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Declaration of Originality

I, Suzanne Hara 14th Oct., 2010. (signature and date) hereby declare that the thesis here submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Australian National University is the outcome of the research project undertaken during my candidacy, that I am the sole author unless otherwise indicated, and that I have fully documented the source of ideas, references, quotations and paraphrases attributable to other authors.

ABSTRACT

Painting light, touching space: investigating how luminosity and the materiality of the surface of paintings create spatial illusions and contribute to the poetics of space.

Painting light, touching space researches the spatial and poetic effects of the luminosity and materiality of paintings. The work explores the interrelations between the formal and experiential aspects of painting from the perspectives of both painter and beholder. A study taking the form of an exhibition of paintings exhibited at the ANU School of Art Gallery from March 17 to 26, 2010 comprises the outcome of the Studio Practice component, together with the Exegesis which documents the nature of the course of study undertaken comprises 66%, and the Dissertation, which comprises 33% of the Thesis.

Colour, material and structural experimentation yielded new paintings demonstrating varied spatial, luminous and potential poetic effects for the receptive viewer. Three approaches to pictorial structure are employed: the grid, concentric geometries and eccentric shapes, each of which generate different opportunities for complex colour interactions, and a variety of pictorial dynamics. Informed by the observation of natural phenomena and the examination and analysis of relevant historical and contemporary paintings, these works are particularly distinguishable by ultra-high value colours using the principles of colour interaction, a subtle range of spatial effects conveyed by colour and the highly-tuned selection and handling of materials. The theoretical platform of the Studio Research is informed by a diverse range of historical and contemporary sources: writers including Susan Sontag and John Berger; theorists Julia Kristeva and Gaston Bachelard; architect Christopher Alexander; teachers Krishnamurti and Pema Chödrön, and artists Fra Angelico, J.M.W. Turner, Agnes Martin, Howard Taylor and Rosslynd Piggott.

The Dissertation addresses the methods of painting light, depicted and illusory, through material, colour and compositional means. While the painting of light has been described as paradoxical by a number of authors, their discussions and analysis have been under-developed. A sensory poetic model and approach is introduced to inform analysis and synthesis in the investigation of paintings. This research

demonstrates the benefits for art scholarship in the development of greater sensitivity to the role of painters' material processes in the generation of significant visual, spatial, kinaesthetic and poetic effects. This has involved contesting and clarifying accounts of painted light found in the scholarly literature. This research proposes that the sensory poetic approach, with its integration of subjective experience, is a model which may be usefully applied beyond this research.

The paintings of Fra Angelico and Mark Rothko are examined in response to literature linking their material surface and luminous qualities. This analysis demonstrates that the artists' approaches to constructing and composing paintings are highly significant in conveying the illusion of light. Pictorial structures are further investigated through close observation of the paintings of J.M.W. Turner, Giorgio Morandi, Agnes Martin, Mary Heilmann and Howard Taylor. This project reveals that colour, materiality and pictorial structures work in concert to produce luminosity and spatial effects with their myriad poetic associations. Materiality and luminosity are inextricably and simultaneously present, however, materiality is perceived at close viewing and luminosity at a middle distance where tactile details coalesce. Consequently, the direct phenomenological experience of paintings is revelatory.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
Abstract	3
Acknowledgements	5
List of Illustrations	8
INTRODUCTION	14
Illustrations for Introduction after page	22
CHAPTER ONE: Architectures of Belonging	23
Precedents	25
Illustrations for Chapter One after page	32
CHAPTER TWO: Asking what love might look like and remembering blossom	33
Structuring colour and the illusion of light	34
The mandala	36
The irregular grid and concentricity	38
Painting close to the edges of colour perception	39
Decelerated looking	40
Emptiness filled	41
Grid power	43
Repetition	46
Nature and rhythm	47
Of formats and surfaces	49
Methodologies	51
Illustrations for Chapter Two after page	52

CHAPTER THREE: Painting light and the poetics of space	53
Emptiness	53
The regular grid paintings	54
The concentric irregular grid-based paintings	55
Eccentric shapes and pictorial structure	57
The materiality of the painted surface	58
Colour and luminosity	58
The colours of light and unnameable shades of grey	59
Illustrations for Chapter Three after page	60
 CONCLUSION	 61
Translation and invention	61
Colour and structure	62
Answers and questions	63
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 67
Curriculum Vitae	72
The final approved Research Program	74

List of Illustrations

Fig. 1 Suzanne Moss, *modular transition*, 2006, oil on linen (8 panels), 244 x 122 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 2 Claude Monet, *Ice Floes*, 1892-93, oil on canvas, 66 x 100.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, H.O. Havemeyer Collection. From http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/european_paintings/ice_floes_claude_monet accessed 15.2.10.

Fig. 3 Peter Doig, *Orange Sunshine*, 1995-96, oil on canvas, 276.2 x 201 cm, The Saatchi Gallery, London. From http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/artpages/doig_Orange_Sunshine.htm accessed 15.2.10.

Fig. 4 Kisho Mukaiyama, *Sanmon WCC – yupotanjyu +nupotanje*, 2005, wax and oil paint, each 49.5 x 49.5 x 5 5/16 inches. From *The Missing Peace Artists and the Dalai Lama*. San Rafael, California: Earth Aware, 2006, 71.

Fig. 5 Eric Fischl, *Bedroom Scene 1* (Krefeld Project), 2002, oil on linen, 79 x 105 inches. From http://www.ericfischl.com/paintings/krefeld_project accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 6 Richard Diebenkorn, *Ocean Park #54*, 1972, oil on canvas, 254 cm x 205.74 cm, Collection San Francisco MOMA. From <http://www.sfmoma.org> accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 7 Suzanne Moss, various experiments, 2006, acrylic on paper, collage of gouache painted paper, painted paper and cardboard constructions.

Fig. 8 Ben Nicholson, *first abstract painting, Chelsea*, circa 1923-4, oil and pencil on canvas, 55.4 x 61.2 cm, Tate Collection. From <http://www.tate.org.uk> accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 9 Suzanne Moss, collage, 2006, gouache on paper, varied dimensions.

Fig. 10 Suzanne Moss, *home construct*, 2006, oil on board, 72 x 68 cm.

Fig. 11 Suzanne Moss, *living room*, 2007, gouache on paper, 40 x 40 cm.

Fig. 12 Suzanne Moss, *home-making*, 2007, gesso, graphite, gouache and collage on cardboard, varied dimensions.

Fig. 13 Suzanne Moss, *home spaces (blue)*, 2007, gesso, colour pencil, gouache on board, 31 x 90 cm.

Fig. 14 Suzanne Moss, *home spaces (green)*, 2007, gesso, colour pencil, gouache on board, 31 x 90 cm.

Fig. 15 Suzanne Moss, *The Visit (roses)*, colour pencil and oil on board, 31 x 90 cm.

Fig. 16 Suzanne Moss, *The Visit (pantry)*, colour pencil and oil on board, 31 x 90 cm.

Fig. 17 Suzanne Moss, *The Visit (between spaces)*, colour pencil and oil on board, 31 x 90 cm.

Fig. 18 Suzanne Moss, *The Visit (that carpet)*, colour pencil and oil on board, 31 x 90 cm.

Fig. 19 Karin Mamma Andersson, *Leftovers*, 2006, acrylic and oil on canvas, 121.9 x 159.7 cm, David Zwirner Gallery. From <http://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/54/> accessed 25.1.10.

Fig. 20 Gwen John, *A Corner of the Artist's Room in Paris*, 1907-9, oil on canvas, 32 x 26.5cm. From <http://www.museumwales.ac.uk> accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 21 Agnes Martin, *Stone*, ink on paper, 27.7 x 27.7 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. From <http://www.moma.org/collection> accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 22 J.M.W. Turner, *A Mountain Scene val d'Aosta*, c.1845, oil on canvas, 91.5 x 122.0 cm, National Gallery of Victoria. From www.ngv.vic.gov.au/collection accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 23 Mikhail Matiushin, *Painterly-Musical Construction*, 1918, gouache on cardboard, 51.4 x 63.7 cm, The George Costakis Collection. From *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Abbeville Press: New York, 1986, 184.

Fig. 24 Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematist Composition: White on White*, 1918, oil on canvas, 79.4 x 79.4 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York. From <http://www.moma.org/collection> accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 25 Debra Dawes, *Parallel planes*, 2007, oil on canvas 261 x 180 cm, National Gallery of Australia. From <http://cs.nga.gov.au> accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 26 Cathy Blanchflower, *Xenon II*, 2006, oil on canvas, 122 x 122 cm. From <http://www.annandalegalleries.com.au> accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 27 Virginia Coventry, *Electric Chartres*, 2001, acrylic, vinyl on marine plywood, 50 x 47.5 cm. From *The Light of Open Spaces. A survey of Virginia Coventry's Work*, ANU Drill Hall Gallery: Canberra, 2004, 3.

Fig. 28 Peter Schuyff, *Son of Random Checkerboard*, 1986-87, acrylic on linen, 228.6 x 167.6 cm. From *Mary Heilmann To Be Someone*. Orange County Museum of Art: Newport Beach, California, 2007, 28.

Fig. 29 Wilma Tabacco, *Angel's kiss*, 2006, oil on linen, 152 x 152cm. From http://www.niagara-galleries.com.au/artists/artistpages/artists_worx/wilma_tabacco accessed 15.2.10.

Fig. 30 Oliver Marsden, 'Ohm II', 2008, acrylic on linen. From http://www.faslondon.com/work_contemporary/Oliver_Marsden_29186.aspx
The Fine Art Society London site accessed 15.2.10

Fig. 31 Dan Walsh, *Fill*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 140 x 140 cm. From Bob Nickas, *Painting Abstraction: New Elements in Abstract Painting*. London: Phaidon, 2009, 113.

Fig. 32 Mark Grotjahn, *Untitled (Lavender Butterfly/Jacaranda over Light Green)*, 2004, 170 x 127 cm. From Bob Nickas, *Painting Abstraction: New Elements in Abstract Painting*. London: Phaidon, 2009, 127.

Fig. 33 Rosslynd Piggott, *Unfolding flower-cloud space no. 2*, oil on canvas, 185.6 x 370.2 cm, National Gallery of Victoria. From www.ngv.vic.gov.au/collection accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 34 Howard Taylor, *Foliage Light Figure*, 1987, oil on canvas, 91 x 62 cm, Private Collection. Photograph courtesy of Douglas and Magda Sheerer, Galerie Düsseldorf, Perth.

Fig. 35 Suzanne Moss, drawing, 2007, colour pencil on graph paper.

Fig. 36 Richard Anuszkiewicz, *Iridescence*, 1965, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm, Collection Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo. From *Abstraction Geometry Painting Selected Geometric Abstract Painting in America Since 1945*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989, 157.

Fig. 37 Suzanne Moss, drawing, 2007, colour pencil on grid paper (scale 1 square = 5mm).

Fig. 38 Suzanne Moss, *#1 (blossoming)*, 2007, graphite, acrylic and oil on canvas, 76 x 76 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 39 Suzanne Moss, *#5*, 2007, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on canvas, 76 x 76 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 40 Suzanne Moss, *circle #1 (remembering blossom)*, 2008, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on board, 100 cm diameter. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 41 Suzanne Moss, *asking what love might look like and remembering blossoms*. 2007-8, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 42 Ingo Kleinert, *Mandala*, 2007, Galvanized iron, 165 x 165 cm seen at Boutwell Draper Gallery, Sydney, May 1, 2008, Boutwell Draper Gallery. From <http://www.art.net.au> accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 43 Suzanne Moss, diagram of blossom and leaf forms, 2007, colour pencil on grid paper (grid notebook #1).

Fig. 44 Suzanne Moss, *#10 (dawn in the city)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 76 x 76 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 45 Suzanne Moss, *#11 (listening)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm. (damaged) Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 46 Suzanne Moss, *#13 (lullaby)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 76 x 76 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 47 Sesshu Toyo, Ch'an painting, 15th C, Muromachi Period, painted on paper, hanging scroll painting, 63.5 x 31.7 cm. Courtesy of The British Museum, London.

Fig. 48 Gerhard Richter, *4900 Colours: Version II*, 2007, enamel paint on Aludibond, 49 panels (of which this is one) each 97 x 97 cm. La Collection de la Fondation Louis Vuitton pour la creation, © 2008 Gerhard Richter. From http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2008/06/gerhard_richter4900_colours accessed 25.1.10

Fig. 49 Mandala of the Buddhist Deity Chakrasamvara, 1590, Opaque watercolor on cotton, Nepal, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. From www.artstor.org accessed 11.1.10.

Fig. 50 Suzanne Moss, *#15 (sky embrace)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 51 Suzanne Moss, sketch for *#15*, 2008, graphite and colour pencil on paper, 16 x 16 cm.

Fig. 52 Suzanne Moss, *#16 (n + 1 measures of tenderness)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 53 Suzanne Moss, *#17 (heart)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 54 Suzanne Moss, *#23*, 2009, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm (since painted over with *#31*). Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 55 Rudolf Arnheim demonstrates the scheme of Albers's paintings noting Albers sometimes omits one or other of the squares which modifies the rhythm. The underlying rhythm of regular intervals remains. From Rudolf Arnheim, *The Power of the Center A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988, 102-103.

Fig. 56 Suzanne Moss, *#24*, 2009, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 240 x 180 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 57 Suzanne Moss, *#25*, 2009, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 240 x 180 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 58 Suzanne Moss, #3, 2007- 9, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on canvas, 76 x 76 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 59 Suzanne Moss, #31 (*rose*), 2009-10, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 60 Suzanne Moss, #33 (*metta*), 2010, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 61 Suzanne Moss, #28 (*love in the time of quanta*), 2009, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 62 Suzanne Moss, #27 (*diagram for gentleness*), 2009, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 63 Suzanne Moss, #29 (*shell beach clouds*), 2009, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 64 Suzanne Moss, #30 (*a soft place*), 2009-10, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 65 Suzanne Moss, #32 (*between the rain – homage to Agnes Martin*), 2010, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 66 Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation*, c. 1441, fresco 176 x 148 cm, Cell 3, San Marco Museum, Florence. From William Hood, *Fra Angelico, San Marco, Florence*. New York: George Braziller, 1995, 106.

Fig. 67 Peter Young, #3-1973, acrylic on canvas, 55 x 56 inches, Collection of Jonathan Scull. Photograph Matthew Septimus. From *Peter Young Paintings 1963-1980*. New York: P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Space, 2007, 58.

Fig. 68 Suzanne Moss, *sharing tea 1*, 2009, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen (diptych) 2 panels each 30 x 30 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 69 Suzanne Moss, *sharing tea 2*, 2009, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen (diptych) 2 panels each 30 x 30 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 70 Suzanne Moss, *windows/jewels 2*, 2009, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 71 Suzanne Moss, *windows/jewels 4*, 2009, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm. Photograph by Rob Little.

Fig. 72 Suzanne drawing up the grid for #33, January 2010. Photograph by Kabir Mokamel.

Fig. 73 In the studio: the works were made against a light grey painted wall. A daylight lamp was used in the mornings and at night. (The two studio windows face west.) January 2010. Photograph by Kabir Mokamel.

INTRODUCTION

The three pear trees looked different. The articulation of every branch had become apparent, I could see how each leaf moved.

Until I met you, I would have been unable to name the transformation that was taking place. Today, at my age, I name it – the fusion of love.

Everything was shifting. The three pear trees, their hillock, the other side of the valley, the harvested fields, the forests. The mountains were higher, every tree and field nearer. Everything visible approached me. Rather everything approached the place where I had been, for I was no longer in that place. I was everywhere, as much in the forest across the valley as in the dead pear tree, as much on the face of the mountain as in the field where I was raking hay.¹

I did not set out to investigate how the materiality and luminosity of paintings create spatial illusions and the poetics of space. My topic evolved through several stages. I began with a fascination for the ambience of interior spaces. I was intrigued by painting's capacity to convey light; I sought to develop a humanising creative practice and I felt an "intense affection" for the work of painting, to borrow the words of sculptor David Smith.² Certainly the seeds of the topic were there. This exegesis documents the evolution of my Studio Research from an exploration of interior spaces to the generation of abstract paintings with spacious luminous effects.

The paintings demonstrate stages of "material thinking", methods of materialising ideas as a process of creative research described by Paul Carter.³ As this process evolved it became clear that making contemplative works was a key objective of my approach to

¹ John Berger, "Once in a Lifetime," in *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos* (London: Bloomsbury, 1984), 29.

² David Smith, *David Smith*, ed. Cleve Gray (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 139.

³ Paul Carter, *Material Thinking. The Theory and Practice of Creative Research* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004), 7.

painting. My material thinking is described chronologically through the exegesis. These processes are interwoven with, and supported by, research on connected areas of art historical and theoretical scholarship, relevant literature, poetry and related art practice.

My interest in the poetics of space derives from the writing of Gaston Bachelard and John Berger – their attention to the complexities of human experience – and my own experiences of paintings, interiors, open spaces and natural phenomena. In 2005, I spoke with Max Harrison, elder of the Yuin nation, about belonging in this country, with the sadness and alienation that I felt regarding what had happened and continues to happen to indigenous people. He spoke generously of sharing the land, and suggested that I “go back to family”.⁴ In my painting practice, this process began with considering my grandmother Kath who had recently passed away, and her house, a labyrinthine place in which I spent a lot of time as a child.

In two previous bodies of work, I investigated the interior of Kath’s house photographically and through collage and paintings wherein the theme was the sense of Kath’s presence and absence (Fig. 1). I commenced my doctoral Studio Research with the intention of finding a visual language to convey the sense of belonging and freedom I experienced within the rooms of her Victorian homestead with the Frank Lloyd Wright inspired extension and the surrounding land flanked by the Murrumbidgee River. In the opening quote, John Berger communicates a similar sense of belonging.

I spent the first year of my candidature investigating colour planes and spaces within spaces, using collage, gouache painting on paper and board, and oil painting on board and canvas informed by photographic source material from Kath’s house. Following numerous experiments using architecturally informed structures with depicted elements, I posed the question: *might it be possible to contemplate significant aspects of human experience, such as love and belonging, through geometric abstract means?* This enquiry became a driver for my project. For me, the major precedent for this approach is Agnes Martin who understood that geometry could be used in the service of

⁴ Max Harrison, May 2005.

contemplation. In this regard, Martin was informed by Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Ad Reinhardt.⁵

When I considered why I find certain paintings so captivating, from Claude Monet's *Ice Floes* (1892-3) to Peter Doig's *Orange Sunshine* (2004), (Figs. 2 & 3), I speculated it was due to their qualities of luminosity: cool and misty in the Monet; warm and strange in the Doig painting. I was also compelled by the possible metaphoric suggestions of a lightness of being, and other states of being too.

During the second year of my programme, informed by my architectural source material, I applied the grid as a method for experimenting with the optical qualities of high value colour interactions, investigating how to generate luminous field effects. I commenced experiments with materials to alter the reflection and refraction of light across the paintings' surfaces using acrylic and oil paint with iridescent and ground pumice mediums.

In a series of 150cm square paintings, I introduced concentric compositions based on irregular grids. The linear junctions provided large areas for colour interaction. I continued to make these during my third year, altering the variables of composition, colour, format, scale and surface, finding that a greater number of intervals and layers of colour created interesting light and shadow effects. With these works, questions about pictorial space and poetic effects came to the fore. In the process of exploring the means of creating luminous effects, ambiguous spatial illusions and qualities of implied motion and rhythm became apparent. Thus my topic evolved into *Painting light, touching space*.

Painting light is a condensed phrase for the structuring of colour interactions, through methods of painting, for the perception of luminous effects. *Touching space* refers to the physical touching of paint to the linen support creating illusions of space, also the

⁵ Barbara Haskell, "Agnes Martin: The Awareness of Perfection," in *Agnes Martin*, ed. Barbara Haskell (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 102.

viewer's vision touching the surface and moving into pictorial space, and being 'touched' or moved by their experience.

Aside from the physical and emotional implications, to 'be touched' also means to be mad.⁶ It seems to me that our inability to articulate, observe or measure the poetic makes it easier to marginalise such seemingly illogical experiences. Yet every strategy is used by visual culture to touch and inspire through appealing to viewers' senses.

While film is always moving and advertising is fast and punchy, a painting is still. Engagement with a painting is essentially and gratifyingly different. New York based writer and critic Bob Nickas suggests that abstraction is an antidote for "the daily flood of images".⁷ It "slows you down" notes curator Max Henry.⁸ Rather than bombarding the viewer with information, the painting is activated by the viewer's engagement; its implied dynamics and meaning come alive through perception, intellect, imagination and myriad links with memory.

And there is something to be said for the phenomenological experience of the real thing which cannot be gained from an image – the impact of the scale, lighting, setting and spaces of reception, the physical reality of paintings' textures, colours, shapes and surfaces that record the artist's movements, materials, methods and insights, and speak of our being in the world. We relate to the physicality of painting in ways that the ephemeral image cannot offer and in those multi-sensual encounters come to know our delights, disgusts and ambivalences.

Nickas addresses the persistence of abstraction in painting: "[i]f a representational picture offers an image of how the world looks, doesn't it fall to abstraction to provide us with an image of how the world feels?"⁹ From Baudelaire's "The Painter of Modern

⁶ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary Ninth Edition*, ed. Della Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 1473.

⁷ Bob Nickas, *Painting Abstraction: New Elements in Abstract Painting* (London: Phaidon, 2009), 7.

⁸ Max Henry, "The New Atlantis: Abstract America," in *Abstract America* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2008), 8.

⁹ Nickas, *Painting Abstraction: New Elements in Abstract Painting*, 7.

Life”, Nickas draws the term “the painter of abstract life” responding to a world that has become vastly more sped up, epic, tragic and unstable since the mid nineteenth century.¹⁰ There is a certain freedom in the viewer’s engagement with paintings as this can occur repeatedly and in their own time. Nickas notes “[t]he painter of abstract life slows down perception at a time when the demands of visual navigation at best disable, and at worst deny, a complete mental involvement in the object of thought”.¹¹ Slow perception improves the quality of life as journalist Carl Honoré on the Slow Movement notes “[w]hen we rush, we skim the surface, and fail to make real connections with the world or other people.”¹² Acknowledging this link between our sense of connection and slow perception, I aim to make paintings that provide a sustained contemplative experience for those who will take the time.

Many artists work with the objective of creating peace and contemplation. Ana Maria Torres cites sculptor Isamu Noguchi (1994): “When the very meaning of life becomes obscure and chaotic, how necessary is the order with which the practice of the arts leads to harmony and without which there is only brutality.”¹³ Sculptor David Smith hoped to “induce a sense of awareness or the contemplative” through viewers giving his work enough time.¹⁴ The Dalai Lama notes that the eighty-eight artists’ works of art in the travelling exhibition *The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama* “seek to create zones of peace, and are intended to inspire others to generate compassion, love and patience”.¹⁵ While the artists have taken a broad range of approaches, a common quality is luminosity, for example, the geometric wax and oil paintings of Kisho Mukaiyama (Fig. 4).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Carl Honoré, *In Praise of Slow* (London: Orion, 2004), 8.

¹³ Ana Maria Torres, *Isamu Noguchi. A Study of Space* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2000), 272.

¹⁴ Smith, *David Smith*, 149.

¹⁵ H.H. The Dalai Lama, “Preface,” in *The Missing Peace. Artists and the Dalai Lama*, ed. Committee of 100 for Tibet & The Dalai Lama Foundation (San Rafael, California: Earth Aware, 2006), vii.

If more of us could spend a few minutes each day cultivating inner peace, the Dalai Lama believes we can generate personal and social transformation.¹⁶ Many other writers, scholars and thinkers agree. According to Julia Kristeva, the need is indicated for “an ‘inner zone’ – a secret garden, an intimate quarter, or more simply and ambitiously, a psychic life.”¹⁷ The cultivation of an inner life is necessary for the prevention of numerous psycho-somatic disorders notes Kristeva.¹⁸ Kelly Oliver explains that by “psychic life” Kristeva means the representation and interpretation of experiences.¹⁹ In her discussion of the Abu Ghraib photographs, Susan Sontag addresses the violence that results from the failure to interpret meaning.²⁰ Alternatively, “[i]maginative response and interpretation”, notes poet Ann Lauterbach, “brings us closer to our sense of connection, our personal agency.”²¹ The numbers of people studying art and visiting art galleries and museums suggests that art in its many forms might provide positive avenues to contemplating meaning. As an example, Drusilla Modjeska cites Michael Kimmelman’s report that the art galleries in New York were full the day after September 11.²²

The intention of ameliorating alienation by making contemplative paintings slowly emerged as a worthwhile objective and led to the formulation of questions which have thematically underpinned my practice: If painting could, even in the smallest way, counter dehumanisation and alienation, how might it be made, what might it look like? How might the contemplation of the highest and best aspects of human experience appear in painted form? Is it possible to paint about the contemplation of connectedness, love and peace in a secular, humanising and non-objective way? Key questions are: “What might love look like?” or “What might love not look like?”

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Julia Kristeva, *New Maladies of the Soul*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Colombia University Press, 1995), 27.

¹⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹⁹ Kelly Oliver, “The Crisis of Meaning,” in *After the Revolution. On Kristeva*, ed. John Lechte and Mary Zournazi (Sydney: Artspace, 1998), 91.

²⁰ Susan Sontag, “Regarding the Torture of Others,” in *At the Same Time. Essays and Speeches.*, ed. Paolo Dilonardo and Anne Jump (London: Penguin Books, 2004).

²¹ Ann Lauterbach, *The Night Sky. Writings on the Poetics of Experience* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 247.

²² Drusilla Modjeska, *Timepieces* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2002), 214.

While these questions cannot be answered directly, they have led to investigations into the formal elements of painting. Early in my research, I was provoked, rather than touched, by Eric Fischl's *Krefeld Project* – a series of twelve paintings seductive in their virtuoso technique and rich palette, relating the apparent failure of relationship between a middle-aged, stylish couple in a stark modernist apartment (Fig. 5). While Fischl painted about a common source of alienation, Martin Hentschel's revealing statement in the catalogue essay about the impossibility inherent in relationships, gave me a locus against which to formulate an alternative approach.²³

Joseph Marioni relates the story of Socrates and the painter Parrhasius where Socrates asks if he could represent the "disposition of the soul".²⁴ Parrhasius asks how such an invisible thing could be represented and Socrates replied that human expressions can be depicted; "the 'look'", notes Marioni "can be represented in shapes and colors because it appears in our visual experience".²⁵ Often I ask what 'the look' of a certain experience might be.

I use the term abstraction to refer to the use of colours and structures to translate experience into 'the look' in terms of the formal and material elements of painting. This process of translation or transmutation of an idea into a visible thing with certain qualities, is in accord with Catherine de Zegher's discussion of the meaning of "abstract" deriving "from the Latin word *abstrahere*, meaning 'to draw from, to remove, to separate'", and "can be equated with both *to draw from* and *to draw form*".²⁶

The stages of Studio Research are presented in three chapters: my first year of candidature is described in **Architectures of belonging**. When my paintings conveyed a sense of searching, I re-evaluated my approach, asking what theme lay beneath

²³ Martin Hentschel, "Stations of a Drama: Eric Fischl's Krefeld Project," in *Eric Fischl. The Krefeld Project*, ed. Martin Hentschel (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2003), 23.

²⁴ Joseph Marioni, "Socrates and the Alligator," in *Abstract Painting between Analysis and Synthesis*, ed. Elisabeth Madlener (Vienna: Ritter-Klagenfurt, 1992), 74.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Catherine de Zegher, "Abstract," in *3x Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing by Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, and Agnes Martin*, ed. Catherine de Zegher and Hendel Teicher (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005), 12.

belonging? The results of considering this question are documented in the second chapter: **Asking what love might look like and remembering blossoms.**

In the final chapter, I recognise the significance of my experiences of natural phenomena and aim for a similar sense of the contemplative. The poetics of space as I experience it in the world and in my painting, is not as much about transcendence as being aware of what is already present and available to the senses. Renato Miracco's statement about Morandi is resonant: "[h]is epiphany.... is not transcendence but rather the spirit of things of this world, almost a materialistic ecstasy that goes straight to the heart of things that surround us."²⁷ Contemplative wonder evokes a timeless, spacious experience that informs my painting.

Looking at flowers, shells, stones and skies, walking on the beach, looking at paintings and sharing tea are some of the experiences that have provided me with a sense of spaciousness, lightness and peaceful awareness. Gaston Bachelard, the originator of the phrase "the poetics of space", explains that in the receptive state, boundaries between one's mind and the object, or vista, seem to fall away and the spaces of intimacy and the world merge through their immensity.²⁸ In relation to painting, the poetics of space signifies the quality of this merging, or connectedness, of one's inspired self with the space of beholding and the picture space.

I have sought to subvert figure-ground relations in favour of a continuous field, a working principle resonant with the aims of Op art and the Colour Field painters. The aim of constructing a field-effect also relates to the continuity of space and matter as described by physicist David Bohm. Based on quantum theory, Bohm describes a theory of connectedness where implicate order unfolds into explicate order as our

²⁷ Renato Miracco, "Nothing Is More Abstract Than Reality," in *Morandi 1890-1964*, ed. Maria Cristina Bandera and Renato Miracco (Bologna: Skira, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, 2008), 302.

²⁸ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 203.

reality, or the intangible becomes tangible.²⁹ An experience of implicate order is consciousness which enfolds our knowledge and perceptions, unfolding as actions.³⁰ For example, thoughts about painting unfold as the act of painting. Architect Christopher Alexander describes consciousness as “the luminous ground”, reinforcing my objective to paint luminous, expansive and returning fields.³¹ In order to do this, my research explores colour interactions, pictorial structures, spatial effects, and surface materialities, culminating in the final chapter: **Painted light and the poetics of space**.

I acknowledge that it is impossible to dictate the viewer’s poetic experience of a painting. While this is so, the thesis that materiality and luminosity create illusions of space and may contribute to the poetics of space was supported in the Dissertation and the Studio Research. From precedents we know it is possible to convey a visual sense of the contemplative, based on the premise that the sensory experience of paintings has qualities in common with meditative practices: the immediate awareness of bodily rhythms, especially observing one’s breathing. This is demonstrated in the work of Hossein Valamanesh and Rosslynd Piggott, and the rhythmic marks of repeated prayers in the work of Savandary Vongpoothorn.

Related theoretical and field research was undertaken alongside the studio research and is presented as the dissertation. It should be read prior to the exegesis as it defines the key terms used in both documents. This exegesis describes the studio research, leading up to and including the body of paintings presented for examination.

²⁹ David Bohm, "Interview with David Bohm," in *Art Meets Science and Spirituality. Art and Design Profile No. 21*, ed. Andreas C. Papadakis (London: Academy Editions, 1990).

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Christopher Alexander, *The Luminous Ground*, 4 vols., vol. 4, *The Nature of Order. An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe* (Berkeley, California: The Center for Environmental Structure, 2004).



Fig. 1 Suzanne Moss, *modular transition*, 2006,
oil on linen, 244 x 122 cm.



Fig. 2 Claude Monet, *Ice Floes*, 1892-93, oil on canvas, 66 x 100.3 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Fig. 3 Peter Doig, *Orange Sunshine*, 1995-96, oil on canvas, 276.2 x 201 cm, The Saatchi Gallery, London.

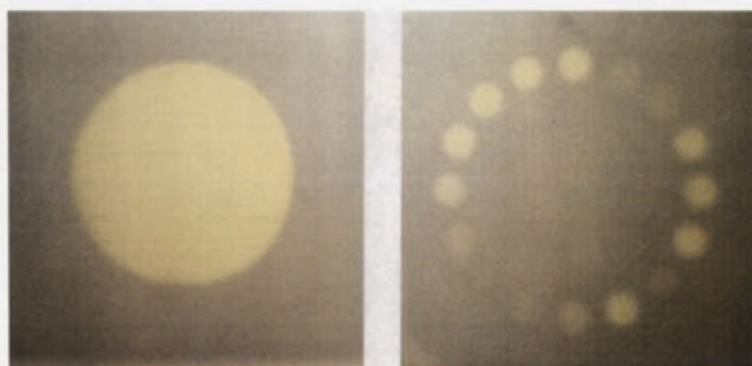


Fig. 4 Kisho Mukaiyama, *Sanmon WCC - yupotanju + nupotanje*, 2005, wax and oil paint, each 49.5 x 49.5 x 5 5/16 inches.



Fig. 5 Eric Fischl, *Bedroom Scene I* (Krefeld Project), 2002, oil on linen, 79 x 105in.



Fig. 6 Richard Diebenkorn, *Ocean Park #54*, 1972, oil on canvas, 254 cm x 205.74 cm, Collection San Francisco MOMA.

CHAPTER ONE: Architectures of Belonging

While the interior of my grandmother's house was resonant source material, an ambience of belonging was not an easily achieved objective. My approach was constructive and I made collages and paintings that held spaces within them. I considered the verb *to hold* to be especially relevant, informed by John Berger's book () *Hold Everything Dear*, Alain de Botton's *Architecture of Happiness* and Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*.^{1 2 3}

I studied and responded to Richard Diebenkorn's *Ocean Park* series of paintings, and noted how he used raking diagonals, a range of geometric shapes, colour and mark to convey pictorial space (Figs. 6 & 7). He reworked his paintings many times, applying obscuring layers, thick and thin, until the work evolved to a state of resolution.

Diebenkorn's overdrawing and erasures suggest the evolution of processes, of breaking and remaking pictorial space.

I investigated Ben Nicholson's constructed and layered approach of both hard and soft-edged shapes (Fig. 8), making collages of painted paper (Fig. 9) and paintings using oil on canvas and board (Fig. 10) and gouache on paper (Fig. 11). I experimented with different approaches to conveying a sense of interior space, from the aerial view, the elevation and the mix of both, the use of various textures, colours, tones, the reduction of pictorial elements and allowing errors to be part of the painting. I suspended depicted interior elements, collaged and painted in gouache within a drawn grid-based structure on cardboard (Fig. 12). I discovered the holding capacity of the grid. The ambiguous spaces of these works were extended into a series of paintings on board (Figs. 13 & 14).

In March 2007, I visited my other grandmother Annie's house near Gundagai, long since vacated, and took photos for new source material. I made four paintings of

¹ John Berger, *Hold Everything Dear. Dispatches on Survival and Resistance* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2007).

² Alain De Botton, *The Architecture of Happiness* (London: Penguin, 2006).

³ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*.

interconnected empty rooms in response to those investigations (Figs. 15, 16, 17, 18). They each began as the same pseudo-architectural drawings in pencil on boards prepared with a white ground. Shapes were designated as spaces for inclusion of interior elements and others, walls. Michael Carter refers to Norbert Elias's powerful metaphor of walls and description of "a system of articulations whereby these 'walls' could be thought of as patterns of daily life, psychological structures, as well as architectural forms."⁴ In *The Visit* paintings, depicted walls and bands of paint hold vignettes of views into rooms and passageways.

Karin Mamma Andersson's paintings informed *The Visit* series in terms of their manipulation of space. In *Leftovers* (Fig. 19), Erika Kane notes that "women are acting out a script that celebrates our attempts to make little sanctuaries in this world rather than one that points out the futilities of such efforts."⁵ A stage setting is suggested, with its fragile and temporary facades while maintaining a sense of the credible lives of each figure, separate and together in their "sanctuary".

The empty interior, Frances Borzello notes, "can carry an extraordinary charge of humanity".⁶ For example, Gwen John's *A Corner of the Artist's Room in Paris* (Fig. 20) has a light, joyful ambience, suggesting John's contentment at that time.⁷ What pictorial elements suggest the intimacy and warmth of John's painting? Is it the warm, high value palette, subtle shifts in tone, the composition of the space opening out fully to the viewer with its placement of things and depiction of drenching sunlight? Although the ambience of the painting is due to a symphony of pictorial elements, these questions led to my investigation of the evocative power of the luminous effects of colour.

In June 2007, it was suggested that *The Visit* series conveyed a sense of searching, of intellectual analysis. I tried reworking the paintings beyond the boundaries of the vignettes to open the scenes to the viewer. Uninspired, I re-assessed the direction of my

⁴ Michael Carter, *Putting a Face on Things. Studies in Imaginary Materials* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1997), 43.

⁵ Erika Kane, "Mamma Andersson," *Contemporary*, no. 82 (2006): 44-45.

⁶ Frances Borzello, *At Home. The Domestic Interior in Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 44.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 47-49.

Research, inquiring into how I could better employ painting's formal and material elements. I made a decision to move away from the subject matter of interiors and began investigating a geometric abstract approach. My early drawings were complex, awkward and difficult to translate into larger scale paintings, which led to the simplification of my approach and consequent employment of the grid.

Precedents

I began making geometric drawings in a small grid notebook in August 2007. I had been examining the exhibition catalogues *Abstraction Geometry Painting*,⁸ *Negotiating Rapture: The Power of Art to Transform Lives*⁹ and *3x Abstraction New Methods of Drawing: Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, Agnes Martin*.¹⁰ The ideals of Agnes Martin, featured in each, resonated profoundly with my thoughts about painting. Martin's ideas drawn from nature, her high value palette, square format and her exploration of grid-based compositions also informed my work (Fig. 21). I have, however, investigated other means of creating the appearance of luminosity using a comparatively complex palette.

There are numerous other precedents in the Western tradition of painting relating to different aspects of my painting practice and I have been informed by many of them. The painting of light effects is a dynamic between depicting light, the luminosity generated by materials and methods, and the interaction of actual light. I was informed by the work of, and literature on Fra Angelico, J.M.W. Turner, Mark Rothko, Agnes Martin, and Howard Taylor. Turner's paintings suggested the layering of colours and dissolution of form. I observed his juxtapositions of pure with impure colours, such as in *A Mountain Scene Val d'Aosta* (Fig. 22), where grey and pink drifts of paint with

⁸ *Abstraction Geometry Painting. Selected Geometric Abstract Painting in America since 1945*, ed. Karen Lee Spaulding and Beverly Fazio (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1989).

⁹ Richard Francis, "Negotiating Rapture, an Introduction," in *Negotiating Rapture: The Power of Art to Transform Lives*, ed. Richard Francis (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996), 2.

¹⁰ Catherine de Zegher and Hendel Teicher, *3x Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing by Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, and Agnes Martin* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005).

tints of creams are interspersed with a pale clear blue creating a sense of luminous atmospheric turmoil.

The Impressionists achieved luminosity through a range of means that I have considered: ground, support, mediums, colours and the way they applied them.¹¹ While their use of thick opaque paint did not appeal to me, I was interested in the reduction of tonal contrast and subtle high value colours, evident in Monet's *Ice Floes* (Fig. 2).

Anthea Callen examines the tonal range in the work of Corot, noting that he aimed to represent the unity of natural light across the painting "by reducing value contrast and brightening colour, giving overall tonal harmony."¹² I discovered that this approach achieves a unifying effect.

Since the inception of abstraction, it has been linked with meditation. The Suprematists' abstract paintings aspired toward a "fourth dimension", the Theosophical term for a higher plane of being achieved through meditation.¹³ Charlotte Douglas notes that the Russian modernist painters were informed by Eastern philosophies and sought poetic ways to convey a sense of elevated consciousness.¹⁴ Kazimir Malevich and Mikhail Matiushin were greatly influenced by the discipline of Vedanta Yoga and linked colour phenomena with the ineffable.¹⁵

Considered a pioneer of colour research in painting, Matiushin experimented with threshold phenomena, including extremely faint shades of colour with the view that "[s]ubtle, barely observable changes in phenomena as fundamental as color, sound, and form give evidence of the unseen world, accessible through meditation but of which we

¹¹ Anthea Callen, *The Art of Impressionism. Painting Technique and the Making of Modernity* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 85.

¹² *Ibid.*, 87.

¹³ Linda Dalrymple Henderson, "Mysticism, Romanticism, and the Fourth Dimension," in *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985* (New York: Abbeville Press and Los Angeles County Museum of Art 1986).

¹⁴ Charlotte Douglas, "Beyond Reason: Malevich, Matiushin, and Their Circles," in *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*, ed. Edward Weisberger (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), 186-7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

are normally unaware."¹⁶ (Fig. 23) While the subtle colours of my paintings have led to suggestions of synaesthetic effects, it has also prompted their dismissal as "just another white on white painting."¹⁷

Malevich, of course, was the first to make such a painting (Fig. 24). His early Suprematist works were contemplative, in order to reach what he described as the "empty place where nothing is perceived but sensation."¹⁸ This gave rise to Malevich's use of the square as "the most affective image".¹⁹

Malevich, however, rejected symbolic content.²⁰ One important aspect of Symbolism is relevant to my work: the creation of light, as John Elderfield notes, the intellectual core of Symbolist art.²¹ Mark Rothko, informed by the Symbolists via Surrealism, has been of particular interest for the same reason. Rothko's floating rectangular shapes and application of many layers of paint to create luminosity, influenced my evolution from hard-edged abstraction toward a broader soft-edged, layered pictorial vocabulary. While the symbol, "an element whose purpose it was to stand for something beyond itself but in a non-narrative way" was the most prominent Abstract Expressionist device, notes Ann Gibson, my work is more about attending to what is there and the sensations evoked.²²

Rothko may have informed Martin's broad expanses of atmospheric colour made by thin layers of paint approaching the infinite space of the Sublime.²³ The space Martin

¹⁶ Ibid., 197.

¹⁷ A student, walking past my work was asked by Gordon to stop and look but said this to Gordon Bull, 2008.

¹⁸ Malevich, 1927 cited by Douglas, "Beyond Reason: Malevich, Matiushin, and Their Circles," 190.

¹⁹ Ibid., 191.

²⁰ John Golding, *Paths to the Absolute. Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollack, Newman, Rothko, and Still. The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), 82.

²¹ John Elderfield, *Morris Louis* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1986), 73.

²² Ann Gibson, "The Rhetoric of Abstract Expressionism," in *Abstract Expressionism the Critical Developments*, ed. David Sylvester (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1987), 65.

²³ Haskell, "Agnes Martin: The Awareness of Perfection," 103.

poetically wrote about, however, was the space “between the rain”.²⁴ This humble suggestion of space could be more conducive to meditation compared with the overwhelming nature of the Sublime.

Constructivists Malevich, Kruchenykh and Matuishin practiced meditation, and painted to achieve what they called *zaum*, a meditative state.²⁵ While the Abstract Expressionist artists disassociated themselves from the infinite intent of the modern’s geometry, many were also deeply influenced by Asian cultures.^{26 27} Barbara Haskell notes that the lectures on Zen given by D.T. Suzuki at Colombia University (1949-1951) captured the interest of an entire generation of artists.²⁸ Surrealism too informed them, notes David Craven, with its “affinity to non-western art, as well as the most sympathy for the struggle against exploitation of Third World people”.²⁹

Historian Naomi Smolik notes it was the theoreticians of formalism “that failed to grasp the mystic origins of abstract painting but also the simple fact that the notion of a pure form is an ancient mystical idea with religious background.”³⁰ The grid, employed in Buddhist mandalas and diagrams for hundreds of years before it appeared in Western art, is a perfect example. The use of the grid as a pictorial structure is ongoing in contemporary artistic practice.

The Australian exhibition *The Field* (1968) included several grid-based works including the paintings of Janet Dawson, Dale Hickey, Robert Hunter, Paul Partos and John Peart. Hunter continues to employ highly ordered, grid-based compositions of flatly

²⁴ Agnes Martin, “The Untroubled Mind,” in *Agnes Martin*, ed. Barbara Haskell (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1973), 18.

²⁵ Douglas, “Beyond Reason: Malevich, Matiushin, and Their Circles,” 186-87.

²⁶ Henderson, “Mysticism, Romanticism, and the Fourth Dimension,” 233.

²⁷ Stanley K. Abe, “To Avoid the Inscrutable: Abstract Expressionism and The ‘Oriental Mode’,” in *Discrepant Abstraction*, ed. Kobena Mercer (London: MIT Press, 2006), 64-65.

²⁸ Haskell, “Agnes Martin: The Awareness of Perfection,” 95.

²⁹ David Craven, “Abstract Expressionism and Third World Art: A Post-Colonial Approach to ‘American’ Art,” in *Discrepant Abstraction*, ed. Kobena Mercer (London: MIT Press, 2006), 39.

³⁰ Naomi Smolik, “Self-Alienated Abstraction,” in *Abstract Painting between Analysis and Synthesis*, ed. Elisabeth Madlener (Vienna: Ritter Klagenfurt, 1992), 60.

applied high value colours.³¹ Several exhibitions in the 1990s demonstrated artists' continued employment of grid-based works; John Young, Debra Dawes and Vivienne Binns are fine examples.

Charles Green criticises Dawes and other contemporary Australian artists who use "systems and structures so familiar that they could not be read as anything but clichés" (Fig. 25).³² Green attributes this to the widening gap between contemporary abstraction and its sources.³³ Smolik addresses this concern, however, noting that contemporary abstract painting

points to its deep embeddedness in a long tradition of art, even if it has long become alienated from this tradition... They (artists) meet this history with some skepticism, but this does not prevent them from still believing in the possibilities of abstract painting.³⁴

Painter Stephen Ellis explains that for us making abstract paintings now "there is no single imperative direction, only a web of connections" as modernism's "diverse idioms have become equally and simultaneously available."³⁵ The richness and freedom of making such connections through painting now is key, rather than being constrained by theory. Evidence of this can be found in Bob Nickas's comprehensive text, showcasing the broad range of approaches to abstraction, and the Saatchi Gallery's recent series of exhibitions and publication *Abstract America*.^{36 37}

The exhibition *Spirit, Light, Pure Form*, (Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, 2001) featured paintings which employed the grid by Virginia Coventry, Celia Gullet, Marie Hagerty

³¹ Michael Wardell, *Phenomena New Painting in Australia: 1* (Melbourne: Ian Potter Museum of Art, 2001), 8.

³² Charles Green, *Peripheral Vision. Contemporary Australian Art 1970-1994* (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1995), 56.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Smolik, "Self-Alienated Abstraction," 61.

³⁵ Stephen Ellis, "After the Fall," in *Abstract Painting between Analysis and Synthesis* (Vienna: Ritter-Klagenfurt, 1992), 147.

³⁶ Nickas, *Painting Abstraction: New Elements in Abstract Painting*.

³⁷ *Abstract America*, (London: Jonathan Cape in association with the Saatchi Gallery, 2008).

and Matthew Johnson. In the exhibition catalogue of *Abstraction Now* Simeon Kronenberg writes: "Like Agnes Martin, [Cathy] Blanchflower subtly includes emotional registering within the confines of a gridded surface."³⁸ (Fig. 26) Where Blanchflower's works are densely filled, however, Martin's are spacious and empty. Similarly, Virginia Coventry's works contain "some *tabula rasa*" and "light of open spaces" notes Terence Maloon.³⁹ Regarding Coventry's 2007 exhibition of hard-edged geometric paintings, Maloon astutely links geometric abstract painting and latent energy (Fig. 27).⁴⁰

My approach to using partially overlapping planes of colour produces different interacting colours and the optical effect of the painted surface slightly hovering beyond the picture plane. The effect is a very gentle version of the kind of optical effects created by a Bridget Riley painting. However, I discovered a more significant link to Riley - her geometric approach and palette is informed by the natural world. Frances Follin lists the late-modernist principles of Op that also apply to my painting: "the lack of distinction between figure and ground, the repetition of units and the use of a grid structure."⁴¹

A resurgence of interest in Op art is demonstrated through the reappraisal and survey *Optic Nerve: Perceptual Art of the 1960s*⁴² and the *Summer of Love* exhibition, held at Tate Liverpool in 2005, which showcased these "criss-crossing currents" of the 1960's.⁴³ The renewed interest may be because Op recognised the importance of the body as a site of experience, as Follin suggests.⁴⁴ Contemporary artists employing Op approaches include Dutch artist Peter Schuyff, British painter Oliver Marsden and

³⁸ Simeon Kronenberg, *Abstraction Now: Notes on Different Paths – an Exploitation of Delight* (Geelong: Geelong Art Gallery, 1996).

³⁹ Terence Maloon, "The Light of Open Spaces: A Survey of Virginia Coventry's Work," in *The Light of Open Spaces* (Canberra: ANU Drill Hall Gallery, 2004), 12.

⁴⁰ Terence Maloon, "Echolocation: Virginia Coventry at the Tin Sheds," in *Virginia Coventry. In Place* (Sydney: Virginia Coventry, 2007), 10.

⁴¹ Frances Follin, *Embodied Visions Bridget Riley, Op Art and the Sixties* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 23.

⁴² Joe Houston, *Optic Nerve Perceptual Art of the 1960's* (New York: Merrell Publishers in association with Columbus Museum of Art, 2007).

⁴³ Martin Herbert, "Summer of Love," *Modern Painters*, no. June (2005).

⁴⁴ Follin, *Embodied Visions Bridget Riley, Op Art and the Sixties*, 226.

Australian painter Wilma Tabacco, known for their employment of geometric forms and luminous optical effects through judicious use of colour (Figs. 28 & 29).⁴⁵

Interested in the writings of David Bohm and Krishnamurti, Marsden makes concentric circle paintings using a spin machine (Fig. 30). He aims to project calm through balance, and “to make substance immaterial, to create a virtual perceived space in the mind of the viewer”.⁴⁶ Matthew Collings writes:

it may change in colour, or pulsate, or it may seem to race – it can be Rothko-esque – slow and full of mysterious depth or can have a pumping beat and be bright and alert – essentially they’re dependent on how the viewer processes them, the viewer’s subjectivity – there are optical effects and illusions, yes, but its not just that....you’re seeing through the illusion – seeing just the raw elements – seeing how the effect is achieved.⁴⁷

Here, Collings comments on three interconnected points: the “viewer’s subjectivity”, or the poetic experience, the range of optical effects and the materiality in Marsden’s work, which touch on the salient points of the thesis. However, where Collings links subjectivity, materiality and illusion, without any in-depth analysis, I aim to reach new understandings about interrelations between these aspects of painting through examination, description and interpretation.

The contemporary context for my painting research can be found in the work of Marsden, Tabacco, Coventry, Robert Hunter, Rosslynd Pigott, and several painters showcased by Nickas: the meditative grid-based works of Dan Walsh (Fig. 31), Bernd Ribbeck’s layered, luminous, geometric works and Mark Grotjahn’s geometric light and spacious paintings (Fig. 32), also described as “meditational for the viewer in the moment, as well as for the artist in the act of painting”.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Matthew Rose, "10 Questions for Peter Schuyff," <http://theartblog.org/2009/06/10/10-questions-for-peter-schuyff/>.

⁴⁶ Oliver Marsden cited by Matthew Collings, "Oliver Marsden's Paintings: Changing Brain States," *Art of England* November, no. 51 (2008): 21.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Nickas, *Painting Abstraction: New Elements in Abstract Painting*, 126.

Piggott sensitively captures the ephemeral experience in her paintings and installations (Fig. 33). I had already begun my blossom-inspired grid paintings when, in late 2007, I saw Piggott's work in the MCA exhibition *Cross Currents*. Curator Merryn Gates describes how Piggott's interest in the intangibles of air, breath and scent transfer to the painted surface through the "finely crafted surface of oil paint, built of sheer layers that allow for subtle shifts of emphasis".⁴⁹ These features informed my greater consideration of surface qualities and subsequent use of fine linen. Significantly, and resonant with my own objectives, Piggott wants the viewer to work, to experience the painting, and aims "to take them into a slow space".⁵⁰

I visited Howard Taylor's concentric geometric painting *Foliage Light Figure* and other luminous works in Perth in May 2009 (Fig. 34). Taylor distilled natural phenomena into luminous, spatially ambiguous paintings. Where Taylor's approach was to try to understand natural phenomena through painting analogies to nature, mine is to make contemplative geometric abstract paintings through structuring the colours of natural phenomena. Gary Dufour describes Taylor's approach as analytical, informed by pictorial problems addressed by painters in the past.⁵¹ While concern for suggesting peaceful experiences aligns my approach with the metaphysical artists (such as Malevich and Martin), an analytical approach is evidenced by my research also.

⁴⁹ Merryn Gates, "Rosslynd Piggott," in *Cross Currents: Focus on Contemporary Australian Art* (Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2007), 83.

⁵⁰ Rosslyn Piggott cited by Andrew Stephens, "Somewhat Extracted," www.theage.com.au/.../07/24/1216492633154.html.

⁵¹ Gary Dufour, "The Inventive Eye," in *Howard Taylor. Phenomena*, ed. Gary Dufour (Perth: Art Gallery of Western Australia, 2003), 16.



Fig. 7 Suzanne Moss, *experiments*, 2006, acrylic on paper, gouache collage on paper, oil on canvas collage, paper constructions.



Fig. 8 Ben Nicholson, *first abstract painting, Chelsea*, circa 1923-4, Oil and pencil on canvas, 55.4 x 61.2 cm, Tate Collection.



Fig. 9 Suzanne Moss, *home components*, 2006, gouache collage on paper, approximately 100 cm square. Destroyed.



Fig. 10 Suzanne Moss, *home construct*, 2006, oil on board, 72 x 68 cm.



Fig. 11 Suzanne Moss, *living room*, 2007, gouache on paper, 40 x 40 cm



Fig. 12 Suzanne Moss, *home making*, 2007, gesso, graphite, gouache and collage on cardboard.



Fig. 13 Suzanne Moss, *home spaces (blue)*, 2007, gesso, colour pencil, gouache on board, 31 x 90 cm



Fig. 14 Suzanne Moss, *home spaces (green)*, gesso, colour pencil, gouache on board, 31 x 90 cm



Fig. 15 Suzanne Moss, *The Visit (roses)*, 2007, oil on board, 31 x 90 cm.

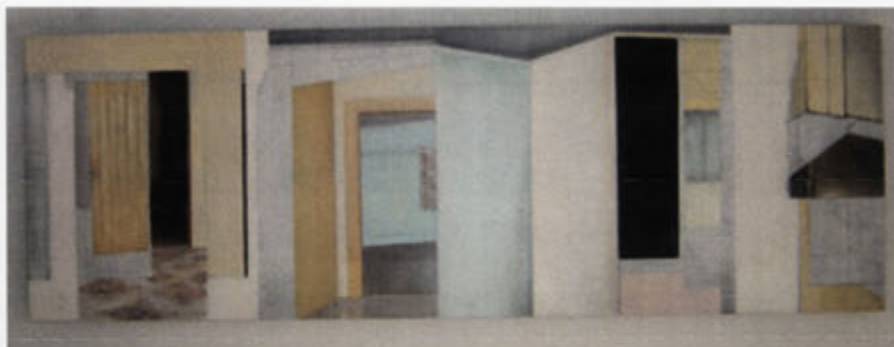


Fig. 16 Suzanne Moss, *The Visit (pantry)*, 2007, oil on board, 31 x 90 cm.



Fig. 17 Suzanne Moss, *The Visit (between spaces)*, 2007, oil on board, 31 x 90 cm



Fig. 18 Suzanne Moss, *The Visit (that carpet)*, 2007, oil on board, 31 x 90 cm



Fig. 19 Karin Mamma Andersson, *Leftovers*, 2006, acrylic and oil on panel, 121.9 x 159.7 cm. David Zwirner Gallery



Fig. 20 Gwen John, *A Corner of the Artist's Room in Paris*, 1907-9, oil on canvas, 32 x 26.5 cm.



Fig. 21 Agnes Martin, *Stone*, ink on paper, 27.7 x 27.7 cm,
Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Fig. 22 J.M.W. Turner, *A Mountain Scene val d'Aosta*, c. 1845, oil on canvas, 91.5 x 122.0 cm,
National Gallery of Victoria.



Fig. 23 Mikhail Matiushin, *Painterly-Musical Construction*, 1918, gouache on cardboard, 51.4 x 63.7 cm, The George Costakis Collection.

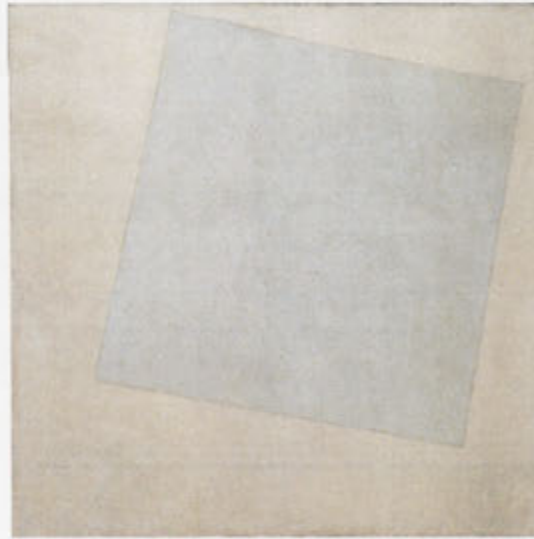


Fig. 24 Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematist Composition: White on White*, 1918, oil on canvas, 79.4 x 79.4 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York



Fig. 25 Debra Dawes, *Parallel planes* 2007, oil on canvas
261 x 180 cm, National Gallery of Australia.



Fig. 26 Cathy Blanchflower, *Xenon II*, 2006, oil on canvas, 122 x 122 cm.

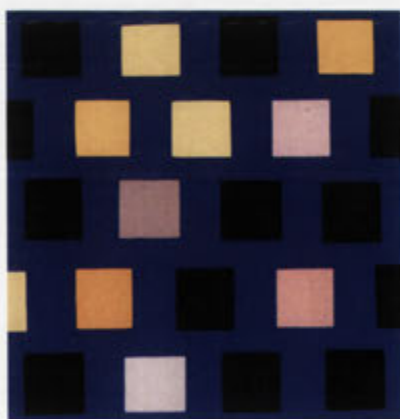


Fig. 27 Virginia Coventry, *Electric Chartres*, 2001,
acrylic, vinyl on marine plywood, 50 x 47.5 cm.

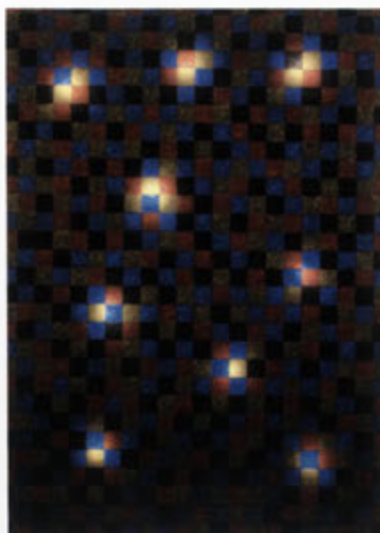


Fig. 28 Peter Schuyff, *Son of Random Checkerboard*, 1986-87, acrylic on linen, 228.6 x 167.6 cm.



Fig. 29 Wilma Tabacco, *Angel's kiss*, 2006, oil on linen, 152 x 152cm.



Fig. 30 Oliver Marsden, 'Ohm II', 2008, acrylic on linen.



Fig. 31 Dan Walsh, *Fill*, 2004, acrylic on canvas, 140 x 140 cm.



Fig. 32 Mark Grotjahn, *Untitled (Lavender Butterfly/Jacaranda over Light Green)*, 2004, 170 x 127 cm.



Fig. 33 Rosslynd Piggott, *Unfolding flower-cloud space No.2*, 2005-6, oil on canvas, 185.6 x 370.2 cm, National Gallery of Victoria.



Fig. 34 Howard Taylor, *Foliage Light Figure*, 1987
oil on canvas, 91 x 62 cm, Private Collection.

CHAPTER TWO: Asking what love might look like and remembering blossoms.

Your love called me aside and asked,
“Why are you passing by and not stopping?”
Then your love told me, “Look at me carefully.
It is me you are seeing everywhere....”¹

This chapter documents and explains my altered course of research using geometric abstract methods from late 2007. The first question: If I could find the essence of ‘belonging’ what would really be there? Love was the answer, entirely unromantic and essential. From kitsch to sublime associations, love is an especially awkward subject. George Orwell predicted the undermining of meaning in language and the suspicion of love and truth in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-four*.² While the reasons are complex, love as a theme in art is regarded with circumspection.

Critic Ann Landi notes that considering the “postmodern stew in which most modern artists find themselves, sentimentality of any sort – and love *is* a sentiment – seems automatically suspect.”³ However, philosopher Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), who coined the expression “Make Love, Not War” notes that the suppression of Eros is destructive; we need to consciously create societies that nurture all aspects of our lives, otherwise we will become less evolved.⁴ The love that Marcuse and I are concerned with is not a sentiment. Rather, it is a necessity well explained by the great teacher Jiddu Krishnamurti:

¹ Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, *Magnificent One. Selected New Verses from Divan-I Kebir*, trans. Nevit Oguz Ergin (Burdett, New York: Larson Publications, 1993), 12.

² George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (New York: Penguin Books, 1949).

³ Ann Landi, “Kiss and Tell,” *Artnews* 94, no. 2 (1995): 116.

⁴ Herbert Marcuse cited by Christopher Phillips, *Socrates in Love. Philosophy for a Passionate Heart* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007), 50.

To be sensitive is to love.... Love gives itself abundantly as a flower gives its perfume.... Love is not sentimentality, nor is it devotion. It is as strong as death. Love cannot be bought through knowledge; and a mind that is pursuing knowledge without love is a mind that deals in ruthlessness and aims merely at efficiency. So the educator must be concerned from the very beginning with this quality of love, which is humility, gentleness, consideration, patience, and courtesy.⁵

If love could be seen, how might it appear? The first image that came to mind was of an infinitely emanating, luminous flower, and I had not read Krishnamurti at that stage. This image provided three qualities to work with, the implied dynamic of emanation and return, luminosity and an expansive field effect. How to convey these qualities using the formal and material elements of painting? After using architecturally informed compositions of spaces within grid-based spaces, I made numerous geometric drawings and arrived at a grid-based, concentric and non-objective approach.

Structuring colour and the illusion of light

During August and September 2007, after making several complex drawings on grid paper (Fig. 35), I adopted the grid because of its simplicity. It was only later I realised how effectively the grid released my work from figure-ground relations, enabled numerous colour interactions and also had links with meditation.

I was intrigued by Agnes Martin's strong structures and high key palette creating paintings which appeared to emanate luminosity. I had no desire to work monochromatically; a selection of colours is central to my idea for a painting. My question was about structure and related directly to my first question about the possibility of contemplating aspects of experience through geometric abstract means: *how can I structure colours to make a painting with luminous, emanating and expansive spatial effects suggestive of the contemplation of love and peacefulness?*

⁵ Jiddu Krishnamurti, *Life Ahead. On Learning and the Search for Meaning* (Novato, California: New World Library, 1963), 10-11.

Richard Anuszkiewicz's painting *Iridescence* provided a structural answer in terms of concentricity (Fig. 36). Karl Lunde notes "his paintings bridge the seeming dichotomy between man-made order and pulsating life, for they state in visual form a mystery that hovers over both nature and science."⁶ Lunde also considers Anuszkiewicz's paintings as creating electric fields with attractions, repulsions and thermodynamic interactions of warm and cool colours.⁷ Inasmuch as the optical effects of Anuszkiewicz's paintings are powerful, their intensity is such that they are difficult to look at for more than a few seconds. What would be the effect of using a subtle palette, and how subtle? Later, making paintings where the colours challenged the thresholds of visibility became an important aspect of my project.

My research using the regular grid to organise high value colours for optical effects began with the making of small coloured pencil drawings in a grid notebook. Concentric squares were overlayed with larger translucent square forms (Fig. 37). The effect of this approach was to create ambiguous spatial effects, while the underlying concentric structure was still quite strong. The early paintings' palette of pink, blue and green was informed by the plum tree blossoming at my back door. Simultaneous colour contrasts occurred between the pure hues and greyed layers of colours, and the juxtaposition of equal value or equiluminant colours created spatial effects, (Fig. 38).

I made two 76cm square paintings before experimenting with increasing the tonal value of my palette, and making several more variations on this theme. In #5, a greater dynamism evolved from the process of varying the surface materiality. Singular blue and iridescent units create material contrasts of opacity, density and variations in the reflection of light across the surface (Fig. 39).

Early in 2008, I made four circular paintings on board (100cm diameter): concentric rosettes with radiating wedge shapes of colour. The most successful was a translation of the blossom paintings into a circular format (Fig. 40). The palette consisted of pale

⁶ Karl Lunde, *Anuszkiewicz* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

pinks and greens varying in purity. Smooth and gritty textures were used along with opaque and translucent paint, within edges and blurring of boundaries.

The mandala

Concurrently, I made my first large canvas in this series of investigations titled *asking what love might look like and remembering blossoms* (Fig. 41). I was inspired by blossoms and the Buddhist nun Rengetsu's poetry-inscribed ceramics:

Gazing up at the cherry blossoms in spring my mind is refreshed.

I can even forget

The ups and downs of life.⁸

The scale of the grid was 6cm squares. Three tints each of green and pink were painted in acrylic around a central square. I had seen Ingo Kleinhert's *Mandala* made from 36 square galvanised iron plates (Fig. 42). Where Kleinhert's composition used even numbers of squares, I had been making my compositions with uneven numbers of squares so that there was a central shape. I painted layers of concentric squares, and blossom and leaf motifs (Fig. 43). A sense of shifting luminosity was achieved through the operations of equiluminant complementary and simultaneous colour contrasts. However, I was concerned that the large unit size made the grid structure too dominant, and tonal contrast emphasized this problem.

Several viewers commented that these early grid paintings were like mandalas. The mandala, an iconic form, suggests a frontal viewing. The Sanskrit word "means a sacred centre ('la') that has been set apart or adorned ('mand')."⁹ It is a contemplative tool for meditation used in Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism and Shinto.¹⁰ The circle signifies

⁸ Lucie Folan Melanie Eastburn, Robyn Maxwell *Black Robe White Mist: Art of the Japanese Buddhist Nun Rengetsu*, trans. Meher McArthur (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2007), 101.

⁹ Meher McArthur, *Reading Buddhist Art. An Illustrated Guide to Buddhist Signs and Symbols* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 175.

¹⁰ Rowena and Rupert Shepherd, *1000 Symbols. What Shapes Mean in Art and Myth* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 337.

perfection and eternity, while the square often symbolizes matter and stability.^{11 12} This information affirmed my use of the circular or square format for the purpose of constructing a composition to evoke contemplation.

Anuszkiewicz, whose painting informed my concentric composition, was a student of influential artist and teacher, Josef Albers, who once said “that is what I want to do: to make twentieth-century meditational images.”¹³ The legacy of his intention found its way into my work through Anuszkiewicz’s concentrically composed paintings.

Mandalas are contemplative forms evident in Celtic art also, the domes and rose windows of European cathedrals and the natural forms of flowers. Hildegard von Bingen made, and used, mandalas as images for contemplation in the twelfth century.¹⁴ They are universal forms, writes Michael Flanagan noting C.G. Jung’s realisation that mandala forms arise spontaneously in dreams and drawings outside of religious contexts.¹⁵

That said, the vast influence of Buddhism on Western art is recognised. Jacquelynn Baas investigates how Buddhist perspectives informed the approaches of twenty artists toward issues personal and global, including Agnes Martin.¹⁶ Mark Epstein notes the attendance of Martin, Philip Guston and John Cage, at D.T. Suzuki’s lectures at Columbia University where the professor taught that awareness of one’s state of mind and “cultivating emptiness” through meditation enhanced creativity.¹⁷ The art they made, and the many they inspired carry his message, notes Epstein, asking us to

¹¹ Ibid., 334.

¹² Ibid., 335.

¹³ Friedhelm Mennekes, "Interconnection: Religion and Art,," in *Beyond Belief. Modern Art and the Religious Imagination*, ed. Rosemary Crumlin (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1998), 27.

¹⁴ Joan and Miron Borysenko, "Forward," in *Mandala. Luminous Symbols for Healing*, ed. Judith Cornell (Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2006), xvii.

¹⁵ Michael Sage Flanagan, "Afterword: The Mandala in Jungian Psychotherapy," in *Mandala. Luminous Symbols for Healing*, ed. Judith Cornell (Wheaton, Illinois: The Theosophical Publishing House, 2006), 140-41.

¹⁶ Jacquelynn Baas, *Smile of the Buddha. Eastern Philosophy and Western Art from Monet to Today* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 10.

¹⁷ Mark Epstein, "Meditation as Art: Art as Meditation," in *On the Being of Being an Artist*, ed. Mary Jane Jacob (Chicago: School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2006), 53.

question rather than be complacent and “embarrass ourselves instead of worrying about what other people think.”¹⁸

The irregular grid and concentricity

Adhering to the scaffold of the grid provided an effective structure for colour experimentation toward creating material, luminous and spatial effects. The tenth painting in the series of 76 cm square paintings was the first to test the effect of employing an irregular grid with juxtapositions of red, blue, yellow and grey tints. I applied a lesson from Turner’s *Val d’Aosta*: to sandwich a colour between grey made it appear more luminous (Fig. 22). Also a form of contrast of saturation, is Birren’s “contrast of purity” where the dull colour makes the relatively pure colour appear brighter.¹⁹ In #10 (*dawn in the city*), equiluminant colours flicker with luminous effects (Fig. 44). This monotonal painting was the beginning of a new body of work.

I had planned to make a larger version of #10, however, once the concentric shapes were painted, #11 (*listening*) was complete (Fig. 45). I did not paint groups of shapes with selected colours as in #10. Without taking this step, the painting achieved my objective of being expansive, emanating and returning in this simpler state of concentric shapes. To find that the concentric composition was enough was an important turning point and several paintings were made in this manner, with variations in composition, palette, layering and quality of boundaries of colours through 2008 and 2009.

Unfortunately, the surface of #11 cracked in a few places. There may have been problems with the sealing glue, too many layers of gesso becoming brittle, and an alternately damp or dry studio environment. Small amounts of crazing have occurred in two other canvases prepared at the same time in 2007. I addressed this problem by using less layers of gesso on linen rather than canvas, and paints and mediums of superior quality. Returning to refurbished studios most likely helped.

¹⁸ Ibid., 55.

¹⁹ Faber Birren, *Color Perception in Art* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1976), 9.

Painting close to the edges of colour perception

While I did not set out to test or challenge the viewer, working close to the edge of colour perception became a rewarding territory for investigation. For #12, the same approach as for #10 was taken, but with turning down the colour saturation even further. It is a white on white painting. Unable to be reproduced photographically, its surface is like that of a damask cloth, and the most challenging to the viewer's visual perception. I found, however, that while using tinted whites, colour interactions lessened substantially and shifts in surface materiality became much more significant through affecting the behaviour of light. The quality of luminosity is that which is inherent in white paint and its reflection and diffusion of light, rather than the spatial effects of luminous colour interactions. Consequently, I returned to the subtle colour and tonal variations employing greater hue saturation for increased colour interactions and accompanying spatial effects.

It was explained to me that due to the difficulty photographing my paintings, their hue saturation must be around or below 15%.²⁰ It was found that at high tonal values with low hue saturation levels, the work takes on dynamic effects because of the time taken for the colours to visually register – there is a time of appearance. The painting is not there all at once. It is only over time, in the direct physical presence of the work that the viewer experiences a full sensory response to the materials and formal qualities of the work. While this was not initially an intended consequence of making high key paintings, it demonstrates that beholding actual paintings is a multi-sensorial experience where the viewer has agency.

Once seen, at a viewing distance where surface details coalesce, the surfaces of some of my paintings have a sense of unfixeness because of the minimal tonal contrast. The brain has difficulty assigning the location of adjacent areas of equiluminant colours in relation to each other and the picture plane; different colours of the same tonal value appear to both advance and recede in relation to each other.²¹ When the subtlety of hue

²⁰ Rob Little, 2009.

²¹ Margaret Livingstone, *Vision and Art: The Biology of Seeing* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002), 66.

is introduced, questions arise – what colours are there, where are they in space and at what degree of saturation do they begin to interact?

Decelerated looking

In employing high value colours, the viewer is required to take more time to see the work. A number of writers have commented on this decelerated looking. Joe Houston notes Malevich's *White on White* painting provokes the viewer to look more closely - it requires more effort (Fig. 24).²² Similarly, Houston notes, the visual threshold of Martin's high value, grid-based paintings is low, "prompting a decelerated and careful examination, which in turn attends a psychological and even physiological response."²³ Dave Hickey notes a kinaesthetic response: "by making paintings that resist being seen at all and that, by resisting our efforts to see them, literally move us around the room in the hope of seeing what we cannot."²⁴ Without any thing or any colour, Lucy Lippard notes that monotonal painting demands the viewer's full engagement.²⁵ Lippard observes: "[t]he spectator might find the work dull, then impossibly dull; then surprisingly, he breaks out on the other side of boredom into an area that can be called contemplation."²⁶ While it is demanding, it is rewarded viewing, as Hickey proposes, it "does its own work for whoever will look."²⁷ I hope to engage and sustain the viewer's looking in these ways, rewarding viewing with intriguing visual and spatial illusions.

For the making of #13 (*lullaby*), I made a range of red-orange and red-blue tints with a greater tonal range informed by a sea-shell (Fig. 46). The effect is a gentle rhythm of compression and relaxation of space across, inward and outward of the picture plane creating varied intervals of light and warm shadowy colours using layers of primary and secondary tints. These effects informed later paintings.

²² Houston, *Optic Nerve Perceptual Art of the 1960's*, 101.

²³ *Ibid.*, 102.

²⁴ Dave Hickey, "Trying to See What We Can Never Know," in *Optic Nerve Perceptual Art of the 1960's*, ed. Joe Houston (New York: Merrell Publishers in association with Columbus Museum of Art, 2007), 13.

²⁵ Lucy R. Lippard, *Changing. Essays in Art Criticism* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1971), 134.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Hickey, "Trying to See What We Can Never Know."

Emptiness filled

The sense of potential in the activated, seemingly empty field painting is intriguing. Heinz Liesbrock described Agnes Martin's *The Islands* as "the paradox of emptiness filled".²⁸ The group of Martin's twelve paintings from 1979, each 182 cm square format, feature rhythmic horizontal bands of pale related colours. They possess a sense of infinite fields although Liesbrock observes that the square format, as in Albers' paintings, is self-contained uniting the scale and inner forms.²⁹ The Abstract Expressionist painters, including Martin, were informed by the Buddhist concept of emptiness.³⁰ Like John Cage, Martin wrote of the "empty mind, waiting in readiness for inspiration",³¹ and used her interest in Buddhism and Taoism "to develop an idea of art as a mode of developing awareness or heightening perception, and so as a vehicle of revelation for artist and viewer alike."³²

In Buddhism, emptiness, or *shunyata*, is one of the qualities of the awakened heart or bodhichitta, notes Buddhist nun and teacher Pema Chödrön.³³ Chödrön cites the nineteenth century Tibetan teacher Jamgön Kongtrül from the Mahayana school of Buddhism (from the *lojong* teachings from *The Great Path of Awakening*), listing the qualities of the awakened heart:

(1) it is soft and gentle, which is compassion; (2) at the same time, it is clear and sharp, which is called *prajna*; and (3) it is open. This last quality of bodhichitta is called *shunyata* and is also known as emptiness....there's a heart quality – the warmth of compassion – that pervades the space and the clarity.³⁴

²⁸ Heinz Liesbrock, *Agnes Martin: The Islands* (Dusseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2004), 42.

²⁹ Ibid., 40.

³⁰ Baas, *Smile of the Buddha. Eastern Philosophy and Western Art from Monet to Today*.

³¹ Haskell, "Agnes Martin: The Awareness of Perfection," 107.

³² Anna C. Chave, "Agnes Martin: "Humility, the Beautiful Daughter... All of Her Ways Are Empty" " in *Agnes Martin*, ed. Barbara Haskell (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), 135.

³³ Pema Chödrön, *Start Where You Are* (London: Element, 2005), xi.

³⁴ Ibid., 11.

Implied is a poetics of space, in this case, an open space with qualities of gentleness, clarity and warmth. Bachelard's description of the merging of the immensity of one's inner space or imagination with the world space of immensity, aligns well with shunyata and the expansive meditative state.³⁵

Fifteenth Century Ch'an (Zen) paintings embody this quality of emptiness, as Hal Foster observes (Fig. 47).³⁶ Foster notes the expanded gaze and radical impermanence of shunyata is suggested through the dematerialisation of distant mountains and the limitless atmospheric space of Ch'an paintings.³⁷ Although there are no intentional landscape elements in my painting, this is the kind of reading that I aim for.

Among many commentators, William Dunning notes that Zen has two major functions in the arts: to encourage demystification, and to discipline the practitioner of a skill until it loses all self-consciousness.³⁸ This is as much as the painter needs to know, asserts Dunning, stating that the abstract expressionist's interest in Zen was in the lack of prior mental planning.³⁹ For Agnes Martin this was not the case. The effect of any meditation practice on an artist's practice cannot be predicted. Nevertheless, for me, the repetitive nature of painting squares and creating rules in response to what is happening in the painting, fosters a meditative process.

By this, I do not mean an anti-intellectual approach, but a focussed way of working combining objectivity and subjectivity in an "intense immensity" of making. It might be thought of as Logos and Eros, although it feels like an inseparable process as Socrates taught; both reason and instinct are 'entwined in the service of *arête*'.⁴⁰ *Arête*, is human excellence or the love of wisdom, notes Christopher Phillips.⁴¹ Philosopher Herbert

³⁵ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 203.

³⁶ Hal Foster, "The Gaze in the Expanded Field," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1988), 101-2.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ William V. Dunning, *Changing Images of Pictorial Space. A History of Spatial Illusion in Painting* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 172.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Phillips, *Socrates in Love. Philosophy for a Passionate Heart*, 36.

⁴¹ Ibid., 21-22.

Marcuse believed Eros needed to be united with Logos for its best creative use.⁴² In arts practice, and in painting as research, this occurs through the formulation of inquiries, the processes of drawing and painting, evaluating experiments, refining research questions, becoming increasingly responsive to the results, and inquiring further through new work.

In investigating the integration of structure and colour toward the generation of luminosity and spatial effects, I am, in effect, melding form and formlessness. Agnes Martin described beauty, happiness and perfection as the formless subjects of art where perfection is “the intensity of absolute beauty and happiness experienced when our minds are empty of ego and the distractions of the everyday world”.⁴³ Simple geometric structures have offered a range of choices with which to order and harness the power of colour for the translation of such experiences.

Grid power

“The grid”, notes Griselda Pollack, is “a means of mapping on two dimensions the space that is both created by a series of more than two points and becomes the support for the structure.”⁴⁴ According to Pollack, it maps relations between components that are otherwise not in a narrative or perceptual order.⁴⁵ Using examples of the work of Reinhardt and Agnes Martin, Rosalind Krauss notes that the “mythic power” of the grid “is that it makes us able to think we are dealing with materialism (or sometimes science, or logic) while at the same time it provides us with a release into belief (or illusion, or fiction).”⁴⁶ While some modernists’ use of the grid originates from optics texts, Krauss suggests the appearance of the grid as window mullions in Symbolist art had a greater influence.⁴⁷ I relate to this suggestion through the development of my own Studio Research from architectural origins.

⁴² Ibid., 51.

⁴³ Haskell, “Agnes Martin: The Awareness of Perfection,” 93-4.

⁴⁴ Griselda Pollack, “Agnes Dreaming: Dreaming Agnes,” in *3x Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing by Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, and Agnes Martin*, ed. Catherine de Zegher and Hendel Teicher (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2005), 165.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1985), 12.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 16-17.

Krauss goes on to explain the implied dynamics of the grid in art works. A centrifugal reading of the grid as a fragment of infinity occurs where it “operates from the work outward” and a centripetal reading is in an inward direction.⁴⁸ Centrifugal paintings, such as those by Agnes Martin, explore the perceptual field, whereas the more concrete are lattices modelling architectural space, for example the work of Sol LeWitt.⁴⁹ The centrifugal grids often dematerialise the surface, and imply movement.⁵⁰ Mondrian, Albers, and LeWitt employed the grid to operate in both directions at the same time.⁵¹ This is also my objective in accord with the expansiveness of contemplation, and the ‘coming home’ to the site of perception, the body.

Krauss, in the eighties, noted that the structural properties of the grid are silent and static, “impervious both to time and to incident”,⁵² however, my research has shown that the addition of colour with varying surface materialities can make the grid-based painting visually dynamic with luminous, spatial and poetic effects. More recently, in relation to Richter’s employment of the grid in his series *4900 Colours* (Fig. 48), art historian Benjamin Buchloh discusses the diagram, pioneered in art by Josef Albers, Ellsworth Kelly, Agnes Martin, Frank Stella, Piero Manzoni and Richter.⁵³ He asserts that diagrammatic abstraction does not refer to the cosmic, the somatic or spiritual, desire or freedom, rather it recognises that painter and the spectator are contained in controlling systems of spatio-temporal quantification.⁵⁴

I address Buchloh’s limiting statement because he does not mention how the formal and material transformation of the diagram by painters may vastly change its references. The kind of support surface, materials, mediums, methods and informed thinking bring

⁴⁸ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 21.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Rosalind Krauss, “Reading Jackson Pollock, Abstractly,” in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1985), 158.

⁵³ Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, “The Diagram and the Colour Chip: Gerhard Richter’s 4900 Colours,” in *Gerhard Richter 4900 Colours*, ed. Rebecca Morrill and Sam Phillips Melissa Larner (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2008).

⁵⁴ Ibid., 64.

qualities to the grid. This is illustrated by the different sensations suggested by the same diagram in Agnes Martin's *Red Bird* grids – one small and neatly drawn on paper with smooth, ruled red pencil lines asserting a sense of presence and the other – large, atmospheric and on canvas, the lines bumping over lumps of gesso and almost fading out in places, suggesting change, distance and disappearance.

No two artists' grids are the same – Mondrian's suggest utopian ideals, Minimalist grids speak of simplicity and clarity, while Martin's grids refer to repetition and change, perfection and imperfection, presence and absence.⁵⁵ In addition to measured time and space, the suggestions of geometry and diagrams in painting are affected by surface materiality, the unit scale and format, the employment of colour and to other diagrams, geometries or systems. From the work of art historian Hannah B. Higgins,⁵⁶ French mathematician Matyla Ghyka,⁵⁷ and architect philosopher Christopher Alexander, it can be seen there is a long and rich history of the use of such structures as solutions for ordering, understanding and constructing ideas, forms and spaces in our world.⁵⁸

According to Alexander, the locating of living spaces through using the grid has attracted major criticism for creating alienating architecture through "banal repetition" without alternation.⁵⁹ However, the grid has been used in making contemplative images for millennia, for example, the combined circle and square of a Himalayan mandala⁶⁰ (Fig. 49). The difference is that irregularities in formal elements counter banality and have a humanising affect. Geometry and the diagram were meaningful modernist idioms, and persist as visible source material with multiple references once they are transformed by the material specificities of painting.

⁵⁵ Chave, "Agnes Martin: "Humility, the Beautiful Daughter... All of Her Ways Are Empty" ", 150-51.

⁵⁶ Hannah B Higgins, *The Grid Book* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Books, 2009).

⁵⁷ Matila Ghyka, *The Geometry of Art and Life* (New York: Dover Publications, 1977).

⁵⁸ Christopher Alexander, *The Phenomenon of Life*, 4 vols., vol. 1, *The Nature of Order. An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe* (Berkeley, California: The Center for Environmental Structure, 2004).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 168-9.

⁶⁰ Rudolf Arnheim, *The Power of the Center. A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 9-11.

Repetition

The grid is a linear structure offering an infinite range of compositional variations to the artist. Arnheim speaks of the grid and concentric circles as “scaffolds of order” where the grid “serves to localize items in a homogenous space.”⁶¹ Krauss, however, claims that the grid is about repetition rather than originality and “a prison in which the caged artist feels at liberty”.⁶² However, artists have long recognised the positive benefits of working within defined constraints. Bridget Riley notes that she was guided by Stravinsky’s lectures that he gave at Harvard (1939-40), published in *The Poetics of Music*:

My freedom thus consists in moving about within the narrow frame that I have assigned myself for each one of my undertakings. I shall go even further: my freedom will be so much the greater and more meaningful, the more narrowly I limit my field of action and the more I surround myself with obstacles...⁶³

I have discovered seemingly endless possibilities of scale, interval and colour juxtapositions through working within the limitations of the grid-based composition.

Griselda Pollack suggests that with repetition, which we see in series of paintings, “we attend to what occurs between each instance”.⁶⁴ Considering why Agnes Martin repeatedly paints the grid, Pollack extends this suggestion into a fascinating question: “does it mean that there is an effect strung out between each work – an invisible space that both participates in each work but is only created by the series, not the repeating but the relations?”⁶⁵ This points to the crucial significance of the actual spaces between exhibited paintings, affecting the noticing of what is different in each painting – the palette, the materiality and the approach. The physical and temporal space between

⁶¹ Ibid., 8.

⁶² Krauss, “Reading Jackson Pollock, Abstractly,” 160.

⁶³ I. Stravinsky (1942) cited by Bridget Riley in E.H. Gombrich and Bridget Riley, “Perception and the Use of Colour. Talking to E.H. Gombrich,” in *Bridget Riley Dialogues on Art*, ed. Robert Kudielka (London: Zwemmer, 1992).

⁶⁴ Pollack, “Agnes Dreaming: Dreaming Agnes,” 163.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 164.

paintings in series is in conjunction with a shift in thinking, provided by the results of the previous work and informing the way for the next. The “effect strung out between each painting” is, in my practice, one of potential, of understanding and speculation.

In working initially within the constraint of the 4cm regular grid, I was able to explore the variables of colour, transparency, opacity, texture, mark, rhythm and scale of the painting and scale of the grid module. Areas of colour vibration creating luminosity and spatial effects drove the painting of the concentric compositions. In November 2008, I showed six 150cm square concentrically composed geometric paintings, four on canvas and two on linen, and two asymmetrically composed paintings on board. The works demonstrated developments from hard-edged geometric painting as in #11 (Fig. 45) using one or two layers of high value colour to multi-layered paintings with a range of qualities of colour boundaries (Fig. 50, and Fig. 51 a colour drawing study for #15 shows the structural planning for the painting.) Three considerations arose at that time: to experiment with larger and rectangular formats; introduce asymmetry gradually rather than the rapid leaps made in the 90cm experiments on board and continue to consider the surface.

I reflected on the smoothness of the surfaces I was using, and the effect of this on pictorial space. Marcia B. Hall discusses the Venetian painters’ shift from using board to canvas, noting that “[b]ecause shapes could be suggested rather than defined, canvas enabled Venetian painters to obtain the atmospheric effects they favoured.”⁶⁶ Hall notes that until they discovered the usefulness of the texture “they seemed to want to deny the surface altogether by gessoing the canvas as they did a panel.”⁶⁷ I decided to experiment with a more textured surface.

Nature and Rhythm

Rhythm is often mentioned when describing the paintings of the Post Impressionists, the Futurists, Abstract Expressionists and Op artists. However, the quality of rhythm varies greatly between painters and their paintings: Giacomo Balla’s colour interactions

⁶⁶ Marcia B. Hall, *Color and Meaning Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 209.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

and repeated altered forms convey the dissolution of nature into rhythmic energy;⁶⁸ Agnes Martin conveys the essential rhythmic nature of things and Bridget Riley, informed by Seurat, aimed to “conjure for the viewer an experience of nature”.⁶⁹ Jonathan Crary raises the question of whether perception of the organized colour contrasts of neo-impressionism involved some kind of oscillation or temporal beat or whether such work is within the domain of the purely optical.⁷⁰ Writer Ursula Le Guin notes “[r]hythm is a physical, material, bodily thing”, and all art rises from and moves with the rhythms of our body and being.^{71 72} While rhythm can be seen visually, the pulse of colours cannot be “purely optical”, just as a drumbeat cannot be purely auditory.

There are different rhythms and arrhythmias in my paintings that suggest time, space and motion. The spasmodic but gentle flickering effect within the fine grid paintings contrasts with the more emphatic, cyclical but ephemeral beat of #16 (*n+1 measures of tenderness*) and #17 (*heart*) (Figs. 52 & 53). The concentricity provides a structure for a more pronounced rhythm whereas the field of small squares features seemingly momentary incidents of light. Tension is created between the arrhythmia of lights among relative shadow and the stability of the composition and format.

The sensation of pulsing provided by colour interactions, corresponds to the effect of having to change focus on different colours as explained by Rene Parola:

In 1922 M. Luckiesh found that the eye must adapt to different focal lengths for different colors... The use of warm-cool relationships not only affects colour changes but also forces the viewer to refocus. The greater the difference in colour, the greater the fluctuations in focus.⁷³

⁶⁸ Houston, *Optic Nerve Perceptual Art of the 1960's*, 36.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Jonathan Crary and Rosalind Krauss, "Discussion," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1988), 76.

⁷¹ Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Wave in the Mind. Talks and Essays on the Writer, the Reader and the Imagination* (Boston: Shambhala, 2004), 71.

⁷² Ibid., 282.

⁷³ Rene Parola, *Optical Art Theory and Practice* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co, 1969), 131-32.

The effect is explained in a different way by neurobiologist Margaret Livingstone who notes that artists have long valued the sense of vibration that equiluminant colours generate.⁷⁴ Livingstone explains that we are able to determine what two equiluminant or same tone colours are, but are unable to locate where these colours are in space so that each appears to move forward and back in relation to the other.⁷⁵ Dynamic perceptual effects might suggest the presence and transience of all kinds of subjective experiences, as Bridget Riley suggests: "perception is the medium through which states of being are directly experienced."⁷⁶

I was dissatisfied with the rhythm of #23; the intervals were too regular, the colours repetitive and predictable (Fig. 54). This painting was likened to Albers' work. Although my paintings have been compared with Albers', my compositions and colours do not follow a formula as his did (Fig. 55).⁷⁷ Like Albers, my compositions employ centricity and concentricity where the role of the frame does not limit the expansion of energy from the centre, as noted by Arnheim.⁷⁸ On the other hand, Albers' shapes appear to be affected by weight,⁷⁹ whereas my concentric compositions compress and relax at top, base and sides aiming for a sense of dynamic weightlessness, a compression and expansion akin to breathing. My measurements are irregular and transposed from freehand drawings, composed of many concentric rectangles and several layers of high value colours. In the most successful of these paintings, the layering results in a range of unpredictable colours of varying purity interacting to create luminosity.

Of formats and surfaces

Early in 2009, I made two large rectangular paintings, one with a smooth surface (#24), the other textured with roughly applied gesso (#25) (Figs. 56 & 57). It had been suggested that the medium-coarse canvas surface might distract from the sense of the ineffable that I wanted to evoke. However, I had examined Agnes Martin's unevenly

⁷⁴ Livingstone, *Vision and Art: The Biology of Seeing*, 66.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Bridget Riley, "Perception Is the Medium," *Art News* 64, no. 6 (1965): 32.

⁷⁷ Arnheim, *The Power of the Center. A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*, 103.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 104.

gessoed canvases and they evoked atmospheric effects when viewed from several metres. Kathryn A. Tuma suggests that, along with the colour phenomena, the material qualities of Martin's surfaces are part of the poetics of her work.⁸⁰ This paradox of a painting's luminosity and its materiality of surface led to investigative field studies in Florence, London and New York late in 2008. My research findings are presented in the dissertation.

Both paintings demonstrated compositional problems. The smooth painting's composition, #24, was too compressed in the central area. There was less ease of visual movement between the concentric shapes. Colour interactions and spatial effects were much less effective than in the previous paintings. I had intended to repeat the same composition but decided against this. The rough surface created a foggy, grey atmospheric effect due to causing an uneven paint application with tiny highlights and shadows. The scale, however, required such a large space of reception that the textured surface was no longer visible. The intervals were not sufficiently varied so the narrow bands appeared to float on top of the wide bands rather than evoke an expansive field effect. Aside from the difficulties in physically dealing with the larger scale in a small studio, I found that rectangular compositions were far more difficult to make both dynamic and balanced.

Both rough and relatively smooth, large surfaces with uneven paint application are equally able to evoke atmospheric effects due to the large viewing distance required to see the whole painting. Moderately and small sized works, however, benefited from the use of fine linen as the surface details coalesce readily with stepping back from viewing at close quarters, giving way to the spatial and light effects of colour interaction without the shadowy effects of surface textures.

I returned to the square format. Regardless of the composition, the square establishes a balanced state and consequently allowed a greater freedom of experimentation with the concentric compositions. Arnheim explains that the vertical format depicts the

⁸⁰ Kathryn A. Tuma, "Enhancing Stillness: The Art of Agnes Martin," in *3 X Abstraction: New Methods of Drawing*, ed. Catherine de Zegher and Hendel Teicher (New York: The Drawing Center, 2004).

overcoming of gravity, the horizontal reflects the struggle with it and the square permits a suspension of the work of art, a more “even distribution of visual weight”.⁸¹ My research had led me to agree.

Methodologies

My methods and processes have included the use of a reflective journal, the observation of paintings, the making of small experimental drawings and paintings and larger works on board, canvas and linen. From mid 2008, substantial developments occurred in my Studio Research. A general method evolved toward the construction of a luminous geometric field painting. Moving away from drawing on grid paper, my ideas became realised as colour pencil drawings from which structured drawings are made and transposed to a larger stretched linen support.

The painting commences with bands of concentric shapes. Recalling the source idea, colours are mixed and painted, overlapping translucent matte layers, making some areas more saturated and other areas more grey such that there are contrasts of purity. The laying down of specific areas of colour might be explained as a random method, however, I understand this process as two-fold. I devise a temporary rule and apply this rule to the next area that my eye alights upon, progressively working around the painting. This process is interrupted by evaluation. The ‘rule’ might be to paint groups of nine squares in blue over the outer one third of the picture, for example, until that instruction is completed and a new rule made in response to re-evaluation. The final stage of painting is slower, more considered. Qualities that have arisen are heightened or lessened; emphases are decided. Shifts in materiality are introduced through the application of oils, or mediums that vary the refraction of surface light.

While early in my candidacy I had planned to investigate luminosity and darkness, it was more than enough to address the territory of luminosity in painting. The use of a high value palette was integrated from the research into my painting practice. Each painting demonstrates the interactions of a different palette as the layers are in different orders, the colours slightly different when they are re-mixed and they are often adjusted

⁸¹ Arnheim, *The Power of the Center. A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*, 101.

during the painting process. I do not measure the drops of pigment. I began painting grids by limiting the palette severely, but have found that responding to the need for a certain colour gives rise to surprising results, further questions and invention.

Initially, I thought only pure colours or tints beside grey should be used, however, through the research, especially of J.M.W. Turner's paintings and the informative texts of Faber Birren, I experimented with a broader range of secondary and tertiary tints. I wanted to avoid high tonal contrast so that a field effect was maintained. As the painting of the concentric paintings progressed through the layering of more complex colours, the unexpected result was the appearance of rhythmic shadowy areas enhancing the luminous, emanating spatial effects.

At the time of my review exhibition in May 2009, some of my paintings were described as folded voids. The suggestion of expansive space was one valued effect, and raised the implications of time – the time of making, the time of viewing and the time implied by the work. A sense of infinite space also implies timelessness, but there is also the momentary, the cyclical or rhythmic, and the linear. With these thoughts in mind, I considered the final body of work for my doctoral project.

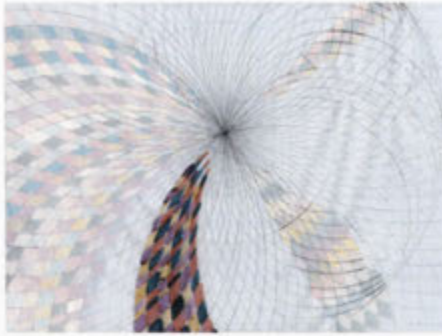


Fig. 35 Suzanne Moss, experimental drawing, 2007
graphite and gouache on graph paper.

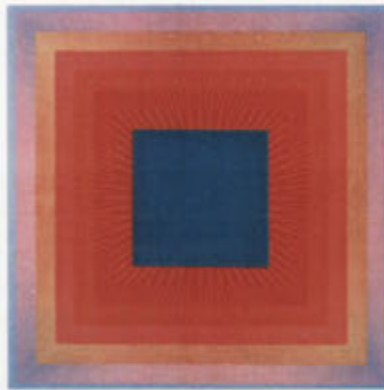


Fig. 36 Richard Anuszkiewicz, *Iridescence*, 1965, acrylic on canvas
150 x 150 cm, Collection Albright Knox Gallery, Buffalo.

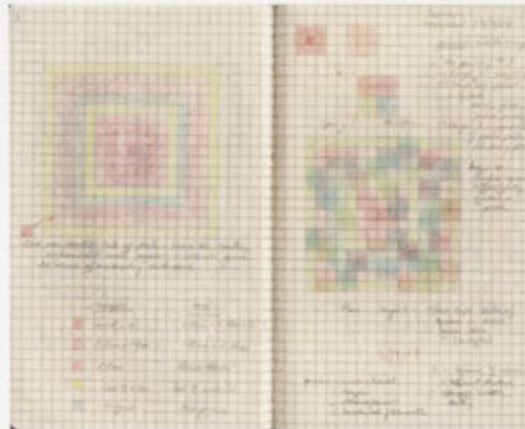


Fig.37 Suzanne Moss, drawing, 2007, colour pencil in grid book, 13 x 21 cm.

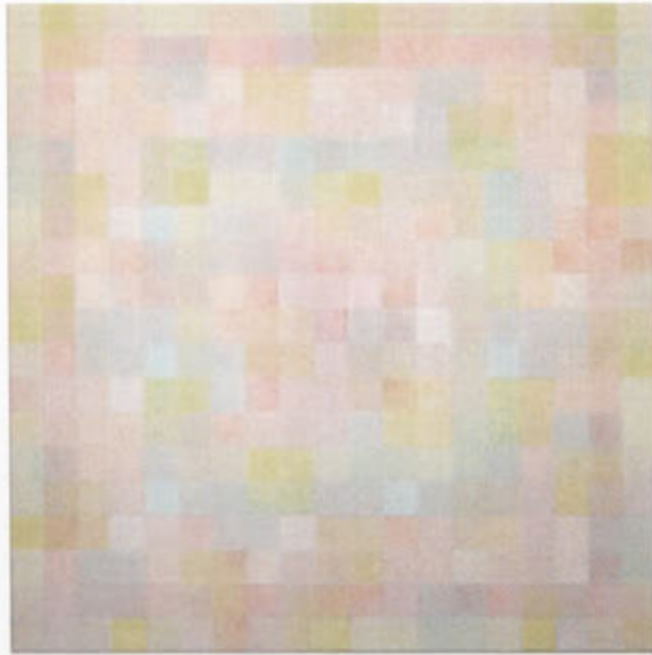


Fig. 38 Suzanne Moss, *#1 (blossoming)*, 2007, graphite, acrylic and oil on canvas, 76 x 76 cm

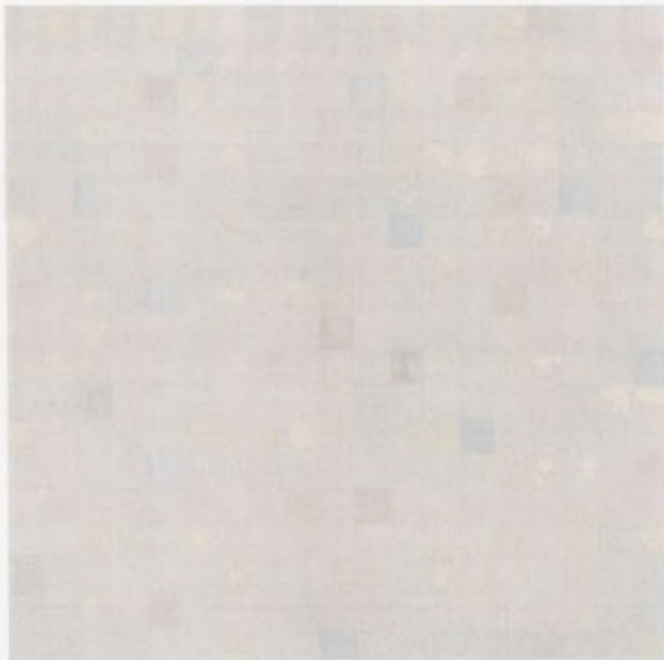


Fig. 39 Suzanne Moss, *#5*, 2007, acrylic and oil on canvas, 76 x 76 cm.



Fig. 40 Suzanne Moss, *circle #1 (remembering blossom)*, 2008, 100 cm diameter.

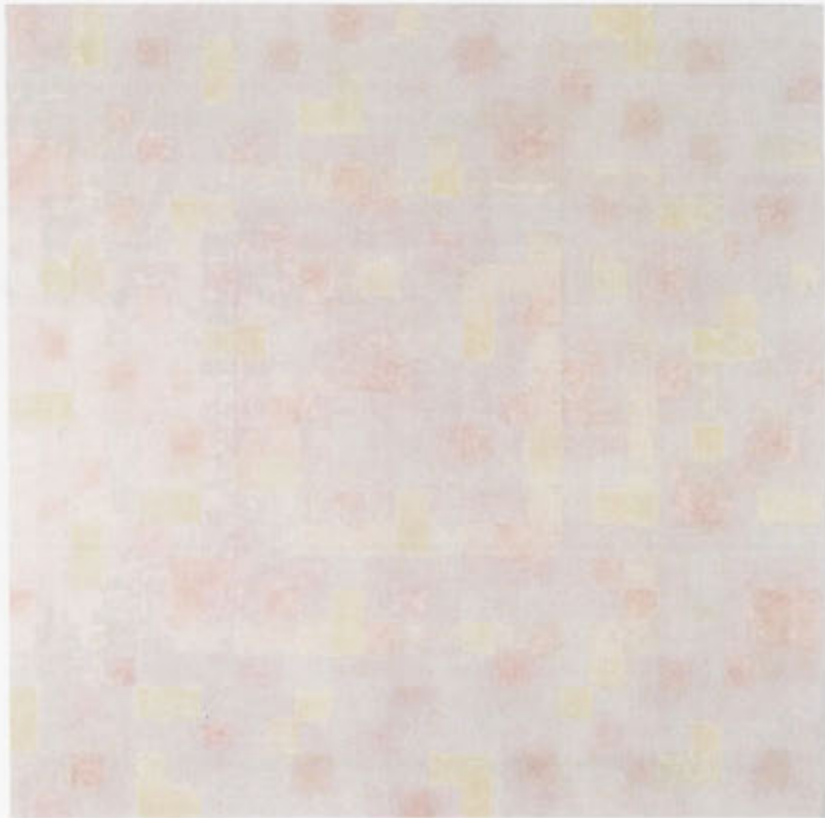


Fig. 41 Suzanne Moss, *asking what love might look like and remembering blossoms*, 2007-8, acrylic and oil on canvas, 150 x 150 cm.



Fig. 42 Ingo Kleinhert, *Mandala*, 2007, galvanised iron
165 x 165 cm, Boutwell Draper Gallery.

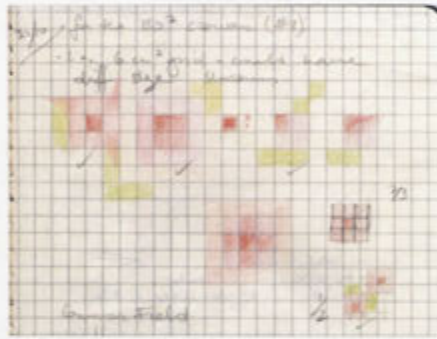


Fig. 43 Suzanne Moss, diagram of blossom and leaf forms, 2007
9 x 13 cm, colour pencil on grid paper.

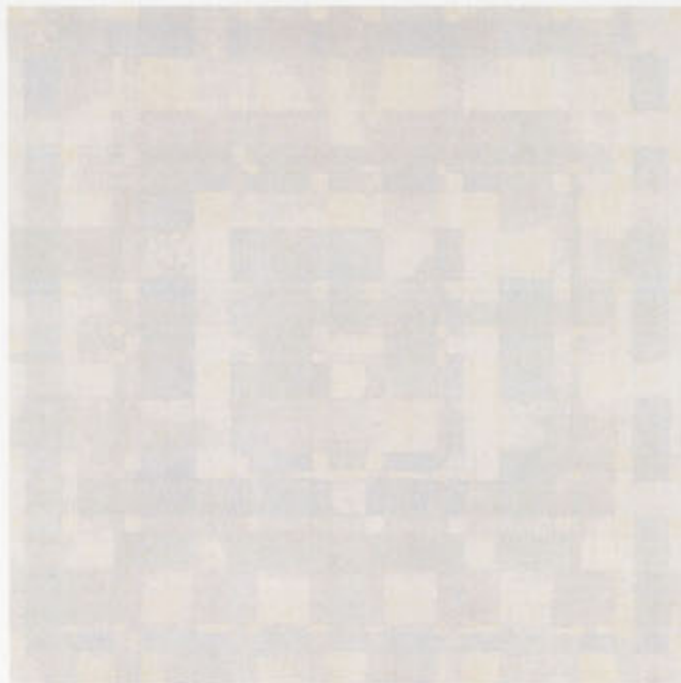


Fig. 44 Suzanne Moss, *#10 (dawn in the city)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 76 x 76cm.

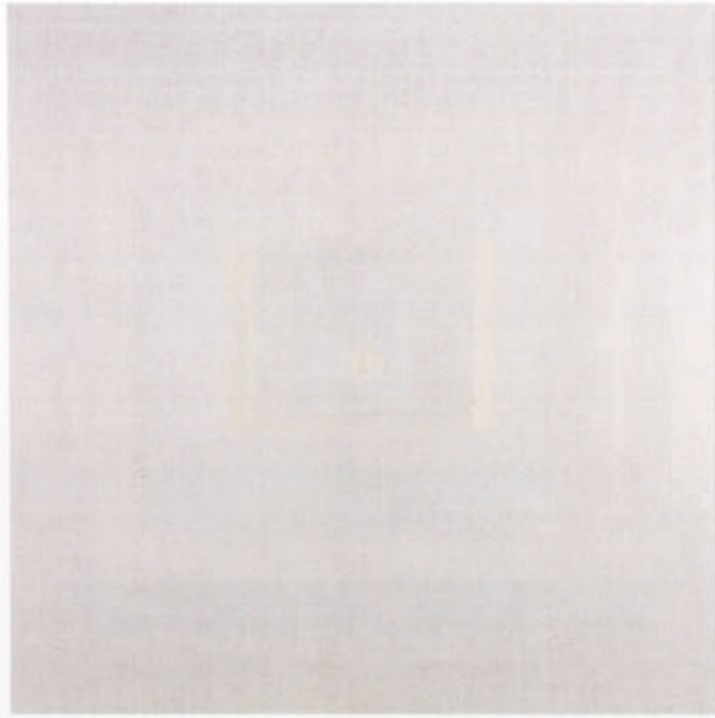


Fig. 45 Suzanne Moss, *#11 (listening)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm



Fig. 46 Suzanne Moss, *#13 (lullaby)*, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 76 x 76 cm



Fig. 47 Sesshu Toyo, Ch'an painting, 15th Century, Muromachi Period,
hanging scroll painting on paper, 63.5 x 31.7 cm.
The British Museum.



Fig. 48 Gerhard Richter, *4900 Colours: Version II*, 2007
enamel paint on Aludibond,
49 panels (of which this is one) each 97 x 97 cm.



Fig. 49 Mandala of the Buddhist Deity Chakrasamvara, 1590
Opaque watercolour on cotton, Nepal,
Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

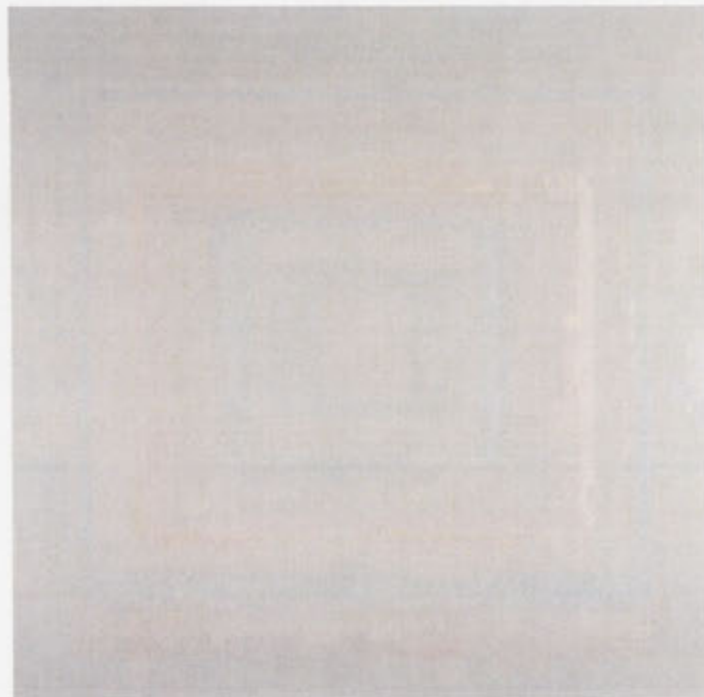


Fig. 50 Suzanne Moss, #15 (*sky embrace*), 2008,
colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm.

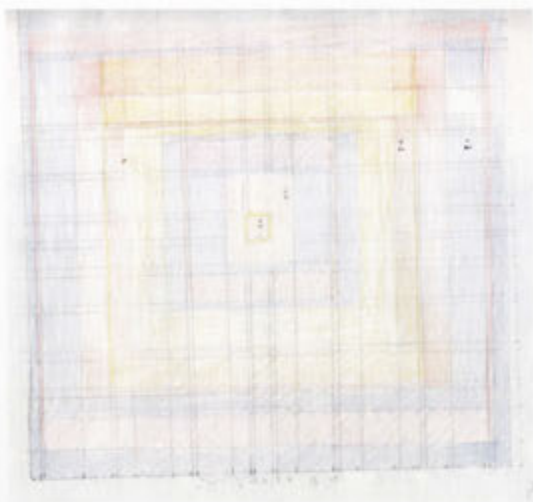


Fig. 51 Suzanne Moss, study for #15, 2008, graphite and colour pencil on paper, 16 x 16 cm.

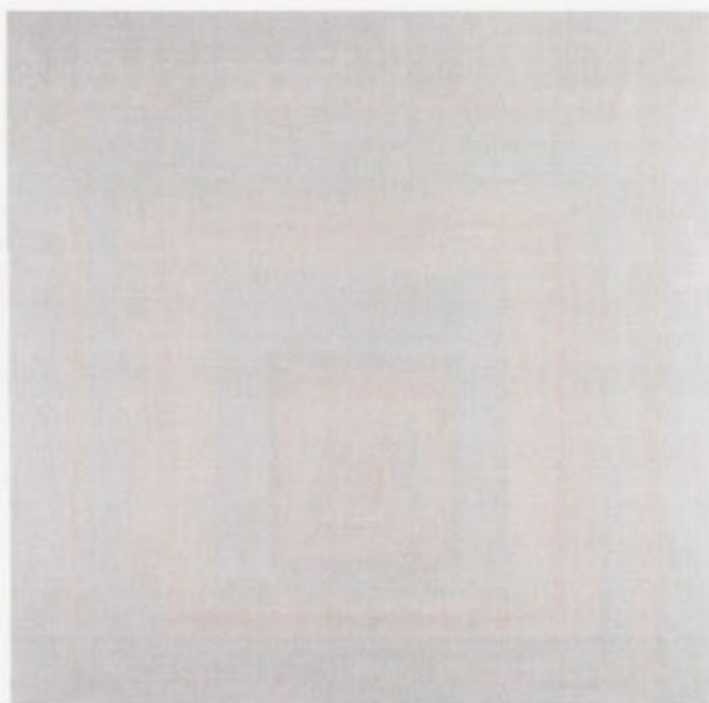


Fig. 52 Suzanne Moss, #16 (*n+1 measures of tenderness*), 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm.

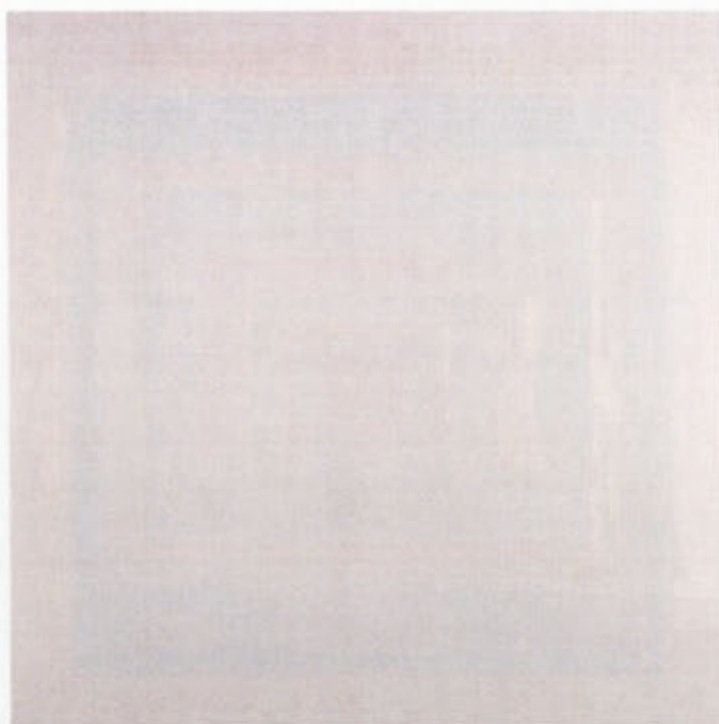


Fig. 53 Suzanne Moss, #17 (*heart*), 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 150 x 150 cm.

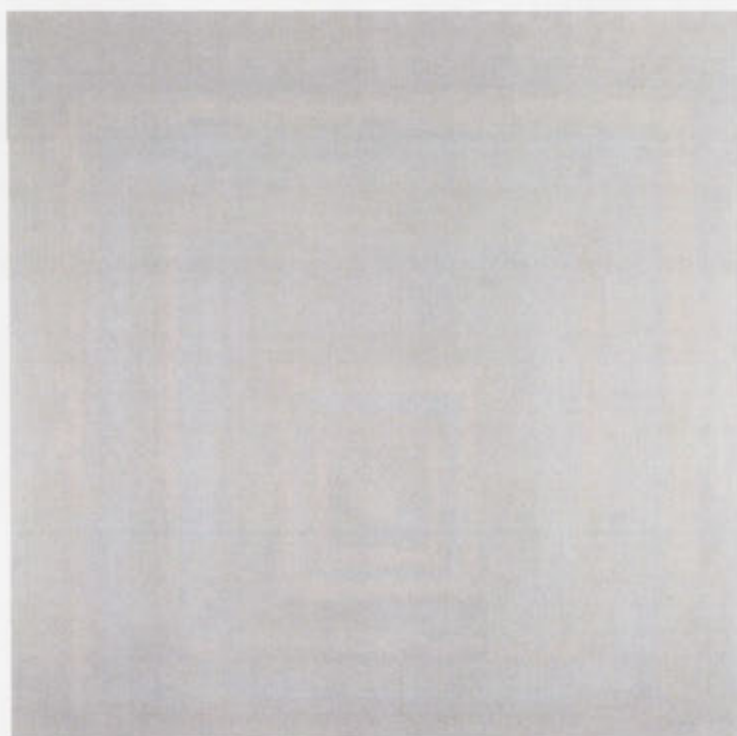


Fig. 54 Suzanne Moss, #23, 2008, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm.
(since painted over with #31)

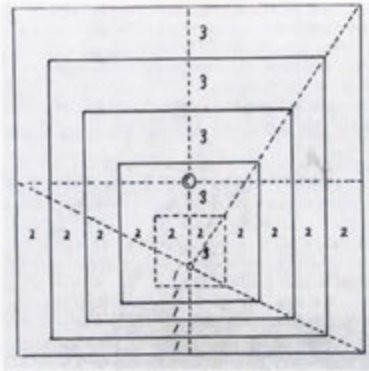


Fig. 55 Rudolf Arnheim, using this diagram, demonstrates the scheme of Albers's paintings. Arnheim notes Albers sometimes omits one or other of the squares which modifies the rhythm. The underlying rhythm of regular intervals remains.

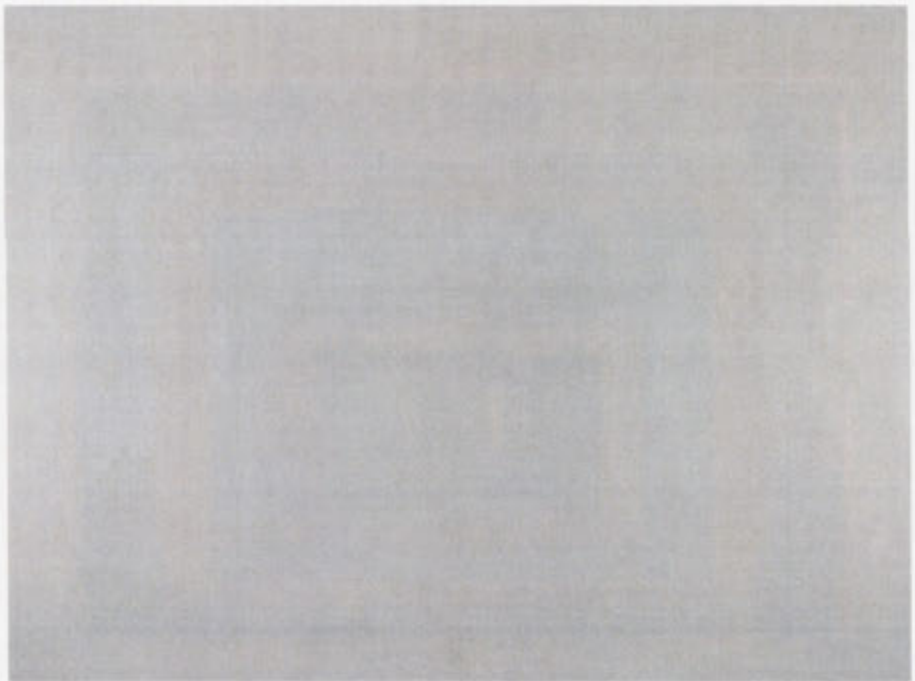


Fig. 56 Suzanne Moss, #24, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 180 x 240 cm.

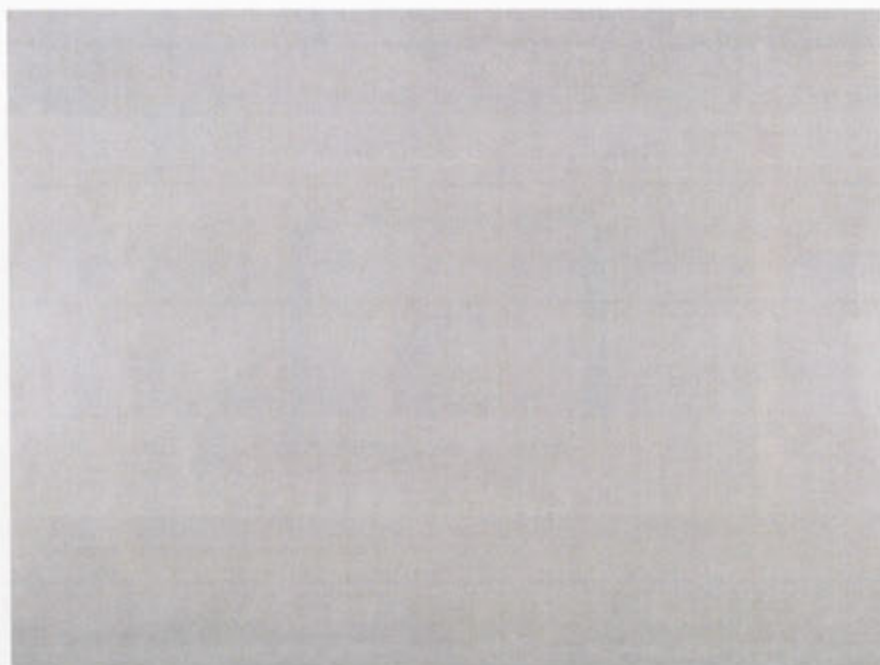


Fig. 57 Suzanne Moss, #25, colour pencil and acrylic on canvas, 180 x 240 cm.

CHAPTER THREE: Painted light and the poetics of space

I am the sky itself as it is drawn together and unified, and as it begins to exist for itself; my consciousness is saturated with this limitless blue.¹

Emptiness

Through the final body of work I wanted to find the most effective way to structure colour arrangements to create a luminous, and peaceful sense of emanating spaciousness. Might other eccentric structures be used to achieve the same goals? How might I introduce greater variations in materiality of surface to generate greater pictorial space and luminosity? What is the effect of the diagrammatic as opposed to the soft edged geometric painting? And is it possible to make a luminous grey painting?

For the final year of research, I investigated three approaches to pictorial structure:

- the mosaic-like grid, with divisions of 1, 2 and 3cm.
- the concentric geometric compositions using a substantially increased number of intervals and complexity of colours.
- asymmetrical compositions using eccentric shapes as I wanted to find out what would happen to the dynamic, the luminosity and the sense of expansiveness and return with a composition made of irregular shapes? I made a series of small works using eccentric shapes prior to embarking on a new scale of 116cm square.

With each structural approach, I made small experimental versions inquiring into the kinds of shapes and surface materialities which might work to confound figure/ground and convey a sense of the spacious field. I varied the surface materiality (translucent, flat, thick and painterly) and edge qualities (defined, blurred, or both) in each of the approaches.

¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (Oxford: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958), 249.

The regular grid paintings

In order to find direction, I returned to my early grid paintings made between August 2007 and May 2008. One of these, #3, an experiment in materiality, has been slowly reworked, building layers of oils over two years (Fig. 58). While it appears heavy handed in relation to recent work, the range of materialities of the surface in #3 informed the later use of oils which will be discussed.

In the paintings where oils are employed over acrylic, the marks, light colours and the greater material presence of paint seems to project light into the space of the viewer rather than within pictorial space. A scattering of small lozenge shapes of oils were painted over the fine grid of #31 (*rose*) (Fig. 59) and the larger scale 3cm grid painting, #33, was primarily painted in oils with a surface varied by mark and opacity (Fig. 60). The concentric paintings, in matte acrylic, do not work in this way, but have a rippling effect forward and back from the picture plane.

The grid's appropriateness as a method for composing my paintings is given by suggestions of its matrix nature, its sense of connectedness beyond the picture, and its repetition, part of all meditative practices. The effects of using a regular grid, an irregular grid and an asymmetrical grid were found to be different. Firstly, the regular grid-based composition provided a diagrammatic means for facilitating the translation of peaceful experiences. #28 especially demonstrates that the 2cm grid is less dominant than the 6cm grid of 2007-8 *asking what love might look like and remembering blossoms*, and causes tracts of small squares to assimilate and others to glow with a luminous field effect (Fig. 61). In the process of painting many layers of translucent tints of red, yellow, blue, grey and white, the painting became greyer than expected, however, the blue became more luminous.

Although the regular grid paintings have an underlying concentricity, they can be viewed from anywhere in the room like a mosaic. Painted with underlying concentric bands, the central focus is subtle compared to the axially symmetrical concentric paintings.

The concentric irregular grid-based paintings

The employment of concentric shapes reflect the processes of focus and reverie and of moving to an expanded state of awareness. In these works, I employed colour to create luminosity within compositions which allowed for the juxtapositions of colour and their interactions, the implied dynamic of emanation and return, and the evocation of space beyond the picture plane. The subtle tone and hue contrasts create a visual beat that suggests an implied motion inward and outward within an ambiguous pictorial space. Areas of colour appear to not be fixed on the picture plane. More layers of colour in some areas create smoky greys and convey a sense of greater depth. The tonal contrast is not so great as to disturb the vibration of nearby equiluminant colours; it brings the colour shifts of simultaneous contrast into play, for example, a warm grey beside orange-pink will tend to the opposite of its partner and appear bluish.

The irregular variations in intervals and colours of the concentric shaped compositions give a sense of the unexpected within a greater unknown pattern while maintaining luminous, spatial and field effects. The asymmetrical grid was able to evoke a field effect but not the implied dynamic of emanation and return. Mondrian aimed for weightlessness and a sense of the infinite, with balance of the verticals and horizontals in his compositions.² I made two compositions without centricity, however, found the complexity prevented the sense of expansiveness that was present in the earlier paintings, rather, suggestions of architecture returned.

The presence of the diagram in #27 creates an entirely different ambience (Fig. 62). There is greater tension between the fixedness of the grid and the implied lack of boundaries of luminosity. While my paintings start out as diagrams, when the linear structure is visible in the finished work, the effect is confounding. The visibility of the diagram evokes a sense of holding the ineffable as if the colours might slip away from their boundaries. At the same time it provides structure for colour, its ineffectiveness for holding any particular thing is understood. At close viewing, #27 is a whimsical diagram. Purposefully ruled lines are barriers for areas of paint, but are no mooring for the colours which appear to float from the surface as one moves further away.

² Arnheim, *The Power of the Center. A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*, 103-04.

On comparing the earlier concentric paintings with #29 (*shell beach clouds*) (Fig. 63), it is evident that a larger number of irregular intervals of colours are more successful in terms of setting up the sensation of a rhythm within and beyond pictorial space (#29 has 21 intervals). The more complex range of coloured greys is also more effective in conveying emanation than earlier paintings. In #29 & #30 (*a soft place*) the objective of making luminosity with many different greys was achieved (Figs. 63 & 64). Many more layers of colour were required and luminosity was created by subtle contrasts of purity. #23 was subsequently painted over to make #31 (*rose*). Over the numerous layers of acrylic, small squares of oils were painted in tints of yellow, blue and pink giving the illusion of stronger flickering luminosity compared to previous paintings.

An alternative underlying structure was sought for #32 (*between the rain – homage to Agnes*) (Fig. 65). Informed by Fra Angelico's Cell 3 *Annunciation*, I used the arch shape of the cloister (Fig. 66). I drew the curves up-side-down following strings hanging from points on either side of the stretcher. I painted the bowed bands using several layers of tints and drew the grid directly over the top. The coloured bands affected subsequent layers of colour. The range of blues and blue-greys and their dissipation into blurry luminosity reminded me of Martin's suggestion to "[l]ook between the rain".³ The challenge with this painting was holding it together, so it could emanate. The bow structure and working with colours within a greater tonal range undermined my intentions, where, as Itten notes, the vibrant effects of simultaneous contrast are lessened.⁴ The solution was partially found in unifying the painting with large areas of blue grey and lightening dark areas to even out the range of values.

The painting, #33, tested the use of a 3cm square grid and also aimed to trial a greater materiality using more varied application of oils (Fig. 58). The reason for upscaling the unit size was to do with creating specific kinds of surfaces in the spaces. Squares were painted soft and hard-edged. I had been thinking about the Buddhist greeting *metta* or loving kindness, and the colours of the lotus flower, and so my palette consisted of pale greens, pinks and creams. After looking at a mandala painting by Peter Young (Fig. 67),

³ Martin, "The Untroubled Mind," 18.

⁴ Johannes Itten, *The Art of Colour*, trans. Ernst van Haagen (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973), 88.

I introduced the circle as a different underlying structure. The circle became too dominant however, and in painting it out I added a light blue green and a range of greys to my palette and continued to build the painting, square by square.

Eccentric shapes and pictorial structure

The paintings employing non-geometric shapes possess a different dynamic. Several small studies composed of concentric eccentric shapes, were made during 2009 (May *sharing tea* and November *windows/jewels*) (Figs. 68 -73). The simpler composition of complex shapes with fewer intervals affects the beat so there is a reduced sense of rhythm and less illusions of space into and out from the picture plane through the creation of intermittent shadow colours as in the concentric geometric paintings. The inner shape locates a focal area, a start and return place, which may not be centrally located in the composition. The irregular successive outer 'skins' are negotiated requiring movement and adjustments – there is an implied torsional dynamism. All of the strongly concentric compositions suggest a frontal viewing location, however where the axially symmetrical grid-based structure articulates balance, the organic forms suggest imbalance and tension. The curved shapes create complex force vectors and thereby suggest simpler compositions.

Each of the three approaches involves pictorial structures confounding the figure/ground relations. Each conveys a different sense of emanating and returning spaciousness through the use of assimilating and interacting colours within a high tonal range. The eccentric forms, however, appear to hold their tension within the picture format, drawing the eye more towards the centre shape than outward.

The materiality of the painted surface

Surface treatments of the concentric compositions are matte with subtle shifts in sheen due to the overlapping acrylic paint layers of varied translucency. The high value matte colours seem to appear, dissolve or hover from the surface of the linen support. The grid paintings' surfaces are varied, using acrylic, oil paint and both coarse and soft brushes. The nubby stuff of Belgian linen is obvious at close range, however, the fineness of it along with the blurring of colour boundaries adds to the sense of dissolution of the painted surface at a viewing distance of greater than two metres. The sensuous quality of the silky surface appeals to the tactile sense of the viewer.

I began to add central areas of oil paint to the small studies composed of eccentric shapes. At close range the inner shape advanced, while at a greater viewing distance the work appeared to become more about space than matter. Squares of pale yellow, pink and blue scatter the surface of #31, advancing these areas relative to others creating a greater depth of pictorial space (Fig. 59). With the viewer's movement, the reflection of light shifts across these small squares, creating a flickering effect across the surface in some paintings. The extensive treatment of the surface in #33 with varied marks in oils creates a lustrous surface, alternating in its reflection of light as the viewer moves (Fig. 60). While complicating the interaction of light with the surface, when the viewer stops, both lustrous and luminous effects flicker more gently and the spacious field effect returns. There is a rich tactile experience at close quarters and the dissolution into light effects at a middle distance of viewing.

Colour and luminosity

All that was learned about luminosity from the fieldwork and paintings made during 2008 was developed further in the 2009 works. Colours interact to create luminosity through contrast of purity, for example, blue and blue-grey juxtaposed appear to merge (assimilate) if they are the same tone, and the blue seems to glow with a loss of distinction of its boundaries suggestive of the radiating behaviour of light. While initially I supposed that painted luminosity could best be created through simultaneous contrast, I found that the multiple layering of high value colours constructed bands of varying purity which evoked a sense of shadow and light movement inward and outward from

the picture plane. Colour purity contrast, or contrast of saturation with limited tonal range was a simple principle to work with.

The colours of light and unnameable shades of grey

It took two years to reach the subtle luminosity with coloured grey shifts that occur in the later paintings such as #29 and #30 (Fig. 63 & 64). The earlier grid paintings employed a limited palette of complementary and/or simultaneous colour contrasts, such as pink, green and blue. Tertiary colours, unnameable shades of grey, were created in the layering of translucent colours, while preserving small areas of relatively pure colours which appear luminous. I found that equiluminant passages of colour created the appearance of shifting light beyond the picture plane evocative of natural light phenomena.

For every variation of one hue beside or over another, there is a subtly different and unpredictable interaction which is also affected by lighting conditions. The layering method means that painting process can be very slow, as in the making of #28 where every square of colour becomes a similar tone of coloured grey with varying degrees of colour purity. In painting #29, I wanted to find out if the painting could work to evoke luminous rhythmic space from the building of coloured layers to create various greys (Fig. 63). It took many layers of primary based tints for the bands to become subtle tones of no particular colour, ephemeral and shadow-like. The effect in #29 is one of the silvery light of an overcast day, bleaching the colour from things.

Through being slightly darker, the shadow bands should sit back spatially, however, they also advance in some areas where the adjacent hue is cooler. In not being able to readily categorise these colours or the spaces they appear to occupy, perhaps they become more suggestive of ambiguous or unnameable experiences in the world.

In answer to my inquiries set out at the start of this chapter, experimentation with greater variation in materiality was undertaken using both small and extensive areas of textured oils in the grid paintings. The effect of the visible linear painted diagram differed substantially from the loss of the diagram in the soft-edged paintings. The

dominance of the drawn diagram at close viewing does not occur at middle distance, due to the overtaking of luminous colour interactions and the lack of contrast of the line. Finally, it was found that it is possible to make a luminous grey painting – it was this question that led to the production of the unnameable colours and questions regarding the perception and distinctions between colours.

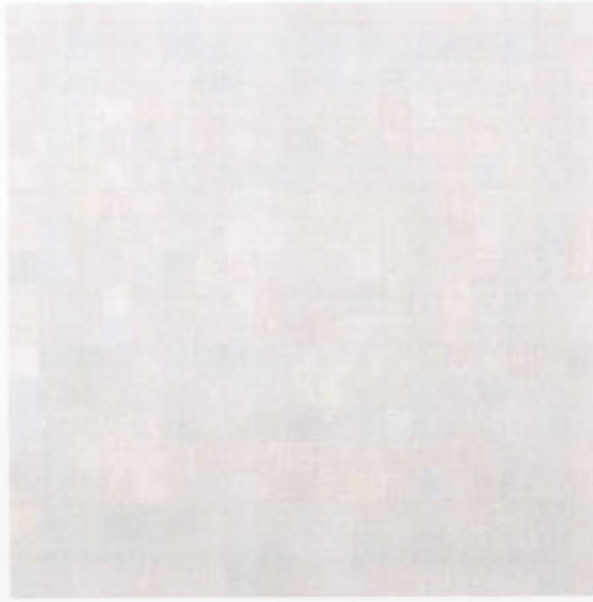


Fig. 58 Suzanne Moss, #3, 2007-9, pencil, acrylic and oil on canvas, 76 x 76 cm.

The author apologises for the images in this section. They do not resemble the paintings due to the great difficulty in photographically documenting works where the colour saturation is below 15%, and where the tonal contrast is minimal. The effects in reality are luminous with ambiguous spatial illusions. If you would like to see original works, please contact Suzanne directly at dovearts@optusnet.com.au or the Painting Workshop at the ANU School of Art.



Fig. 59 Suzanne Moss, #31 (*rose*), 2010, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen, 150 x 150 cm.



Fig. 60 Suzanne Moss, #33 (*Metta*), 2010, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen, 150 x 150 cm.

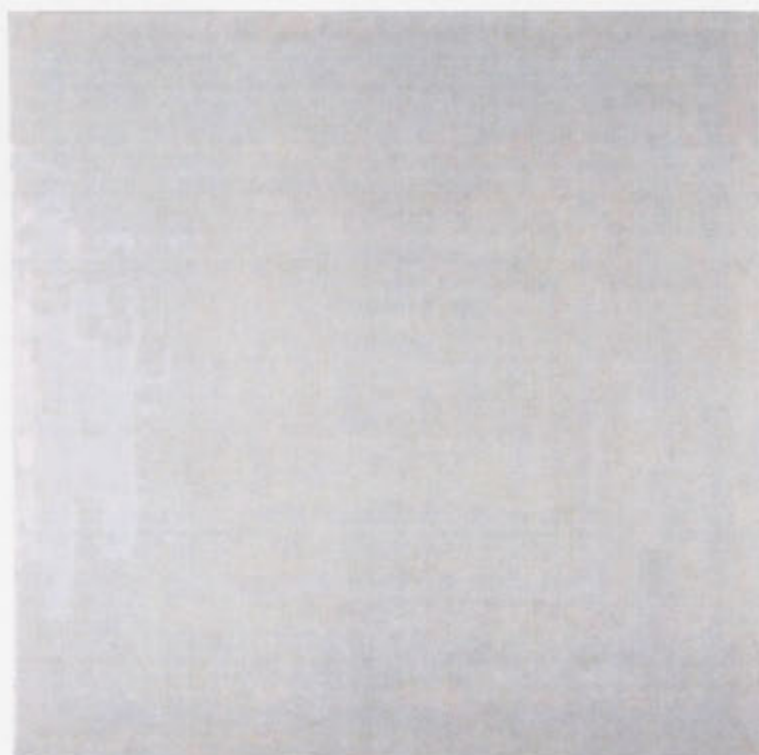


Fig. 61 Suzanne Moss, #28 (*love in the time of quanta*), 2009, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm

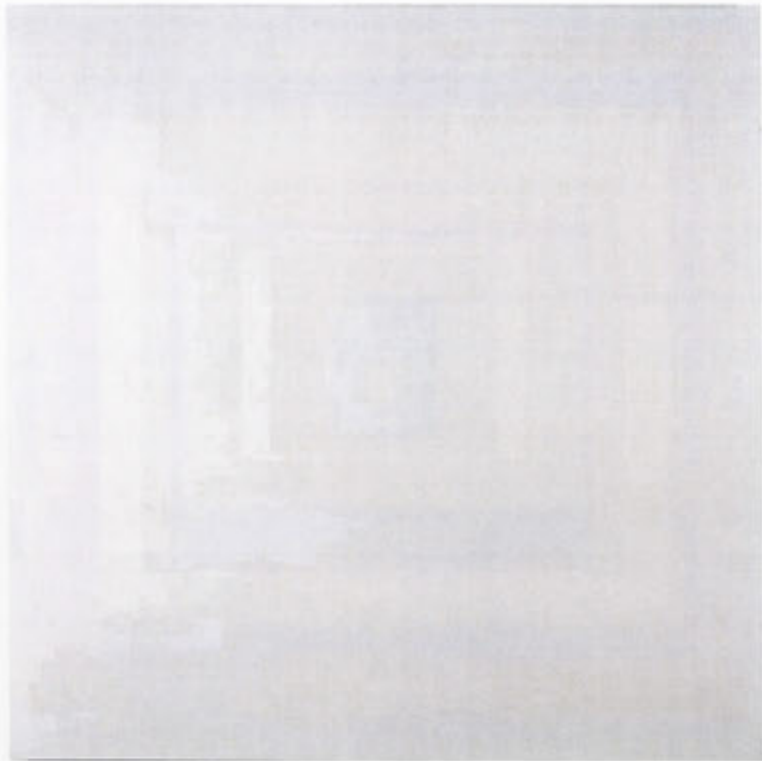


Fig. 62 Suzanne Moss, #27 (*diagram for gentleness*), 2009
colour pencil and acrylic on linen. 150 x 150 cm.



Fig. 63 Suzanne Moss, #29 (*shell beach clouds*), 2009, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm.

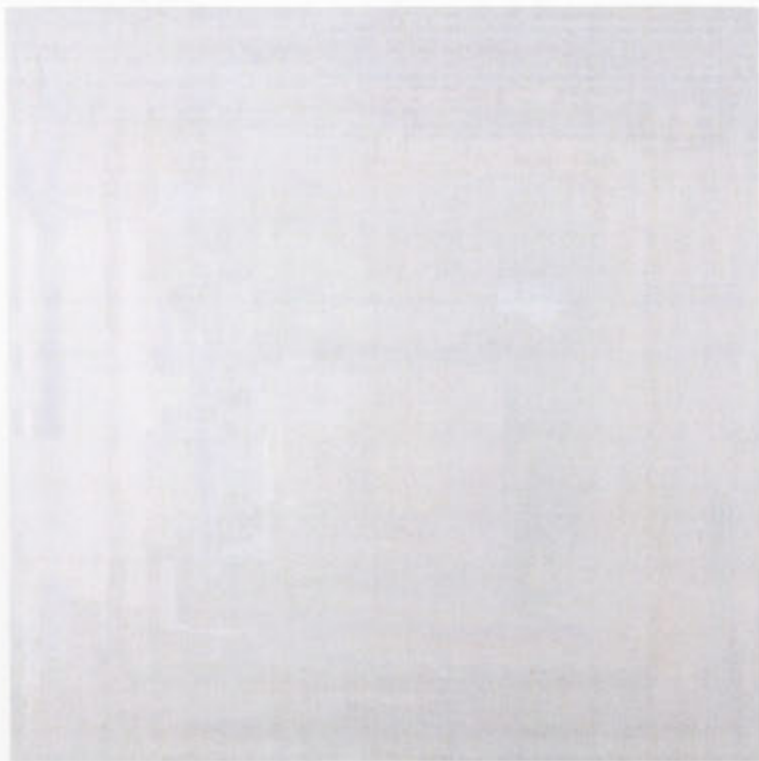


Fig. 64 Suzanne Moss, #30 (*a soft place*), 2009-10, colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm

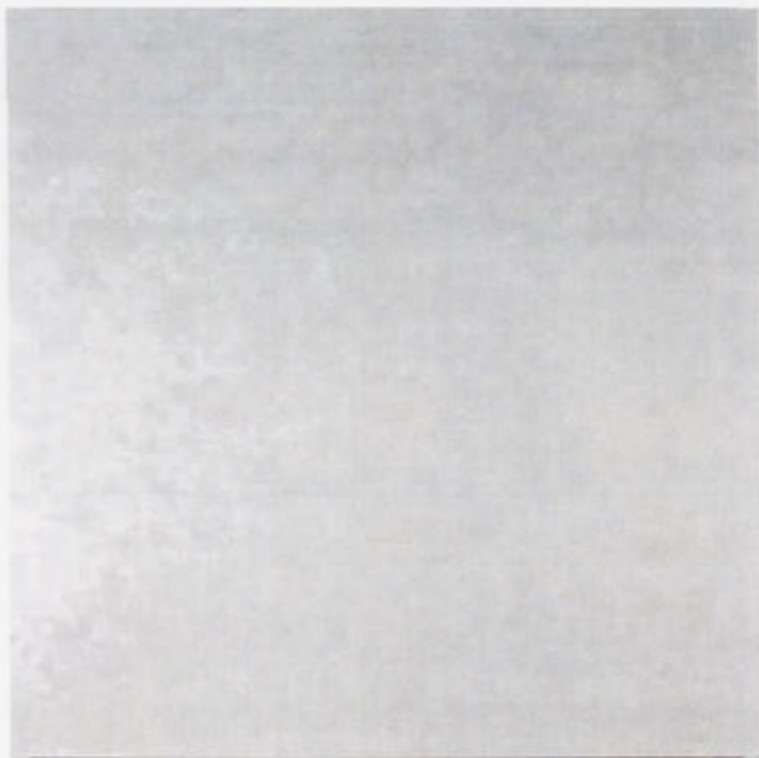


Fig. 65 Suzanne Moss, #32 (*between the rain - Homage to Agnes*), 2010
colour pencil and acrylic on linen, 150 x 150 cm.



Fig. 66 Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation*, c. 1441, fresco, 176 x 148 cm, Cell 3
San Marco Museum, Florence.



Fig. 67 Peter Young, *#3-1973*, acrylic on canvas, 55 x 56 inches.
Collection of Jonathan Scull.



Fig. 68 Suzanne Moss, *sharing tea 1*, 2009, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen (diptych) 2 panels each 30 x 30 cm.

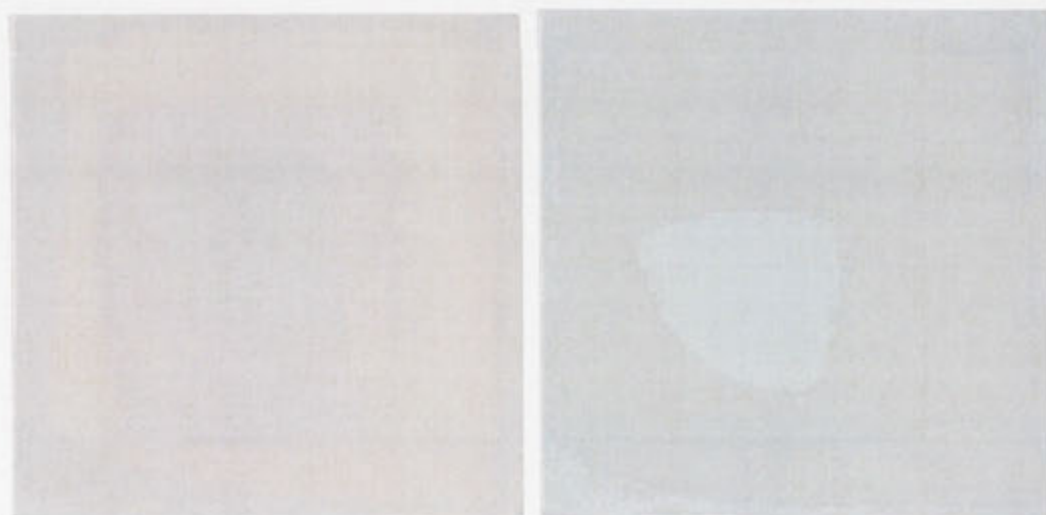


Fig. 69 Suzanne Moss, *sharing tea 2*, 20 09, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen (diptych) 2 panels each 30 x 30 cm.



Fig. 70 Suzanne Moss, *windows/jewels 2*, 2009, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm.



Fig. 71 Suzanne Moss, *windows/jewels 4*, 2009, colour pencil, acrylic and oil on linen, 30 x 30 cm.

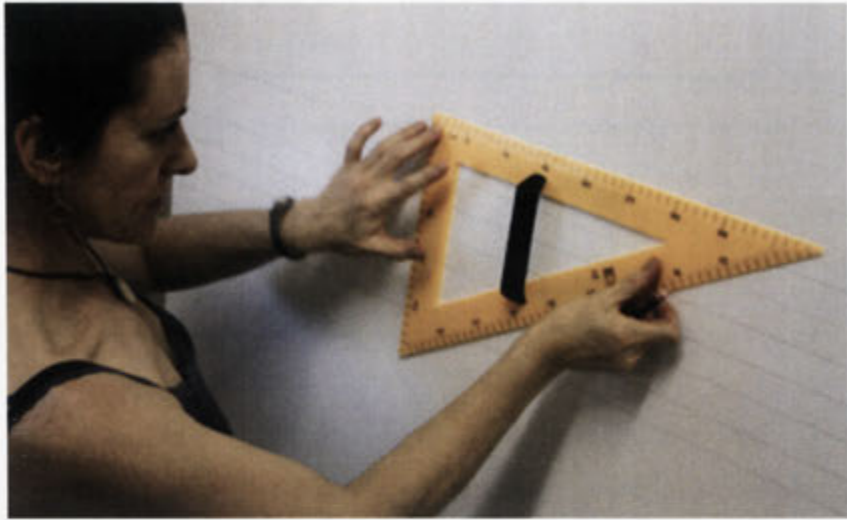


Fig. 72 Studio photograph drawing up the grid for #33, January 2010

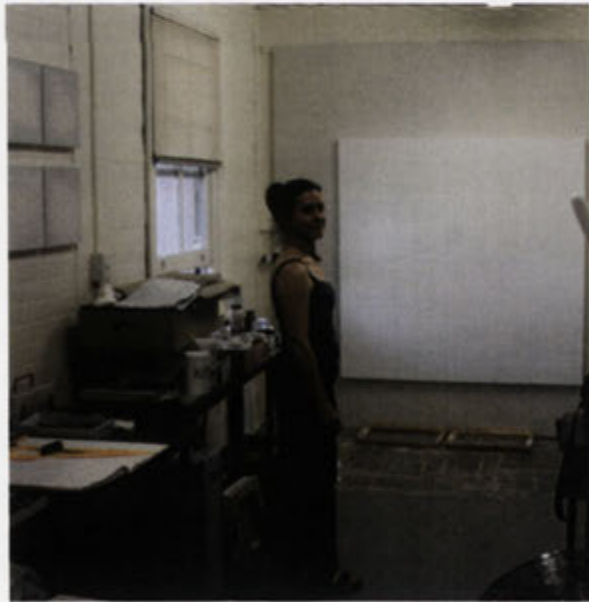


Fig. 73 Suzanne in the ANU Lennox A block studio. The paintings were made on a light grey painted wall. A daylight lamp was used in the mornings and at night. The two studio windows face west.

CONCLUSION

Translation and invention

The observation of something as small as a shell or limitless as the sky, can convey a sense of spacious and timeless awareness. The processes by which I made paintings was through the translation of such experiences of natural phenomena with remembered colours and synaesthetic and metaphoric associations into geometric, layered compositions. My decision-making seemed to dissolve in the layering process, both informed and intuitive, becoming part of the work. Is it here that arts practice departs from the scientific model of research? Or might it be said that research of any kind to create a new form of knowledge depends on inspiration, speculation and “leaps of faith”.

Paul Carter cites philosopher Giambattista Vico who linked memory, imagination and invention and defined “*ingegno*, wit or the gift of invention as ‘the faculty that connects disparate and diverse things’”.¹ Carter speaks of how a “narrowly reductive notion of empirical research” describing outcomes in advance, leaves out invention.² Invention, however, is exactly what is required not only for the translation of experience into art, but for the discovery of new findings in any area of scholarship. Carter does not recommend dematerialising the processes of invention through explanation, “writing ‘about’ creativity, rather than ‘of’ it”, considering its inspirations and impacts rather than what the artist did next.³ I write of, and about my painting as research, but any written account cannot compare with the experience of making and viewing the paintings.

While the pictorial structures I employ are not new, a significant result of the research is the invention of pairing simple structures with colours generating luminous spatial effects that slow perception, and convey an expansive contemplative ambience for the

¹ Carter, *Material Thinking. The Theory and Practice of Creative Research*, 7.

² Ibid., 7-9.

³ Ibid., 9.

receptive viewer. My slow, methodical approach, integrating analysis and speculation, explores the thresholds of chromatic perception within geometric compositional systems (Fig. 72) creating luminous field effects and ambiguous pictorial spaces.

Colour and structure

I have found that grid systems are an effective means of experimenting with juxtaposing colours and testing their capacity to generate luminous effects. I have also found that there is no one composition or solution, that each solution gives the work a different quality. There are, however, key characteristics for meeting my objective of making subtle, yet iconic, contemplative works.

Concentricity was found to be an important compositional structure, and high key colour juxtaposition the most significant method. While axial symmetry relates to our axial human form, combining this with the grid-based composition conveys both stability and expansiveness. And the centre, whether it be centralised or not, invites return. In the concentric geometric compositions, a wide variation in interval size suppressed distinctions between figure and ground. Rather than a predictable rhythm, taking the irregular intervals from a sketch suggested a fluctuating field effect, where the rhythm might belong to a much larger score. When painting the intervals, blurred and firm boundaries suggest varying degrees of distance and proximity to the picture plane. Numerous fine layers of translucent primary and secondary colours created complex shades of grey, alongside areas of greater colour purity, resulting in spatial illusions from the luminous and rhythmic effects of shadow and light.

The fine grid provided many more edges along which colour interactions occur. Its use resulted in a luminous field effect with a lesser sense of emanation and return than that given by the wider intervals and the stronger rhythms of the concentric compositions. The dynamic in the grid paintings is given by colour and structure. The luminous blues in #28 (Fig. 61) and the materiality of the oil-painted high tonal value squares in #31 appear to radiate outward (Fig. 59).

Although only small paintings were made using eccentrically shaped compositions, it can be seen that they convey a different implied dynamic; the shapes each have their own energies and suggestions. Tensions occur between the odd shapes with uneven compressive, expansive and torsional effects creating a sense of jostling between forms. Within the square format, the eccentric shapes appear to be contained and not suggest an expansive field. However, if the format were eccentric, perhaps a greater sense of expansiveness would result. The employment of eccentric structures is complex and requires further research.

The paintings presented, along with this exegesis and the dissertation, demonstrate how painted luminosity and its materiality of surface are able to create spatial illusions, without the use of conventional projection systems and with minimal tonal contrast. Within the body of work presented, the quality of light, spatial effects and ambience varies from painting to painting. It is this that most strongly demonstrates the complex ways that materiality and luminosity, colour and composition, contribute to the paintings' potential poetic qualities and support my argument.

The effects of luminosity and materiality may contribute to the viewer's poetic experience of space in several ways. At close viewing, the most obvious features are the silky qualities of surface tactility and, in some paintings, the presence of the linear diagram or the presence of varied textures. As soon as one steps back, the fine linen surface with its lack of texture without tiny shadows causes surface details to quickly coalesce and dissolve into diffused light effects, from the properties of zinc white, colour interactions and the reflection and refraction of light. Some of my paintings are, at first, visually challenging, initially verging on invisibility and apparently lacking in incident. The gradual appearance of spatial illusions and colours to the viewer's perception acts to reward a more sustained looking with luminous, meditative repetitions and rhythms. Along with these effects, both colour chords and the titles of the paintings are evocative.

Answers and questions

Through the making of the concentric paintings, significant questions about colour perception arose. Viewers' responses to the paintings suggest there must be a threshold range of hue saturation at which colour becomes visible/invisible, and I was employing colour at, or close to, that threshold. What seems to be a white or barely marked canvas at immediate viewing, becomes a subtle interplay of colour, shadow and light effects after 10-20 seconds. Within this time interval, distinctions between colours and assigning names to them must occur within the brain. Evidenced by the almost white painting, #12, with its reduced pictorial space, there is a point of percentage hue saturation where colour interactions no longer occur; there is a failure to produce luminous spatial effects. There must also be a time interval required for beholding; for colour perception and interactions to occur, especially low saturations of colour. And in the realm of complex and subtle chromatic mixes, at what point are we able to 'name' colours?

While thinking about these questions is interesting and offers questions to vision science, intrigue and wonder are triggered by engagement with the paintings' material qualities, passages of unnameable colours and luminous effects. On the one hand, these effects are evocative and perhaps better left in the territory of suggesting poetic experience, which is, arguably, the "luminous ground" from which new knowledge arises. On the other, my paintings take time to see, are difficult to reproduce photographically and challenging to exhibit, given how much they alter with different light sources. Perhaps it is enough that painting offers rewards for sustained viewing as described by Anna Chave on the paintings of Agnes Martin: "as a form of mental relief and as an instrument of sensibility, a mode of sensitizing the viewer."⁴

Visually sensitising the receptive viewer through subtle shifts in high key colour and surface qualities may impact on their sensory awareness and state of being beyond the gallery context. In looking at non-objective painting, sensory experience is suggested. Visual, spatial, tactile and kinaesthetic sensations are experienced and brain waves surely change. Future research might compare the generation of gamma brain waves

⁴ Chave, "Agnes Martin: "Humility, the Beautiful Daughter... All of Her Ways Are Empty" ", 151.

during meditation as researched on Buddhist monks with those induced by viewing certain paintings.⁵

The viewer, through looking longer, gives the painting time, allowing it to affect them perceptually. This may be akin to my experience when I am focussed on painting, noticing the effects of colours side by side, losing and finding boundaries and spaces. It is a peaceful and aware state of mind that I can only hope is conveyed to the receptive viewer. Especially in the large grid paintings, the slow, repetitive method and time of making and the accumulation of marks, suggest a sense of long time and infinite space.

At the outset of this project I asked questions about how a painting might, even in a small way, counter dehumanisation and alienation. At the conclusion of my project, it can be seen that this intention is carried through the development of my painting and practice, the evidence of which now exists as material, spatial and luminous painted fields to contemplate. Sensations conducive to the contemplation of love, peace and connectedness in a secular and non-objective way might appear as luminous flickers in a field that seems to generate its own sense of life – as in #28 (*love in the time of quanta*) - or the sense of rhythmic waves of #29 (*shell beach clouds*) (Figs. 59 & 61). In *Painting light, touching space*, the grid provided the structure, originating with the woven net, the matrix which has evolved into our networks of today.⁶ High key colour relations were layered to complete the grid with materials composed to convey the emanation of light, the associated spatial implications and poetics. I have shown that the generation of luminosity and all it signifies is necessarily grounded in the materiality of the painted surface.

The painting of light has been linked with enlightenment and transcendence in the works of artists as diverse as Fra Angelico, Mark Rothko, Agnes Martin and James Turrell. Certainly, these states of being are resonant with my aim of making luminous meditative

⁵ Lawrence L. Greischar Antoine Lutz, Nancy B. Rawlings, Matthieu Ricard, and Richard J. Davidson, "Long-Term Meditators Self-Induce High-Amplitude Gamma Synchrony During Mental Practice," University of Wisconsin-Madison, <http://psychz.psych.wisc.edu/>.

⁶ Higgins, *The Grid Book*, 235-45.

paintings. Painting light as a metaphor for enlightenment is, in this case, about suggesting a state of present moment awareness through visual intrigue, spatial awareness and material sensuality.

Investigating the painting of light and resulting spatial effects has revealed the complex, transient and unfixed nature of colour perception. A colour defines itself by juxtaposition and neighboring colours interact to alter our perception of each colour and of the relations between them. As we negotiate these chromatic relations with geometric structures we experience spatial sensations. These spatial illusions link the space of the painting and the space of the mind through perception. It is here the poetics of space may be experienced, the intense immensity of the spaces of the imagination, of the world, and of the realms of paintings. This suite of works demonstrates how painting's stillness, and qualities of light and space, can quieten our minds, holding us in a state of contemplation, through seeing slowly.

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Solo Exhibitions

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| 2010 | <i>Painting light, touching space.</i> Exhibition presented for the requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy, ANU School of Art Gallery. |
| 2009 | <i>Suzanne Moss. Review exhibition.</i> Foyer Gallery, ANU School of Art. |
| 2005 | <i>Space for Peace.</i> ANCA Gallery, Canberra. |
| 2004 | <i>Bittersweet Mini-series.</i> ANCA Gallery, Canberra. |

Selected Group Exhibitions

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2010 | Finalist in the 59 th Blake Prize. |
| 2009 | <i>Radar.</i> Graham Eadie, Suzanne Moss, Gary Smith, Frank Thirion, Eleftheria Vlavianos. M16 Gallery, Canberra. |
| 2009 | <i>The Phoenix Prize.</i> ANU School of Art Gallery. |
| 2008 | <i>The Clifton Prize.</i> Canberra City. |
| 2007 | <i>Process: Inspiration to Presentation.</i> Melbourne, The Town Hall Gallery. |
| 2006 | <i>Degrees of resonance and separation.</i> Suzanne Moss and Martine Peters. ANCA Gallery, Canberra. |
| 2006 | <i>Process: Inspiration to Presentation ANCA Tenants' Show 2006.</i> ANCA Gallery, Canberra. |
| 2006 | <i>Picture this: painting alumni 2000-6.</i> ANU School of Art Gallery, April 6-29. |
| 2006 | <i>M16 Drawing Prize.</i> M16 Artspace. |
| 2005 | <i>CCAS Manuka Drawing Award 2005.</i> |
| 2004 | <i>Hatched.</i> National Graduate Show. Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts. Perth. |
| 2004 | <i>Three Colours White.</i> Brenda May Gallery, Sydney. |
| 2003 | <i>130 Degrees.</i> School of Art Graduating Students Exhibition. Canberra School of Art Gallery. |

Reviews

- 2005 Helen Musa, 'Moorish for Moss' Review of *Space for Peace*, Canberra Times, Times 2, Dec 5, p.9.
- 2006 Sharon Peoples, 'Painter, textile artist work together as if one', Review of *Degrees of resonance and separation*, Canberra Times, Times 2, Sept 15, p.4.

Prizes and Awards

- 2009 Istituto Italiano di Cultura Premio Italia' Award, 1st
- 2006-10 Australian National University PhD Scholarship
- 2008 Istituto Italiano di Cultura Premio Italia' Award, 2nd
- 2008 ANU Field Studies Grant for research in Florence, London, New York
- 2007 ANU School of Art Materials Grant
- 2003 ANU University Medal in the Honours School of Visual Art
- 2003 ANU Emerging Artists' Support Scheme (EASS) Embassy of Spain Travelling Scholarship to Spain
- 2003 ANU EASS Animal Health Australia Loan Collection Award
- 2003 ANU EASS Canberra Grammar School Acquisition Award
- 2003 ANU EASS Australian War Memorial Acquisition Award
- 2003 ANU Honours Scholarship

Professional Practice

- 2010 Lecturer and tutor in Painting and Art Theory Workshops, ANU School of Art, Canberra
- 2006-10 Doctoral candidate (Visual Arts), Painting, ANU School of Art
- 2009 Pinnacle Teacher Training Program, ANU
- 2009 Lecturer in the Painting Workshop ANU School of Art, Semester II
- 2009 Assistant drawing teacher, Painting Workshop ANU School of Art
- 2008 Tutor in the Art Theory Workshop, ANU School of Art
- 2007 ANU Graduate Teaching Program
- 2007 Assistant drawing teacher, Painting Workshop ANU School of Art
- 2006 Assistant drawing teacher, Painting Workshop ANU School of Art
- 2004-6 Resident at Australian National Capital Artists' Studios.

Collections

The Australian War Memorial, Canberra; The Embassy of Spain, Canberra; Canberra Grammar School; Private Collections in Sydney, Canberra, Wagga Wagga.

RESEARCH DEGREE CANDIDATES – ANNUAL REPORT AND PLAN

STUDENT NAME	Suzanne Moss	STUDENT ID	u3357567
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A. CASS Student Office will provide a system generated cover sheet which is to be attached as Page One for each Candidate (Please check details and indicate any changes required)

B. Student Section (to be completed by all Candidates) Please elaborate under the following headings
all highlighted text boxes expand to allow for detailed information

B1. Detail your progress and achievements over the last 12 months (or since last annual report and plan)
 During the last year, my Studio Practice-led research led to further evolution of my previously altered topic:

Mystery and reverie or a poetics of tension? Studio Practice-led Research investigating inter-relations between visual poetics, materiality of surface, and colour as luminosity and darkness in painting.

to

Painting light, touching space: investigating how luminosity and the materiality of the surface of paintings create spatial illusions and contribute to the poetics of space.

This shift of thematic concern to include space and the poetics of space resulted from further development of both my Studio Research and Dissertation. I realised, especially through critique, the significance of spatial illusion in my painting, inextricably linked with the fluctuating luminosity of concentric colour interactions. Studio Research included the investigation of large scale, rectangular formats (2.4 x 1.8m) using smooth and rough surfaces. These works were not considered successful due to the space of reception demanded by the large works, which minimised the impact of the more textured surface. The scale of compositional elements required more experimentation, however, I could not cope with the physical demands of the large overall scale. Also, the rectangular format did not provide the stabilisation of the composition permitted by the square.

I have experimented with curved concentric shapes which markedly increase the compositional complexity and dynamics. My plan is to increase the scale of these works from 30cm to around 120cm, with the aim of balancing the complexity using a more spacious composition. The other most recent visual research has been with a return to the regular grid, however, this time using a finer scale of 2cm squares over a 150cm square format. Informed by the links between quantum physics research, consciousness and zen writings, my aim is to paint meditative, emanating, luminous painted fields. The role of iridescent medium has been investigated, however, its darkness when not reflecting light creates too much contrast.

I have continued to investigate high value colour interactions using irregular concentric grid-based compositions as a means of ordering and layering colours. I have recently completed a series of experimental works on ceramic surfaces on board with acrylic paint. Due to the unsatisfactory results, I have returned to stretched linen for the final body of paintings for examination in March 2010.

A full draft of my dissertation has been reviewed by my supervisors and is currently in the editing process. The research of the Dissertation commences with the writing of Kathryn A. Tuma, Kasha Linville and Rosalind Krauss, as the authors consider the materiality, luminosity and poetics of Agnes Martin's paintings. Linville's phenomenological reading, extended by Krauss, was found to be of particular relevance. It was demonstrated that the material qualities of paintings contribute to spatial illusions along with colour interactions creating luminous effects, dependent on the space of reception, or viewing distance.

In Chapter 2, a Sensory Poetic Model was developed mostly from the writings of John Berger as a method for informing discussion of both the formal and poetic aspects of painting in the following chapters. Chapter 3 investigated the materiality and luminosity of Fra Angelico's and Mark Rothko's paintings, compared in the literature in terms of their dry surfaces and luminosity. Field studies (ANU funded, late in 2008) to examine Fra Angelico's frescoes in Florence and Rothko's paintings in London and New York greatly informed this and the following chapter. It became clear that pictorial structures are particularly important for the composition and interaction of colours which create illusions of space and light, thus Chapter 4 focussed on this. Paintings of JMW Turner, Mary Heilmann, Agnes Martin, Giorgio Morandi and Howard Taylor were examined and discussed. Field studies (personally funded, May 2009) to Perth permitted the examination of Taylor's paintings

with the kind permission of Douglas Sheerer.

During Semester II, I have undertaken the Pinnacle Teachers' Program for Graduate Teachers, and as part of that, presented lectures in the Painting Workshop based on Chapters 2 and 3.

B2. Have concerns mentioned in your previous annual report and plan been addressed? Give details.
I followed through on plans for my Dissertation to undertake observational analyses and writing about primary sources by painters concerned with particular qualities of light. Through analyses and syntheses, the employment of colour as light in painting and the poetic impact or tensions created by materiality of surface were investigated as intended. In my Studio Research, I experimented with scale, format and on various surfaces - rough, smooth, canvas, linen, board, ceramic on board - before deciding to return to stretched linen for the final body of paintings. Materiality was also investigated comparing acrylics, oil, iridescent mediums and pumice.

B3. Have you completed research integrity training? YES ☒ NO ☐

B4. If required, have you obtained ethics clearance? YES ☐ NO ☐

If so, detail from whom and when and list your Human Ethics Protocol Number.

NA

B5. Have any of the following problems affected progress over the past year? (tick or double click on box to tick electronically)

Interruption to supervision	☐	English language/comprehension and /or writing	☐
Employment commitments	☐	Access to research materials	☐
Financial	☐	Understanding work expected	☐
Other	☐	Health/personal	☐

Please elaborate on specific issues identified and indicate what steps have been taken to address these issues?

B6. Specific Milestones for research progress in the coming year

(eg. completion of a body of work, a chapter, development of research methodology, fieldwork etc). You should develop these objectives in consultation with your supervisor. These objectives will be considered at your next annual review.

My plans are to complete my Dissertation and Exegesis for forwarding to examiners early in January and the completion of a new series of paintings for examination late in March, 2010. I would like to demonstrate progress and turning points during the last three years through an exhibition of works in the Painting Workshop and two related series of paintings in the School of Art Gallery.

B7. (a) What is your maximum submission date?

7.2.10

(b) Give your projected submission date (if your expected submission date is beyond your current maximum submission date please detail reasons)

7.2.10

B. Have you completed any coursework required for the degree or courses related to the degree? YES ☐ NO ☒ N/A ☐

If Yes, provide details

Course ID	Course name

- B9.** (i) How many hours per week are devoted to your candidature? 45
(ii) How many hours per week do you undertake paid employment? 4

B10. Supervision

Do you meet and discuss your research with your supervisor ☐ at least once per week ☒ at least once per month
☐ at least once per semester ☐ communicate by correspondence only

Do you meet and discuss your research with your panel members either collectively or individually ☐ at least once per week ☒ at least once per month
☐ at least once per semester ☐ communicate by correspondence only

Please elaborate on the level of support and advice you have received during the last year from your supervisor(s). If you are unsatisfied with your current supervisory arrangements please contact the Associate Dean (Research Training) for advice.

I have received all the supervisory support I have required during the last year. The advice I have been given has been generous and helpful. My questions have always been answered comprehensively.

B11. Resources (eg computer, office space)

Do you have sufficient resources to support your research program? YES ☒ No ☐

If No, please elaborate on the current level of resources available and detail any additional resources required for the completion of your research program

Due to the generosity of my family, i have had sufficient resources to support my research. I was waiting for a computer for over two years with no sign of that being forthcoming. I enquired several times about this and gave up.

Affording the quality of materials needed to make work at this level has been a concern for me especially during the last year. \$500 allowances are routinely given to environmental science students for books without a competitive selection process. i would like to see equity across ANU faculties regarding these kinds of allowances for material resources necessary for the completion of one's course of studies with reduced stress.

Section B should be completed by the Candidate and then forwarded (with Section A – cover sheet) to their Chair for completion of Section C. This form can be forwarded in hard copy or saved and emailed.

C. Chair Section

C1. Has the candidate:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(a) diligently and consistently applied themselves to their project?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
(b) shown initiative with the requirements of the research program and the level of study?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
(c) made satisfactory progress over the past year or since last review?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C2. Have any of the following problems affected progress over the past year? (tick or double click on box to tick electronically)

Interruption to supervision	☐	English language/comprehension and /or writing	☐
Employment commitments	☐	Access to research materials	☐
Financial	☐	Understanding work expected	☐
Other	☐	Health/personal	☐

Please elaborate on specific issues and indicate what steps have been taken to address these issues?

C3.

Do you meet and discuss the research with the candidate on average
☐ at least once per week
☒ at least once per month
☐ at least once per fortnight
☐ communicate by correspondence only

Are the general supervisory arrangements satisfactory?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If not, how could they be improved?

C4. Do you agree with the projected date of completion of the research and submission of thesis indicated by the candidate at B7?

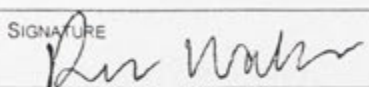
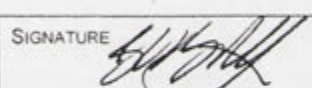
YES ☒ NO ☐

C5. Any other comments on the candidate's work and rate of progress?

Excellent progress toward objectives as outlined.

C6. Recommendation to the Head of School/Centre: The progress of the candidature **during the last 12 months (or since last review)** has been assessed to be:

☐ Satisfactory	meeting all requirements; continued enrolment in candidature recommended
☐ Marginal	Continued enrolment subject to the outcome of an additional review on ____ at which time progress against the attached thesis related tasks and deadlines will be reviewed
☐ Unsatisfactory	☐ an additional review will be held on ____ at which time progress against the attached thesis related tasks and deadlines will be reviewed ☐ recommendation to the Delegated Authority that the candidate be requested to show cause why the candidature should not be terminated for the reasons attached

D. Approval		
D1. Student		
My Chair has discussed Sections B and C with me.		
NAME Suzanne Moss	SIGNATURE 	DATE 13/10/09
D2. Chair of Supervisory Panel		
I have read section B of this report		
NAME RUTH WALLER	SIGNATURE 	DATE 8/10/09.
D3. Head of School/Centre		
I have read sections A – C of this report and recommend/ comment as follows		
COMMENTS excellent progress noted. (look forward to the submission in 2010.		
NAME Gordon Ball	SIGNATURE 	DATE 13/10/09.
D4. Delegated Authority		
I have read sections A – C of this report and recommend/ comment as follows		
COMMENTS		
NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE

Completion of an Annual Report and Plan is compulsory for all students enrolled in a research degree

- For students who commenced full-time on or before 31 March, the Thesis Proposal Review and Annual Report and Plan are to be combined. This process must be finalised by **15 December** of the first year of candidature
- For students who commenced full-time between 1 April and 31 August, the Thesis Proposal Review and Annual Report and Plan process must be finalised by **30 June** the following year
- For continuing students all Sections of the Annual Report and Plan are to be completed by **30 September**