

Make a painting of frequencyⁱ

“Warmth and cold are as important in sculpture as space and form.”ⁱⁱ

Part One: A living state

Frederick Kiesler, the Austrian/American architect, artist, and theorist, was the first person to write of Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass*. It was published in an architecture journal.ⁱⁱⁱ “Architecture is control of space. An easel painting is illusion of Space-Reality. Duchamp's Glass is the first x-ray-painting of space’ Kiesler wrote as the epigraph for his article. ‘It is architecture, sculpture and painting in ONE’ and to create such a [whole art work] he maintained ‘one needs as a lens (a) oneself, well focussed and dusted off, (b) the subconscious as camera obscura, (c) a super-consciousness as sensitizer and (d) the clash of this trinity to illuminate the scene.’ Kiesler refused to attempt any interpretations, preferring to concentrate on ‘the teaching of its techniques’ ...”^{iv} The *Large Glass* lets one see through to whatever is happening in the world around, while being itself an enigmatic world continually available for more thinking/talking/writing; it occupies this small space here as a talisman.

Perhaps an ‘expanded painting/practice’^v is a living-state; how one *is* every day as time and space unfold (a decentred, scattered body), a condition, a force that follows logics of various kinds, simultaneously; a freedom, as illusory as that might be, or a sense of the self and world (and one as the other) as strange. It might also be freedom to follow many paths or ideas, to be capricious, distracted and/or bored; a certain sensuality at the heart of the matter; that ‘painting’, or an attachment to painting (as if it is the ‘proper’ name of art, or is (still) imagined to be so), and the releasing of that, at the same time, is a (self-)recognition that experience is always surprising and felt – an actuality beyond (or invisibly inscribed in) re-presentation.

Time is experience's matter: unrepeatable, unexplainable, and we make (up) time, and we make (up) ourselves in time (experience gathers in time's space (even as they (time/space) the one and the other, but not the one and the same); we believe in(side) it, as we do in ‘our’ experience; and, art is part of the time/matter of our experience, and a way of ‘using/thinking’ experience/time. We need time to expand matter (in thought), so as to have, for instance, ‘all the time in the world’ for experience (to see an artwork, to make an artwork); and, to attend to others, alive and dead, and things (organic and inorganic); to learn intuition as a method – a sense/thinking (between instinct and intellect)^{vi} that may (or can) touch (or reach) time as duration, memory (and these are matter), and as an elasticity (or buoyancy) of consciousness. Elizabeth Grosz, in *The Nick Of Time*, writes: “What duration, memory, consciousness bring to the world is the possibility of an unfolding, a narrative, a hesitation. Not every thing is presented all at once. Matter is an enfolding that consciousness is capable of unfolding. This is what life (or consciousness) bring to the world: the remembrance of the past, the history

submerged or lying behind the present, whose resources are not completely depleted for they can reinvigorate the present and help generate the new ...”^{vii}

An ‘expanded practice’ (or a continuous practice) is an unfolding (not an unfolding practice, but an ‘unfolding’ (a thing in itself), a ‘force-moving’ (wrote William Carlos Williams) without end, an ongoing response to pulses and ruptures from sensations and affections), a way (of doing, of losing oneself) that relinquishes determination (takes leave of the task set by oneself, or by the rules of the game that frames the task – thinking here of John Cage’s chance operations being open to his own taste and the interventions of others of all kinds, of the plan, of the topic, of the procedure), of what it was that seemed the point, and to discover (by letting come) what it is that waits at the heart/soul of the point, from way back, in another time, in another voice, in the unlikely or the unexpected or in the hauntings or fantasies lurking in ‘the point’, and lurking in the future as the un-inevitable ‘point’. The work then, becomes a vessel – and writing becomes a place for meetings, a seductive place, a place for intimate encounters (where one is one’s own subject, and so *is* the work (a fire that burns on its own terms)), a space for arrangements, for liaisons.

Grosz writes of intuition: “Intuition is not an exploration of the unknown (this is the task of intellect, to render the unknown known or knowable), but a finding of oneself in the unknown, an immersion in its specificity, a negotiation with its newness. It can be considered a mode of being lost in an unfamiliar element to which one must adjust through an understanding from within.”^{viii}

Expanded practices though are strict, they have internal expressive consistencies such as *concern*, *location*, *desire*, or a weave of these, that mixes (threads, fibres, cords, yarns) thought and material (a complex of surfaces) – they are singular and intense for that, and of uncommon-ground. That is, the ground is wide-open, available, composed, subtle/baroque, and transitional; in their appearances these practices are definite, but in their trajectory they are indefinite; the work is not final (or ‘resolved’; other things readily join, by sympathy, by alarm, and make tempers ‘worse’ (evoke trouble, doubt, dispute^{ix}), although it is ‘complete’ (as un-finished) at its moment of exhibition (of saying, of writing or playing); and is, to more or less extent, already moving on, a source for something else – a dissolution, a separating of parts, and not so as to re-convene (heal, mesh, reconcile), but, so as to stay apart together.^x Form in formlessness, or form in a continuum of form, or form as practice or process or mass, or as a series of actions, or as a book about a painting never painted.^{xi}

Agnes Martin says of her paintings: “My paintings have neither object nor space nor line nor anything – no forms. They are light, lightness, about merging, about formlessness, breaking down form.”^{xii} Her claim tells how painting can think of itself (through the artist), how even when it is form it is formless – that it is other than itself (and other than its interpretations) as it appears; that it is (imagined vibrant)

emptiness filling, unending. Martin's work comes to mind because I've always thought of it as drawing, not painting. She made a film called *Gabriel* in 1976 that, if I read Rosalind Krauss right, is like 'painting'. The film expands painting, although Krauss is looking for something else – a way to name Martin's work 'abstract sublime' or 'objectivist opticality' for instance; to read it while mindful of Martin's refusal of 'nature' and 'romantic' as adequate or even close descriptions. An artist's 'refusal' is critical in the moods and modes of their work's distribution by writing; adding artist-writing to painting, or to the discourse of painting/practice, is important to the 'form' of meaning over time. The way in which a work is distributed, the language used, is a type of capturing; it is the tone of that capturing that does or does not invite further distribution (or writing).^{xiii} There's a moment reached in Martin's film (which follows a boy walking in the mountains) where the boy's gaze is fixed, and, writes Krauss, this gaze reveals: "... in shot after shot, each ... held for a very long time, one after another 'Agnes Martin' painting: a turquoise river filling the frame with a rushing, transparent luminosity vertically laced by the burnished whiteness of stalks of sage ...",^{xiv} and so on. In this case, painting comes to film and writing; it is still itself, and expanded too, even when otherwise. Martin's film might be showing the way for a writing that follows, that finds, away from the work, outside the work, the work in the world

To shift (with) painting, while painting, and while not rejecting painting by being anti-painting is like Deleuze and Guattari's 'deterritorializing' (in a minor way). From the dominant language, or from a language that dominates, comes another indeterminate shape or tendency, an in-between state or a melting of the known and authorised aesthetic (or structuring system), a ruining of unity governed by its ideals (order, hierarchy, control, likeness). The minor tone sets out, takes a detour, to territorialize, or find/make, another space – something turns into something else (but not by abandonment). This is a performative act or set of acts in that a poetic (a comment, a coincidence, a mourning, a fear, a lament, a joy) enters the negotiation^{xv} and disturbs the story, and 'a play', a fault line, a deception, escapes and expresses itself, indifferently even, and at odds with, or in dialogue with, the place it emerged from, bringing news of another world, a paper-thin or thick-skinned non-standardizing world. The disturbance is concordant, complex and subtle, to do with the bustle of thought, with life, with gaps and omissions. These gaps and omissions allow speaking and writing to come to works – the works are invitational (or so it seems to me). Works that expand from 'painting', and that are painting too, comment upon their own production; they are decisive, and they are unsettling; Maurice Blanchot, writing about literature and commentary, says: "The more a work comments upon itself, the more it calls for commentary; the more it carries on relations of 'reflection' (of redoubling) with its center, the more this duality renders it enigmatic."^{xvi} That is, anything can potentially be with anything, in thought, in deed (in our makings); the infinite opens, and is overwhelming (engendering not incapacitating); the disturbance, as shaking or tingling or slowing^{xvii}, is a way, or a glimmer of a way, to participate in a contrary and turbulent culture, one that is fluid and adrift. Grosz writes that "... art is

the way that the universe most directly intensifies life, enervates organs, mobilises forces ...”,^{xviii} and further, in her use of Deleuze’s philosophy: “Art engenders becomings, not imaginative becomings – the elaboration of images and narratives in which a subject might recognise itself – but material becomings, in which these imponderable universal forces touch and become enveloped in life, in which life folds over itself to embrace its contact with materiality, in which each exchanges some elements or particles with the other to become more and other. It is for this reason that art is not frivolous, an indulgence of luxury, an embellishment of what is most central: it is the most vital and direct form of impact on and through the body, the generation of vibratory waves, rhythms, that traverse the body and make of the body a link with forces it cannot otherwise perceive and act upon.”^{xix} This delirious and generous text frees art to be what it can be, or to think what it could be, in seeing itself as a force of nature, as is philosophy in its extravagance, its display of thought at work; the job, the process, is undirected, purposeless, “... in short [writes Grosz] [art could be said to be, or to touch upon, the] capacity to enlarge the universe by enabling its potential to be otherwise, to be framed through concepts and affects ... [and to be] a small space of chaos within chaos, where chaos can be elaborated, felt, thought ...”^{xx}

There is always the potential for delay and deferral, as a mode of engagement, of coming gradually to what artworks do (what they release to the artist and the viewer as fascination, passion, obsession), and to be therefore (a human) belated by choice (“... the thing which was there is not a word but words track it ...”^{xxi}); this is a whereabouts or a wheresoever attitude, *where* ‘reductiveness’ has less chance of seeming reasonable. And, of course, painting is ‘expanded’ by belated-language, by voice or by writing (stuttering, stammering), and then by reading, and is (often) about ‘death’, or ‘grief’; but there are numerous speaking positions about everything. Frances Stark, a Los Angeles artist, in an essay called *Scared to Death* writes about not knowing quite how to speak about painting, while wanting to speak anyway. She writes about another artist called Morgan Fisher and how he’s “... making paintings inspired by books on panels built up more like furniture than stretcher bars. Utilizing an orthographic method, borrowed from the practice of architectural rendering, he arrives at an irregularly shaped canvas, onto which he applies an even coat of gray house paint, the exact tone of the photographer’s gray card. It’s hard to explain [she writes], because it’s all very complicated, and all the complicated explanations seem like justifications, but they’re actually inspiration, easily mistaken for justification. Morgan told me I should read the essay by Yve-Alain Bois, ‘Painting: The Task of Mourning.’ I was surprised to find that Bois concluded his essay by paraphrasing the novelist Robert Musil: “If some painting is still to come, if painters are still to come, they will not come from where we expect them to.”^{xxii}

Part Two: Arranging differences

The specificity of practices, the singular 'thingness' of them, as they materialise, form work(s), form bodies of work, is critical, if we can see this specificity, to undermining in ourselves the temptation to announce or interpret. I will briefly mention, in this regard, particular exhibitions of three Australian artists: Aldo Iacobelli, Akira Akira, and James Geurts. They have different practices, different cultural backgrounds^{xxiii}, and each has, to more or less degree, a relationship to painting – whether it appears in the work as exhibited, or not.

Aldo Iacobelli's installation titled *from time to time one talks to the moon* (2007) was premised on painting, and especially on 'paint', the medium; these paintings were events, parts amongst parts, objects with other objects; as an ensemble of presences the 'objects' conditioned and deformed each other. The non-painting objects bring the paintings into their world of 'sculpture' – the common aspect being their own painterly surfaces – which in turn bring the objects into the world of painting; the space of the gallery, the painting of it throughout a specific white, and by the building of specific walls, became itself a sculpted form – this expanded the capacity of the ensemble to resonate within a sympathetic surrounding circumstance, materially (aesthetically) and immaterially (ambience). Sight-lines were 'drawn' across the gallery in firm architectonic movements, precise like choreographed moves, like actual 'acts', and in variations (like a plant). "The sculpted/composed space does not render it particularly 'something', does not make it an analogue – it's an image, like a dream; and the dream can prompt inquiry into what the space/image does inside its strict borders, dimensions, thicknesses, and substances; can art be 'well' amidst the romance of spatial relations; the paintings seem parts of very large other spaces – whole buildings, cities, universes; spaces ruptured, or broken-off, by minute rituals, hopes, despairs, silences, breakdowns, longings; abundantly remaining spaces."^{xxiv} Not only did the installation become a cycle of exchanges and affects, but the gallery, as the venue, as the host, did too, and participated in the work's potential to leave its own real and independent borders.

The object-works of Akira Akira are not 'paintings', but paint is applied as if the sculpted shapes are the base, the structure, for white paint. In a sense, the almost-architectural shapes leading up to the 'spill' shapes of *paint that never dries* (2006)), and the spill-shapes themselves, are monochromes that sit on the floor like curved, folded, or crumpled canvasses. At the same time their 'other' materiality, their internal solidity, is suggestive of different concerns – building, land, escape, but only just. These are virtual 'things' on several levels, virtual paintings, virtual shelters, virtual places, virtual spillages, each rendered 'painterly', fluid, contained, and not least – quiet; and it's this quiet that 'expands', like wondering, as it seems to offer greeting/meeting; in replying (and offering back) one gives to the work whatever can be thought in its company; in the quiet one is given back oneself, strangely. "White, tinges of blue, painterly (and the whites are icy, best seen in moonlight): a solemn

zero full to the brim, and continuous; the bones of words, and the quivering wings of words – their propensity to become small proximal gatherings of song, bird, love, and vicinity/neighbourhood/friend. The floor and the walls (sliding open): a nonperiodic table for pain and steam and hum and zest, as a diverging proliferating image of compassion. The slightest change makes all the difference (or deference): “‘Either’ admits of countless definitions, or a definition that accepts countless definitions. It is like countless bubbles generated from beneath a smooth and solid surface of water; a solid emptiness unevenly distributed while existing in the extremities; a fluid mediated by non-mediacy ... an anti-mathematical space in which unlimited limitation each time forms a dimension shorn of scale.”^{xxv} Anywhere you put these ‘spills’ they will perform quiet – they will spill out white.

James Geurts *90 Degrees Equatorial Project* (2007) was an exhibition that consisted of several parts positioned around an off-centre axis. This axis was a set of constructed photographs in square light-boxes arranged in an oblique line on the floor – a first mark, a brush stroke, a deep cut. The other elements were quite different from this first mark, and quite different from each other: an almost-invisible painted white square on a wall, a concertina book on a shelf, two small wall-mounted light-boxes containing abstract images, a large four-screen video projection (again, abstract), a slide-work of drawing-collages, a sound-work (by Michael Yuen). The gallery was arranged like a constructivist painting, a kind of geometric mapping that, if analysed as a land form, would reveal a situation of various intensities (convolutions) and temperatures (substances). Underpinning the relationships between elements was the act of ‘drawing’; drawing that hovers between drawing and painting (a drawing that is a painting of the body’s response to the world, at the moment of that response). A ‘situation’ emerged in the gallery that was delicate; the viewer came into that situation as another delicate temporary element, and through walking and watching drew (physically) the elements to each other. “This, the conditions given, as a tending (or leaning or inclination), as an ever present other-realm, a universe of one’s (possible) making, a force that opens ‘glimpses’; it’s not a realm of abandonment or banishment, but of ‘hereness’, of feeling, of the exact presence of being-here (its wetness, joyfulness, fearfulness, lightness ...). Toward ‘what’ given then does one (one’s work) tend ... now we are dreaming in the light ... and just as the glimpse opens, force of a different kind slams it shut.”^{xxvi}

Part Three: Slow presences

The force-moving produces “ ... a polyphony of effects – autobiography, documentation, interventions from music, film, news, associative spurts of the ‘stream of consciousness’ ...”^{xxvii}; this extending outward, this porous enquiry, is an overwhelming impossibly ‘how’, as it is always in the company of absence, of provision. Such a practice of being in the middle, surrounded, surrendered, allows language to ‘happen’ (as life does, moment to moment), as space, as energy; painting is, or can be, only a facet of a formational-act, of ‘how to speak’ in such a way that the work (impulse) keeps

moving, or arriving, in respect to vague convolutions, to contagiousness, to whatever else might be for instance 'painterly' – like writing or filming or drawing or dancing; one thing leading to another, a generous eventfulness, dislodging codes (to be a condition within a post-medium condition, of composites, of hybrid networks; and, in Krauss's words, to be (oneself) a kind of 'compound apparatus' (layer upon layer)^{xxviii}).

Gilles Deleuze wrote: "If the Baroque establishes a total art or a unity of the arts, it does so first of all in extension, each art tending to be prolonged and even to be prolonged into the next art, which exceeds the one before. We have remarked that the Baroque often confines painting to retables, but it does so because the painting exceeds its frame and is realized in polychrome marble sculptures; and sculpture goes beyond itself by being achieved in architecture; and in turn, architecture discovers a frame in the façade, but the frame itself becomes detached from the inside, and establishes relations with the surroundings so as to realize architecture in city planning. From one end of the chain to the other, the painter has become an urban designer ... The sum of the arts becomes Socius, the public social spaced inhabited by Baroque dancers."^{xxix}

There is no core or model; if art is a type of research in which new ways of being, of affecting and being affected, can be cared for, then it is necessary to manifest visual and non-visual compositions that bear the chance-shapes of this – to, in however small ways, as sensations upon the body,^{xxx} offer planes of infused surfaces that constitute the ungraspable (the refused, the unpredicted), and the endlessness of difference. The dark-light/threshold living-state (not this or that utility) of an 'expanded practice' or 'proliferating practice' is a connecting (through valves and hinges) to the world (joining the open space of what is and is not, is seen and unseen), and/or a questioning of social structures, as a thread of content amongst other content; to, in some respect, consider work as affective, as a ritual of dissolving the fixed and the certain, of elusiveness and absence – and it is this elusiveness and absence that I detect in the work of Iacobelli, Akira, and Geurts.

What interests me in the works of these artists is their slow subjective presence – not that subjectivity is the works' overt 'subject'; this presence arises from the inner life of the artist, and the inner life of the places and events they have known or witnessed, and the inner life of their immediate and present surrounds (and the combination of these inner-lives, their co-existence, their rhythm). Intention is not foreclosed; instead, intention emanates (as if continuous) from an excessive and contrary everyday textured and tensed milieu, it spreads and congeals, spreads and congeals

Part Four: Painting/drawing writing

The way we write can also be an 'expanded practice' – a writing that is combinative, painterly even, spreading, congealing, that eschews unity, and conclusion, and 'outcome'. Writing through and away

from art practices and their places of gathering, and beyond what they imagine or imagined they could do, enables sense to be spacious, (force) moving (melancholy and elegiac).^{xxx}

I have used 'painting' throughout this writing as if the real-focus; this has worried me, like a wound; it has served though as guide, slowing me down; painting is a heavy weight, not least through sheer volume; yet it is always 'about' light and transformation (technique and topic; about what there is to see and to think there is to see); it holds, like a prize, the terrible burden of representation (even abstract it represents: nonrepresentation). Duchamp's *Network of Stoppages* (1914) is a diagrammatic painting/drawing over the top of an older painting of two nude figures (reaching for the light), *Young Man and Girl in Spring* (1911). The canvas has been turned from the vertical to the horizontal, and over the bodies is a painted/drawn schema of flows, forces moving, and being stopped and started by valves, a network-in-the-making, a web unfolding from a point like a fan, a measured spreading – toward a sculpture, toward something yet unknown: a study for the *Large Glass*. The network came from his *Three Standard Stoppages* (1913), that he had termed 'canned chance', and in being transferred to the *Large Glass* became the 'capillary tubes' that connect the 'nine malic molds' (the Bachelors) to the sieves (that feed them 'dust').^{xxxii}

Writing about 'expanded practice' is a way to write about writing, or a type of writing. The painting/drawing *Network of Stoppages* branches out from a 'beginning', from 'somewhere' on the edge and corner of the one below, as if the one below has an horizon line; at each 'stoppage' there are 'joints' or 'hinges' (it seems) that could attract to themselves other systems and networks, or suddenly burst open; it could be a map for writing, a writing that is a force-moving from an artwork, for instance, to an infinite plane of writing; the map is "... a condensed schema of directional flows ..."^{xxxiii} (and reminds one of Joseph Beuys's 'directional forces'); it flows out over the already available pictorial surface – from its small knot, it finds by various degrees and inclines its way elsewhere. Writing as an expanded practice (in association with other expanded practices) is a field of flows and pools and stoppages; it does not make of itself a separate matter; in its 'force moving' it makes a mood faintly/tangentially; it takes its own tact from its own knot (slipped from another work by chance). It becomes a suspended writing, a writing that forms itself with several or many voices. *Network of Stoppages* suspends "... drawing [called a 'painting'] between the technical diagram, the scientific schema, and the graph of libidinal flows ..."^{xxxiv}

An expanded practice is one that carries, 'lightly', oppositions, contradictions, differences, deadends, tensions, subjectivities, and chances; it also carries 'force moving' or 'directional flows' that form appearances of unforeseen shapes – without severe discipline or smooth transitions (or resolution or outcome), although at moments, at junctions, doing or being one or all of these. The stoppages or valves are where libidinal warmth can cool or heat or change its consistency (water to vapour or ice),

become another substance altogether (cooked, mixed, shredded, diluted, smashed), or find paths and spoors, marginal or excessive.

Rachel Blau DuPlesses, in her essay about a text by Beverley Dahlen's titled *A Reading*, writes: "... by the very intensity of concentration, of commitment to lateral motion, to metonymy [to write metonymy, she has already said, is to write all margins, no page ... all is margin, all is center] not as defense or substitution but as a path, a Way, such a writing turns the notion of time askance. Instead of narrative being the the master form of forms, privileged above others, narrative must take its turn among an array of strategies. For instance, the phrasal pulse which is the major unit of composition in *A Reading* – its short unit of noticing without the demands of finished statement – undoes the hegemony of the sentence, and yet the period is used as a center of punctuation. This both/and strategy gathers up the closure of the sentence and the ongoingness of the phrase. It appears that Dahlen has an interesting commitment to multiplying closures in a texture of availability. In her words "finished never done".^{xxxv}

Part 5: Coda

During April/May 2010 the Australian Experimental Art Foundation held an exhibition titled 'paint/hing (as one)', curated by the Director, Domenico de Clario. There were thirty two artists, with works from the early 20th century until 2010.^{xxxvi} The title referred to "... the whole of [the] exhibition as constituting a discreet body of 'painting', one that might inclusively construct, amongst other things, a local constellation. This constellation might then be referred to as 'painting', and be located within a local universe called 'art'; in time this constellation might become known, but probably only to its very particular inhabitants, as the 'paint/hing constellation'.^{xxxvii}

There is 'pain' here, in 'pain/t/hing, in terms of changing one's shape, morphing oneself within one's living-state, orientated to memories and sudden re-examinations: "It [whatever 'it' might be (a word, an image, a feeling)] continues to offer to this whole [called myself] until the shape you once knew emerges elsewhere as another; different, but somehow the same. And then you try and understand ... how this [it] – this painful thing actually can simultaneously be both itself [myself] and other."^{xxxviii}

The exhibition, its composition on the walls, its overall spatial sense, was an 'expanded' painting. The composition – where works were positioned (low, high, leaning) – was achronological, athematic, amedium, asize (as a method); it was in effect/affect collage-like, a sort of surreal sculptural event, and accompanied by a diagrammatic map. It required a consideration of: a. what a painting is in the company of other paintings; and, b. what viewing can be that is in the very first instance pleasurable and confounding (an ecstatic release from inheritance, from significance (genre) or from hierarchy (subject, medium, age). There was no beginning or end; there was, rather, a way, a process, of

working *with* space, of inviting works into unexpected 'situations'. At once, in one blow, you are somewhere else *with* painting: an 'assemblage' of images, of scenes, colours, shapes, and textures; and of objects and materials and movements.

The walls, the entire space as a bounded void, was the 'canvas', where mark-making was (at) the desire and imagination (given an understanding of the ephemerality of thought in time, and simultaneously the fabric of time in that it manifests through objects and their appearing in space) of a patient waiting (a divining even); this means, in the concept of sense-as-sensation (movement/change/transformation – this moment, condensed), that the company that each object keeps is critical to its affect, to how it can undo its own already established historically-inscribed world. It, wonderfully, becomes available again, magically alive again, to its own presence. It does not lose its past-life, it accumulates another/more life. It becomes bigger, it expands while all the while staying exactly what it *is*. The exhibition, as 'painting', re-animated both old and new works, it put them not only into relationships (or small unlikely communities), but it broke into their own pre-occupations, it gave them, within themselves, a new/romantic work to do, 'play' to play-with, and energy. They were curious again. Modest moves, no doubt, but crucial to a style of archaeology or forensics.

There is, then, an event, an expression, a distortion. Hope (perhaps) in other words, an experiment, right where painting is, in the gallery. An intense move, nevertheless, almost on the spot, a move (step) toward another move (step), a move to move the boundary by an indeterminate affirmation of appreciation, if not love; an inventive thinking process that imagines 'affect' rather than power. Difference, the making of difference, happened in the middle of the substance under examination, in the thick of it (painting) as already, itself, a transformative condition (a site of exchange, relay, and knowing (but not 'true')) – felt (but not a feeling upon the surface of the skin) beyond self-interest (an event in its own lifetime – an aspect of pain (a headache, a swelling); a marathon without finish(line). This exhibition was unrepeatability. It is/was only once, it arrived once.

The idea of at-once, and once-only, is both the act of the event and the event as cellular, and therefore unsystematic – in that it can migrate, dissolve, split, digress. Only-once-single, and yet extending, virtually, possibly, to everything that might connect or be connected, as if it, in its cellness, is up for grabs, is available for another 'showing' (like a painting *is*). It's an applied (applicable) idea only in its capacity for 'makeshift(ness)': joining together the divided, separating the connected, assembling the restless; a found-idea, to be subjected to, so as to stay-alive, violence. Violence that causes something different again to form through unlikely, uncanny, forces; and so on: endless compositions. The painting/show, its stillness, its fact, was its agency, its tactical reserve, and this is vague (a vague tactic, a slide into the fence, a faint scream); the 'completeness' of the painting is,

paradoxically, its openness (to inattention, to various ecologies and mechanisms that risk falling apart, that risk contempt and frustration).

'painting (as one)' was, expressively, vague, in that it was un- or uni-directional, spreading out before one's eyes, speeding into moments of blur and stopping into moments of calm (and overall was touching, sacrificial, and elusive) – as a field; and, was vague like a low vibration. The exhibition, as an 'expanded painting', associated (gave in/to associations) with the everyday, material/emotional/political, vividness (bloodiness) of the internal (the subtle body of longing, of peace, perhaps), in that it was an all-body, an all-present, experience. It was not external (in terms of meaning coming to bear upon it); it was vague to/ward the outside; the outside being separated from the inside (as a notion, an 'as if'); the field is, as theory, an atmosphere, continuous (yet the continuous was produced, in the exhibition, by discontinuous, discrete, pieces), rather than a sign-by-sign, limit-by-limit, visual engagement (necessitating negotiation after negotiation, and exhausting) with seemingly isolated scenes and forms (although this does not serve well as a comparison, it's not that simple – as the 'joins', real and imagined, are, like sound, a continuum (on the inside of the inside and the outside, for instance). The field is a place for lingering; the atmosphere of the 'field' lingers; it is not about the large or the loud (although they are elements; and, in terms of 'about' being the drive of narrative, of plots and description), but rather a muting and slowing ambience, precise and careful, attended to gradually and indefinitely, gently with-holding secrets and memories.

The curatorial intuition (an intention that comes about by chance and choice) sets difference into play differently, by the vitality of a profusion of conflictual states of 'attachment' – to beauty, anger, happiness, remorse, order. This 'vague' (near to Francois Jullien's discussion of 'blandness', held by 'the ancients', as calm, vague, solitary, and unfetteredness^{xxxix}) then, is not neutral. By the profusion an absence emerged, and it was quietly, acutely, complex; one was kept on one's toes by this quiet-insistence; it was a sharp absence as to-expand is infinite, to-live is finite. The dispersed, as dust particles of death (of all futures), as the gathering and displaying of belongings – thoughts, remembrances, memorials – is, in the work of an expanded practice (of art, writing, curating), contained, as a possibility, within each and every other thing/non-thing, as particular and (extra)ordinary: "... the lawn is a collection of grasses – this is how the problem must be formulated – that includes a subcollection of cultivated grasses and a subcollection of spontaneous grasses known as weeds; an intersection of the two subcollections is formed by the grasses which have grown spontaneously but belong to the cultivated species and are therefore indistinguishable from them. The two subcollections, in their turn, include various species each of which is a subcollection, or rather it is a collection that includes the subcollections of its own members, which are members also of the lawn and the subcollections of those alien to the lawn. The wind blows, seeds and pollen fly, the relations among the collections are disrupted ..."^{xl}

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- i Gavin Bryars's lists this sentence from Marcel Duchamp's *Box of 1914*, in his catalogue of Duchamp's music. (Gavin Bryars, 'Notes on Marcel Duchamp's Music', in *duchamp:passim, a marcel duchamp anthology*, ed. Anthony Hill, Gordon and Breach Arts International, 1994, p. 145)
- ii Joseph Beuys, in Caroline Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys, We go this way*, Violette Editions, London, 1998, p. 324
- iii *The Architectural Record*, vol 81, no 5, May, 1937
- iv Jennifer Gough-Cooper & Jacques Caumont, 'Frederick Kiesler and *The Bride Stripped Bare ...*', *ibid.*, p. 101
- v Rosalind Krauss wrote about the 'expanded field' in her essay on sculpture in 1978. With her three small diagrams she brought landscape and architecture into the sculptural 'complex' as she called it. So that 'sculpture', the use of the word toward an array of mediums and locations, was freed from its commemorative position due to a shift in thinking about 'explanation' itself, as writers had to take account of artist's shifts in practice. Krauss writes:

"With regard to individual practice, it is easy to see that many of the artists in question have found themselves occupying, successively, different places within the expanded field. And though the experience of the field suggests that this continual relocation of one's energies is entirely logical, an art criticism still in the thrall of a modernist ethos has been largely suspicious of such movement, calling it eclectic. This suspicion of a career that moves continually and erratically beyond the domain of sculpture obviously derives from the modernist demand for the purity and separateness of the various mediums (and thus the necessary specialization of a practitioner within a given medium). But what appears as eclectic from one point of view can be seen as rigorously logical from another. For, within the situation of postmodernism, practice is not defined in relation to a given medium – sculpture – but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium – photography, books, lines on walls, mirrors, or sculpture itself – might be used.

Thus the field provides both for an expanded but finite set of related positions for a given artists to occupy and explore, and for an organization of work that is not dictated by the conditions of a particular medium. From the structure laid out above, it is obvious that the logic of the space of postmodernist practice is no longer organized around the definition of a given medium on the grounds of material, or, for that matter, the perception of material. It is organized instead through the universe of terms that are felt to be in opposition within a cultural situation. (The postmodernist space of painting would obviously involve a similar expansion around a different set of terms from the pair *architecture/landscape* – a set that would probably turn on the opposition *uniqueness/reproducibility*). It follows, then, that within any one of the positions generated by the given logical space, many different mediums might be employed." (Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field', in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 1987, p. 288/289)

- vi Intuition, says Henri Bergson, is a way of knowing between intelligence (a movement outward) and instinct (a movement inward). "Intuition is "disinterested, self-consciousness" instinct ...; equally, it can be understood as intelligence now attuned to itself and to the specificities of life. Akin to an aesthetic rather than a scientific understanding, intuition is the close, intimate, internal comprehension of and immersion in the durational qualities of life. Intuition is not an alternative to instinct and intelligence, but their orientation in different directions. It is the orientation of the rudiments of instinct with the insights of intelligence, no longer directed to a single or given practical end, but for its own sake. The observational and aesthetic appreciation of, say, a work of art is not the simplification of the work to its most recognizable features; it is an immersion in as much of the art object's qualities as one can achieve, not simply to learn something or do something but primarily to feel something, which may, but often does not, have a practical concern. This involves both a lessening of the intellect's grip on the object's future use and a deepening of its capacity to scour and address the multiplicity of its other (nonutilitarian) qualities. It is a contemplation or observation that opens up worlds to us, rather than narrowing the object down to our potential concerns." (Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time, Politics, Evolution and the Untimely*, Allen & Unwin, Crow's Nest, 2004, p. 234

vii *ibid.*, p. 186

- viii Grosz, *ibid.*, p. 240; Grosz continues: "Intuition, then, is the way the inner directedness of instinct can rejoin the outward orientation of intellect, which have been elaborated by evolution in opposite directions. Intuition is not the reconciliation of the contrary impulses of instinct and intellect; it is the generation of a new series of impulses which may help modify our relations to the world."

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- ix Nikos Papastergiadis writing about art that is assemblages of images, in particular the collaboration between Lyndell Brown, Charles Green and Patrick Pound: “We do not stand before a map, or an archive in the conventional sense, because if we did we could legitimately ask for the references, the grid, the rules of ordering, so that we could plot our own position in relation to the system we are confronting, or determine the criteria for inclusion and exclusion, why some objects are given the value of being kept and others are disposed of. Thus for all its complexity and scale this work is private and incomplete. It is as endless and Sisyphean as life itself. The boundaries are imposed not to distinguish a unique form, but to show that the assemblage of the content is not random and infinite. To make artwork that performs the work of memory and mapping is a way of revealing the anxieties of history and place. The technique may point towards everything or promise universality but it always delivers a very local fixation; it is, in the end, to paraphrase the postcolonial critic Gayatri Spivak, an ‘itinerary of desire’.” (‘Trompe L’oeil, Under the Signs of Everything’, in *Spatial Aesthetics, Art, Place and the Everyday*, Rivers Oram Press, London, 2006, p. 66)
- x A part might be a fragment, a bit of something bigger, and yet it’s own singular ‘thing’. It’s a poor thing sometimes, yet it can circulate – things fall a/part (or fall free); in parting, and becoming ‘part’, they reveal their own capacity to have sense and to be free from service – and become available for other use, they become ‘in common’.
- xi A writing that moves horizontally across ‘the work’, and radiates from the work, and is co-present with the work, that takes work as a signal, as a live-thing, as an affect upon the body, and that touches one and alters the world a little, slightly cuts it, like Roland Barthes does in his essay on Bernard Réquichot, for instance:
- “The fundamental form of repugnance is agglomeration; it is not gratuitously, for mere technical experimentation, that Réquichot turns to collage; his collages are not decorative, they do not juxtapose, the conglomerate, extending over huge surfaces, thickening into volumes; in a word, their truth is etymological, they take literally the *colle*, the glue at the origin of their name; what they produce is the glutinous, alimentary paste, luxuriant and nauseating, where outlining, cutting-out – i.e., nomination – are done away with.
- A rhetorical instance: what Réquichot’s collages agglomerate are animals. Now, it seems that the conglomeration of creatures provokes in us a paroxysm of repugnance: swarming worms, nest of serpents, hives of wasps. A fabulous phenomenon ... summarizes the entire horror of these animal agglomerations: this is the *rat-king*: “In their natural state,” says an old zoological dictionary, “rats are occasionally subject to the strangest disease. A great number join together by the tail and thus form what is commonly known as the *rat-king* ...” (‘Réquichot and His Body’, in *The Responsibility of Forms, Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991, p. 211
- xii Heinz Liesbrock, ‘Figure and Emptiness, Agnes Martin’s The Islands at the Josef Albers Museum, in *Agnes Martin, The Islands*, Josef Albers Museum, Richter Verlag, Düsseldorf, 2004, p. 42
- xiii A footnote at the beginning of an essay on the French painter François Martin, and a body of work titled *Le Semainier* (fifty-two panels composed of six sheets of drawing paper, on each a different painting or drawing; for a year Martin painted one sheet a day in addition to his usual work, and on the Sunday he mounted them onto a panel), Jean Luc-Nancy’s says: “... the text was not written as an illustration of [the work]. Rather, it seeks to retrace a gesture of Painting that does not belong to any painting in particular.” In the text Nancy writes: “We take ‘painting’ as a practice, ‘painting’ as a product (‘work,’ ‘canvas,’ or ‘piece’), and ‘paint(ing)’ ... as a colored substance. With it, we mix the idea of something that has its place in an uncertain classification between (on, under, to the right or left of?) music, architecture, dance, sculpture, poetry. This is naive, certainly. But it is not inane. The *Semainier* presents us with painting, presents itself as painting, and everyone knows what that means. We see it every day. The *Semainier* presents all these days to us: not a painting of the ‘everyday,’ but the ‘every-day’ of painting: each day, each time, painting again, each time an advancement without progression, moving along a one-way sense without developing a meaning. In short, the dis-course of painting – for it has its discourse, of course. Nothing is simple, and discourse has its painting, and the one wouldn’t stand up without the other, nor without music, poetry, and so on. Nothing is simple. The ideas of ‘discourse’ and of ‘painting’ are false ideas, caricatures of Ideas. On the other hand, something resists, something like ‘brush *versus* pen’ ... Let’s let everything happen, let’s watch it come. That’s what Martin has done with this painting. At the end of the week, on God’s day, the mounting is done, as it comes.” (‘On Painting (and) Presence’, in *The Birth to Presence*, trans. Brian Holmes and others, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1993, p. 343/344)
- xiv Rosalind Krauss, ‘The /Cloud/’, in Barbara Haskett, *Agnes Martin*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1992, p. 156

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- xv 'Negotiation' could mean here: constellation, fragmentation, or sensation, but nevertheless it means discussion, circumstance – and are endless (that is, circumstance comes and goes, and is not 'determined' to finish or resolve: "... if something remains beyond an aesthetics of the fragment, beyond the repeated echoes of the disaster and desire of 'great art,' if something remains *or if there is something that is coming anew* that would be like a 'more essential,' 'more primitive,' 'more original,' and consequently 'more unprecedented' and 'more future' fragmentation (but also by virtue of this a fragmentation from which would proceed in their way works of art as such), and if this fragmentation must have to do with the event of being that one also calls existence, and within existence with this – that it comes and 'essentially' does nothing but come (come-and-go, toward the world) – if then there is something like this, and if it has a proper place (but with what sort of 'propriety'?), a place where it exposes itself as such, is this place still (or in a new way) art?) 'Art' in what sense?" (Jean Luc-Nancy, 'Art, A Fragment', in *The Sense of the World*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London, 1997, p. 127)
- xvi Maurice Blanchot, 'The Wooden Bridge (repetition, the neutral)', in *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis and London, 1993, p. 391
- xvii Disturbance can be 'surprise', an unexpected result or occurrence or event or response. Jean Luc-Nancy writes of surprise as the "withdrawal of the course of time", that it's on the "limit between the already-having-been and the not-yet-being": "This is the structure of the surprise (and it will form the exact reverse of the structure of the present): it takes place without having happened; it will therefore not have taken place, but will have opened time, through a schematism of the surprise whose 'I' would surprise itself. Open time could be the time of astonishment and upheaval, or that of interrogation and explanation. For example, the time of the question: Why is there something? – or even of this (other?) question: Why pose the preceding question? We can always take the time to respond to the question, and we must, even if only to respond that there is no 'reason' for this 'why'? Yet this time that we will take will have been opened only by the surprise that did not take time, the surprise for which there was no longer time – or not yet time – to take one's time. The surprise will not even have taken the time to come, it will have come-up at every coming and will have been the event of a *free time*, of a free opening of time so that time could present itself." ('Freedom and Destiny', in *The Experience of Freedom*, trans Bridget McDonald, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1993, p. 114)
- xviii Elizabeth Grosz, 'Chaos, Territory, Art. Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth', in *IDEA Journal*, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, 2005, p. 25
- xix *ibid.*, p. 24
- xx *ibid.*, p. 25
- xxi Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *The Pink Guitar, Writing as Feminist Practice*, Routledge, New York & London, 1990, p. 117
- xxii Frances Stark, 'Scared to Death', in *Painting at the Edge of the World*, ed. Douglas Fogle, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2001, p. 209
- xxiii Iacobelli: Italian/Australian; Akira: Japanese/Australian; Geurts: Australian/Dutch; each of the works mentioned was shown at the Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide (2006/7).
- xxiv Linda Marie Walker, 'sounds at night', in *Aldo Iacobelli, from time to time one talks to the moon*, catalogue, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, 2007
- xxv Linda Marie Walker, 'The paint that never dries – notes on the mood of a land (and its expressions)', in *Akira Akira, paint that never dries*, catalogue, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, 2006 (Quote from: Maurizio Vitta (ed.), *Shin Takamatsu, Architecture and nothingness*, L'Arca Edizioni, Milan, 1996, p. 20)
- xxvi Linda Marie Walker, 'Giving oneself time (for life)', in *James Geurts, 90 Degrees Equatorial Project*, catalogue, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, 2007
- xxvii DuPlessis, p. 112
- xxviii A post-medium condition constitutes one thread in the weave of contemporary discourse. The current situation is a convergence of ideas relating to situational practices, relational aesthetics and notions of 'post-production'. For further exploration of these ideas see: C. Doherty, *From Studio to Situation: Contemporary Art and the Question of Context*, Black Dog, London, 2004; M. Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, MIT Press, Massachusetts, 2004; N. Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Le Pressess du reel, Mathieu, 2002; N. Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as screenplay: How art reprograms the world*, Lukas & Sternberg, New York (see also: Bianca Hester, *Material Adventures, Spatial Productions: Manoeuvring Sculpture Towards a Proliferating Event*, RMIT University, Doctorate Thesis, 2007)
- xxix Daniel Birnbaum, 'Late Arrivals', in *Painting at the Edge of the World*, *ibid.*, p. 85
- xxx "If framing creates the very condition for the plane of composition and thus of any particular works of art, equally art itself is a project that disjars frames, that focuses on the intervals and conjunctions between frames. In this sense, the history of painting, and of art after painting, can be seen as the action of leaving the frame, of moving beyond, and pressing against the frame. Art thus captures an element, a fragment,

of chaos in the frame and creates or extracts from it, not an image or representation but a sensation, or rather, a compound of a multiplicity of sensations, not the repetition of sensations already experienced or available beyond or outside the work of art, but those very sensations generated and proliferated only by art.” (Grosz, *ibid.*, p. 22)

- xxxi Nikos Papastergiadis outlines three principles regarding the intersection of art and writing, the second of these is: that “ ... writing is grounded in the materiality of thought. There is no hierarchy in the materials or media for thought. All thinking is metaphorical. It is, by comparing, juxtaposing, translating, narrating, repositioning – that is by assembling – that we create and think. In this sense, writing and art have a common root. The purpose of writing is not to repeat the materiality of a thought process that has been exercised with other materials and media, but rather to develop its unique voice in the forum of ideas. Writing on art is not the promotional work of art, but a different level of engagement with the working through of ideas.” (Papastergiadis, *ibid.*, p. 206)
- xxxii Frederick Kiesler bought the *Network of Stoppages* in 1937 from the artist Joseph Stella.
- xxxiii Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, ‘Hesse’s Endgame: Facing the Diagram’, in *Eva Hesse Drawing*, ed. Catherine De Zegher, The Drawing Center, New York, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2006, p. 119
- xxxiv *ibid.*, p. 120
- xxxv DuPlessis, p. 113
- xxxvi 16.04.10 – 15.05.10; Akira Akira, Micky Allan, Clarice Beckett, Eugene Carchesio, Maria Cruz, Joseph de Lutiis, Ludwik Dutkiewicz, Wladyslaw Dutkiewicz, Diena Georgetti, Matthys Gerber, Romi Graham, Anton Hart, Sam Howie, Aldo Iacobelli, Lindy Lee, Nick Mourtzakis, Elizabeth Newman, Brigid Noone, Ian North, Roslynd Piggott, Gregory Pryor, Yhonnie Scarce, Sam Schoenbaum, Vivienne Shark le Witt, Helen Smith, John Spiteri, Adriane Strampp, Peter Tyndall, Paul Uhlmann, Ann Scott Wilson, Judith Wright
- xxxvii Domenico de Clario, catalogue: http://aeaf.org.au/exhibitions/10_painthing.html
- xxxviii *ibid.*
- xxxix Francois Jullien, *In Praise of Blandness, Proceeding from Chinese Thought and Aesthetics*, trans. Paula M. Varsano, Zone Books, NY., 2004, p. 132
- xl Italo Calvino, ‘The Infinite Lawn’, in *Mr Palomar*, Vintage, NY., 1999, quoted in Domenico de Clario, catalogue, *ibid.*

Linda Marie Walker