... (Mannoni, 2003 [1968]). Importantly the fetishist never asks questions about what they are doing.<sup>56</sup>

What does this mean for female fetishisation? and what does this mean for the materials and objects involved in my practice? Freud highlights a few essential material connections, which complement an argument that runs through this research; that the material fetishes are materials that have a relationship to the body<sup>57</sup>. Though referring these to male sexual desire, Freud acknowledges that,

'fur and velvet – has long been suspected – are a fixation of the sight of pubic hair, which should have been followed by the longed-for sight of her female member; pieces of underclothing, which are so often chosen as a fetish, crystallise the moment of undressing, the last moment in which the woman could still be regarded as phallic' (Freud, Strachey, and Richards 1991 p355).

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<sup>56</sup> This ambivalence is what differentiates fetishism from neurosis; the neurotic asks questions, though those questions are unanswerable. Neuroses, for Freud, were treatable illnesses; these included obsessive-compulsives, phobias, anorexia and forms of control, all of which are defence mechanisms. The neurotic can be treated, as they know what is going on and are aware of the reality but are denying it, whereas the fetishist cannot.

<sup>57</sup> In Creative Strategy 3, the relationship between fabric and the female body will be discussed through the work of Alison Watt.

Significantly, these implications by Freud unfurl and explain the materials associated with a fetish: fur, velvet, silk, lace. Not only that, he further discusses feet and hair; these bodily elements that can also be translated through materials that resemble skin and leather products, which further links to other skin-like materials such as rubber and latex. However, these bodily elements also refer to theories on abjection (Kristeva 1983), and considerations of sexuality by Grosz (1994). These theories became increasingly important to challenge Freudian phallogentrism. Grosz asserts,

'This project of rewriting the female body as a positivity rather than as a lack entails two related concerns: reorganising and reframing in terms by which the body has been socially represented [...] and challenging the discourses which claim to analyse and explain the body and subject scientifically – biology, psychology, sociology – to develop different perspectives that may be able to better represent women's interests' (Grosz 1994 p64).

Primarily, this research looks for ways to reframe ideas of fetish and materiality from the position of the female subject to confront the discourse around the female fetishisation of materiality.

The third interpretation of fetish is the conceptualisation of the commodity fetish.<sup>58</sup> It is identified with the female consumer and indicates that the female purchases an ideal life or identity. Lorraine Gamman and Merja Makinen describe the characterisation of the female fetish through commodity and consumerism in *Female Fetishism: A New Look* (1994). They imply that sexual and commodity fetishism overlap and interweave. This idea can be linked to Freudian theory and the rationale behind choosing certain materials through fetishising the object and imbuing it with social importance. The complexity of the female fetish grew through a redefining of substitution and commodification, which directly and indirectly pulls in Freudian and Marxist (1867) theory. Throughout this research, there will be references to both.

One appeal of fetish is that it has a nuanced play within and against existing structures and narratives of power, namely the structure within a capitalistic, patriarchal society. Within this play, fetish acts have their levels of power. These ideas of play, fantasy, dualities of power or

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<sup>58</sup> Karl Marx in *Das Kapital (Capital. Critique of Political Economy)* (1867) discusses the social relationships involved in producing goods that, in a Capitalist society, people are conditioned to equate, via the mechanisms of production, the value with the market exchange rather than relating value to the labour involved in the production. This value obscures the relationship between object and body, where people subscribe subjective values to a commodity which then turn into real, objective value. Significantly, this interpretation of fetishism is strongly associated with female fetish.

hierarchy, became prevalent as the practical research developed and while thinking of consumption and seduction of the object. It is important to note that the fetishist needs the real object and not a substitute or representation to achieve satisfaction. Hierarchy exists between a set of things, people or situations, to classify or rank. Key characteristics of fetish also involve a hierarchy. That is to say, the involvement of the dominance hierarchy, where a dominant behaviour will reciprocate someone displaying submissive behaviour in return. Within the *Fabricating Fantasy* series, there are multiple expressions of hierarchy. The fetishisation of materials involves the actual fabric being displayed in an overabundant manner, juxtaposed with the painted representation of the fabric perched on a pedestal above the fallen fabric. However, to counterbalance that, where the painting and the photograph mobilise the viewer's gaze, the real fabric charges the fetish through its realness. Also, the painting and the sculptural element supersede the photograph. The photograph can flatten the fetish; the photograph is considered as 'just' a representation of something and therefore cannot be the object that asserts the fetish.

### **2.3 Female Fetishism**

My interest in fetishisation and feminism forms this enquiry. The critical investigation creates a way into the work through a particular fetish, as already stated the fetishised object is specific to the person; my personal object is drapery which will be investigated in Creative Strategy 3. However, Creative Strategy 2 has allowed the study of a broad range of materials through a similar lens or fascination as a way of assessing my own responses. The personal approach defines the way I undertook the research and positions the critical environment and repertoire of materials.

In questioning how, as a female researcher and artist, the premise for the fetishisation of material could be from a perceived lack, prompted a repositioning of the research that could address personal concerns. Primarily, this offered the opportunity to express fetish as something productive and generative rather than as a replacement or substitute for something lacking. Elizabeth Grosz discussed this rejection of the patriarchal definition in *Volatile Bodies* (1994). In the chapter 'Intensities and Flows', Grosz analyses Deleuze and Guattari's *A*

*Thousand Plateaus* (1987) stance on desire<sup>59</sup> and interprets it through a feminist and female perspective:

'that while psychoanalysis relies on a notion of desire as a lack, an absence that strives to be filled through the attainment of an impossible object, desire can instead be seen as what produces, what connects, what makes machinic alliances. Instead of aligning desire with fantasy and opposing it to the real, instead of seeing it as a yearning desire is an actualisation, a series of practices, bringing things together or separating them, making machines, making reality. Desire does not take for itself a particular object whose attainment it requires; rather, it aims at nothing above its own proliferation or self-expansion' (Grosz 1994 p165).

Here, Grosz describes desire as positive and productive rather than striving for an impossible object or in opposition of the real. Throughout this research, I investigate ways in which painting processes and theory can be constructive and generative.<sup>60</sup>

Anne Hamlyn, in *Freud, Fabric, Fetish* (2003), discusses female desire and femininity using Freud's theories on female desire and fetish as a starting point. She highlights the contradictions within his arguments, mainly that Freud's hypothesis means that the female does not fetishise the same as a male. Furthermore, she thinks textile fetishes are brought on from childhood,

'this is because of their natural proximity to the primary object of the child's desire. They are the [hu]man-made surfaces that envelop the idealised maternal body [...] What lies beneath – the 'reality' that fabric brushes up against – is female genital difference. It is that refusal to recognise that difference that, for Freud, lies at the root of fetishism' (Hamlyn 2003 p15).

To extend Freud's interpretation of the female fetish being a clothes fetish, Hamlyn suggests that women desire to 'produce textiles to assist the process of concealment and revelation.' (Hamlyn 2003 p19). For Freud, clothes fetish was not perverse behaviour, which was a striking difference to men – men fetishise sexually, which Freud thought was a perversion. The implications of this idea are worth exploring. As this research will show, the significance of the relationship between subject and object is that the female use of fabric and drapery is more than merely an erotised process of concealing and reveal for the male gaze.

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<sup>59</sup>Desire is one of the characteristics of fetishisation, or an effect of the fetish.

<sup>60</sup> This development came after an initial reductive approach in early research. This is further revealed in the sketchbook.

Hamlyn continues by pointing out that 'fabric is a substance, across whose surface the modes of Marxist commodity fetishism and psychoanalysis may and do cross. And it is, by and large, through the actions of women that such over-crossing takes place' (Hamlyn 2003 p19). The 'over-crossing' that Hamlyn is discussing relates to fetish, whether through ideas of the commodity or psychoanalysis. This idea is crucial when thinking about the relationship between the object and the female subject. The actions of women consolidate fundamental arguments established throughout this thesis on materiality and fetish. Not only is it vital to express an autoethnographic position, but it is also, more generally, to create an alternative to the given Freudian phallogentric positioning when analysing fetish and desire.

To elaborate on the generative potential of the relationship between subject and object, Ronald Barthes in his essay entitled *Striptease* (2009), portrays the connection of the body with the object and, consequently, the contradiction of the striptease.<sup>61</sup> For Barthes, the sexuality of the stripper is lost once she strips.<sup>62</sup> The sexual element of the movement is bound up in the process of removing the clothing. Barthes emphasises that what is on the person or the body is what makes it sexual. Significantly, it means that the thing or object put on the body is what makes it fetishised, not the naked body. The naked body is not enough. Fetish is the relationship between object and body, and ultimately, how these together relate to the voyeur or active participant.

Combining Grosz and Barthes is to say that a body wrapped or adorned can potentially generate fetish. It actualises the erotic and desire through movements and processes of revealing performed by the stripper. Rather than the desire coming from something that is lacking, it is instead generated by proliferation and expression. An example, in contemporary art where drapery and wrapping are a subject, would be the early wrapping pieces (1958 – 69) by Christo<sup>63</sup>, where he used a transparent fabric or polythene to wrap objects which were then bound in rope. Objects included packages, a telephone, statues, and furniture, hence objectifying and making cherished. This series extended to performative pieces of wrapping women, which were filmed or photographed, namely, *Wrapped Woman 1961* explores fetish activity of the subject-object through events and performances. Interestingly, often when

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<sup>61</sup> Barthes' ideas can be linked to the fetish as they have connections through the use of fetish objects within the act of the striptease.

<sup>62</sup> Barthes relates this essay to the female stripper for a male gaze; however, it can apply to any gender stripper and any gender gaze.

<sup>63</sup> These works are before the collaborative works with Jean-Claude.

these works are described it is in a positive light, 'The act of ›Wrapping‹ a female body in front of an audience may awaken associations with abuse and coercion, but also – more positively – may evoke an impression of protection, of a mantle'<sup>64</sup> (description Daimler Art Collection). However, I would argue, that the act of wrapping a woman in plastic and tying her up is overtly an act of violence, rather than a sole fetish activity, such as the act of bondage or Shibari. A work such as the *Wrapped Woman* is multi-layered, and it could be said that the statement reflects an attempt to posit a positive spin on the work rather than declaring it as an act of violence against women. In this instance, the woman is subject to commodification and objectification by the male gaze. It conforms to symbols of power and dominance, submission and restraint. It embodies many tropes of fetish; however, it is the genesis of a style that Christo and Jean Claude cultivate and refine.<sup>65</sup>

To continue the challenge of the common interpretation of fetish, I will distinguish the difference between a sexual fetish and material fetish. And not only that but also acknowledging the place of fetish in the art object and creative process. Lorraine Gamman in *Chocolate, Chocolate, Chocolate* (1995) distinguishes the difference between the sexual fetish and, what she calls, 'art appreciation' rather than fetishisation of or in art. She argues that the overuse of the term fetish in art and culture is making it 'virtually meaningless' (Gamman 1995 p6). Gamman suggests that the term has become a universal term to cover sexuality and the erotic in art and attempts to correct this by articulating the differentiation of sexual fetish from artistic fetish;

'A sexual fetishist replaces a potential partner with an "object" (they prefer) to achieve orgasm whereas an artist, even a "fetish artist", usually makes art objects (including those that utilise signs of sexuality) primarily to communicate or provoke a reaction' (Gamman 1995 p6).

However, convincing and relevant Gamman's argument, this research on the fetishisation of materiality is going beyond the sexual fetish. It makes explicit the connections between materiality and fetish rather than an over-emphasis of the erotic in art. Through a focus on the fetishisation of materiality, the artwork can potentially transverse both sexual fetishism and commodity fetishism. Moreover, by applying fetishisation of materiality to the genre of

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<sup>64</sup> <http://art.daimler.com/en/artwork/wrapped-woman-project-of-pennsylvania-christo-1968-2/>

<sup>65</sup> Christo and Jean Claude continue to subvert acts of fetish and power in many of their installations. For example, *Wrapped Reichstag* 1971-95

painting, it implies that fetishisation can be both the materials of the physical painting and the image.

## **2.4 Fetish as Agency**

Grosz informed my thinking as an artist and a female researcher, which motivated a reconsideration of the use of particular theoretical applications in the work. This reappraisal was paramount for the analysis of fetish in the practice and re-thinking agency for the female fetishisation of materiality. The methods of investigation started by linking object qualities to the works and juxtaposing materials of different textures and stability/fluidity, which led to thinking about vessels and porous parameters that made apparent associations of the female body as place or site. I worked with materials that linked to the object and the body: latex, leather, plastics, and used paint as a fluid rather than paint as a skin or image. The interpretation and intention of these works were tied into the agency within them.

The aspects of fetish that are key to the cultural interrogation of agency are the fetishised object that evokes power, change, or, a response in the individual, which affects how the object is utilised in the painting. Material objects are used by humans to manipulate their worlds, so the object is imbued with operational functions. The object gained agency when it is applied for specific means. To possess agency, the object must impact either the physical or mental state of humans. However, the fetishised object goes beyond what was initially intended for that object, which further gains a new function when translated into an art object. It expands beyond its original capacity, and the subject's intentions no longer restrict its possibilities.

From a hermeneutic analysis of painting, the three factors of agency I consider in this thesis are:

- artistic agency (authorship, intention)
- agency of the object (material, thingness)
- agency of the spectator (reception)



## 2.5 Artistic Agency

Duchamp, in his lecture *The Creative Act* (1957), posits artistic agency in the art coefficient as 'an arithmetical relation between the unexpressed but intended and the unintentionally expressed' (1957). Duchamp contended that the artwork could express more than what the artist intended and that there was a difference between the intention and the realisation. The coefficient is actively designed or planned by the artist; however, it cannot be totally managed. By taking from Duchamp's coefficient, I propose a connection between fetish and art-making resulting from an art coefficient. While fetishisation of materiality and creative processes sit independently from each other, I can expand or merge these notions by connecting intention and realisation through fetishisation. This application of fetish introduces or challenges a cultural interrogation of agency in the materiality of painting. The fetish rearranges the artist > object > spectator equation. The fetish can transform agency, the artist and the spectator become a combined entity where they are secondary to the object, they are active participants in the fetish process or activity.

In the theories of Elizabeth Grosz, *Art and the Animal* 2013 and *Volatile Bodies* 1993, she describes the connections between the subject and materiality's capacity to contain multiple associations and signs. In both texts, she examines social and cultural sexual connections; however, in *Art and the Animal*, she specifically connects the sexual to impulses, drives, instincts and aims by the artist in art-making. Grosz applies a model that suggests,

'Art comes from that excess in the world, in objects, in living things, which enables them to be more than they are, to give more than themselves, their material properties and possible uses, than is readily given to them' (Grosz 2013 p3).

Grosz gives agency to sexual energies, and these forces are embedded in the artistic process, this aligns to my methodological methods, and that art is made with the whole body (Frueh), my own personal fascination and obsession. Grosz suggests that art and artistic processes are beyond the psychoanalytical, that it is 'not simply for pleasure or for sexuality' (Grosz 2013 p3). She argues that 'Art is connected to sexual energies and impulses: they both come from a common impulse for more' (Grosz 2013 p3). These energies and impulses described, concern the obsessive use of drapery in my practice for over the last two decades.

The idea that the object or matter can be more than what it was is discussed through New Materialism. It suggests that materiality is both – entanglement and matter; that matter is multiple and self-organising; that matter is bound up in dynamic and shifting relationships (Barad 2007 p392). The intention of the art object in installations, or sculptural, or painted works, create dynamic and open processes for the artist, which bring in associations that continuously change or are continually becoming. The art object is activated through interaction from the subject by painting processes and representations. A critical text published in MAI: Feminism & Visual Culture, *Feminist New Materialist Practice: The Mattering of Methods* (Coleman, Page, Palmer 2019) asserts that,

'A central tenet of new materialist thinking is that 'matter' is fundamentally multiple, self-organising, dynamic and inventive, moving between nature and culture, the animated and automated, bodies and environments. In Barad's words, "matter" is "a dynamic and shifting entanglement of relations, rather than [...] a property of things" (2007: 224). Materiality is, thus, an entanglement and matter; in itself, it is always already open to, or rather entangled with, 'the Other'. And [t]his is as true for electrons as it is for brittle stars as it is for the differentially constituted human' (Barad 2007 p392).

Thinking through this assertion and concerning this research, it proposes ideas and entanglements that happen when creating and researching through an expanded practice. Through the dynamic nature of entanglement or expansion, I can bring the external matter into painting, such as the ready-made, the photograph or different fabrics and therefore, transforming the agency in the works. These ideas are developed in the subsequent discussion on fetish.

## **2.6 Agency of the Object and the Thing**

Martin Heidegger puts the *thing* in the context of being-in-the-world rather than a conceptualisation of being (1971). The thing is, therefore, related to the social context in which they are framed. It is necessary to discuss the theories of the thing and thingness to identify the hermeneutic significance of the subject-object relationship and agency. The theory of the thing (Heidegger 1971, Brown 2001) puts in place a rationale for why objects are embedded with significance and how signs associated with the object give them potency. The central figure associated with the theory of the thing is Heidegger, in *Poetry Language Thought* 1971. His theory focuses on the function of an object rather than its objectness. The

importance of this theory is that I can align it with the human-object relationships that exist in culture and art. Bill Brown in *Thing Theory* 2001 and Grosz in *The Thing* 2005 further develop Heidegger's theory. Grosz creates further realms of meaning for the thing through notions of the female. It is also worth noting that the philosophical understanding of the thing came at the same time as modernism, which was aligned with preoccupations of the material and objectness.

Heidegger sought the essence of the object or thing and its thingness, rather than taking the scientific approach of seeing matter and objectness as the space it occupies and its relationship to the world. Heidegger explored the subject-object relationship through how it functioned and its use-value. The emphasis is on the thingness, not the subject. 'The vessel's thingness does not lie at all in the material of which it consists, but in the void that holds' (Heidegger 1971 p167). Heidegger uses an analogy of a jug where he sees the pour of the jug, the outpouring aspect of the jug, as its thingness rather than the jug itself as the thing (Heidegger 1971 p169). The thing is within the void and the potential of what that void can do. Heidegger sees the giving forth of the pour as a part of the ritual of daily life and with it brings in associations of the world; earth and sky. The process of giving from the jug establishes layers of meaning and significance. This is what Heidegger saw as a thing: the activity of an object that is manifested through a process. The process of making, of looking and revealing are bound up in the art object. These activities associated with the art object are its thingness. The process that Heidegger speaks of creates a subject-object relationship where the subject constructs the function. Furthermore, the function has the potential to be distorted.

Purpose and meaning created through thingness give it authenticity, which for Heidegger was the essence of the object; that it links the body and the earth, onto and into, the object. The thing is how humans resolve and understand the relations between mind and matter, object and subject (Heidegger 1971). Heidegger links the subject to the object through function. This link has further implications for ideas of ritual, or indeed impending activity or touch, which are tropes of fetish practices — indicating that the theory of the thing can contribute to ideas of fetishisation.

Bruno Latour in *Fetish - Factish* (2011), attributes the subjects' encounter with objects and enhancing them with signs, as a fetish. It is a process of awarding the object with a belief so

to 'strike up a relationship with others' (Latour 2011 p42). It becomes essential to manipulate the thing in order for the subject to achieve something with it and to use it with others. If this were applied to the art-object, it demonstrates how the art-object generates the triad relationship of object + artist + spectator.

Extending Heidegger's theory, Grosz asserts; 'the thing, the object, or materiality is not conceived as the other, the binary double, of the subject, the self, embodiment, or consciousness, but the resource for the subjects' being and enduring' (Grosz 2005 p131). The object is embedded in the human condition. The facility of the object is again generated through activity or process, though now, the thing is essential for the subject. It is something unchanging, stable, and determinable that can be opened to temporal forces and be reinterpreted. Throughout this text, Grosz discusses the object or the real (the material real) and what it can become.

'The thing poses questions to us, questions about our needs and desires, questions above all of action: the thing is our provocation to action, and is itself the result of our action.' (Grosz 2005 p132).

According to Grosz, these are the fundamental motives of why and how a thing is created. 'fundamental processes that regulate all of life; one is natural selection, and the other is sexual selection' (Sunday Morning Interview 2005). Similar to Heidegger, the thing is matter entwined with function.

Grosz continues stating that things only exist because of the energy invested in them by humans, who invent instruments to aid living in the world (Grosz 2005 p138). The object evolves as humankind evolves. These instruments have a function, they are not just the matter that already exists, or that is ineffectual, according to both Heidegger's and Grosz' theories, the thing is productive and functional, constructive and generative. The significance of this is through the creation of 'artificial organs' (2005), the objects that enable and extend the subject's abilities.<sup>66</sup>

For Grosz, the thing or the material is open to external and temporal forces such as 'history, biology, culture, sexuality' (Grosz 2005 p5). Rather than the material being fixed or stable, it

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<sup>66</sup> The extension of the subject abilities ties into ideas discussed in Creative Strategy 1 and the section on prosthetics.

is, in fact, changeable under these forces. The significance of these temporal forces is that political or feminist interpretations can alter these states. Equally, desire and fetish are the temporalities of an event between two or more subjects or subject-object; desire and fetish are the external forces on the object and alter its state and perceived being.

Bill Brown's thorough analysis of the object-subject relation in *Thing Theory* 2001, grounds and connects the object to fetishisation in temporal and spatial contexts. This position adds to what both Heidegger and Grosz analyse in their texts; how the thing directly affects external forces. 'The time in which the thing exists' (Grosz 2005 p143), the peculiarities and desirability of the thing is subject to a moment in culture, 'different things in different scenes' (Brown 2001 p9). Brown distinguishes that each society has different needs and desires that translate through the want or need for certain things and the value that they potentially have. He frames the thing within a specific context, or society, and at a particular moment. Similarly, Grosz asserts:

'The thing is positioned or located in space only because time is implicated, only because the thing is the dramatic slowing down of movements, the atomic and molecular vibrations and forces, that frame and contextualise, and merge with alongside of other things' (Grosz 2005 p133).

The thing has purpose and process, which are durational and temporal. The thing waits for action and interaction. Brown ties in the idea of the site and where it is spatially located. Site specificity and spatial context are critical concerns in the practical element of this research. The theories of Brown, Grosz and Heidegger show the functional need and utilisation of things. These theories explain how the subject made objects more complex by a fetishisation of the object. The object becomes laden with associations, signs, and significance.

An example of fetishised objects within art can be seen in the work of Cathy de Monchaux. Her work in the 1990s had a more overtly sexualised and bodily aesthetic than her recent work; however, de Monchaux is an important reference for the fetishisation of materiality. Her sculptural wall-based objects embody abject and feminised undertones. De Monchaux plays with opposing materials and textures to parallel desire/repulsion, excess/restraint and life/death. Her choice of materials and their juxtapositions imbue connotations and significance of fetish through the contrasting sensory matter. She puts steel and brass with velvets and leather. Sharp and spikey edges are in direct contact with cushioned and soft

forms. The strong sexuality of her work is evident in the seduction and sensuality of forms and textures.

'Obviously, in one way [my work] is about the sexual desires that aren't to do with reality or what you'd really like to do. I'm using sexual imagery as a metaphor for that sort of fantastic possibility' (de Monchaux, Viso 2000).

De Monchaux creates a fantastical world through her work to deal with female desire and provocations. 'Materials here become highly charged: leather, pink and faded evokes the flesh; metals, often spikey and rusted, contain and constrict; lead, dull and heavy, evokes mortality' (Barnett 1998 p7). These works explore and test 'the boundaries of the body' (Barnett 1998 p10), where ideas of inside/outside are pierced, slashed and tied.

The theories of the thing demonstrate connections from the subject to the object, which is not merely a psychological replacement for a perceived lack. The object is needed for human survival, and they function to sustain society and culture. Whereas the thing transforms through functions that are placed on it by a subject and it becomes something other than its original structure. The function reveals the relations between body and object and how these objects perform. This theory explains how objects come from being mere materialisations to having a metaphysical presence: 'the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idols, and totems' (Brown 2001 p5). Demonstrating that the function can become the agency that expands painting.

The subject transfers energy onto an object. Through a fetishistic activity such as viewing or engagement, the function and use of the object are magnified or transformed. The object's materiality, texture, construction and appearance become scrutinised when interrogated through ideas of fetishisation.

## **2.7 Agency of the Spectator**

Rancière, in *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009), investigates the role of the spectator, principally the spectator within the context of the theatre, which he then applies elsewhere in an art exhibition context. He initially distinguishes the conventional role put in place by Plato as a passive relationship from the performers to the spectator. Rancière develops from this with describing two types of assembly of an audience, one the passive audience that is

watching the theatre and the other type of audience that is both viewer and participant (Rancière 2009 p4).

Throughout the text, Rancière gives multiple perspectives of these scenarios of spectatorship and the intellectual understanding of observing; the ignorant schoolmaster, or the workers in a factory (2009 p1 – 19). From these ideas, he develops a third perspective, one that is uncontrollable as it is unique to the individual, his or her own pre-existing knowledge. Crucially, it is not a class-specific perspective but an individual's perspective, which means they retain their personal opinion. He thinks that there is no such thing as a uniform collective and that the emancipation is in the individual's interpretation (Rancière 2009 p15). These are important observations to consider when exploring the painting as installation and the externality of painting with the complexity of an audience.

Rancière discusses a post-medium condition that he divides into three situations. These are in terms of a 'hybridisation' (Rancière and Elliott 2009 p21) of mediums or cross-discipline of mediums. Firstly, he quickly dismisses the consumer serving egoist artist. Secondly, he refers negatively to this crossing of disciplines, as it 'leads to a different form of stultification, which uses the blurring of boundaries and the confusion of roles to enhance the effect of the performance without questioning its principles' (Rancière and Elliott 2009 p21). However, in the third situation, he accounts for a 'new intellectual adventure' (Rancière and Elliott 2009 p22) put in place by the artist in creating a new context for what the spectator may already be familiar. The emancipation is that the spectator is an already developed intellectual. I agree with this assertion, as I have described through Berger (1972) and Gilbert-Rolfe (1998), the audience has a certain level of visual literacy and agency. The spectator or audience is familiar with looking within or outside a frame, and they are familiar with being both active and passive participants.

## **2.8 Fetishising Painting**

The fetishisation of materiality is an active agent in developing ideas of painting as object and painting's objecthood.<sup>67</sup> The context for these ideas emerged during the time of

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<sup>67</sup> Painting as an object is explained in detail in the Context section at the beginning of this dissertation.

modernism, particularly minimalism, and the writings of Greenberg (1960), Judd (1965) and Fried (1967). However, incorporating the fetishisation of the object (in this case, painting) surpasses the modernist painter's commitment to the pure form and the object as an object. As this research shows, the object, even when minimal, is bound up in desire, obsession and action.<sup>68</sup>

I would argue that the modernists' singular focus on the objectness and surface of the painting suggests or imbues connotations of fetishisation. Greenberg's emphasis on the flatness of painting and the modernist's move to 'signify the enduring presence of flatness' (Greenberg 1960 p87) directly connects material and surface with what they can become. The inescapable presence of the surface meant that attention was brought to the surface rather than the image portrayed. This rationale of modernist painting, the literalness and focus on the surface, creates a dialogue between subject and object with the physical sensations of the surface. There is an elevation of the painting as object, through this enduring focus on the surface.

Furthermore, not only can Greenberg's writings be considered as a fetishisation of the surface, but they can also be regarded as fetish in the broader sense. I suggest that Greenberg is fetishising the art object by applying it with value and commodification. In several of Greenberg's essays (1960, 1964), he emphatically champions the worth of modernist painting. The application of value could be interpreted as the value having a function in the art object, and with this research, the fetishised art object has both economical and critical value. Thereby, the financial value becomes an operative function of fetish.

Fetish implies that it complicates the material, physically through manipulation and psychologically; this is a further detachment of the minimalist object, which defined itself as free of material complications. However, complications can be seen to enrich the aesthetic, to deepen the understanding and reinforce the conceptual grounding of an artwork.

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<sup>68</sup> In the essay entitled *Survey* (2000), James Meyer argues that 'there was no underlying meaning to things, no truth apart from one's immediate encounter with empirical reality' (Meyer 2010 p25). Meyer sums up minimalism as it 'not alluding to anything beyond its literal presence' (Meyer 2010 p15). This research is opposing these ideas as it argues that the object is embedded with more associations than its literalness.



The word complication is an additive word, containing 'pli' meaning to fold<sup>69</sup>, where an existing thing is increased, added to, or made more complex. Though there are apparent differences between the minimalist or modernist painting and material fetishisation, they are still inextricably linked through the focus on the surface, literalness, value and commodification. The parameters that modernism set in place, the importance of defining conditions and orientating painting as an object, are precisely those that emphasise its connection to the fetishised object. The fetishised object is specific and defined, literal to the point of compulsion. The sections that follow establish how a thing gains a metaphysical association and what happens to a painting when it extends out into other networks.<sup>70</sup>

Thinking about the works of Christo, I was interested in how it sat in dialogue with my work practice at the time of researching these. Though there are similarities in the application of folds as a means of investigating material, I further explored materiality as a fetish mechanism and process. It led to a range of productive artistic methods and materials, these involved ropes and the act of bondage, latex, plastics and leathers. The material repertoire that grew is indexical of those associated with the body and skin, including silk, satin and velvets which are smooth, shiny and soft.<sup>71</sup>

## **2.9 Fetishisation in Abjection, Fantasy and Ugliness**

Three modes of fetishising materiality are abject, fantasy and ugliness. These modes create new subversive ways of seeing, as I attempt to represent the feminine in alternative material situations by addressing and disturbing negative associations of female fetish and the body. Therefore, implying that abject, sexualised, and related forms of fetishisation have agency in the practical element of this research.

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<sup>69</sup> 'From Latin complicat- 'folded together', from the verb complicare, from com- 'together' + plicare 'to fold'. Oxford Dictionary online <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/complicate> Accessed 10/6/17

<sup>70</sup>David Joselit in his essay *Painting Beside Itself* 2009 discusses 'transitive painting' a term he devised to describe painting that 'invents forms and structures whose purpose is to demonstrate that once an object enters a network, it can never fully be stilled, but subjected to different material states and speeds of circulation' (Joselit 2009 p132). This is further discussed in the section *Painting as Object*.

<sup>71</sup> Please refer to section Creative Strategy 2 in portfolio and sketchbook.

The term abject is frequently used to reference matter that is expelled from the body. A key text in defining the abject is Julia Kristeva's seminal essay *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* 1980. Kristeva connects the female body to purity and defilement. Abjection is rooted in this defilement and can be defined as the feeling of disgust in a subject on seeing bodily secretions, waste, blood and even the dead body. Her theory offered a compelling framework for my practice to respond to, which I tested through oil paint and alternative materials that are outside the form of painting and could challenge the feeling of disgust in the human psyche.

Grosz suggests that the abject is,

'Detachable, separable parts of the body – urine, faeces, saliva, sperm, blood, vomit, hair, nails, skin – retain something of the cathexis and value of a body part even when they are separated from the body. There is still something of the subject bound up in them – which is why they are objects of disgust, loathing, and repulsion as well as envy and desire. They remain (peripheral, removable) parts of the body image, magically linked to the body' (Grosz 1994 p81).

The abject is neither subject nor object but a bit of both. It is, at the same time, inside and outside. Grosz places the body as central to understanding subjective experiences so that abjection can explain individual anthropological, social and psychological experiences (Grosz 1994). This correlation between the abject, the choice of materials and how they are used shaped the practical outputs. The *Fabricating Fantasy* series (2019), attest to the fetishisation of material as a conduit for the production of the works, where the real or the physical is purposefully utilised within the installations. The materials have a perceived or anticipated function and are imbued other sensory and sensual connotations through juxtapositions and orchestrated scenarios.

To subvert further the ideas of abjection, I can look to thoughts of the *ugly*. It is not in opposition to beauty and not meant in a repulsive or disgusting sense. Ugly hinges on the uncomfortable. Concerning painting, the aesthetic and formal decisions sit on a line where they are not beautiful and not ugly but are of both.

Mark Cousins' *The Ugly* (1994) is useful for exploring aesthetics within a painting and as a method of the process for painting. Here, Cousins writes that beauty is connected to purity and truth; an emphasis also asserted by Umberto Eco in *On Ugliness* (2007). Rather than

stating that ugly is the direct opposition to beauty, he distinguishes it by what it is not; not pure, not truthful. Cousins describes ugly as not the opposite of beauty but as a transforming or changing entity. He acknowledges an element or part of a process that should not be there, something other than, that is the ugly. It is this interruption that contaminates a space or a thing and grows within it. For this, he uses the example of dirt. Dirt is only dirt because it is in the wrong place (Cousins 1994 p63). Adrian Searle associates 'purity and self-containment' with the 'charade' of painting (Searle 1994 p14), thereby challenging beauty as something pure. Searle challenges the assumptions embedded within a painting's surface.

Umberto Eco in *On Ugliness* (2007) helps to contextualise ideas on what the ugly can mean in art,

'Beauty and ugliness are defined with reference to a 'specific' model – and the notion of species can be extended from men to all things, as Plato does in *The Republic*, by agreeing to define as beautiful a pot made according to the correct rules of art, or as Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Teologica*, 1, 39, 8)<sup>72</sup> does by stating that beauty is the result not only of due proportion, brightness or clarity but also of integrity – hence an object (be it a human body, a tree, or a vase) must have all the characteristics that its form has imposed upon the material [...] Consequently, the label 'ugly' was ruthlessly applied to freaks of nature, often mercilessly portrayed by artists. The same holds for those hybrids of the animal kingdom whose appearance was an infelicitous blend of two different species' (Eco 2007 p15).

These initial thoughts by Eco ground the ideas of how, in this project, concepts of the ugly can be teased out. Where it is not a direct opposite to beauty and rather than associate it with a negative, instead it could be thought of as re-articulation or expression or interpretation of a given or established convention. This interpretation would enable or suggest a more positive use of ugliness and open a way for it to be generative. Once this is established, it enables positive transformation. These assertions can take the shape of a hybrid. It is a form that can be constructive and affirmative, as ugly – by not being an opposition, but, a re-expression or alternative to a given set of rules, as two things or ideas come together, established relative to individual societies and cultures.

Ultimately, the fetish relies on the adherence and transitive action of the subject on the object. The subject exerts a force that establishes the object as the conductor of energy imagined or conjured up by the subject. The energy, whether of representational intent or effect or those

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<sup>72</sup> Eco's referencing.

of the tropes of fetish, such as desire, erotic or obsessive, transverse the body onto the object. The energies establish a fetishised relationship to the object, one of ritualism, consumption and temporality. These notions are within the paradigms of fetishism and organised for scopophilic and voyeuristic means. In the 1950s Harold Rosenberg in describing American Action Painters said that 'what was to go on the canvas was not a picture but an event' (Rosenberg 1952 p22). He described the canvas as an 'arena in which to act'. The artist 'went up to [the canvas] with material in his hand to do something to that other piece of material in front of him. The image would be the result of this encounter' (Rosenberg 1952 p23). This idea opposed certain ideas by Greenberg on aesthetic formalism, where he thought the trace of the event was removed or lost in the completeness or totality of the surface (1960).<sup>73</sup>

As described by Rosenberg in 1952, the process of painting and its relation to the artist may be a fetishised activity. The relationship of the fetish to painting is two-fold, where it is both representing a fetishised object and fetishising the process of the act of making. This layering of actions, of the process and then the outcome for an audience, is explored in Paul McCarthy's *The Painter* (1995).

McCarthy works with the materials and processes that imbue fetishistic logic, processes and rituals through the lens of an artist painter. His performance is violent, comical, and at times sexual. The visual language employed by McCarthy is saturated with suggestive materiality. Moreover, he uses prosthetics to extend his body and as tools to paint. Within this are ideas of the ritualistic and sadistic consumption (consumption), which are embedded within it the corporal and bodily functions. The parody continues through his interactions with collectors and his gallerist. McCarthy is playing with ideas of the fetish, through fetishising the paint, the process of painting, the encounters with people who commodify art, authority, and the personal emotions of the artist. Though these aspects of the artist and his life are exaggerated and satirical, McCarthy is highlighting fetishes associated with painting, and the networks that painting extends into, such as commercial, sexual, food-based themes and popular culture. McCarthy fetishes the materiality of paint through associating and combining it with food, such as ketchup and mayonnaise. He tries consuming and lathering the mixture. Sexual undertones are implied through the eroticisation of the paint. The familiar reference-points of

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<sup>73</sup> However, it could be argued that Jackson Pollock, for instance, would crossover both conceptualisations as his process was performative yet the finished image was complete.

a studio and materials create an environment that is at once intimate but simultaneously threatening and unnerving. Grosz suggests that sexuality is,

'excessive, redundant, and superfluous in its languid and fervent overachieving. It always seeks more than it needs, performs excessive actions, and can draw any object, any fantasy, any number of subjects and combinations of their organs, into its circuits of pleasure' (Grosz 1994 p viii).

These concepts generate the experience of the fetish; McCarthy is performing through materials that could be desirable and yet repulsed.<sup>74</sup>

Using film allows the interrogation of painting through another medium and offers a different perspective for examining concepts within the work. Attributes formerly of painting: the metaphorical, hierarchy of materials and the authority of structure, are no longer constrained as painting expands and becomes interrogated through other mediums. The fetishisation of materiality has become more than an aesthetic; it is complex, rarefied and multifaceted.

This research project proposes strategies for expanding painting. This rationale is potentially a position that means tropes of fetish, like desire, can come into painting and be transformative. The tropes are something external to painting that can generate a 'strength' or interest within an artwork. These can be brought in through representations of drapery or the materiality. For Cousins, the element that throws a work of art off balance is the element that strengthens it. Trying to overcome the ugly is what adds power to the piece (Cousins 1994 p61).

The development of the practice throughout this project has aimed to challenge assumptions in painting, especially regarding subject-matter and materiality. I will discuss two practical outputs, one is the pocket experiments, which were never exhibited, and second is the *Fabricating Fantasy* series. This series stimulates the discussion on hybridity through the incorporation of multimedia. I do this through the painting of fabric, the photograph of the painting in an alternative situation, and pedestal that supports the painting. The placing together of the three formats asks questions of hybridity in painting. The presence of the ready-made or real objects makes the other media obsolete, as, according to Cousins, the truth is in the real, whereas the other two formats are mere reproductions

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<sup>74</sup> Ideas of repulsion are discussed further in Creative Strategy 3.

## 2.10 Pockets, Containers, and Vessels

The forthcoming ideas will explore the pocket as a model of collaboration and incorporation. These ideas utilise the theories of Derrida (2001) and Berger (1972) and propose a situation where the assimilation into painting by something external or foreign, forms alternative hybrids and multiplicities. The pocket was a way of bringing materiality back into the work after using a reductive approach to minimise the materiality in Creative Strategy 1. This proposition contrasts the prosthetic as it is considering an external object or concept that is integrated or assimilated within a painting and produces a different set of outcomes for the physical and conceptual concerns of painting. Pockets or containers amplify the possibilities of the material incorporation.

Berger, through his collection of essays in *The Shape of a Pocket* (2001), collates ideas of interiority and exteriority in painting. The interior, in this case, being the pictorial and the exterior being that which lies outside of the frame. In many instances in the essays, 'outside of the frame' is the relationship between the artist and the object to be painted. Berger's earlier ideas of painting from *Ways of Seeing* (1972) believed the viewer brought their own set of experiences to viewing a painting and also looks in and through the pictorial image. These more recent essays offer us an alternative to viewing painting and how it is constructed; that the artist and the object that is painted or represented are in collaboration.

Berger defines the pocket as being '...a pocket of resistance. A pocket is formed when two or more people come together in agreement.' And at the exchanges between the two 'strengthen their conviction' (Berger 2001 cover page) The agreement, in this case, is the collaboration between artist and object. Rather than the artist solely in the act of representing or mimicking on the canvas, the artist has an encounter with the object, and it is revealed through paint. In the essay *Steps Towards a Small Theory of the Visible*, Berger describes, 'the impulse to paint comes neither from observation nor from the soul (which is probably blind) but from an encounter: the encounter between painter and model – even if the model is a mountain or a shelf of empty medicine bottles' (Berger 2001 p15). This encounter is further described as the artist receiving, that the artist is giving form to what they receive from the object (Berger 2001 p18).

This idea is the pocket: the collaboration between the object and the artist.

Berger further describes the moment when the object is present in the painting, and he calls this 'thereness' (Berger 2001 p 77). The artist has searched for the intrinsic nature of the object. The ramification of creating this thereness is when the painting is finished, the object loses something from being painted, there is an exchange, and the painting gains some of the essences of the original object, which is thingness of an object, its individualising difference, that is lost in the exchange. Thingness becomes thereness in the relations of being, or in the process of searching, and the collaboration between the thing drawn and the artist. Berger simply describes this notion in his essay *Degas*, where he speaks of the necessities and interests of Degas in making work, 'The apogee point for him [Degas] was when the drawn entered the drawing when the sculpted passed into the sculpture' (Berger 2001 p65). The real transitioned into the represented, and the external became integrated. Berger thought that this is the point that interested the artist and asserted that this is only understood when in the act of drawing; 'I can't explain how the drawn enters the drawing. I only know that it does. One gets closest to understanding this when actually drawing' (Berger 2001 p65).

Collaboration is not the only type of pocket that can enable a transformation of form and the potential of hybridity. Derrida in *The Work of Mourning* (2001) has an account of a pocket, which is unrelated to painting, yet this model for mourning can be appropriated as a proposal for a body to incorporate some-thing that exists outside of the body. In turn, this can extend the discourse on expanded painting practices.

Derrida mentions the pocket as a comparison to the incorporation that happens while mourning the death of a loved one. Derrida suggested that the person mourning assimilates or incorporates the dead into their own body. When this happens, the living-body creates a pocket within itself to accommodate the nature of the person passed. Derrida's ideas are interpreted as bodily digestion of something foreign to it. Whereas a painting cannot physically digest a foreign object, it can absorb or assimilate. It can seek to preserve or contain the other. However, in doing so, it will inevitably lose something of itself and the bodily host. 'Incorporation may [...] entail a greater fidelity to the otherness of the other' (Wortham 2010 p229). This is evident in some processes of painting, for example, staining. The canvas can take on the properties of something foreign to it, such as sizing, or it can absorb pigment and colour. The features of the other materials change the host (canvas), and it hybridises. This exchange that involves each component losing some of its essences was

evident also in prosthetics. The hybridising of material inevitably leads to each element, losing some of its essence or nature.

Evidence of incorporating or assimilating can be seen in the work by Simon Callery where the canvas absorbs the pigments. The canvas is untreated/unprimed/raw so it can absorb the mixture thoroughly. The materiality is composed of the distemper; a composition of rabbit skin glue and pigment. The distempered canvas is the pocket. Rather than the colour sitting on a surface or skin, the colour is soaked into the canvas. This process of assimilation is further amplified in the project *Streatham Project 2016* where he drags canvas through the streets of Streatham and by doing so, the city is physically absorbed into the canvas. The result is a manipulated form that holds within its structure the pigment and the detritus of the city. These paintings are not windows into another world through an image, they are material pockets of evidence of process and place.

## **2.11 On Practice**

The Creative Strategies have different philosophical investigations that in turn, create differences between the artworks and treatment of materiality, from reductive to psychoanalytical, to politicised and internal, where each one leads to transformation. Key to these material investigations was the physical handling of materials, through the experimentation and manipulation, I was able to test the limitations of the frame and support. This was in-line with the theoretical enquiry. The double articulation between theory and practice happened in a non-linear manner, where the practical often occurred in blocks of time in mini-residencies.

This section considers the material relationships of the interior and exterior concerns of painting. The ideas reconcile alternative methods of process, whereas, in Creative Strategy 1, the prosthetics were an extension, and here, the pocket is the container, neither notion is a conventional form. These ideas augment and manipulate the theory, but, in doing so, create a discourse for a re-articulation of framing painting. The notions put forward in this text question the interior and exterior spaces of painting, the theoretical space as well as the physical space. The pocket as a container could be seen as the subject in the image, the pictorial surface, made up of narrative and gesture. However, by including Berger (2001) and



Derrida (2001), the potential of what the pocket can mean in painting opens up and proposes an alternative.

These experiments are pockets, or containers, or vessels, that contain liquid paint. They are embedded in notions of the fetishisation of materiality. The materials that I experimented with are leathers, latex, pillows, harnesses made from wood or rope, and paint. Paint was used, not for its ability to be manipulated into an image, but for its elementary capacity as a liquid. These artworks tried to hold the liquid, but it flowed and seeped through its seams and boundaries. The containers and materials continued to perform after being filled with paint. Though a temporary action, until the paint dried.

The material approach of these works brings into question the materiality of the medium and its spatial dynamic by questioning the limitations of the medium and critiquing the materials of painting. Its physical constraints acknowledge the works' structural potential; however, the paint transgresses these and creates new limits.





Work in Progress 2017  
Pocket experiments

## 2.12 Fabricating Fantasy Series

This series of artworks<sup>75</sup> consider the role of fantasy in fetishistic processes, whilst also, consolidating the research to date by incorporating ideas of site, framing, materiality, expanded painting and drapery. The works were created while on a research placement at Hospitalfield, which provided an opportunity to work within the decorative Arts and Crafts house<sup>76</sup>. This inspired and drove the research to move away from a reductive approach<sup>77</sup> and to embrace fetishistic processes and ideas. Using the house as a backdrop and context for the works, let me develop fantastical scenarios with paintings and installations. The scenarios led to thinking about narrative, and the fetish role-play, so I let the decoration, colour, and interior influence and seep into the artworks. A crucial moment in this work was

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<sup>75</sup> Please refer to portfolio p36 – 55 and sketchbook p44-65.

<sup>76</sup> Through January to June 2018, I had a research placement as Programme Researcher in Hospitalfield. This placement was supported through the Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities Doctoral Internship Programme. These internships aimed to connect the research skills developed by PhD's with complementary organisations so to gain professional experience. The benefit of the placement in a thriving art centre meant that I could avail myself of the studio and creative energy of the resident artists.

<sup>77</sup> The reductive approach is explained in *Creative Strategy 1*.

acknowledging and interpreting the Mannoni phrase 'I know very well, but nevertheless...' to understand that the fetishist does not feel remorse or guilt for their actions. The fetishist enjoys the fetish. Embracing the unapologetic enjoyment of the activities, materials and processes of the fetish was liberating for the practice. I responded to this statement by adopting themes and materials that explored themes of fetishisation: abjection, adornment, abundance, colour, spectacle and immersive fantastical environments.

The *Fabricating Fantasy* series begins to test or challenge the impact of external constructs on the internal (painting) and the impact of a conventionally internal medium on the external. The artworks do this through the fragmentation of the physical painting and the implementation of multiple parameters within the work. Their parameters varied from initial painting to site of installation, to photograph, and to its exhibition in a gallery setting.

Joanna Frueh's idea that we make art with our whole body (1996), as mentioned earlier in the *Methodology*, is key to understanding the premise for these works. As previously stated, Hospitalfield House was hugely inspirational for this work and the experience of living there for six months shaped how I went about making these pieces. The house was consistently cold, unsettling and remote; the work I made was in opposition to those feelings. Not only was the house physically affecting my body and emotions, but it also formed the fundamental aesthetics of the works. My interest in drapery, from before the PhD began, was re-ignited on witnessing the embellishment and decoration of the textiles within the house.

The creative outputs of this research demonstrate Joselit's theory; the painting enters into social and cultural networks that surround it and thus transform its meaning.<sup>78</sup> This indicates that the networks that the *Fabricating Fantasy* series connects with are architectural, spatial, historical and fetishistic. The paintings photographed in Hospitalfield House link the work to the site and architecture of the house. They bring attention to different social structures and the historical roles of women. Patrick Allan, an artist, and Elizabeth Fraser, who was the heir to the house, left the estate to support artists and art education. While I was undertaking a research residency there, I thought about Elizabeth Allan Fraser and the women artists who have lived and worked in the house. This consideration also led to investigating the class divide evidenced in the architecture of the house – workers quarters versus homeowners' quarters, and class divide between artists who could take up such an opportunity to work

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<sup>78</sup> Please refer to the *Fabricating Fantasy* series (2019)

there and those who could not. I photographed the paintings in domestic situations, which are explored further in the sketchbook. These situations inform the finished artworks. Their installation also references interior architecture while suggesting femininity and fetishisation of colours and fabrics – satin, velvet and leather wallpaper. The paintings comprise of multiple states: paintings, photographs, furniture, wall installations, and drapery.

The feminist autoethnographic position of analysing personal experience to understand the broader cultural experience meant that through the personal experience of living and working in the house and its grounds, I was able to respond physically and emotionally through the work. By highlighting the mundane and everyday domestic settings, I felt the work could connect with the spaces of labour, being and leisure. These considerations prompted the manipulated furniture supports as a kind of provocation to feminised forms and means of provision. The objects were elevated in meaning and purpose by these considerations and their function as art objects that challenged the space of painting, whilst imbuing feminist methods, therefore challenging the agency of the object.

These works extrapolate ideas of fetish from the fabrics whilst engaging with extended media of painting and other disciplines. These media pushed the boundaries of painting, through photography, installation and sculpture within my practice. The paintings on gesso panels further my explorations into painting as object. These panels compress the idea of skeleton and skin (Gilbert-Rolfe 2012), as the skin and support are one. By using this format, it meant that I would need to find alternative prosthetics or armatures to support the work and alternative ways of exploring the inside and outside to what had gone before.

### **2.13 Red/Abject 2018**

The first painting *Red/Abject* 2018 references Kristeva's (1980) definition of abject and the association of the object to the female body. It emphasises abjectness is in its rejection of the conventional form and its discarded condition, where the boundary of the inside and the outside is ill-defined, and borders are faint. The artwork could be a fragment that was separated from a body. Placing it within the context of the house exaggerated its dismissive appearance when compared to the surrounding gold-framed 1900s portraits. Thereupon, the painting in its simplicity revealed opposition.





Red/Abject 2018  
Giclee Print and Painting installation  
Dimensions variable



Red/Abject  
Giclee Print 40 x 60cm



Red/Abject Detail

Once the painting was photographed, I thought about its display within a gallery setting and the ways in which the painting could exist alongside a photograph of itself. Not only by being similar to Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* 1965, where the work highlights the conceptual relationship between the language, visual and referent, I wanted this work to refer to itself and also to ideas of the abjection of self,

'The abjection of self would be the culminating form of that experience of the subject to which it is revealed that all its objects are based merely on the inaugural loss that laid the foundations of its own being. There is nothing like the abjection of self to show that all abjection is in fact recognition of the want on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded' (Kristeva 1980 p5).

I questioned the abjection of self to instigate ideas about loss and want, how this could be revealed within this artwork, and how the final installation of the piece could reflect that. I supported the painting with a gold velvet cushion and installed it on a plinth. The free-standing painting gained physically and spatially.

## 2.14 Fabricating Fantasy: Umbrella Stand Scenario and Fabricating Fantasy: Fireplace Scenario

The subsequent works in this series continued with tropes of fetishisation: abjection, rejection, and the duality of the inside and the outside. The works represented fantastical scenarios that I was constructing around the house. The following *Fabricating Fantasy: Umbrella Stand Scenario* and *Fabricating Fantasy: Fireplace Scenario* developed from working intensively within the house. Crucially the feminist method of experience-in-practice became increasingly important, as it generated meaning by challenging patriarchal positions by implementing theories on abjection. Grosz states that,

'A completely different set of perspectives – this time based on women's specificities, experiences, positions, rather than those of men, who hide themselves and their specificities under the banner of some universal humanity – is possible and needs to be explored' (1994 xi).

These works allow for a deeper consideration of female perspectives, through the idea of place, labour and fetishisation of material.



Fabricating Fantasy: Umbrella Stand Scenario  
Giclee Print 40 x 60cm  
Painting structure 130 x 110cm





Fabricating Fantasy: Umbrella Stand Scenario  
Giclee Print 40 x 60cm

The significant difference between these two works and the earlier *Red/Abject* was that the panels were made specifically to fit into spaces and situations within the house. This shift in form enabled the paintings to merge into their spaces. As referenced in *Creative Strategy 1* and ideas by Miwon Kwon (2004), the panels are site determined and shaped by the physicality of the site. Different experiments are shown in the sketchbook, where I explored scenarios where the panels could fit. The methods that emerged to achieve this enquiry were:

1. Photographing domestic places in the house and taking measurements for potential sites to install the paintings.

2. I chose fabrics to complement the decoration in the house. I wanted the works to blend in and look like they belong, however, their impracticality and awkwardness would render them useless and be a hindrance to day-to-day life; one blocked the fireplace one sits on an umbrella stand, another hung on a door handle. In doing so, they brought attention to the artworks and their function. The aim was to mimic vibrant and luscious decoration through the materiality and fabrics chosen. The paintings, when installed in the house, absorbed or became part of its surroundings. The house retains much of its original features; hand-carved wood, hand-printed leather wallpaper, and hand-woven textiles. I wanted to connect to these crafts and the expertise of the makers by creating additions to the rooms. The intricate



details and choice of materials reflect my interest in the fetishisation of materiality.

3. I worked out the form of the drapery and cutting the panel into the same shape, so it represents the shape of the segments of folds and fabric.

4. Once painted, I returned to the house to fit and document the painting in-situ.

5. After photographing and documenting the paintings, I brought the pieces back to the studio and made prosthetics to enable the works to stand alone and confront the space by physically being in it. This position is a way of challenging how the painting exists in an environment. The prosthetics resemble furniture and the domestic scene. Nevertheless, by being useless as a functional piece of furniture, as they are not sturdy enough to support a person, I challenged the objectness and function of the piece.

6. The result was painting hybrids and photographs, which were installed together for exhibition and evaluation.



Fabricating Fantasy; Fireplace Scenario 2019  
Giclee Print 40x60cm  
Painting installation dimensions variable.  
(Sculpture 120x40x30cm)



Fabricating Fantasy: Fireplace Scenario 2019  
Detail



Fabricating Fantasy: Fireplace Scenario  
Giclee Print 40 x 60cm

The three-dimensional is emphasised in these works, through the physicality and the photographic document of the painting. This emphasises that the physicality allows the painting to enter into new networks through its spatial considerations. The transitivity that the paintings entered were domestic, historical and societal networks (Joselit 2002). Furthermore, by utilising Kristeva's idea that the abject is the 'border of my condition as a living being' (Kristeva 1982 p3) and the force in-between being and non-being, it created a new context for the works where its frames or boundaries are multiplied. By relating it to the abject and transitivity, it describes the forces between 'structural and political acts of inclusion/exclusion which establish the foundations of social existence' (Tyler 2009 p79). This conceptual framing indicates ideas by Grosz that the point of the frame is where spatial and social concerns can be challenged (Grosz 1994, 2001). In the *Fabricating Fantasy* series, the painting's frame is no longer an edge or boundary; it is now the expanded space and has entered into new cultural and social conditions. The inference that can be drawn from this is that paintings are rhizomatic maps (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), there is not one singular entry point into the artworks, but they are a series of connections between history, sociology and painting.

These three works I see as a turning point in the practice, where the culmination of the research was emerging and changing, which evidenced the double articulation of the written and practical examinations.

## **2.15 Conclusion**

This Creative Strategy demonstrates how the fetishisation of materiality can challenge the agency in painting through a series of discussions around agency, materiality and fetishistic approaches. These narratives complement the practical explorations, which was profoundly realised by the double articulation of theory and practice and an intensive investigation into material compositions, conditions and performances. This enquiry amounted in the *Fabricating Fantasy Series* where it explored fetish attributes of fantasy and material conduits.

The findings suggest that the art coefficient creates a gap between intention and realisation, where notions of fetish can enter the narrative and challenge agency in the artwork, therefore, opening up possibilities for a cultural critique of female fetishism and materiality.

Moreover, fetishism creates a material ontology that challenges perceived thoughts relating to subjected matter and objecthood in painting's discourse. From positioning feminist autoethnographic and empirical methods, I demonstrate how these subjective and cultural lenses can transform ideas of space and material in painting. The significant transformation is that fetish changes the cultural re-interrogation of the agency. The agency is shown to shift from:

Artistic agency > agency of object > agency of spectator

to:

Agency of fetishised object > artistic + spectator

My definition of fetishisation of materiality challenges agency in the art object by allowing the human psyche to give superfluous meaning and power so as to accommodate fantasies and aspirations in the object. The object becomes the conductor of energy that transverses the body, establishing a fetishised relationship between subject and object. By imbuing notions of fetish onto the object, it elevated the objects' agency. The subject's intention to transfer energy to an object through processes of fetish, create and magnify the object's capacity. The agency of fetish is that it embodies a capacity for the materials to be excessive, sensual and abject meaning the objects materiality, texture, construction, and appearance become scrutinised and transformed when interrogated through ideas of fetish. These ideas generated a productive response in the studio, where I strove to enjoy the fetish. Keeping to its ethos, where the person is unapologetic for the use and transformation of materials, it allowed me to embrace the materiality of the fabrics and paints.

Essential to this argument was the investigation into the object's relationship to the subject, which is explored through ideas of the *thing*. Situating Heidegger alongside Grosz allowed considerations of the thing that is embedded with significance; it gives objects potency and furthers connections to the subject. These discussions show Grosz' theory as generative and useful to my arts practice. Following on from these ideas and the link to painting, I brought in ideas from Joselit and how these objects exist within networks. These networks are pertinent when considering the networks of material fetish, the connections to the subject and the tropes of fetish, and the potential spaces in which painting can extend.

Furthermore, the study reveals my personal impulses to challenge preconceived notions of fetish through disturbing and rearticulating ideas connected to the female, in particular, abject, fantasy and ugly. By twisting and transforming these ideas, through material juxtapositions, representations and different media, the agency for transformation are shown in the matter of the works.

The contribution of Creative Strategy 2 is in the articulation of the agency of the fetishisation of materiality in challenging prescribed ideas around relationships between subject and object, or, body and materiality. This conceptualisation impacts on contemporary painting by proposing a new approach to understanding materials.

### **Creative Strategy 3: One Way to Become Too Fat**

### 3.1 Introduction

In *Creative Strategy 3*, I investigate the transformative possibilities of drapery in painting through ideas of multiplicity<sup>79</sup>. The subject of drapery, by its very condition, is multiplicitous. The swathes of fabric and intricacies of its folds can be signifiers for historical, societal and gendered associations and connotations. Therefore, it is a subject in painting that can assimilate ideas of excess and expose many of these interpretations whilst expanding the discourse of the internal in contemporary painting. In this section, I will propose ways for drapery and its representation, to enable transformation in an expanded practice. The research question asks: *how can the subject of drapery be transformative in expanded painting practices?*

To achieve this aim, I will:

- 1) Define and contextualise the drape in painting.
- 2) Apply a theoretical framework which engages with concepts of transformation and multiplicity from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) and Elizabeth Grosz (2005). Rhizomatic theory is applied as a method for understanding the connections between external and dynamic expansions in painting and the painted surface.
- 3) Analyse the work of Alison Watt and demonstrate the transformation of the internal and pictorial, through feminist methods and the politicised significance of drapery as a feminised object.
- 4) Position the drape as the object of desire with multiple and generative potentials.
- 5) Discuss Ulla von Brandenburg and the incorporation of the real drape.
- 6) Demonstrate ideas of the transformative possibilities of drapery and desire in my practice concerning this Creative Strategy.

Creative Strategy 3 interweaves ideas of fetishisation from Creative Strategy 2, whilst extending them through a different practical lens. I continue with the feminist methods developed previously to formulate an analysis of drapery as an object of desire. Following on, I synthesise these ideas to generate transformations in painting, including potential hybrid entities and the move from the pictorial surface to the real object. The ideas put forward by

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<sup>79</sup> Please refer to portfolio p49-58 and sketchbook p67-87.

this Creative Strategy, culminate in a discussion on the practice, which is further evidenced in the portfolio and sketchbook.

As this Creative Strategy will show, drapery is more than a depiction of folds, it is a social and cultural signifier in western visual language that has a lengthy and captivating presence within painting and sculpture<sup>80</sup>. It is the principal preoccupation of my practice because of its conceptual, cultural and political significance, as well as, being a fascinating object to paint. In this section, I will argue that as subject matter, it can capitalise on the socio-political associations, as well as, the signs of desire, to transform agency, intent and interpretation in expanded painting practices. These concepts and principles of desire are advanced through theoretical constructs of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Grosz (1994, 2005).

### 3.2 The Drape

'Drapery is defined as what it does' (Copjec 1994 p69). This statement is of significant importance in this research as it defines and establishes the spine of the outcomes of this Creative Strategy. Finding the rationale for the drape, through its forms and signs, reveal the core reason for the drape and expose the ideas bound up within. Essentially, the drape is the condition of the physical state of a fabric or cloth and not necessarily a stand-alone object in its own right. Its forms and conditions are only possible through the intervention of someone or something – a subject or another physical structure or element. Anne Hollander calls this the 'basic accountability in the cloth' (Hollander 2002 p14). Due to the intervention of these associations and implications, the drape functions in the material world; therefore, it is always responding to it. The fabric and folds are not just forms, but they are forms that are the result of something real. 'The drapery suggests curtains and an anticipated spectacle, as well as a convincing, yet perhaps ultimately disappointing, invitation to see what lies behind the cloth' (Doy 2002 p183). Drapery signifies dualities of real object versus painted representation and concealed object versus revealed object. The drape covers an object,

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<sup>80</sup> For instance, the history of drapery is tracked in Gen Doy's *Drapery: Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture* Introduction and Chapter 1, and Anne Hollander's *Fabric of Vision: Dress and Drapery in Painting* 2002.



conceals it and traces the outline the form of the object. At this moment, it is a representation of the matter concealed whilst simultaneously revealing its form and shape.<sup>81</sup>

To understand the form of the drape, Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault (France 1872 – 1934)<sup>82</sup>, the psychoanalyst that specialised in treating women who fetishised silk<sup>83</sup>, developed three orders of elements for the structure of drapery, these are crucial investigations or strategies for the artist, as they help to articulate the form and purpose of the drape visually. Joan Copjec in *The Sartorial Superego* (1990) puts forward de Clérambault's 'three orders of elements':

'1. The principal point of support [...] 2. The movement of the cloth from this point [...] 3. The zones of the body covered and the various means of fastening, twisting, and folding the cloth' (Copjec 1994 p69).

These three orders are valuable in painting processes and for setting up a composition. Key to painting fabric's form is understanding the principal point of support; this is the point where the drape falls from, how it is affected by gravity and how it gets its overall shape.

Understanding how and why the folds are created makes for a practicable and structured representation. As previously stated, there is always a rationale for the drape, it is subject to what it comes in contact with, as well as the weight, texture and density of the falling fabric. Understanding these physical attributes and their constraints mean that form can be interpreted and represented. This understanding is equally relevant when the drape is the art-object, as in the work of Angela de la Cruz or Steven Parrino. A central tenet to their paintings is the principal point from which they create the fold; it is the point where a movement or action took place, and the drape was created.

Drapery is an enduring reference in the history of art, as presented by Gen Doy's *Drapery: Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture* 2002, whether as subject-matter in the genres of a still-life or portrait painting or for its physicality or object-ness. The signs and codes associated with drapery in painting are complex. Doy describes the history of drapery, its beginnings in Greek statues, to critical moments in Western art history from medieval to

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<sup>81</sup> Other forms of reveal include a peeling back of the drape to expose what is underneath or the possibility of sheer fabrics that allow a viewer to see through to the object.

<sup>82</sup> It is worth noting that de Clérambault was practising psychiatry at the same time as Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) who features heavily in this thesis. Freud's essay on Fetishism was published in 1907, and de Clérambault published case studies on fabric for sexual gratification 1908 – 1910.

<sup>83</sup> I discuss the link between types of fabric and fetish in the previous creative strategy. Silk and satin are two fabrics that feature in the practical element of this research.

Renaissance, Baroque to Neo-Classicism. Doy explains how critical figures in C19th and C20th such as Gainsborough or Hogarth looked down on the drapery painter, the painter who was brought in to 'only' paint the drapes in a portrait painting. They thought the specialism of painting drapery was beneath the portrait painter<sup>84</sup> (Doy 2002 p5). This hierarchy within painting is interesting as it marks a passing of trends within the practice of painting. It was a time when portrait painting was fashionable for the noble and wealthy, and for various cultural and socio-political reasons the drape or the dress was an essential part of defining this. The figure's dress links to their power and influence, which related to both the depiction of men and women. Traditionally, the artist portrayed the figure, whether religious or regal, in fabrics that were seductive and noble. According to Hollander,

'Painters might use drapery to infuse their canvases with extra vitality and raw beauty, whether to suggest human power or true divinity, to enhance the tailored clothing they were scrupulously recording, or to improve the look of fruit on a plate' (Hollander 2002 p10).

This use of fabric was equally widespread in Dutch C19th still life painting, where the commissioner was 'showing off' his wares to impress the viewer. The still life was giving a perception of the truth, a narrative of a well-educated, wealthy, well cultured and well-travelled individual. The fabrics held within them a trace of this idealised life and the dress or the fabrics in the paintings were essential in portraying this impression. The inference that can be drawn from this is that drapery is bound up in the commodity of the social and cultural value of textiles.

An interpretation of drapery by Briony Fer in *The Pleasure of Cloth* (1998) discusses the 'pathologising' of the decorative and drapery in art since modernism. Fer discusses the use of drapery as pathological, that, in art, it is not merely a piece of cloth, but it is a statement or element that is associated with anxiety or is often loaded with meaning, which is associated with the decorative,

'the more elaborate twists and contortions invoke 'drapery' rather than just a cloth; that is, one of those overlooked aspects of painting to which an odd sort of anxiety had often been attached' (Fer 1998 p1).

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<sup>84</sup> Briony Fer contradicts this in *The Pleasure of Cloth* (1998) where she states that Gainsborough did not use a drapery painter.

This anxiety links to details and the decorative, both of which fell out of favour with modernism. However, with modernism alternative uses and conceits for drapery emerged.

Since the 1950s, the approach to drapery included a more dynamic and substantial material investigation, where the handling of the actual fabric and the experience of the material or experience-in-practice (Barrett 2012), became more apparent. The transformation in the representation of drapery was a result of an increased physical engagement; as can be seen in seminal pieces by Rauschenberg, where he employed drapery for both its physical and painterly attributes<sup>85</sup>. The use of fabric in terms of painterly gestures progressed to works by artists such as Christo, Robert Morris, Barry Flanagan, Sam Gilliam, Katharina Grosse, Angela de la Cruz, Berlinde De Bruycke, and Tauba Auerbach. These artists work within the realm of painting and, at the same time, push the boundaries of the use of fabric in expanded painting practices. Many of their artworks are in a state of becoming object. These artworks perform differently spatially and experientially as the fabric's materiality is front and centre. By exploring the physicality of the material and by incorporating tension and folding, the artists manipulate and transform the paintings.

For example, de la Cruz, in many of her works, merges the physical canvas with the idea of the drape by re-articulating the stretcher frame and transforming the form of the painting<sup>86</sup>. Her work utilises folds, tension, and gravity. It is within her painting's structure that the tensions and falls happen, highlighting the materiality of canvas rather than an image of a drape. By doing so, it is re-ordering conventional painting processes and practices. The drape has transformed from image to structure, making de la Cruz' work primarily and overtly three-dimensional.

De la Cruz goes beyond the modernist objecthood of painting and embraces the potential excessiveness of the canvas and its folds. Her work is at variance to Fer's observations, 'The taste for the decorative in clothing and furniture was pathologised as feminine, as embellishment, as style, as excessive' (Fer 1998 p1). The detailing of drapery in painting was 'repressed within modernism in favour of the pared-down simplicity of geometric form' (Fer

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<sup>85</sup> For example, one of Rauschenberg's combines: *Minutiae* 1954, Combine: oil, paper, fabric, newspaper, wood, metal, and plastic with mirror on braided wire on wood structure 214.6 x 205.7 x 77.5 cm

A detailed chronological outline of Rauschenberg's artworks is available on the Rauschenberg Foundation website. <https://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/art/search-artwork?page=2>

<sup>86</sup> See the discussion on de la Cruz in the Context review p25.

1998 p1). De la Cruz pushes beyond the feminine 'style' and transforms the geometric form, so it becomes more spatial, fluid and expressive. The modernist style began the move towards a sculptural and spatial form of painting<sup>87</sup>. However, artists, such as de la Cruz, have moved beyond modernism and found a way embracing excessive forms, that incorporate elaborate twists and contortions that align it with the excesses of drapery, but yet, has traits that represent formal ideals. The sculptural quality of her work, including the wall-based pieces, position the work in an expanded field. The work expands from painting through sculptural and architectural considerations of space.

### 3.3 Drapery, Multiplicity and the Rhizome

Drapery's condition of multiplicity is embedded in its determinations and interpretations and its fluctuating and shifting surfaces. Crucially, the drape can increase dimensions when painted through tensions or surfaces, as it has a manifold of appearances. From this situation, it proliferates, transforming the potential singularity of a painted canvas.

'A multiplicity is an entity that originates from a folding or twisting of simple elements. A multiplicity has porous boundaries and is defined provisionally by its variations and dimensions' (Tampio 2010).

By engaging with multiplicity, it immediately surpasses the singular and the linear models of the understanding and processes of painting. It opens up rhizomatic connections and infinite understanding (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The rhizome is a factor of multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari developed the theory of the rhizome to describe a model that was multiple and generative.

'Multiplicities are rhizomatic, and expose arborescent pseudomultiplicities for what they are. There is no unity to serve as a pivot in the object, or to divide in the subject [...] A multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes, and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p8).

To understand expanded painting through multiplicity would mean conflicting the ideas put forward by Barragán in the Context Review, where he sees an expansion as painting plus 'something', a duality or coupling, where the painting is the central pivotal point, and

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<sup>87</sup> Modernism's instigation of expanded painting practices is explained in more detail in the *Context Review*.

everything expands from that point. By introducing Deleuze's rhizome, it means that with the artwork, there is no one singular point from which to position the work. The artwork is a system or model that 'maps' which is 'entirely orientated toward experimentation in contact with the real [...] it fosters connections between fields [...]' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p12).<sup>88</sup>

Furthermore, the link to Deleuze can extend to his theories on the fold, where they 'are metaphors for abstract thought processes and concepts of being, conceptual rather than actual folds' (Doy 2002 p186). The fold allows consideration of alternative social constructs caused by and within drapery, including: textile art historical heritage, commodification, politicisation, desire, fetishism, and social ritual can be explored through Deleuzian ideas of the fold.

In many ways, Creative Strategy 3 enforces the rhizomatic nature of drapery and desire through a multi-media approach to the artworks, whilst also engaging with the fold as a means of transforming painting conceptually, spatially and architecturally.

### **3.4 Politicised Drapery and Alison Watt**

For an examination of how drapery can be seen as transformative in painting, I will look at the work of Alison Watt and politicised transformation. My assertions in this section may be what Duchamp would have termed as the 'unintentionally expressed' by the art coefficient (Duchamp 1957). There is a gap between what is intended and what is unintentionally expressed, but within the loaded subject-matter of drapery, it is open to many interpretations.

'Drapery allows the artist to work with approaches to abstraction without becoming totally non-figurative. Thus, the many connotations of drapery, e.g. luxury goods, excess, concealment, display, art historical tradition, can be offered suggestively to the spectator and further developed. The representation of drapery allows the sensual enjoyment (and production) of simple, yet rich, forms, without the emptiness of formalism' (Doy 2002 p211).

The similar subject-matter and approach of Watt's work to my own, make Watt a critical mainstay and point of comparison for my research. For the last three decades, Watt has

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<sup>88</sup> The rhizome method is particularly evident in the installational pieces where the sculptural and painterly merge and flow between each other. Refer to Creative Strategy 3 in portfolio.

centred her prolific practice around the subject of drapery. The trajectory of her work began in the 1990s by situating the female figure in drapery settings. She references the work of Ingres, as an inspiration for associating the female form with the folds of the fabric. Over time, her work focused solely on the drape, and the relationship to the figure became subverted.

In the exhibition *Fold* 1997, Watt's work has a direct and intentional association of the female body to drapery. In the accompanying catalogue essay, John Calcutt in *Cutting Pleasures; Folding Delights* 1997, adopts the connection of drapery to the female form. He reduces Watt's relationship to the female figure to a concentration on the hymen which he activates through Derrida;

'The hymen is a sort of textile. Its threads should be interwoven with all veils, gauzes, canvases, fabrics, all the curtains [...] It is neither desire nor pleasure but in between the two. Neither future nor present, but between the two [...] The hymen, stands between the inside and outside of a woman, and consequently between desire and fulfilment. As soon as one has recognised the fold of the hymen one has read the endless multiplication of folds' (Calcutt 1997 p16).

Here, Calcutt positions his observations from a male gaze, which mirrors the Ingres position. Calcutt not only reduced the female to a single body part, but he also locates it as the place of 'desire and fulfilment', which is a very narrow interpretation. However, it is an interesting narrative when considering the politicised potential of drapery in this series. I would argue that, by linking her work to Ingres, Watt is inducing and rousing the male gaze. These artworks are aligned with Ingres and his depiction of the female body. Ingres celebrates the juxtaposition of drapery with the female form by elongating the figure to accentuate 'the identity of the human form with the weights, falls and folded swags of drapery' (Lee 1997 p21). Painting allows Watt to interrogate Ingres' paintings, through tonal values, formalist devices or the elongated 'S' (Lee 1997 p21) and the idea that drapery provokes a sense of anticipation by suggesting that it might contain a figure. In her paintings, Watt suspends this suggestion and anticipation.

As the trajectory of Watt's work develops, the metaphor of the female body changes. For instance, it is again evident in the painting *Iris* 2014 – 15, where the painting has a hint of flesh tones within the creases of the folds, which can emphasise this connection to interiority and the female body.



Alison Watt  
*Iris*, 2014-15  
oil on canvas  
120 x 80 cm  
Image courtesy the artist and Ingleby, Edinburgh



Alison Watt  
*Hollow*, 2009  
oil on canvas  
183 x 183cm  
Photograph: John McKenzie  
Image courtesy the artist and Ingleby, Edinburgh

The painting *Hollow* 2009 describes the connection of drapery to the female body but in a more subverted manner than the earlier work. The monochrome painting again suggests desire, and possibly the erotic, in multiple ways; first, it has a distinct resemblance to female genitalia from the shape of the folds depicted. Second, it connotes flesh-like tones. Third, it

resembles a fold in bedsheets, a detail of the knots and movement from the throes of passion. Watt's work sits between the figurative and the still life as she is representing the figure within the folds and lines of the fabric. Much of this body of work suggests connections to the body through the silky quality of the surface of paint that alludes to the skin or epidermis<sup>89</sup>. Equally, the drapery could be seen as the skin that covers something underneath, or, it could suggest an interior in the folds, describing something within them rather than a covering or still life.

However, the removal of the figure to solely the drape provokes a different interpretation, and transforms and questions interpretations of the gaze.

'What she has achieved is an image of an interiority of self and particularly of the female self. Thus, she has reversed the classic gender cliché of the female body as the passive subject of the male gaze to demonstrate instead and with perfect self-confidence the separate and wholly independent perspective of gender viewed from within' (Macmillan 2014).

In Watt's work, the drape transforms the political understanding of the gaze. The context of the male gaze is developed in Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* 1975, which is based on sexual inequality in cultural representations of women. She observes that the 'pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure, which is styled accordingly' (Mulvey 1975 p62). Macmillan is asserting that the Watt has subverted the gaze through her acceptance of the interiority of self; however, I would argue that the paintings go further than that to subvert the male gaze.

Though Watt's paintings suggest femininity and sensuousness, I want to highlight the impact of her process, as specific attributes of the work go against the possibility of desire. Initially, I can surmise that this is due to the painting process. These large-scale paintings seem to be painted from a photograph. Similar to when discussing fetish in the previous chapter, it is the object itself that is desired and not an image of it. Though Watt's paintings are a realistic representation, the drapery is removed a further step from the viewer. Through using a photograph, Watt puts a barrier between herself and the object of desire. In my opinion, this process results in a flattening and a sterility in the works.

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<sup>89</sup> The skin is different to Gilbert-Rolfe's idea of the canvas being a skin (1998), here Watt's skin of paint sits flawlessly on the canvas as support.



The monotone palette can be seen to exacerbate ideas of sterility, or absence, or blankness. This could suggest that Watt is dulling the desiring force of the drapery and the sensuality and active drive associated with painting from life. 'Watt's are discarnate, untouched by the messy heat of real bodies: no blood rushes through these folds' (McLaughlin 2016 p194 – 195).

However, what if this is a politicised strategy? A further attempt to subvert the male gaze? When analysing this process of sterility further, it leads to questioning Watt's intent. If she is intentionally making the paintings of drapery more sterile, is it possible to read it as a feminist method? Is she using sterility as a way of refracting the male gaze and the previous associations that the work had to Ingres? By this hypothesis, I would suggest that sterility is a politicised protest to the canon's tradition of the male gaze of the female figure. The act of subverting the male gaze brings autonomy back to Watt. The drapery provides a context for the realisation of a politicised motivation.

'No blood rushes through these folds' is an interesting observation, as the economy of colour and removal or smoothening of the painter's marks, subdue the life in the painting. Watt's flattening of life within the folds is rejecting the consensus of an invigorated painting. To open up this discussion, I looked at *The Celibate Woman Journal* (1984), here it speaks of consciously choosing how one relates to another, and how to remove the sexual from relationships. The emphasis is on choosing and intent. The celibate maximises personal autonomy 'it is a path of self-determined vision, context and duration' (Watson 1984 p23). Though the antithesis can also be argued, a celebration of sexuality is also a political stance.

As described in the *Methodology* section, painting representationally allows an intensive interrogation of the object being painted (Lister 2016). The scrutiny that representational painting allows means that even the over-looked object or scenario can be elevated. This elevation is evidenced in Watt's *Hollow* 2009, where the perfection of the folds provokes a fabrication or fantasy rather than a real event. This perfection means, for me, that it is in exchange for vitality and desiring forces.

Watt's work continues to stimulate abject associations as she is focusing or highlighting details of the folds, by magnifying up to an exaggerated scale, what would generally be over-looked. Her trajectory began with a celebration of sexuality that was aligned with the male gaze. Even with this alignment, it is not critical of or suggesting exploitation of the female

figure. It has since moved towards shifting that sexuality to a perspective that generates a new interpretation of the work that embodies sexually equal representations. The processes that Watt uses to achieve this position are from painting representationally, a monochrome palette and through scale, which creates an immersive and experiential environment for the viewer. The possibilities that can be created through the medium of paint mean that the artist can address themes and modify them. Watt, through scale and colour, modifies the fabric and in doing so, adds ideas of architecture, space, immersion and beauty. The scale of Watt's paintings is impressive and demonstrates an immersive environment when confronted with them. This scale can create movement within the folds as it forces the viewer to look around and move to take in the whole vista of paint physically. Whilst the proximity to the drape means that there are gains and losses, her paintings gain spatially associated themes; however, they lose notions of desire.

On viewing these paintings, there is a feeling of being submerged in the folds. There is a three-dimensional effect that is generated from the scale of the folds. This scale is in contrast to Watt's more recent paintings (2019) of white objects in a monotone background. These still-lives again play with ideas of sterility; however, their scale is more modest. Watt discusses her process in an interview with Phil Miller that these images of objects are fabricated in her head and are not based on real objects.<sup>90</sup> She states,

'The still life is often quiet, it is not grand, and is often associated with the domestic and so the feminine. It has often a lowly position and it has all these qualities about the still life that I find attractive, because its greatest power is its intimacy' (Watt 2019).

With Watt's description, there seems to be an object quality that she is embracing in these newer works.

The fabrication of metaphors, established by Watt, seem deliberate and are enhanced by painting. However, it does not deal with the structure beneath the fabric, or the reason for the fold, or the 'basic accountability in the cloth' as described by Hollander (2002 p14). The fold becomes a motif for what it could be, or what it implies, rather than evidence of representing an event or reasoning of the fold as there is no principle point of support. The drape is

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<sup>90</sup> Watt mentions her process in an article by Phil Miller in The Herald 31 August 2019

cropped to imply suggestive shapes and forms, rather than being evidence of a figure's presence.

By suggesting politicised motivations in Watt's work, due to the sterile monotone aesthetic of drapery, creates another dimension to it. These ideas are enhanced by the limited palette and the overall completeness of the paintings. The spatial complexity of the composition: the folds, the geometric shapes created within them are neat, sit comfortably on the surface and fill the painting. However, Watt discusses how the image breaks up the closer the viewer gets to it, and the brush strokes become increasingly visible (Watt 2016). On the first approach, her work might seem singular; however, there are multiple interpretations evident within the folds. Multiplicity favours processes and dynamic forms, Watt's work is meditated and subtle, yet the multiplicity is evident internally.

As a juxtaposition, my work '*Fabricating Fantasy: Yellow Scenario*' 2020 is an outward dynamic form, while also, investigating notions of the feminine along with tensions of excess and foregrounding sensuality and the subject.

### 3.5 Desiring Drapery

'Draperies, as I had now discovered, are much more than devices for the introduction of non-representational forms into naturalistic paintings and sculptures... For the artist as for the Mescaline taker, draperies are living hieroglyphs that stand in some peculiarly expressive way for the unfathomable mystery of pure being [...] is it, perhaps, because the forms of folded drapery are so strange and dramatic that they catch the eye and in this way, force the miraculous fact of sheer existence upon the attention? Who knows? What is important is less the reason for the experience than the experience itself. They had seen the *Istigkeit*, the allness and infinity of folded cloth...' (Huxley 1954 p18-19).

Aldous Huxley's *Doors of Perception* gives a first-hand account of the compulsion of drapery, though in a heightened physical state. In this, Huxley thinks the drapery sets the tone or 'temperament' of the artwork (Huxley 1954 p17). The drapery allows speculation on being-in-the-moment; it is experiential and all-encompassing. The text is primarily fictitious, though based on real events, and it gives insights into the argument for the obsessive and desiring force of drapery. Through the complicated pleasures of the folds, the artist can embellish the painting with dramatic effect. The implications are that drapery grows in

significance through the association of desire. In doing so, our understanding of drapery surpasses the physical, and it becomes a sign for other cultural values and meanings, such as the sexual gaze, politicised connotation, feminine and feminist correlations.

In Gen Doy's comprehensive book on drapery, *Drapery: Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture* (2002), she posits the idea of the drape as a symbol of desire. Her position is from a Freudian point-of-view concerning lack and the object as a replacement for this lack.

'the use of drapery in contemporary art is an overt concern with eroticism and the body, whether the body is actually included in the image or not. The drapery becomes the focus for sensual investigations around voyeurism and fetishism. The drapery itself stands in for the absent body and at the same time can function as a 'surface' for the play of modes of representation and illusion' (Doy 2002 p211).

It was a common thread of thought in the 1990s and early 2000s that structured desire as 'a fundamental lack, a hole in being' (Grosz 1990 p64), that is 'barred or repressed from articulation' (Grosz 1990 p65). It reflected Lacan's ideas on desire who thought desire results from a perceived gap between the subject and object, 'desire is neither the appetite for satisfaction nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second, the very phenomenon of their splitting (spaltung)' (Ecrits p690 – 692).

Deleuze and Guattari, and Grosz, oppose ideas that desire is structured from a lack and think of it as a generative and positive force<sup>91</sup>. They see desire as productive rather than a need to acquire something to compensate for or fill a gap. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is a positive and active force that has the power to shape society. They consider that the 'desiring machine' makes societal connections and formations,

'Your very drives and impulses, even the unconscious ones, which seems to be what is most individual about you, are themselves economic, they are already part of what Marx called the infrastructure' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 p71).

Grosz further enforces these ideas of the generative potential of desire. She outlines where there are at times political ramifications or frameworks, but that necessarily desire is

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<sup>91</sup> At the time of writing *Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction* in 1990, Grosz defined desire through Lacan's thinking, one that points to a gap between a desiring subject and the object of desire, where the gap results from a lack. By the time Grosz writes *Time Travels* 2005, she moves towards theory of Deleuze and Guattari who oppose Lacan's ideas.

productive. We are part of a machine that shapes our drives and desires. Grosz interprets Deleuze and Guattari's discussion on desire, through feminist thinking,

'Pleasures and desires are allowed to be pleasures and desires without necessarily being tied directly to a larger political framework or system of justification [...] It is instead a relation of production or assemblage, which may have political effects at particular moments, but is primarily productive or creative rather than critical' (Grosz 2005 p194).

For Grosz, the body's composition has desiring energies and forces within it that function to increase and multiply. Grosz acknowledges that,

'This profusion of energies and forces functioning within and as subjects is not the denial of sexual difference but its increasing elaboration, for sexual difference, the systematically differing morphologies of (most) living bodies, operates not only at the level of the body-as-a-whole, but also within the body's microscopic functions and processes' (Grosz 2005 p195).

By positioning drapery as an object of desire, I can interpret Grosz' stance on desire and feminism and re-articulate generative forces in drapery by applying other considerations to it and through it. Desire is made up of forces that operate internally, and 'within the body's microscopic functions and processes' (Grosz 2005 p195), while Grosz writes specifically about the body, I contend that this can be extended to the painting. By investigating Grosz' interpretation of desire and feminism, it allowed consideration of the interiority of painting as something that can be expanded through desire as a consideration of these forces. Taking the painting of drapery as a feminist position, showed that desire is not just the gap between the subject and object, but it is a force that is tied to a multiplicity of sexualities and objects that can contribute to expanding painting from within its surface. It posits drapery, with all its political and cultural associations, as a vehicle for discussing femininity and female desire. It is a window into another world of female forces of desire and materiality.

Moreover, drapery has a performative function as a repository, or catalyst, for political, social and cultural signs. Its association with art, specifically painting, goes beyond its physicality as it is a vehicle for these signs. Barragán in *Painting History, Manufacturing Excess: How the Artistic Configures the Political* 2019, chronicles the socio-political importance of history painting. 'History painting became the visual history of mankind and its excesses: think of absolutism, imperialism and colonialism' (Barragán 2019 p36). Throughout history, painting has a performative function in depicting political and societal agendas, as recorded by John

Berger in *Ways of Seeing* 1972.<sup>92</sup> Critically, Berger recognises that we see art through our own specific gaze, whether feminist, left, right, and so forth. The political is not just what the artist has introduced, but, also, it is informed by the political leaning of the viewer. Equally, he considers where and when the viewer sees something affects how they see it. Each viewer brings with them their individual experiences and, in turn, this influences how and what they see. When this is juxtaposed with Doy's in-depth study of drapery (2002), it parallels the power of the visual; where and when drapery was used to embellish or distinguish particular agendas. Doy locates her area of investigation to France in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, as it is central to the merging of academic, artistic and fashionable interpretations of drapery. The significance of these ideas formulates intent in my practice.

Considerations of sexual difference and desire, create a unique undercurrent to this research, not only does it reflect rhizomatic connections that are evident in the practice, but desire offers a rationale for these connections, by assemblage or magnetic forces between matter that creates or expands some-thing, such as, painting. The increasing elaboration that sexual difference is productive suggests that the desires are not defined by a gap between a subject and object, but that there are modes within it that are creative and increasing. These desires and impulses are forces that apply to painting, specifically the painting of drapery, and suggest that different forces from within the subject-matter can morph and expand it. As discussed in Creative Strategy 2, painting expands into other networks; therefore, changing ideas and cultural practices around it.

### **3.6 Ulla von Brandenburg and the Real Drape**

Crucially, an assertion that has been present throughout Creative Strategy 2 and 3 is that desire and fetish want for the real object and not a representation of it. This created questions about the role of the representation of the drape in my painting:

- A) was the object of desire the painted representation of the drapery? Or,
- B) was it the real drape?

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<sup>92</sup> Painting as a political tool has been well documented, other sources include TJ Clark in *The Painting of Modern Life* 1985. Clark discusses the history of art as documenting the social and political conditions of modern life.

As discussed through Watt, the painting of drapery can bring in many interpretations and evidence Duchamp's coefficient, and the painting adds its own interests. However, the real object needs to be explored. The painted image of the drape sits on a surface and is forever suspended in the act of concealing and revealing. To look beyond the drape, or to expand the notion of drapery, I need to interact with the real fabric physically. Artists, such as Ulla von Brandenburg, use drapery to significant spatial effect and spectacle.

The drape is a portal that relates to the architectural. There is something beyond it, something hidden, something waiting to be disclosed. The real drape has different objectives to that of painting. It creates physical aspects as spatial form and as a physical manifestation of space. Ulla von Brandenburg explores the space beyond the drape, what is behind it, and the theatricality that's embedded within it. The installed swathes of fabric and curtains generate an anticipated spectacle. This work challenges Michael Fried's assertion that the work of art 'degenerates as it approaches the condition of theatre' (Fried 1967).

These works create discussions around social encounter and experience, revelation, voyeurism, the sensuality of the cloth, dressing up, or social ritual. Deleuze's fold is particularly relevant to von Brandenburg's work, where he describes alternative ways of conceptualising the material and spiritual world. Von Brandenburg installations 'each separate space, in turn, circumscribes and produces behavioural patterns and codes' (van Tilburg 2020 p75). The spectator can move within worlds that are fabricated through the use of drapery. Merel van Tilburg asks us to step outside those systems that are habitual so to 'free ourselves from existing systems of regularised and ritualised social interaction' (van Tilburg 2020 p77), a deterritorialisation from expected social conditions/conditioning. The works deterritorialise the habitual passage through spaces and reterritorialise the social interactions in the gallery space by creating alternative situations for the spectator. The works are subtly enticing and promise an experience beyond it.

'Fabrics allow me to camouflage, conceal and clad the white cube of a museum, and thus change the system of values and the frameworks of thought. I use fabrics to create spaces in which we can apparently be elsewhere, in other words, fall into other worlds. [...] In a space where curtains have been hung, the separation between the interior and the exterior, or between different worlds, becomes blurred. And that blur makes us wonder where we are' (von Brandenburg 2018 p49).

The drape disrupts the person's movement around the space, where once the architecture determined the route around a building, now the hanging drapes disrupt and reform routes, passages and meeting points. Creative Strategy 1 investigated thresholds and the frame as the site of activity, here, the curtain marks the threshold; it incorporates an element of time, where the person can pass from one space to another. It is a device for transition, that captures moments of realness through the drape. Van Tilburg contends that this relationship to space references Foucault's description of heterotopias and the theatrical space. 'The spaces in the environments are both here and at the same time, elsewhere, since they conflate actual and potential space' (van Tilburg 2020 p75). Von Brandenburg's spaces create new situations and places of social ritual or interaction. The works create a new reality and immersive environment.

### 3.7 On Practice

The principal works which I have developed during the research undertaken in developing this Creative Strategy are *Fabricating Fantasy: Red* (2019) and *Fabricating Fantasy: Yellow* (2020).<sup>93</sup> In February 2019, I organised the exhibition *Virtues of the Real/Necessity of the Imaginary* at The Art Space Glasgow, a two-person show with Sin Park. The central painting installation for this exhibition was *Fabricating Fantasy: Red*. This work pulled on all the ideas mentioned previously in this section, of drapery as the object of desire, abjection, and site.

For this piece, the exact site had now become secondary to the impression of the work. I chose the interior of the McLellan Galleries Glasgow as the site that would shape the custom-made gesso panel for the painting, which was then photographed in-situ. The gesso panel was shaped to fit in this site, and a similar process to the previous work of Creative Strategy 2 was followed. The focus of the piece shifted from the place where it was made, to the gallery where it would be exhibited. This painting as installation allowed me to investigate the sculptural forms of drapery and associated connotations that it brings with it.

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<sup>93</sup> Portfolio p49 – 58 and sketchbook p67-87.





Fabricating Fantasy: Red 2019  
Painting installation dimensions variable.  
(Wall piece 240 x 180cm, Giclee Print 40 x 60cm)

In *Fabricating Fantasy: Red*, the material, formal and conceptual elements of painting come together. The material, in this case, satin fabric, took centre stage. It is the real fabric installed on the walls, it is a representation in the painting, and it is a referent documented on the staircase in a photograph. The painting became the shared link between each medium and outcome, highlighting boundaries between real and representation, and metaphoric implications of reveal and conceal. *Fabricating Fantasy: Red* demonstrates elements of reveal and conceal as it partially exposes the wall beneath. As mentioned previously, a painting can capture the moment where the drapery is caught in a moment of suspension. This moment can expose or deny concepts through its folds. The red satin accentuates and adorns the wall while showing or revealing some wall behind the drape. I wanted to invite the spectator into the fabric, to gaze, interact and move through the installation. The purpose is to fabricate a fantasy that involves excessive readings of drapery and tensions of revealing and denial that drapery brings as a subject-matter.



Fabricating Fantasy: Red  
Giclee Print 40 x 60cm



Detail of *Fabricating Fantasy: Red* on satin  
Photograph credit: Eszter Biró

Furthermore, *Fabricating Fantasy: Red* shows the reduction in the importance of the painted object. The intention to conceal the painting within the same colour drapery which is counterbalanced by being put on a pedestal. The enveloping or layering of scenarios, events and mediums demonstrate a site-specificness and extend painting through alternative mediums and sites.



*Fabricating Fantasy: Yellow* 2020  
Work in Progress

In *Fabricating Fantasy: Yellow Scenario* 2020<sup>94</sup>, the installation is primarily a drape that is stretched between two walls in a gallery space. The fabric, in this case, has many conceits and dimensions. Its physical form is under force; it is suspended in time due to the tension. The duration of this tension is infinite as it could potentially remain in that state permanently. Within the space, a wall-mounted fabric is stretched over two walls, along with seating on the ground. The installation dictates the viewers' encounter. Simultaneously, the seating suggests a familiar scenario. The wall installation piece is a drape tightly stretched

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<sup>94</sup> This painting is yet to be exhibited as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.



between two walls; this piece adds tension to the space, which parallels the tensions of the female space. I link this female space to ideas from the short story *The Yellow Wallpaper* 1892 by Charlotte Perkins Stetson, where she explores the suppression of women by the patriarchy. In the story, the female protagonist's mental health deteriorates due to being imprisoned in the room where she picks away at the wallpaper. The wallpaper becomes a metaphor for the oppressors. This story is a link to metaphors and the domestic space, which is explored through my painting as installation. The wall-mounted fabric has added tension when read alongside *The Yellow Wallpaper*.

The two works *Fabricating Fantasy: Red* 2019 and *Fabricating Fantasy: Yellow Scenario* 2020, demonstrate desire and drapery. Both works emphasise the spatiality of drapery and therefore create an immersive experience. The experience of moving through the work and space can combine a sense of movement, touch, and the visual for the viewer. Moreover, the installations implicate a sense of adornment and a sense of space. However, even though *Fabricating Fantasy: Red* has a fall of drapery that moves up to a pedestal to support the painting, it remained essentially static. The work, while static, limits sensory impact. To intensify the experience, I worked on creating an environment that could have the potential to intensify the sensory perception. In *Fabricating Fantasy: Yellow*, I added tension to the piece to bring dynamic movement to the space. The fabric is stretched between the two walls of a corner. It appears to be pulling apart, while simultaneously pulling together the walls in the space. The tension in the fabric creates an action or force within the work. The work is not just about visual experience, but it is an intensified immersion into the action of the drape. As Huxley had pointed out, the drape is a 'living hieroglyph', by putting it in a state of tension, it is emphasising its dynamic nature and increases the potential for sensory experiences.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

This Creative Strategy proposes that considering painting through notions of multiplicity and the rhizome can result in excessive and multiple processes and outcomes. This idea of excess is at a variant with Greenberg's ideas of reduction (1961) that this research began with in Creative Strategy 1. Assimilating ideas of excess and multiplicity into the practice allowed the work to reveal socio-political considerations and concepts than with the reductionist pure-form of modernist painting. Once the excessive works transverse other networks and

disciplines, they bring in the viewer and the subject, which is a further rejection of modernist thought, as Fried (1965) thought that the incorporation of the viewer reduced the artwork to theatre. As shown in this strategy, embracing the decorative and the material, generates multiple interpretations and outcomes for the painting, including the psychoanalytical, the philosophical and the cultural.

This Creative Strategy creates a framework for engaging with multiplicitous ideas to enable transformative outcomes in painting. The transformations happen by challenging and embracing the multiple and complicated nature of the drape and its folds, which brought in cultural, political and societal positions that were explored through desire and excess of folds. Through discussing the work of Alison Watt, it showed how these socio-political, engendered, and cultural associations are revealed in painting. Understanding these associations transform the interpretation of painting, and can extend the social and cultural impact of the work.

Drapery creates a situation in painting that is continually becoming. By analysing it as a productive force, it associates it to the female body. Though it is not the sole theoretical understanding of drapery, this association formed an element and performed a function in the practical research. The goal was to establish a position where drapery is an expository tool in the argument of gendered desire. As shown, this section pulls out commonalities between critical essays on drapery to create a model for investigation within expanded painting. It demonstrates that as a representation and as a concept, it can enable painting to capitalise on ideas of desire as a means to expand painting practices.

The enquiry of this Creative Strategy develops the material thinking around ideas of gendered desire through a focus on drapery. This focus impacts on both the interpretations of the artwork and its conceptual basis, as well as, being a means for a new approach to creative development in an arts practice.

# Conclusions

## 4.1 Overview of Conclusions

This thesis brings together theories, ideas and practical outputs in the form of Creative Strategies to propose new material conditions for transformation in painting. Creative Strategies are tactics that broaden current painting processes through asserting alternative applications of material and subjective relations. They developed different models of process that allowed my practice to shift, in some cases considerably, from the conventional two-dimensional pictorial surface that I began with to a three-dimensional spatial practice.

I set out to create methods of thinking that challenged painting and proposed a new approach to contemporary painting. Each Creative Strategy has achieved different modes of practice by engaging in different core methods of thinking. Each Creative Strategy has individual philosophical investigations that created differences between the artworks and treatment of materiality: from reduction to psychoanalytical, to politicised and desired, where each one leads to a transformation and significantly, each one operates beyond the frame of painting.

The practice-led methodological process demonstrated the significance and capacity of the creative object in generating new knowledge. Therefore, where, and how, the work was situated had transformative effects on the piece and its intention. This indicated that the research has a social and practical impact; however, fractal. As the research progressed, the ideological assumptions and generalities about gender and the roles of women had deepening ramifications, and I questioned key philosophical texts through a feminist lens. Addressing this issue through my practice became increasingly important and directed the research from an early stage.

This project contributes to current discourse on material thinking by synthesizing three distinct modes of enquiry, which propose a new approach to contemporary painting. The three empirical applications of materials enable three methods of transforming painting

practices. Particular to my research questions, they demonstrated different conceptual notions of process that in each contribute to new processes, understanding and concepts:

#### *Creative Strategy 1: One Way to Shed Excess*

The research question asked, how can a consideration of prosthetics enable painting's frame to expand beyond its conventional form? I proposed a method of reduction to get to the crux of the painting's structure, where I was able to apply a prosthetic that transformed painting's objecthood. Therefore, the outcome is the transformation of the dimensionality and constraints of painting. By employing Estelle Barrett's ideas of experience-in-practice, who contends that 'knowledge is dependent on interactive experience – a fluid movement between the viewer's feelings, thoughts and the art object within a social context' (Barrett 2012 p67). The engagement with the materials and the aesthetic experience came before the signs and symbols of the artwork. The outcomes of this creative practice, through process and interaction, broadened the knowledge of painting as object. Therefore, it was the materialisation of the experience-in-practice in the painting that makes it a new object of knowledge (Barrett 2012 p68).

#### *Creative Strategy 2: One Way to Take Control*

This Creative Strategy questioned how can the fetishisation of materiality challenge agency in painting? To answer this question, I considered a broad range of materials to bring into painting, with the primary focus on those indexical of fetish. This allowed the material ontology to challenge a hermeneutic exploration of painting, and perceived gender bias in theoretical discourse. From positioning feminist autoethnographic and empirical methods, I demonstrated the intersection of material with cultural and subjective tropes. Thus, indicating that these feminist lenses could transform the discourse on ideas of space and materiality in painting.

Feminist methods created a way for the fetishisation of material to be understood as something that generated or increased meaning through challenging patriarchal positions. The fetishisation of material allowed for an understanding of excess through the effect and sensation of the materials involved. Rather than abbreviating the communication, it created an excessive environment of materiality and therefore, triggered an equally sensational response in the viewer. This response was brought from their encounters with objects in the

world that are then reintroduced in a different situation through the work. Therefore, I fabricated fantastical scenarios that created new contexts for the paintings.

### Creative Strategy 3: *One Way to Become Too Fat*

In taking an in-depth analysis of drapery as an image and as an object, I questioned how can the subject of drapery be transformative in expanded painting practices? To answer this question, I proposed a series of conceptual shifts, drapery as the desired object can transform notions of contemporary painting, and the politicised shift in the reading of signifiers in the painting of drapery. Again, this was through applying a feminist autoethnographic lens so to shape and understand possible outcomes of the subject of drapery. Significantly, the drape is defined by what it does. It has an internal rationale; this research demonstrated that intent can expose this rationale, and not just the form.

The effects of employing feminist methods into my practice is one of the significant outcomes of this research project and Elizabeth Grosz was paramount in forming constructive arguments that support the theoretical basis of my practice-led research. The theory offered a compelling framework to create a range of visual perceptions and conceptual assertions.

In Creative Strategy 2 and 3, I argued that as a woman I can, like so many before me, offer perspectives on women's issues that contribute to raising consciousness of female empowerment. I have discovered that through material investigations, ideas of fetish and desire are still argued from the position of women being passive subjects to men's fantasies. This observation highlights the continued need for feminist artists to assert and persevere in taking steps forward to posit women as agents in their own fetish and desire.

As this research has transformed my approach to practice, I am compelled to use a feminist lens to reflect on the work. As previously implied, the inference that can be drawn from this is that the prosthetic has the potential to challenge the reductive and mostly patriarchal history of modernist painting (Greenberg 1960). The feminist lens enabled a questioning of the canon and a critique of the cultural hierarchy in modernist painting. Applying this lens of objectivity enabled a deciphering and learning from the practice. I challenged the patriarchal and reductive norm through the application of prosthetics as I created something generative out of something reduced.



## 4.2 Notes Towards the Future Potential of the Research

Early in the research, I proposed a way of counterbalancing and challenging Freudian ideas as taking a non-phallogentric position. However, whilst exploring themes of subjectivity, gender and autoethnography it revealed a need for a female subjective position on phallogentricism and female ideas of desire and fetish. Though I had spent time investigating non-phallogentricism, I felt I could only contribute as an observer rather than an autoethnographic position. Non-phallogentricism would involve considering texts from the Whitechapel publication, *Queer* edited by David Getsy and an investigation into discourses on gender and queer theory. This is an evolving and important discourse and would be beneficial work in the field of agency, fetish and contemporary painting. The results would promote a diverse and unilateral exploration of the Creative Strategies. As such, the research can promote alternative attitudes and an in-depth understanding of the influence of cultural, political and societal constructs on material-based art practices.

My focus during this research began with the subject of drapery and folding, and considerations of the potential within. My research was organised to understand different approaches to integrating theories and practices into painting processes. In conclusion, following these approaches helped to radically innovate processes and agencies for an individualised art practice. As I have argued throughout this thesis, a transformative practice is a generative and positive method for creating paintings. The research proposes three such ways in which a practitioner can actively incorporate the concepts into their practice. While this PhD has focused on these Creative Strategies, the nature of practice-led methodologies means that they are continually evolving. My painting practice has been shaped by keeping true to a lens of feminist representation and agency. Through the dissemination of this work, it places these Creative Strategies within the discourse of contemporary painting from a female position. I have related the discourse of Creative Strategy 2 and 3 to a gendered position with assertions by Elizabeth Grosz, which deal with further considerations of feminist challenges to the canon and the application of philosophical understanding in painting. It is my hope that these positions highlight the necessary and continuing need to challenge interpretations of social and cultural theoretical discourse.

As I complete my project write-up, it is amid the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. This unusual situation has put a hold on what was considered as normal day-to-day activities.

Unfortunately, it affected completing and exhibiting my final artwork *Fabricating Fantasy: Yellow*. However, even with these considerations, the art world prevails. My work *Fabricating Fantasy: Fireplace Scenario* and *Red/Abject*, are selected for a group exhibition in Oceans Apart Gallery September 2020, on the theme of the expanded field of painting and the Deleuzian rhizome. The positive outcome, as a result of this invitation to exhibit amongst other artists from this field, demonstrates the shift and transformation in my practice, as the work emerges with three-dimensionality.

It is possible to use this research to inform public exhibitions and events to structure and contextualise a thematic and critical understanding of painting. I began such projects, as mentioned in this thesis, and anticipate to continue to present and produce other projects in this manner. This thesis acts as a representation of an expanded painting practice. Moreover, it offers a suite of methods and a framework for further production; as a contribution, I hope it can act as a useful guide for other practitioners and researchers in the expanded field of painting.

Crucially, there is equal importance on the sketchbook, portfolio and dissertation in evidencing the research that has been undertaken and to identify the research within the practice. Each Creative Strategy has its accompanying practice that refers to the new knowledge that has been gained within their specific contexts. Therefore, my contribution is in current material thinking and is based on the collective knowledge of this thesis, in the individual Creative Strategies and practice, where it exists as a set of understood means by which to propose a new approach to contemporary painting.

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