

# **Inspiration: a functional approach to creative practice**

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Declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award. Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Gil Dekel,      contact: [www.poeticmind.co.uk](http://www.poeticmind.co.uk)

*To the one who is walking beside me for thousands of years now,  
my wife,  
and the one who reminds me why we are here,  
my child.*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis describes an exploration of the processes of conception of inspiration and application in art-making through making art (engaging audiences in some instances), reflecting on the process of making art, and through the accounts of others who undertake such practice.

A review of the current situation evidences that being inspired to create art is largely seen as a stage removed from the creative process, which happens before the creative process, after it or beyond it, yet not as part of it. The literature separates the creative act from the initial stage of being inspired, dividing the process into two distinctive perspectives that do not sit together. The literature does not portray a uniform whole experience. This view sees the individual as having little influence over the initiation of his or her artwork and the motivation to create it.

Taking an autoethnographic position, through reflection on personal practice and in-depth interviews with contemporary practitioners I argue that the conception of inspiration, or being inspired to create art, is an integral part of the creative process, not an external part. A model of the process of inspiration based on a sequence of stages – stimulation, internalisation, and application – is put forward in this thesis. Each stage is investigated through reference to a body of practical actions (making of artworks, interviewing artists, presenting papers and engaging audiences) in conjunction with examples from contemporary and historical art practice.

Finally, through operationalisation of this model, this research demonstrates that inspiration is an integral part of the creative process, and through a participatory art experiment indicates an approach as to how it can be better accessed or used in an applicable and practical way by those usually deemed as ‘non-artists’.

# 1. Introduction

This thesis looks at the issue of the creative process that operates in the mind and the heart of artists, which was developed following my background as a graphic designer in Israel and in the UK.

In the field of graphic design one is expected to create works within limits of time and budget, where inspiration is not allocated time for. Design works are fast and demanding, yet creative and innovative. To be able to continuously create within those limits I have noted the benefit of exploring how artists can better connect to the intuitive and impulsive nature of the creative work. It is then that I started to write short-verse spontaneous poetry (in the style of the poet Rumi, see Green & Bark: 1999) which was inspired by an inner impulsive force producing fast results, without consciously sitting and analyzing what I create. I almost never edit these poems. These poems produce words as well as symbolic images in a creative flow of verbal imagery – both are necessary for graphic design, using short catchy slogans with imagery. I first published a short-verse poem in an anthology of North England's poets.

As part of the creative flow of verbal imagery I also combined photography images I created by going to nature, and produced a self-made book. Selling this book I then realised that success can be found in the simplicity of actions, the spontaneous of creation, and the flow that was not effort bound. I noted that spontaneity and images of nature from within re count as appeal to the public.

Then I developed the imagery in public exhibitions. I first exhibit in the UK in Leeds city art gallery, among other artists, where I could contextualise my work as an artist. I then realised that there is a need to learn about the process of being inspired to create art so that I could share it with other artists and non artists, helping to promote the creative work and the connection between art and the wider public. It is then that I came up with the initial idea of this research, focusing initially on images and words in my proposal. I was dealing with the opposition of image and words; the tension in the juxtapositions of the two in art work.

As my research developed I noted that both images and words share the same core source, which is emotion coming from within the artist. I see images and words not in

juxtapositions, but rather as two tools working together, expressing the inner emotion. I now set out to examine this inner emotion, in the following thesis.

The aim of this research is to look at the inner states of being inspired, and not to discuss the final result. There is a vast literature that focuses on the final choices of colours or shapes in art works. The following research focuses on the experiential knowledge, the psychological journey in which artists sense reality through images and words. I deal with the choices behind the artefacts; the choices behind the colours, shapes, compositions etc., as a way to see what motivates artists to create, not as a way to examine the final art works.

The developments of the thinking mind of artists has undergone a major shift throughout history, where artists moved away from depicting the external reality around them to depicting the internal reality within them, using abstract art. This evolution will be discussed in the literature review chapter. Apart from this evolution which is scanned through the history of art, I will not look at the historical frameworks of art in this research, since I assume that artists have been creating art in all times in history and in all the different cultures and societies on this planet. Regardless the differences in cultures and societies, artists from all cultures and societies create art. Therefore, the influences of historical and cultural context on art do not seem to answer the specific question of this research, which is - what instigates inspiration and a creative urge in artists? I believe this question can be addressed by calling upon concepts that are not necessarily reliant on history, time or space.

## 2. Literature Review

This research draws from the area of visual art studies, English literature critiques, psychology, philosophy and theories in science, where there has been an attempt to understand or determine approaches to creativity in artistic endeavours. In this review I will look at these critical theories as well as at artists' own accounts that are documented in the literature. Artists' own accounts, experiences and points of view will particularly inform my thesis.

Contemporary minimalist artist Carl Andre (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 87) reminds us that the question of artistic inspiration is not a recent one. More than two thousand years ago, Andre explains, Aristotle suggested an approach to understanding creativity by requesting artists to represent the processes of nature, and not nature's appearance. In *Book Z* of his *Metaphysics* Aristotle (1994: 4) explains the problematic of appearances, using colour as an example. Seeing the colour of a surface, Aristotle explains, is not seeing what he calls the inner essence of either the colour or the surface, since the colour has its own essence, and the surface has its own separate essence. Appearances, according to Aristotle, cannot tell us much about the source from which things are made and therefore, Aristotle concludes, it is worthwhile to look at the creative processes of making, the processes by which things are attached to other things.

Yet, Aristotle cannot be said to suggest an exploration of the creative processes of artistic making. Rather, he focuses on the creative process of nature through the works of artists.

Nature is regarded as a central point in the work of the English Romantic Blake, being regarded as a source of inspiration for Blake's creativity. Some of Blake's famous visions occurred to him in natural surroundings at an early age (Uglow, 2007). At the age of eight, according to one account from Blake's wife (Bentley, 1995: 36), while in Peckham Rye by Dulwich Hill in London, Blake looked up and saw 'a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars'. Such visions continued all through Blake's life. Nature, in this instance, stood as an inspiring source to uplift and motivate the artist to make art, as well as forming the content of much of his work.

The philosopher Charles Taylor (1989: 374) agrees that nature served as a source of inspiration for Blake, but he adds that nature had another function: it was also the source for the artistic expression itself, the source that enables the act of creation. Taylor suggests that observing nature and accessing inspiration through it must be at the same time an act in which Blake defined or realised inspiration, not just accessed it. Observing and realising took place at the same time, and this simultaneous form is the artist's expression, which Taylor calls 'expressivism'. Yet, the philosopher and art critic Colin Wilson challenges the notion of expressivism. Wilson (1971: 27) quotes Blake as saying, 'Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of perceptions... He perceives more than sense... can discover'. In this statement Blake asserts that people have an ability to see more than the eye can perceive, suggesting that it is a capacity of greater vision, or an expanded state of mind – and not nature – that enables artistic inspiration.

The work of the seventeenth century painter El Greco, *The Opening of the Fifth Seal* (1608–1614; fig. 1), can serve as an example. In this work El Greco employed vibrating brush strokes to illustrate the visible world in a way that distorts images, as the critic Roger Kimball (2002: 47) notes. Nature and visible reality are represented yet in an early attempt of abstraction. Nature is regarded as a source which goes beyond expressivism of realisation, and into a form of abstraction which characterizes the individual unique artistic signature of the artist representing his inner self more than the outer reality.

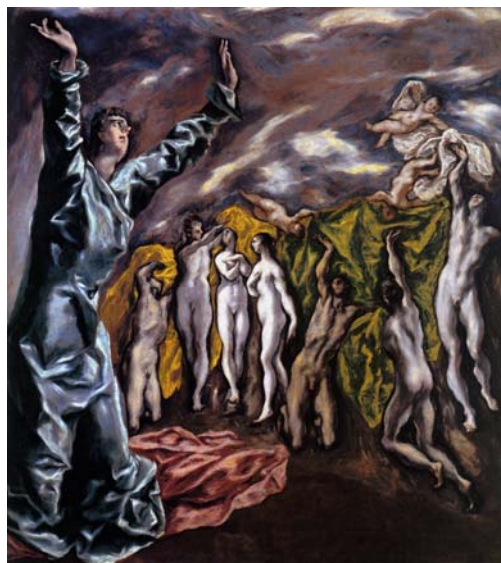


Figure 1: El Greco, *The Opening of the Fifth Seal* (1608–1614, oil, 225 × 193 cm.) New York, Metropolitan Museum.

Abstract artist Victor Pasmore (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 350) provides another example. Pasmore compares figurative works that represent the visible world with figurative works that represent the artist's inner world. In the works of seventeenth century Dutch painter Rembrandt, Pasmore explains, the viewer first sees a portrait, and then the quality of the painting, such as the use of colours and the brush strokes. However, in the later works of the nineteenth century English Romantic landscape painter Turner, the viewer first sees the paintings themselves, the colours and shapes, and only after reading the caption does the viewer realise that the paintings depict landscapes (fig. 2). Artists Gilbert & George (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 322) add that '...what's important is his vision, not the landscapes. You look at a Constable work and don't say 'what a fantastic field', but you say 'what a fantastic Constable'. It is him speaking to you'.



Figure 2: J. M. W. Turner, *Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway* (1844, oil on canvas.) London, National Gallery.

Others, like Dutch artist and critic Piet Mondrian, were also inspired by nature and accepted the existence of capacities that are removed from nature and that are larger than the obvious visible aspects. Mondrian (Mondrian, Holtzman, & James, 1993: 14) explains that indeed nature inspires him, arousing emotions that stimulate creation, but to express his emotions he abstracts nature. The act of expressivism for Mondrian involves deconstructing nature and representing its component elements: lines, shapes and colours. Mondrian did not see the creative process through nature as a

straightforward thing to be represented in art, but rather saw nature as a visible source through which the artist can observe and represent the elements that form the shapes of nature and of emotions (fig. 3). Mondrian was conscious that it is the artist who observes nature, and not nature that observes the artist.



Figure 3: Piet Mondrian, *The Grey Tree* (1911, oil on canvas, 78.5 x 107.5 cm.) The Hague, Haags Gemeentemuseum.

Mondrian (Mondrian, Holtzman, & James, 1993: 16) stresses that while he sees beauty in a flower, he is not trying to depict that beauty in his paintings. For Mondrian, the visible beauty is a sign for a human experience of form and colour, but it is not what he calls the ‘deepest beauty’. The surface appearance of a thing causes pleasure, Mondrian explains, but it is not the inner character of that thing. In that respect, Mondrian echoes Aristotle’s argument about appearances that do not represent the thing’s inner essence. Through deconstruction of those things, Mondrian tries to reach the inner essence, or the larger perspective.

Aristotle’s initial request that artists should represent processes in nature has reached a point in modern art, as seen through Mondrian’s work, where nature serves as a tool to inspire artists, but not as the artists’ main subject.

The painter Stanley William Hayter writes in the introduction to Kandinsky’s (1972: 15) *Concerning the spiritual in art* that towards the end of the nineteenth century, modern art in the West freed itself completely from abstractions of nature altogether. Modern art, such as abstract expressionism, progressed to represent the actual

processes of making art itself. This progression was seen as natural, and more authentic to the representation and means of art, as the artist Sol LeWitt (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 417) explains: ‘Obviously a drawing of a person is not a real person, but a drawing of a line is a real line’. It was for that reason that in 1921 the Russian Constructivist Rodchenko covered a surface completely with a single colour, without adding any representational form, to demonstrate that the canvas surface is a form in itself which takes part in the creative process (Dabrowski, 1998: 57).

Through abstract art, artists are trying to represent the way that art is constructed and the way that artists are inspired. Robert Morris (1993: 43–45), artist and art critic, illustrates this with the work of the painter Jackson Pollock. Pollock used the stick to mix the paint in the tubes as the brush to paint on the canvas. In that way, Morris explains, Pollock held the process of making art to be part of the actual painting, and broke away from Cubism by investigating the means, the tools and the methods of making art.

At this point, I see art making as investigating its own language; trying to understand art through making art. Contemporary sculptor and painter Anish Kapoor (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 334–335) says that art is ‘discovering a language – putting together vocabulary of form, colours, and slowly becoming into a word’. However, the language of art is not made of forms, colours, and words only, but of the artist’s own emotions as well. Nietzsche, quoted by Iain Biggs (2006: 190), refers to ‘thinking with our feelings,’ which is an issue in art much debated at the *Research into Practice* conferences and proceedings published each year by Hertfordshire University in the UK. Morris (1993: 41) adds that this question is particular to each artist. Using the term ‘Anti form’, Morris explains that the use of shapes has a long history in art, therefore, art works should focus on particularisation, on the specific scale at which the artist uses the shapes and materials. The specific way in which the artist re-uses shapes becomes the tool by which art investigates its own language. Hence, the focus shifts from the forms and means used in art to the forms and means used specifically by the artist; trying to understand art not through the means of art but through the artist.

Foucault (1988: 115), in his often-quoted *What is an Author?*, argues that we must understand the author if we wish to understand his work. Likewise, the philosopher



Jacques Derrida (Kofman & Kirby, 2002) suggests that one must learn how a work is constructed by the author in order to understand it. However, Gilbert & George (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 322) make no distinction between the work and the artist at all, declaring in 1990, 'We are the art and the artists'. The artists become an integral part of the work, just as much as paint and canvas are. In that respect I believe it is impossible to gain any insight into the created art work by learning about the artist, since the artist is the art work – the two are one. Gilbert & George's declaration marks a move in art history from representing the process by which art is created by the artist, to representing the process by which the artist becomes an art work. Walter Benjamin ([1935] 1999) noted this duality in relation to mass reproduction, suggesting in *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction* that art making includes authentic experiences of the artist which cannot be copied by a machine. Art, in that respect, is the extension of the artist.

However, the idea that making art represents the process in which the artist becomes the art work was challenged by Kandinsky. Kandinsky (1972: 10) argues that there is an additional element which cannot be said to originate from the artist himself or herself, but still must guide the artist. Kandinsky calls this element 'internal voice', asserting that it is the most important creative source which artists must listen to. And yet Kandinsky asserts that this source is internal and immaterial; it does not draw from any external sources. The poet and academic Jane Piirto (2005: 6) echoes Kandinsky's argument, adding that there is a power calling the artist and asking to be answered. In that respect, as the artist becomes the art work he or she is actually following guidance from internal sources, as if the artist becomes the servant of an impulsive urge to create.

Carl Jung (1990: 72), discussing creative processes in what he coined 'extraverted art', uses a plant as an illustration for this idea. Jung says that a plant is not a mere product of the soil, but rather is a living self-contained process, which in essence has nothing to do with the character of the soil. In the same way, Jung explains, the qualities of an art work are inherent within the work, to an extent that one might describe art as a living being using the artist as a nutrient medium. Art employs the artist's capabilities for its own creative purpose. Artists seem to describe feelings that support this idea on different levels. Some acknowledge expanded feelings that are

remarkable and that the artist is part of, while others acknowledge expanded feelings of larger sources that seem separated and coming from beyond the artist altogether.

In that respect, the poet Keats (Ackroyd, 2006) asserts that poets have no identity or self, but rather they imagine the self in thousands of living forms. The poet Anne Stevenson (Curtis, 1996: 54) says, 'The truth is vaster than the alphabet', and the video artist Bill Viola (Shambhala Sun, 2004) declares that he observed 'art inserting itself into experience'. The Suprematist Malevich (Drutt, 2003) discusses the use of pure geometric forms, which represent a universal essence that belongs to all people and have no single culture. These artists belong to the first group, which acknowledge intensified or larger emotional capacities in which the artist takes part. Jephcott (1972: 12) refers to these experiences in his study on Rilke and Proust with the term 'Privileged moment'.

To the second group belong such artists as William Blake. Blake (Bowra, 1976: 44) argues that he feels the presence of something larger than man during the experiences which inspire him to write, and declares (Halpern, 1994: xv) that he is under the guidance of angels day and night. Yeats (1966: 272), who was known for his automatic-writing experiences, also supports the notion of knowledge or creative power that comes to the artist from beyond the artist's own mind. These forms of knowledge are seen by the cultural and literary critic Marina Warner (2006: 237) as important forms which can reveal what would otherwise be hidden, and are thus useful for research studies.

Taking the same view, Jung (1963: 176) adds that some things in the psyche seem as if they were produced by themselves and not by the psyche. Jung describes an experience where he entered an intense mode of observing his own way of thinking. During that experience he visualised an imagined figure named Philemon, who asserted to him that his thoughts are not his own and are not created by his own mind. Likewise, the architect and founder of Anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner (1993: 40), asserts that thought should be treated as an external object, since thoughts are basically the speech of another being speaking to us.

To describe the totality of all psychic processes and contents, Jung coined the term 'collective unconscious'. Art, he argues (1990: 80), originates from the collective unconscious, and not from the artist's own personal unconscious mind. Jung's notion

of the collective unconscious seems to be echoed by the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard who coined the term 'Absolute image'. Bachelard (1969: 153) explains that absolute image is a self-contained image which is not prepared by thought, and is not the result or influence of a previous image in one's mind; rather, it is absolute. The poetic image, Bachelard (1969: xvii) explains, has no causality, therefore it is absolute image. This notion could be compared to Immanuel Kant's important idea of the a-priori and synthetic thought, as discussed in his *Critique of Pure Reason* ([1787] 2000). Kant argues that thought itself is based on a-priori categories of space and time, which exist in the mind of the person even before the person thinks. Kant makes a distinction between thoughts that are the results of previous thoughts ('post-ideated image' in Bachelard's terminology), and synthetic thoughts that are not produced from previous thoughts.

Kant, Jung and Yeats can be viewed as representing the notion of inner faculties, and may convince us that there are unsolved or poorly-understood influences on how we perceive and think. However, the literature on quantum physics may shed important light on this issue. Recent theories in quantum physics (Arntz, Chasse & Vicente, 2004: minute 5.27) suggest that the mind can have an influence over matter, to the extent that the mind, or thoughts, seem to alter or form physical objects. Such studies, as Professor Josephson Brian's (n.d., para 1) *Mind-Matter Unification Project* in Cambridge University, imply the possibility that people may have a greater influence over reality than was previously understood. In that respect, artistic creativity could be brought closer to an understanding through the artists who create.

The literature does not seem to reach a conclusion in regard to the influence of the mind over matter or the seemingly transcendental sources of inspiration that inspire artists. Piirto (2005: 10) uses the word 'Muse' in relation to the transcendental inspiration source in art, quoting Ted Hughes as saying, 'Poems get to the point where they are stronger than you are'. Piirto seems to touch on a crucial point in regard to the transcendental Muse: the Muse, she says, comes from afar but from within the artist. Albeit remote or beyond the artist, the inspirational source seems to come from within and through the artist. Piirto notes that such a form of inspiration is accessible as a result or in response to the artist's emotional state. In that respect the artist's feelings, or emotions, can be seen as a gate, or an access point, to inspiration.

However, feelings may not be evident all the time, and thus difficult to evidence on inspiration. In *The act of creation* Arthur Koestler (1964: 148) quotes Plotinus (ca. AD 204–270) who argued that feelings can be present without an awareness of them. It seems that some forms of feelings, from which sources of inspiration may come, are felt by the artist but cannot be evidenced for in the literature, while some other feelings can be evidenced for. More so, the poet and critic Kathleen Raine (1975: 120) suggests that those feelings, once felt, seem familiar, as if they were a normal part of the artist's psyche. The poet TS Eliot provides an example in one line from his poem *Burnt Norton* in *Four Quartets*. Eliot (1970: 16) suggests a meditative mode of experience where one is under 'concentration without elimination'. Concentration without elimination suggests a state of paying attention without trying to eliminate or filter what one feels. In this way, while the literature may not evidence on the totality of feelings from which the artist derives inspiration, it can relate to those feelings that one is aware of and can make sense of. The poet and critic Archibald MacLeish (1965: 18) explains that the poet actively labours against the meaningless, until he or she forces it into meanings.

The conclusion of the literature at this point brought me to an understanding that artists have moved from depicting external appearances to depicting the means of art itself, and the means by which the artist himself or herself engages in art making. That process led to the exploration of inner sources of inspiration, suggesting that inspiration is accessed through the artists' strong feelings that are later given meanings which can be communicated.

The process of giving meanings to strong feelings allows artists to make sense of their experiences. Giving meanings to experiences suggests coding experiences into language. Language, according to the philosopher of art Susanne Langer (1982: 65), is a form of logic and thought. Naturally it can be said that using that form the artists can then communicate their experiences to audiences. However, the poet and critic Wallace Stevens (1952: 13) in his essays on reality and imagination, suggests an opposite view. Stevens asserts that poets have a desire within them to actually 'kill' language by stripping words of all associations. Artist Anish Kapoor (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 337) seems to join this feeling, confessing that once he has an idea in his mind he would resist to draw it on paper for a while. Anish asserts that an idea is 'much more alive' in his head than on paper. In that respect, I infer that artists may not

be said to translate feelings and experiences into meanings for the ultimate purpose of communicating, but rather for the purpose of expressing. Indeed, the literature focuses on the artistic language – colour, shape and line – suggesting that artists translate meanings to these artistic forms. Installation artist and educator Joseph Beuys (Thistlewood, 1995: 57) argues that these forms are the natural place of meanings or ideas. Beuys argues that ideas cannot exist by themselves in the form of verbalised representation, but must be rendered in colour, shapes, pictures and imagination in order to ‘live’. The act of giving meanings by artists to feelings and experiences is the act of expressing ideas, and giving them their natural forms in which they can ‘live’.

Picasso refers to a different importance in the process of inspiration and art making. By asserting that ‘... it is the realisation alone that counts’ and ‘Others talk, I work!’ (de la Souchère, 1960: 13-14), he notes that the most important part in the process of creativity is the actual application of artists’ ideas into the artwork. The work of the contemporary painter Felice Varini indicates a new approach in the way that artistic forms are applied to actual works of art. Felice (Muller, 2004: 43) abandons the canvas as a surface for paintings and instead uses architectonic spaces as canvas. Painting his localised-perspective paintings on buildings, streets and spaces, Felice moves away from such as Pollock, by using reality as the place to create art as well as the canvas for the work (fig. 4).



Figure 4: Felice Varini, *Between Heaven and Earth* (2005, acrylic paint on buildings, street and sign post.) Image source: <http://www.varini.org>

Works in public spaces, Bal (2001: 3) explains, cannot be seen as individual creation by the artists only, but collaborative creation with the viewers. The inclusion of the

viewer in the process of public works of art indicates another interesting implication. According to Blake (Wilson, 2001: 226), the true mode of knowledge comes from experiencing, from the actual making and from participating. In that respect, by putting artistic forms into practice, artists generate frameworks that enable both the artists and the viewer to experience forms of authentic knowledge. The Romantic poet Wordsworth is quoted by the psychologist and education reformer John Dewey (1933: 37) as saying that all our senses are acted upon by the environment: the eye sees, the ear hears and the body feels. Wordsworth's statement supports the notion of authentic knowledge, which is 'felt' and understood through the body, rather than the mind. Wordsworth indicates that at an early age, the whole body of the child is 'curious', in a state where curiosity is still removed from thinking.

The literature brings me to an understanding that artists apply artistic forms to practice, in a way that incorporates new forms of knowledge. The literature suggests that applying artistic forms into practice is not merely an act of artistic expression of those artistic forms, but rather an act of expression of embodied knowledge through practice.

## **2.1 Summary of literature and Intentions of the Investigation**

The literature cited above scans the developments in art from representing the external visible world to expressing the internal act of creation. The literature has provided examples of stages in the creative process which begin with feelings that are given meanings, then transform into artistic forms, and later are put into action and made into art works.

However, the actual process of how the act of expression is achieved is either not discussed or remains vague within the current literature I have reviewed here.

Therefore my intention in the following is to show through documenting my processes of creating artworks the developments from one work to the other and the influences of feedback from audiences.

In addition, through interviews with other artists I will demonstrate the core commonalities in the different approaches that the different artists have and which allow all of them to open up to be inspired to create. With these investigations I intent

to counter the current popular view in the literature that opening to inspiration is an act achieved due to the unique personality of the artists which cannot be nourished by other people. In a final art workshop experiment I will demonstrate that so-called non-artists can be brought to share the same creative processes as artists do.

I will discuss the role of my paper presentations I gave in conferences as well as paper publications I had during this research, and will demonstrate how these activities can be integrated into art work in terms of their creative process. In this way I will demonstrate the quality of artists to combine both the creative artistic faculty and the more structured academic faculties of generating ideas and coherencies.

In the next chapter (chapter 3) I will discuss the methods I employed in this research, and will reveal some approaches I took in which I employed art making as a research method that generated data for my thesis (see section 3.4. *Art practice as a research method*). In order to complement the literature that debates a general theoretical idea that art should be seen as valid research method, I will demonstrate that this is possible in action, in real life, and will discuss the way that I have undertaken this. Piirto's important article *The Creative Process in Poets* (2005) demonstrates a lack in the present literature. While Piirto reviews the experiences that artists report once entering a state of heightened emotions, there is no explanation of how artists arrive at such states, and what is the process in which one state triggers another.

Certain literature in psychology as well as Gestalt deal with emotion and art, yet from a physiological and physical approach, not from a spiritual one. That literature focuses on re-action, while I focus on the action of making choices. In theories of re-action, if I may call them so, the researcher looks at emotion as a response for something, a cause and effect. For example, arguing that if someone feels happy it is because something else made them happy. Yet, in my theory, which I call the theory of action, I argue that emotion is not the result of something external but is an inner personality and intensity, whereby one chooses to be happy, one acts, not re-acts. Making choices brings up certain types of energy to create.

I will document these processes in this thesis, and discuss the methods I used in chapter 3, while a full review of the application of the methods will be discussed in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 will demonstrate the application of the methods in practice with the resulting academic and art works created as part of the investigation process of this research. That chapter will also assess the works and will conclude core themes in the process of creativity. These core themes will serve as the basis for chapters 5–7.

Chapters 5–7 will test the core themes of my works against the works of other artists, drawing from my interviews with artists, visiting exhibitions, literature review, and feedback from audiences on my works and papers.

Chapter 8 concludes chapters 5–7.

Chapter 9 will discuss an art workshop experiment in which I applied and tested the conclusions in practice. This chapter will demonstrate in practice my findings in relation to the creative process.



### **3. Methodology**

My interest is in understanding the actual experiences of opening up to inspiration within my own personal practice of making art as well as my interpretations of experiences reported by others.

The initial approach I took was to go out to nature and observe external events that inspired me. I was like a walking-recorder of human experiences, trying to absorb external influences, write them down and communicate them. I favoured an approach of observing and comparing facts derived from how external things appear to be in the process of inspiration. Yet, examining external appearances did not explain how the external affected my inner emotions while being inspired to create art. My inner emotions felt so strongly and somehow ‘larger’ or more ‘expansive’ than experiencing reality in other instances, and I began to question in what way external influences could affect inner emotions.

Looking inwardly I gradually developed to a stage where I as a researcher became aware of the validity and depths of internal experiences that occur within me. I have shifted from the notion of logic and reason to that of intuition and self awareness, therefore I was looking to discover what kinds of research methods incorporate and value the participative presence of the researcher. I studied several research methods and undertook numerous art experiments before eventually coming round full circle as it were, discovering that what I had been doing, without the name for it, was the method of autoethnography, or self-exploration as research.

I found in the literature an increasing number of positive evaluations as well as criticism. The criticism suggested that such an approach can turn towards being non-relevant to the academic community as it may become self-indulgent and even narcissistic (Holt, 2003: 3) leading to ‘the problematic nature of self-as-the-only-data-source in autoethnography’ (Holt, 2003: 15).

Looking further I discovered a transpersonal approach to autoethnography that answers this criticism by evaluating the epistemological and ontological assumptions made about the nature of the self. For a transpersonal approach, the self is not merely a dead-end or a separated aspect of one individual, but rather the gateway to profound unitive experiences. The experiencer does not separate himself or herself from reality

or society, but on the contrary the experiencer is having a ‘...realization of everything being connected’ (Hart, 2000: 34), by going beyond the usual identification with his or her biological and psychological self (Braud & Anderson, 1998: xxi).

I was excited by these references to visionary perception, and of the way such writers write easily of angels and the muse. It accorded with my own experiences, and offered the opportunity for my research to be more honest and congruent - and I hoped, more inspired.

Transpersonal Psychology aims to explore a fuller range of human experience than mainstream psychology, and to include the exceptionally positive and inspiring. Researchers in transpersonal psychology have developed a range of methods suitable for such experiences. The pioneering work of Braud and Anderson (1998) provides an important series of contrasts between conventional and expanded visions of science, based on the premise that an understanding comes not from the stance of being detached objective analytical, but from identifying with the observed participants (p. 10). Likewise, Hart (2000: 35) suggests the researcher move away from the so-called thinking observer, and into a connected, present and aware participant.

Braud and Anderson introduce valuable new methods such as integral inquiry, intuitive inquiry and organic research, yet I looked in vain for an approach to art practice that comes from artmaking itself – an art-practitioner approach, not a social-science approach. I was in search of a transpersonal autoethnography method that would come from inside the artmaking experience itself, and would not rely on what psychologists had said about inspiration in artmaking but on what artists say about inspiration in artmaking.

Hart’s (2000) paper on transpersonal psychology puts forward a method of inquiry in which inspiration is seen as an activity of knowing, achieved in a nonrational process (p. 31). This view sums up my approach of choosing the phenomenology research method from the perspective of autoethnography in relation to experiences of opening up to inspiration while making art. I drew from the autoethnography approach of dealing with human nature, by learning about the self and discovering experiences and knowledge that can be shared with others.

The autoethnography approach focuses on the researcher describing personal experiences and linking them to other experiences for analysis. I suggest taking this approach one step forward: not only do I describe my experiences and link them to others', but I also step out of the personal observation of my experiences and construct the step-by-step process by which experiences came to happen. I do not merely describe the moment of the experience, but document the process that lead to such a moment: the actual stages of sensing, feeling and reflecting. I describe the way I feel and think, explaining what I actually do in order to be inspired. My contribution is in putting forward the details of how an event develops; the unfolding process of the creation of the experience – not just the external influences but also the internal within me, so that any one can learn and join.

My approach offers to take a global event – the nature of human experience in creative action – and turn it specific by detailing the steps of its developments, so that anyone can learn. Theory, in my case, comes later to support my argument and not to be structured upon.

Another development that I suggest evolves around the use of the first person in the text. In autoethnography studies the first person 'I' is used by the researcher to allow for reflexivity and includes the researcher's own voice and opinions as part of the findings of the text (Holt, 2003: 2). This takes into account the importance of the researcher's opinion and subjectivity in constructing findings, however the speaker's 'I' in the text is separated from the 'I' that had the experience studied. In my research I use the first person 'I' not as a psychological observer but as the space in which the experience happens, the 'container' of the inspiration.

The following sections will detail the methods:

In section *Phenomenology* I will discuss the theory behind the phenomenological approach, and the rationale for why it was chosen as a suitable method for this research, compared to other methods. I will touch briefly on how phenomenology has been instrumental in creating art and in developing the research theories that inform this thesis.

The *Grounded theory* section will explain the method of developing theory based on the notion that an academic experiment builds up the next experiment that informs the research.

In section *In-depth interviews* I will explain the ‘narrative interview method’ employed, and the process by which I selected interviewees and how I conducted the interviews.



In section *Art practice as a research method* I will discuss how the actual act of making art was utilised as a research method in itself. I will explain how the activity of making art was used to disseminate knowledge; to facilitate a better grasp of how primary sources are distributed; and to encourage others to participate and contribute to the research. I will not discuss the specific kinds of arts that I have produced in this section. Rather, I will focus on showing how art practice in itself was used as a research method in this research. For a full discussion of the choices behind making the art works; the developments from one to the other; the interviews; and the conclusions from the works and the interviews that served as the basis for the body chapters of this research – see chapter 4.

Finally, section *Data collection and analysis* will outline the method by which the artefacts created allowed for data collection.

## **Methods**

### ***3.1. Phenomenology***

#### **3.1.1. Agent**

Prior to the start of this research, in February 2006, I had two distinct modes of thought. One involved being a creative artist myself, and the other was writing up a PhD proposal (*Symbols of Feelings*, published December 2006; ). These two states of mind did not coincide. However, as my research progressed I gradually learned to combine the two, allowing practice and theory to feed into each other. During the first few months of this research I had already created a few artworks, and presented my paper at a number of conferences and events ( actions table). This yielded valuable feedback from audiences in the early stages of the research, referring both to my

theoretical ideas and to the artworks, which were presented as part of the papers. As a natural matter I have adopted the phenomenological approach of using the researcher himself as an **agent** (instead of using structures). The marriage of **practice with theory** led to a point where practice generated theory, and theory created meanings and explained practice. Since the phenomenological approach gives equal weight to practice and theory, the two could ‘speak to each other’, allowing me to give them equal attention, thereby observing the influence of one on the other. Theory was viewed as a part of the process of making art, and art produced experiences and results that enriched theory. This was especially noticeable in the concluding art experiment for this research (see chapter 9).

### 3.1.2. Deduction/Induction

In the first stages of the research I attempted to examine artistic experiences via a **deductive** approach, trying to generate theory based on theory. I looked at Kant’s ([1781] 1964) a-priori knowledge, Descartes’ ([1630–1701] 1972) notion of epistemology based on the act of thinking (rather than on the act of feeling), and Einstein’s (1962) explanations of the fluidity and relativity of experiences of time and space. These theories, together with quantum physics, did prove valuable for this research, although not in a way that I had expected. I was unable to deduce from these theories a conclusion relating to the activity of artistic inspiration. However, I was able to conclude through these theories that there exist possibilities for unseen capacities that transcend our normal perceptions. The deductive approach through scientific theories, together with my discussions with scientists and via attending scientific conferences, did not say much about artistic creativity. Instead, an **inductive** approach, which allows for **intensive** and **in-depth** research, was chosen.

Edward de Bono, in his book *Parallel Thinking* ([1994] 1995), developed a useful method for induction research. de Bono does not just assert a system, but also scans the current system in use. He explains that the current mode of thinking, which he calls traditional thinking, uses judgement (yes/no, right/wrong, true/false) as a tool to eliminate some information and thus arrive at one conclusion. de Bono suggests an alternative method, parallel thinking, which embraces both sides of contradictions and seeks to design a way forward (see diagram 1). In that way, de Bono ([1994] 1995: 57) argues, we can design and create through possibilities, rather than take ideas apart

through analysis and logic. This approach was used in my research through an interdisciplinary literature review, consisting mainly of art studies, with references to psychology, philosophy, and science, for the purpose of designing conclusions gained from a method of parallel embracement. The research also saw an interdisciplinary approach by being a practitioner in many fields of art, ranging from making poetry, films, graphic design, installations, and art workshops.

I have also interviewed artists across a few sectors of the arts – poets, painters, installation artists, chanting artists, authors, critics, and academics.

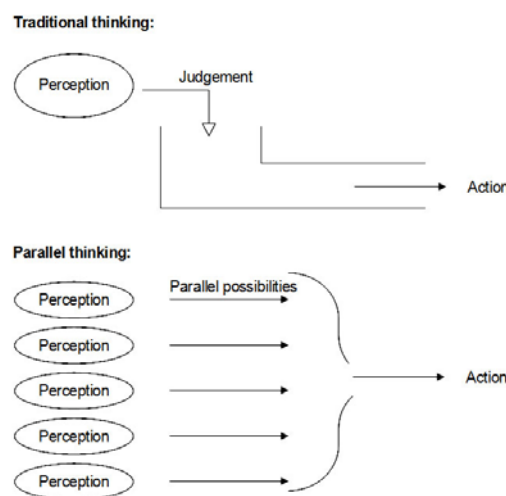


Diagram 1: Illustration of de Bono's Traditional thinking and Parallel thinking.

### 3.1.3. Description

Phenomenology (as discussed by Denscombe, 2003) proved suitable for gaining in-depth access to the processes of creativity in art since it advocates that research focuses on **describing** things, on how things are, rather than trying to explain them as they happen. In order to understand inspiration, a thing which is sensed intuitively but not known, the researcher needs to learn to observe, accept and describe, rather than try to explain. This approach proved useful to me when I was receiving feedback about my presentations and artworks, as well as when conducting interviews. The first experiment in being 'open' to receiving challenging information produced data derived through artistic meditation which was later made into a short film, *Interview with authorial-Self* (2006/2007; [DVD](#)). The data was surprising to me as much as it was to those who watched the film (as evident in their feedback), and yet it was not filtered by me but was brought forth as it is (see also revised transcript version of the interview, 2008; [video](#)).

### 3.1.4. Experience

Phenomenology suggests that the researcher should examine events through **experiences**, and not through predefined theories. Knowledge gained by the senses, and not deduced in the mind, can give clues to such elusive events as the process of capturing inspiration in art activity, since artists describe this process as emotional rather than logical. For example, the poet Anne Stevenson in an interview for this research (👁️👁️ para. 9) argues for ‘connections between you... and your experience, and your feelings... and words... that no analytical psychologist can explain’.

### 3.1.5. Relevant context

Poetry is defined by Robin Skelton (1978: 35), in his classic work *Poetic Truth*, as an activity that comes to express an experience, not an activity that tries to define or explain. While phenomenology looks at experiences and emotions, it also focuses on the study of the **everyday world experience**; the study of activities and events which are **relevant** to the participant in the research, as opposed to other approaches that generalise a theory about events that are remote from the participants. Hence my understanding that the phenomenological approach is suitable for research that focuses on inspiration and yet draws conclusions from ‘down to earth’ events and experiences that matter to participants. This is most important if the research is to advance our knowledge in the study of creative experiences. Otherwise, as my first supervisor challenged me before he accepted this research, I could simply engage in art practice alone outside academia, where I could do and say whatever pleased my creative urge, but which would not give us systematic tools to help us understand creativity.

### 3.1.6. The mundane

By focusing on the things that matter to the participant, the phenomenological approach emphasises the **mundane**, the simple things that one encounters in one’s daily life. Attention to the mundane is important to this research, which recognises that inspiration occurs in daily life as part of normal activity, and not as a remote meditative experience only available to a few unique people.

### **3.1.7. Identification and objectivity**

Instead of applying predefined theories to different people in different cultures or times, phenomenology encourages the researcher to **see** through the eyes of the participants by suspending their own belief systems as they gather data. Data is collected in all its complexities and depths, even to the extent of recording **irrational** and contradictory experiences that were observed. If such events happen, then they will be brought forth to the research, because they describe the event or experiences of participants, and not the belief system of the researcher – or, indeed, the literature. However, the data will later be examined in terms of the literature for the purpose of constructing a logical narrative that can shed light on the creative process and be replicable by others. Evaluation and explanations are required if one chooses phenomenology, since events that are known only through the senses and not via the mind tend to lack **coherency**.

### **3.1.8. Participation**

By valuing the way people think, phenomenology sees people's perspectives and points of view as a topic of interest for research. People are seen as **creative beings** that have a say and influence on their lives, not as passive respondents. Similarly, I have observed that the creative flow is often enabled by artists who simply seem to take **responsibility** for their inner urges to create, and thus they create art. While talent can be refined through practice, personal responsibility for the 'inner call' must come from the person himself. This was noted in a final art experiment undertaken for this research (see chapter 9), where participants were asked to view themselves as active creators, a perspective which resulted in participants demonstrating a strong sense of access to their inner creative forms of thinking, and acting artistically upon those thoughts.

### **3.1.9. Personality**

Other research methods, such as positivism, seek to distance themselves from the so-called **personal influences** of the researcher. Yet, personal influences and background seem to be the foundation of creative processes in which inspiration transforms from an idea into art. The phenomenological approach accepts **subjective** experiences as valid data, encouraging the researcher to explore subjective feelings that inspire others



as well as those that inspire the researcher himself (an important point in my case, since I am both the researcher and the artist). This touches on the fact that the academic researcher is a **person**, a human being, and not an objective so-called food-processor that simply receives information and processes it to a desired outcome.

### **3.1.10. First person**

For this reason, throughout this thesis I will avoid using the third person form to comment on the research; rather, I will use the **first person** form ‘I’. I wrote this thesis, and I stand behind it. I am also one of the participants and the observed artists for this research. Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 9) remind us that it is always the ‘I’ who writes the text, and Derrida (Kofman & Kirby, 2002) defines the attempt by classical philosophers and biographers to remove the authors from the writings as ‘pretence’. Derrida suggests the Deconstructionist approach, where text is examined to reveal how the author constructed it and how the reader understands it. Foucault (1988: 115) explains that before we look at a study, we need to understand the role of the author of the work, since behind any study – be it a study in science, art, philosophy, history, literature – stands an author who wrote it. More so, Foucault argues that the bibliography section at the end of a research does not only show the sources from which the author drew, but also the connections and modifications of ideas that the author orchestrated.

In my short performance and film *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006; [DVD](#)) I relate to the authenticity of words by saying, ‘...this is why the Egyptians embedded their words in stone’. However, with our modern technology words are not embedded in stones anymore, but rather they are usually composed in electronic forms which are non-tangible and can easily be erased. Words become loose in such non-permanent media, therefore, in this research I shall give the words their ‘birthright’ of association with their author.

### **3.2. Grounded theory**

Grounded theory is interested in the linking of events through their **development**, for the purpose of generating a common theme. This approach was important in helping me to observe the ways in which one artwork developed into the next one. When creating art, which is inspired by emotions and feelings, artists may find it difficult to

observe the link between one work and the next. Grounded theory enables one to employ the tool to make such an observation.


This research was developed by creating art experiments, learning from feedback and experiences, and building upon them. Grounded theory (Denscombe, 2003: 116) sees this approach as a process of adding subsequent **sites**. However, the so-called ‘site’ of this research (processes of opening to inspiration) is an experience, a mental activity. In a way, the site is people’s own minds or hearts, rather than a physical place.

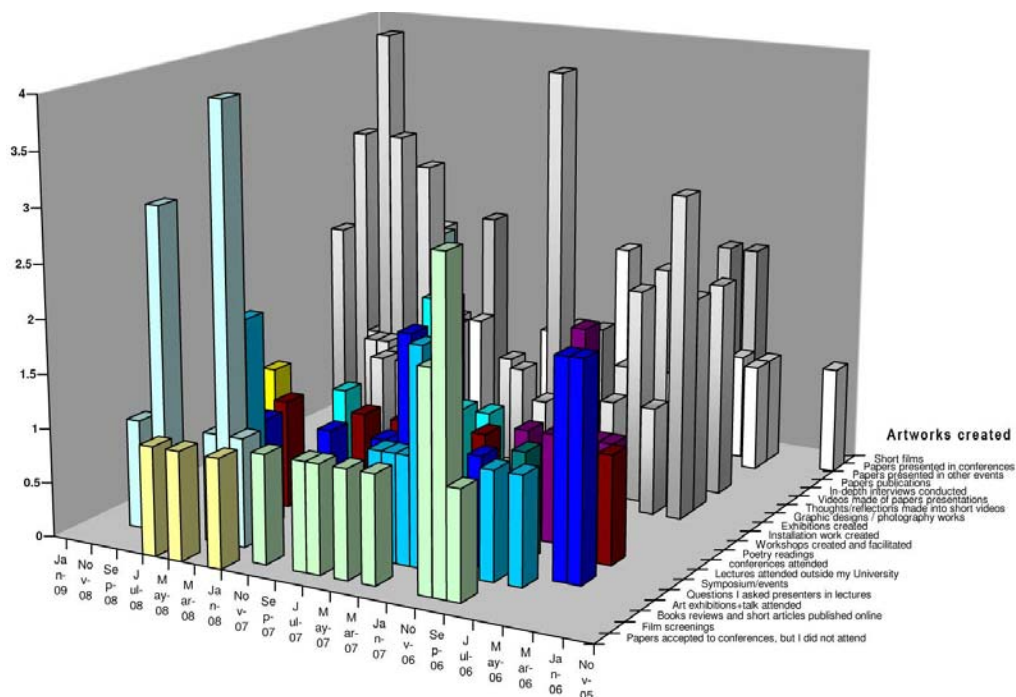
The painter Mondrian provides an example of applying research into the mental ‘site’ of artistic activity, in a process which may be called the ‘language of application’. Mondrian, I feel, would observe reality, be emotionally inspired by it and then would choose a language of colours and shapes into which his emotions would be condensed. Riley (1997: 1) explains that Mondrian had a systematic approach to the visible world. Mondrian would observe the branches of the trees with their rhythmical structures that would lead to dynamism, fragmentation and emotional intensity within him. He would then add a subsequent factor by identifying order and balance (unity and fullness) in the shapes of the branches, which would then lead him to making systematic statements in his painting. Riley (1997: 1) suggests that Mondrian insisted on finding order, suggesting in that way that Mondrian was consciously using this method.

Grounded theory is operationalised in this research as a practical tool, where I have made a set of choices, following Mondrian’s approach, in which mental artistic activities were given corresponding colours, shapes, sounds and tastes, and later subjected to feedback from audiences. This feedback would then shape further works. For example, making the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006; [DVD](#)) followed sites, or stages, that developed one from the other. The first stage was personal observation of nature and being inspired by it. Being inspired was an inner ‘mental site’, which occurred in an external site – nature. I chose to express the external site by taking pictures of flowers with my camera. Warner (2006: 223) suggests that the camera may capture what the human eye cannot see, things that ‘lie below the threshold of vision and beyond the frequency at which the brain registers light’ (p. 223). To illustrate the idea of capturing things that ‘lie below the threshold of vision’ I have taken close-up images of flowers; flowers in zoom, in order to convey the inner feeling that I felt

inside and which lie in the minute shapes of flowers. The use of the camera for that purpose seemed to me most suitable.

To externalise my inner feelings I chose to write short-verse poetry, and then read the poems in front of the video camera, manifesting them publicly. I also subjected the poems to what may be called ‘emotional feedback’ by giving them to another poet to read in front of the camera. Doing so, my inner emotions that were reflected in my poetry were given the sound and gesture of the inner reflection of another poet. In that way my process received not only professional feedback from another artist (reading my poems), but also her own artistic input. The poetry reading later inspired the specific use of the flower images in this film, where colours were intensified. Using the grounded theory I have focused on ‘grounding’ emotional experiences with the visible world of nature, images and human interactions.

In other works and experiments, I have received feedback on my films, artworks, and paper presentations in conferences – which subsequently inspired further work, that can be illustrated as a ‘wave’ of actions leading to feedback, leading to further actions. This pattern can be seen in graph 1 which shows actions taken for this research (artworks, exhibitions, conferences etc’,  for full list), with periods of intense artistic creations, following periods of reflection and assimilation of feedback, and a repeating pattern.



Graph 1: 'Action Graph' showing main artworks and other activities undertaken for this research.

### ***3.3. In-depth interviews***

Interviews can be used as a field study and a method to gaining a direct access to the artists, the primary source, as Blazwick (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 27) suggests. Blazwick describes a number of different types of interviewers: the interrogation (who does not take into account the artists' responses); the challenger (the 'media journalist' who tries to bring an issue to a trial); and the researcher/analyst (where the interviewer collaborates with the interviewee). I chose to employ the last mode, which Hollway and Jefferson ([2000] 2005) define as the 'narrative interview method'. Using this method, I started with a general notion of a topic to explore in the interviews, but I did not select the order of the questions, or word them in my own language. Instead I tried to become a listener, with the hope that the interviewee would become the storyteller. Hollway and Jefferson ([2000] 2005: 31) assert that in telling a story, the interviewees become the narrators and take responsibility for making the relevant points clear and understood. Relevance is created within the interview itself, and by the interviewee.

In total twenty-two interviews were carried out with poets, painters, installation artists, chanting artist, authors and academics. One interview with an installation artist is not included due to technical problems with the recording. The remaining twenty-one can be read in the Appendix (📀) and accompanying CD. As part of the interviews I am also including my art meditation experiment with my wife, which was made into the film *Interview with authorial-Self* (April 2007; [DVD](#)), since it was carried out in a same way as the other interviews: questions were asked, answers were provided, and new questions were formed from those answers. There was no pre-script.

My interest in the process where words and images appear to the artist led me to interview poets (whose 'business' is words) and visual artists (whose 'business' is image). I noted that the poets who were interviewed were much more articulate in expressing their ideas verbally than were the visual artists. The first artist that I have interviewed, David Johnson, mentioned to me that this may be the case, saying that I will find that poets articulate ideas more easily since their 'business' is words and so they are more proficient in using them.

Initially I approached those artists whose work inspired me; simple as that. Later I noted that I was drawn to artists who all shared the notion of a source of creativity which is unknown, and which felt to them as being 'beyond'. Most interviewees

disagreed with the assumption of my thesis regarding sources of inspiration and creativity, and yet all interviewees acknowledged that they did not work as individuals, but rather as collaborators with sources that were felt to be unknown.

I met with those artists who accepted my invitation to take part in the research, usually in their homes (across the UK and France). The first interviews were filmed, and later transcribed by me. Later interviews were carried out via email correspondence. At the end of each transcript I have noted the date and the place of the interview, and whether it was carried out in person or via email. All texts were sent to a professional copy-editor/proofreader, and later sent back to the interviewees for their amendments and comments. Once the interviewees had confirmed the final version and signed a release form (☺), the transcribed interview was formatted and published online.

Meeting face-to-face had the advantage of getting to know the interviewees, and being able to receive additional information through body language. The biographer Shirley De Boulay explained in a lecture to the Alister Hardy Society (22 April 2006, Oxford) that the interviewers learn from what is said as much as from body language, for example, observing moments of enthusiasm or hesitation just before giving an answer. The disadvantage of face-to-face interviews was the time-consumed in travelling, their expenses which were all paid by myself, the costs of filming equipment, and the long process of transcribing the video recordings. With interviews via email correspondence the interviewees typed their answers, saving me the transcription process. However, with these interviews I lost the human contact, and I had to compose emails with a few questions ready for the interviewee to respond to. It was challenging to construct questions which needed to have some logical sequence even before the interviewee typed his or her answers.

Content analysis (☺) was carried out on all the interview transcripts. A description of the conclusions derived from the content analysis is provided in chapter 4.

### ***3.4. Art practice as a research method***

#### **3.4.1. Development**

In this PhD research I could have chosen to explore artworks that other artists had already created. I could have observed works, read the literature and had discussions

with artists. Such research could indeed yield theoretical data relating to the processes of artistic inspiration. However, by choosing to create artworks as part of this research I am able to observe the stages by which creation takes place, as well as engage with audiences and observe the development of the PhD from one artefact to the next.

This process of self-reflection also allowed me to gain an understanding of how the making of my artworks could be used to trigger others to open up to their own creativity. Therefore, making art and exploring its development, was inherent to this research. This personal motivation meant that I was less interested to observe a so-called completed artefact in the museum, and am more drawn towards examining the way that inspiration is captured and how it transforms into art, as well as engaging with others to inspire them to open up to creativity.

### **3.4.2. Dissemination**

Art practice was used as a method in this research to disseminate knowledge. In my artistic films I incorporated some of my theoretical ideas, giving them artistic shapes and colours. This provided another form of representation in addition to paper publications and paper presentations. The films were screened as part of paper presentations, and in turn the presentations were themselves filmed and made into other films. In this way I have treated paper presentations as a source for art. For full description of the process of dissemination through making art refer to chapter 4.

### **3.4.3. Art presentations**

While I arrived for each presentation well prepared with a theoretical background, I treated the presentations as an ‘academic performance’ (see example paper presentation made into the video *Interdisciplinary Mud*; [DVD](#)), where a coherent presentation is delivered, but not in the formal dry style of a person holding up a paper that covers half his face, and reading it aloud in front of the audience. I never read from a paper; I only referred to keywords. This allowed me to be free, where I was able to use body language, vocal tones, and have direct eye contact with the audience, in a way that recalls an actor on stage (Dekel, 2008, para 1). The result was that these presentations were described as ‘thought-provoking’ (Dr. Liz Stanley, by email) or alternatively, received critical or unfavourable responses from audiences, as in the case of a presentation in front of Computer Science postgraduate students (Portsmouth

University, August 2006). Nevertheless, even in that latter case, two students approached me at the end of the presentation expressing much enthusiasm and interest, which, I assume, they were too shy or reluctant to express during the actual presentation. I noted that performing a paper is generally inspiring to audiences.

#### **3.4.4. Art as a trigger**

Art practice can also be used as a tool to move people out of their comfort zone, which seems to limit people's creativity, as I have experimented with by asking people in the street, 'What is Love?', for the making of a short film by that name (2007; [DVD](#)). As a researcher I could use other techniques to obtain answers, such as questionnaires. However, being invited to sit in a classroom and answer a questionnaire has the danger of allowing people to maintain their comfort zones. By approaching people randomly in the street, holding a camera in my hands, people (who did not ignore me but actually stopped to respond) gave immediate, spontaneous answers. This will be discussed in chapter 7.1. Here I am merely interested in demonstrating that art practice in itself can be used as a research method for gathering data.

#### **3.4.5. Authenticity**

I have been writing poetry from a very early age. Gradually the form of my poems developed into short-verse spontaneous poetry, usually up to two lines written in a single moment, without any editing. This form of writing can serve as a method for documenting inner experiences, through a concise and precise use of language. Since the text is not edited, it describes emotion in sincere, natural and non-discursive language, as W.B. Yeats (1966: 103) explains. Iqbal (1983: 155), referring to the short-verse spontaneous poetry of Rumi, adds that spontaneous un-edited writing can serve as a direct link to the artist's feelings, meaning that we can trust the writing as an authentic carrier of experiences.

#### **3.4.6. Process in end-products**

Art practice involves a few stages in the process of creating: idealisation, preparation, making, and feedback. Gilbert & George (2007, para. 5) state that their final design process on the computer is 'always ten per cent of the actual piece', meaning that ninety per cent of the process of creating art work is unseen or unknown to the viewer who sees the final piece. By making art, the researcher can follow these 'unseen'

stages and become aware of processes that are usually ignored by others, and yet which constitute ninety per cent of the making, as Gilbert & George assert. Such a researcher can then have a better general grasp of the processes, and a greater respect for simple things. A chair, for example, may not be seen any more merely as a piece of metal and fabric made in a factory, but will be respected as the culmination of a long process – a process that may have begun with a thought, a sketch, a request for a business loan from the bank, and a design on a computer, and which culminates in setting up a factory line, buying materials, producing, contacting distributors, shipping off to stores and devising an advertisement agenda. Making art provides the researcher with a tool to observe the processes of making, to the extent that the chair on which the researcher sits to write his thesis will no longer be seen as ‘just a chair’.

### **3.4.7. Processes of documentation**

By experiencing processes of making art, the researcher can learn that there are long processes for making data representative, which otherwise may seem as a straightforward representation of events. The experience of making more than twenty films and videos for this research – from the initial stages of imagining and planning through to directing, filming and then editing – provided me with an outlook on other films that claim to show ‘authentic documented data’. It could be said that any director/editor who directs footage and then edits it, will gain an informed view of the editing choices that other editors made. Likewise, a photographer will have an informed understanding of the distorting effects that light and camera angles can have on proportions. This is valuable if a researcher wants to keep an open mind when reading text or watching films as part of his data collection process. By doing art, the researcher experiments with the fact that things follow processes of editing, thus the researcher can gain a better understanding of the duality in which observed data might be edited and presented inappropriately.

### **3.5. *Self exploration***

After years of study, Kant (Lemay & Pitts, 1994: 19) came up with the conclusion that all humans have similar faculties that filter perceived reality. By examining his own mind, Kant argued that he is in effect generating a universal human knowledge, which is applicable to others as well. Jean-Jacques Rousseau agreed with Kant’s method of self-exploration, adding that examination of one’s mind should follow the




examination of one's emotions. Rousseau, according to Ackroyd's study on the influences on the Romantics (2006), had a private emotional revelation in 1796 where he saw thousands of lights and a 'crowd of splendid ideas presented to him'. This emotional experience was later reflected upon, and inspired Rousseau's later critical work. In that way, self-exploration seems to be beneficial when one explores one's own mind as well as heart.

Following this argument, I have created art works and examined my own process of being inspired, and of transforming emotions into words and images. The patterns that I have observed were later compared to those evidenced in the literature as well as in the interviews I undertook with artists.

### ***3.6. Data collection and analysis***

For this research I created short films and videos, poetry, graphic designs, installations, photography, performances, poetry readings, and exhibitions; kept personal diaries; built an art website; and designed and facilitated art workshops. I also presented papers at nine conferences and ten other events.

#### **3.6.1. Films**

The films were posted online, screened at film festivals and shown at conferences. I have received written feedback from audiences at conferences () and also made video recordings that documented my creative processes. Posting films online seemed a much easier task in reaching viewers; however, this proved less beneficial in terms of receiving feedback. Although the films were played more than a total of 14,000 times online (up to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009), I have received only a few comments/feedback from online viewers.

#### **3.6.2. Exhibitions**

Each exhibition involved an original design of a logo and posters that referred to the thesis. The exhibitions and installations included invitations for the audience to participate, rather than just watch. A feedback book was left for audiences' comments.

### **3.6.3. Art workshop**

I created a participatory art workshop (see chapter 9) that examined the thesis' findings. The workshop involved a short performance, a brief presentation of my thesis, an artistic guided meditation, and artistic activity by participants. Participants created stories and images (👁️) providing me with valuable information about their processes of creativity as well as feedback about my skills as an artist and facilitator.

### **3.6.4. Diaries**

I kept seven written diaries reflecting different thoughts: the process of creating art; the development of the thesis; insights that came while making films; insights that came while writing poetry; ideas for art works and product designs; spiritual experiences and visions; and dreams. Some of the thoughts from the diaries are mentioned within the body chapters of this thesis.

### **3.6.5. Online art resource**

I created an online art resource (work in progress), and have found that building up a website from scratch can involve similar creative impulses as creating artefacts, including feelings of artistic and emotional intensification and visions that come to the artist, which in my case inspired the design of the website. I also noted that building a website can help to assimilate data collected for research, and assist in structuring it in a coherent way. The technicality of a website demands that data is structured through 'tabs', and these tabs can be seen as chapter titles for a PhD thesis.

## **3.7. *Humour***

Former USA Secretary of State and Ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright (2003: 320) asserts that in order to begin a dialogue between conflicting countries the first thing to do is to exchange such people as scholars and artists, and later politicians. In that way Albright suggests that arts, among other disciplines, have a quality of negotiation that can bring different people closer to each other, through shared values that are expressed in art. Albright (2003: 448) explains specifically how this could happen, suggesting that the use of humour can help the listeners to be more receptive. Humour in art becomes a very powerful tool.

I have been examining the power of humour in art throughout all my art works as well as my academic paper presentations in conferences. In my art works I have used humour to raise a smile with the audiences for the purpose of delivering ‘serious’ messages which might be ignored otherwise. My aim was not to ‘convince’ the audiences about my ideas, but rather to break away all forms of defences that usually prevent audiences from receiving messages, regardless of whether they agree or not to the message.

For the performance and film *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006; [DVD](#)) I have designed an invitation poster (fig. 5) drawing from the design of the official website of the Royal Family (fig. 6). I was later told that construction workers that worked on the School site had approached the school manager asking if they needed to finish work to be ready for the Prince’s visit. This kind of humorous scene has set the way for the performance. For the performance I dressed up as a prince and reserved a ‘serious’ tone while discussing in a factual manner the possibility of parallel reality. The audience seemed amused, in a way that allowed for my ideas to be assimilated easier.

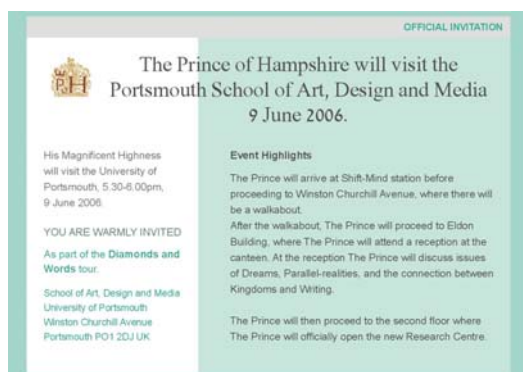


Figure 5: Ad design for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).

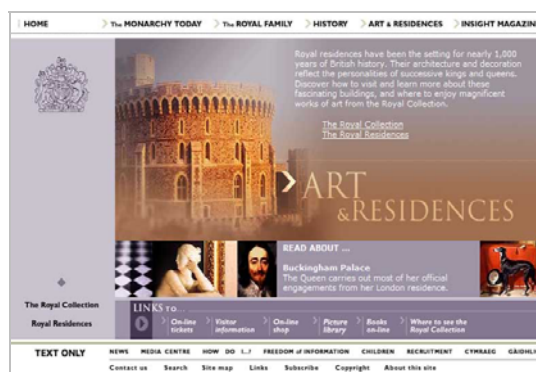



Figure 6: Page snapshot from the official Royal Family website, [www.royal.gov.uk](http://www.royal.gov.uk) (17 January 2008)

I later incorporated humour in my paper presentations, and noted the steady feedback suggesting that the audience was fascinated by such a form of presentation of an academic paper. For the final art workshop experiment I made a use of humour not just to ‘break the ice’ but also as tool to facilitate the path that would lead participants to the aim of the work. In a very ‘serious’ manner I revealed to audiences my apparent dialogues with Angels. The audiences were amused, yet, in addition to breaking the ice, I have already opened up the theme of inner creativity (‘angels’) which was the theme to be explored in that specific workshop.

## 4. A Body of Practical Actions

This chapter will describe the developments in the process of my research of making artworks, interviewing artists, presenting papers and engaging audiences, which I will call in short ‘the body of practical actions’ that I undertook to facilitate my understanding of the inspiration process. I have gained insights from both making art as well as from the more ‘formal’ academic activities, such as interviewing artists, publishing papers and presenting papers in conferences. For that reason, I shall refer to all my artistic and academic activities with the word ‘action’ (for a full list of actions, see actions table ).

In section *4.1 Artistic choices*, I will explain in short the artistic decisions undertaken in creating the actions, the way they evolve from one to the other, and how they helped to engage audiences.

In section *4.2 Core themes*, I will explain how reflections on actions evolved into conclusions that made the core themes of this research, which will be discussed later in chapters 5–7.

### 4.1 Artistic choices

All actions undertaken focused on trying to externalise inner thoughts and presence, through a dialogue between the internal image and the external. All actions centred around the notion of the self, illustrated by a use of figures in all works.

This section will describe the artistic choices that assisted in my own reflections and evolution of my thinking, and how they helped to engage the public to draw out their own inspiration. Through choices of colours, shapes, line, text, movement, and Self, I will indicate three stages, which will be called Actions1 – individual; Actions2 – individual in a group; and Actions3 – collective individuals.

#### *Actions1 – individual*

The first group of actions, Actions1, consists of my first two films, videos made of paper presentations, as well as the actual conference paper presentations (November 2005 – October 2006), and the first interviews with poets.

The initial use of colour was through graphics of solid blacks, red, and blues, that facilitated certain strong statements (films *Quantum Words*, *Prince of Hampshire*). This enabled me to come up with strong and prominent ideas which helped in ‘advertising’ the thesis within academia, getting the word ‘out there’, so to speak, at the start of this thesis, through my first four paper presentations and the publication of my first paper (December 2006). Strong graphic colours, were joined by decisive lines, which appeared as a form, for example the light glare in the film *Quantum Words* is made of gradating thick lines that receive the weight of a form. This decisiveness symbolised my definite ideas, which shaped the initial approach that I took with the first interviewees. Using some clear ideas, to begin with, I inspired the first interviewees to allow me to interview them.

The early use of texts in Actions1 was still as a parallel to the images of the films, as if they were separated.

Movements in Actions1 were minimalist and precise, as can be seen in the film *Quantum Words* and in the body gestures observed in my presentations. This kind of movement was set to portray a thought that was in my mind, and then was acted directly. I have used movement as a tool to illustrate inner reality and bring it out.

Initially the presentation of the notion of the self was as an individual. The films portray single characters at the centre of the scenes, and at that time I was working alone. This was suitable to this stage in which my inner reality was being expressed, for the purpose of showing it, externalising it, and by this means inspire others to find their own inner self.

### ***Actions2 – individual in a group***

This group consists of the films *Unfolding Hearts*, *Interview with authorial-Self*, *Explorers of the Heart*, poetry readings, installation *Waterised Words*, and paper presentations (February 2007 – September 2007).

Colour evolved to a use of whites, and zooming in and out into washed out areas (film *Unfolding Hearts*). This white allowed for a place of contemplation where decisions and statements are being made as opposed to being stated. Lines blurred, and it became harder to see where one line ends and the other begins. Forms became

more abstract, for example the dissolving flowers in the film *Unfolding Hearts*. The camera focused on the head and shoulder, for example the film *Interview with authorial-Self* which emphasised what is being said, rather than being understood through movement. The text then became a part of the image by turning into an image in itself, for example the installation *Waterised Words*. The self was presented as an individual who is in relation to others, through my public poetry readings, and the dialogue of the self in the film *Interview with authorial-Self*. This was also notable in the paper presentations which evolved into a dialogue with the audience, where I presented my process of works, not just a clear theory behind it, and received feedback which helped me to develop further works.

This stage saw the initial sharing of my process with others, for the purpose of sharing a creative process, and less for delivering, or teaching ideas in a linear way.

### ***Actions3 – collective individuals***

This group consists of collaborative works and the making of them into the films *What is Love?*, *A Fallen Angel*, *Confessions of an Angel*, *The Collective Hearts*, as well as videos made of conferences, and the actual papers presented at the conferences (October 2007 – December 2008).

Colour then evolved to pastels, which presented a mix of several colours, a multitude of ideas, where there is no one strong opinion, but rather liberal and flexible choices. This can be seen in films *What is Love?*, *A Fallen Angel* and the creative output created by participants in the film *The Collective Hearts*.

Text dissolved into the image, becoming a prominent factor where the image existed for the text. For example in the film *What is love?* what people say creates their movement and the image of the film. In the final participatory workshop, made into the film *The Collective Hearts*, the spoken text served as a guide that enabled body gestures by the facilitator, and produced inner images that were later drawn and made into images by participants.

Less movement was directed by me as a director, and more movement was allowed to flow spontaneously from the characters in the films. In the film *A Fallen Angel* the movement is the direct outcome and expression of the actors, in a natural matter of

their expression. Movement became the outcome of the speech, and by then I stopped using movement as a tool. This is also seen in the natural movement of the tree's leaves in the film *Confessions of an Angel*. The videos made from the conference presentations also changed from fixed hand movements, to body language that spoke in itself, turning movement into a part of the message, not a separate tool.

The presentation of the Self evolved to show the individual as part as a group, putting the self into works with others, for the purpose of seeing how the self can find himself among the others. From the initial notion of the self as an individual expressing a message with no context, the self evolved to be situated amongst other practitioners, and then developed to share the creative process with others, to create together with others, as can be seen in final art workshop *The Collective Hearts*.

In the next section I will describe how this range of actions gradually showed commonalities, developing core themes.

## **4.2 Core themes**

The core themes which I developed from my reflections on the actions that I undertook are captured by the chapters' headings and their sub-themes, as follows:

Chapter 5: Stimulation (Sensing–Feeling–Acknowledging). Chapter 6: Internalisation (Shape–Movement). Chapter 7: Application (Place–Space).

The initial approach that I took at the start of this research was to focus on connecting what seemed to me opposites between expressions through emotions and expressions through thought. I have attempted to link the two through a literature review of scientific theories. I have sensed these opposites while creating art myself as well as in the writing up this PhD study. In my case, the artistic flow felt like a spontaneous burst of emotions decoding themselves into an artistic language of graphic designs, films and short-verse poetry. This occurred naturally and easily. The writing of a proposal, on the other hand, was a process of reading literature, reflecting, and structuring a linear narrative. The long process of thinking seemed to oppose the burst of emotions, and I assumed that thought governs the act of creativity.

I started to examine the way that thought and perception operate. Thought is largely seen as an act that operates on the basis of space and time, as Kant ([1787] 2000)

argues. I was drawn to explore that area through the studies of Einstein as well as recent findings in Quantum Physics. My aim was to understand the artistic creative process, which I saw as operating under the faculty of human perception. I did not aim to make any arguments relating to the field of science.

I noted that the Theory of Relativity and studies in Quantum Physics argue for the surprising possibility of parallel realities that exist at the same place and the same time. These theories do not indicate a scientific 'fixed' truth about reality, but rather indicate possibilities of different realities existing together. From this I noted that the inner emotional reality and the outer intellectual reality can coincide, in what these theories suggest are simply two different modes of perceptions. This notion served as the basis for my article *Symbols of feelings and extraction of knowledge* which was my first article to be published during my research (Dekel, 2006).

The scientific theories that I explored challenged the 'priority' of thought over emotion.

I decided then to examine my inner emotions and visions. By externalising my inner visions into visible art works I was able to observe the way inner emotions operate and generate images. The first film that I created for that purpose, *Quantum Words* (2006; [DVD](#)), visualises an inner vision I had using images of flares of light that seem to come from 'inner realities' and which pass through me and to the audience. The film's images followed the images that I saw in my vision. The importance of this film is that it combined both the emotional inner vision and the articulated mind through which I was able to make sense of each image and symbol used in this film, which I later addressed and presented in the first three papers I gave in conferences.

With the making of this film I also noted the dual role of emotions in artmaking. Emotions, in my case, demonstrated a role in generating visions, or ideas, that made the content of the films, as well as a second role which I can only say contains a purpose to itself, regardless of the art work, and seems as if attached itself to the art work. This I noted following the visions that I had, which occupied my mind for a long time, but once externalised in the completed film, they brought with them a sense of satisfaction. It was as if the visions were now externalised and 'satisfied'. Yet, I did not feel that satisfaction as my own, but rather as belonging to the visions and inner



images. I felt an emotional identification, so to speak, with that satisfaction, as if one person identifies with another.

For the second film I decided to go further and to create a character that will 'represent' the inner world of emotions. *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006; [DVD](#)) presents a character that lives in such an inner reality and which has arrived from that place to tell us about its existence. With these films I attempted to visualise my inner worlds, and to communicate the creative process to the audiences.

I started at this time to interview artists, and initially focused on poets. Poets are known to be the masters of language, which obviously highlights the use of words. Words are the tool by which the mind thinks. In that way I could examine my assertion that the intellect governs inner emotions. Poets can share insight on their inner emotions and images which are later translated through thought into words.

But the poets that I had begun to interview for this research proposed a different approach to my understanding of inner reality that exists along with an outer reality. All poets seemed to share an experience in which an unknown source was triggering inner emotions within them that inspire them to create poetry, yet the poets insisted that the process of creating poetry is not the co-existence but rather the combination of both worlds, the inner emotions and outer intellect. All poets suggested that their inner emotions are shaped by the intellect into coherent sentences that can be communicated to the audiences, as Sylvia Paskin ([👁️](#) para. 9) explains:

‘...a poem can’t just be emotional. If it were just emotional there would be no boundaries to it; you would just have syrup... emotion has to be filtered in a way that it has structure and clarity. This is very important.’

The poets’ descriptions indicate a process of filtering emotions through the intellect. This suggested that emotions are not separated from logic, but rather an initial stage in the process of creativity, and which are later filtered by the intellect. This repeating evidence from the interviews has established the core theme of ‘feeling’ within chapter 5 – Stimulation.

I shall mark in blue each theme, as follows, so that the reader can see where and how each theme was situated in the final chapters:

Chapter 5: Stimulation (Sensing–**Feeling**–Acknowledging). Chapter 6: Internalisation (Shape–Movement). Chapter 7: Application (Place–Space).

At this stage I had established a crucial point, feelings, as the initial stage of the process of being inspired to create art. My films demonstrated my inner feelings and were inspired by inner visions that I had. The literature (literary critique and quantum physics) has discussed the important role of emotions in creating art, and my interviewees reaffirmed this. Yet, the interviewees also affirmed the importance of intellect and logic. I had yet to decide where to place intellect in relation to emotions, in my thesis chapters. The experience of presenting six papers in conferences and events during my first year of research has helped me to find the answer.

During my paper presentations I have noted that what governs an understanding from my audiences is the emotional input and the ability to express visionary ideas by the speaker. Feedback I received on my presentations suggested the importance of intensity of emotions that come alongside the intellectual theories that I presented. My presentations were based on a considerable literature review, which was presented to audiences together with my films and in what may be called intensified presentations. I noted the role of emotions in the presentations, where the presenter stands in front of what he or she says (not ‘behind what is said’ but rather ‘in front’ of what is said). This demonstrated, in my case, that the creative process is not a theory only but rather an applied part of my research. As one feedback from my presentation in Edinburgh University explained (personal communication, October 2006), ‘I would like to invite you to present in other places around the country, since there is a real need for a challenging and inspiring presentation such as yours’.

Feedback on my presentations taught me that in order to lead someone to understand inspiration they need to *be* inspired themselves. With this I have assumed that what governs the intellect is the emotion, while the intellect is the tool through which the emotional is expressed. I determined that the next core theme will be logic, which I called ‘acknowledging’, and which will come after the theme ‘feeling’:

Chapter 5: Stimulation (Sensing–**Feeling**–**Acknowledging**). Chapter 6: Internalisation (Shape–Movement). Chapter 7: Application (Place–Space).

Under the theme ‘acknowledging’ I discuss the use of words and images to make sense of one’s feelings. However, I do not refer to this act as purely intellectual but rather as an act in which the artist simply acknowledges the inner feelings, registers them, but not intellectualises them for a purpose of trying to explain inner emotions through seemingly systematic intellectual theories. Systematic intellectual theories, such as Quantum Physics, have already demonstrated that this is impossible. More so, Anne Stevenson (👁️👁️ para. 9) believes that psychological theories will find this difficult to explain, saying these experiences are such ‘that no analytical psychologist can explain’.

From my interviews as well as the literature review I concluded that feelings are an initial stage in the process of being inspired to create art, and are followed by a second stage of acknowledgment. I noted the power of emotions through my paper presentations, and dealt with my own inner experiences, trying to visualise them in my art.

That conclusion suggested that the creative process does not necessarily flow from thought but from emotion. Hence my interviews evolved from poets to visual artists focusing on the creative process of the imagery rather than of thought. The literature that I read evolved from literary and scientific critic, to psychological theories and literature on the experiences of artists, such as Blake, Yeats, Futurism, Mondrian, Kirchner, Kandinsky, Pollock, Beuys and Robert Morris. This shift was largely due to the good advice of my new supervisor. With this literature I noted that visual artists discuss not just their inner experiences but also the processes through which they are inspired to create.

The third film I made, *Unfolding Hearts* (2006; [DVD](#)), was a first attempt to explore the process in which one opens up to inspiration. This film describes my experience of opening up to creativity, explained through short-verse poems that I wrote which assert the wisdom or skills that seem required to follow up this process: ‘Each moment I die and reborn. / Even the smallest atom has free will. / Look into the music of people’s hearts; we are all notes in God’s symphony. / We are ponds of emotions clothed in a body. / You cannot force a bud to open to a rose. / What if every leaf was afraid to fall?’

This film followed the process of internalisation of images, colours and shapes that happened in a process, not in a singular event. While *Quantum Words* (2006; [DVD](#)) visualised images that I saw in my imagination in a specific inner event, *Unfolding Hearts* was created through a conscious process of looking at nature, taking photos of it, and then transforming the images into abstract shapes with intensified colours. For example, pictures of flowers I took in Portsmouth (fig. 7) and turned into emotionally intensified images in the final film (fig. 8).

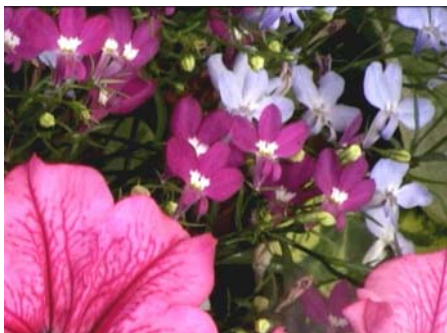


Figure 7: Picture of flowers taken in Portsmouth, and later used for the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006), as seen in figure 6.



Figure 8: Still image from the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006), based on picture seen in figure 5.

Kandinsky's theories on colours and abstract art were inspiring in the making of this film. Kandinsky focuses on the unique observation in which artists observe reality, and that this form of observation is manifested, or translated, into colours and shapes. At the same time the visual artists that I have interviewed were less interested in discussing the so-called spiritual experiences, or inner experiences, and more inclined toward discussing the ways in which they go about producing images and giving colours to their emotions. In an interview I conducted with painter and poet Paul Hartal ([👁️👁️](#)), Paul described the way in which the mind and the heart of the artist translate emotions into images, in more than a total of 9000 words for this interview (later edited and published as a 3000 words), demonstrating that the process of translation is most important to visual artists. Hartal ([👁️👁️](#) para. 5) explains that 'each art form communicates meanings through its own specific set of symbols', and in that way he emphasises the awareness that artists have on the different forms that different arts produce images and symbols.

With that I noted the importance of what I call artistic internalisation, where the artist translates his or her emotions into shapes and colours. The questions that I posed to my interviewees have evolved from asking about the nature of the inner reality, to asking about the techniques, use of paint, spaces, and the choices that the artists take.

The literature I read focused on the growing use of abstract shapes by artists, and my interviewees have seemed to support this. My visual artist interviewees can be divided to two groups – those who focus on representative art (Dekel, Hartal, Stevens and Chan) and those who focus on non-representative art and use abstract shapes (Varini, Johnson, Devine, and Dowlatshahi). I was surprised to realise that a close examination of the interviews of the ‘representative’ artists, has demonstrated that they also used shapes in an abstract way, even if the final result was representative that cannot be said to be abstract art. Dekel, for example, asserts that her initial vision is abstract, ‘an essence... a white outline, a symbol’, as she (👁️ para. 32) suggests, and when she paints she focuses on each part of the human face as an individual specific shape, that only later comprises the whole representative picture. Likewise, Chan explains that her inspiration from the shapes she sees in nature (‘perfection and their symmetry’ (👁️ para. 2)), draws from the abstract and changing form of the shapes, and not from their defined or fixed form. It is the impermanence of the shapes, the changing forms of flowers ‘which is very touching’ to her (👁️ para. 3).

With this conclusion I have established the core theme of ‘shape’ to represent abstract art, within chapter 6 – Internalisation:

Chapter 5: Stimulation (Sensing–Feeling–Acknowledging). Chapter 6: Internalisation (**Shape**–Movement). Chapter 7: Application (Place–Space).

While exploring the use of abstract shapes in the process of art making I noted that colours come next. Kandinsky (1972) and Rodchenko (Dabrowski, 1998) have noted the use of colour for its inner qualities that are not necessarily connected to the surface. Colours are used by artists for their inner quality, or as inner messages that come within colour, in what can be called ‘abstract colours’. Felice (👁️ paras. 18–19) for example, asserted that colours have a dual quality to them that can be used in art. Felice explains that colours are usually regarded for the emotion that they convey once people see them. Yet, he asserts another quality to colour, that of having an active creative process with nature itself, regardless of the observer. Colours are

absorbed and altered in relation to the surfaces on which they are applied, to an extent that colour seems to assume a role with reality which is more prevailing to the role colour assumes in art once being observed by audiences, as he (👁️👁️ para. 12) explains:

‘Painting... it is not born to create specific shapes that need to satisfy the viewer. The paintings are not defined by the understanding of the viewer or what the viewer sees, but rather exist in their own right, and have their own relation to the three-dimensional space in which they were created.’

In that respect I have examined colours not with regard to their visible influence on the viewer’s senses, but rather to their inner independent quality with reality, which artists seem to assert. I have concluded that the use of colour by artists comes to create a sense of movement of inner emotions into the external reality. I focused on vivid colours and transparent for their quality of generating movement, which became a theme in chapter 6:

Chapter 5: Stimulation (Sensing–Feeling–Acknowledging). Chapter 6: Internalisation (Shape–Movement). Chapter 7: Application (Place–Space).

Likewise, my paper presentations in the second year of this research evolved from focusing on inner experience to focusing on the process of transformation of initial inspired image to the actual artefact. Feedback on my paper at the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Arts in Society Conference (Kassel University, Germany, August 2007) has demonstrated the immense interest that a presentation on creative processes can stir. I have presented a few films I created and their development, and feedback suggested that there is a need for further study in that area.

Another important conference I took part in was organised by the Consciousness and Experiential Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society, in Oxford, September 2007. For this conference I have presented a poster, not a ‘paper’. It was the poster that served as the trigger to inspire audiences (while at their half-hour tea break between lectures) to approach me and ask about my research. I then gave a short presentation to the people who gathered around me in a similar way that I would give a paper. However, the interesting part was that my artistic poster was inspiring people to approach me, and not a formal way of sitting in a class and listening to a presenter.

The custom of poster presentation is not new in this conference, but is followed each year. For me, this was a first and new form in which I could engage in an intellectual academic discussion, triggered by my artistic art work. This was most suitable to that stage in my research where I evolved to explore processes rather than specific moments of inspiration.

At the same time my paper (Dekel, 2008) on the creative process was accepted for publication in a social sciences qualitative research journal, demonstrating that the creative processes followed by art researchers does not contribute to the art field only but also to such studies as those in the social world.

My artworks shifted from focusing on my own personal experiences to observing the experiences of others. I have begun this shift with the installation work *Waterised Words* (2007) (see overview chapter 7.2) which focused on asking audiences what is the taste of water that was embedded within words.

In another project, *What is Love?* (2007; [DVD](#)), I have continued to engage people with questions, this time asking people in the middle of the street, ‘What is love?’ and filming their answers into a short film (see overview chapter 7.1). This project felt like an installation in action, where the final art work was created while it was made, with people’s responses shaping the way my action looked, and the way I continued to ask other people, shaping the feeling of the final film. This project drew from my experience by then with interviewing people, where I have learned that surprising questions which are articulated well can open up people to unique responses. Robson (1993: 234) in his study of research methods describes a method in interviewing which he calls ‘probes’. Probes, he explains, are tactics, such as body gestures that can get the interviewees to expand on the answer they gave. I took this tactic to its extreme, using it for getting an initial response from people, and not a second response that aims to expand on the previous one.

By this time my interviews with artists, my paper presentations, and the literature review have shifted from focusing on inner visions and emotions to focusing on the creative process which artists and non-artists seem to follow. My art works moved to become public, not just in the content but also in the context in which they were created. In a way the thesis evolved from the individual to the group, from the inner world of *The Prince of Hampshire* to the collective world of *What is Love?*. I also

carried out more performances and poetry reading in front of audiences in events that were not directly connected to my research, thus allowing me to expand my work to public audiences (fig. 9).



Figure 9: Gil Dekel at a poetry reading and graphic design presentation, Access Festival 2007, Southampton.

By then I had noted the need to express the creative process in public, and I started to wonder about the methods which might be employed in order to facilitate a better use of creativity by people. The first question I asked in that respect was how artists seem to manifest creativity better than most other people do, the so-called ‘non-artists’. The artists that I interviewed suggested that there is no unique or special capacity to being an artist. Rather, they suggested that they have a ‘normal’ relation with life, and that they live in this world, so to speak, and not in an imagined world which is remote from our reality.

Yet, when I examined that form of relationship with life I noted that my interviewees evidenced a specific quality they all share, the quality to sense, to be sensitive to reality. As Wilmer (👁️ para. 57) suggests, his work has ‘... a duty to what exists, to the nature of reality...’ And Katayoun (👁️ para. 28) suggests that ‘first and foremost it is about having a sense of your environment... allowing the internalisation and processing of those images to influence a work of art’. My interviewees exert a very sensitive approach to life, in which they see things that normal people ignore. The poet Lorca (Gibson, 1989: 23) described this as a ‘...straightforward approach to life; looking and listening’.




With this conclusion I noticed that there is a core theme, ‘sensing’, which comes even before the individual feelings of the artist come to work. I have included the theme ‘sensing’ at the beginning of chapter 5:

Chapter 5: Stimulation (**Sensing–Feeling–Acknowledging**). Chapter 6: Internalisation (**Shape–Movement**). Chapter 7: Application (Place–Space).

With the understanding that the artist has a way of sensing reality, I noted that the access to the creative source requires one to become aware of one’s way of living and perceiving reality around them, as British performer Roger Robinson (BBC Hampshire, 2007) say, ‘the more you are aware of yourself and [commit to it?] the more you are personally empowered’.

The literature that I read shifted to observe artists in various countries and times in order to understand the context of their creativity and thus understand the specific personal way through which they access the creative source. I examined the developments in visual art through history, and have approached artists from outside the UK for my interviews.

My artwork evolved to examine the creative processes, the way that the personality of the artists affects their creativity. The first art work in that respect was *Interview with authorial-Self* (2007; ) , a work in which I have conducted an interview with my own source of creativity that explains in simple words how do I open up to be inspired as an artist. In a second experiment, made into the film *Explorers of the Heart* (2007), I have performed my poetry with an actor that joined me, and during the performance we have also answered questions relating to the way that we are inspired to create art. The aim of such works was to explore and share understanding about the way that artists sense reality around them.

The questions in my interviews shifted from asking about the nature of the creative process ‘philosophically,’ so to speak, to asking about the personal way in which the artists access the creative power, touching on the social and cultural context.

The finding that arose from the interviews revealed a shared source that seems to come from beyond the conscious mind and logic to inspire the artists. Although differences in social and cultural backgrounds of the interviewees (USA, Canada, Norway, Finland, France, Hungary, Israel, Iran, the Far East, and the UK) they all

shared that their personal way of becoming inspired is by way of experiencing life by appreciating it and seeing its beauty. With these commonalities I concluded that the approach of artists that allows for creativity is not a unique skill saved to artists only, but rather a simple approach of experiencing and appreciating. With this finding I concluded that chapter 7 will be named ‘Application’. By application I mean the translation of the artists’ images and emotions through the sense of environment. I do not refer to the actual making of art in the environment, but rather to the influence that the environment has on the shaping of the idea in the mind of the artist. What interests me is the psychology of the creative process.

Under Application I established the core theme ‘place’, suggesting artists’ experience and appreciation of life:

Chapter 5: Stimulation (**Sensing–Feeling–Acknowledging**). Chapter 6: Internalisation (**Shape–Movement**). Chapter 7: Application (**Place–Space**).

My interviewees shared the feeling of appreciation of life and sensing its beauty by experiencing it, not by observing it. Yet, that feeling manifests itself not just through an individuality that is remote from reality, but rather through the individuality which must operate within the collective context of reality. As Katayoun (👁️👁️ para. 38) declares, ‘my art is my life. I do not separate the two’. It is by knowing the individual character of the self that artists assert that they find the ‘gate’ in which they can experience the collective reality. It is a duality in which individuality opens a way for the artist to experience the collective. Varini (👁️👁️ para. 14) explains the way in which two things may be seen separated yet are integral, using the metaphor of love: ‘When two people are in love they do not love the same person but each other... yet they are perfectly able to understand and share that love’.

While the research started with the notion of the individual, it evolved into the shared context, and now returned back to the individual that is within a context. Likewise, my art work shifted to examine the duality of the inner individuality expressed as a collective. In *Confessions of an Angel* (2008; **DVD**) I assert the desire of an artist to know himself through the process of helping others to know themselves. In a subsequent experiment that was made into the film *A Fallen Angel* (2008; **DVD**) I told a short true story of an inner experience I had, to students of Playback Theatre. My experience inspired them to re-enact and perform it with their own input. This form of

shared creativity demonstrated how people can learn to draw inwards both as a group and as individuals within a group.

At the same time my paper presentations changed from presenting ‘structures’ to more open discussions, adjustable to the context and aiming to explore ways in which the audience can be inspired themselves while I discuss inspiration. In a two-hour long presentation that I gave together with another artist for the Alister Hardy Society (Oxford, March 2008), I have allowed for ample input from the audience, and assumed the role of a facilitator. Although I was the ‘expert’ in the field of art, as feedback suggested, and my presentation shed much light on the topic, I noted that art can elevate audiences, who consider themselves ‘not creative’, to be prolific and fluent in expressing their own insights, using spoken words. It seems that the individual needs merely to be inspired within a group.

I concluded that the function of the artist is simply to focus the awareness and attention of others to the creative process within every person.

However, artists assert that the inner creative process operates not just with the seen or heard inner reality, but also with its absence, mainly silence. ‘I prefer to be quiet when painting’ Chan (👁️👁️ para. 14) explains ‘it is in the silence... that the communion... can take place’. Chan’s experience demonstrates that her communion is conducted through silence, and in that way silence is not seen as a negation, or cancellation, but rather as a new form of communication. For that reason, sound and silence were chosen as core themes addressing the theme ‘space’, in chapter 7:

Chapter 5: Stimulation ([Sensing–Feeling–Acknowledging](#)). Chapter 6: Internalisation ([Shape–Movement](#)). Chapter 7: Application ([Place–Space](#)).

The sequence of the process in which artists become inspired was concluded for the three chapters: the initial [sensing](#) that something exists transforms to a specific [feeling](#) within the artists which is then [acknowledged](#) with impressions of images and words. Acknowledgement receives artistic abstract [shapes](#), and with it colours that produce a sense of [movement](#). As the creative energy moves it is manifested through the [place](#), the experience of life and its beauty, which allows the artists to perceive a [space](#), an individual character of the shared reality.

The notion of inner reality within the shared reality was explored in a final workshop experiment undertaken for this research (see chapter 9), where I have guided a group of eight individuals that defined themselves as ‘non artists’ to draw inwardly and see if they can connect to inner images and emotions. Each individual worked privately, with his or her eyes closed, yet they all shared the same guidance that I provided, and also produced some remarkable similarities in their works. The experiment indicated that the creative process can be learned and achieved by all people, rather than seen as ‘inherent’ or ‘inspired’ by high forces to some individuals only.

Analysis and reflection of external circumstances, discussed in this chapter, has provided for the core themes of the inspiration process as well as for the workshop experiment. The following chapters (5–9) will demonstrate how these core themes can be approached not from external circumstances only, but from internal circumstances of the artists, looking at them not from the outside but from the inside (see fig. 10).

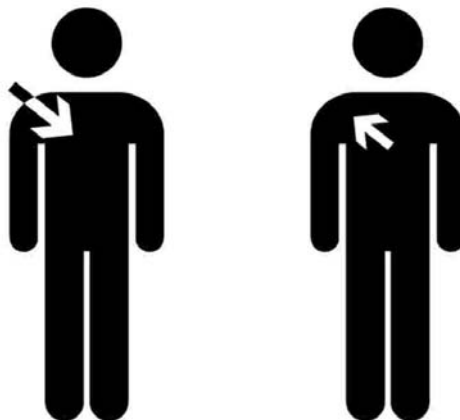


Figure 10: External influences of the artist (left), and internal influences (right).

## 5. Stimulation

The artists that I have studied indicate that they begin the process of creating art with an urge to create. The initial experience of artistic inspiration involves a sensing, a noticing that something exists somewhere. Sensing then wells up within the artist's body or mind, turning from a general perceptive experience into a particular experience, a feeling. Feelings are then given by the artist the boundaries of meanings through a process of acknowledgement.

These stages may well occur almost at once, however I will discuss each step and demonstrate how they develop from one to the other.

Chapter Stimulation will be explored through the categories of sensing, feeling, and acknowledging.

### 5.1. Sensing

Noticing that something exists, or sensing it, is an initial experience in the artistic process.

#### *Inner voice / listening / collective unconscious*

Piirto (2005: 9) discusses the cravings for silence that artists report, asserting that artists are seeking isolation in quiet places in order to hear an 'inner voice' that would inspire them to create.

The English Romantic William Blake was open in discussing his experiences of an inner voice, and took it as a matter of fact. Beer (2003: 12) quotes from a letter Blake wrote to John Flaxman in 1800 where Blake refers to the daily events of his time, adding that 'My Angels have told me that...' Blake (Halpern, 1994: xv) declared that he is under the guidance of angels day and night. Charles Taylor, in his study of the *Sources of The Self*, asserts (1989: 368-369) that the inner voice is a crucial concept in the work of the English Romantics, to the extent that fulfilling the inner voice makes the act of artistic creation possible (p. 374). According to Taylor, the hearing of an inner voice is at the same time the act in which the artist defines and formulates the inner voice, and thus realises it. In that way, Taylor (p. 375) wishes to emphasise that

it is not a matter of copying a model or carrying out an already determined form, but rather one of actively crafting it, of giving a shape to the inner voice. The inner voice cannot be fully known outside or prior to the articulation and definition of it. Artists know it only once they do it, according to Taylor.

However, Kandinsky, in his work *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1972), saw the inner call from a different perspective. Kandinsky asserts that the inner voice is a source that calls upon artists to create. Kandinsky sees the function of the inner voice as an active source in itself that inspires or motivates artists into action. In that respect the inner voice should not be confused with thoughts that run in one's mind and which one hears in one's own voice. According to Jung (1990: 82), the inner voice is stronger than the individual to the effect that it is 'The voice of all mankind resounds in us'.

If an inner voice comes from beyond the psyche of the artist, and actively calls upon the artist, then one should wonder how artists come to hear this inner voice. The act of listening is a challenging one, as author Deepak Chopra asserts. Chopra (1995) argues that often people do not listen but rather tend to prepare answers even before the other has finished talking. If 'normal' listening may prove so challenging, how then do artists seem to accomplish an inner listening?

Wordsworth's work *The Prelude II*, from 1805 (1971: 326–330) gives some clues to the way in which the artist listens. Wordsworth says:

'I would stand,  
beneath some rock, listening to sounds that are  
the ghostly language of the ancient earth,  
or make their dim abode in distant winds.  
Thence did I drink the visionary power.'

Wordsworth opens the description of this scene by saying, 'I would stand'. That act of standing is not carried out for the purpose of resting after a long walk, but rather for the purpose of 'listening to sounds', as the following line in the poem says. Wordsworth reveals that he simply stops, standing still, in order to enable the faculty of listening to take place. While Wordsworth stands 'beneath some rock' in a natural landscape scene, what he hears is not the sound of the moment but rather the 'language of the ancient earth', asserting that even if looking at nature, it is a


contemplative moment where one listens to an inner voice. Listening to the inner voice was an important issue in the times of Wordsworth, where there was a growing awareness that identity is created out of a human's own mentality, and not out of a theological deity (Jay, 1984: 33). As the Romantic period freed itself from religious myths, Wordsworth, according to Jay (1984: 39–40), asserted that one should work from within oneself, not from external influences.

Blake's work *Sconfitta* (fig. 11) illustrates this idea. In this work the figure Urizen is depicted in a deep contemplative scene in front of the new world that he has created. Urizen, although the creator of that world, does not look at his creation, but rather stops and reflects by drawing inwardly. The mental act of stopping allows artists to draw inwards. With attention drawn inwards, the artist gains access to the voice that dwells within.



Figure 11: William Blake, *Sconfitta* (1795, frontpiece illustration for *Song of Los*.)

The first part of Yeats's book *A Vision* (1974; first published in 1925), written together with his wife, explains their method of automatic-speech of drawing inward where they would gain access to an inner voice, or what they called the 'communicators'.

I have been following Yeats's method, experimenting with automatic-speech with my wife. I decided to approach one automatic-speech experiment as if it is an art interview, where I would ask the 'communicator' questions. The questions and answers were made into the film *Interview with authorial-Self* (2007; [DVD](#)  see also


revised transcript ). Yet, I noted one difference from Yeats's description. Yeats (1974: 8) quotes his 'communicators' as saying, 'We have come to give you metaphors for poetry' whereas my experience with my 'communicator' revealed that he is a part of my own self, my own creative self, hence he defined himself not as a 'communicator' but as my 'authorial-Self'. For this reason I have re-enacted the answers that were given to me by authorial-Self through my wife's channelling, and using the computer I split the screen to include both 'Gils' – Gil who asks the questions on the left, and Gil the authorial-Self on the right (fig. 12).



Figure 12: Still image from the film *Interview with authorial-Self* (2007).

In this way, I would suggest, drawing inwards can be said to allow the artist to open up to his or her own higher creative self. The idea of interacting with oneself is used widely in art, for example, in Gwen Stefani's music video clip *What You Waiting For?* (2004), which deals with ways in which the artist becomes inspired to create art by acknowledging the inner self (fig. 13).



Figure 13: Still image from Gwen Stefani's video clip *What You Waiting For?* (2004).



Artist Marcel Duchamp explains his invented alter-ego figure, Rrose Sélavy (1920s): ‘...not to change my identity, but to have two identities’ (From the display caption, Tate Modern, London, March 2008.) And the poet Shelley, according to Ackroyd (2006), described a vision in which he saw an image of himself walking towards him and asking, ‘how long do you mean to be content?’ In my case the opposite happened as I was the one to ask my ‘image’ questions.

The sense that the inner voice can exhibit itself as part of the artist can be illustrated with the creative process of painter Barry Stevens. Stevens (🖌️ 👁️ para. 33) explains, ‘External and internal are for me like a spectrum or a continuum. The point at which one becomes the other is arbitrary’. Blake’s claim that ‘the human might... be linked to the divine’ (Beer, 2003: xii) is seen by Stevens not just as a link in which one point touches another, but rather as a continuum, a spectrum. This spectrum suggests that artists are connected to their inner voice, or source of creative energy, at all times, but at specific moments they acknowledge it, or open to it, and allow for the creative flow.

If we agree that the artist is connected at all times to the creative source, we might ask whether each artist is connected to a so-called individual source, or whether they are connected to a collective or shared source, from which all draw. Poet Anne Stevenson (🖌️ 👁️ para. 27) asserts that ‘...poetry is literally untranslatable. However... you can transfer the spirit of it from one language to another’. Stevenson reveals that there is a core essence, which she defines as spirit, which can be exhibited within all cultures, even when the language is non-transferable. Poet Maggie Sawkins suggests that this core essence can reveal itself not by being translated or transferred, but rather by splitting itself, as it seems, and presenting itself to people from different places. She (🖌️ 👁️ para. 15) says: ‘You could dream similar dreams to someone who lives in Africa, even if you are from a completely different culture’.

Shared ideologies that inspire simultaneously different art movements can be seen through art works. For example, the German Bauhaus and the Russian Constructivism movement, were operating in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century at a great distance from each other, yet they shared similar ideologies. The Bauhaus’s social ideology of using functional and simple shapes covered with a single colour (Aynsley, 2001: 61) (fig. 14) were also inspiring the Russian Alexander Rodchenko’s social ideology of functionality and use

of single colour and simple shapes (Dabrowski, 1998: 57) (fig. 15). The Bauhaus applied this ideology in architecture, and Rodchenko in painting.



Figure 14: A Bauhaus style building as part of 'White Tel-Aviv' (1933). Architect: Yitzhak Rapaport. Image in public domain. Image source: <http://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A7%D7%95%D7%91%D7%A5:Rechter.jpg>

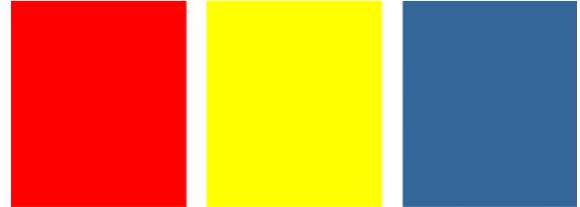




Figure 15: Illustration of Rodchenko's 1921 *Pure Red Colour, Pure Yellow Colour, and Pure Blue Colour* (1921, oil on canvas, each panel, 62.5 x 52.5 cm.) Original work: Moscow, A. Rodchenko and V. Stepanova Archive.

Carl Jung (1990: 80) argues that people draw from a central source, which he defines as a collective unconscious. The collective unconscious draws on all cultures that exist today as well as cultures of the past. More so, Jung (1990: 56) asserts that shared thoughts seem to turn into shared actions, in what he termed synchronicities (Jung, 1963: 356). These synchronicities hold meaningful coincidence or equivalence of psychic and physical states, which have no causal relationship to one another, as Jung explains, but which inspire artists into actions. The various poets, authors, painters, and installation artists that I have interviewed shared the feeling of an urge to create that comes from a 'mysterious' place. Painter, poet and philosopher Paul Hartal (👁️👁️ para. 8) explains:

'...intuitions, imagination, emotions, ideas, memories, thoughts and dreams are not independent events of an autonomous brain and nervous system. We are an integral part of nature and cognitive processes occur in an organism sustained by its environment. They take place in a body that interacts with the biosphere and the entire universe.'

In this way, the collective unconscious is not just a pool of shared creative energy, but rather the originating source to which all actions can refer. However, people seem to exhibit different ways or points of view through which they express the creative energy emerging from the collective unconscious.

To understand how people respond to the same ideas I carried out different forms of engaging audiences to receive varied feedback. The first film that I created for this research, *Quantum Words* (2006; ) , was showcased in a few different forms: in conferences at universities as part of paper presentations, online ([youtube.com/gldek](https://www.youtube.com/gldek)), and sent by post as a DVD for people I knew or contacted, for them to watch at home. Although this film was viewed online more than 1200 times, I received only a few responses through the online medium. Written feedback from eighty people was collected through conferences presentations, emails, and guest books placed at exhibitions where the film was screened (). The feedback covered the following themes: personal points of view, associations, use of graphic style, images, words, sounds, narrative, and philosophical ideas that viewers noted.

Conflicting interpretations were also noted, such as ‘Idea of Now which you speak about links with quantum physics’ versus ‘... the ‘quantum’ analogy doesn’t work’. Or, ‘...word made visual’ versus ‘Image  $\neq$  word’. And while some ‘...felt: quite a strong resistance’ to the film, others claimed it was ‘Original, beautiful, sublime. Better than anything I’ve seen in *Documenta...*’ or ‘Made me smile... Enlightenment is fun’.

More so, the production of the film itself enabled me to have two different points of view, as I noted down in my diary during the making of the film (17 February 2006). Before making the film its initial images had captivated my mind and I saw them as if I was the participant looking outside, and seeing light sources downing from above and bursting from within me. Yet, while preparing the story board I saw the scene from ‘outside’, as a director looking through the camera and seeing the actor (which resulted in the final camera angle shot used in the film) (fig. 16). I became an observer of my own mind’s images, looking at them from outside and sketching them for the story board. While the initial theme of the film remained, my perspective on it changed, transforming my point of view from a participant within the scene to an observer from without the scene.



Figure 16: Still image from the film *Quantum Words* (2006).

While the duration of *Quantum Words* is one minute and forty-two seconds only, still it managed to stir so many different responses from viewers as well as myself. Such diversity indicates that people do not interpret what they see based on external patterns of social dogmatic thought, but rather based on their personal associations and identity. However, identities may not seem separated faculties. To quote from one feedback received on this film: ‘Identity is not the property of any one individual. The creative process is the identification itself’ (👁️). In that respect, variations symbolise a shared activity of presenting collective unconscious from different perspectives. While we discuss such terms as identity and ‘individuation’, as Jung (1963: 352) puts it, it seems that these terms contain both the private individual as well as the collective that belongs to the whole human race.

The initial sense that triggers artists is enabled by drawing inwards, where artists connect to a collective unconscious which is not individual but rather shared by all people. Artists sense, or become aware, to the inner and outer environment. This experience is then followed by feelings, emotional intensities that well up in the artists.

## 5.2. Feeling

Once artists open up to the inner voice, they seem to attach to it an emotion or a specific feeling, which makes the experience specific to the artist. Kapoor (2005) asserts that artists start to have a sense of an artwork with a feeling, and not with a

definite assurance regarding the result or the completion of the work. A Feeling seem to guide the artist towards creation.

Chapter Feeling will be explored through the categories expansion, urge to create, and release.

### ***Expansion / urge to create / release***

Once the inner voice is acknowledged within the artist, its value is increased, bringing with it a state of growth. Jung (1963: 353) defines this state as ‘inflation’, an expansion of personality beyond the proper limits.

However, psychologist Abraham Maslow (1994: 37) challenges definitions of ‘proper limits’. Maslow asserts that people are far more admirable and awe inspiring than is conceived. According to Maslow, people are simply best, in their own natural state without a need to add non-natural transcendent characteristics to their experiences. Yeats agrees with this, adding that all wisdom and truths are already contained and present within people (1966: 189).

In that way, I note that the experience of inflation is a state where the artists’ attention grows to observe the already contained wisdom within. While inspiring things already exist, ‘...we have our eyes shut at them. We don’t hear them and we don’t see them’ (Ken Devine 🐾👁️ para. 37). The growth allows artists to go beyond restrictions, and release boundaries or blocks that limit one’s being.

Yet, artists report that the sense of inflation at this stage is not an intellectual but emotional one. The artist is not in a conscious state where he or she is allowing for an inner voice to bring with it intellectual ideas or new observations on the artist’s higher self. Poet Stevenson asks: ‘Where would it come from? I don’t know’ (🐾👁️ para. 8). Artists say that they feel emotion growing within them in those moments of inflation, and not an intellectual growth. The sense of creative flow ‘...come[s] as a burst of emotion,’ Paskin (🐾👁️ para. 2) explains, and not with a burst of intellect, as may be said. Through emotion the artists grow beyond restrictions to a state where they get a sense of their inner wisdom. Jung (1990: 78) describes this stage in the term ‘psychic formation’, explaining that it is subliminal until its energy-charge is sufficient to carry it over the threshold into the consciousness, where it turns into action. While still in

the subliminal stage, the overflow of emotion, or energy-charge, brings the artist into a state of attention widening, in Maslow's (1994: 28) terminology.

In automatic art, artists are trying to maintain this state and capture its impression in their work. Automatism requires the artist to suspend judgment and enter a state where natural impulses guide their hand, as can be seen in Masson's automatic drawing (fig. 17).



Figure 17: André Masson, *Furious Suns* (1925, pen and ink, 42 ×31 cm.) New York, Museum of Modern Art. © 2007 Artists Rights Society.

However, while in the state of inflation artists seem to acknowledge a creative impulse that does not flow from within only but also from reality itself. Painter Melanie Chan (👁️👁️ para. 24) explains, 'Creativity is life; there is no separation for me of these two elements'. While Chan sees the creative flow within life, artist Vaara (👁️👁️ para. 39) believes that he himself is part of the creative flow:

'we are as much part of the biosphere as a sunset is... From this point of view everybody is not an artist, as Joseph Beuys manifested, but rather everybody is art itself...'

Vaara explains that he '...create[s] art in order to participate in the process of the continuous creation of the world' (para. 32). As such, the creative flow which is seen as being already present in life, includes the artists themselves. The sense of inflation with its emotional charge, does not 'generate' creativity, but rather open up the artists' attention to see that they are part of the creative flow which is already present in life.

However, while artists are part of the creative flow, they often do not recognise it. It is only in moments of inflation that they can recognise their true nature. In that respect, I would not define the experience of inflation as an emotional growth, but on the contrary – as an emotional reduction, a deflation. The artist is deflated from the natural state of being part of the creative flow, into a point where he or she becomes aware and can observe this process. The seemingly emotional growth is an emotional reduction, a lowering from a state of being part of the collective unconscious to a state of being an individuated single part that can observe the collective unconscious.

The intensity of emotion can be seen as a normal state that the artists feels in their natural state, however with the reduction of their awareness this emotional capacity becomes too strong for their body to contain, bringing the urge for a release and expression through creating art.

While artists indicate that they have an urge to express their emotions, I believe that emotion that overflows them is already expressed. My view suggests a duality between the experienced emotion, and the additional urge to express it somehow. The artist has already ‘created’ the emotional intensity, so to speak, and the remaining part in the creative process is to externalise the emotion by turning it into colours, shapes, or words. The urge to create refers to an urge to transform the already contained emotion into meanings. Artists do not have an urge to feel, but rather an urge to express – to transform feelings to something else. I see this artistic urge to create as a tool to manifest emotions into a communicative language.

According to the Media and Communications professor David Gauntlett (2004), art is expressive, and less descriptive. In that respect, the urge to create is an urge to express, not to create language that will describe something. Kapoor (Richards, 2004: 215) asserts ‘I have nothing to say as an artist,’ and while he (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 334) agrees that artists are putting together a vocabulary of form and colours, he (Kapoor, Bhabha & Tazzi, 1998: 11) does not believe that this vocabulary is meant for the purpose of saying something:

‘My role as an artist is to bring expression, but not to be expressive, [not] to say something. I got nothing in particular to say, no messages. But I bring expression [and] means that allow others to work with.’

The urge to create is given the function of producing a ‘vacant’ language, a tool of forms and shapes that could be used by the viewer to apply their own expressions. As painter Cecil Collins (1981: 1) defines it, ‘All art brings a message into the world. The message of life itself’.

Sol LeWitt’s 1960s Conceptual works can illustrate this idea. In his *Wall Drawing #1136* (2004; fig. 18), the painting is drawn directly on the gallery’s walls, from floor to ceiling, and not on a canvas. In this way I see LeWitt’s work as suggesting a new way of looking at the creative flow: not as confined to aesthetic forms, such as a painting to be hung on walls, but rather as part of the environment and life itself, which merely needs recognition. The walls become part of the artwork, not a place to hang artworks, in a way that suggests that reality is part of people’s life, not a ‘place’ in which people ‘need’ to live.



Figure 18: Sol LeWitt, *Wall Drawing #1136* (2004, paint on wall surface, dimensions as installed.) San Francisco, Fraenkel Gallery. Image source: <http://www.tate.org.uk>

Since emotions are already present within the artists, the need for a release is not a need to realise or express the emotion, but rather to create tools for others to become expressive in themselves. This is why Kapoor ‘...got nothing in particular to say’. His emotions already speak to him at all times, and Kapoor’s only contribution is to create tools for others to be expressive.

In a way, artists deflate from their natural state into a lower state, where they retain a memory of their emotions, and seek to provide others with tools by which others may also come to learn their natural place in life.



This conclusion can illustrate why many authors consider artists as social educators. Art historian Patricia Bickers (👁️👁️ para. 10) explains how artists bring creative tools: by providing ‘...a vital discursive space where the unthinkable can be thought and expressed’. Likewise, Dr. Iain Biggs (👁️👁️ para. 27) sees art ‘...as a mediation between the known and the not known’.

Kandinsky (1972: 29) agrees that ‘The voice of the spirit is heard by the artist,’ but he believes that by hearing that voice that ‘Artists obey Socrates’ advice: Know Thyself’ (p. 39). For Kandinsky the making of art is an act of learning about oneself, where the artist keeps exploring himself or herself. I would argue that while artists follow a process of deflation, that the creative urge and the making of art keep reminding the artists who they truly are. Self-exploration acts as a tool to remind artists not to forget their higher state whilst they are in the lower state.

I have experienced the creative urge and desire to ‘Know Thyself’ throughout this research. In the short film *Confessions of an Angel* (2008; [DVD](#); fig. 19) I am confessing to an urge to bring creativity and to learn about my self by helping others to learn about themselves. The script reads:

Do you know who you are?  
I wonder who am I now? What is it that makes me  
breathe, that makes me create?  
Who we are? Where are we going? What is it that  
we are doing here?  
Ah... Planet Earth...  
I want to bring the power of God, the power of  
creativity into this Earth. Into everything around me.  
Thank you, thank you...  
Do you know who you are?  
Yes, I want to create; live. I want to share my light  
with you.  
Do you know who you are?  
I want to remind you who you are, and then  
remember who I am.



Figure 19: Still image from the film *Confessions of an Angel* (2008).

The creative urge had me creating numerous short films, graphic works, poems, art works, exhibitions, and performances for this research. I also engaged in varied roles, such as being the actor for the films, as well as the composer, director, camera man, editor on the computer, and did the work of promoting the final films. I also kept additional cameras documenting the process of making the films (figs. 20-21). Using several cameras allowed me to observe the different perspective that the artistic process holds (figs. 22-23).

In that way the creative urge manifested itself in different forms, yet through one person who would later evaluate his experiences and write them down in this thesis.



Figure 20: The making of *Explorers of the Heart* in 2006/2007.



Figure 21: The making of *Princess Louise* (work in progress) in 2006.



Figure 22: Image from camera 1, filming the singing 'Amen' for film *Quantum Words* (2006).



Figure 23: Image from camera 2, documenting the work with camera 1, for film *Quantum Words* (2006).

I consider my nineteen paper presentations in conferences and events to be a form that balances the 'required' academic format, with some artistic elements of images, sounds, and performance (see Dekel, 2008). The creative urge did not stop, in my case, with the making of art only, but also extended itself into the academic work of this research. The mediation between the artistic emotional and the academic intellectual scope was evident in a video film which documents a paper I gave at a conference. The video *Interdisciplinary Mud* (2006; *DVD*) follows the structure of a written paper, with written references to authors that were discussed or quoted in the video (figs. 24-25), as well as a bibliography list as if at the end of a paper, that ran at the end of the video in the style of credits rolling at the end of a film (figs. 26-28).



Figure 24: Still image from the film *Interdisciplinary Mud* (2006).



Figure 25: Still image from the film *Interdisciplinary Mud* (2006).

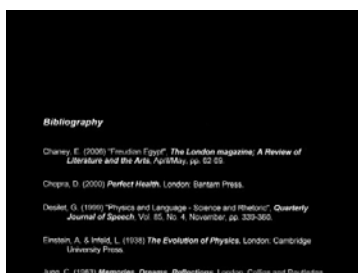


Figure 26: Still image from the film *Interdisciplinary Mud* (2006).



Figure 27: Still image from the film *Interdisciplinary Mud* (2006).



Figure 28: Still image from the film *Interdisciplinary Mud* (2006).

The realisation of the creative urge and its expression through the artist are contextualised through the personality and subjectivity of the artist, as can be seen in this work. In that way, although artists seem to create universal tools of expression that do not say things but rather bring expression itself – inevitably the artist shapes the art work according to his or her own personality. The artists are reflecting on a higher collective source and shaping it in different ways through their individual subjectivity. It follows that artists do not copy a singular pattern, but rather draw from a source to which each artist gives his or her own interpretation.

By comparing these different interpretations artists can realise that none of them copied from the same pattern, but rather that each exerted his or her own creative urge. Comparisons of differences can show us where we all meet, explains Tony Blair (Garrett, 2008). The creative urge is that which unites all artists, or as Kandinsky (1972: 39) asserts, art in our times is very much varied, and this is what makes the types of art actually become closer to each other.

Emotional intensity suggests a state of deflation, where the artist's body cannot contain the emotion, and seeks a release. This release is not an expression of emotion, which is already expressed within the artist, but rather a creation of vacant tools for others to become expressive. The tools that are created are individual forms that are specific to each artist.

For the purpose of creating unique and individual forms, artists need to go through a process of acknowledgement and translation of emotions into inner words and images.

### **5.3. Acknowledging**


With heightened emotions and an urge to create comes a process of acknowledgement, where the artist makes an intuitive response to the creative feelings, through producing inner words and images. I see this as a process which stands both as a creative form in itself, where emotions are transformed into words and images in the mind of the artist, and as a process in which the artist registers emotions that are later transformed into art works. This process is not an intellectual self-analysis, but a form of recognition and registration.

The process of acknowledging will be examined through the categories word and image.

## *Word / Image*

Robin Skelton (1978: 19–20) describes the feelings of identification that children have with the environment around them. Skelton explains that as we grow up we then start to give names to objects, and in that way objects are then treated as if they are independent of ourselves, turning into what he calls an ‘outness’.

By using words to give names, people separate themselves from things and emotions, and then observe them. Observation allows people to examine the relations they have with things and emotions, hereby producing meanings. Abraham Maslow (1994: 89) argues that the use of words has the power of removing inhibition and blocks that prevent people from expressing peak-experiences. He (1994: 90) suggests a method by which people learn to observe their experiences and then to label them, giving them names. Myra Schneider (👁️ para. 24) shares her experiences in which words help to ‘...sort out ideas... crystallising thoughts and emotions... outside you... you can understand it much better. You have partly separated yourself’.

In a performance made into the film *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006; ) I have partly separated myself by inventing a personality, the Prince of Hampshire (figs. 29-30) who admits being both a prince as well as the PhD researcher, Gil Dekel, myself. The character prince reflects on this, as part of the film, explaining:

‘Apart [from] my duties as the Prince of Hampshire, I am also a full-time International PhD student, at the University of Portsmouth... and I was wondering what is the connection between my duties as the Prince of Hampshire and my duties as a PhD student?’ (minute 1.30).



Figure 29: Still image from the film *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).



Figure 30: Production image from the film *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).

As an answer to that question, the character prince asserts in the film that words do not only help us to reflect and understand ourselves better, but rather help us to understand our position in the social and historical context. With the written documents that we have we can know what happened in the past, and we can assess where we are now. The character prince says:

‘It is thanks to the written words that commemorate past kingdoms that you can read about these kingdoms today, and know them... without the written words you will not remember the great achievements of [such as] Napoleon, no matter how much he was successful. It is not the ‘great conquests’; it’s the great writings...’ (minute 2.40).



In that respect words allow people to look at themselves, both by looking inside, making meanings of their feelings, as well as by looking outside at their historical and cultural position, observing the collective social development in which they take part.

I have attempted to give shape to this observation, turning words into an artefact that will serve as a reminder to audiences for the duality of looking inside and outside, and so I have attempted to create a coin that the character prince would give as a free gift together with the DVD of the film. For observe side of the coin I designed the prince's figure – representing the historical motif of the emperors' face on a coin. For the reverse side of the coin I designed the text 'A Word' – representing the monetary value in the prince kingdom – words as a currency of exchange, instead of money (see test etching on cooper sheet, fig. 31).



Figure 31: Etching test for *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).

Words, in that imagined kingdom, symbolise the highest value that one can share – the authority of the speaker, his or her 'own word'. As a token to this authority, I have decided to wear the prince's costume while designing the coin on the computer (fig. 32).



Figure 32: Design of *Prince Coin* on the computer, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).

For the making of the coin I have experimented, with help from others, with a stamping process using a mint (figs. 33-34), wax engraving for pouring lead (fig. 35), clay (fig. 36), silk screen and acid etching (figs. 37-39), and embossing on metal sheets (fig. 40). I also considered the simpler way of designing the DVD as a coin, as well as commissioning commercial companies to take a 3D scan and produce a die-cast coin (however, the quotes I received for this task amounted to more than £800 for producing a quantity of 300 coins).



Figure 33: Mint for making *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).



Figure 34: Mint for making *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006) (image altered in Photoshop).



Figure 35: Wax engraving for making *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).



Figure 36: Clay testing for making *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).



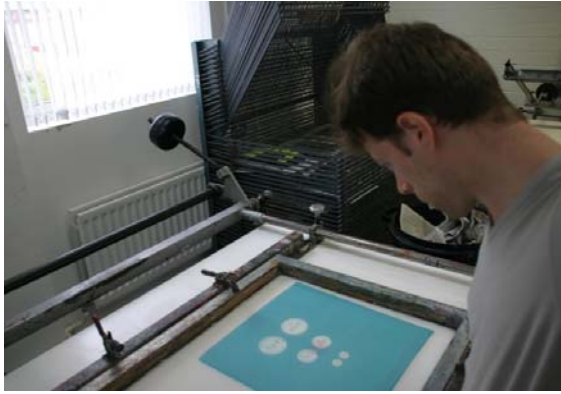


Figure 37: Acid etching for making *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).



Figure 38: Acid etching for making *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).



Figure 39: Acid etching on cooper for making *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).



Figure 40: Embossing on metal sheets for making *Prince Coin*, for *The Prince of Hampshire* (2006).

For cost reasons the final coin was not made, however I was left with a few attempts that culminated in artefacts that are works-in-progress. These ‘half-completed’ objects can be seen as ‘open artefacts’ indicating in a few ways that one can follow how to make the coin. In that way, the possibilities become the artefact.

Koestler (1964: 173) explains that words crystallise thoughts by making precise the vague images, and articulating intuition. Likewise, the painter Malevich (Drutt, 2003: 34) asserts that ‘the pen is sharper’ than the brush, and that by writing with the pen it

can ‘...obtain the turns of the mind’. Since words are tools of expression I have tried to crystallise the act of words themselves, in the form of a coin, producing something ‘made’ of a word and that could be held and seen by audiences. My feelings, as Kapoor (Kapoor, Bhabha & Tazzi, 1998: 11) explained above, are that artists should make the tools of expression visible, not necessarily say something new.

For Rudolf Steiner, the attempt to visualise the act of a word may be seen as altogether unnecessary, since words are seen by him as an integral part of one’s own body. Steiner (1972: 10) argues that the use of words is so inherent that it operates with the orientation of the body in space. Speaking, Steiner says, is the outcome of walking, where forces of movement are carried to the head structure. As such, walking turns to speaking, and speech becomes one’s orientation in space. Steiner wishes to assert the importance of the inherent tools of speaking through words and thinking in words. Perhaps for that reason, Yeats (1966: 99) states that words spoken with intensity in public turn powerful, becoming more than the mere verses. It could be argued that Yeats acknowledged Steiner’s argument that an intensified and authentic speech produces an expression of the true self of the person, which Yeats calls ‘more than the mere verses’.

I have sensed Yeats’ ‘more than the mere verses’ throughout my performances, poetry readings, and paper presentations where a feeling of inner power was welling up within me while giving my talks or readings. This creative power helped me to speak in front of many varied audiences, in a clear strong voice. In times, my sentences may have been far from perfect, yet the voice was always strong, delivering the inner essence if not the ‘outer’ essence (the meanings of the words said.) This was evident in one conference presentation which was made into the video *Trembling Words* (2006). The content of my presentation was accepted by half the audience but rejected by the other half. Likewise was the feedback in regards the way in which I combined the ‘normal academic’ presentation format with some artistic presentation or performance. Yet, the intensity seemed to express itself and externalise the inner voice, which was credited by all the audience.

Following this I have noted that people do not listen only to the content of words but also to the energy behind it. Critic and artist Robert Morris (1989: 339) observes that a word in a text ‘...works by gaps and discontinuities,’ where one word means

something else compared to the next word, and as such ‘language shows only differences’. Borrowing this idea for art I would suggest that if one looks at a painting one observes a complete picture with forms and shapes, but reading a text one observes the white gaps between the black words. Each word in that way can be seen as a separate island. The Dada art movement discussed at length its belief that each word contains a few meanings, not a single meaning.

However, Skelton does not focus on the discontinuity or the several meanings of each word. Instead, Skelton (1978: 13) focuses on the context, believing that the appearance of words on the page actually produces their meanings through the reference. A word appearing next to a word, Skelton explains, can determine the quality of the word. He summarises by saying that people do not accept a single meaning as a basis for words, but rather they allow meanings to be enriched by their context.

Artists Ken Devine (👁️👁️ paras. 13-15) discusses the multiple meanings of words, saying:

‘...behind the ‘simple’ things that people say lie complex relations that they have with life, and they use language to convey that. Language is illogical... [it] is saying something which is partly true and partly false. Rarely can you say a complete truth...’

Devine (para. 24) refers to points of view, suggesting that we create meanings depending on context, ‘Whether something is true or false, that is a matter of position, a point from which we see it’. The complexity of words and the inherent energy which they contain is described by TS Eliot (1970: 30): ‘Words are best when they say things we no longer need to say’. Following Eliot’s assertion, and borrowing from Non-objective art, we may speak of ‘Non-objective language’. I see Non-objective language as an art form where words are stripped of representation. In one respect words already have a side to them where they are stripped of their representative meanings, and seem to have a visual shape: words that are printed on a page become ‘a shape on the page’, as Wilmer (👁️👁️ para. 38) notes. Likewise, concrete poetry tries to create a shape using the printed words on the page. The Italian Futurism art movement in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is known for its use of layout of ‘bursting’ shapes of words across the page – words becoming an image.

Like word, image is a representative tool used by people to understand reality. More so, it is natural for people to think that what they see represents things as they truly are, asserting the famous dogmatic view: 'I will believe it when I see it'. Yet, Morris (1989: 339) reminds us that just like words, images are also representational signs, implying that images are indicating different things than the observed. Alan Corkish (👁️ para. 23) reveals how this may happen, saying that '...photographs often capture unexpected pointers or markers to other things'. By capturing the 'unexpected' images come to serve as '...markers to other things'. Yet, the 'unexpected' does not suggest that a thing was not there to begin with, but rather that a person did not expect or did not pay attention to it. By not expecting, the observer may overlook it. The presence of visible things may only be noticed later, in the example of Corkish, by looking at it again in a photograph.

Installation artist David Johnson (👁️ para. 40) asserts that while things might be ignored, still they are registered and remain, as he says, '...in the back of my mind...'. In that respect even when not consciously noticing things, still they are captured and registered. Jung is well known for his research on the images that are registered in one's unconscious, 'absorbed subliminally' as he (1972: 23) puts it. Yet, Jung also has an important theory regarding the conscious mind and the way that it seemingly ignores things. He (1963: 184) argues that the act of ignoring happens after the conscious mind has allowed images to rise. As the images rise, we '...wonder about them a little,' and we then neglect them, not trying to understand them. According to Jung, images are fully present in the thinking aware mind, and are not ignored but rather neglected.

This suggests that the act of neglecting images is an act where the conscious mind represses images back to the unconscious. Paskin's (👁️ para. 6) argument that she feels as if working '...from a place that you might not have such an easy access to,' can assert that images do rise up to the working consciousness but are later repressed, leaving the artist with a feeling that she is fully in the creative work and yet unaware to its rising content. In that way the conscious mind manages to capture images coming from the senses and then repress them, which I will term 'repressivism'. Repressivism does not refer to those images repressed in the unconscious. Rather repressivism refers to the act of the conscious mind to contemplate images, to repress

them, and to give us the illusion that images bypassed the conscious mind and were directly repressed in the unconscious.

If we accept this assumption, we should then consider whether there is enough research that examines this process. Many authors, such as Alma, Wyllie & Ramer (2002: 65) in their important study on developing creativity, suggest forms of creativity, or intuition as they see it, as productive forms that bypass the conscious mind and that we should learn to connect to. While these studies are important for informing the creative powers that are not subjected to conscious or logic, it is also important to note the counter-creative power of the conscious mind to produce blocks. Such blocks seem to leave the artists with the feeling of knowing things and yet not being fully aware of them. David Johnson (👁️👁️ para. 18) deals with this duality, trying to illustrate it in his works, ‘...something that you could not see yet is the centre of the work... things you cannot see but know about, therefore affect the way you see: the non-visible’. In his work *Trying to Imagine Not Being* (2003) he painted out the shadow that a post casts on a wall. The shadow is noticeable on the floor, running to the wall – but does not exist on the wall where it should be (fig. 41).

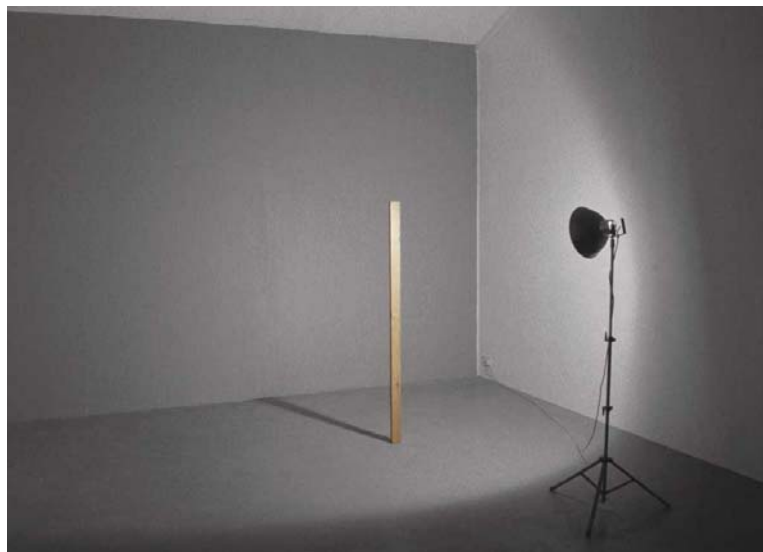


Figure 41: David Johnson, *Trying to Imagine Not Being* (2003, floodlight, post, emulsion paint, black wall painted so shadow disappeared, variable dimensions.)

Casting one’s own shadow on the same part of the wall reveals what Johnson (para. 9) calls a ‘white ghost’ (fig. 42).

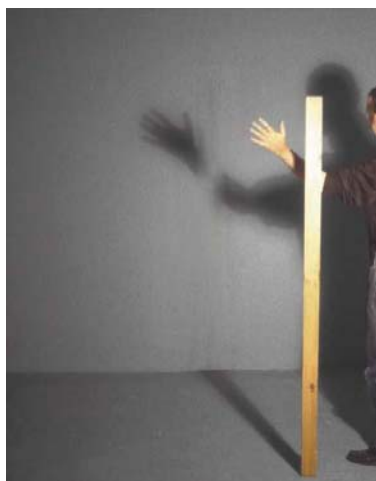


Figure 42: David Johnson, *Trying to Imagine Not Being* (2003, floodlight, post, emulsion paint, black wall painted so shadow disappeared, variable dimensions.)

Image, I would say, is a symbol used by artists to denote something else, something which we cannot see. Even poetry, whose main tool is words, ‘...does use images to try to convey abstract thoughts and feelings...’ (Maggie Sawkins ¶ para. 17). The way in which artists approach the invisible and the abstract is explained by the Constructivist Naum Gabo (Annely Juda Fine Art, 2003: [4]). Gabo says, ‘Artists do not observe the world, but live the world’. Gabo asserts that artists do not look at reality in the common sense, but rather have a different mode of absorption of images – the ‘living’ in the world; the experiencing of it.

The artists that I researched tend to say that experiencing the world becomes a mode of seeing, which provides them with the perception of seeing beauty around them, or as Mondrian (Mondrian, Holtzman, & James, 1993: 15) defines it, ‘...a monument of Beauty...’ Hartal (¶ para. 37) goes even further, suggesting that ‘We have the historical evidence that humans even under the most dreadful conditions are capable of retaining their lofty spirit and inner dignity’. The ability to see the lofty and the beautiful in life can be argued as an ever present faculty within the artist. This ‘sense of beauty’, as I call it, suggests that the artist’s visual perception does not rely on what the artist sees from the outside but rather relies on his or her inner spirit. The artist looks at the world, but renders the images with the beauty that he sees inside. Emotion and visual perception are united, in what I would like to call the ‘emotiovisual’ faculty of artists.

I have noticed the creative power of the emotiovisual faculty during the making of the short film *Whispers in the Dark* (2006; [DVD](#)). The film portrays the unfortunate event

of a war which affected my family. Through the emotiovisual faculty I have created images and poetry that identified with both sides of the conflict, and helped to elevate pain through what I attempted to be a positive outlook through human disasters (fig. 43).

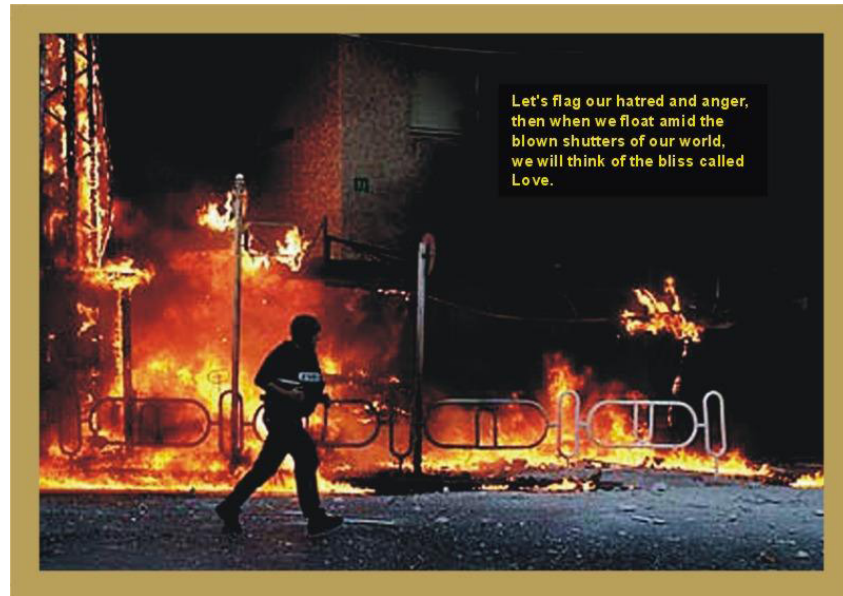


Figure 43: Still image from the film *Whispers in the Dark* (2006).

Through the emotiovisual faculty I could deal with observed pain not by debasing it (which brings more condemnation and thus more pain) but rather by an act of seeing and bringing out the beauty. As one feedback on the film asserts, 'The film offers a... perspective on ways of living together in peace without denying the aggression and loss of life that has occurred' (👁️). To borrow from this description, I would say that one can condemn the fire for burning a forest, yet one may also observe the power of the trees to restore themselves and grow once again after the fire.

While I have used images from the conflict I also attempted to introduce the image of light, or reconciliation, symbolised by a milky white screen, and an individual trying to penetrate through the light; trying to break through the screen glass and bring light to the audience (figs. 44-48).





Figure 44: Still image from the film *Whispers in the Dark* (2006).



Figure 45: Still image from the film *Whispers in the Dark* (2006).



Figure 46: Still image from the film *Whispers in the Dark* (2006).



Figure 47: Still image from the film *Whispers in the Dark* (2006).



Figure 48: Still image from the film *Whispers in the Dark* (2006).

Video artist Bill Viola has created the work *Ocean Without a Shore* (2007) where individuals are slowly approaching out of darkness and moving towards the light (fig. 49-50). Light, Viola (n.d.) asserts, serves as a threshold one needs to pass in order to be materialised into this life.





Figure 49: Bill Viola, *Ocean Without a Shore* (2007, video installation.) Image source: <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateshots/episode.jsp?item=10088>



Figure 50: Bill Viola, *Ocean Without a Shore* (2007, video installation.) Image source: <http://www.oceanwithoutashore.com>

In both my work and in Viola's, light is seen as a material, an image with sustainability. This is a good example for the way in which artists approach images. Artists seem to relate to image as an object to itself. Image seems to hold a denotative aspect, describing the thing, as well as a connotative aspect, describing something additional. Artist Michael Snow epitomises this idea with an image within an image in his work *Authorization* (1969; fig. 51).

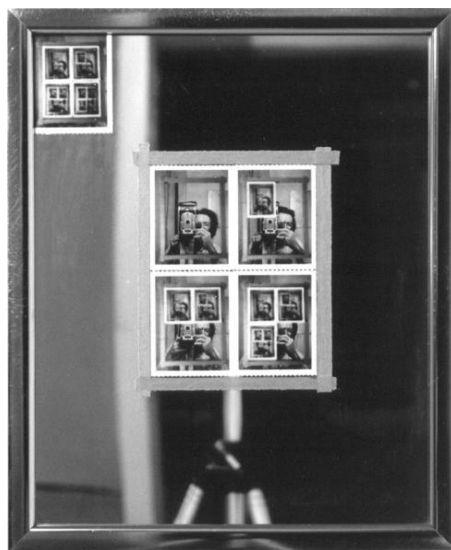


Figure 51: Michael Snow, *Authorization* (1969, black and white polaroid photographs, adhesive cloth tape, metal frame, mirror, 54.5 x 44.5 cm.) Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography. Image source: The CCCA's Canadian Art Database Project: <http://www.ccca.ca>

By choosing the title *Authorization*, and showing himself as part of the image while taking the image, Snow emphasises that image as seen through the eyes of the artist is under the authority of the artist, as if created by the artist himself.

Words and images are tools through which artists make an initial registration to give meanings to their emotions. With the act of identification, the emotiovisual faculty provides artists an experience of both feeling and seeing the world through new eyes, as well as observing it and making sense of it through reflection.

## **Summary of chapter 5**

Carl Jung (1972: 21–23) asserts that there are unconscious aspects to the perception of reality through the senses. The senses perceive, Jung explains, and then translate reality to the realm of the mind, into a psychic event. Psychic events, Jung (1982: 19) explains, come from experiences that are governed by emotions and the irrational. Likewise, the experience of being inspired artistically involves first being aware of the inner emotional and outer environment. Constructivist Gabo has discussed the unity of the inner world and the outer, asserting they merge one into the other. The merger of the inner and the outer is noticed or sensed by the artist, in the forms of opening up to an inner voice and becoming sensitive to the faculty of listening. The artist then senses a collectible unconscious experience. Once noticed, feelings then rise within the artist by which the artist experiences himself or herself as part of the creative flow of the environment. In my view the artist feels an expansion of the self, or a deflation, and an urge to create. This urge is acknowledged through an emotiovisual response producing an initial impression of words and images within the artist's mind, as a first step in creating meanings.

This indicates that the artist follows a process of understanding what he or she is going through; of what is the creative force that heightens their senses and emotions, and inspires them to share the inner and outer realities through art. The process of understanding involved internalisation of images and words into artistic forms, as discussed in the next chapter.

## 6. Internalisation

Following the process of acknowledging and producing the impression of words and images, the artist then moves to a process of internalisation where meanings are turned into specific forms of shapes and colours that will serve as the basis of an art work.

Chapter Internalisation will be examined through the categories of shape and movement.

### 6.1. Shape

The artistic experiences that I examined are manifested from the inner reality and to the external environment through shapes and colours.

Kandinsky, in his study *Point And Line To Plane* (1979) explains that abstract forms are isolated from their objective environment of material and plane (p. 21). This isolation means that the abstract form frees itself, as Kandinsky (p. 28) asserts, from dependency or practical use, beginning ‘its life as an independent being’. Kandinsky’s assertion indicates an inner quality that the artist observes in the abstract shapes.

Artist and architect Victor Pasmore (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 352) explains that shapes are not only representative but inherent in the way that people observe reality. Shapes that are observed in nature, such as the circle or the square, do not just exist in nature, but rather they represent some basic form of a visual sensation within people, Pasmore explains. These visual sensations are explored by artists through abstract forms that are not representative but rather stand as an expression of the language of forms themselves.

#### ***Abstract / Light / White***

Bolt (2004: 11) asserts the importance of abstract forms, indicating the misleading prevailing assumption by art theorists and historians that still seem to assume that visual art is representational. Digital artist Renata Spiazzi (Nalven, 2005: 155) adds, ‘Too often, people looking at a painting get sidetracked by the subject and never get to the real beauty of the work’. Abstraction, according to Spiazzi, allows one to focus on the beauty of the medium itself.

The use of abstract shapes in works of art allows artists freedom and flexibility to remain adaptive to changing inner ideas and emotions, which resonates with the unfixed forms of the shapes. Abstract forms maintain a dialogue with the emotions, continuing to evolve and to be clarified as the artist clarifies his or her own ideas. Abstract forms help the artist to discover his or her own inspired-inner-self, as it may be called, without the need for expertise or technical perfection. The artist may well be proficient in the skill of art making, as Picasso has demonstrated from a very early age, yet the skill is not seen as a necessary criteria for the expression in abstract art. I feel this can be demonstrated in the works of the Suprematist Malevich.

In his attempt to express a universally shared feeling, Malevich (Drutt, 2003) asserted that pure geometrical forms have no specific cultural element to them and as such they can be universally comprehended regardless of cultural or ethnic origin. A simple black square, Malevich asserts, represented economy, which he saw as the most important motif or quality through which to examine reality (Drutt, 2003: 33) (fig. 52).

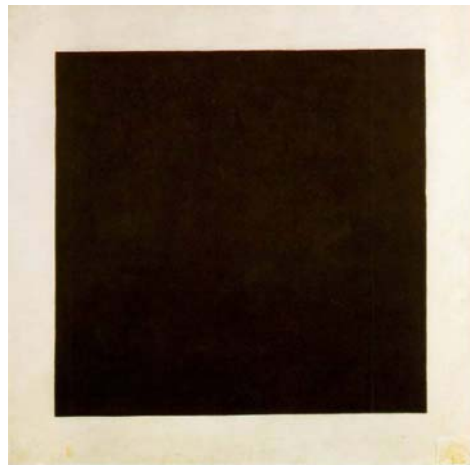


Figure 52: Kazimir Malevich, *Black Square* (1923, oil on Canvas.) St. Petersburg, State Russian Museum.

The search for an abstract and a non-objective in his works, was seen by Malevich (Drutt, 2003: 61) as ‘the optimism of a nonobjectivist’. This optimism is well discussed by Gabo through his own abstract construction works, yet he sees it from a different perspective. While Malevich was reaching to reduce art to zero and then go beyond the zero (Drutt, 2003: 46), Gabo was looking for abstract art that retains the laws of nature (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 37). Gabo’s use of abstract forms was not meant to reach for anti-art, a negation of form, but rather to explore forms and space without depicting mass. He (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 35) asserts, ‘my art is

optimistic, because it looks forward and has a vision'. I draw from this that the symbolic image of 'looking forward' is adequate to Gabo's idea of abstract spaces with no mass, where no specific image is defined but rather multiple possibilities exist for one to look at.

In that same spirit I have attempted to capture the space of artistic possibilities that contains no mass, in my work *A Black Circle That is Going To Be* (2008) (fig. 53).

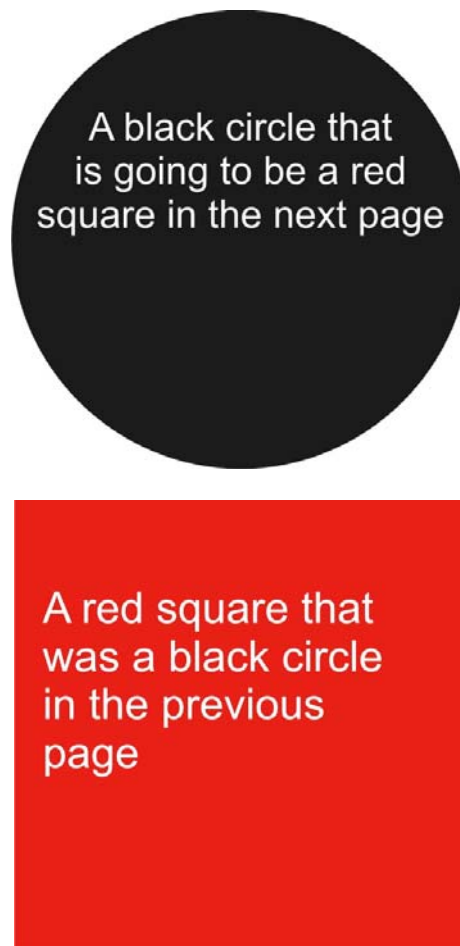


Figure 53: *A Black Circle That is Going To Be* (2008, electronic Flash presentation on [www.poeticmind.co.uk](http://www.poeticmind.co.uk))

The work was created as an online Flash presentation, where the viewer first sees the black circle with its text message of 'going to be a red square in the next page,' and after five seconds the circle disappears and the red square appears, with its text message asserting it is 'a red square that was a black circle in the previous page'. The work is accompanied with this assertion:

'What interests me is not the square or the circle, but what is in between the two: the artistic process by which one becomes the other.'

In this work I have attempted to bind the abstract space of the creative process between two covers, like a book bound inside covers – the black circle as a front cover, and a red square as its back cover. By linking the two parts I attempted to link the idea of what is going to be created with the actual artwork. This work represents the ‘covers’ of a creative process, which hold the empty space in which creativity occurs. Yet, the creative space between the covers exists only thanks to the text on the images, which asserts this space. The text is read by the viewer, and in that respect the viewer creates that abstract space in his or her mind. The work serves as a frame for a creative process that occurs in the mind of the viewer.

Painter Felice Varini also uses the observation of the viewer as part of constructing his works. In his works he paints geometrical shapes on urban landscapes, using the perspective-localised method in which the complete shape of the work is noticed only from one focal point (fig. 54). Looking from outside the vantage point, the viewer sees fragments, the broken shapes (see two examples in fig. 55).



Figure 54: Felice Varini, *Three Ellipses For Three Locks* (2007, acrylic paint, seen from the vantage point).



Figure 55: Felice Varini, *Three Ellipses For Three Locks* (two images) (2007, acrylic paint, seen from outside the vantage point).

Unlike my work where the work enters the mind of the viewer, in Felice's work the viewer walks around the painting, trying to construct an image from different points. Elements in the work are observed through the process of viewers walking around it. Felice (🖌️👁️ para. 12) explains:

‘My concern is what happens outside the vantage point of view. Where is the painting then? Where is the painter? The painter is obviously out of the work, and so the painting is alone and totally abstract, made of many shapes. The painting exists as a whole, with its complete shape as well as the fragments.’

In that respect Felice has brought the artistic search for abstract shapes from the invisible and non-existence back to the physical reality. The physical reality serves as the element, or the surface, that produces abstract shapes, in what Felice (🖌️👁️ para. 31) suggests is a step forward in the history of abstract art:

‘The question that I am asking as an artist is, ‘What is the next step in the history of art after Mondrian, Malevich and Pollock? What can we offer today that will take us to the next step in abstract painting?’ My answer is to work on the three-dimensional reality...’

Installation artist David Johnson seems to take abstract art further by trying to create an experience in which abstract forms are created, and then removed, in what can be termed ‘the abstraction of abstract art’. In *The Invention of Nothingness* (2008, work in progress) he painted a black abstract form on a wall which covers the shades of the light which is cast on that wall from a floodlight. Once the floodlight is turned off, the viewer can see the abstract black form on the wall (fig. 56).



Figure 56: David Johnson, *The Invention of Nothingness* (2008, work in progress, floodlight off, emulsion paint.)



But once the floodlight is turned on, the light with its brightness covers the black form, so that the viewer sees a uniform wall hue (fig. 57).



Figure 57: David Johnson, *The Invention of Nothingness* (2008, work in progress, floodlight on, emulsion paint.)

In that way, Johnson has turned the qualities of abstract shapes upside down or inside out. Abstract forms are not created by light, but rather are negated by light. Johnson has demonstrated an attempt to create abstract forms by ‘flushing’ or rendering images with light.

While Johnson uses light to create a negation of shapes, artist Katayoun Dowlatshahi captures light directly onto glass surfaces, hence using light as the brush (fig. 58). She (🖌️ 👁️ para. 7) explains:

‘...the light source can be represented as a mirror; by shattering that mirror many individual fragments or shards are created. You and I and all other beings are represented by these individual fragments. However, we reflect that one light source from many different perspectives; that is what makes us all unique.’



Figure 58: Katayoun Dowlatshahi, *Drawing Fragments of Light I, II & III* (2004, triptych, gelatine, blue & black pigment onto glass, 168 x76 cm each.)



The use of light and light colours is not new. Following Kirchner's advice that colours' 'birth' is from light and their combination makes white (Grisebach, 1999: 185), artists have been attempting to remove the sense of 'shapeness' of forms by 'flooding' them with bright colours, usually with white. Malevich's *White on White* from 1917 is an example (fig. 59). However, I observe that rendering shapes with bright colour is not meant only for the purpose of abstraction or negation of image, but also for the purpose of creating a sense of expansion. Ambrose & Harris (2005: 142) explain that rendering a shape with bright colours will give the impression that the shape is larger than a similar shape rendered with dark colours. Light colours have the property to produce an impression of expansion. Malevich is known for his use of white colours for representation of aesthetics that will lead to what he sees as a spiritual freedom. White colour, with its quality of expansion, carries an essence of infinity and higher feelings in his works (Lowry, 2004: 85).

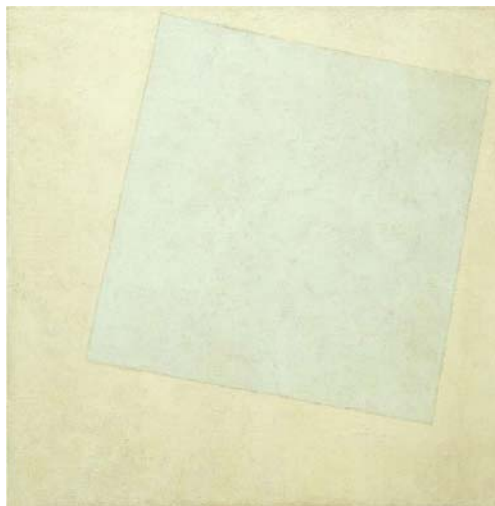


Figure 59: Kazimir Malevich, *Suprematist Composition: White on White* (1918, oil on canvas, 79.4 x 79.4 cm.) New York, Museum of Modern Art. Image source: <http://www.moma.org>

I consider Malevich's attempt to convey the pure, or the spiritual as he sees it, as unique in that he produced a white colour layer applied on another white colour layer. However, we must admit that Malevich's work is hung on the gallery's wall, and in that respect the work, with its light hue, can be seen only thanks to the different hues of the gallery's wall, which might even be dark. This problematic of light colours is well expressed in the work of Roi Vaara. In 1983 Vaara painted himself with white paint and walked down the streets of Helsinki (fig. 60). Vaara (👁️👁️ para. 14) says, 'The idea came to me from the notion of the white race, and so I tried to disappear in the landscape'. Yet, looking at the photo documenting this work (fig. 60), I would

suggest that Vaara did not manage to disappear in the landscape at all, but on the contrary, became very noticeable against the many other ‘hues’ around him.



Figure 60: Roi Vaara, *White Man* (1983, street action) Helsinki, Finland. Photo: © Harri Larjosto

Yet, this may not be seen as an artistic’s ‘problem’ to the extent that artists argue that they seek to bring something into this world, not to ‘depart’ from this world to the spiritual realm. In that regard, white colour, which shines bright amidst darker hues, can be seen as a way of bringing spiritual qualities to our reality. To use an old analogy – to shine the light colour against the darker ones. The need of a dark hue for the white to be visible is notable in another Vaara work, his *Wet Paint Handshakes* (2008; fig. 61). In this work Vaara tries to transfer the qualities of the white hue to the audience who shake his hand which had been dipped in white colour, and yet Vaara (👁️ para. 10) admits to the need for a dark background:

‘I wear black tuxedo... and the contrast between the black and white makes the performance visually prominent. After each handshake I wipe the white paint off my hands on my black tuxedo, so the tuxedo becomes ‘dirty’ with white.’



Figure 61: Roi Vaara (right), *Wet Paint Handshakes* (2008, performance in Hayward Gallery, London, black tuxedo, white paint). Photo: © Naranja.

It is interesting that the artist feels a need to use two opposing hues that contradict each other, and yet complement and support one another and create something new, for example, a new view on dirt, as Vaara explains: the tuxedo becomes dirty, yet 'dirty' with white. The purity of white is brought down, so to speak, even into dirt. White colour with its purity is used by the artist as a symbol that purifies the physical world.

I see the works of Piet Mondrian as a way forward with the use of light colours. I consider his work as an attempt to express qualities of white not by layering white against other colours, but rather by layering other colours against white. Basic colours of red, yellow and blue are layered within black grid bars against white, as can be seen in the work *Composition 10* (1939-1942) (fig. 62).

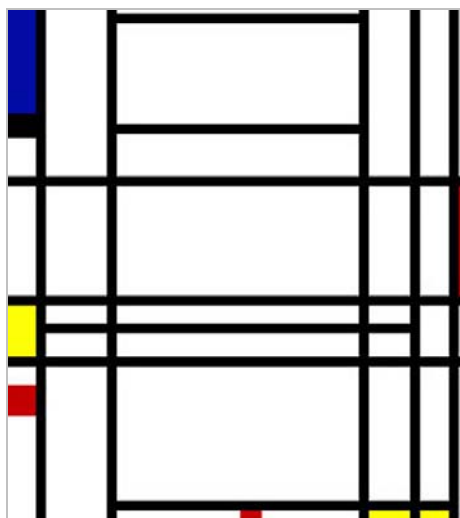


Figure 62: Piet Mondrian, *Composition 10* (1939-1942). Private collection. Image source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet\\_Mondrian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet_Mondrian)

In my view the colours and the black grid stand as representation of the physical reality, through which we can peer at the white behind. The peering at the spiritual through the physical in the works of Mondrian does not consist of looking through glasses or a telescope, so to speak, but rather looking through a microscope. Mondrian's work seems to me as if one looks at a blood cell through a microscope, where patterns of physical cells are abstracted into geometrical shapes. The white that is revealed is the spiritual within the blood of people, within us. Mondrian's own arguments can support my view. Mondrian (Mondrian, Holtzman, & James, 1993: 14) explains that the more basic a colour is, the more inwards and pure its expression. In that respect white shows us the purity which is inside of us, and not necessarily external to us. It can also be viewed as a simple grid, or formula, through which we can connect to our own inner creativity.

Likewise, I have attempted to externalise the inner feeling of purity through poems written and performed as part of an art event in Southampton (August 2007). A video camera was filming the event, yet it stood on a tripod in a bad position, resulting in low-quality footage. When I decided to make a film of the footage, I realised that I would need to create many visuals to replace parts of the footage, and decided on creating visuals consisting of white space into which graphic words will appear. The words are the text of the poems, and they appear one after the other in synchronicity with the spoken words of the poems, resulting in an independent composition of an image (fig. 63).



Figure 63: Still image from the film *Explorers of the Heart* (2007).

While Mondrian's work can be seen as an attempt to look into the inner essence of people, the white DNA so to speak, my work attempts to bring out the messages from within that DNA, to externalise the words that are within the white DNA, allowing them to emerge.

My premise would be that abstract shapes are seen by artists as universal forms that are not bound to a specific culture. Abstractions serve as a flexible tool to capture the inner essence, allowing for a free flow of ideas within a shape that is not fixed to a convention or tradition, but rather it is pure. Purity brings with it light and white colours, as a carrier of inner essence that artists seek to bring forward into our reality.

I suggest that the vehicle that is used for this bringing forward, or movement of an inner idea, is the use of vivid and transparent colours.

## **6.2. Movement**

The need to express inner purity in art work sees the artists using vivid and transparent colours as a mean to create intense visible movement symbolising the movement of inner purity. Michael Lancaster, in his study *Colourscape* (1996), suggests a theory that may explain why this movement is carried out through use of colours. Lancaster (1996: 6) explains that colours depend on relationships to the extent that no colour can be seen in isolation. Colours are working in what can be seen as a collaboration, which does not relate necessarily to the object on which they lie. In that way colours are used by artists for their inner relations that create a sense of inner movement within the art work.

### ***Vivid / transparent***

Kandinsky explains the inner qualities of vivid colours and the way that they seem to glow. Kandinsky (1972: 61) asserts that each colour can extend through variations between warm and cold, yet red has the most extensive scale. Red, he says, has an inner glow, which creates a movement within itself, not a movement outside and not even inside.

The inner qualities of primary colours are exemplified in the Pointillism technique which applied separate dots of colours on the canvas (end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century).

Matisse's painting *Luxe, Calme et Volupté* from 1904 (fig. 64) is an example of the pointillist technique, where vivid colours were created not by mixing, but by painting small dots side by side. The Pointillism technique is important not only for its use of colour but also for its use of colours as the shape. The shape that is required to contain the colour is the shape of the dot itself which is the colour. In that way the pointillist technique has turned colour into the abstract shape, without the need to create another shape for the purpose of dispensing the colour. Kazimir Malevich (Crone & Moos, 1991: 1) reflected in 1908: 'Until now there was a realism of objects, but not of painted units of colour...' The Pointillists have managed to demonstrate painting with units of colour. This issue does not seem to be mentioned too often in the academic literature, perhaps because the subject matters of the paintings, as can be seen in the case of Matisse's work, are representations of objects (figures, trees, landscape) to the effect that we may forget that such representations are created by the familiarities of the viewer's memory with these images. As it stands to itself, the painting can represent colour and not necessarily images.

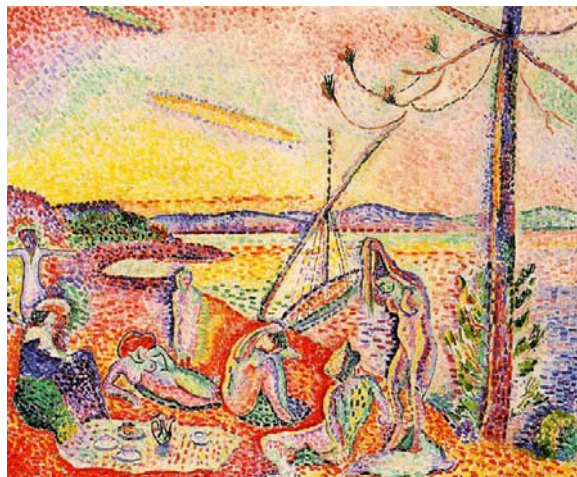


Figure 64: Henri Matisse, *Luxe, Calme et Volupté* (1904, oil.) Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne.

Since colours are not mixed they retain their individual vividness. Yet, when the viewer looks at the painting from a distance, colours blend to create new hues. This effect of colours blending is used widely today in modern digital printing, such as in outdoor large scale poster prints.

While Matisse has managed to create shape through the physical property of dots of colours, using several colours, modern artists tend to pick or focus on a single colour only, and use it as the main source for their work. I see modern art works as if they have been zooming into such works as Matisse's, and focusing only on one element or



colour. Artist Felice Varini tends to apply a single colour, mainly blue or red, painting on urban landscapes. In that way the colour's hue is altered as the result of the hue of the surface on which it is applied (fig. 65), and new hues are created through the hue of the urban's '...surface and the light conditions' (🖌️ 👁️ para. 19). While Matisse's intense colour would blend with colours beside it, from 'side to side' so to speak, Felice's colour blends with colours behind it (surface) and in front of it (sun). This illustrates Felice's ambition to break away from the flatness of the canvass, as he explains (🖌️ 👁️ para. 18), and to allow for a three-dimensional blending, where the intensity of the colour becomes a merging point between the sky and the earth. It is in this form that art has reached a point in history where colour does not represent an object, but is the culmination of it.

The inner purity of white receives an intense movement through intense colours, having an inner glow, as Kandinsky asserted - a side to side glow, in Pointillism, as well as an up and down or front and behind, seen in Felice's works (fig. 65).



Figure 65: Felice Varini, *Terrace No. 2* (1988, Acrylic paint on urban landscape.) Villa Arson, Nice, France. Image source: <http://www.varini.org/02indc/indgen.html>

Kapoor goes further, trying to generate a movement of his inner ideas to the work by trying to penetrate into the colour. Like Felice, Kapoor uses monochromatic colours, usually red, but treats the pigment of the colour itself as the surface of the works, as can be seen in the example of his pigment sculptures (fig. 66). The sculptures are made of red pigment which acts as the surface for pigment, the red colour. In that way

colour does not sit on a surface but rather on colour, on itself. The next step in the history of art might well be a work of colour that does not stand on material at all – a non-material essence that reflects colour.



Figure 66: Anish Kapoor, *As If To Celebrate I Discovered a Mountain Blue Flower* (1981, wood, cement, polystyrene, pigment, 107 x 305 x 305 cm.) Image source: <http://www.lissongallery.com>

It seems to me that the use of intense colours by artists comes to illustrate their desire to look into colour, and to show that colour should not be treated as a mere rendering tool for surface, but rather as a vehicle for a spiritual essence. Kapoor (2005) explains that he sees colour not as a surface but as a form, or, as Gabo (Annely Juda Fine Art, 2003) said long before him, ‘Colour is the flesh of our visual perception of the world, not its skin’.

Likewise, I have experimented with transferring inner ideas, or moving ideas from my mind and to the audiences, and with use of intense colour in the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006; *DVD*). The intensity of the images I created was achieved through inverting pictures of flowers that I had taken (fig. 67). The film deals with an artistic experience of seeing the world in brighter, vivid colours which contained a spiritual message. The script reads:

‘As I was walking [down] the street, suddenly I felt light in me and around me, as if someone pushed me from above the water from deep within...’ (minute 0.28), ‘I’ve looked around me, the sky, houses, trees, people – everything was alive, but different. All was made of sparkles of light, blinking...’ (minute 1.35).

The inversion of the images is as an attempt to invert reality, trying to bring out some qualities that are inherent within things, and which our eyes cannot see in daily life.



The use of intense colours attempted to make that shift an intense one. As one feedback (👁️) on the film noted, ‘the colours [are]... the seven magic colours in Chakras’. The seven Chakras are symbolic wheels where the spiritual and physical meet, denoted by seven intense colours, each representing a specific quality in the person (fig. 68).



Figure 67: Still image from the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006).

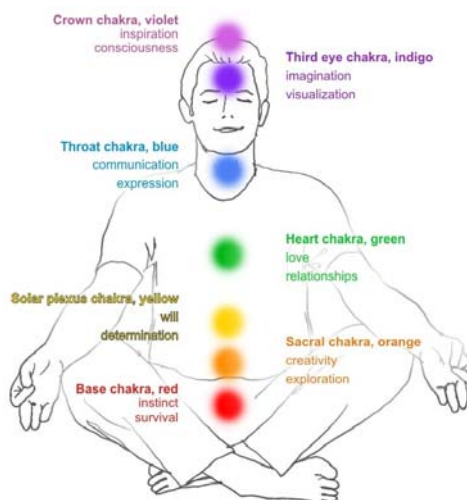


Figure 68: The seven Chakras.

Gilbert & George shed new light on the way that intense colour can deliver inner ideas. They (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 323) assert that the colours that they use originate from themselves, from their own essence, and not from the outside reality:

‘We started with ourselves, not with copying artistic trends that are seen in museums. It took us years to find red colour, whereas artists start with all colours

on their palette, first thing. It took another three years to find yellow.’

I infer from this that the intense colours used in their works come from knowing themselves, not from using colours that were the ‘trend’ in the cultural scene. Vivid red, yellow and blue are the extensions of the artists themselves, and to evidence this they tend to use their own image as a signature that renders the colours in their works (fig. 69).



Figure 69: Gilbert & George, *Planed* (2007, electronic image). Work released to the public domain by the artists through the BBC and Guardian websites, May 2007.

The specific work of Gilbert & George chosen here (fig. 69) was released by the artists over the internet to the public domain as a free gift, just after the showing of a BBC documentary on the artists (May 2007). Doing so, Gilbert & George managed to extend the intensity of the colours in this work – beginning in themselves, moving through their cameras, computers, the BBC TV documentary, the internet – and ending in many forms on the computers of downloaders, who might continue to distribute the light by printing it.

Vivid colours are noted for their force of moving with intensity from what artists describe as spiritual realms and into the physical reality. However, the same quality of movement can be reversed by use of transparent colours. Transparent colours are noted for their translucent quality that allows one to see through the layers. Unlike intense colours that assert a definite artistic statement, the fluidity of transparent colours suggests a sense of blending of several emotional levels that artists express.

By using transparent colours artists observe the process in which things change from one thing to another, or blend one into the other. Watercolour painter Chan (👁️👁️ para. 7) explains, ‘I pay particular attention to the way in which the light falls and how this changes the colours that can be seen. The colours of flowers can be vibrant, intense or delicate’. Chan has an interest in the transition of colours and emotions, which she tries to capture through the transitory quality of watercolours (fig. 70).



Figure 70: Melanie Chan, *Rose 2* (detail) (2007, watercolours on paper, 21 x 42cm.)

The transitory quality of colours can challenge the assumption that an image is observable through separation of its colours. According this assumption when the mind sees different colours it can compare the differences, thus seeing objects more clearly. In that view, if all colours were to blend they would then produce pure black or pure white or grey, as illustrated in fig. 71.

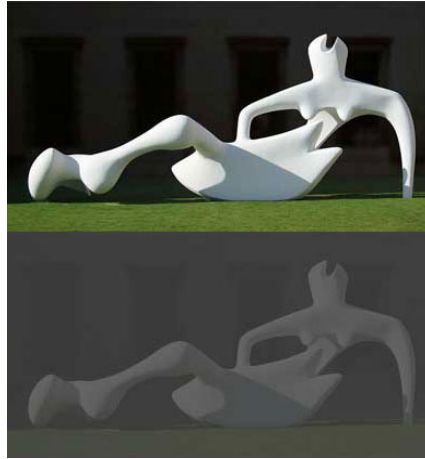


Figure 71: High contrast image (top) and low contrast (bottom). Image of Henri Moore's *Reclining Figure* (1951).

Yet, the tendency of watercolours to disperse into the paper and produce layers of colours seems to embrace different colours, not separate them. The layering of colours manages to produce a noticeable image, with the viewer's eye piercing through layers, receiving different levels of the blending quality.

Likewise, Gabo (Annely Juda Fine Art, 2003: [3]) accepts the quality that allows for depths in colour, but he rejects the surface of colour that reflects light. His view is interesting in that it tells us that colours may have a quality in which they withdrawn inside, from the surface of the painting and to inside. In that way, the quality of watercolours to move from the surface through layers, and into the canvas, is challenged by Gabo, who asserts that colour does not 'begin' on its surface. Rather, colour 'begins' from what I could only suggest to describe as 'the other side of the colour'. Gabo suggests to look from within colour and deeper forwards, or inwards into the colour. Looking beyond the surface, according to Gabo (Annely Juda Fine Art, 2003: [7]) is like looking into our own psychological selves.

I have been inspired by the idea of looking beyond the surface and into our own psychological selves, and created an art exhibition held in early 2007. I have used printed words as a symbol of thoughts, where thoughts can be seen as representing one's psychological self. Words were printed on translucent stripes of paper, and hung from the ceiling. The audience was invited to stand behind the stripes, observing the reverse of the words, the 'other' sides of words. Observing words from behind, this work asked, where do words come from and where do they stay in one's mind, from behind the mind, or in front of the mind? (fig. 72-73).



Figure 72: *The Other Side of Words* (2007, print on transparent stripes).

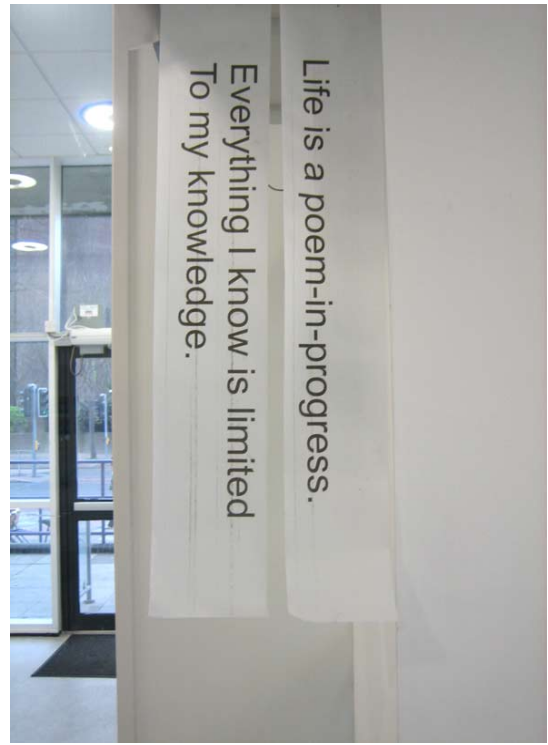


Figure 73: *The Other Side of Words* (2007, print on transparent stripes).

With Gabo's insistence that colour is an event in itself, not connected to the essence of the object on which it is laid (Annely Juda Fine Art, 2003: [3-4]), we should examine how he treats the transparent quality in his works. Feeling that space is not around us but within us, Gabo uses glass and plastics which allow one to look inside, through it, and get a feeling of a space inside the image that is created (fig. 74). According to Gabo, all people are transparent (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 38), yet it should be noted that the use of glass and plastics was not merely done for its transparent qualities, but also as a statement of embracing modernity. Gabo believed that art should embrace new materials that technology in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had to offer, especially the improved transparent plastics (Lodder, 2007). In that way I suggest Gabo went beyond the dogmatic definitions of what an artist is and what materials he or she should use.



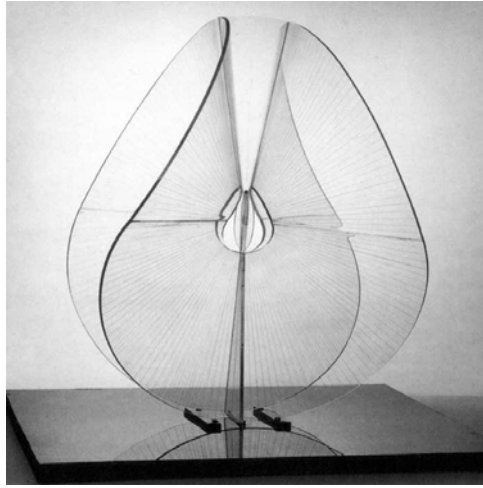


Figure 74: Naum Gabo, *Spheric Theme: Translucent Variation* (c.1937, this version executed 1951, perspex, diameter 57.3 cm.) New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Image source: <http://www.tate.org.uk>

Katayoun's work offers a new way of looking at inner spaces and the way that inner ideas are transferred in works of art. In her works she captures direct light, without the use of a camera, straight onto transparent surfaces of glass, using the 19th century Carbon Photography process. By capturing direct sunlight onto glass, the work (fig. 75) suggests that nature itself is the art work, spanning from the sun and to the glass on the earth. In that respect, we are standing within the sphere of her work – between heaven and earth, so to speak, looking at the nucleus core of the work from within it. While Gabo uses transparency as a way of looking from outside into the art work, Katayoun's uses transparency as a way to allow us to look at the work from within the work.



Figure 75: Katayoun Dowlatshahi, *Drawing Fragments of Light I, II & III* (2004, triptych, gelatine, blue & black pigment onto glass, 168 x 76 cm each.)

Felice's intense colours suggest a merging point of sun and earth, and Katayoun's work suggests the same merger yet not by using intense colours but rather transparent colours.

Through the use of the motif of transparency, I see Katayoun's work as expanding the sphere in which art and people exist. Looking at her work, we are looking at ourselves, and from within ourselves. Katayoun (👁️ para. 5) asserts, 'Light is around us all the time. We live within it...' She (para. 6) adds that through the process of her works, she 'discovered invisible characteristics of light...' In that respect, the motif of transparency turns into a complete invisibility, and this complete invisibility becomes an accomplishment of Gabo's search for no representation of colour in art.

Yet, one could say that transparency may not be the sublime form of non-representation of colour in art, but simply a form that the human eye cannot register. We could ask what could be the qualities of art works in which colour is not representative and yet is still visible. It could be said that such forms of colour already exists, but it takes new ways of comprehension and having 'new eyes' as Proust ('Marcel Proust', 2008) suggested, to be able to see it: 'The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes'.

But this 'voyage of discovery' is a voyage of creating, as theories in Quantum Physics suggest. According to Arntz, Chasse & Vicente (2004: minutes 8.50–14.40) matter can be created through wave length or sphere. Matter is an idea turning into form through shapes and colours.

I consider that colours are seen by artists as having an independent quality which is separated from the surface on which they are applied. As such, colours act as a vehicle for creating movement of inner ideas in the mind of the artists to be externalised in art works. To illustrate this quality, vivid colours and transparent colours are used for their moving quality, allowing the bringing out of things from the inner or spiritual realm as well as the peering through and looking into the spiritual realm.

## **Summary of chapter 6**

I conclude from the above that artists' experiences are given initial boundaries within abstract shapes that allow for the free flow of ideas. The shapes bring up with them

colours, or light, which serve as a link for the transformation of abstractions from ideas into matter. Vivid colours and transparent colours both express the movement from nothing into something.

Once the artist has an initial indication of an idea as well as shapes, colours and matter to use for his or her art work, then a sense of location or place that will shape the final outcome arises. This will be discussed in the following chapter.



## 7. Application

With the artistic ideas ready to be applied, the artist allows the external reality to affect the final shaping of the work, in a process of application of the idea. Application is examined in this chapter in relation to the process of creativity that the artist undergoes, not in relation to the final artefact (composition etc'). Thus, application is examined through the influences of the external contexts on the way artists shape the outcome of the work – a process I would refer to as exploring how the external context influences the psychology of the actual creative process.

With this in mind this chapter on Application will be examined through the categories place and space.

### 7.1. Place

Artists are inspired to create their work in places, such as nature, cities, galleries and people's homes. However, artists seem to have a unique approach to the place, as they experience it. By a '...straightforward approach to life; looking and listening,' poet Lorca (Gibson, 1989: 23) explains, artists seem to enter into an act of creation with the environment, not merely observation of it. In this act, artists report on a sense of experiencing life's beauty.

#### *Experience / beauty / appreciation*

The environment, according to Raine (1975: 119) is recreated by artists in the form of being 'experienced' as opposed to being 'noticed'. The environment, or indeed life, shift from a 'thing' outside the artist, and turn into a living process within the artist. One might argue that it is the artist who turns a 'living process', or a living agent, within life, as Vaara (👁️ para. 32) indicates, '...I create art in order to participate in the process of the continuous creation of the world'.

With the acknowledgement that the artist is part of a creative force, artists come to appreciate life in a way that changes the way they see the mundane and the normal in life, into a state where they can see beauty in all. The poet Keats (Ackroyd, 2006) declared, 'I have loved the principle of beauty in all things'. Shelley (Taylor, 1989: 378) suggested that poets strip familiarities from the world, and bring beauty, which is

the source of forms. Likewise Mondrian (Mondrian, Holtzman, & James, 1993: 16) asserts that the surface of things, or what the eye can see, can cause pleasure, yet beauty lies in ‘...their inner character,’ which is unseen but so vital that it ‘brings up life’.

Like Mondrian, painter Dekel sees an inner beauty, yet she sees it in the observed shapes, colours and lines, referring to the ‘topography of the face, and the lines of emotions’ (👁️👁️ para. 40). She (para. 21) asserts, ‘Each time I see a person I can see something which is... [an] exploration of another aspect that I... do not know about, and is beautiful’. Dekel seems to focus on the visible shapes of people’s faces, and see the beauty in them. Others, such as Chan see beauty through nature. Chan (👁️👁️ paras. 2, 6) asserts, ‘I see the beauty of nature in flowers, and I am amazed by their perfection and their symmetry’. Chan adds that this beauty is not merely the visible shapes of flowers but rather that the ‘...impermanence of the flower is... beautiful...’

This implies that artists appreciate beauty in the existence of the visible things as well as in their non-existence, the impermanence, as artist Gustav Metzger demonstrated. In the early 1960s Metzger developed the Auto-destructive art, where he would ‘paint’ with acid onto sheets of nylons, thereby letting the sheets be consumed (fig. 76). Metzger (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 523) asserts that Auto-destructive art is concerned with beauty; with what do we do after things fade away.



Figure 76: Recreation of First Public Demonstration of Auto-Destructive Art 1960, remade 2004.  
Image source: <http://www.tate.org.uk>

In the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006; [DVD](#); fig. 77) I use the same symbolism from a different perspective. Images of flowers in the film unfold into existence and then fade

away. This symbolism was brought as an illustration of moments of appreciation to life, where the artist's heart 'unfolds' and opens up to receive the beauty of life.



Figure 77: Still image from the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006).

A feedback on the film (👁️) explains:

‘The symbolic of flowers is rejuvenation. As much as the flower is delicate and its life is short, it insists to appear in the next season, year after year. Trees also die, but flowers die much faster than trees. Flowers are beautiful and produce scent, and they reappear year after year, fresh and gentle, sending calmness to their surrounding.’

Moments of appreciation of beauty seem to have such a strong presence, to the extent that they can actually challenge one's own belief system, as Corkish (👁️ para. 28) demonstrates:

‘I was walking on Formby sand dunes when a flight of geese went past; perfect formation, about a hundred of them, the sun just tipping the edge of the sea, not a sound except the waves moving and no one in the world except me... it just filled my lungs; washed over me like an emotional tsunami. Then, for a split second, I could almost believe in a God and was saddened because my brain won't allow me to.’

Corkish's experience suggests that his 'emotional tsunami' seems to overcome his thinking mind, which 'won't allow' him to believe in what he calls God. For Corkish, this realisation happens for 'a split second', after which his mind seems to take control

over his intense emotions. Corkish exemplified what the psychologist Abraham Maslow (1994: 75-77) termed Peak-experiences. In such moments, Maslow (1994: 28) explains, there is a shift in the attention of the person, an attention widening.

I have examined the notion of attention widening through a street-action art work, which was made into the film *What is Love?* (2007; *DVD*). I went to city centres in London, Portsmouth and Southampton, during weekend rush hours, and holding a small camera in my hands I randomly approached people who passed by and asked them the question, ‘What is love?’ (figs. 78–81).



Figure 78: Production still from the film *What is Love?* (2007)



Figure 79: Production still from the film *What is Love?* (2007)



Figure 80: Production still from the film *What is Love?* (2007)



Figure 81: Production still from the film *What is Love?* (2007)

I did not attempt to invite people for a relaxed meeting of ‘tea and cake’ so to speak, but rather to ‘snatch’ people’s responses on the street, whilst they are not ready and cannot contemplate a deep reasoning. I wanted to see how people respond immediately to an immediate question. It is said that people ‘fall in love’, not

‘cautiously and slowly walking into love’, and in that respect I attempted to make people fall into their answers.

The choice of city’s shopping centres during rush hours was deliberate. In these places people are usually engaged with shopping, with buying things, and not with contemplating feelings. So people were not in a prepared state for the question. Moreover, I was very much aware of the phenomenon of sales persons approaching people in shopping centres, trying to sell something. I knew that many people would think of me as a sales person, which was an advantage in my experiment, because it meant that people would be completely surprised by my question. In that way I attempted to remove people from their comfort zone of ‘being ready’ for this experiment, and thus allow them to provide authentic responses. The responses could evidence how people see life, and how much value and thought they give to natural things in life, such as love. Responses also evidenced how people feel regarding being challenged.

In total 390 people were approached during the five days of the experiment (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2007). I have received 137 verbal responses, and another 60 body physical responses where people made a gesture as they passed me but did not say anything. Also, an additional 200 people ignored me completely, probably assuming that I wanted to sell them something.

In the editing process of the footage for the film I have kept this balance, to include those who answered and those who said that they do not know or do not wish to engage in conversation.

The answers ranged from affirming the importance of love (‘We cannot live without love. Love is very essential’) to a complete sense of unappreciation (‘I believe it is just merely a chemical thing’.) The answers are mostly short, since most people did not stop to answer, but rather were replying as they were walking about. Therefore it is possible for me to bring responses in full here, organised under dates and locations. Surprisingly, most people say that they don’t know or cannot explain what love is.

*What is love? 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007, Southampton, outside the Art House:*

I will have to think about that...  
I wouldn’t know what love is.

For me, it's I love you. Blast the world with love.  
I don't know...  
Love is ... I don't know.  
A good question.  
It's very embracing question... We cannot live  
without love. Love is very essential.  
No. Good question.  
I have no idea.  
I don't really know what love is.  
I don't know.  
That is a difficult one.  
The bond between a man and a woman.  
Sorry, we are in a hurry.  
I think it is wonderful. Sorry, we are in a hurry.  
Oh man, I ain't got time to do it.  
Love is trust.  
That's really random...  
Love can change oneself. It's hard to describe.  
Hello...  
Good question...  
Everything...  
Oh, no...  
No...  
I am quite in a hurry, so I will tell you some other  
time.  
Love? to respect one another.  
No...  
Passion...  
I am sorry, no time.  
I believe it is just merely chemical thing.  
When your heart going boom boom boom.  
I suppose two people coming together and enjoying  
their company.  
Harmonious integrity.  
That's a really hard question... Passion, isn't it?  
I don't know.  
No response.  
Thank you...  
Sorry... sorry...  
I don't know  
Who knows?  
Don't know.  
I wouldn't know at the moment man, I just got  
dumped by the girl I love!  
That's a silly question really, I feel like Prince  
Charles...  
I don't know, I am single.  
Sorry, I am busy.  
No...  
No understand.  
I am twenty-one, so I wouldn't know.

Love is ... love.  
A feeling that someone can give you.  
Sorry, I am too busy.  
No.  
I ain't got time, sorry pal.  
I have no idea.  
Crazy...  
I am not into love...  
Love... it is one word.  
Busy, thank you.  
Love is the ultimate.

*What is love? 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2007, Southampton city centre:*

I don't know  
Find out yourself.  
No effect.  
It's giving of yourself.  
Don't really know right now.  
We are in a hurry... we are just friends.  
No thank you.  
No.  
No.  
No, thank you.  
I don't know.  
When two people want to share things together.  
What is love...  
Something that you can't easily define.  
You have to find it...  
No.  
No.  
No.  
Wouldn't know.  
No.  
Sorry man.  
Thank you.  
I got no clue.  
Love is the key to the universe.

*What is love? 5<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Portsmouth city centre:*

Oh... Lots of things.  
Emotion, I don't know, it something you cannot say  
really.  
I talk to you later.  
I don't know, I will have to think about that.  
Sorry I am too busy.

*What is love? 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007, London:*

I have to go to work, thank you...  
Ah... No... I don't know.  
Ah... It means a lot of things, pal.  
No.  
No.  
Pardon? Beautiful thing on the planet  
I don't know.  
I don't know.  
Too important for me.  
Thank you.  
Love? Never heard of it.  
No, thank you.  
Wouldn't know.  
Sorry.  
No, thank you.  
It's emotion.  
No.  
Oh, no, sorry.  
No...  
Sorry but...  
Love? Smile, wonderful, be happy.  
No.  
...got to do with it?  
Sorry... to be yourself.  
Sorry...  
Sorry.  
Ah...

*What is love? 9<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Southampton city centre:*

Ahm... Just a feeling, I guess it is important.  
Sorry... I have no idea.  
Life.  
Who knows?  
No, thank you.  
Self sacrifice.  
No, sorry.  
No.  
Another time.  
I am all right, mate.  
I don't know.  
Fantastic feeling you want to share.  
Liking a person.  
Caring for somebody else I suppose.  
No.  
It's just something that happens, isn't it?  
No... I am not from here.



One may argue that the question ‘what is love?’ is a difficult one to answer without deep contemplation. Moreover, as one feedback (👁️) I received on the final film suggests, there might be an issue with using words to describe a state of emotion:

‘The question what is love, could itself frame the type of responses received. The question is formulated using language, concepts and in this way shapes the communication of love. The word love is a concept, the act of love, or experience of love is a state of being. Yet on one level we still need language to describe that state of being to one another.’

Another feedback (👁️) acknowledged that, ‘It is a very overloaded question really...’ but argued that even if the question is overloaded still ‘...the best responses were from people who didn’t know, or who couldn’t answer’.

The automatic art and poetry experiments undertaken by the Surrealist art movement, offer some examples for the way that people operate on the basis of immediate responses. According to the Surrealist movement, people are perfectly able to give words or images to their innermost feelings through instantaneous experiences. This is demonstrated with the art they produced. Likewise, Derrida’s account on the way that he finds himself writing indicates some form of automatism. Derrida (1993: 3) explains, ‘...I find myself writing without seeing. Not with my eyes closed, to be sure, but open and disorientated in the night’. Yeats goes even further, arguing (1966: 103) that instantaneous experiences are not just a link to inner feeling, but rather a tool that provide the most authentic way to describe emotions, since emotions are not filtered or edited on the way. My experiment proves that this is indeed possible, as can be seen in the responses from some people who were perfectly able to describe love and reflect its meanings, although being asked such an instantaneous and challenging question. For example, the following responses I received: ‘Love is trust,’ ‘Love can change oneself,’ and ‘Love? Smile, wonderful, be happy’.

Poet Myra Schneider (👁️ para. 17) agrees that spontaneous responses may create the best link to inner emotions. She explains:

‘I use a flow-writing technique. Flow-writing means writing what comes to your head without planning. Our education system teaches us to plan before we

write, and put it down only after you sort out what it means. In flow-writing you let everything come in.'

Schneider asserts that the flow-writing technique enables one to open up and articulate inner feelings. More so, she sees this form as a natural basic way of communication, which apparently is repressed by our education system. In that respect, the form of an immediate question, as I have used, may not be seen as a challenging one, but rather as a natural way to engage in communication. More so, the way to allow for flow-writing, as she (🖱️ 👁️ para. 17) describes it, is by taking a 'condensed' or precise starting point, choosing a specific phrase or colour:

'It is difficult to let go of the consciousness, so you have to take a starting point, a sentence, a colour, a phrase. You have to let go and stop planning. You can't 'try to let go' but rather you try to see what words are coming up. If you do try to let go, you will then be holding it, and that will be artificial. So, you try to see what words are coming instead of what words you want to direct. What is coming from underneath, from the unconscious, and flowing to the surface.'

In that way, the phrase 'what is love?' can be seen as an effective starting point to enable people to open up, and not as a challenging question that inhibits people from responding. As one feedback on the film asserts: 'it struck me as a nice ice breaker video into a group discussion'.

A year and a half after completing this film I was approached by a production company from Canada, who followed a similar experiment, made into their film *What is Love Toronto?* (2008). In their film, a large canvas with the text 'What is Love?' was placed in the middle of the street, and people were invited to 'step in' and reflect on the question in front of the camera (fig. 82).



Figure 82: Still Image from the film *What is Love Toronto?* (2008). Image source: [www.whatislovetoronto.com](http://www.whatislovetoronto.com)

In this film people's responses were much more articulated than in my film. People discussed varieties or types of love, such as love between a man and a woman, love between mother and a daughter, sister and brother, the love of religious figures, and the love of people to their pets. In my experience on the other hand no one refers to types of love, but people were more focused directly on the question, 'what is love'.

In the Toronto experiment all the people asked seem to agree to participate, as there was no indication that there were people who refused to answer the question, or ignored it, as noted in my experiment.

However, although the Toronto people were given the time to reflect on the question, they did not seem to come up with more profound or deeper answers than the people did in my film. The same motifs of communication, respect and sharing were repeated in both films. This suggests that allowing people to reflect and think before they reply may not necessarily bring people to a better understanding or articulation of their emotions.

Recently, I thought of a way to examine this assumption by making a new film which will include re-editing of both footages – my work and the Toronto's. In that way we will be able to examine closely how people react and respond to different modes of engaging with them. The Toronto production company replied that they are very interested in this idea, and it might come to fruition in the future.

The purpose of my film was to provide a space in which we may widen our awareness, by providing an actual tool for personal development. With this experiment I was not attempting to indicate on a so-called important question (what is

love?) but rather to create the conditions in which people can observe themselves as they are trying to find the words to express what they feel, and see how much they appreciate life and pay attention to it. Most people could not find the words, yet the experience must have helped them to notice things better, at least to notice that there are still things in life which are so essential yet are so hard to articulate. In that way I wished to bring about the ‘...vital discursive space where the unthinkable can be thought and expressed,’ as Bickers (👁️ para. 10) has already noted above in regard to the way artists work.

Feedback from the audience suggests that it is indeed possible to create through art a discursive space that enables people the opportunity to think about themselves. Most feedback that I received from viewers who watched the film included the viewer’s own answers to the question, which implies that the film engaged them in the same way that it engaged the participants in the streets. ‘For me,’ one feedback says, ‘love is the reason to live, Love is hope’. Another feedback says: “‘Love Reveals When Oneself Vanishes’”.

The underlying message of appreciation and beauty of life was summarised in the last seconds of the film. In those seconds, I quoted one word from few positive responses that people shared with me, and included graphic images of flowers with the quotations (figs. 83-85). This was done because I am not trying only to ‘discuss’ things in my art but also to create tools that allow for communication. The ‘summary’ in the last seconds was created as a manifestation of beauty, evidencing that some people see the positive and the beauty, even if we challenge them with a direct surprising question in the middle of the street. In that way I hope to give the viewers a positive sense on other people. It is my hope that next time the viewers who watched the film go out shopping that they would already have an image in their mind of people in the street that have a positive outlook on life, just like those people they saw in my film. The power of art, in that respect, is to leave the audience with an actual tool for bettering their perspective on life.



Figure 83: Still from the film *What is Love?* (2007).



Figure 84: Still from *What is Love?* (2007).



Figure 85: Still from *What is Love?* (2007).

The way that artists view reality moves from looking and into experiencing, which provides artists with a sense of perception of beauty. With beauty observed artists seem to appreciate reality.

Appreciation is an act in which the artist allows for a unique or individual characteristic in his or her personality to express itself, opening a door through which the external merges with the internal.

## 7.2. Space

With a sense of appreciation of the environment, artists allow the observed reality with its beauty to form a part of the artist's own personality. The experienced reality becomes a space, an inner context of the external environment, which is felt within.

### *Sound / body / inner space / silence*

Wassily Kandinsky made use of his musical training in his paintings. He (1972: 40) asserts that unlike images, sounds do not represent natural phenomena, but rather express what he calls the artist's soul, and create an 'autonomous life' of its own. On the other hand, painting is an act based on a visual object, imitating nature or abstracting forms of nature. Music is 'an objective language', as artist Victor Pasmore (Bickers & Wilson, 2007: 352) adds.

However, I do not see Kandinsky's 'autonomous life' of music as something created in the musical composition, but rather expressed through it, as if it were existing there beforehand. Chanting artist Russell Jenkins (🎧👁️ paras. 2, 6) suggests that he has a feeling of the existence of a sound coming from within him, saying, 'I have a hearing of an Aum...' and 'I hear inside'. Jenkins explains that this sound is independent of him to the effect that it is visible: 'It is like you look at it and you think, 'Oh, it's a star that I can pluck out of the sky'' (para. 2). In that respect, sounds seem to be impressed on the artist and present themselves to the artist. The forms in which sounds present themselves can vary depending on the artist's skill. In the case of Jenkins, he (para. 4) would aim '...to replicate it through [his] voice,' while Dekel (🎧👁️ paras. 34) asserts that sounds come as a guide, advising her on the making of her works.

Robert Morris created in 1961 a work whose title is self explanatory: *Box With The Sound of Its Own Making* (fig. 86). The sound of making the box was recorded on tape which was then played and presented as part of the finished box. Suggesting that the act of making is also the result of the work has shifted sounds in time. The moving of sound in time joins the moving of sound in space, as Warner explains. Warner (2006: 17) says that with the invention of the radio, telephone and television that sound has begun to be displaced in space, as voices were now being moved through the air. I should mention here the use of the Internet to mobile sounds.

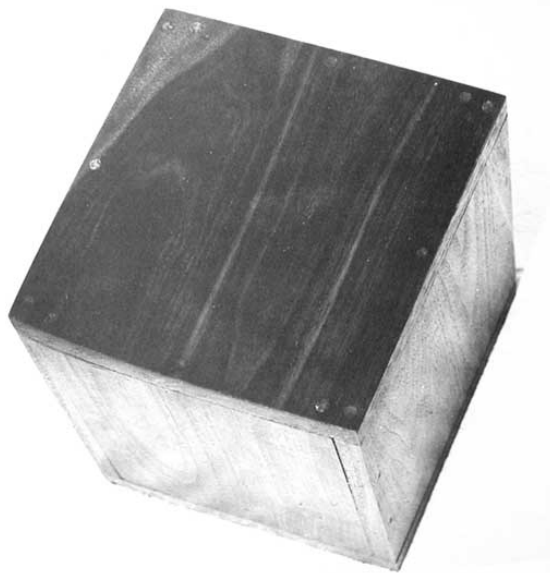


Figure 86: Robert Morris, Box With The Sound of Its Own Making (1961, walnut box, speaker, tape recording of the sound of making the box.) Image source: [http://www.lichtensteiger.de/box\\_with.html](http://www.lichtensteiger.de/box_with.html)

Stevenson adds to the understanding of the impact of sound, approaching it from a cultural historical view: ‘If I couldn’t overhear the rhythms and sounds established by the long, varied tradition of English poetry...’ Stevenson (🔊👁️ para. 15) says, ‘...I would not be able to hear what I myself have to say’. The cultural context of sound, according to Stevenson, enables one to hear oneself.

But, I noted that hearing oneself while making art indicates something else than the prevailing notion of hearing one’s own thoughts. Schneider (🔊👁️ para. 9) explains the technique ‘image exploration’ that she uses for writing. Through a semi-meditative technique she seems to have ‘...heard a sound, and it was of my father... I was very shocked because my father was dead’ (para. 10). This inner voice presented itself in a manner that Schneider could not produce at will – the sound of the voice of her father who had passed away years before. Schneider’s description challenges the prevailing assumption that artists ‘imagine things’ that do not truly exist. Even if Schneider did ‘imagine’ this voice, one should ask how did she produce the sound of the voice of her father? It is assumed that when one thinks, that one hears one’s own thoughts in one’s own voice, not in another’s.

Jung describes his own experiments with the inner hearing of voices in a different sound than his. He (1963: 176-177) says that figures would appear in his visions and he would ‘talk to them’. In one of his visions he heard a woman’s voice within him, which asserted that his writing down of his fantasies is an art. If this fantasy was

merely fictional then one should wonder how did Jung's mind produce the sound of a voice of a woman. And if imagining has that ability to re-produce someone else's voice in our mind, then how can we be assured that the thinking mind does not do the same, producing someone else's thoughts in our own voice in our mind?

It follows that the sound of one's own voice may be presented to one by someone else altogether, as I have noted in one of my dreams. Just before waking up one morning, I heard someone calling up my name in my own voice. The calling came from outside of me, as if someone was standing in front of me and calling me, yet it was in my own voice, and so it felt as if that someone was at the same time myself. Dreams seem to allow one to experience what Jung (1963: 45) calls 'two different persons,' which inspired one of the images in my photography, poetry and graphic design project *Petals of Trust* (2007) (fig.87). The most important 'feedback' I received on this project was that it was exhibited in Southampton and was purchased.



Figure 87: An image from *Petals of Trust* (2007, photography, poetry, graphic design, A3 poster).

Artistic experiences of being inspired through words come to artists through different sounds – male, female – which feel as if they are separated from the person, and not created by himself or herself. Wilmer (👁️ para. 42) reminds us that while words are carried out through sounds, that the sound of words '...is independent of what they signify'. Sound seems to have a different layer to the words that they carry. Wilmer



continues, ‘Of course the sound tends to get associated... with the significance. Nevertheless, the sound is independent.’

In that respect I consider sound as a primal form of expression that is expressed before words or image are realised. Sounds have a direct resonance to emotions, with high sounds corresponding to happy emotions, and low sounds usually corresponding to sad emotions. In the same way that one can feel pressure through touch, one feels emotion through sound. Sound in that respect is the language of the senses which is experienced instead of being read in a written form. It creates events as they are felt rather than perceived logically. Jenkins exemplifies this argument in regards to his inner hearing of sounds and his chanting. He (👁️👁️ paras. 7) says:

‘...the reason I cannot fully express what I hear is because there is even a higher sound than the one I hear. The original sound is still in a process; it is still being produced. Far from it being a one-off sound that is just created, it is a sound in progress, and it is the creating of everything else out of it. A kind of a source from which sounds are created. And it has not yet been finished being ‘sounded’, so it’s hard to fully re-produce it in chanting.’

I have experimented with the differences that sounds can have on audiences, throughout my films, incorporating different tonalities to express different modes. In *Quantum Words* (2006; [DVD](#)) I have incorporated sounds of sea waves, chanting in Hebrew and sounds that represent movements of lights. I have also included subtle singings, which were recorded very close to the microphone. For *Confessions of an Angel* (2008; [DVD](#)) I have recorded the whole narration in an almost whispering sound, again very close to the microphone, giving the feeling of something ‘very intimate’ and a ‘brevity of the piece,’ to quote from two separate feedback (👁️👁️). In that way, sound can be seen as an essence that does not only move in space, but rather creates spaces. Intimate sounds seem to provide viewers with a feeling that someone is very near, as if the space of the room, in which they watch the film, becomes smaller. The inner space is altered, becoming flexible in that way.

I have explored the notion of inner space in the film *A Fallen Angel* (2008; [DVD](#)). For the making of this film I have shared an early experience I had at the age of sixteen. Students from a Playback Theatre took upon themselves to re-enact my story, without

any preparation, in front of audiences, as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Arts in Society Conference, at Kassel University, Germany. By listening to my story and re-enacting it in the room, my inner space felt as if it was internalised within the actors, and then externalised by them in a new form (figs. 88-89).



Figure 88: Still image from *A Fallen Angel* (2008).



Figure 89: Still image from *A Fallen Angel* (2008).

I have told my story using these words:

‘I was walking in one of the religious cities in Israel, I am non religion person, amidst these many Jewish religious... I am not religious at all. And then God told me, ‘Here I am!’ in the middle of the street... when I was sixteen. He told me, ‘Here I am,’ so I looked around me and I could not see him. I asked him, ‘Where are you?’ And he told me, ‘You shall write poetry, that is where I shall be’ (from *A Fallen Angel*, 2008).

And the group performed it, using these words:

‘You begin life, inside this really dark dark tunnel. You are walking, amidst this crowd of all these people. Until you begin to listen just a little bit. You begin focusing on the small words; small words of a higher power. You try so hard, you try to understand what they tell you. Write, write. But who is talking to me now? You have a kind of a scared chill emotion. This, this power, this being has told you to...  
You do exactly what you are told. You do what comes from the heart, and you release what’s inside, on this paper.  
So you begin to write, you begin to write, until you have this mountain of... It’s Him! You see that being right in front of you.  
I see,

I understand,  
And I thank you!' (from *A Fallen Angel*, 2008).

In a conversation after the performance (24<sup>th</sup> August 2007) the group explained that they are not just listening to the words that are spoken, but also to the way in which the person 'carries' his or her words:

'I am listening to your words, but really looking to see if you are nervous a bit, thinking, thrilled? These are characteristics and emotions that you don't realise that you are expressing. They are involuntary, I think that this is what formulates what we take and perform on the stage.'

The effect that the body has in this work seems stronger than the story itself. The actors are relating to the inner space of the person, and then they perform it using their own bodies. This is evident in the explanation given by the group's director:

'It is an instinct thing, which we cannot analyse. Acting techniques... particularly in America, where acting methods are used by spending a lot of time analysing your character, doing your substitution work. [However] here you have to take instant decisions based purely on your senses, on your five senses, and whatever that other sense is. So instant empathy has to happen. With your stories, we then tell our own stories and act them, so we can act freely.'

With no preparation before the performance, the five senses and 'that other sense' of the actors are reaching to the five senses of the speaker, and not just to what the speaker says. Through empathy the actors are gaining access to the speaker's inner space. This is an almost automatic-performance, where the actors are guided by the knowledge of their own bodies. That knowledge came from the body of the speaker.

In this experiment I have told the story of a previous experience, and it could be said that the experience was shifted in time, from the past to my memory and to my body and from there to the actors' bodies. In a way, this project imitates the spontaneity of *What is Love?* to the extent that the human body reacts instantaneously. My story, as retold by the actors while they performed it, was an expression of the body's movement, and not its guide. This can be observed in the film where the movements

of the actors seem to lead the words that they say, as if movement comes half a second before their speech does.

The notion of inner spaces within the body was explored in a different project that I have created, *Waterised Words* (2007). For this installation I poured Evian drinking water into three kitchen bowls. Under each bowl I had printed one of the following words: Love, Calmness, or Fear, which could be read by looking into the bowl (fig. 90). I also included the same words on the installation table (fig. 91), and then invited the audience to drink the water with their ‘embedded’ words and to tell me the ‘taste’ of the words (figs. 92-95).



Figure 90: Installation *Waterised Words* (2007, water, kitchen bowls, printed text, pebble.)



Figure 91: Installation *Waterised Words* (2007, water, kitchen bowls, printed text, pebble.)



Figure 92: Installation *Waterised Words* (2007, water, kitchen bowls, printed text, pebble.)



Figure 93: Installation *Waterised Words* (2007, water, kitchen bowls, printed text, pebble.)



Figure 94: Installation *Waterised Words* (2007, water, kitchen bowls, printed text, pebble.)



Figure 95: Installation *Waterised Words* (2007, water, kitchen bowls, printed text, pebble.)

I chose the words love and fear based on Walsch's notion that these two are opposites. Walsch (1997: 24) asserts that the opposite of love is not hate, but rather fear. To this I added a third word, calmness, which I considered to have an intermediate value between the other two. In that way I expressed the full spectrum of human emotion, using three words.

The audience were advised that the water is plain Evian drinking water, and there is no 'trick' involved intended to fool them. I tested the water in front of the audience to demonstrate this. The purpose of this work was to see how people would respond to the notion of 'drinking words'; of taking words in, instead of the normal forms of communication where people speak words, i.e. taking words out. In that way I explored what happens to words whilst they are 'inside'.

I was also attempting to see how can we relate to the 'obvious' tools of communication, words in this case, in a challenging way that will tell us something

new about ourselves. The idea of attaching a taste to words was meant to leave a physical sensation with the audience, a sensual memory to words, instead of only an intellectual one.

Water was in the bowls in a way that produced stillness, quietness, as if saying nothing. This was in contrary to the spoken or read word in the bowls, underneath the water, which produced sound. In that way I was trying to remove the sound of words, as if to absorb the word's sound by the water, and focus instead on the sense impression that the experiment produced. Water is a symbol for sustainability as the human body must have water to survive. Words placed within water give the impression of being crucial to one's existence.

People's responses were mainly of amusement, with some reporting actually experiencing a different taste to the various waters (although all the water came from the same bottle):

- \* [tries Fear]: 'There is an element of earthiness about it.'
- \* [tries Love]: 'It is salty I think.'
- \* [first tries Calmness then tries Fear]: 'No difference... but I felt calm as I was drinking the Calmness water...'
- \* 'Can I mix Love and Fear?'
- \* 'Very different taste to all of them. I noticed that the one cancels the taste of the other.'
- \* 'Can I have a mix of Calmness and Fear?'
- \* 'Did anybody actually want to test Fear?' / Gil: 'Yes, they say it is not that bad...would you like to try Fear?' / 'No...thank you.'
- \* [tries Love]: 'It tastes very clear...'
- \* [tries Love]: 'It's very funny...'
- \* 'I know what Fear tastes like... and I know what Love tastes like... Give me some Calmness...'  
[tries Calmness]: 'Flavourless... Quite flavourless. See, I think Calmness is less salty than Fear. It is softer, as if there is round edges on the molecules, as oppose to spiky edges.'

\* 'I find from all this that words are much bigger; they have deeper meanings. Even if one word is a word it has a few meanings to it.'

The purpose of this project was not to gain evidence of 'deep' psychological influences, but rather to challenge people, raise questions, and most importantly to give people a tool to better understand themselves. After this project I was approached by a reader from the Psychology school, suggesting we collaborate on a new project where we could test people's responses through a test group and a questionnaire that he offered to design. While I did like his suggestion, we did not collaborate in the end since my attempt was to indicate, challenge, inspire, and provide tools – and not to test people. I was happy with the challenging element that my work achieved. However, I would love to remake this installation on a larger scale, based on the skills I have gained since to reach more people.

With this work I have represented the notion of an inner voice, which artists report as being so crucial for guiding their creative impulse. My 'job' was to visualise this inner voice, through words, forms and colours, and still be reminded that it is an inner one.

For me it is natural to think that artists reporting on an inner voice are given the choice of listening to this voice or ignoring it. If the artist chooses to listen to this voice, he or she is then required to listen to something that is inside and not outside, since that voice is argued to come from within. The artist must exert a sense of silence that allows listening, i.e. drawing oneself's attention inward. The act of listening is by definition characterised with an inwards drawing, an absorption of sounds from without and to within. Yet, in the case of an inner voice, artists cannot absorb an external voice, but rather have to absorb an internal one. This could be said to be a form of listening where the artist's 'inner ears' listen to a voice that comes from what I shall call a 'deeper within,' a place of silence and stillness.

Artist Anish Kapoor (Richards, 2004: 215) describes his momentous works as representing the space within us. Kapoor's installation work *Marsyas* (2002; figs. 96-99) at Tate Modern tries to occupy the large space by connecting the space's three parts with a large PVC membrane tube. The work is described as an exploration of 'metaphysical polarities: presence and absence, being and non-being...' (Tate Gallery, The Unilever Series: Anish Kapoor). Following this description I see the work as a



symbolic large-scale momentum exploring the duality of sound and silence, with its unique shape resembling large horns or speakers which multiply sounds, as well as large ears which absorb sounds.

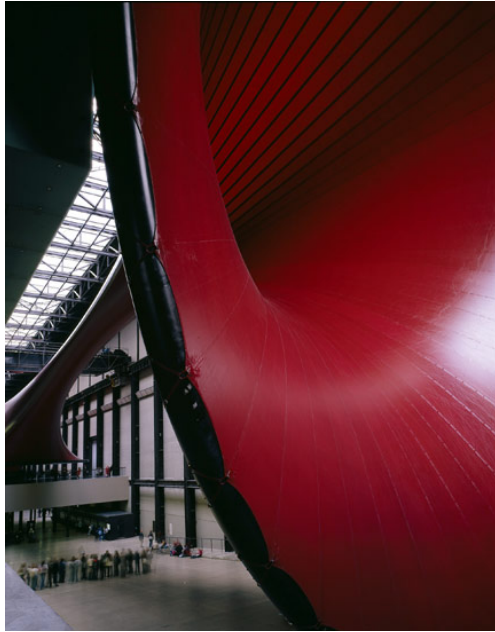


Figure 96: Anish Kapoor, *Marsyas* (2002, installation.) London, Tate Modern. Image source: <http://www.tate.org.uk>



Figure 97: Anish Kapoor, *Marsyas* (2002, installation.) London, Tate Modern. Image source: <http://www.tate.org.uk>



Figure 98: Anish Kapoor, *Marsyas* (2002, installation.) London, Tate Modern. Image source: <http://www.amazon.com>



Figure 99: Anish Kapoor, *Marsyas* (2002, installation.) London, Tate Modern. Image source: <http://www.tate.org.uk>



Large scale artefacts tend to amaze the viewer due to their size. The image that comes to my mind is of viewers standing at the bottom of this sculpture, raising their heads in silence and in amazement, trying to absorb the grandeur of the sculpture, as may be seen in the left bottom corner of fig. 96. The vacant area of the Tate gallery's previous Turbine Hall provides a space where sounds or silence will be multiplied. This can be seen symbolically as representing schools' national ceremonies or otherwise religious atonement ceremonies where horns are blown, producing loud sounds that stir great awe in the hearts of the spectators. Feelings of awe can be seen for their characteristic element of silence – one keeps silent by standing still and absorbing the loud sound of the horn. Kapoor's work manages, once again, to deal with metaphysical dualities of sound and silence, where the two are inseparable.

William Blake discusses moments of silence not in the experience of the viewer but rather in the experience of making art. Blake is quoted by Geoffrey Hartman (lecture at The British Academy, London, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2007) as saying that he 'speak[s] silence with my glimmering eyes'. According to Hartman, poets must preserve the belief that all voices are in nature, and are coming 'out of the silence'. Voices may indicate a form of communication with the artist, or at least a mode where information is transferred through sound and can be received by the artist. This form of communication is expressed by the portraits paintings of Melanie Chan. Chan (👁️👁️ para. 14) asserts that she 'prefer[s] to be quiet when painting; it is in the silence... that the communion with the flowers can take place'. For Chan the silence is an artistic tool to open up to inspiration, as well as a tool to facilitate a communion with her subject, in what she describes as 'non-verbal communication' (para. 28).

I would suggest the forms of silence as experienced by artists are different from silence as experienced normally. Artists seem to indicate that silence holds multiple forms of information, sounds as well as colours, as Kandinsky (1972) adds. Kandinsky refers to the silence as an impenetrable wall, which is represented in reality through the colour white. 'White,' Kandinsky explains:

'...has this harmony of silence, which works upon us... like many pauses in music that break temporarily the melody. It is not a dead silence, but one pregnant with possibilities. White has the appeal of the nothingness that is before birth, of the world in the ice age.'

Seeing silence in the colour white, Kandinsky explains that it is ‘pregnant with possibilities... that [are] before birth’. This description fits well with modern quantum physics theories suggesting an observation of space where everything seems to exist at once, before things follow a process of materialisation in which they become visible (Arntz, Chasse & Vicente, 2004: minute 18). It is rather clear why such theories are deemed by many colleagues as ‘poetry’ created by poets and not ‘science’ explored by scientists. Once one attempts to explain what Heidegger (Lemay & Pitts, 1994: 98) calls the mystery of life, the language then becomes poetic. However, Einstein and Infeld (1938: 310) clearly noted in their study of the growth of ideas from early concepts to Relativity and Quanta, that science itself is the creation of the human mind, with the mind’s freely invented ideas and concepts that determine how scientists perceive and interpret reality. If I could contribute to this dialogue I would suggest that science can be seen as the poetry of the mind, while art be seen as the poetry of the heart.

In the film *Quantum Words* (2006; [DVD](#)) I have incorporated moments of silence between scenes, where still images with written poems appear with no soundtrack (fig. 100), inspiring the viewer to read the text. While reading, the viewers hear what they read in their mind and in their own voice, as is the case when one reads text. In that way, the external image of silence triggers internal sounds in the viewers’ mind, in what may be called a ‘singing silence’.



Figure 100: Still image from the film *Quantum Words* (2006).

A reverse experiment on silence in art was carried out through my film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006; *DVD*), where the film's images were interwoven with scenes of poetry that was not written but rather spoken by myself and by the poet Maggie Sawkins. Each poem was cited twice, once by myself (for example, fig. 101) and then again by Sawkins (fig. 102). While *Quantum Words* generated silence that was completed by the inner sound of the viewer's thought, *Unfolding Hearts* worked on generating sound in the film, which seems to generate silence within the viewer and a drifting feeling, as feedback (👁️) suggested: 'It's like being hypnotised slightly'; 'It touches all senses, and relaxes. I have a feeling of falling from a high place on to a carpet of feather...' It can be argued that the tonality of reading the poems produced the feelings of stillness in the viewers. The visual poetry in a setting of unfolding flowers, followed by quiet voices and a calming soundtrack, offer the viewers with a glimpse into what may be called a collective-silence. Collective-silence is the silence experienced by the viewer together with experiencing glimpses into the artist's mind, where creative silence operates.



Figure 101: Still image from the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006).



Figure 102: Still image from the film *Unfolding Hearts* (2006).

The inner sounds that inspire artists are felt as if they are coming from beyond the capacity of the imagination to produce sounds in the mind. Sounds are felt as a vehicle for an independent source. With these feelings, artists draw inwards into a deeper listening, that transcends the listening to one's imagination, and reaches a listening to a collective self that is accessed through silence. In this state a two-way form of communication is enabled.

## **Summary of chapter 7**

The act of application involves experiencing reality in a way that sharpens the sense of perception of beauty. With the experience of beauty comes appreciation to life, which opens a door for a communication with sources of creativity that are felt beyond the artist's psyche.

## **8. Conclusion of body chapters 5–7**

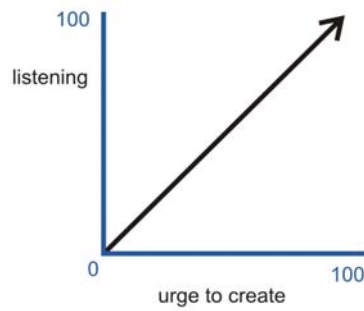
Observing the process of creating art works for this research, as well as reflecting on artists in the interviews I conducted, bring me to the conclusion that the stages of inspiration is an integral part of making art, and not an external part. Creativity manifests itself within reality, and in order to access it one needs to pay attention to the initial stages of the process where the artists are triggered to create.

Artists that I interviewed demonstrated a straight forward approach to life which consists of embracing rather than dividing. By embracing artists become sensitive to the minute stimulus or messages that are contained within the mundane and simple aspects of life. Instead of trying to make sense of those, artists open up to experience, and in that act they perceive beauty that inspires them to create and which delivers to them insights.

The documentations of my own creative processes, as well as making artworks and engaging with audiences, affirm this mode of artistic approach to life and demonstrate that art work can be employed as a useful tool that contains messages, emotional as well as intellectual. These conclusions suggest the need to learn to direct one's attention to the initial stages in which the process of creativity is instigated.

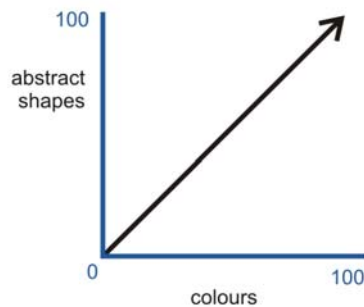
I conclude that inspiration is an integral part of an inner process of making art while it is applied. With regard to gaining validation to this conclusion, I tested it by conducting an art workshop, hence contextualising this conclusion not just with artists but with non-artists as well. For the workshop I have tested the operational qualities or skills I observed in this research by which artists demonstrated opening up to creativity. The skills are summarised as follows:

Chapter 5 – Stimulation: the act of listening and urge to create. The more the artist listens the more he or she has a growing urge to create (illustrated in graph 2).



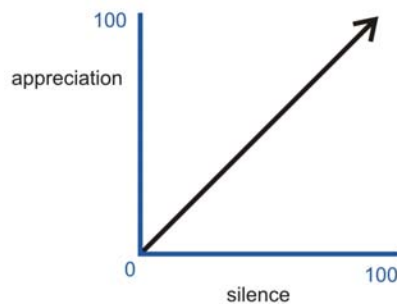
Graph 2: Listening vs urge to create.

Chapter 6 – Internalisation: abstract shapes and colours. The more the artists are aware of an inner idea the more it will be perceived through abstract shapes, and the more the artists will try to illustrate this with intense colours (illustrated in graph 3).



Graph 3: Abstract shapes vs intense colours.

Chapter 7 – Application: appreciation and silence. The more artists appreciate life the more inner silence presents itself, allowing a form of inner communication with creative forces (illustrated in graph 4).



Graph 4: Appreciation vs silence.

These parameters of listening, images, colours, and urge to create were tested through the art workshop experiment, as described in the following chapter.

## **9. Testing the conclusion in practice – a participatory art workshop experiment**

### **‘The Collective Hearts’**

In order to examine how the thesis findings are applicable in practice, I created and facilitated an art participatory workshop. My purpose was to examine in practice how we can facilitate a better awareness for people to their own inner initial stages in which they are inspired to create. This experiment also tested the notion that people do have such inner stages in which they come to be inspired, albeit many people’s argument that they are not creative (all participants who took part in this experiment argued that they are not creative).

In this experiment I have guided participants through a story telling into a greater awareness of their stages of inspiration, and asked them to create images or words based on their inner observations. The event was documented, and highlights of the footage was made into the video *The Collective Hearts* (2008; [DVD](#)).

#### ***Practical preparations***

The *Art House* gallery/café in Southampton was chosen as the venue, as it is conveniently located in the city centre, it offered to advertise the event on its mailing list, and it provided cold and hot drinks, as well as charging me the most reasonable price for use of the space.

The workshop was open to all – artists and non-artists. I have designed an invitation poster, and posted it online as well as in locations across the city.

I have prepared an artistic guided meditation focusing on three stages of the creative process. The guidance was simple in its structure, based on the conclusions from my thesis. I have used humour, storytelling, and short performance.

Across the space, I placed two video cameras that recorded and documented the event. One camera focused on the participants, the other on me as the facilitator. Participants were aware of the cameras; however, I placed the cameras on bookshelves so that they would not be prominent.

Participants were notified that the event was documented as part of this research, and they signed a release form giving permission for use of the material (👁️). Feedback and resulting art works were collected (👁️).

Participants were given various types of papers, acrylics, pastels, crayons, coloured pencils, scissors and glue. The tables were arranged in a semi-circle, facing me. In this way I ‘completed’ the other half to make a full circle.

I designed the event for five to ten people, and eight people arrived. I had no control over who would arrive or how many people. Of the eight people I had not know six; I knew one person well; and I had met one person before but did not know much about him.

### ***The structure of the guidance***

I designed a guided ‘journey’ focusing on three main themes that I had covered in my research and wanted to examine with the participants: inner collective-unconscious, internal personality, and external influence. I have reversed the process and started from the external and then drawing inward to the internal, following Descartes’ advice. Descartes ([1630-1701] 1972: 71) asserts that it is easier for people to know the external observed reality than their own inner self, even though the inner self is the thing that observes the external reality.

The three steps were divided into external influences (‘place’), internal influences (‘centre of the place’), and a collective-self (a ‘gift’ given to participants by someone). The first step, external place, was still portrayed as a physical place that exists, yet which exists within the participant, not outside them. This drew from my research focus on the inner process of creativity in the mind of the artist, and not on actual physical external places (‘site’).

For that reason I asked participants to close their eyes, and to listen to my guidance in three steps:

1. Stage ‘place’ – finding a creative place within. I suggested that the place could be an image, a sense, a feeling, a memory, a ‘knowing’, or a thought.
2. Stage ‘centre’ – acknowledging a personal point within the place, a core of the individuality.



3. Stage ‘gift’ – ‘pulling up’ or ‘dropping through’ the centre, and accepting a message, or a gift, that was awaiting them there and which was given or left by someone/something apart from the participants.

After each stage I asked participants to slowly open their eyes, and write/draw what they saw.

### ***Event***

As participants were arriving they all apologised for ‘not being creative’, and suggested that they ‘do not engage much in writing and definitely cannot draw’.

The event started with a short introduction of its purpose, placing it in the context of my PhD research. I presented some formal theories regarding the processes of creativity and the role of inspiration in art making. I then remained in a ‘formal mode’ and discussed my experience of being inspired to create this workshop by an angel:

‘A few days ago I was speaking to my Angel... we had a lovely chat me and my Angel, we were sitting in my room... we had coffee. [And] he told me, ‘You shall make a workshop. You shall invite people, and you shall make an experiment’. An experiment in which we will all draw into our own, what we call, sources of creativity. We will draw inside... through simple steps that I will guide you, and we will see which gifts lie within, because it is not only the ‘external’ where we all meet; it is also the ‘internal’ where we all meet’ (from *The Collective Hearts*, 2008)

Participant’s facial expressions in response to this ‘formal’ description of communication with an angel indicated that they perceived this as humorous (see fig. 103). Using humour and still being serious regarding what I say, have managed to demonstrate that I am myself open to inner sources of inspiration, without the need to ‘prove’ my opinion to others through a serious argument. The participants’ response to this shows that humour can allow the facilitator to say what he or her experienced and want to communicate, while letting participants to decide if they accept the message or not – without the need to reject anything which may sound different or surprising.



Figure 103: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)

By asserting that it is 'not only the 'external' where we all meet; it is also the 'internal' where we all meet', I have raised the idea that by drawing inward we can start to look at the forces of inspiration that call upon us to create.

Bachelard discusses the notion of drawing inward in the context of daily life. He (1969) discusses the intimate corners of the house, as places where people like to curl up and reflect. He sees these intimate corners as symbols to our inner space, which he describes best by using an analogy made by Jung. Jung described the psyche as a building, where the upper story might have been built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the ground floor in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The entrance hall, Jung explains, is reconstructed from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and in the cellar we can find Roman foundation walls. Under the cellar there are filled-in caves. Jung sees this image as an analogy to our mental structure, and raises an important point in people's behaviour. He says that people can hear a noise in the cellar of this house, and hurry to the attic. Once they find no burglars there, they say the noise was pure imagination. Jung suggests instead a method to examine the cellars, and even go further to see on what the cellar stands on, the filled-in caves.

This 'psyche house' was a method used by Jung with his clients. Jung would guide his clients to close their eyes, and imagine a downwards-facing staircase. Patients would then imagine going down this staircase and into their inner mental 'cellars'. Recently, this method was made popular by the author and facilitator Branon Bays (1999), who named it *The Journey*.

Bays (1999) developed her method following a diagnosis in which she was found to have a football size cancer tumour in her stomach. The doctors had told her that she must be hospitalised immediately and that she had one month to live. Bays refused to accept that direction, saying that there must be another way in which to recover, and asserting that she had a knowing that she would heal. The doctor pointed to her large book library assuring her that there is not even a hint of evidence of someone in her condition being cured. As Bays declined hospitalisation and left the hospital she had a peak-experience where her vision intensified and images became clearer to her, holding a message, or a 'knowing', in which she knew that she would heal.

Bays entered a strict diets in the following months and meditations where she would visualise going down an imagined staircase to the core of what she saw as the reason for her illness. Bays process resulted in a full recovery, and in systemising this method to be used by all people as a way of self empowering.

I have attended one of Bays' workshops in London, and observed the power of visualisation and spoken words to facilitate conditions in which participants can direct their attention inwards to a creative processes that occur inside, and that are usually ignored. Following the use of this method as well as another visualisation method that I studied (Reiki), I managed to experience myself what I can only call depths-of-visions. Depth-of-visions does not refer to observing inner blocks only but also to observing inner insights, as I have experienced, which can teach a person his or her inner powers to be creative. Jung named the depth of vision with the term Archetypes. My interviews with artists demonstrated a sense of creative flows with forms of insights that seem to come from beyond the known way that artists know themselves. I was set to examine these modes of perception in my art workshop.

I asked my participants to close their eyes and imagine a downward-facing staircase. I guided them to slowly descend and focus their attention on a place where they could feel comfortable to observe memories or feelings that could prompt creative imagery (figs. 104-105).



Figure 104: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)



Figure 105: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)

Although I had a pre-written text to read from, I improvised the guidance on the spot, since I had to react to different responses from the participants. Some were ‘faster’ while others were going ‘slower’ in their journey. I was also adapting my voice speed, tonality, and the words spoken to suit all participants, by suggesting two guided ‘tracks’: while I was guiding participants in their ‘journey’ using a slow voice, I was also speaking to those who might be more advanced suggesting through slightly faster voice to start to explore the next step, the inner place, at the same time. Feedback from participants indicated that this approach was needed, as some reflected they had reached the inner place very quickly, whilst others were still descending the imagined staircase.

As I was guiding, I was using gestures as an expression of the spoken story (figs. 106-109). I have watched carefully how actors were expressing words through their body in acting for my film *A Fallen Angel* (2008; [DVD](#)), and have used the technique, as the actors suggested themselves, in which they observe how one speaks and how one moves, before they re-enact one’s story. My application of this method is evident in fig. 109, where one participant has raised his hands in front of his face, a gesture

which I immediately felt was an important form of bodily expression of my words – and I have re-enacted this gesture at the same time as he did (fig. 109).



Figure 106: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from the film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)



Figure 107: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from the film *The Collective Hearts* (2008.)



Figure 108: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from the film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)



Figure 109: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from the film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)

Once I felt that participants have reached the first step, a ‘place’, and explored it, I then gently guided them back. I asked them to remember their creative place, and then to ‘draw back’ by climbing the imagined stairs, opening their eyes, becoming fully aware of the present, and then writing down or drawing their impressions. I did not attempt to take them further to the second stage, but rather asked that they open their eyes while still aware of the first stage, the ‘place’ they just visited. By having them



paint or write, I made sure that they document their impression in case they might forget it later, and also for the purpose of comparing the impression of all their stages later on.

I have departed from Bays' method in that I asked participants to open their eyes and document their experience, while Bays' method uses a one-to-one guidance method where participants remain in the inner journey with their eye closed, whilst the facilitator takes the responsibility for writing down the participants' impressions. I, on the other hand, insisted that participants take full responsibility of their impressions and that they themselves document them. When one writes one's impression in one's own words and images, there is no danger that the facilitator interprets and writes them down differently from what they were. The documentation is more authentic once done by participants, and will be easier for them to remember. I also attempted to see how people express themselves creatively (figs. 110-111), remembering my participants' initial declaration that neither of them can draw nor paint or connect to their inner stages of creativity.



Figure 110: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)



Figure 111: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)

By asking people to remember their inner image while they ‘come back’ to awareness, this has demonstrated that people can hold in their memory or conscious mind the inner image, remember it, and then describe it. This conclusion asserts that inner images, such as images coming in dreams which people tend to forget as they wake up in the morning, do have the capacity to attach themselves to the memory and logic and remain there.

In that way I wanted to examine Jung’s assertion that images are held in the conscious but are repressed by it to the unconscious. My experiment asserts that indeed the conscious mind has the capacity to hold and remember inner images, which people usually associate with the unconscious to the effect that they believe the conscious cannot contain those images. My experiment did not go as far as to prove the act of repressivism, but demonstrated that the conscious mind is indeed much more capable than was thought before.

Once participants had finished drawing on paper their impression from the first stage (‘place’), I took them again on the journey, asking them to find the centre of the place – and then come back again and draw it or write it down. Then I took them into the third stage, where I asked them to go ‘inside’ the centre, or beyond it. I have used Bays’ term ‘drop through’ to guide participants to go further, and accept a ‘gift’.

In this third stage, participants went through the place, and the centre of the place, symbolising environment and the individual’s place in the environment. The stage of the ‘gift’ was beyond the individual. I was attempting to find what people can say about the inner call, without me suggesting that there exists an inner call. Five participants simply described the gift that they received, while the other three participants were enthusiastic in revealing that they felt an actual presence of something or someone giving them their gifts.

We then had a group discussion with each participant reflecting on the stages, on what he or she felt, saw or heard, and on their impression of the images and the texts they have created (fig. 112).



Figure 112: Image from participatory art workshop (still image from film *The Collective Hearts*, 2008.)

The first stage, a ‘place’ was reported by participants in the form of a room, or a theme of nature. The most commonly theme was a scene on a beach (see two examples from two participants, figs. 113-114). Participants reported:

‘In front of me was this vast ocean, disappears into this really bright sky which was all enveloping. But the ocean is up [at] me, its really calm lapping at my feet.’

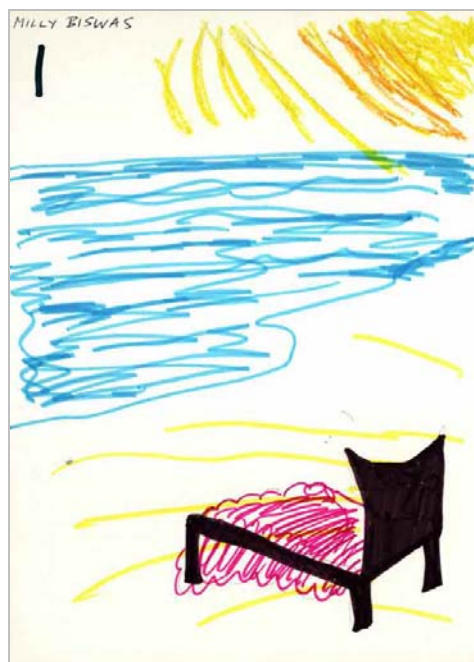


Figure 113: A drawing made by a participant in participatory art workshop.

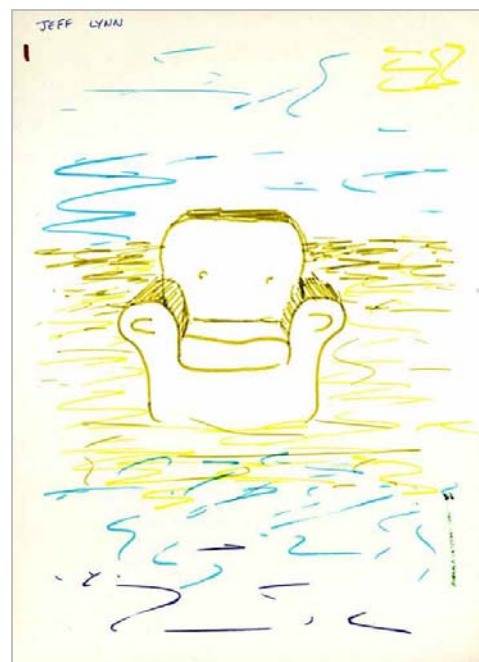


Figure 114: A drawing made by a participant in participatory art workshop.



I noted that participants' descriptions of their inner visions did not consist only of what they saw, but also of what they felt from the experience of observing the images. The inner image and the feeling around it were united in the descriptions:

'My daughters... I could feel presence but I could not see them on this beach somewhere... and the left and the right which were just an expansion of this beach. Somebody came with this golden key. That was a key to this red box, to open... I felt really powerful... [inside the box was] a warm strong self... this kind of a collective-identity... almost God, almost [a] spiritual power.'

'A feast of words and colours and perfume. I was absolutely entranced by the perfume of wavelet in spring time. It was just words that came to me, words with halo around them. It was about finding peace, finding love, finding the shining beauty and acceptance.'

'I go straight to the light... and I feel secure. And I see this landscape in the distance. It's a sparkly different colours ball; I have never seen anything like it.'

'And I just thought 'peace'... it was just my own little bubble in the world.'

'Very powerful wind and you just enjoy leaning into it.'

All participants used words and imagery (figs. 115-118).

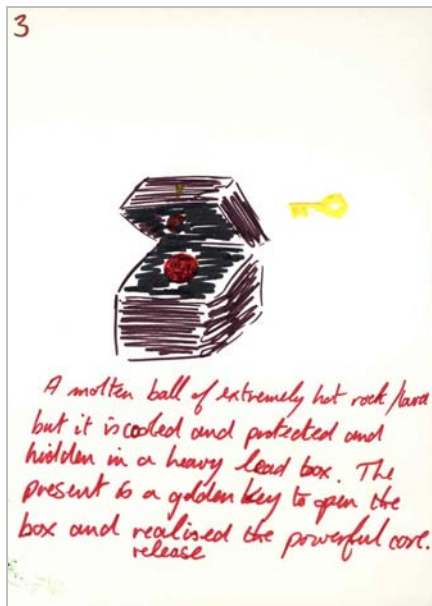


Figure 115: A drawing made by a participant in participatory art workshop.

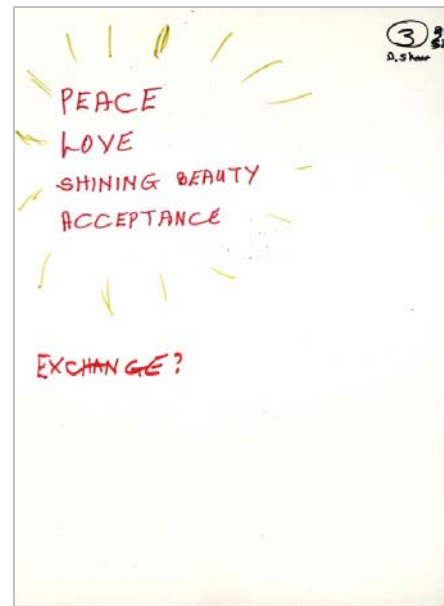


Figure 116: A drawing made by a participant in participatory art workshop.



Figure 117: A drawing made by a participant in participatory art workshop.

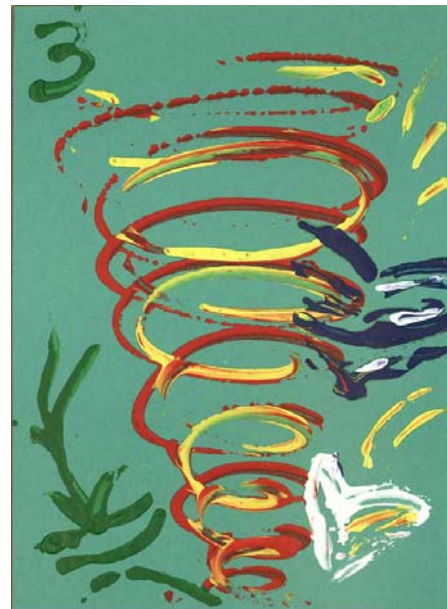


Figure 118: A drawing made by a participant in participatory art workshop.

## Conclusions

I conclude from this workshop that audiences, even those who are not artists, were receptive to a creative process once following a guidance to pay attention to inner activities. Once attention is drawn inward, and applied onto materials, participants were then creative and enthusiastic about their inner call, as much as any artist that I interviewed and read in the literature claims to be.

Once people paid attention to the initial stage of inspiration, they were then compelled to express it and create art, in the same way that my interviewees reported on the urge to create. No one participant was left without any ideas to create, or was not been inspired. All were able to write creatively, to draw or paint and to express themselves. This suggests that a creative urge lies within all people, yet artists simply acknowledge it.

An important observation that I noted is that participants looked really formal when participating in the guided journey. With their eyes closed they did not look on the outside as if something happens in the inside. However, their reflections suggested that a lot happened inside, which was evident also in their works. This observation, joins the conclusion of *What is Love?* experiment, affirming that on the outside people may seem formal, yet on the inside there is a lot of activity operating, which simply needs to be pointed out in a way that people realise it, becoming aware of it, and learning to use it.

This conclusion, in my view, shows that Foucault's 'death of the author' and the critical literature's notion of a separation of the inspired stage of art from the process of making art – are invalid. My experiment demonstrates that authorship and inspiration are both living through the art as it is made.

## **10. Thesis conclusions**

This research demonstrates that creativity is a natural process that is bound into many aspects of life. Rather than being a separate event that occurs prior to the actual implementation of ideas in practice, inspiration is shown in this research as a part of the creative process. In my view, by acknowledging this process, artists that were studied for this research demonstrated becoming aware to an inner voice that guides their attention towards the beauty or the creative in life. With an appreciation of life, the artists experience heightened emotions, which they use in order to create artefacts that serve as expressive tools, not for the artist's expression of their emotions (since emotions are already expressed, or felt) but for the audience to use for their own expressions.

By observing and critically analysing each part of the process of creating art both in my experience and that of other artists, I have revealed patterns that show that there are shared collective phenomena of translating the environment through emotion, word and image. This research shows that the emergence of a creative impulse does not come prior to making art or afterwards but occurs in the actual process of doing art as the sheer conscious acknowledgment of the process allows for the inspiration that the artist seeks.

This research shows through practice the process in which awareness can widen to allow people a better grasp of instigating inspiration in art.

The process of this research demonstrated that art practice can be applied as a research method in itself to gather data, as well as a method or tool through which participants can learn to access their own creative impulses (as demonstrated in final art workshop). Art practice, in this way, is elevated from mere practice which required theory to explain it, to a practice through which theory is explained – a tool to gain practical knowledge through the act of creating.

## **11. Suggestions for further research**

Inspiration is situated in this research as an integral part of the creative process, which can be demonstrated in the works of artists and non-artists. Focusing on the inner creative process allows people to become aware of the creative impulse, and use it in creating art works. The act of focusing is determined by the person's will to do so.

Further research can explore the aspects that trigger this awareness, asking what triggers free choices?, and exploring this question as one creates art.

One experiment can analyse the types of products that are created while focusing on different parts of the inner process, for example, will focusing on the stage of appreciation lead to more poetry being created?

Further research could look at senses that are regarded as non-physical, such as sound and thoughts, and explore how they affect the types of product that artists create.

Another area of research could explore the collective unconscious shared by many, by looking at the potentially shared ideas that occur from different people at the same time.

# Appendices

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## Poets:

### Rising to the Surface of Language.

Poet Anne Stevenson interviewed by Gil Dekel.

#### **Gil Dekel: Can we talk about your creative process of writing? [1]**

Anne Stevenson: For me, writing poems is not so much a process as a way of feeling my way in the dark. Lines come to mind; I work them over in my head and then somehow collect a poem out of them. Ideas usually arrive after the lines. For example, the first five stanzas or so of *A Lament for the Makers*, the longest poem in my latest book, *Stone Milk*, came to me long before I knew its subject would be an imaginary underworld. Sometimes simply seeing or finding something sets lines going, for instance, picking up a silver napkin ring inherited from my grandmother and noticing that her initials were almost worn away. In New England, when I was growing up, we children were given initialled silver on our birthdays. I began to write about that, but then realised that the poem wanted to go in a different direction. What began as a poem about inheriting my grandmother's silver became a war poem about inheriting her nightmares and terrors. [2]

Earlier that year, I started another poem set in the Alps when a friend gave me, off the cuff, the phrase 'Stone Milk' to describe the glacial rivers – although a more conscious inspiration was the painting of a Himalayan rhododendron forest by a friend, Paul Stangroom, in which the mountains themselves are white as milk. And this painting, in turn, suggested that I might find a use for five loose stanzas that had been floating free in my notebook for months. *Before Eden* imagines God creating a perfect world, as in this picture, but then breathing life into Adam (ie. creating evil as well as good) when he cannot bear to preside over the silence and loneliness of perfection. [3]

Usually I write first thing in the morning, maybe at 5 or 6. That's when lines and fresh ideas best come to mind. Later in the day I can do very little. I look at what I've scribbled down and it's just text. [4]

#### **It seems as if you had one big poem in your mind, which you take apart into a few ideas, then make it back into one poem? [5]**

Exactly. The process of consciousness is very strange. A poet has to keep a door open to the unconscious almost all the time. But of course if you just let the unconscious free to write at random, you produce nonsense. [6]

#### **What about automatic-writing? [7]**

Yeats believed in it, and I am a great believer in Yeats, but I never had the experience of automatic-writing myself. All I have is a sense of lines occurring, and once they have occurred, I mess them around, a bit like a crossword. At that stage you bring the conscious mind to bear on the process. There are times when the conscious mind lets you down, too, and you have to stop. Writing a poem is, in part, knowing when to stop forcing it, admitting, "This isn't going to work," and leaving it for a while. You hope something will show up, that the completed idea will eventually appear. Where would it come from? I don't know. The process is mostly a matter of adjusting the unconscious and conscious mind; setting up a balance of knowing and not knowing. [8]

And you have to be able to recognise when a line is right and when it's wrong. This is why it's so hard to teach creative writing. You can teach people to write in metre and rhyme, and how to punctuate, and so on. But the deeper creative process is very mysterious. You don't have to be a mystic to write poetry, but you have to recognize that a lot is going on in your head and in the world which is much more mysterious than we normally imagine. I don't use the word spiritual, since it is overused, but it is hard to say what else. After all, there are connections between you, or what you call you, and your experience, and your feelings about things and words, and so forth, that no analytical psychologist can explain. [9]

**You mentioned getting ideas early in the morning. [10]**

Yes. I often lie in bed for an hour or so, half awake. If a phrase or line appears I rush to my desk to write it down, and then, without getting dressed, work in my study over a cup of tea until I run out of energy. By that time my husband has made me several cups of coffee and eaten his breakfast. [11]

Ideas come in dreams, but also while simply walking down the street, even in the dentist's chair... anywhere. I have written a poem at the hairdresser's. Any time will do. But my best writing is done in the early morning. Some people write late at night, but I'm a morning person. Waking from a deep sleep is like rising through a sea of dreams to the surface of language. Recently I wrote a poem describing exactly that, called *The Loom*. [12]

**Perhaps you cannot teach people to be creative, but you could teach people to stop blocking themselves from being creative? [13]**

I think that's true. Years ago, I used to lead creative writing workshops, when I found that, in discussion, writers were over-swayed as much as helped by the group. Individual poems became group-poems, and in the process lost their individuality. A gifted poet has to find his or her own way, and a gift for writing poems is like a gift for music or painting. People who have it, know it. And just as it's impossible to teach people who do not have a musical ear to play or sing well, so it is impossible to teach people who do not instinctively listen to and love poetry to write it well. [14]

It happens too often these days that people want to write poems who rarely read it. I mean traditional poetry: Shakespeare, Wordsworth and so forth. Too many students satisfy their creative urge by expressing themselves. OK. But communion is needed as well. And by communion I don't mean showing off by using a lot of clever, contemporary jargon, I mean working with language, old and new, and *feeling* it in cadences that make sense. If I couldn't overhear the rhythms and sounds established by the long, varied tradition of English poetry – say by Donne, Blake, Keats, Dickinson, Whitman, Frost – I would not be able to hear what I myself have to say. Poems that arise only from a shallow layer of adulterated, contemporary language are rootless. They taste to me, like the mass-produced vegetables grown in chemicals for super-markets. [15]

**But don't you have poems that you wrote when you were, say, four years old? [16]**

Not four! I do have a few my mother kept from when I was about 7 or 8. They are ballad like, song-like, all in verse. I had a lyrical ear from the beginning. But I don't think children's poems in general sound original. Like mine, they tend to rhyme a lot. Even Shakespeare did not start off with a blank sheet. He was influenced by the immense poetic richness and the dramatic/lyrical conventions of



his period. He must have breathed and dreamed in iambic pentameter. There was no time in the past when, to poets, inherited forms were not important. [17]

**And apart of rhythm or form that past poetry has to offer us, what about inspiration itself? Where is inspiration coming from? [18]**

Listening. And reading aloud a lot. I never write poetry unless I am reading poetry. [19]

**Was Blake, with his unique visionary symbolism, working within a tradition? [20]**

Sure he was. He was working from a non-conformist religious tradition, first writing lyrics and then narrative poems in the medieval poetic tradition. Dante, too, was traditional, in the tradition of the visionary epic. For me, mythic poems like these are not true, but they're of extraordinary imaginative importance. I believe being religious or spiritual in any tradition has mainly to do with poetry and language. Every religion that I can think of – Islam, Judaism, Christianity – has produced wonderful poetry. It seems to me such a pity that people make politics (and wars) out of moral and religions matters. All religions teach the value of the spiritual life, which is, in the best sense, imaginary. Ted Hughes would have agreed. Religious imagination does not even contradict science. Discoveries about man's place in the world, and the world's in the universe, and the universe's place among the galaxies – what could be more imaginatively inspiring? Think of the way the tiniest quantum particle fits into any scheme we can imagine of reality! Amazing! Anybody who really understands science must feel spiritual. [21]

**When people sometimes ask, 'Do you believe in God?', I feel like answering, 'I believe in Quantum Physics...' [22]**

Yes. It's all the same stuff. I wish poets these days were less taken up with politics and more aware of what's happening in physics. I hate wars, and injustice upsets me no end. But I don't think poetry is going to solve the problem in Iraq or Afganistan. As for me, I suppose I am trying to come to term with reality on a bigger scale. As you say 'I believe in Quantum Physics'. That is to me reality. Mind you, I don't understand it. I don't understand the Theory of Relativity. I'm poor at maths... [23]

**Albert Einstein was such a good story teller; there is not much math in some of his books but only wisdom... [24]**

Well, I'm sympathetic to Einstein because he was a musician. I was a musician before I was a poet. I played the cello and I still play the piano, but, alas, my deafness means I can hardly hear tonality now. That's why I like to put music into poetry. Rhythm is so important; I always write by rhythm. I actually prefer music to poetry, if I had to choose. Music, after all, is a language that can move and affect all humanity, irrespective of the Babel tower of words. The same is true also of painting, I suppose. [25]

**So, what is the position of words compared with that of music and visuals? [26]**

For me, poetry is literally untranslatable. However, it does seem to me transferable. That is, you can transfer the spirit of it from one language to another. We have the King James Bible, for example, full of glorious poetry. And the Bible was "transferred", shall we say, from Hebrew, Greek and Latin into

English. We have Shakespeare as well – that magpie genius of foreign words and stories – who all but reinvented the English language. But I agree that every language is limited. Visions in music and painting are more abstract and therefore maybe closer to reality? [27]

I'm interested in Kandinsky, the painter/musician. There is an exhibition of his work on now in the Tate, and you must go see it. I recently wrote a dream poem in which I tried to use colours like a painter. Let me show you... One of the strangest things about writing poetry is that you do feel a bit mad... I think you have to be a little mad... The poem was called *After Kandinsky*, until I changed the title to *Sea and Sky*. Then I changed it again to *Completing the Circle*. [28]

Video 1: Anne reads her poem *Completing the Circle*, Sep 2006. [29]  
[the video is included in the CD attached to this thesis]

**That's beautiful! [30]**

You think that's beautiful? [31]

**I do. [32]**

Well, I am in a puzzle about the poem. It was written in memory of a writer friend who died, and I wanted to paint it with memories of colours and shapes in dreams. The Kandinsky exhibition gave me the images, but I was not sure whether they should refer to dreaming or to dying. I asked my husband, who said dying is a lot stronger. Yet if I say dreaming, the poem seems to make more sense, don't you think? [33]

**It does, I agree with you. [34]**

I should probably change it to dreaming. [35]

**Some people believe that dying and dreaming is the same thing... [36]**

Yes. I was trying to suggest that in this poem. Maybe there is something in an after-life. But I am not sure I believe that. Only in memory does personality survive. [37]

**It is said that life is like a room. Birth is one door to that room and death is another door. So, you are born into life and die back to life... [38]**

Now, that's Quantum Physics... the idea of coming and going in and out of life doesn't bother me at all. The idea of Heaven and Hell is of course childish. But I don't know if in Judaism there is the idea of Heaven and Hell? [39]

**No, I think there isn't. In Kaballah's teaching, Heaven is simply a state of changing one's mind. [40]**

It seems to me that primitive peoples invent the mythologies they need. The bearing that myth has on reality is the same whatever the myth is. It always puzzles me that people go to war to defend their myths but end up fighting for power. Without power you can't protect yourself. So you fight to win, and that could be how cults of power and energy came to be embedded in Christianity – through Lucifer who used power and energy to corrupt the weaker ideal of peace.

That's what happens incidentally, at the end of the poem *Before Eden* when God, in a sense, becomes Lucifer. [41]

Let's go back to *Inheriting my Grandmother's Nightmare*, about my grandmother who lived with us in New Haven during the war. My father was a philosophy professor and my mother, an enthusiastic hostess. She especially enjoyed arranging dinner parties for visiting academics, artists, poets and so forth. My grandmother, who never touched alcohol, thought wine was the work of the devil. But at these parties everybody, of course, got a little drunk, and grandmother was thrust aside and ignored. I always felt guilty about her, about my childish treatment of her. And now I am a grandmother myself, I can identify with her. I hardly understand my grandchildren... they live in a world of mobile phones, televisions, i-pods, computers. How can I help resenting the wholly materialistic world they are going up in? [42]

I want to say something about rhymes. Looking for a rhyme often gives me an idea of how to go on with a poem. I say to myself, "I want a rhyme here and there"... and again, "I want the rhymes to be heard but not to be obvious." Like avoiding obvious *ta Tam ta Tam ta Tam* rhythms in my poems, I want to avoid obvious rhymes while structuring the work around them. This is one of the blockages that makes poetry so difficult to write these days. Eighteenth-century poets had it easy, writing in heroic couplets. The Romantics had it easy, writing odes and sonnets. But today if you go back and write in the styles of the nineteenth, eighteenth, seventeenth centuries, you risk writing pastiche. The challenge is to use old traditions to make something new, original. Each generation that passes finds it more difficult to use set forms – to put, as it were, new wine in old bottles. And yet, without bottles of some shape, the wine, the poetry, the art of whatever kind, spills out and disappears forever. [43]

#### **Do you write on the computer? [44]**

At a certain point I put a draft on the word processor. The word processor is hypnotic... for good and evil. After looking at the screen sometimes the right word appears out of the blue. At other times I have to take it off the screen and put it back on the paper. Back to pencil... [45]

When I find new lines or ideas I put them in a little notebook. Nobody could make anything of these jottings; they sound like nonsense even to me, sometimes. But I usually root poems eventually in these scribbles. [46]

True poetry is usually ambiguous. It is like a pebble dropped into a pool. If it's a real poem, the ripples spread out into a full circle. But there's rarely anything definite or finite about what it means, and that is why poetry is so fascinating. A poem should be clear and ambiguous as well. If the poem is left completely ambiguous you get no pleasure from it. But if it's completely clear, you might as well say what you have to say in prose. [47]

Now, I have prepared some sandwiches, do you have cheese? [48]

#### **I love cheese. [49]**

26 July 2008

Interview held in London, UK, September 2006, and via email correspondence July 2008.

## **The Arc of Grace.**

**Poet Sylvia Paskin interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

### **Gil Dekel: How do words come to you? [1]**

Sylvia Paskin: Often they come as a burst of emotion. Sometimes I hear or read something, or something happens to me. And around this set of feelings you find yourself writing about it. That's how the poem begins to form. I usually write long-hand, I don't write directly to the computer. I make notes. One day it can be two sentences, on another two lines, or one word. Over time it begins to make a kind of a shape or a form. If you let it be it grows, and you find yourself having a poem. Sometimes you read what you have produced and you think, 'How did all this come?' You don't even know what was inside; you can't understand how it got from a lot of different feelings, different emotions, to a finished poem. [2]

With any poem, even if you think you finished it, you have to let it go. Let it be and come back to it in a few weeks' time. This is why people often take their poems to workshops, where other people can comment. Of course, you also have to trust yourself. [3]

I think a thesaurus is very useful, particularly in English because it has such a big vocabulary. Sometimes there is a word that is just similar but it has a little nuance, an edge or something, and you try that word and often it works. Sometimes the word just comes to you, and it is just 'the' word. [4]

### **Do you ever read back your poems after a while, and learn that there is something there that has come to tell you something? [5]**

I think that's true; it has happened to me. I tend to write poems based on my life and responses. I am not somebody who writes poems about the contemporary political situation. When you write about things that are more directly associated with your life, then the poem helps you to understand things about your life. The poem speaks from a place that you might not have such an easy access to. Only when you concentrate and focus, there is a distillation, an essence is coming through. You look and think to yourself, 'That is how I actually feel!' This can be very powerful. [6]

What you write is very specific to you, but on the other hand, why do people enjoy reading poetry? They want to read a poem because it speaks to them. The greatest poems are those that relate to more people. Why do people respond to Shakespeare? Because what he says is a universal truth: dilemmas and dramas do not change, they go on. [7]

### **A good poet then has the talent to distil a kind of a DNA of universal emotion? [8]**

Yes, but a poem can't just be emotional. If it were just emotional there would be no boundaries to it; you would just have syrup...

So I think emotion has to be filtered in a way that it has structure and clarity. This is very important. Poems are about emotion, yet a good poem has a kind of an 'arc' to it. As you read the poem it takes you on a journey. Rising up the arc, going through the poem, and then down to its end. When you come to the end of the poem you know you have travelled through this wonderful arc of grace. Like any journey you make there has to be preparation, and then you can produce the poem. [9]

**And how do you feel the poet creates such arc? How are the poet's emotions 'converted' to linguistic structure? [10]**

Depends what a word is; how you define it. Certain words have emotions around them. If you take the word 'love', nobody can understand that word without having a lot of responses. Such a word carries with it feelings. But you can write about a table, which may not have a feeling in itself but has a meaning to you. Your emotions about the table must work together with the words that you generate in the poem. [11]

**Is there a non-linguistic phase; an emotional level that exists before words come? [12]**

Joseph Brodsky, in his Nobel Prize in Literature speech, said: 'It is not poets who create language; it is language which creates poets.' [13]

I think we start with emotion, and there is a process where you have to leave emotions, put them aside, and deal with the language that needs to be adequate to what you want to say. You have to be very tough with yourself, because it isn't enough just to write what you feel. A level of understanding has to come in. The right syllable, the right word order, the right rhythm, meter. A poem is on the page, it has to have a look – a sonnet, a sestina, free-verse, couplets, four lines. These are tremendous decisions to make. And then you need somehow to bring in the emotions, the feelings, the experiences. [14]

**It is like a sculpture. [15]**

Yes, it is architectural. In some cultures the amount of syllables you use is laid down differently, for example, the Japanese Haiku. You can have as much emotion as there is in the world, but you can only have seventeen syllables. On one hand, that might be very difficult for a poet. On the other hand, some poets will tell you that when you do have a very strict form it makes it easier because there is so much you push away and so you get to find the point. [16]

The Sufi poet Rumi wrote short verse. You get a feeling that he followed a process of refinement to get to what he wanted to say. When the Arabs were in Spain I think they used to write what we call Hanging Poems. These were poems embroidered in silk and hung in the streets. Can you imagine this beautiful scene where you walk down the street through hung poems that would wave at you. You would walk through poems, and the wind would play with them. [17]

**Do you sometimes feel your poems reveal too much personal stuff you would prefer not to see? [18]**

Yes, I'll tell you about my parents. My parents were Holocaust survivors, and a few years ago I started to write one poem about it that became quite violent. I thought to myself, 'Can I write this poem? Can I actually say what I want to say?' Because what I wanted to say was shocking. On the one hand the emotion in the poem is private. On the other hand it is something that anyone can read and understand. And I was moving between these two. [19]

This poem is connected to taste. My mother is from Vienna, and would make wonderful cakes. My mother could bake like an angel. I remember as a child, growing up in Britain, that on Sundays other refugees would come to us for coffee and cake. As my mother was baking, she used to show me what all these cakes

were; so one line came to me in the poem: 'with the pastries came the stories.' [20]

As she would bake she would tell me these stories of what happened to her. So, Gil, we are making these fantastic cakes of celebration, and at the same time these are stories of Vienna and the Anschluss, the annexation of Austria into Germany, and what happened to my grandparents. Then I am expected to eat the cakes. [21]

The poem is about what happens to me as I am eating. My mother, as many other Holocaust survivors do, would give me those cakes, and would say: "You will not starve". Meaning, of course, you will not starve like those who did starve. And whenever she would say that to me, I would feel I can't eat anymore. I cannot digest; I cannot take into myself anymore of this horror. This is a difficult poem. It's about the celebration of life in a way, and at the same time it is about terror. Emotions, feelings, experiences, and trying to make sense as a second generation child. What is this chocolate of death? Your tongue, your mouth, your teeth. I began to imagine that my teeth were tombs. Cooking, baking, lovely Vienna, and on the other hand... this horror... [22]

### **Can poetry heal? [23]**

Yes, it can. What can you do with difficult emotions? You can distract them inside you. Or you can become an alchemist, taking lead and turning it to gold. Of course, it has to stand in its own right; you cannot just splurge on the page. The poem has to be considered and worked out to make sense. But it is valuable to cope with difficult emotions, and poetry does that. [24]

### **Sometimes people have emotions which they say they cannot express in words. Do you feel that words are a limited tool of expression? [25]**

What else could I use? Poetry is about the beauty of the words, how you put them together. Maybe other poets can also paint, or play music. You have to trust yourself that what you write has inner integrity – this is the only way a poem can work. If you mess about it trying to be clever the poem will show this. I think the poems that work best have integrity, just like a person. [26]

### **How much the poet has to be in his poem? [27]**

I think everyone that writes, signs their name at the end of the poem, telling you that this is their original response and feelings. There is a lot self-identification in poetry, and it is important for people to say that this is their work. In the same way that in the Renaissance artists began to sign their paintings. In the eleventh century people did not do that. It is always the author of the poem who speaks. Even if you write about a forest, it is you who speaks from your poem. The forest is not coming your way; it is you who uses the poem to explore responses. [28]

There is a lot of soul-baring and exposure in poetry. With a poem it is very easy with just a few lines to reveal yourself, unlike a book which is made of thousands of lines. A poem is quite immediate, and it feels powerful for the writer. Very rarely do people write poems together. [29]

Sometimes people would tell you, 'You take it too personally'. And I think to myself, how else can I take it, I am a person. [30]

**Insight into Words.**

**Poet Maggie Sawkins interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: You have been writing since the age of nine. How does the process of writing poetry work for you? [1]**

Maggie Sawkins: I think that there are different processes for different poems. Sometimes it is two things that seem opposites, and you make a connection. That is, a tension between two things that a poem can grow out of. For example, a while ago someone at the end of this road set fire to herself in her bedroom, and I read about it in the paper. I was in my bedroom which would be the corresponding height to her house. And I was looking at this mobile made out of thin paper sheep. As it turned around at some point it became invisible, and then it kept turning and you could see it again. I was thinking of the mobile, the sheep, the girl that set fire to herself, and the two things came together in a poem. The poem was about staring at the sheep, the mobile, but really it was about... if they caught fire that no one would miss them, because they are just paper sheep. I am trying to put across that it is the people that are left in life that do the missing. [2]

A poem just about a mobile wouldn't really say much. It might be just a nice description, but that wouldn't really make a poem. You need some connection; to feel a connection. [3]

**How do you 'make' such connections? [4]**

For me it is about human involvement. I write lots of things, some work and others do not work because there is not a found connection. Sometimes you have to work at an idea; you have to keep on working. Sometimes you have to plug away at what you have written, then it comes to you... [5]

**Is there any specific time of the day that you are most inspired? [6]**

I think early mornings when I wake up. I have dream diaries besides my bed. [7]

**Do you ask before you fall asleep to write a poem, requesting a poem to come to you? [8]**

No... but I wish I could... [9]

**What do you think is the difference between poetry and day-to-day language? [10]**

There are a lot of definitions of poetry, and I think that poetry is a mystery. For me it is a condensed use of language. Poetry is some kind of rhythm, but that will be true for prose as well. Poetry is obviously the shape across the page. Often when I start to write I try to make it the shape of a poem. [11]

**Do you feel that poetry is there for you to learn something from? [12]**

Sometimes I feel the poem that I have written reveals something about myself that I kind of knew was there, but I haven't consciously written the poem to express that. Poetry gives words to that something. I guess that if you were a psychologist then a good way would be to look at someone's writings to find out things that you can't express. [13]

**Carl Jung suggested that a poem comes from a source higher than the poet himself. [14]**

I think it is about range of emotions. I think dreams are more like that; they come from different levels of collective-consciousness. You could dream similar dreams to someone who lives in Africa, even if you are from a completely different culture. And symbols... poetry is interested in symbols. Dreams are symbols, so they are like poems, aren't they? They are metaphorical. [15]

**But dreams come mostly through images, and less through words. [16]**

Yes, it is images, yet poetry does use images to try to convey abstract thoughts and feelings in interesting poetic ways. Poetry is concrete. [17]

**And poetry must have logical structure to it, using the communicative structure of words. Dreams do not seem to have a sequence of time. [18]**

Yes, even with symbols and images, you still try to make the poem a beginning, middle, and end. It is interesting when I do my dream diaries. Obviously you can't remember everything, or recreate in writing exact dreams. Remembering is a stage removed. But it does not really bother me that I can't remember everything, because what I tend to do is make a story out of the dream even if it is surreal or illogical. Still there is the use of story technique to write it down. You have to decide the tense, first person, third person and so on. So you still have these decisions to make in the writing. [19]

**Do you dream in the first person as much as many of your poems are in the first person? [20]**

My dreams are like films, very vivid. And you cannot capture it straight away; it is always leaving. You can train yourself to write it down as you wake up. [21]

**And how about the waking life? Do you feel daily events in your life as vivid as dreams? [22]**

For me it is about the emotion, which is usually linked with an object; something visual. For example, about two years ago my mom died in hospital. We brought her a red geranium because she liked those, and put it in the room that she was in. My mom was fading away, she stopped eating; she didn't want to carry on living. So after she died I was thinking about this geranium, and as it was a very hot summer the geranium died as well. There was that connection with my mom, and then I just got the first line of a poem: 'She knew how to die'... Once I got that, I knew... yes, I know how to write this poem. The flower became symbolic. It was a geranium that killed itself, wanted to die. So, it is two contrasts that make a good poem. [23]

**How do you find these contrasts? [24]**

I don't know, they just seem to come from inside. It is not a process of a struggle, trying to write a poem. It does not work that way for me. You have to



be patient. There are a lot of writers, even poets, that do wake up every morning and write two-three hours. Like a job they work at having inspiration. I guess it is both ways. [25]

### **Why do people write at all? [26]**

It makes me feel good if I have written a good poem. But then it's gone, and I have to write another one... Sometimes there is that feeling that you are never going to write another poem again, yet they always come... [27]

### **They will never leave the poet... maybe they have to speak themselves through the poet... [28]**

Yes, and that can make a poet happy. [29]

21 June 2008  
Interview held in Portsmouth, UK, July 2006

### **Whirlpool of Emotions.**

#### **Poet Clive Wilmer interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

#### **Gil Dekel: Hello, Clive... [1]**

Clive Wilmer: Nice to meet you, Gil, at last... [2]

#### **I wasn't sure if this is Cambridge Central Station, because it looks so 'open'; quite wide... [3]**

Yes, it's an unusual lay-out here. This part of England is very flat, like Holland... [4]

#### **In *The Mystery of Things*, your recent book, there are quite a few references to religion, using such words as God, Lord, Angels. [5]**

I suppose if I am absolutely frank about it I would have to describe myself as a Christian. But I don't like having to too much, because I feel that I belong to a broader view of the spiritual realm. I don't mean that Christianity in itself is not broad, but I would not want to associate myself with a parochial view of the spiritual. Religion is fundamental to what I write, yet my religious convictions have not been consistent throughout my life. I have been through lots of different periods, including a period of atheism. Even in the period of atheism, religion provided the main symbolic system of my poetry, which I never lost. So it is a question of how fully you incorporate that symbolism into your life. Whether it's just a convenient system, or whether it's something that you profoundly believe in. And I think there are different degrees of commitment to that kind of system. I have been interested in other religions. I am not exclusively Christian. [6]

#### **Have you also practised Buddhism? [7]**

The Buddhism in *The Mystery of Things* was to do with somebody I was emotionally involved with at that time. [8]

#### **Can I ask about the painting you chose for your book cover? [9]**

Yes. It's *The Resurrection* by Piero della Francesca. It is possible to understand it in several ways. Obviously it is a Christian painting showing Jesus with the stigmata, but it also has a relation to Paganism. It wonderfully combines – as I try to do in my poetry – the spiritual and the physical. This is why the book is called *The Mystery of Things*. The painter, Piero della Francesca, gives a sense of the substantiality of the body, and yet he is a profoundly spiritual painter. I am interested in the way that the spirit communicates through things. In a way, the things are all we need; we don't need more than the things. What we call the spiritual – in the book I call it 'ghostliness' – seems to me to be *in* things. That is where I start from. So Christianity, for instance, is very profoundly a religion of the body. It is about the resurrection of Christ; about the death and resurrection in bodily form of a human being. [10]

**Would you see the story of the resurrection as a triumph of the body? [11]**

I suppose one would have to say it is primarily a triumph of the soul. But it is a triumph of the soul *in* the body. I don't really want to separate the two. For instance, the spiritual aspect of love cannot be separated from the physical aspect of love. At the same time I think they are different dimensions. [12]

**Do you see the physical things as having a soul within them? [13]**

In a way, yes... Can I come at it at a slightly different angle? I am very suspicious of any view of life which tries to devalue the importance of matter. It makes me a little anxious about the very word spirituality, because it is sometimes associated with people who try to suggest that what happens in our bodies is not important; that things are mere things. To me things are what I love much of the time. A picture, like this painting for my book cover, is a thing; it is made out of paint and wood. My furniture: these are things that were owned by my parents and my grandparents, and so they have a human connection for me. Food is a thing, but it's also what I need to nourish me, to make me fit and healthy and even happy. All those things are terribly important. [14]

**Do things inspire you to write poetry? How would you start to write a poem? [15]**

It varies a great deal. Sometimes a poem may take many years to happen. I might have the idea but the poem doesn't happen for – in one case I can think of – twenty years... At other times, you know, we may finish this conversation, I may think of something, and I may write it down, and have a poem. Very often I know that a particular body of subject matter is going to produce a poem. At other times it would be a word or a phrase or a line or even a rhythm or something like that, which would produce the poem. Let's take my poem *Stigmata* as an example. The poem is based on an analogy between the pain we suffer when love goes wrong and the pain of the Crucifixion: by extension, the suffering of God through the evil of human beings. That's an analogy. I was familiar with that analogy from other writers; it's not an original comparison. But I began to think about that analogy in relation to the situation I was in at the time. After a while I began to see that there was a poem in it. So I spent a lot of time reflecting on that analogy, and then quite out of the blue some lines came to me. The very first line of that poem was spoken to me by somebody else in a conversation, and I saw the words he used as a way into a poem. To me it is very important that a poem is a thing made out of words, just as a painting is a thing made out of paint. So I need words in order to make a poem. A painter can have an idea but

he cannot do anything with it until he has a brush, paints, a piece of wood. Similarly, I need to have words, which are much less obviously physical, but still belonging to the human body. We speak with the breath, and the mechanism of the throat. The language that we have is not something that we have invented out of nothing; it is something that we share with other people. For me, words have a substantial presence, just as a painter's materials do for him. [16]

**So, words are your tool to express something, but what is it that you express? [17]**

Well, I'm not sure I'd even go as far as that, because I'm not sure I can separate words from the things they express. But perhaps the simplest way I can explain it is with the titles of my main collections of poetry: *The Dwelling-Place*, *Devotions*, *Of Earthly Paradise*, and the most recent, *The Mystery of Things*. These are all titles about being in the world, and about the attachments that we feel to things in the world; things including, of course, people. The world is mysterious, paradisiacal, a dwelling place where we live, and we feel devotion, attachment to it. [18]

**One has to have a critical, analytical structure in language, and yet poetry can describe something quite different – the abstract. How do poets do it? [19]**

Ezra Pound was interested in comparing poetry to other arts. He was particularly interested in comparing poetry to sculpture. If you are a sculptor, particularly if you are using stone, the creation of a work of art is an engagement between the artist and an object that already exists in the world, the piece of stone. It is a kind of struggle, a battle. But the heart of the work of art is already there. You need the artist to make it a work of art, but he is making a work of art out of *something*. That's what I think of poetry as being. We are making a work of art out of language. Language after all belongs to the race; it is not a private thing. Language already includes meanings. So when you talk about an analytical process in words, that analytical quality is already there in the words. Even when you are a child and you are using words, you are using them critically. Words are not private property; they are out there in the world. You manipulate their meanings, and discover meanings that you hadn't necessarily anticipated. You say things which you didn't necessarily mean to say, because the words say them. It is more than just you. When I write a poem it is recognisable as my poem, yet the poem is not just me. My poems are in language, and in a way language is already an art, a communal, collaborative one. When human beings speak, they are creating something. You and I sitting here, talking; this is a miracle. And even more than that, you, Gil, speak another language, Hebrew, and we can talk here in English. And somewhere in English, there is also what English has taken from Hebrew, after all. There are Hebrew words in English, and there is a cultural heritage. So, it is a very rich matter that we create as human beings. [20]

**You write about angels in your poems, I believe one is Gabriel, which in Hebrew means the strong hand of God. [21]**

It is interesting that you picked that one because my son's name is Gabriel... [22]

**Your poem *In The Library* ends with the beautiful metaphor of words wanting to be read into the reader. [23]**

That poem is very simple in a way: about a girl reading in a library, and rather consciously ignoring me... and I want to be like the words she is attending to.

That poem is a good example of what we were saying earlier about the spiritual and the physical and whether words are things or not. That poem is an image of this. It has an erotic dimension to it and also a very spiritual dimension, the absorption of language. I can tell you that this poem's image fits rather nicely with what I am saying here, but the poem is entirely accidental. I wrote it quite quickly; it was provoked by a particular day, a particular incident on a particular day. [24]

**Do you also write about things that are not triggered by events, things that come from somewhere else? [25]**

What would somewhere else be? [26]

**I am thinking here of the qualities of inspiration itself. For example, a few people can sit and watch the same movie, yet only the poet among them is inspired to write about something that all the others may have seen but perhaps not noticed. [27]**

Let's take the poem *Bottom's Dream*. This poem doesn't have an obvious source event. Of course, when you've written a poem like that, you go on to discover that all kinds of events have gone into it unconsciously. But it didn't originate in an event. [28]

*Bottom's Dream* is about Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I was asked by the editor of *Around the Globe*, the house magazine of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, to write a poem, and the only requirement was that the poem had to have something to do with Shakespeare. The name Shakespeare covers almost the whole of my life. I first encountered Shakespeare when I was eight or nine... When I was nineteen I acted in a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I played the part of Peter Quince, who is a carpenter, and who writes the ridiculous play with which *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ends. He has this complicated relationship with Bottom, the main comic character. Bottom says: 'I will get Peter Quince to write me a ballad of this dream.' It is very characteristic of Shakespeare that this never actually happens; there are always loose ends in Shakespeare – things left unresolved at the conclusion. [29]

So, we played that production for quite a few nights. Every night I sat there listening to these lines, and I thought, 'I want to be a poet, I am Peter Quince, I should write this poem!' I even started to write it, but I was probably too young. So nearly forty years later, I got this commission from the Globe and sat down and wrote *Bottom's Dream*. And it is one of the key poems of my work. But I had no way of knowing that that would happen, because all I was doing was answering the commission. Is that what you meant? [30]

**I guess I mean: how do words come to the poet? [31]**

Well, maybe we can look at another poem with a Shakespearean title: *Much Ado About Nothing*. This is a much more abstract poem. It came about from my work as a teacher. I seem very often to teach that the word 'nothing' is a very rich and complex one. You think of it as just a negation, but it's actually enormously significant. Just think of how it occurs in a sentence. In English you can say, 'I don't know anything,' and you can also say, 'I know nothing.' Saying 'I know nothing' is a little like saying 'I know a thing which is called nothing.' Nothing is something... that paradox fascinates me. It is a paradox that Shakespeare plays with a tremendous amount. The pronunciation of nothing in Shakespeare's time was probably more like 'noting'. 'Noting' means to observe, to take note of, but it

also has a sexual connotation. 'Naught' meant both zero and vagina, so 'naughting' – not very different from 'noting' – could mean having sexual intercourse. [32]

I am interested in the way that a word which appears to be of no particular significance can produce all these meanings. So, this poem came out of the fact that I was teaching these things... [33]

### **What do you think characterises the poet compared with other types of writer? [34]**

I suppose there are certain things you need as a poet. Obviously you need to be fascinated by language, but that is not enough. While you are in love with language, you also have to be in love with what is beyond language. Language is, in a sense, an attempt to take possession of the world. A lot of what I write is an attempt to take hold of what I love but can't really have. What is beyond me. The poem about the girl in the library is a good example: it is about desire for something beautiful and unattainable. [35]

When my mother died I went with my sister to my mother's house to dispose of my mother's property, and we realised there was a danger of quarrelling over the possession of things because we knew we would want the same things... So, we made a deal: if one of us said, 'I want that,' then the other one wouldn't disagree. And it worked, surprisingly. In the kitchen there was a table which we both very much associated with our mother. The kitchen was her kingdom, but the table was a very ordinary working table. Anyway, my sister said, 'I want the kitchen table,' and so she got it. The next day I got on my bicycle to go to the school where I worked and, by the time I got to school, I already had this poem in my head, *The Kitchen Table*. It was unconscious; I didn't think I was going to write about the table. The poem is an attempt to take possession of the table. I hadn't been able to have the table, so my poem got the table, and there it is permanent. I now feel I have the table. It isn't just the table, but also the spirit of my mother in the table. I really feel I have it now. In a way, it is better than having the table. If I'd had the table, I don't think I'd have written the poem... [36]

### **Imagine all the poems that you don't write because you already have the things... [37]**

That's right... There is a paradox about poetry which pleases me a lot. Poems are in language so they exist in time; language is temporal. You only understand what I am saying now by listening to me over a period of time. You don't know what point I am trying to make until I get to the end of the sentence. Therefore, the whole business of appreciating language is temporal. You read a poem, and it takes you a period of time to read it. But a poem is also a thing, it is a kind of monument. It has a shape on the page. You can look at the page and it always looks the same. Every time I open these pages, there the poem is, printed, still there, as if there was no such thing as time. The language that I am speaking now has gone as soon as I've spoken it. The poem is stable, monumental and fixed, and it will outlive me; and at the same time the process of reading it is dynamic, engaging in time. [38]

### **Why do you write poetry? [39]**

Writing is at such a deep level of your personality that I think you can't really know what it is that makes you write. Often you write your best poems when you feel least engaged by the matter, and that's very odd. I think that in order for a

poem to happen, we need to put a part of ourselves asleep. Then something else in the mind can start working. I often find that the best poems I write come about when for some reason part of my mind is occupied with other matters, such as riding my bicycle to work. It is very mysterious. Take the technical aspect of poetry; needing to give a poem a form – for instance, to make it rhyme. Why do we make things rhyme? It seems to me that rhyme does the job of occupying the mind, it takes care of the part of the mind that is good at playing chess, or doing crossword puzzles... The mind is occupied by that. It is effective then in enabling insight. [40]

### **What is the connection between words and images? [41]**

There are some words that are not images, such as the function words: a, the, is. You can have a word without an image but you cannot have an image without a word attached to it. Function words do not represent anything. There is also the sound of words, which is independent of what they signify. Of course the sound tends to get associated imaginatively and emotionally with the significance. Nevertheless, the sound is independent. [42]

### **What about nonsense poetry? [43]**

Well, they do have something we can imagine in them. But could you imagine making a poem that was *entirely* nonsensical, made up of words which just fitted together syntactically? It wouldn't be a poem, though it could be verse – you could fulfil the obvious technical requirements of a poem with gibberish. [44]

### **When I asked John Hegley he suggested that poetry does not necessarily have to be communicative. [45]**

Poetry is inherent in language, so all language is potential poetry. Language as we speak it has all the characteristics of poetry: rhythm, music, richness of meaning, analytical and critical qualities. By being a poet one is foregrounding what is already in language. One is trying to take the potential of the language and make it manifest. [46]

### **What about emotion? Is it part of poetry? [47]**

Yes. [48]

### **Is it part of language? [49]**

Yes. Words are loaded with emotions. There are words that appear not to have any emotion in them. I am not sure that the word 'camera', for instance, comes to me with any emotion. Perhaps it does to you since you create films using cameras. [50]

### **What about words which come out of emotion, not necessarily words that carry emotion? [51]**

If you use the word 'desire', you name the emotion, but it is unlikely that you are going to generate it in the reader's mind. That's the problem with abstraction. You have to generate the emotion through other words, which call upon the reader's experience. 'I am very angry today' is not a moving sentence. It is much more powerful to say, 'There is always something more important than trees' (to quote from my poem *The Apple Trees*), than to say, 'I am very angry about cutting those trees down.' [52]

### **The poet has to choose the right words to communicate emotions. [53]**

Yes, because communication is not inherently poetry. Communication is practical, you have a message to deliver. The message is in the words. When you receive a parcel in the post with a present inside, you discard the wrapping. The words are the wrapping within which the message comes. You don't pay much attention to the words in communication. In poetry you do pay attention to the words. In the sense of just communicating a message... I think that is not what poetry is about. [54]

The poet and critic Donald Davie says that there is a misunderstanding about poetry. Poetry is not about addressing the audience, but about addressing the subject. The poet thinks about the subject, writes about the subject, and should not pay too much attention to the reader. The reader is not there to be talked to, the reader is there to hear the poet talking about the subject. The reader is listening. Poems which depend on a relationship with the reader become merely rhetorical. They become ways of moving the reader, deliberately trying to get to the reader's emotion. That is not how poetry should work. The reader should be moved by the poem just as the poet was moved by the experience that went into it. Not because somebody set out to move the reader, but because there is something intrinsic in the experience that is going to get to the reader. [55]

### **An intrinsic essence in experiences? [56]**

Yes. The 19th century poet Robert Browning was notoriously obscure. Somebody wrote to him saying his poetry was interesting but why could it not be easier to understand his meaning? Browning replied that the poet's business was with God, not with the reader. I think he meant that the poet had a duty to what exists, to the nature of reality, and the reader's business was to listen if he wished to. The poet's duty is to what happens. The analogy would be if you went to the cinema and the characters in the film didn't talk to each other but talked to the audience instead. What you want is the characters talking to one another, and the audience listening to them. You understand what the film means not from what they tell you, but from appreciating the whole situation. [57]

22 July 2008

Interview held in Cambridge UK, April 2006 and via email correspondence July 2008.

### **Becoming Something Deeper.**

#### **Poet Myra Schneider interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

Myra Schneider: Hi, Gil, welcome... would you like some tea? [1]

**Gil Dekel: That would be nice. [2]**

[getting tea] [3]

**Gil Dekel: Did you always live in London? [4]**

Myra Schneider: I have been living here a long time now, since 1955, in this house. This room was my son's bedroom, and it is now my poetry workshop room. [5]

**Your wonderful book *Multiplying the Moon* was published by Enitharmon Press... it is a gift to be able to write like that... [6]**

Thank you... I can tell you a lot about it. [7]

**Can I ask you about the process of writing *The Cave*, which appears in this book? [8]**

Yes... I was quite weak from chemotherapy; this is in the year 2000. I managed to do my teaching here at home, but I wasn't strong enough to leave home to do anything. I should have been going to run a weekend course, and I did the preparation work, but somebody else stood in for me. I worked at what I call image exploration, which is a technique where you make a suggestion and people would fill in their own ideas, their own feelings, and their own images. [9]

So I worked out an image exploration, and came up with this idea of the cave. The image cave is very good because it is underground, inside, and you can find all sorts of things there. You can imagine you are inside that cave and can see things around you. Then you write what happens next. Before the weekend course happened, I had a poetry group here. We did the image exploration, and I got very involved in it. I kind of heard a sound, and it was of my father. He was making an accusation about me, a confrontation. I was very shocked because my father was dead. So, I wrote a poem about this, and as I developed it closely to the image exploration I realised that it wasn't by chance that I had the image of a cave. Rather, I needed to go down there myself, and find out what was going on. There was this accusation, and me standing up against it, fighting back, and getting out again from this underground place, which I suppose the illness put me into. [10]

**And the accusation is your father questioning your life? [11]**

Yes, and it is quite unlikely for him to do, but this is what I heard in the image exploration. He said, 'You are hardly a woman.' I suppose that this is something that I felt after the breast cancer. I did feel that everybody else is perfect and I am peculiar. Of course, this is not true, but these things are irrational and I haven't addressed it before ... So, probably that was a way of looking at these feelings. [12]

I was quite shocked and shaken that my father came in, a kind of authority figure. But I stood up to him, it is very important that I said, 'No, I am a woman!' I actually said that I have become something deeper, because the experience of having cancer puts you in a different dimension. You see things in a different perspective. Life becomes very precious; you want to hold on to it. [13]

**Why were you shocked to hear your father? [14]**

I was surprised to see him in that context because I thought that I had finished writing about him. Well, I never seem to finish writing... and I had this ... some sort of a vision of him; photographic. It was a sense of his voice. [15]

**This is how you write? Out of sensing, or seeing, images? [16]**

When I write a poem I develop a lot of notes, and I use a flow-writing technique. Flow-writing means writing what comes to your head without planning. Our education system teaches us to plan before we write, and put it down only after



you sort out what it means. In flow-writing you let everything come in. It is difficult to let go of the consciousness, so you have to take a starting point, a sentence, a colour, a phrase. You have to let go and stop planning. You can't 'try to let go' but rather you try to see what words are coming up. If you do try to let go, you will then be holding it, and that will be artificial. So, you try to see what words are coming instead of what words you want to direct. What is coming from underneath, from the unconscious, and flowing to the surface. Coming out of the cave to the sunlight. [17]

### **How do you deal with it once you sense a word or a metaphor? [18]**

A metaphor will take you beyond logic, comparing one thing to another. There is more than one meaning to it. Logic can only cope with one layer of meaning at a time. A poem is suggesting all sorts of things besides its actual literal meaning. I personally think in images, and images come into my writing. [19]

With free writing words flow, but then you have to craft the piece of work, so you do have to apply logic. You do have to ask, 'Where is this going? Which of these connections really works? What is missing?' This is where technique, skill and craft have to be merged with inspiration. Inspiration comes as you work through; it is not something that collides and pours down at you. I do draft after draft after draft. I don't stop drafting until I feel I have something there. It is a mix of imagination, flow-writing, associations, and organisation using logic. [20]

### **So what do you think Blake meant when he said something about doing nothing and letting the Holy Spirit work through him? [21]**

Maybe so, still his poems are quite formal. I think his description is probably true as for the ideas and images coming to him. And then there is much work and crafting needed. [22]

### **Do you think writing can heal? [23]**

I believe that any kind of writing, not just poetry but even just sitting and writing your feelings, is healing. It is a way of release. You let out what is worrying, instead of bottling it all up. It helps you sort out ideas. Helps you to see, crystallising thoughts and emotions into a shape that is outside you. And so you can get hold of it and do something about it. You can even discover what you are feeling that you didn't notice before. For example, at one point I was extremely angry and didn't recognise it. The anger started to surface in the poem *The Shell*. Climbing up the stairs and letting go of rage. In another poem, *Release*, I write about going to let go of my anger. Once this is written, outside your mind, you can understand it much better. You have partly separated yourself from it, and then you got more control over it. [24]

### **It is like a mirror to your deepest soul? [25]**

Yes, it is a way of life. It is about being in touch with your spiritual self; words come from there. Poetry is how you feel the sound of words, the meanings of words, playing with words. I am a pantheist, believing that God is in everything. This was Wordsworth's religion... [26]

21 June 2008  
Interview held in London, UK, December 2006

## **I Was Always a Genius.**

**Poet Alan Corkish interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: I get the feeling that your poetry is based mainly on telling a story, an event, rather than depicting a picture. Is this correct? [1]**

Alan Corkish: I'm not sure about what you mean Gil. Language is complex, I don't think you can hang labels onto anyone's poems that are that simplistic. To be honest, I sometimes write stuff just because I like the sound of the words; I think what you refer to are poems I label 'snapshots', they capture a moment in time... my 25000 word autobiographical poem *Glimpses of Notes* is a series of such snapshots... but sometimes the 'picture' is patently obvious. I went through a phase of writing 'concrete' poems which depicted nothing but the picture created from words. [2]

**What is the difference between image and word? [3]**

As a philosopher – and philosophy was my first love and the subject I studied for my initial degree – I could say there is no difference: a word, a letter, an image are all simply things viewed which convey information. [4]

As a poet though I'd answer that within a written page can lie both images and words, and words of course conjure images... they have to, otherwise all that would be left is the music which Kerouac and co. experimented with in 'poems' like *Sounds of the Pacific Ocean* in his novel *Big Sur*. This is why it is important to read poetry as opposed to simply going to open-floor gigs to listen; you need, almost always, to absorb the shape of a poem as well as hear the words, otherwise (like at most poetry open-floor gigs) poetry is reduced to a kind of low-brow music-hall entertainment. But Gil, I could probably do my PhD on the difference between image and word... so that for now is my condensed answer. [5]

**What inspires you to write? [6]**

You presume I'm inspired? That amuses me. In 2004 I put the nail in the coffin of anything to do with 'inspiration' in favour of perspiration and wrote one poem every single day; 366 of the buggers (2004 was a leap-year). I made myself finish each poem completely by midnight on the day and never altered a word after that. Mainly they work too. If you sit around all day waiting for inspiration you'll not write much of anything. We writers are workers, artisans; if I could give some advice to would-be writers it would be: 'you are not Gods, anyone can write, if you want to be a writer remember it's a job'... now that may not sound very romantic but it's true. [7]

I edit the poetry journal *erbacce* ; we get literally thousands of poetry submissions and 99% of it goes straight in the bin; mainly because it's 'inspired' but lazy. A poem needs crafting, it needs working on like a sculpture. Idiots think they are inspired and so they slap down their alleged inspiration and think it's wonderful; usually it isn't, usually it's self-indulgent. [8]

Coleridge said that poetry was 'the best words in the best order', and I think he got it spot-on; that means the poet has to alter, to think, to work. My favourite story concerns an exchange of letters; someone wrote to Oscar Wilde and asked how his latest poem was coming on. He replied: 'Yesterday I worked for sixteen

hours editing a section of it, then I removed a comma... today I put it back again...' [9]

### **What is inspiration, then? [10]**

It's a word invented by idle bastards so they can laze about in a pub waiting for it. It's an excuse not to write. [11]

### **So, have you ever met such so-called 'idle bastards'?... and if so, what is the difference between their poetry and, say, the poetry of William Blake? [12]**

What I meant was that everyone thinks they can write poetry be it appalling rhyme or (allegedly) 'linguistically innovative'... and of course they can, to some extent, but the point about Blake, for example, is that he didn't slap down a poem and then say 'Oh how wonderful that is; I'll send it to a publisher'. Not at all. Like Yeats, Hopkins, Yevtushenko et al. he then sat down and worked on it. [13]

The first outpourings of a poem could be compared to coughing up a large quarry stone; then the true poet uses wit, experience, passion, intellect, even genius to sculpt it into shape. [14]

Sometimes I sit and just tell myself to write a poem; that is what I did in 2004 when I wrote a poem-a-day whether I was in the mood or not... At other times something moves me deeply, often it's anger. Writing poetry springs from many wells, I guess, and sometimes it's just another job like being a stone-mason or a deck-hand on a whaler... [15]

### **What is your view on those moments when something moves you deeply? [16]**

As I get older I find these happen less frequently. Besides, when I look back I'm not entirely sure that such 'outpourings' inspired by being 'moved' work. It's like when I went through a phase in my life when I was drinking far too much alcohol. I'd down a bottle of whiskey and suddenly there'd be an 'outpouring'. At the moment it would always seem like the best thing I'd ever written; but when I sobered up it looked more like an outpouring of vomit as opposed to genius. [17]

This doesn't invalidate other poets who say such moments worked for them. Blake, for example, and Coleridge... and it has to be said that Shakespeare was so prolific that it's hard not to believe that much of his work was so inspired. [18]

What I do now mostly, and it may disappoint my readers, is to sit and write for four hours every morning. I write usually between 4.30 and 8.30 in the morning, as I don't sleep much... then in the afternoon or evening I print it out and edit it. Much more ends up in the bin now than it ever did when I was a young man... [19]

### **Do you work in any other medium? [20]**

I paint; I am an avid photographer and I sculpt. I'm just not very good at them... and I so wish I could play a musical instrument but as hard as I try I can't manage it. I've always had a guitar and every so often I get it out and have another go. But although I can carry a tune when singing I can't get anything from those strings except a twangy howl. That said I know deep inside that I

could learn if I put my mind to it... maybe I'm too old now to give it the effort required. [21]

**Do you find any creative connection between words (poetry) and images (photography)? [22]**

Yes, frequently, in the sense that I will often compose a poem following a long walk when I've been clicking away. I live close to Gormley's 'Another Place' and love to walk and photograph those iron men in all shades of light and in all weathers. The photographs often revamp memories which in turn spark ideas for poems or prose; when I'm walking I have with me a hand-held recorder and at least one camera. The poems which evolve, however, may not have anything directly to do with the content of the photographs; the photographs often capture unexpected pointers or markers to other things. [23]

Let me give you a concrete example. I was walking in Ainsdale Woods recently; bluebells are coming out; while walking I concentrated on the sheer beauty of 'now' and photographed it. Later the photographs sparked memories of past events in other bluebell woods and eventually a distant memory emerged of a girl I knew a long time ago and how we'd planned to make love among the bluebells, but Fate intervened (the bastard often does)... some of that, the memory, the girl, the past is slowly erupting into a poem. [24]

**What happened? [25]**

I'm tempted to say 'Don't be so damned nosy!' but I suppose writers have to lay themselves open... I will do when the poem is complete but for now all I can honestly say is that we split. Difficult to enlarge, really. For sure we were in love but sometimes love is not enough... [26]

**You say, '...concentrated on the sheer beauty of 'now''. How do you concentrate on beauty and the 'moment of now'? [27]**

Mmmm; I am an atheist, more than that, I'm an anti-theist; I despise religion and all people who shut off their need to do anything in this world by having faith in the next. But, life is so beautiful, I call it the beautiful accident; however, most of the time we take it for granted until zap, something seems to hit us in the solar plexus. Like a few weeks ago – I was walking on Formby sand dunes when a flight of geese went past; perfect formation, about a hundred of them, the sun just tipping the edge of the sea, not a sound except the waves moving and no one in the world except me... it just filled my lungs; washed over me like an emotional tsunami. Then, for a split second, I could almost believe in a God and was saddened because my brain won't allow me to. [28]

A God who created such beauty couldn't possibly create the mayhem and horror which also fill this world. The difference between such moments and viewing the 'daily activities' of life lies within. Exactly the same moment at another time or on another day might pass me by entirely. Maybe it's the light, or the mood that sparks it off... but I'm honestly not totally sure. [29]

**Do you think that anyone can 'alter' their inner state in such a way to come to see more of the beauty of this world? [30]**

As I just indicated, I'm honestly not totally sure. Acid maybe, or a good toke on some skunk; but I don't use drugs anymore so I can't be sure... but Kesey, Lang, De Quincy, Huxley et al. certainly believed that drugs helped. [31]

Sometimes creativity just happens and I'm sure it just happens to others as well. Creativity is capable of altering the inner state, I'm sure of that... [32]

**Once creativity 'alters' your inner state, can you say what happens to you at that moment? [33]**

Mmm; I sound as though I'm being evasive, or just plain stupid... let me explain something about altered inner states: I am bi-polar, it's under control but it has meant in the past, and still means occasionally, that I have no control over my inner state; my state of mind is out of my control or at least it has been for large parts of my life. [34]

But again I have to say that when 'high' I'd write endlessly and try to explain to people how brilliant it was... Then when I normalised, the same thing, I would discover it was so much utter drivel. Drugs, alcohol, mental illness, they all alter states but I have no interest in what is then 'seen' or to discuss whether it's 'seeing beauty' because it's false. [35]

When on a sunny day I get suddenly and unexpectedly hit by the impact of this beautiful accident then what happens is private and personal, there is no point in trying to explain it to you or to anyone else. I may write a poem about it, but even if that poem is the best thing I've ever written it doesn't come close to the 'experience'. [36]

If I believed in a God, which I don't, I'd talk about 'communicating with something greater' or some such drivel. But I believe in nothing except me. Maybe that's it, maybe what happens is that I actually communicate with me, with the person inside whom we repress for most of our lives due to conditions of worth which are inflicted on us as soon as we take breath... yes, maybe that's it, a sense of freedom-to-allow-the-real-me-to-breathe for a few minutes... I guess that's as good as it gets. [37]

**Have your views on life, on religion, on the beauty of the word changed over time? [38]**

Remarkably no. Or at least very little. I was sent to various Churches and Sunday Schools as a child and none of it ever seemed anything other than a silly con-trick. As young as five I was sceptically asking my sisters 'Who made God then?' I suppose quite recently, within the past 10 or 15 years, I have become more orientated towards anti-theism and I speak out now openly when Christians or Muslims or Jews start talking about their alleged 'faith'. I can't help it, I just despise their smug cowardice. [39]

**Has your creativity changed, or developed, over the years? [40]**

'Changed'? Well, of course, every time I sit at a PC or pick up a pen that which spiels out is different, a change from all else previous. 'Developed'? I think that's too subjective a word and anyway it's for others to say; 'develops' indicates growth and movement, it hints at progress... that's really not for me to say. [41]

But hang on, it sounds as though I'm being uncharacteristically modest when I say that so let me think: I began, about ten years ago to publish my work; payment would generally be just a copy of the journal or book my work appeared in and now I have contracts with major publishers so in one sense that is an indication that someone out there believes my work has developed; but maybe

it's they who have developed... yes, that's it, I've educated the readers; I was always a genius, it just took the readers and publishers a long time to catch on, ha ha ha... [42]

**... so, you are almost like William Blake, I guess? It took the community a long time to realise he was a genius... [43]**

Indeed it did. Thanks for making me think, I hate interviews which are too 'easy'. I enjoyed this... [44]

15 June 2008

Interview conducted via email correspondence during May-June 2008.  
Alan Corkish is based in Liverpool, UK. Gil Dekel is based in Southampton, UK.

**Muses (collective-unconsciousness):**

**Turning On the Light Without Choosing Which Way It Will Spread.  
The authorial-Self, a 'Muse' of poetry, is interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: I am very happy to be able to interview my own 'Muse', my own creative self, and ask him about processes of inspiration in writing poetry. [1]**

**I would like to thank you, the authorial-Self, for 'descending' from the so-called 'collective unconsciousness, the spirit world', and coming over here, today. [2]**

Authorial-Self: It is more like coming down with an elevator, from your higher-mind and down to your heart... [3]

**So let's explain what is going on here. You are my creative 'Muse', and we are speaking with each other now through what some people call 'flowing speech' or 'automatic speech' experiment. The poet Yeats discusses this technique in the first part of his book *A Vision*. [4]**

**The first question I would like to ask you is about writing poetry. When writing, you actually inspire me to write my poems? [5]**

In fact you receive inspiration from groups of acknowledgements; from various sources. You receive from a 'cloud' of knowledge, from which you decide what symbols you want to draw and use for your poetry. [6]

**So, you are my authorial-Self, my creative-self, which is also me, in a way? [7]**

Yes. [8]

**So, what is the difference between you and me? [9]**

Well, you see, what is the difference between Gil who writes, Gil who runs, and Gil who likes to cook? [10]

**But running and cooking are things that I am doing, these are activities. Poetry, on the other hand, is something that 'I Am' – I was born a poet. [11]**

No, you were not. Poetry is an activity that you do just like any other activity. You see, you were not born 'cooking', and you were not born 'running'. In essence you are 'everything' and once you decide to do an activity, you simply limit the light in a way in which it becomes physicalised, whether it becomes poetry or cooking, or anything else for that matter. [12]

**Why do you inspire me to write poetry? [13]**

It is actually your own choice of what you want to be. [14]

**I chose to be born a poet? [15]**

You choose to be a poet every single time you write a poem. [16]

**Do you mean that the act of writing poetry is also an act of choosing to be a poet? [17]**

Yes. [18]

**But I thought that I am a poet all the time, even when I am not writing? [19]**

By choice. Only by your own choice you are a poet even in those moments that you do not write. [20]

**Why did I choose to be a poet? [21]**

Because it is now time that you document your experiences and verbalise them. Everything you gone through in previous life times has reached its melting point, and is ready to be documented through verbalization. [22]

**Are poets at a state where they are ready to document their experiences? [23]**

Yes, it is about self-observation and inquiry. You observe who you are, you inquire into your experiences, and you document them. [24]

**Why did you choose me from all people to be the one that writes and 'physicalises' your poetry? [25]**

Every human being is a particular experience of that which is All. I am using the term All here to express the higher realm, or what some of you call the collective unconsciousness. Now, if I want to document your specific life experience, why should I go and document another person's experience? I will go to you to document your experiences. [26]

**So, you chose me – in a way you chose 'yourself', 'ourselves' – because you wanted to document the particular experience of my physical self? [27]**

Yes, but be careful... [28]

**Careful of what? [29]**

Some people might think you got a multiple personality... [30]

**[Laughing] [31]**

[Smiling] This is about the gradation-of-personality... you are like a rainbow, consisting of many colours in one personality. [32]

**How then do you inspire me? [33]**

In your case I tend to appear in your dreams. And all you do is open a door to wider consciousness, which prevails over everything. Then you choose some aspects of it that you wish to write about. You have to listen, that's all. Listen to trees, clouds, people – and the poetry will flow to you. [34]

You see, consciousness is not a singular event, but rather a multitude of appearances. Consciousness is in every possible form, and poetry gives manifestation to one aspect of this consciousness, to one form. [35]

That form 'goes down' into the shape of an idea, then to the shape of thought, then down to awareness, to words, choice of words, and then it extends itself to become a sentence. At that point you write it down. [36]

**And what about emotion? [37]**

Emotion goes through a process of gradation on its own accord, and it evolves alongside that process. [38]

**Is this process of writing poetry a linear process? [39]**

Not at all. [40]

**But producing poetry is linear – word coming after word coming after word. [41]**

That is the only way that you can possibly understand it. Your mind, your logic, is sequential, but your heart can work in other ways. [42]

**What do you mean by 'your heart can work in other ways'? [43]**

I mean emotional intelligence... [44]

**When do you inspire me to write poems? [45]**

In your most awake moments... [46]

**When my eyes are closed?... [47]**

When your heart opens... [48]



Now, Gil, let me ask you about the way you write: at first a poem appears in your mind, and you contemplate the idea as to how to shape it into words, don't you? [49]

**No, I don't contemplate it. I usually have an emotion, an intense feeling, which 'flows' immediately to words. I don't think of it; it simply 'pours' into words, which I immediately write down. [50]**

So, when emotion appears in your mind, is it then verbalized? [51]

**Yes... [52]**

But at first you don't really give the emotion a name... [53]

**No, I don't... [54]**

You just have a sense of it. [55]

**Yes. [56]**

Now, let's look at what goes in your mind once you have that sense. First, you want to give meaning to that sense, to make it something that you can understand and write. To do so you go through self-reflection. Self-reflection is a process in which you critically choosing words which can be adjusted to the sense. Choosing words is a process that uses your logic and your intellect. So, what happens in this process is that you contemplate on how to shape feelings into words. In effect, you translate the feeling into words, into verbalized experience, through reflection and choice of words. Then, when it is written it becomes accessible to other people who read your poem. [57]

**But you are describing a long process, whereas in my case it happens in a split second. I get a feeling, which is translated immediately in my mind to words. It is instantaneous. [58]**

Hmm, yes... [59]

**You are saying that in a split second I get a feeling, which then undergoes self-reflection, critical choice of words, and receives meanings? All this is supposed to happen immediately? [60]**

Do you want to tell me that you still believe that time is a fixed measurement which was created by God? [61]

**Time is not a fixed measurement; time is relative. [62]**

So what is 'a split second' then, if not eternity?... [63]

**But, here we are talking about relativity of time, which is applicable only if you are moving at the speed of light, right? Are we then moving at the speed of light? [64]**

To presume that you are moving at the speed of light is to presume that there is darkness all over, and that light is moving through it. [65]

**Yes... [66]**

But, in reality light is everywhere, and darkness is the illusion of it... [67]

**I am even more confused now... still it makes perfect sense... can we go back to talk about poetry? [68]**

We never changed the subject... [69]

Now, let me summarize the process: first, I send you a sense of a feeling. Then, you grasp it, filter it through experiences of this lifetime, add to it the sense of logic, verbalize it – and you get the words for your poem. [70]

**How does one produce logic from feelings, from emotions? Emotions and logic seems opposites, so how one bridges them? [71]**

That is the beautiful capacity of your mind – to create meanings of everything, including emotions. [72]

**So, without logic there would be no poetry? [73]**

There would be... 'watercolours'... [74]

**'Soft poetry'... [75]**

'Floating memories'... [76]

Have you ever had a feeling that something is at the tip of your tongue yet you cannot say it? [77]

**Yes. [78]**

That's it. That is 'floating memories'. You feel something, you sense it, you know it is there, but you can not say it. That happens while logic is looking for the sense of the feeling, to attach a sense to it. Your logic has to put everything in boxes. Once it finds the right box, it immediately 'remembers'. [79]

**What are these boxes? [80]**

These are pre-set boxes that help you to classify the world. Everything you feel is adjusted to one such box. [81]

**And after all this, can I ask what is your definition of poetry? [82]**

Poetry is the music of the banality. It is a tool to elevate everyday life to the sacred. It is an expression of your wisdom where you write down all your necessary mistakes and necessary triumphs that brought about your life experiences. It is like turning on the light without choosing which way it will spread... [83]

10 August 2008

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The interview was held through automatic-speech experiment (conducted by Gil Dekel and Natalie Dekel) in Portsmouth, UK, 12 October 2006, and was revised in July/August 2008.

## **Visual Artists:**

### **Painters:**

#### **On Every Beach the Sand is Different.**

**Portraits painter, Natalie Dekel, interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

#### **Gil Dekel: When did you start painting? [1]**

Natalie Dekel: I was left-handed and my mother was worried that I will not be able to use my right hand. Where I was born and grew up, everyone had to be the same and had to write in school using their right hand only... So at the age of one my mother gave me a lot of pencils and told me to draw using my right hand only. I ended up being able to work with both hands. [2]

#### **Can you paint with both hands? [3]**

Yes. [4]

#### **Is there a difference? [5]**

Yes. I use the right hand to create decisive lines, geometrical, logical. And I use my left hand to paint with colours, and to paint without thought, without thinking. Line is more a thought personified and the evolution of it. Colour builds up emotional layers. Every colour creates a certain resonance. As you draw with colours you build up a story around emotions that evolve and can create responses within the viewer. [6]

#### **Which masters of art influence your portrait works? [7]**

I admire Rembrandt because he is the master of soul portraits. Every painting he has done, you look and you can almost feel the breathing, the heart beatings, and the sweat on the person's face. He manages to transform the time and the place beyond limitations. It is a transgressive time. In Holbein's portraits I see real people that I could imagine living today. I also like Egon Schiele for his line. It is a living line expressing emotions. [8]

What attracts me is the expression. Sometimes somebody is perfectly able to express a realistic line, but the line is dead on the paper. I am searching for this something that makes my heart beat faster when I see it. Looking at a painting and becoming it; feeling for the person drawn. In those moments you forget you are looking at it, just like reading a good book and forgetting you are reading it. You become part of the story. [9]

A good painting is not one among thousands hung in a museum that you pass through quickly, getting tired, having to do so because of a 'duty' to the history of art. That is not beauty. I believe that a good painting stops you, like Klimt's *The Kiss*. You look at it and it absorbs you. You become this beautiful meditation, a part of the scene, and through this experiential knowledge you feel the meanings of that art work. [10]

**Many people go to see paintings in the museum, but may not see what you see. Is art for artists alone then? [11]**

No. I believe that there is no such thing as one definition of art that everyone should succumb to. If you ask ten people to look at the same painting, each one will see different things in it. Let's take Mondrian. For me, Mondrian's work is too analytic; too much thinking. The work is standing still, and I feel very subtle, very withdrawn. Being an emotional person, there is so much beyond his work that I cannot connect with. And yet for you, when you look at a Mondrian, you can almost feel the beat of the lines, the basic colours, the balance of the shapes. For you it makes sense much more, because that is the type of a person you are. So, it depends on the personality, not on the work. What I see is what interests me as a person. [12]

### **It seems as if art is more expressive than communicative? [13]**

It is not less communicative, but simply communicative on different levels. The beauty of it is like the beauty of words. A word is a symbol, so when I say 'a chair' both of us understand a chair, but we imagine different chairs. I might imagine an 18th century style chair, while you might imagine a wood rocking chair. We both talk about a chair, but the feelings, the background and the emotional experience are different. The content is the same, but the context is different. The same goes for paintings. When you look at a painting it is a symbol and it will communicate right for every person on their level, on what interests them. [14]

### **Why do you paint? [15]**

It's a compulsive urge, a way to express myself. I feel better and more confident to express the little nuances I see around me in visuals than in words, maybe because I speak several languages and none of them is actually my own, as such. So whatever I could describe in words is less significant than seeing an image which can strike you, 'Yes, that's me!' [16]

Painting helps me to self-develop and evolve. If my work can help others to evolve or even raise a thought in someone, then I will be honoured. [17]



Figure 1: Self portrait (detail), in Art Nouveau style, early 20th century, after Alphonse Mucha. 21cm x 42cm, acrylic on card, painted 2004. [18]

**Your recent project is 'past lives portraits' and 'guided portraits'. What is your attraction to portraits specifically, and not to other forms such as nature? [19]**

Everyone is talented in certain areas, or rather, interested in certain areas. I am fascinated with people. When I was little I had a feeling that I am here on Earth by a mistake, by chance. And I was looking around me at people who I thought could not understand me or what I am. At first there was a gap between how I thought as a child to how other children thought. I felt too mature for them. Later on I just felt different, and I was fascinated with these 'other beings', people, that are not me. [20]

Each time I see a person I can see something which is like an exploration of another aspect that I do not have, do not know about, and is beautiful. Human beings are microcosmos of macrocosmos which got everything in it: thoughts, emotions, nuances, relations. [21]



Figure 2: Anne-Marie as a French Lady of the 18th century. 21cm x 42cm, acrylic on card, painted 2008. [22]



Figure 3: Anne-Marie, pictured in 2008. [23]

**How did you come to draw people's past lives and not their present lives? [24]**

Even though we are in the present moment and I am depicting someone's face in the present, there is emotional and physical luggage of past lives and past experiences that I feel compelled to express and show. I will take the present time personality and contextualise it in the past. What's interesting is that when I see you it is not just how I see you now, but how other information about you which is not from now is coming from the past. It is right behind you. This information 'bombards' me and I want to depict it. Perhaps it will be a message for you about what carries on within you. People carry a lot of stuff with them. Sometimes it is more prominent and I see it clearly, maybe because I personally knew the person in the past. [25]

**How do you receive this information about people's past lives? [26]**

I just look at them and I have a feeling about it. I see them. [27]

### **How did the past lives portraits project begun? [28]**

It started with self-portraits of past lives which were influenced by other paintings of great masters. Then it evolved to self-portraits inspired by my imagination. Then portraits of other people, and lately I've been drawing portraits of 'invisible' people, spirits that come to my mind and which I cannot see elsewhere. So I paint what I see in my imagination, like the following portrait, *Keith*: [29]



Figure 4: Keith, an Angel. 21cm x 42cm, acrylic on card, painted 2008. [30]

### **How did you see him in imagination? [31]**

Initially I did not see him as a person, but as a being, an essence, a spirit figure. I saw a white outline, a symbol. I didn't see his face at all. As I drew I had to ask him, 'Do you have dark hair? What colour are your eyes?' Actually he has darker hair than what I drew, but I wanted to have a lot of white to give the feeling that he is not here any more; non-physical. So the hair got lighter. What I saw in my imagination is the intensity of his eyes. Very powerful. I would ask the question, and would be given an image where I could see a part of his face that I then drew. Eyes, then hair, feelings, memories. He would convey to me and I would draw it. [32]

### **How do you translate feelings to colours? [33]**

If I have a feeling it may be like asking oneself, 'Remember omelette?' and I say, 'Yes, that is how it felt.' So omelette is soft, fluffy, white yellowish. Then I ask, 'How did your eyes look?' and he says, 'When I was looking there was an intense blue.' And so I draw intense blue, and as I draw I keep asking, 'Is that right?' and if not then I get an image or a sound to guide me. The hair is a bit wavy and dark. He loved to go with his hand through his hair. So when I was asking about the hair, he did not give me the colour, but the whole feeling. What it felt like to have hair and put your hand through it. [34]

It is perhaps a thought, a word, a feeling, or just an urge that comes up. Sometimes you feel hungry and you think, 'I feel like having pasta now.' Why did you decide to have pasta? Isn't it a kind of an unexplainable feeling for a particular taste? This is the urge I get to paint. [35]

### **How do you translate emotions to colours? [36]**

I presume it is quite easy. Like the Chakra's colours. If it is positive and light bubbly, I will use pink, blue, yellow. If it is heavy, earthy, it is darker colours. The same with shapes. Sometimes you let go and let your hand choose for you. You don't think. Drawing then becomes flowing like automatic speech. [37]

### **Is there a difference between drawing yourself and others? [38]**

You seem to know the light of your own self better. Even if you change, and we all do, at least you are familiar with the lines, so it is easier to observe the changes and to focus on the messages behind lines. [39]

When you draw other people you need to learn them: how they see reality, how they feel, how their eyelashes curve, how the nose goes. You need to learn everything anew. It is like each time learning what it feels like to touch the sand, because on every beach the sand is different. You need to learn the topography of the face, and the lines of emotions. One person will blink differently when they are happy, perhaps hold the mouth differently. Every single line depicts emotion, and you need to become a psychologist of the person before you can depict the emotions in their face. [40]

### **If the artist knows herself, how can she observe and paint a self-portrait? [41]**

You never know yourself completely. To paint yourself you detach yourself to observe what is it that you are looking for. When I draw I never know; I know only what I expect to find more or less, but I never find the same thing. [42]

### **How do you detach yourself from yourself? [43]**

I don't draw the self. I draw the body that contains the self, and the body keeps changing. [44]

### **You draw the body or the soul? [45]**

I am trying to convey the soul and the emotion behind it; a soul which is contained in a bottle, a body. This body is what I am focusing on because that is what we can understand. [46]

### **How do you convey the soul in the body? [47]**

By learning the nuances of every single line in the face. Each line shows how you think, what you eat, how you behave. Who you are. Our faces are maps. According to Chinese natural medicine, you can even look at one's ear and tell one's health. [48]

### **Can you look at someone's hand in the same way? [49]**

Yes. Van Gogh even looked at shoes. He did portraits of shoes. And that was a complete portrait, because the way you wear your shoes tells a lot about you. Light walker, heavy walker, do you look after the shoes, the type of shoe you choose. The shoes become you, they bear the message you imprint upon them with each step. With people's faces it is not different. The way you wear your body shows who you are. [50]

### **Once you capture an essence, a message, isn't it then fixed in the painting? [51]**

It is; however, portraits are snapshots in time; that is what they are. Rembrandt did many self-portraits through his life, and each one continues to exist. You as a personality change every single second, just like your cells changing each second. Some scientists believe that each year most of the body's atoms are replaced by new atoms, so each year we get a new body. It is not even the same person that is drawn a year later. You take different snapshots and show the evolution of the self within the body, so you can look back and reflect. [52]

### **How do emotions relate to thoughts? [53]**

They are like different pitches in music. You can have low pitch and high pitch. One is thought and the other is emotion. When they come together they produce a painting. [54]

15 June 2008

Interview held in Southampton, UK, 15 April 2008. © Natalie and Gil Dekel

## **Portals of the Mind and the Soul.**

### **Painter, poet and philosopher Paul Hartal is interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

#### **Gil Dekel: What is your view on the sources of creativity in art? [1]**

Paul Hartal: Creativity is a cognitive process that results in new outcomes. It generates original ideas and novel products. Since creative faculties are not distributed evenly at birth, we come to the world with significant differences in levels of intelligence and talent orientation. [2]

Art happens in a culture, in a society and under certain historical conditions. Formal and informal education plays a significant role in the development of the artist. It is possible to hone talent and to stimulate inventiveness. But creativity can be taught only to a certain extent. [3]

A significant aspect of the arts concerns the hilarious and the amusing. Humour opens an intriguing door to wisdom. Another major source of creativity originates in the irrational realm of dreams and the unconscious. [4]

I think that all art disciplines share common traits with each other. Poetry, painting, music, dance, drama and film involve parallel creative processes. They



may express similar content and vision in different forms. Each art form communicates meanings through its own specific set of symbols. At the same time the sources of creativity transcend the individual. Thus, poetry, music, painting and all the arts, flow from the same external fountainhead of creativity. [5]



Figure 1: *Music and Poetry*, 2005, 40cm x 51cm approx, acrylic on canvas. [6]

**What is that external creative fountainhead? Or, may I ask, what is inspiration? [7]**

I believe that our intuitions, imagination, emotions, ideas, memories, thoughts and dreams are not independent events of an autonomous brain and nervous system. We are an integral part of nature and cognitive processes occur in an organism sustained by its environment. They take place in a body that interacts with the biosphere and the entire universe. [8]

Inspiration literally denotes inhaling and refers to the ancient belief that artists breathe in supernatural spirits. Meaningful archetypal dreams surface through the personal unconscious, from the deepest layers of the psyche, what Jung calls the collective unconscious, as nocturnal images, memories and fantasies. [9]

But I would like to go beyond Jung. We live in a holographic world in which the whole contains the part and the part contains the whole. Accordingly, the metaphors of the human mind reflect the metaphoric universe and our creative impulse echoes the creativity of the cosmos. I envisage the existence of a universal field of consciousness which permeates the cosmos. Our own consciousness originates from this spectrum. Similarly to a television set that receives its programme from a broadcast station, our brain acts as a receiver of information transmitted by the stars and galaxies. [10]

The universe is a poet. Its symmetry entails reciprocity. Its holographic qualities imply that when poets write poems the universe writes its own. This follows from the unity of the knower and the known. The artist is part of the universe, and the universe is part of the artist. [11]

The idea of the primacy of consciousness is also supported by science. In the 1920s the astrophysicist Arthur Eddington suggested that the stuff of the world is

“mind-stuff”, which does not spread out in space and time, but rather space and time are spun out of it. [12]

Among other renowned scientists John Wheeler also holds that what we experience as matter originates in the mind. The primacy of the mind involves cybernetics, because, in Wheeler’s view, the laws of physics can be stated in the language of information theory: “it from bit”. Also, more recently, the nuclear physicist Amit Goswami has advanced his credo that the universe is an unconscious entity, which becomes aware of itself through human consciousness. [13]

I believe that we can gain deeper insights about the true nature of the universe through our senses than through our intellect. This is so because the universe is made not only of mind-stuff but also of love-stuff. Love is built into the fabric of the cosmos. From a scientific perspective, love basically can be viewed as an attractive and binding force that exists throughout the universe, even at the atomic and molecular level. The stars and the galaxies, indeed infinite space itself, are an extension of the self, the external dimensions of our inner sphere. And they are imbued with love. We are created by the universe but we also create it. We are born to love and to be loved. Life and love are inexorably interwoven. Life exists as a result of love, and love exists as a result of life. In the beginning of time man and woman were not separated and they desire forever to return to this primordial state. It is in the transitory ecstasy of the embrace when man and woman reunite that the universe reveals a mysterious glimpse of its deepest secret. [14]



Figure 2: *Time Does Not Exist: Love is Eternal* (blue version), 2005, 91cm x 61cm approx, acrylic on canvas. [15]

**How does inspiration works upon you while you paint or write a poem? [16]**

While I paint or write I focus on the work itself and do not reflect on theory. Inspiration itself, however, is just the beginning. According to an old maxim, art is ten percent inspiration and ninety percent perspiration. [17]

**What inspires you to create? [18]**

I see the world as a mysterious place, full of magic and wonder. Life is a precious gift, in spite of all its hardships and tragedies. It comes with potentials. Humans have the power of honouring and celebrating life, as well as trivializing and debasing it. I find inspiration in the excitement and the sorrow of existence, the beauty and ugliness of the world, in grand events and in trivial things. Some aspects in my oeuvre are influenced by ironic traits and humorous moods. [19]

I view myself as a Lycoist, or Lyrical Conceptualist. Lyco Art is a new idea, which I introduced into the periodic table of art with *A Manifesto on Lyrical Conceptualism*, published in Montreal in 1975. Lycoism is concerned with the creative process, cultural transformation and the human condition. It engages the entire scale of formative energies through transformative vision, a voyage of aesthetic consciousness in which passion evolves as logic and logic becomes passion. It expands the boundaries of aesthetics and identifies the meaning of art with its life serving purpose. [20]

In my vision paintings and poems are portals of the mind and the soul. Immersed in the artist's vision, paintings arrest and frame the unrelenting chaos of the world. I believe that art must concern itself with science and technology because in our post-industrial society science and technology determine our lifestyle. At the same time, one of the major goals of art is the humanisation of the environment and therefore science and technology should not be our masters but our servants. Intuition and imagination play a salient role in both art and science. Transcending the state of existing conditions necessitates innovative leaps into uncharted areas. Consequently the cognitive faculty of creative imagination is more important in advancing the human condition than the inert body of knowledge. [21]

### **How would you define poetry? [22]**

The word *poetry* derives from the Greek *poesis*, which means making and creating. Literary tradition describes poetry as an artistic form that conveys meanings through the aesthetic and evocative qualities of language. [23]

Poetry pleases, moves and elevates by word choice and word form, the interaction of style, pattern, sound, image and idea. Great poetry expresses heightened thought, intensified emotion, concentrated observation and soaring imagination. [24]

The towering construct of the poetic diction rises as a memorable experience wrapped and ornamented in such artistic devices as simile, metaphor, rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, onomatopoeia and melody. [25]

Poetry extends beyond language. And in the final analysis it eludes exact definition. I read somewhere that poetry is the frame of life. I think it is rather the other way around: Life is the frame of poetry. Let me go even further: Life is identical with poetry. [26]

### **Why do you create art? [27]**

Why indeed? Would it not be easier to live without art? I think it would be simpler but not easier. Could I live without creating art? I believe I could; but it would be a grey and attenuated life. So, the answer to your question is that I paint pictures and write poems because they make my life more interesting, more exciting and

more meaningful. [28]



Figure 3: *Centaurus A Galaxy*, 1993, 61cm x 50cm approx, acrylic on canvas. [29]

However, your question also opens a Pandora's box of unsolved mysteries and enigmas. What is art? It defies universal definition. Aesthetic philosophies depend on context and history. Creating art is a cultured instinct propelled by the atavistic memory of star formations, butterfly colours and bird songs. Art is an impulsive thrust, a spontaneous wave of excitation. Also, creating art is a therapeutic experience. Art heals. As a way of meditation it not only purifies the soul, but in terms of body-mind interaction art is also capable of enhancing the immune system by psycho-neurological stimulation. Among its many potential roles, art has important transformative capacities as a formidable humanising force. Moreover, art can also function as an effective weapon of social criticism. [30]

**You talked about the unity of word and image, but what is the difference between the two? [31]**

Word and image resist conversion. They mutually defy transference into each other. Thus, the main underlying difference between poetry and painting stems from their medium specificities. The visible properties of the world comprise the essential subjects of painting. A painting is a frozen picture in time, presented on a two-dimensional surface. Poetry on the other hand is a verbal composition, an emotional or mental event moving through linear time. Reading a poem is a linear experience progressing through time. Its length can be measured by the clock. However, the duration of viewing a painting is not a time-determined linear experience. [32]

A poem consists of words soaring through the vibrating air as sounds, or written in the abstract symbols of text. A painting on the other hand is a two-dimensional image of the three-dimensional world in visual form and colour. How one is supposed to capture on the canvas the sound of "O", or the sound of a conjugated verb? And then there are feelings, emotions, and sensations, nuances of meaning and abstract concepts. These cannot be expressed by means of figurative realism. Perhaps, a great artist might succeed in expressing them through symbolic compositions, but not without sacrificing clarity. [33]

All art forms are metaphorical, and ambiguity is built into their fabric and essence. Both poetry and painting are semiotic systems of signs and symbols that communicate messages. It also should be noted that the proverb, "a picture is

worth ten thousand words”, is a reversible adage for a word can also be worth ten thousand pictures. So, words can describe pictures and pictures can illustrate words. They can complement, enhance and synergise each other, but they can never entirely replace each other. Painting is pictorial and visual, whereas poetry is verbal and auditory. [34]

**You talked about life as a gift that people can choose to celebrate or debase. Do you think that all people have the opportunity to choose in life? Perhaps some people are born into a situation/place that they cannot change? [35]**

Of course life is finite, a short visitation in transitory time. I take it for granted that reality is bigger than the individual. Besides, people are born indeed with different genetic givens, with different abilities and into different socio-economic conditions. Thus, talent alone is not enough. People who have to toil hard to make ends meet can hardly afford to get an appropriate education in order to realize their dreams. Nevertheless, exceptional individuals motivated by strong will and tenacious determination do succeed in spite of all hardships. And luck also can play a role in success. The world is a rather uncontrollable place and life is an unpredictable chess game. [36]

Historical and geographical conditions have their say, too. If you live under the rule of the Khmer Rouge, or the Taliban, you cannot become an artist in the Western sense. Now, after all this clarification, the main point regarding the possibilities of celebrating or debasing life remains intact. We have the historical evidence that humans even under the most dreadful conditions are capable of retaining their lofty spirit and inner dignity. The individual has the inward potential to rise above his or her own suffering and to turn it into a moral triumph of integrity. [37]

**Do you think artists make a choice (conscious or subconscious), regarding which art form they will engage with? [38]**

I think that artists are aware of their specific talents before they become accomplished practitioners. It is not a coincidence that Rembrandt and Picasso were painters and not musicians. [39]

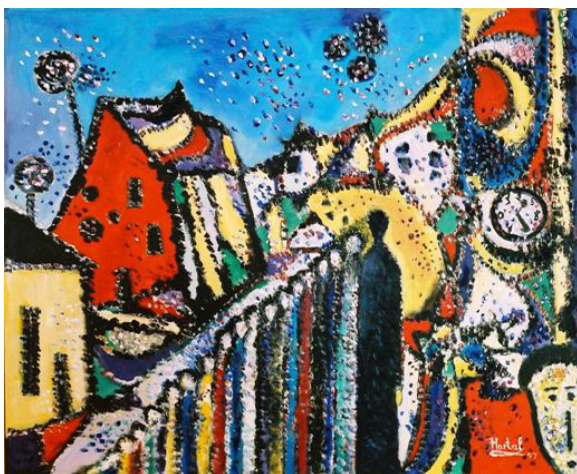


Figure 3: *The Red Queue*, 1997, 76cm x 56cm approx, acrylic on canvas. [40]

**Your academic background varies from science and medical studies, to geography, history, education and art. Are there similarities, or a core essence, in the teachings of these fields? [41]**

The achievements of science and technology are truly astonishing but they have been accomplished with the help of the arts. Science and art complement each other. Just think of such ubiquitous elements of daily life as writing, printing, photography, film, television, computer design and the architecture of the city. They would not be available to us without the creative mind of the artists. [42]

The stars of Newton and Hawking are not closer to reality than the stars of Goya or van Gogh. In its strife for discovering how the world actually is, science does not discover how real is real. Instead, it discovers what it can say about nature in human language (which includes mathematics). [43]

Even mathematics, the most exact subject on earth and the queen of sciences is a construct of the human mind. It is much less rational than it pretends to be. For example, mathematics inconsistently allows multiplying by zero but forbids dividing by zero. So the realm of the queen of sciences is a wondrous kingdom, floating on the lake of poetic ideas, such as the hierarchy of infinite sets or the baffling imaginary number  $i$  (the evasive square root of minus one). Consequently, in the words of Albert Einstein: "as far as the propositions of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality". [44]

It is a common myth that scientists test their theories against exact observations and proceed in accordance with the precise rules of irrefutable logic. However, scientific creativity, similarly to artistic creativity, incorporates irrational components. The physicist, as Einstein points out, cannot arrive at the principal universal laws of the cosmos by pure deduction: "There is no logical path to these laws; only intuition, resting on sympathetic understanding of experience, can reach them". [45]

I believe that art and science are symbolic endeavours through which humanity explores, structures and interprets reality. There is art in science and science in art. On the whole, it is true though that compared to the rational and objective methods of science, art offers an irrational and subjective approach. Nevertheless, art is completely concrete, and therefore a significant source of authentic empirical knowledge. In certain respects, this form of concrete knowledge challenges the epistemological status of the mathematical abstractions of science because genuine knowledge can be only achieved by the experience of the senses, and art is based on sensory realization. [46]





Figure 5: *In the Beginning*, 1995, 71cm x 56cm approx, acrylic on canvas. [47]

I mentioned above that an important facet of the arts involves the hilarious and the amusing. Since ancient times people were aware of the healing power of laughter. "A cheerful heart is good medicine", says the Book of Proverbs (17:22). However, for scientists hearsay is not enough. So let me mention that a recent pioneering study at the University of Maryland, for example, has found cardiologic evidence that laughter indeed benefits the heart and improves the healthy function of blood vessels. [48]

Nowadays psychologists, neurologists and immunologists take an increased interest not only in humour but also in poetry, literature, music, painting, dance, theatre and film, because all the arts have potential healing qualities. Integrative medicine treats the whole person, not only a specific organ. It recognizes that the human organism has an inner healer and it significantly influenced by the mind. A positive, optimistic mind set is a prerequisite of well being. [49]

A strong scientific basis for the integration of the arts into medicine is found in interdisciplinary studies. Since the 1970s the new interdisciplinary science of *psychoneuroimmunology* (PNI) is making inroads in furthering our knowledge on the function of the brain and the immune system as an integrated system of defence. Candace Pert in her book of 1997, *Molecules of Emotion*, shows that our thoughts and emotions are deeply interdependent in our bodies with a chemical information network of neuropeptides. Due to the presence of the neuropeptides on both the walls of the brain and the immune system, thoughts and emotions occur throughout the entire body. Through the mobile brain of these molecules the mind becomes body and the body becomes mind. [50]

Intrigued by dramatic claims for mental control over involuntary bodily functions through the ancient meditative practice of Yoga and Zen Buddhism, Herbert Benson at Harvard Medical School decided one day to test whether the rumours were true or not. His research affirms that simple techniques of breathing and mind-focusing through meditation can in fact alter involuntary physiological functions. Thinking relaxing thoughts, concentrating on pleasant things and freeing the mind from worries have the capability of calming the overactive sympathetic nervous system. A part of the autonomic nervous system, the sympathetic nervous system regulates our involuntary behaviour. Meditation relaxes, alleviates stress and offers an efficient, safe and drugless therapy. [51]

I think we need a new and inclusive form of culture in which art should play a more salient role. The justification for this stems from the inherent limitations of science, its increasing nihilistic impact on education, on society and the human condition, as against the immense potential benefits and greatly undervalued functions of art. We need the imagination, the insight, the intuition, the lateral reasoning, as well as the spiritual values and the human norms that are excluded from the exacting, strict and inelastic methodology of science, but are inherent qualities of art. [52]

Science cannot answer teleological questions, such as why does nature exist, what is the final purpose of the universe, or what is the ultimate meaning of life. [53]

Moreover, science has no built-in moral values of right and wrong. On the other hand, a pivotal function of art is to serve as an ethical guide and moral compass to humanity. [54]

15 June 2008

Interview conducted via email correspondence (Feb 2007, and May/June 2008).

Paul Hartal is based in Canada. Gil Dekel is based in the UK.

Images © Paul Hartal, Text © Paul Hartal and Gil Dekel.

## **I Am a Painter.**

### **Perspective-localized painter, Felice Varini, interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: You do not paint on canvas but rather on architectural and urban landscapes, such as buildings, walls, streets. Your works have only one view point, or a vantage point, from which the viewer can see the complete painting, usually a simple geometric form (a circle, square, triangle). From other view points the viewer will see 'broken' fragmented shapes. For example, the following work, as seen from the vantage point (Figure 1), and the same work seen from outside the vantage point (Figure 2): [1]**



Figure 2: *Battiaz Tower* (1986), material used: white plastic resin (seen from outside the vantage point). [3]



Figure 1: *Battiaz Tower* (1986), material used: white plastic resin (seen from the vantage point). [2]

**Is the issue of view point important to your work? Are you trying to encourage the viewers to stop and contemplate on how they see things around them? [4]**

Felice Varini: No. When I begin to paint I never think about the viewer. The viewer does not affect the way I start the work. The viewer will become part of the work once it is done and he can watch the painting. Even then I can not tell you what he will see, because I do not know where he is standing and what is the view point from which he is watching the painting. [5]

I start my works from one vantage point, which is simply the height of my own eye level. This is only a starting point, a way to begin. I plan the work using sketches, pictures, camera, or just in my head. And I work with the space, considering the relationship of my view point with the space as well as the geometry of the space itself. Then I make the painting. [6]

Once the painting is done it starts an independent life, having a relationship with the space, which has nothing to do with me or the viewer. It is a direct relation that the painting has with the space, in a kind of an abstract reality. [7]

The viewer can then be present in the work, but as far as I am concerned he may go through it without noticing the painting at all. If he is aware of the work, he might observe it from the vantage point and see the complete shape. But he might look from other points of views where he will not be able to understand the painting because the shapes will be fragmented and the work too abstract. Whichever way, that is ok with me. [8]



Figure 3: *Two Circles In Corridor, Red No. 1* (1992), Paris, acrylic paint (seen from the vantage point). [9]



Figure 4: *Two Circles In Corridor, Red No. 1* (1992), Paris, acrylic paint (seen from outside the vantage point). [10]

**You would not want the viewer to become aware of the 'complete' shape from the 'right' vantage point? [11]**

No, I am not worried about that. Everyone knows how a circle or a square looks like. My concern is what happens outside the vantage point of view. Where is the painting then? Where is the painter? The painter is obviously out of the work, and so the painting is alone and totally abstract, made of many shapes. The painting exists as a whole, with its complete shape as well as the fragments; it is not born to create specific shapes that need to satisfy the viewer. The paintings are not defined by the understanding of the viewer or what the viewer sees, but rather exist in their own right, and have their own relation to the three-dimensional space in which they were created. I work with the reality itself, with nature. [12]

**But if there are so many different vantage points, fragments, and the painting's own existence without the viewer, then we arrive at too many different elements with no similar ground for us to compare and share? [13]**

When two people are in love they do not love the same person but each other, and yet they are perfectly able to understand and share that love. [14]

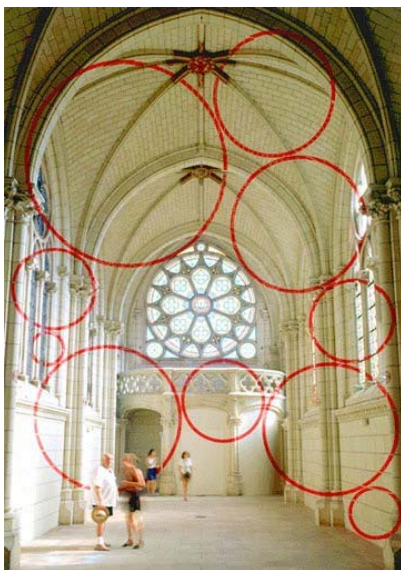


Figure 5: *Surrounding at ten* (1999), Thouars, France, redchalk (seen from the vantage point). [15]

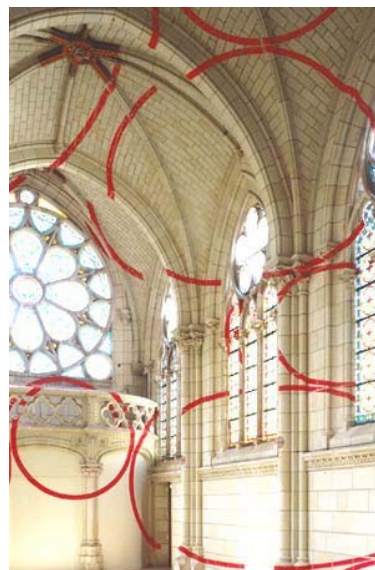


Figure 6: *Surrounding at ten* (1999), Thouars, France, red chalk (seen from outside the vantage point). [16]

**You use simple geometric shapes, triangle, square, circle, as well as basic colours, red usually. Why this simplicity? [17]**

If you draw a circle on a flat canvas it will always look the same. The drawn circle will retain the flatness of the canvas. This kind of working is very limiting to me, so I project a circle onto spaces, onto walls or mountain sides, and then the circle's shape is altered naturally because the 'canvas' is not flat. A mountain side has curves that affect the circle, and change the circle's geometry. So, I do not

need to portray complicated forms in my paintings. I can just use the simplicity of forms, because the reality out there distorts forms in any case, and creates variations on its own accord. [18]

The same goes for colours. Usually I use one colour only, and the space takes care of altering the colour's hue. For example, if I use one type of red colour on a mountain side, the result is many kinds of red, depending on the mountain's surface and the light conditions. Sunlight will affect the different areas on the surface and the same red colour may become stronger or darker or clearer in certain areas, depending on how the sun rays hit the surface. The sky can be bright or dark. And if the surface has its own colour or a few colours then that will affect the red that I apply on it. So, I do not need to use sophisticated colours. [19]

The reality exists with its own qualities, shapes, colours and light conditions. What I do is simply add another shape and colour in response to that. [20]

### **So nature is a co-painter of your work? [21]**

Yes it is. In comparison I can say that Constable used to work after experiencing the reality, whereas I work on the reality. [22]



Figure 7: *Double Blue Triangle* (2001), acrylic paint (seen from the vantage point). [23]



Figure 8: *Double Blue Triangle* (2001), acrylic paint (two views from outside the vantage point). [24]

### **How long does it take to complete a work? [25]**

It can take a week with three assistants working with me. [26]

### **Are your paintings meant to be permanent in the space where they were created? [27]**

Once I make a work it can be removed and remade in a different place, as long as certain guidance is followed. I write a description for each work, describing its specifications, and you can remake it in another space if you follow the exact instructions for the shapes, sizes, relation to each other, and relation to the space. The new space needs to have similar characteristics to the original one. [28]

The result will not be a new work, but rather a remake of the same work. I do not make an object and move it, but I move the concept, and can remake it in the new space, in the same way that there is a written play and a theatre company can stage it in a few different theatres. [29]

### **Did you ever consider to construct or create the space itself? [30]**

No, because I am not an architect. I am a painter, and painting is my main concern. The question that I am asking as an artist is, 'What is the next step in the history of art after Mondrian, Malevich and Pollock? What can we offer today that will take us to the next step in abstract painting?' My answer is to work on the three-dimensional reality instead of the canvas. [31]

I do not intend to create the reality or manipulate it. The reality is complex enough. Every day you can discover something new around you. It is an ongoing surprise; looking at old churches, sub-stations, houses. There are many types of



architecture around the world, with new relations and new perspectives created all the time, and once I choose a space I start a new thinking process with it. [32]



Figure 9: *Castellgrande* (2001), Bellinzona, Switzerland, screen print (seen from the vantage point). [33]

**You work directly on space but you do not define yourself as an installation artist. [34]**

No. I am a painter. When I started these paintings in 1978 the word 'installation' was just at the beginning of being used. Today it is used widely. Sometimes when I speak of what I am doing I use that word to make the conversation simpler, but I consider the reality itself to be the installation, and I work on that installation with paint. The reality is an installation work which belongs to all of us, and I am working with it, sometimes against it, in order to reach for new forms, new lights and new colours. [35]

For me it would be very limiting to paint on a canvas which is closed within a frame of four sides. There is no relation to reality there. When I experience reality outside I do not know where it starts and where it ends. It is open, and the work is open. The space has no limits. [36]

My relationship with the space is trying to discover more things that we can not normally see. The vantage point of the works is really very fragile. It is a mechanical point of view in a way, it does not encompass reality. In reality our eyes move all the time, and we cannot see with our eyes like the camera does, taking snapshots. We cannot retain a freeze frame with our eyes, so it is difficult for anyone to stand at the exact vantage point of my paintings. For me, the work is outside the vantage point, where reality allows for all shapes to live. [37]

I begin with the vantage point for the purpose of having a starting point, a focus point to begin with. [38]

**Do you have to be focused to do a painting? [39]**

Yes, I think so, and that is true for everything you do, paintings, films, sculpture, everything. Once you have made a decision, it is your desire that you are putting

forward, your choice. If you focus on this choice and stay with it, then you will complete it. But if you keep changing then you may not go into the matter of things. It is very difficult to spread too much into many areas, I prefer to focus. [40]

### **It seems a complicated process to construct your paintings. [41]**

Technicality is not a problem, anyone can do it. [42]



Figure 10: *Ellisse Rossa Piena per la Finestra* (1995), acrylic paint (seen from the vantage point). [43]



Figure 11: *Ellisse Rossa Piena per la Finestra* (1995), acrylic paint (seen from outside the vantage point). [44]

### **Why do you make paintings? [45]**

I discovered the world of painting when I was young, and with it my desire to paint. It was a strong feeling; I would 'burn' in the middle of a painting. As a ten year old I saw the works of the Italian artist Lucio Fontana, who would cut the canvas of his paintings right in the middle. This was my initiation into modern art, where I began to think of painting without any representation. [46]

With painting you can move forward and discover new things that can progress the world. I do not believe in inspiration, I think it does not exist for me. Instead, I explore the space, walk through it, look through a few point views, I make decisions, and then it all clicks right into place. It is like writing, where you begin to write, you search for the phrase, and then it happens. [47]

### **What is that point when things click? [48]**

This is something that happens while you are within the process; it is not external to you. It is not a source of inspiration 'falling' on you. Maybe other artists feel that they are inspired all the time, but I do not believe in God, and for me the notion of God is not part of painting. Painting is about choices, attitudes, and a desire to discover something new. Everyone can paint. The question is whether you choose to do it or not, and whether you choose to develop yourself from one work to the next. [49]



Figure 12: *Three Ellipses For Three Locks* (2007), acrylic paint (seen from the vantage point). [50]



Figure 13: *Three Ellipses For Three Locks* (2007), acrylic paint (two views from outside the vantage point). [51]

### **Do people criticize you as not being a 'real painter'? [52]**

Yes, but that is not a problem. In fact, I hope that everyone could do paintings as I do, because it is not a question of how difficult or easy the task is, but a question of thinking and choosing. A great painter can work with very simple elements, and the work that comes out can be a masterpiece. It is about good thinking and choosing good spaces. [53]

### **So, how do you choose a good space? [54]**

I would love to be all the time concrete and objective, but I know that there are moments of ambiguity. I cannot say I know where and why I choose a good space; perhaps uncertainty is necessary because it makes us what we are, human beings. We are not perfect. [55]

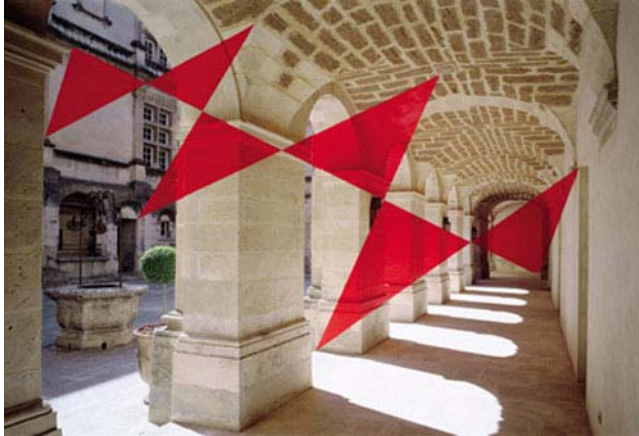


Figure 14: *Six Triangles In Diagonal* (2003), screen print (seen from the vantage point). [56]

My artistic work spans over thirty years. I am making works, discovering new realities, and then having new questions. Then making new works, new realities, and new questions. One thing is certain here: the questions themselves keep evolving... [57]

22 July 2008

Interview held in Paris, France, 26 May 2008.

Text © Felice Varini and Gil Dekel. Images © Felice Varini.

## **Unfoldment.**

**Mandala painter, Barry Stevens, interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: Mandalas are usually round, or I should say circular around a centre. As such they do not seem to have an up or down, left or right. How do you then 'plan' the painting? [1]**

Barry Stevens: The reference point is the centre. First thing is to find the centre of the paper and then to place the point of the compass there and draw a circle. Generally speaking, mandalas are drawn up geometrically and everything happens around the centre. To me the centre is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere. Some mandalas express this with a multitude of centres as part of the mandala. [2]

**Once you draw the centre, is it not then fixed on the paper, thus not infinite anymore? [3]**

This is the magic of the creative process. It cannot be done but somehow it happens. For this to occur one has to surrender to the process. [4]

**What is that 'surrender'? [5]**

Surrender involves the recognition that a greater or higher power is working through one and that one does not actually exist independent of the whole. So it is part of merging with what we call 'all that is'. It is about letting go of limitations and as those limitations dissolve, a wider perspective has a space in which to



reveal itself. The more you let go the greater the space until it feels infinite. At the point at which you let go into the infinite, there is no longer an "I" or "you" as such. Then there is no question of being independent. There is just the experience of Oneness expressing itself in an infinite variety of ways. In some sense the "I" continues to function and appears to have some independent existence but it is understood that the "I" is an 'apparency' rather than reality. [6]

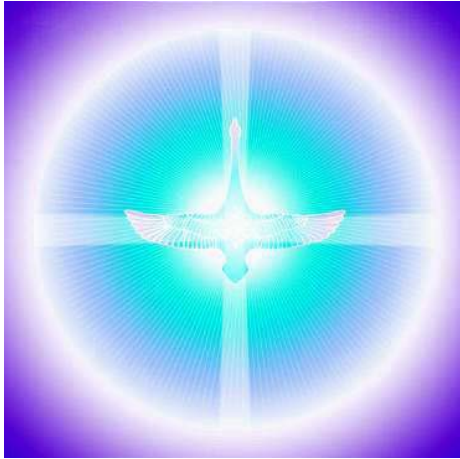


Figure 1: *Swan*, 2005, 30cm x 30cm approx. [7]

### **How do you surrender to the process? [8]**

Firstly by recognizing that there is no alternative! In other words, once you know that you are a part of an infinite matrix of energy and that everything is part of a universal flow of energy there is no alternative but to let go and surrender. Having said that, I am aware that there is a counter movement which wants to hold on. It is like a yin yang and to a certain extent the mandala embodies both these processes as it also does the timeless and spaceless. [9]

When I surrender into the centre there is the awareness of being beyond time and space. The centre is not a location; it is a figure of speech which intuitively seems appropriate but which is not linguistically accurate! [10]

### **When did you first experience the centre? [11]**

I first experienced it in the context of a spontaneous mystical experience I had when I was a teenager, and then I developed familiarity with it in the context of meditation. I don't do anything special as an artist to experience it, rather it is already self-evident. As an artist I simply express it. Without wishing to be too philosophical or obscure I have to say that once the centre is seen to be self-evident it turns out that everything and everyone is expressing it whether they know it or not. This is how I see it, and I think it is true to say that this understanding is in agreement with some universal mystical understandings. [12]

It is a difficult subject to communicate through words really, which is one of the reasons I communicate through mandala symbols. To quote from a book by Jean Klein: [13]

"Q. As language is dualistic, linear and sequential, therefore completely inappropriate to express the divine, wholeness, being, do we not need symbols? [14]

A. Symbols are a necessary part of culture. They express reality more deeply and suddenly than most words. The understanding of symbols does not belong to the everyday functioning of the mind. They pierce the mind and reflect its own ground in wholeness. Symbols take you beyond complementarity." [15]



Figure 2: *Indigo Snowflake*, 1998, 30cm x 30cm approx. [16]

**And what are the main symbols you explore in mandala paintings? [17]**

I explore light in a variety of manifestations, including stars, lotuses, Yantras and so on. [18]

**What attracts you in light? [19]**

A sense of resonance. A recognition of identity. [20]

**How do you feel this recognition while painting, while holding the brush? [21]**

I think that 'identity' is not about a given set of actions or circumstances but rather is about 'Being', and this exists whether I am painting or not. However, the way an artist expresses him/herself is an expression of their identity and being. So what I am saying here is that the mandala resonates with that, with identity as well as being. It is not about holding or not holding the brush! [22]

**Why then do you hold a brush at all? Why art, if the 'Being' can be experienced without it? [23]**

'Why' implies purpose. As the Tao Te Ching says "The highest purpose is purposelessness". As I understand it, mandala artists paint to celebrate and express Oneness. [24]

**And what about you, why do you paint mandalas? [25]**

It happens naturally. I enjoy the creative process. I feel inspiration flowing through me. I appreciate the positive feedback I receive from people who like my work, and I feel it is a positive contribution which I am happy to be a part of. It supports me financially. [26]

**Can you say how you feel inspiration flowing through you? And what is inspiration in art? [27]**

Inspiration flows through me as a sense of connection and flow; a sense of well-being and feeling in tune with life. There is a sense of inner peace, joy and creative adventure. Inspiration can take many forms depending on the medium and what the artist is communicating but in most if not all cases it involves a sense of a creative force moving through one and giving the artist a feeling of excitement and discovery, a sense of moving into a more "alive state". [28]

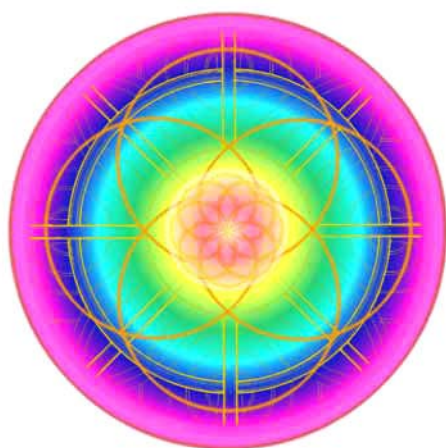


Figure 3: *Interlacing Lotus*, 1998, 30cm x 30cm approx. [29]

**How do you choose the colours for your works? [30]**

I might feel inspired to create a certain effect or envisage certain possibilities. Then I will mix a variety of colours and tones and then draw up a series of circles or lines with a view to creating the desired effect. I think a lot of artists do this one way or another. For me it is an intuitive process. Though having said that, one stained glass artist friend of mine said I approach colour like a scientist! So it is intuition and a fair bit of rational thought and consideration. [31]

**One can close one's eyes and imagine seeing light. Is there a 'duality' of external light and internal light? [32]**

External and internal are for me like a spectrum or a continuum. The point at which one becomes the other is arbitrary. [33]

**And yet, it seems that we all create such 'arbitrary points' in which we differentiate our inner life from the external. As an artist you must do so in order to produce an external 'physical' thing, a painting? Is this correct? [34]**

This is part of the 'Lila' also known as The Divine Dance. We appear to exist and function in time and space with all the, as you say, arbitrary differentiations which go with that, but on another level we are 'timeless and spaceless beings'. There is a process and that process is the unfoldment of the timeless and spaceless beingness (which is our true nature) in time and space. [35]

**Is art instrumental in that unfoldment process? [36]**

Art is part of the process as is everything else. I do not think that there is separation. It is all one seamless continuum. [37]

**Can the act of painting be said to be meditative? [38]**

Well, the word 'meditative' is open to a variety of interpretations but generally implies a degree of inner and outer stillness though not necessarily the latter. I would say that working with mandalas is a kind of metaphor for locating and expressing the centre which is stillness itself. In that respect working with mandalas is meditative, yes. [39]

**You say 'working with mandalas'. It sounds as if it is a collaboration between you and the mandalas? [40]**

Yes, it is certainly a two- or more-way process. My experience is that we are always connected to everything and everyone directly or indirectly. So whenever we do or say anything we get instant feedback from the universe one way or another. Sometimes this involves another human being making a comment or just a feeling arising that confirms or negates where the process is going. So my feeling is that we are always involved in a collaborative process whether we acknowledge that to be the case or not. To be specific, quite a few of the mandalas that I have painted have been on commission and involved discussions and preliminary drawings and so on and so forth. [41]



Figure 4: *Sri Yantra Turquoise Variation*, 2000, 30cm x 30cm approx. [42]

**Where do you draw your philosophical ideas from? [43]**

I would not say I draw them from a place or a set of teachings. However, I have read and continue to read many books of a spiritual and philosophical nature. In

particular I would say I resonate strongly with the teachings of Advaita Vedanta. [44]

### **How has your own creativity developed over the years? [45]**

There are at least two processes; there is the unfoldment of consciousness and the unfoldment of artistic skill. These express themselves in the mandalas as they have developed over the years. [46]

I did not do much artwork as a child. I was sent to a boarding school at a young age and the emphasis was on study and sport to start with. Art and philosophy came into my life when I was about fourteen when still at boarding school. The school had a good library and art department. Art and philosophy have always been linked in my consciousness and found fruition in mandala art in my 20s. However, at first I was mainly interested in abstract art and the concurrent psychological theories of the 20th century. I had a strong feeling that a way to explore consciousness deeply was to turn within. I felt a power pulling me inwards and was aware that art was or is a way to facilitate that journey along with meditation. Meditation began to happen spontaneously, culminating in a life changing experience some years later. When I left school I went to university and studied psychology but did not graduate. However, I have always been and continue to be interested in the subject. [47]

The transition to becoming an artist, in the sense of earning a living though my art work, happened gradually and took some years to come together. First of all the idea or possibility arose in my consciousness. Then gradually circumstances unfolded which made it possible. [48]

On the one hand I could say that I paint for myself and on the other hand in response to requests from others. However, an integral aspect of 'mandala consciousness' is Oneness, so really whether painting for oneself or others, it is all the same. [49]



Figure 5: *Agape*, 1988, 30cm x 30cm approx. [50]

### **What is 'Oneness'? [51]**

Whatever direction you explore, inwards-outwards, up-down, etc., sooner or later there is the experience of having gone as far as one can go. Then one encounters

infinity and discovers that it is always present as who and what one is, which is consciousness or awareness unqualified by a perceiver. I call this Oneness. [52]

Perhaps an answer which is close to the truth is 'I do not paint but rather painting happens.' [53]

21 June 2008

Interview conducted via email correspondence May/June 2008.

Barry Stevens is based in Wales, UK. Gil Dekel is based in Southampton, UK. Text © Barry Stevens and Gil Dekel, Images © Barry Stevens.

### **The Beauty in Temporality.**

#### **Watercolour painter Melanie Chan interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: You specialise in watercolour paintings of flowers. What do you see in the flower? [1]**

Melanie Chan: I see the beauty of nature in flowers, and I am amazed by their perfection and their symmetry. Once I start painting my mind starts to become calmer, as if the flower is encouraging me to be in the moment. I pay particular attention to the way in which the light falls and how this changes the colours that can be seen. The colours of flowers can be vibrant, intense or delicate. [2]

Painting fresh flowers is my favourite form of watercolour painting. With fresh flowers there is the beauty in its temporality, its impermanence, which is very touching. At the start of a painting some petals may not be fully open but as the experience of painting unfolds in time, so do the petals. The Japanese have a special name for the fragility of things, which is *mono no aware*, like the fragility and beauty of the cherry blossom which blooms for just a short time. [3]



Figure 1: *Rose 2* (detail) (2007), watercolours on paper, 21cm x 42cm. [4]



**Once the flower painting is completed, do you see it in a different way compared with the real flower? [5]**

The painted flower seems much less vibrant and less delicate. It is as if the flower's natural perfection cannot be recreated entirely. There is a loss somehow in the translation process into a painted representation. The act of painting results in an image, which lasts longer than the flower itself, while the impermanence of the flower is, for me, far more beautiful and precious than any image of it. The image might evoke the beauty of the flower, but it is a token, a pale imitation of the wonderful, natural creation that was before me when I was painting. [6]

Nonetheless, the painted flower suggests the beauty of nature, so it acts as a kind of a reminder, reminding me to be attentive to the natural world around me. [7]

**How do you start a flower painting? [8]**

When painting flowers I start from the centre and move outwards. If I draw a portrait then I tend to start with drawing the eyes. But each watercolour painting is a different experience so there is no fixed formula or step-by-step technique that can be called upon. [9]

**Why did you choose to use watercolours? [10]**

The choice of watercolours is a practical one: I find them easy to transport and work with, and they dry easily. I also like the translucency of watercolour and watercolour paint effects, such as blending colours wet-on-wet. [11]



Figure 2: *Tiger Lilies* (detail) (2007), watercolours on paper, 21cm x 42cm. [12]

**Can you say what you feel or think while painting? [13]**

When I am painting flowers I tend to forget my emotions and lose myself in the moment of what I am doing. In this way I find it quite therapeutic as it tends to still my feelings and active 'thinking' on what is happening in my life or in the world. I prefer to be quiet when painting; it is in the silence, in the calm mind that the communion with the flowers can take place. However, if I am painting an

abstract work in acrylic, then I am tuned into my emotions and let them steer me towards certain shapes, textures and colours. For example, I am often drawn towards blues, greens and flowing lines when feeling emotional or melancholy. At times when I am feeling joyful then my palette would be more vibrant, featuring orange, yellow or red. At other times, I will choose the colours according to the seasons. In summer time I prefer to use brighter colours, when the daylight is strong and the world around me seems to be full of light. [14]

Sometimes my artistic interpretation takes place so that the natural colours of the flowers are supplemented with emotional tones that I bring forward. For instance, when painting daffodils in spring, I might use lilac or even a touch of aquamarine on the petals to make the yellow of the flowers stand out even more. [15]

### **What inspire you to create art? [16]**

I tend to get a feeling that draws me. Sometimes this might be a feeling to experiment with colour, or texture, or just experiment and see where things might go... Sometimes the feeling, or impulse to create, is an inner one based on a mood or memory. At other times it might be external, for example, a scene which might draw my attention. [17]

### **What happens when certain things draw your attention? [18]**

I believe that inspiration is there most of the time, but usually my mind is elsewhere, busy thinking about the past or the future. So it is often necessary to make time to be mindful, to pay attention to nature and it is then that I get a kind of urge to express that relationship. If I do not express that urge, then I feel blocked and irritable like a dam that holds back the water. [19]

### **What is inspiration? [20]**

Inspiration is the creative force of life itself and the Universe. I read a great metaphor recently which illuminated the inspirational process. The metaphor is that the light, or inspiration, is always shining. However, some people draw heavy curtains around their windows so only a bit of light comes through. But if we allow our consciousness to be like sheer curtains, then more light is able to shine through us... [21]





Figure 3: *Rose 1* (detail) (2007), watercolours on paper, 21cm x 42cm. [22]

**Is the way you paint affected by any of your beliefs about life? [23]**

Yes, I think it would be very difficult to separate the two. Creativity is life; there is no separation for me of these two elements. I feel that painting is a part of who I am. I could not imagine not painting, since it is an expression of life and intrinsic to life, like breathing or eating. [24]

**You have completed your PhD recently. Is there any relation between writing PhD thesis (using words) and painting (using images)? [25]**

I think that words conceptualise and divide the world into binary categories of subject and object. Painting, on the other hand, is like being open to the light of inspiration, and allowing it to flow through me and gain expression. Artistic expression seems to exceed the conceptual boundaries of language; it is more whole somehow. [26]

The academia and its conventions of celebrating thought can help to explain or understand art, yet academic words about art and the process of making art are formal processes which are different from making art. Academic writing is for me, less free-flowing than making watercolour images. [27]

For example, I am often surprised by the range of colours that can be seen in a single petal and realise that it is only by paying attention and spending time looking at the flower that these can be noticed. Paying attention in this way brings me to a state of relaxed awareness, which Buddhists call mindfulness. Mindfulness is different from the analytical concentration that takes place when reading a text, or writing a thesis. Mindfulness is for me an act of entering into a sort of communion or shared experience with the creative impulse that forms each living thing. I am looking intently yet also gently at the flowers before me, and it draws me into a non-verbal communication experience. This is why I prefer to be quiet when painting. [28]

24 July 2008

Interview conducted via email correspondence (May-July 2008).

Melanie Chan is based in Leeds, UK. Gil Dekel is based in Southampton, UK. Images ©

Melanie Chan. Text © Melanie Chan and Gil Dekel.

## Installation artists:

### Meaningful Objects.

Installation artist Ken Devine interviewed by Gil Dekel.

**Gil Dekel: Your art project *Colours of the Sphere* looks at the ways in which people create meanings with the world around them and especially with colours. [1]**

Ken Devine: Yes, the project started ten years ago with a brief to work in a junior school. I had a six months' residency then and I scratched my head for some time to find an idea for a project that I could do, and I just hit on the idea that you could ask anybody the question, 'What is your favourite colour?' You can ask a four-year old child, and you will probably get a response. And you can ask a ninety-four year old 'child' and get a response... [2]

I am filming people's answers, and the video clips are embedded in a three-dimensional simulation of a colour sphere which we created on the computer. You can navigate inside that sphere, focus on any specific colour, and watch the clips of people talking about that colour. [3]

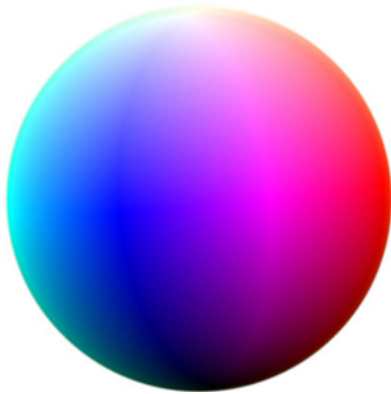


Figure 1: Interactive 3D simulation of the colour sphere. [4]



Figure 2: Navigation in the colour sphere, using a wheel attached to the computer. [5]

### What do people say about colours? [6]

People say remarkable things and it is not just to do with a favourite colour, but with anecdotes and short pieces of history about themselves. Usually people divide into different groups: the yellow people, the green people, the red people... The way I think about 'groups of people' has completely changed since the project begun. [7]

Some people talk about colours in terms of emotion, and this is a metaphysical relationship with colours. Other people talk about colours as an object, or event, or a person. And that is a kind of empirical relation with a thing that exists or can be observed. And then there are those who have a very clear rational idea as to their favourite colour. This is a kind of cognitive reasoning of the colour, which they try to contextualise. For example, they would try to explain why white is white. Or they would explain what the colour signifies by going into a chain of 'because so and so, which is because, and because, and because'. It is a kind of a series of reasons for why a colour has an effect on them. [8]

I came across profound responses from people who were honest, rather than trying to be profound... [9]

Roughly speaking, these ways of how people respond are three central cores, and of course, any one person can move from one core to another. This is rather natural because of the changing nature of colour itself. You could think of colours in different ways, for example, in terms of hue/saturation/value or red/green/blue or in terms of primary/secondary. So, there are very interesting relationships between colours and the impossibility of it, and the impossibility of people... Someone can say something about red which is very similar to what someone else said about blue. That is ok, because it creates a new set of relationships that we may have not been aware of before. We are not talking here about single people, but about complex compound meanings. [10]

It is easy and complex at the same time, and I like this contradiction about reality. I think people can say contradictory things even in the same sentence, and such contradictions can make more sense than if you were just following a logical argument. With a logical argument you end up with an absurd position, because you are limited to logic. [11]

### **How can someone say contradictory things which still sound right? [12]**

That is because behind the 'simple' things that people say lie complex relations that they have with life, and they use language to convey that. Language is illogical... like thought. Thought is illogical. [13]

### **What is thought then? [14]**

Thought is an analogue process that includes the bits in between... It is saying something which is partly true and partly false. Rarely can you say a complete truth, a one hundred percent truth. The same goes for untruth. It is very difficult to say something which is a complete one hundred percent untruth. [15]

Language has that ability because we are dealing with a constantly changing dynamic environment, and changing meanings. People change continually. So, you have to think of all the gaps in between truth and untruth, and that is where most of us exist. It is about the difference between linear logic and non-linear logic. We are living in a non-linear world; we are not driving down the railway track. We are skating, we are wobbling on the ice, and you can go in any direction... [16]

I see human beings as model makers. We represent things by creating things, and our creations can be concrete or abstract, or feelings. All are equally valid creations. Now, the models by which we create can differ, for example, religious models or scientific models, and these models keep changing all the time; they evolve. Yet, the issues that they examine are the same. The issues are the human

condition, the way we feel, the way we rationalise things and the way we interact with others. [17]

It is not the case that we have one perfect model that can provide us with all the answers. Science, for example, is a very useful model, yet it does not define the truth, because science itself is always in a stage of a flux; it is always asking more questions. The deeper the questions get the more poetic the answers come out... [18]

At the moment there is no relationship between the advances of science and happiness. Supposedly advances make life easier, simpler, and give people more free time, therefore we are 'happier'. Ok, now let's accept this argument and reverse it: by the Middle Ages everybody must have been completely fed up, depressed, and unhappy all of the time, because they were denied this 'happy making' technology that we have today... but of course that is not true. We do not say that in comparison to Medieval Europe we now have TVs and therefore we are happier. There is no sensible relationship at all here. Objects are not the driving force in life. It is the struggle which is the driving force. [19]

### **So, how would you approach this struggle? [20]**

By looking at the meanings that we create. Meanings make our relationships with concepts and with objects. We are all some kind of rational cognitive self. We all respond to the physical world. The emotional aspect, above all, engages with others as well as with ourselves. [21]

### **How do emotions relate to meanings? [22]**

If you feel something then there is a meaning. Maybe it is not rational, yet we do not live in a rational world. Rationality is about trying to construct those things which can be replicated, and create a kind of a rhythm. Rationality finds out what this rhythm is in a particular time. But that is a small part of what we do. We are not manufacturing motorcars most of the time, and when we do, we are not manufacturing them rationally. If there was such a thing as a 'rational motorcar' it would have been designed by now; it would be the perfect prototype from which all motorcars would be produced. But this does not happen, as we are constantly developing and changing the cars we produce. Take another example: if a chair was a rational object then the ultimate 'chair' would have been discovered by now and we would not need to keep creating so many different variations of it. So, all these chairs we are creating are expressive objects, objects with meanings, emotional objects. Whether we fully understand the meanings or not is another matter. [23]

Politics is example of great emotional art, based on rhetorical skills and persuasive arguments which do not have to be true at all. In fact, rational arguments are not useful in politics because they can be totally uninspiring... Whether something is true or false, that is a matter of position, a point from which we see it. [24]

An important part of the work is the point of view. You can navigate inside the colour sphere and choose a precise view of a colour. If you move the camera slightly you then change the position. For me, this relates to the way meanings are created through the point of view that we choose. It is about the position through which we see something, as well as what we actually see. It is about the way in which we frame what we see and thus frame what we decide to exclude. [25]

### **Does choosing a point of view affect the colour? [26]**

In reality there is no definite place on the colour spectrum where you can draw a square and frame a colour within it. All colours are in relations to other colours. They sit side by side, diffusing one into the other. So there is always a difference between the beginning and the end of a colour. Red can sit between orange and purple, spreading into orange on one side and into purple on the other side. So, none of the colours exists in a sense, it is rather a set of relationships. There is no fixed place where you can see 'that's red!' and in the same way you cannot fix the meanings of it. We have agreed on where colours start and where they stop, but there is no 'stopness' about red. [27]

We tend to think of colours as existing on points, but a point has no dimension, it is rather an idea. So that is about how much we can tell about the existence of colour – zero. What we are left with is a set of relationships between the points which create the spectrum. [28]

It is marvelous that there is this apparent concrete thing, colour, which the brain with the eye constructs. And we talk about it and wear it, we use it, we express ourselves with it. It is so concrete and yet totally abstract. There is a wonderful paradox to that, and everybody can give you an opinion on this paradox... [29]

### **What is your favourite colour? [30]**

The one place I really find fantastic is the centre of the colour spectrum, the point between black and white, which is grey. It is the only place that has no complementary colour. Grey colour gets such bad press these days... we say, 'What a grey day', but grey is not completely depressing. It is not the total blackness of melancholy, and not the neurotic of total white... it is in between, like the Mona Lisa's smile... it fights with nobody... [31]

### **Can we talk about how you became an artist? [32]**

When I was fourteen I saw a programme about Frank Lloyd Wright, the American architect, and decided that I wanted to be an architect. I wanted to design falling water... I went to study architecture but the experience was far less art and far more structural. I had to design where to put the bins... Once the course finished I went to work as an artist for some time, and then I moved into furniture design. That coincided with having children and feeling the need to do something useful and productive... and so I made beds. Gradually the objects I made became more and more bizarre, up to a point that I realized I was making sculptures again... The objects I made lost their functionality, and they became questioning-objects rather than objects that answer questions. I had to admit it then... art was just what I had to do. [33]

### **What is inspiration in art? [34]**

It is very complex, and I think there is inspiration in anything, not just in art. Inspiration, probably, is a uniqueness that comes out of parts of a person, which did not come together before. It is a moment of recognition that happens at the most unplanned events. [35]

### **Recognition of what? [36]**

Of whatever it is that lit a fire in you. I am sure things happen all the time that could be potentially inspiring, but we have our eyes shut at them. We don't hear

them and we don't see them. Inspiration is a kind of a moment of having your eyes open, and I think that can happen in every walk of life, in every moment. This is why I prefer to talk about 'the art of...' rather than saying 'art is'.... Everything is an art of something: the art of painting, the art of cooking, art of walking, art of talking. Once we start to classify 'art is...' we then have to go into logical arguments which are bound to end with a confusion, because there are so many exceptions to it. Dance is art? Yes it is. Music is art? Yes. Painting is art? Yes. Now, how many different kinds of paintings there are? There are endless kinds of paintings, and endless kinds of what cooking is, what conversation is, what letter writing is. We cannot define everything and find a specific one definition. So, it is much better to discuss these in terms of 'the art of cooking', 'the art of playing chess', or 'the art of drawing'. [37]

Art is as useful as football and as cooking food. You do not have to cook and you do not have to play football. Most objects which are designed, created and made – we don't need them; they do not satisfy a real need in a way. However, they do satisfy one's desire and they provide meanings, concepts and frameworks. Art is one of those things, a vehicle for meanings. [38]

So this art project might be a serious research project, but it might also be a wonderfully useless research... it has grown into this fantastic monster of meanings, and we keep adding meanings to it. What's important really is to continue finding out new things and new relations in the meanings that people share with us. [39]

26 June 2008

Text © Ken Devine and Gil Dekel, Images © Ken Devine.  
Interview held in Portsmouth, UK, May 2008.

### **Extra Light in the Mind.**

**Installation artist David Johnson interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: Your work has undergone an interesting evolution over the years. [1]**

David Johnson: When I was young I used to paint and draw and make mono-prints. I studied architecture originally, but gave that up to go to art school. As soon as I got there I started to do works about the idea of the invisible. The invisible was just anything I might convey about what was there, but you couldn't see, and that thing animated the simple things that you could see. [2]

Then, in the mid 80s, I went on to do works using the inversion of inside-outside, which is an old metaphor in art, and can be seen in Magritte's paintings of windows. The Magritte paintings are a bit too much an illustration of this idea of consciousness. I really like Magritte, so I was trying to deal with the metaphor of the relationship of the mind to the world, but in a way which is more ambiguous. [3]

**Your work *Untitled (moon)* is interesting in that respect. The moon image is not achieved by a reflection and not by any light source (such as a light bulb) in the bucket. It is rather a slide projection onto the milk in the bucket. [4]**



Figure 1: *Untitled (moon)* (1987). Bucket, milk, slide projection. [5]

After that I did a series of works based on the general idea of creating the appearance of a light source where there wasn't one. The light was actually projected from above where the viewer was. For example, in *Facing the Dark* a window frame is hung on the wall of a windowless room, and the light which seems to shine through it and into the room is all from a slide projection coming from above the viewer. Where the window-panes would have been the projection is just black. [6]



Figure 2: *Facing the Dark* (2000). Window, slide projection. [7]

In recent works, instead of creating appearances of a light source, I took the light source, placed it in the centre of the work, and then got rid of its appearance. These pieces were about being and non-being. [8]

For example, in *Trying to Imagine Not Being*, I stood a post in front of a floodlight. I then made the shadow that the post casts on the wall invisible by carefully painting around it with shades of grey. But the shadow re-appears as a white ghost if you cast your own shadow on the same part of the wall. The piece is about my own death. Death isn't so much about skulls and gore; it is an absence. [9]

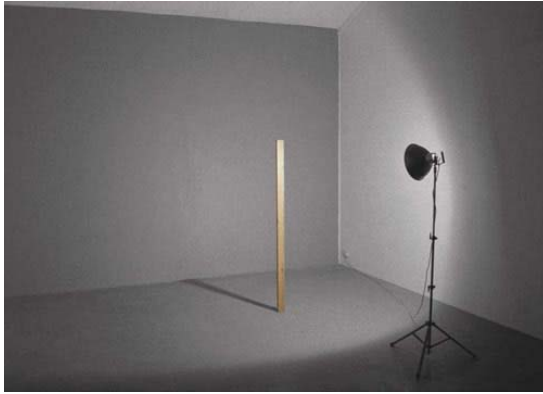


Figure 3: *Trying to Imagine Not Being* (2003). Floodlight, post, emulsion paint. [10]

I am working now on a new piece, *The Invention of Nothingness* where a floodlight casts light directly unto a wall. I have painted the most brightly lit part of the wall with black paint and graded it out to white at the edges of the wall, so the result is that it looks like an even grey: [11]



Figure 4: *The Invention of Nothingness* (work in progress). Floodlight on, emulsion paint. [12]

Every three minutes the floodlight turns off for half a second, and you get a glimpse of the painted black grading out to white on the wall: [13]



Figure 5: *The Invention of Nothingness* (work in progress). Floodlight off, emulsion paint. [14]

It took ages, a couple of months, to paint out all the grey shades of the light on the wall. The tiniest difference and it becomes very obvious, you really see it, so I had to create about fifty shades of grey and move them tiny amounts till it was



right. I think I will do it again on a false wall in my studio, which will then be dismantled and set up in the gallery. But if the floor in the gallery is a different tone than the one in my studio, then light will bounce differently from the floor to the wall. And the side walls in the gallery must also be in the same place as the walls in my studio. [15]

I like the idea of hidden images. I am thinking about another work where people's shadows will be removed. There will be two projections: one positive and the other negative, cancelling each other out. A video camera would film the shadows that the audience would cast on the wall in the gallery. Then a projector would receive the image from the camera and would project on the shadow on the wall a negative version of the same shadow, and will cancel it. There are enormous complications for this, mainly if you cancel the shadow then there is nothing for the camera to pick up... [16]

### **What are the main difficulties you come across? [17]**

For me the chief problem of making works is finding a way of producing generating ideas that have strong metaphorical possibilities, such as the idea of something that you could not see yet is the centre of the work, or the idea of inverting inside and outside. My interest is in things you cannot see but know about, therefore affect the way you see: the non-visible [18]

### **What are you trying to find in the non-visible? [19]**

You could call me an atheist, but I am trying to deal with the idea of the spirit, not denying it. My position is of not-believing in anything beyond this world, and still trying to find a way of being spiritual within that. [20]

### **How do you understand the spiritual in the world? [21]**

It seems that one of the problems with postmodernism is that it allows us to think we only have surfaces of things. Whereas if you start to think of the world as being generated in our mind, being created by our own mind, then the surface is just as insubstantial as anything else. And all the other things that you are putting into it, all your knowledge about things, are just as insubstantial. You then have something that does allow depth, which is almost a no-no to some critics of contemporary art. [22]

I started thinking more about the nature of being. The old philosophical question, 'Why is there something where there could be nothing?' Trying to bounce on the edge of existence, and the mystery of things existing at all. The theologian Don Cupitt is also trying to find a way to experience the world in a spiritual way, while not believing in anything beyond this world. He acknowledged that we can never really know the world, but we can enjoy the appearances it produces. [23]

### **Do you believe in that? [24]**

I would not go quite as far as he goes. I think we can actually know the world quite a lot. The experience of the world is immediate. The mind in itself is part of the world; you can't actually make a distinction as they are tied up in one system. [25]

### **How do you feel the mind relates to the world? [26]**

The trouble with applying philosophy to reality is that you are taking something set to one form and try to understand with it something which has a different form and is much more ambiguous. [27]

I think ambiguity is very important both in art and philosophy. The world is ambiguous, and as soon as you start thinking about how we experience the world it becomes ambiguous. That is why I want my work to be ambiguous. I want to be very much based in that. Some people have called my work Romantic. I don't quite see it in that way, but I can see how they could see that. That is the part of the ambiguity of my work. I am dealing with things which at some level could have different ways of looking at the world, and I am very happy for that. I don't mind that at all. I also don't have any feelings about the uniqueness of my works; the actual material is not precious to me in any way, and I could remake the works. [28]

### **How do you formulate ideas for your works? [29]**

I see my art as a sort of concrete ontology and also epistemology. I don't mean that I react to a philosopher's ideas of ontology, but that I react to a common source that makes the philosopher and artist think about ontology. The source in experience which is mysterious, and is the basis for works, whether philosophical works or artistic works. [30]

Someone once said that the philosopher applies the left brain to explain the right brain sense of reality. I am trying to use the right brain experiences to deal with that basic right brain reality. But obviously the left brain is involved too. [31]

If you try to formalise ideas then you fix them too much and they lose their multifaceted-ness. If you are indicating, 'This means this, and that means that' it is like taking a field of possibilities and justifying one path only through this field. I am worried about this when I am writing. I am constantly aware that whatever I am saying, I am cutting out a whole lot of possibilities that should be left in. [32]

### **What is the difference between images and words? [33]**

Images are more immediately perceived; they are more concrete. Words are already a medium, so you are dealing with something which is sort of one removed from the world. The word is in itself a metaphor. The creation of language was art, and then we are producing a secondary art from that. [34]

On the whole I tend to find that images come to me fairly complete. I am quite good at visualising, partly because my education was scientific. So when I make the work, it is more the matter of making it as near to the way I conceived it rather than getting new ideas to add. [35]

Henri Bergson said that the mind receives the light and then appears to project reality out to where the reality really is. It is as if we are projecting something onto the reality... as if the light is re-projected by the eye back to the world. I have always been fascinated with the relation between the human eye and the inner eye, the confusion about the two becoming the same thing. [36]

### **Which makes one wonder about the materiality of the world. [37]**

As experienced? Or the thing itself that we imagine is out there? The thing that scientists try to exclude their own minds from, when they interpret it? If you are thinking in a scientific way, then the distinction between matter and energy has

fairly much ceased to exist. The distinction between philosophy and science seems to be breaking down. A lot of philosophers are accepting scientific views now. Science is definitely not any more cause-and-effect. Now we have got quantum physics, so cause-and-effect in its simple view of the world disappears. [38]

### **In your view, what is inspiration? [39]**

It depends on what stage we are talking. Once I have one of these generating principles, then I can have it in the back of my mind and a lot of other things will be randomly joining together at various points. Then an image would come to my head, and some other idea would go with it as an addition. That combination of two ideas will produce the right thing. I don't find that I can will it so much. If you actually think too theoretically and trying to link things, then it ends up one-dimensional, lacking some poly-valencies. [40]

Quite often it will be months or years after that I suddenly realise what the ideas deal with, and it never occurred to me before. But I fairly much have to define what I want, to be very precise, before I start. I cannot go off buying a boat for a work, and then realise it is not the right boat... [41]

For most artists, particularly painters and conventional sculptors, the actual process of interacting with the medium generates an awful a lot of ideas. Abstract expressionist painters are reacting to what's happening when they do something, by doing something else. They are probably the most towards generating ideas as they do something. I am almost the opposite of that, in that I fairly much have to define exactly what I want before I start making it. Obviously when I think of an idea I may not be aware of all the implications of it. But I am aware of a sort of depth of possibilities somehow. You can do that intuitively, have a feeling for that. Artists' sensibility is very close to the spiritual attitude to life. Even being an atheist I still see parallels to spirituality. [42]

### **Being an atheist but still believing in God?... [43]**

No, this is not to do with believing in God, but that is something like the ideas that Einstein held. He spent a lot of time thinking in terms of images. He said that thinking theoretically didn't feel as something he was doing with his intellect, but with his stomach... [44]

### **What do you feel in moments of inspiration? [45]**

An intense feeling of living. It is as though there is an extra light in the mind that suddenly sparks in full capacity. [46]

Well, you can go on thinking of this forever. I am not sure you can really sum it up. [47]

4 July 2008

Text © David Johnson and Gil Dekel, Images © David Johnson.  
Interview held in London, UK, April 2008, and via email correspondence (June-July 2008).

## **Emotional Slices of Light.**

**Photographic installation artist Katayoun Dowlatshahi interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: You are tracing light onto glass using a method called Carbon Photography. How did you develop the idea of 'light drawings'? [1]**

Katayoun Dowlatshahi: In 1998 I spent a year as Artist in Residence at Durham Cathedral. It was there that I began a journey investigating the relationship between photography and drawing. I wasn't happy just to collage together photographs with drawings. I wanted to investigate the historical roots of photography in relation to drawing and to produce light drawings without using a camera. How can you draw something so intangible, like light? The work I produced for the residency was a prelude to research undertaken subsequently during 4 years of research at doctorate level. I adopted a 19th century process called Carbon Photography and experimented with this technique onto glass, metal and paper using direct sun light. Light was transmitted directly through a glass installation and its effects captured onto these various surfaces. [2]



Figure 1: *Drawing Fragments of Light I, II & III* (2004). Triptych. Gelatine, blue & black pigment onto glass, 1680x760mm each. [3]

**What attracts you in light? [4]**

I have always been interested in light and shadow, and the dialogue between the two. Light is around us all the time. We live within it; we take it for granted. There is something incredibly powerful about the concept and the physical phenomenon... I am very careful not to use certain words to describe the nature of my work... but I do feel that my work touches on the spiritual without being religious. [5]

A lot of my early work was very dark, but it was not about darkness, but about light. To appreciate and understand light you have to embrace its shadow. In recent years I have been doing more work where light has become more predominant. [6]

I found the process, through which I discovered invisible characteristics of light, to be very symbolic and visually exciting. From an esoteric point of view I am fascinated with the concept of a single source. The existence of one light source or energy. All beings are simply an extension of this light; they are a material reflection. The following analogy may explain more clearly what I mean: the light source can be represented as a mirror; by shattering that mirror many individual fragments or shards are created. You and I and all other beings are represented by these individual fragments. However, we reflect that one light source from many different perspectives; that is what makes us all unique. This concept, simple as it may be, is core to the way I perceive the world around me and is the most important visual image that I will carry throughout my life. [7]

### **Is that image helpful in making your art? [8]**

It is always there, but I am not trying to represent it in my art. It is just there. Symbolically, I think it is represented throughout. If you go to different parts of the world light is perceived differently, because of the difference in regional architecture and the landscape. Also, the relationship people have with light is different around the world. The challenge for me is to draw out something unique from all that, even if the work tends to be more about the shadow than the light itself. [9]

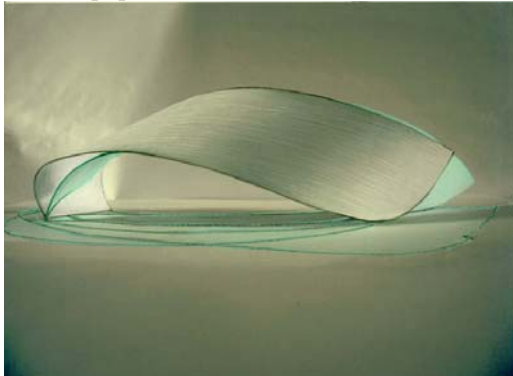


Figure 2: *Proposal for Sunnyside Gardens Commission, Sunderland* (2006). Steel, curved glass with etched finish, ground area 4250x8600mm sq. [10]

### **You did a lot of residencies and commissioned work in specific spaces. What is your relationship to the architecture and the space of the works? [11]**

I relate to the space, its history and its context, allowing these elements to feed into the work. For example, I did a piece of work in Santa Fe, USA, when I was on a residency there. I produced a variety of different types of works there: drawings, video, photography. I was really blown away by the architecture of the building, which was designed by a contemporary Mexican architect by the name of Ricardo Legorreta. He had really considered the nature and function of light within the building, which had long thin apertures punctuated within walls and along corridors; you could literally observe slices of light entering into the building. I responded to that in particular in my work, as well as a video and some drawings. I also produced a piece of work made up of ten photographic images of this light. [12]

With commissioned projects it is not always appropriate to apply something which is really personal, because the work is really about the space, and less about me. [13]

### **Is it possible for artists to focus on the space and 'remove' themselves? [14]**

I think it is important that I am flexible enough to respond to a specific space, and that I do not impose my personal identity on the work in question. My identity may well come through, but at least I am creating a much more personal and honest response to the space. In other words I allow the context to influence the work. For other artists, such as Anish Kapoor, this may not be so important because his work has a very strong identity, and that is what people want from him. [15]

When I was working in Durham I spent a great deal of time in the cathedral, I was very impressed by the sacred structure in relation to the landscape it was

built upon. Churches are solid buildings, yet they represent something intangible, spiritual. Trees rooted in the earth transform the space below their canopy of branches when the sun's rays pierce the empty spaces between the leaves; the pillars of a church are as these tree trunks, and the vaulting above is like a canopy of branches. You just have to look inside Kings College Cambridge as a fine example of this analogy. [16]

I am always fascinated by the vertical line. The verticality of the pillars of the church, and the light and shadows cast from these. It is as if I am walking through a forest observing the light, shadows and intangible shapes; these are the qualities that I internalise in my mind's eye. [17]

**And how do you bridge the internal image in your mind with the external image? [18]**

The important thing is not to try to force yourself to illustrate these ideas, but to allow your intuition to guide your process. [19]

I once joined the Theosophical Society through my mother's encouragement. I was attracted to it because theosophical ideology and values, which are not wholly rooted to one religion but are borne of many. I liked the idea that I could connect to deep human and shared spiritual values without the need for pure dogma. [20]



Figure 3: *Glass Study 6.52pm* (2003-4). Glass and sun light, Portsmouth. [21]

**How do your spiritual beliefs affect the way you see life around you? [22]**

It is really part of who I am; I don't necessarily make a differentiation. When I was younger and still training, I had very strong mood swings; both negative and positive emotions. I could not communicate my feelings or my beliefs through art since I had not developed the necessary skills to do so, therefore, I communicated my heart felt sentiments through poetry. Words were very immediate and powerful for me. [23]

At eighteen I visited Israel, lived for a few months in a Kibbutz, a month in Egypt, followed by two months in the Armenian quarter of Jerusalem. The experience had a huge impact on me. It was as if I underwent a psychological and spiritual journey. At the time I thought that my visual art would, on my return home,

reflect this journey but it didn't. Conversely, poetry that I wrote at the time did reflect these experiences but I could not translate words into pictures. [24]

I still find it difficult to articulate my spiritual values and beliefs. When you are facing a blank canvas, you are thinking, 'How am I really going to do this? How am I going to convey all those thoughts and images?' I could not do it at first. I did not have the ability or the tools some artists have in formalising ideas through drawing or painting. It took me many years to get to where I am now. I can now convey these inner sentiments but I had to develop new avenues intellectually and practically within my practice, to enable this to happen. [25]

### **And how does the creative process unfold? [26]**

I have always felt that I am not the kind of a person who could spontaneously create a work of art. I build my work around a concept and take on a process or technique that would enable me to develop those ideas fully. This is how I work in residencies. When I am in a residency, I am experiencing a new context, allowing myself to be in that place; in the landscape or urban environment. [27]

I allow the process to slowly unfold, I don't push it. I just do not think you can. You have to experience it first. First and foremost it is about having a sense of your environment, memorising that space, allowing the internalisation and processing of those images to influence a work of art. [28]

In Durham I was thinking about the architecture, the internal space, and the light, but I didn't know how to convey that. So I was holding the memory of the interior space of the cathedral and without using any visual references I drew what was in my head. I didn't think it, I just drew it. I didn't know what I was doing, but I allowed my intuition to lead me; I had trust in the process. Once the drawing had begun I could assess it. Though the work was fairly formal to begin with, I found that over time I began to consciously abstract the lines more and in doing so broke down the formality of the earlier work. [29]



Figure 4: *Light: Past and Present* (2003). Triptych. Enamelled colours on glass, 1800x3600x250mm each. [30]

### **How do things inspire you? [31]**

It is a visual response wherein I see something that strikes a cord in me. I use photography in many ways, either to document or record a moment in time or as a technical means of creating unique images. For example, I once visited a region of southern Spain in the mountains and villages above Granada. A friend and I found many derelict houses that used to be lived in by Moors high up in the hills. The Moors were expelled by the Christians many centuries ago and these houses were left abandoned. The interiors of the houses, some no bigger than large huts, had deteriorated and were dark with only shafts of light piercing through holes or around doors or windows. I loved what I saw. I photographed these dark interiors and though I never exhibited the work, the images greatly influenced my work. [32]

I periodically experience epiphany. I would do something very practical with my work and during my analysis of it I would begin to see connections with thoughts and ideas, and be overwhelmed by strong emotions. The artwork always manages to connect to some deep unconscious level, and at the moment I would become conscious of new things in my work. I would end up in tears, sometimes of joy, sometimes of humility knowing that I as the conscious artist was not fully in control of my process. I was only able to bring my understanding to it after the work had been created. [33]

The process of creating work is akin to having blurred vision, at a certain juncture during the process the veil that has clouded your vision has been removed; in that moment you discover something about yourself and the work you have done, which is incredibly empowering. That knowledge feeds you and is inspiring... this is a fascinating subject. It's not very often I end up talking about it... [34]

**What is that moment when the veil is removed and you discover new things? [35]**

I think that we have the potential to be very conscious beings, but only a small part of us is truly conscious most of the time. We are unaware of our whole being, be it in the mind or spirit. My moments of epiphany happen when I think that I have reached a deeper connection with myself. I don't fully understand it but sense the immensity of that potential. It is hard to define because I am talking about something that is essentially invisible, intangible. It is as if we get a glimpse of other fragments reflecting light from the same light source as you. [36]

**When is it that you have such moments? I mean, would that be while making art or maybe otherwise in your daily life? [37]**

That is a hard question because my art is my life. I do not separate the two. [38]

It is not like washing the dishes and suddenly having an epiphany. I never had that. When I am in my creative process I have these moments or when on a journey; less so in recent years. At present I am very content and emotionally calm in my life, consequently I am less in touch with extreme positive and negative emotions. A visual artist, like any other creative practitioner, often reflects on some aspect of his or her life, which in turn can act as a powerful catalyst for a work of art. For many years this form of self reflection was a strong motivation for me, it was a very productive and life enhancing time for me. [39]

As an older woman with experience and emotional maturity I now seek other ways to find inspiration. I used to hit a brick wall in a dark place, so to speak, and would get a response, an emotion, sometimes of anger or sadness; that would inspire me to do things. But in my contentment I struggle to find inspiration, I



don't have a brick wall to hit against. Some people can be inspired by the beauty of nature. Wordsworth wrote the most amazing poetry because he was in beautiful settings, yet as artists we are not motivated by the same things. Though nature inspires me, it is the edge, the unknown that beckons. [40]

So I have had to work harder in these last few years to find a certain maturity and depth to my practice that enables me to reflect on deeper more universal experiences. [41]

**Why can you not bounce of happiness in the same way as of sadness? [42]**

I don't know... I can feel emotion from that which is beautiful but the inspiration may not necessarily come from that relationship. [43]

Emotions are integral to our conscious and sub-conscious minds, so no matter how, they always finds a way to show themselves. [44]

5 September 2008  
Images © Katayoun Dowlatshahi, Text © Katayoun Dowlatshahi and Gil Dekel.  
Interview held in Portsmouth, UK, 30 May 2008, and via email correspondence (June-September 2008).

**Performance artist:**

**The Image of Ourselves.**

**Performance artist Roi Vaara interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: Would it be correct to say that you are a 'performance artist'? [1]**

Roi Vaara: I am known for my performances, so yes, it is correct to say I am performance artist. But when I am asked what I do, I reply that I am an artist, originally a painter who now presents his visions in a live format. [2]

**And you have mentioned that you use the most direct medium for your live performances: your own body. [3]**

Yes, my live performances are meant to create a common ground with the audience, focusing on the basic existential human level through simple means. So, no special skills or special tools are needed here, and anyone could do what I do, which makes this kind of work very communicative. [4]



Figure 1: *Artist's Dilemma*, performance for video (1989). Photo: © Naranja. [5]

**Your performances seem 'silent', like a silent film... Are you using sounds in your work? [6]**

Usually I use the sound that the actions in the performance create, and only on rare occasion I use my voice. But this depends on the performance and what it requires. For example, in one performance I was standing on a high pedestal and I reached the ceiling. I couldn't stand straight because of the ceiling, so I had to bend under it giving the impression that I was actually bowing in front of the audience. I accompanied that 'gesture' with a sound of loud applause... [7]

**In your recent performance *Wet Paint Handshakes* you dip your hand in wet paint and invite the audience to shake your hand... What is the idea behind this work? [8]**

I tried to create an art experience where everyone could feel something or at least think about something while I perform. So I offered a challenge: a call for a personal contact with another person whose hand is dipped in wet paint... [9]

I wear black tuxedo, which is the common formal gentleman's suit, and the contrast between the black and white makes the performance visually prominent. After each handshake I wipe the white paint off my hands on my black tuxedo, so the tuxedo becomes 'dirty' with white. [10]



Figure 2: *Wet Paint Handshakes* (2008). Hayward Gallery, London, UK. Photo: © Naranja. [11]



Figure 3: *Wet Paint Handshakes* (2008). Hayward Gallery, London, UK. Photo: © Naranja. [12]

**White colour seems a recurring element in your art. Is this correct? [13]**

In the early 1980s I became known as the White Man following my performances in public spaces in Helsinki, Finland. The idea came to me from the notion of the white race, and so I tried to disappear in the landscape... I guess that colours carry different meanings within different cultures. Our experiences in specific cultures affect the ways we act and react in order to get satisfaction. [14]



Figure 4: *White Man*, street action (1983). Helsinki, Finland. Photo: © Harri Larjosto. [15]

### **What attracts you to perform? [16]**

I am looking for ways to share moments of life with other people, and to convey feelings of existence through an art form that is direct. At first I started with doing paintings and installation works but I felt that performances would be much more direct. Then, when I was invited to perform in galleries, I had to rethink the way I do performances. My concern shifted into thinking how to include other media in my performances, such as drawing, painting, photo, text and so on. I think that even some scientific methods or tools can be useful in this trip; who knows... [17]

**I assume that since you use your own body as a medium for your art, that I could ask how do you feel art relates to your daily life? Do you 'live' your art? [18]**

I think that life is art in itself. Practical things which belong to daily life take up most of my time, and they are the source from which the ideas for my performances are coming. Instead of saying that I live my art, I rather say that art makes me live. [19]



Figure 5: *Balloon Man*, street action (2006). Indonesia. Photo: © Juliana Yasin. [20]



Figure 6: *Balloon Man*, street action (2007). Szentendre, Hungary, The International Performance Festival 2007. Photo: © Bence Regös. [21]

### **How has your creativity developed over the years? [22]**

Although I have done a lot of art works I still find it difficult to say if any development has occurred in my creative process... I am not sure whether the process of creating art has become easier or more difficult over the years. Creativity seems to be some kind of a current, a continuous process with some fast moments and some slow ones. It is important to keep on doing what you started with, and sooner or later you will find the right way to complete it. Art is about finding new ways. [23]

Some years ago I had a phase where I suddenly felt that I had done all I could do in art, and that there was nothing else for me to add. I could not see any reason to continue. Art is a living thing for me, so the problem was not a matter of technicality to solve, but a problem of a way of living. It was a bit strange, and I felt sort of empty and a bit blue. I thought that once I complete those performances I have already agreed to do, that I will then move on to find something else which will be more exciting than art. Having that thought in my mind actually helped me to accept the situation, and soon after, a week or two passed, and new ideas for art appeared in my mind... and with these new ideas I realised that I have become somewhat more free; free from anxieties I had before. [24]

### **And what happened that allowed for new ideas to come up? [25]**

I just realised that there is nothing that I can do to change that; it is not in my hands. So I had to accept the situation. This acceptance somehow solved the problem. It made me leave behind all that I had done before and so I became more open to embrace new ideas and try new things. In some sense I had become more free in my relationship with art, and with life generally. This new way of seeing made it easier for new ideas to enter. I think that it is up to our personal beliefs alone how we see and understand things around us. [26]

**You mentioned that your work is not intended to create public sensation but to challenge the way we are looking at things. Do you think artists can challenge without creating sensation? Your performances do seem to create sensations around them, don't they? [27]**

There are some types of art that seem as if they were designed to appear in the media for the purpose of making headlines. It might actually be the result of the media which seem to blow things out of proportion, and I think this is most

prominent in the USA. I would like to call it the media market art. Such media market art seems to be sensational, provocative and spectacular by purpose. [28]

I am not interested in this form of art per se. My art is designed for the purpose of having a direct communication between one person and another, and it doesn't require the amplification or manipulation of the mass media. In order to make this point clear I have said that I intend to challenge, not to create sensations. In any case my art doesn't seem to interest the media too much, and that is ok with me. [29]

### **Why do you create art? [30]**

A good art experience is for me like a powerful feeling of being alive. It is like being under a spell or a trance. I feel energized, happy and satisfied, and I wish I could trigger such experiences in other people as well. [31]

Art is an energy work, and a good work enlivens me, sort of raises me up above the everyday experience. A bad work makes me feel dead. So, I create art in order to participate in the process of the continuous creation of the world. [32]

### **What is that process of 'continuous creation of the world'? [33]**

Well, things happen all the time around us; that is the nature of life. Life is a dynamic system and we do what we have to do. Each circumstance creates characteristic, both in the physical and the spiritual realm. When circumstances change, the ways we look at things change as well and new opportunities appear. Art can show us the image of ourselves in the changing world. I believe that the world is in a continuous state of change, and thus the creation of the world continues. [34]



Figure 7: *Alarm, Forces of Light* (1996). Helsinki, Finland. Photo: © Naranja. [35]

### **What inspires you to create your art? [36]**

Life is like a puzzle, and it can be very satisfying to figure out things and create order using different elements. This order is a kind of a proposition for how things might be, or will be at least for a moment... It is inspiring to find new surprising ways about life, and for me the everyday life and other cultural phenomena are the sources for inspiration. [37]

### **How does the 'everyday life' inspire you? [38]**

When I was a young painter I lived in the countryside, and I was fascinated to see that each evening the sunset looked different; it was never the same. I could look at that and at other natural phenomena for hours. What I learned is that it did not make much sense to try to catch those phenomena in paintings or in photos, because they were much richer in reality. Since we are as much part of the biosphere as a sunset is, the complexity of life remains an inexhaustible source for art. From this point of view everybody is not an artist, as Joseph Beuys manifested, but rather everybody is art itself, I would say... [39]

5 November 2008

Images © the photographers. Text © Roi Vaara and Gil Dekel. Interview conducted via email correspondence (June-July 2008). Roi Vaara is based in Finland. Gil Dekel is based in the UK.

## **Authors/Academics:**

### **Suddenly Awakened.**

**Author Colin Wilson interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: How would you define your sense of artistry? Would you consider yourself a writer, philosopher, mystic, or perhaps a critic? [1]**

Colin Wilson: Well, as an artist/philosopher, I would say. You see, when I was in my early teens I was deeply impressed by Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*, which still strikes me as the most exhilarating play of the 20th century, and by Shaw's theory of the artist/philosopher. Shaw says, 'the real aim is to become both an artist and a philosopher', and he seems to me to embody that aim. That is what I have tried to do ever since. This explains why I have always written novels and critical books in tandem. *The Outsider*, as you know, sprang out of a novel called *Ritual in the Dark*, which I started writing years before. I started that when I was in my teens and didn't finish it until after *The Outsider* came out when I was twenty-four. And from then on, the so-called critical books came out frequently at the same time as the novels did, with whom the subject the critical books dealt. [2]

For example, there is a passage in *The New Existentialism*, which I wrote at the same time as *The Mind Parasites*, in which I speak about the theme of the mind parasites, and express it. Then I suddenly thought, 'Aha, that would make a novel'... [3]

**You published *The Outsider* in 1956, and more than fifty years later it still captivates our minds. Does this book still represent who you are today and the way you see the world today? [4]**

Oh, sure. You see, my work has continued in a dead straight line from *The Outsider* onward... it has not veered at all to right or left... the kind of thing I am thinking about today is still a development of what I was thinking about in *The Outsider*. I suppose *The Outsider* is basically about the basic question of 'how can human beings achieve more consciousness?' [5]

You might say that *Ritual in the Dark* is about the possibility of achieving more consciousness by sexual means, something that the hero Gerard Sorme sees as a possibility. But then he sees the corpse of one of the victims, and he decides that it just not what he means. He is in fact horrified by it. [6]

Baudelaire said that everything in the world exudes crime. In fact, that is romantic nonsense. Of course, crime is all very nice as a Romantic ideal for morbid artists like Baudelaire and Edgar Allan Poe, but you know, it does not really work for sensible people... It can't meet the test of reality. [7]

**Is your writing motivated by your so-called inner world or by external events? [8]**

Well, that's a difficult question because we all are living between two worlds... and that's the whole point of *The Outsider*. I was writing in that book about people who feel themselves to be in-betweeners. People who have a basic desire to not waste their life working at the same thing as other people do, as I did myself... Before *The Outsider* came out I worked in all kinds of jobs that I hated – office jobs, even navvying – but I was fortunate enough, so to speak, in being bright enough to impose my own terms, and to write *The Outsider*, which meant that from then on I could be a writer, rather than working in a factory. [9]

Most people live between two worlds in that sense, and what someone like myself was trying to do from the beginning was to live in this second world, so to speak, the world of the mind. And that is something you find in Yeats and in all kind of 1890 Romantics. They identify this other world as our inner being, for example, Kierkegaard's argument that 'truth is subjectivity'. Yeats says, 'The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be', meaning by 'unshapely things' the ordinary physical world around us. [10]

Yeats accepted the notion of the world of fairies as an alternative. At least, you know, Yeats made an effort to replace this ordinary boring everyday world with something that he could feel more real, whereas poor old Dowson did not really believe that there *is* another world, which explains the terrible sadness in his poems. That's because he feels that ultimately there is no way of finding yourself, finding a way to this 'other world', which Yeats was pretty certain really existed. Somebody says in Yeats' play *The Shadowy Waters*, 'what the world's million lips are thirsting for *must* be substantial somewhere'... [11]

**What inspires you to create? I mean, does going into nature inspire you? Or perhaps you need silence in order to 'hear' the words? [12]**

No... As a matter of fact I realised when I was in my teens in the Lake District that I was not getting the same thing from this nature that Wordsworth got... I was too much in a practical down-to-earth world to really be able to respond in the way that Wordsworth responded to the daffodils... [13]

Basically I am too much a practical person, too pragmatic, which is of course why I started training as a scientist. At that time all I wanted was to become a scientist... [14]

**Is it correct to say that you acknowledge another level to life that needs focusing on, in addition to the everyday reality? Is this level deduced from everyday life, or does it enrich everyday life? [15]**

That is precisely what I am talking about. This is the really important question. The Romantics themselves did their best to express it, but what makes Yeats so great is that he really did try to say 'does this second level exist?' whereas I'd say that most of the Romantics (and Dowson is an example) did not really feel that it existed, and therefore felt that this was really a rotten world that was devised as a death to poets. Thompson's *City of Dreadful Night* is a reflection of the way that



the Romantics feel when they see that this world is a death trap – a kind of turning away with disgust. [16]

**Do you find it easy to communicate spiritual ideas to the wider public, or do you 'reduce' the information in order to make it more accessible and reach fuller understanding? [17]**

I don't reduce the information at all. I try to put it so clearly that it actually gets through to the conscious mind... P.D. Ouspensky noted that teaching a group actually taught him as much as it taught the others. [18]

**How do image and word support each other in conveying messages in your own writing process, as well as more generally in daily life? [19]**

Well, I have been reading the proof text of my latest book *Power Consciousness*, and in the last chapter I describe a method of achieving intensity consciousness. I talk there about Rubenstein's experiments with flatworms called planaria, and that is my way of explaining something as clearly as I possibly can. [20]

'In 1958, Irvin Rubenstein and Jay Boyd Best, two zoologists working at the Walter Reed Army Institute in Washington, were conducting experiments involving the learning capacity of a simple organism called the planarian worm. Planaria are incredibly simple creatures – no brain, no nervous system – so they make excellent subjects for experiments in the lab. The two zoologists were trying to study how they could learn without a brain. They put some planaria into a closed tube containing water – which planaria need to live. They then turned a tap which drained the water out of the tube. In a state of alarm, the planaria rushed along the tube looking for water. Soon they encountered a fork; one branch was lighted, and led to water; the other branch was unlighted, and didn't. Soon, ninety per cent of the planaria had learned the trick of choosing, and when the water was drained off, they rushed along the tube and chose the lighted alleyway, whether it was the right or left fork. [21]

'But now a strange thing happened. As Rubenstein and Best repeated the experiment over and over again (with the same worms), the planaria began choosing the *wrong* fork. That baffled them. [22]

'One of them suggested that perhaps they were bored with doing the same thing, and the wrong choice was the expression of the kind of irrational activity – like vandalism – that springs from boredom. The other asked, how *could* they be bored when they had no brain or nervous system? But a few more experiments seemed to indicate that the boredom hypothesis was correct. As the experiments continued, the planaria would just *lie* there, refusing to move, as if saying: 'Oh God, not again!' They preferred to die rather than go looking for water. [23]

'It seemed so absurd that Rubenstein and Best devised another experiment to test the boredom hypothesis. This time they took *two* tubes, and a new lot of planaria. In one tube, which had a rough inner surface, the water was down the lighted alleyway. In the other, which was smooth, it was down the dark alleyway. This was a far more complex experiment, and only a small percentage of the planaria learned which alleyway to choose. *But that small percentage never regressed.* They could do the experiment a thousand times and not get bored. Because they had been forced to put twice as much effort into the initial learning process, they achieved a higher level of imprinting – that is, of purpose – and maintained it forever.' [24]



Let me add: the relevance of this experiment to Schopenhauer and Beckett should be obvious. *If someone fails to put sufficient energy into the learning process, they become subject to boredom, and might even prefer to lie down and die rather than make an effort.* I had in my teens stumbled on the observation that of how often major writers, artists and musicians have had difficult beginnings, while those who have perhaps as much talent but an easier start in life seem to find it harder to rise above the second rank. Dickens, Shaw, Wells, Beethoven, Brahms, are examples of the first, Beckett and Schopenhauer of the second. They would do it a million times without getting bored, so they *were* getting bored the first time. [25]

**You also mentioned that the visionaries cannot express their experiences fully in words. Do you think that language is limited? Are there additional or better tools we could use? [26]**

Pretty obvious. What is the difference between a taste of an orange and a taste of tangerine?... There are so many hundreds of things that you cannot express in words. [27]

Of course, the main thing we can't express in words is the vision that Proust called '*le moment bienheureuse*', these strange moments of absolute pure joy which Marcel experiences in *Swann's Way* as he tastes the biscuit dipped in her tea, and is suddenly flooded in total affirmation. He actually says exactly this, that we think that we have taken everything into account, so to speak, in adding up what life is all about, and then in these moments suddenly you discover that there are millions of things that you have forgotten that are tremendously important. The trouble with human beings of course is that they actually become suicidal because they forget these things. Our real problem is what Heidegger calls forgetfulness of existence. We just forget... [28]

**As a child, did you ever have a vision or a strong sense of what you later came to write about? [29]**

Yes, my basic insight and the only really basic one, which is of course Proust's '*le moment bienheureuse*', came to me as a child in Christmas time. Then I'd always get that wonderful feeling, 'my God isn't the world lovely!' How was it possible that I ever thought it wasn't? How was it possible that I would get so bored and fed up in November when Christmas was so close? That is my vision. I would also call it holiday consciousness, because we get it when setting out on a holiday, a sudden feeling of 'my God, isn't it a wonderful complex world'. It is incredibly difficult to induce it again at will. [30]

**What were your impressions of Abraham Maslow? Do you think he himself had peak-experiences? [31]**

Yes, he had peak-experiences a great deal of the time, because he was a wide open person, not a narrow rigid intellectual. [32]

**How would you associate the work of Maslow with that of Carl Jung? [33]**

Well, they both shared an extremely important insight, which was really that Freud was wrong... In *Civilization and its Discontent* Freud tended to take the view that things are basically rotten, and we are forced to discipline ourselves by civilization, until we lose all our vitality. So Freud's basic vision is negative, whereas Jung said, in that one terrifically important sentence, 'the soul has a religious function.' [34]

Maslow was saying the same thing in his recognition that peak-experiences are the basis of a completely different view of life. Of course, all amounting to what happened... Maslow discovered that when he was talking to students in class about peak-experiences, they began remembering peak-experiences which they had in the past, and which now they more or less forgotten. As soon as they began to talk about it, what happened to them is exactly what happened to Proust. The '*moment bienheureuse*' suddenly awakened other moments, and they all began talking about peak-experience and having it all the time. [35]

**You mentioned that artists are aware of the spiritual levels. What are the methods that artists use to become sensitive to the spiritual? What were William Blake's methods? Can anyone become sensitive likewise? [36]**

When you ask about artists and their basic visions, this is an extremely interesting question. An artist's basic vision is really how he sees life, so to speak. And he wants to put on to the canvas the thing that had the greatest impact on him. [37]

Francis Bacon, who was a friend of mine at the time I first knew him, was painting these slightly blurry things, the dog shivering and the pope screaming... really it was a very negative kind of vision. But as far as he was concerned, just being able to put that on the canvas made it positive. It is almost as if some collector had said to him, 'Well, tell me what you really believe,' and Francis replied, 'Come back to my studio and I will show you.' Then, in the studio he points at a pictures and says, 'There, that's what I believe'. [38]

Blake in a sense went much further than that. I don't know if you have seen the book *Why Mrs. Blake Cried*; if you haven't you ought to read it because it's terribly important. It is about a lady called Marsha Keith Schuchard, and she discovered that Blake's parents were members of a church in Fetter Lane, and this was while Mrs. Blake was carrying Blake in her womb. The church, you could really say, was a sexual church. In a sense they were following up visions of Swedenborg, who discovered the terrific importance of sex in religion, and this is what they were trying to do: they were trying to induce such intensity of sex that you might almost say that their chief instrument of inducing it was mutual masturbation, but that is a crude oversimplification. The man and the woman had to get together in such a way that they induce intense sexual excitement in one another. [39]

I remember somebody telling me once that he had read somewhere that in certain Hindu religions, when people got married they had to go to bed for night after night, and not touch one another, and keep on doing that until finally they would reach such a point of intensity that they can gradually have an orgasm simply by lying in bed side by side... Now this is what Schuchard is talking about. And apparently these people in Fetter Lane could induce a kind of semi-orgasmic state which went on all night long, for hour after hour. [40]

I strongly suspect that this was what they had learned from a German mystic called Zinzendorf. His teachings, I suspect, reached Blake through his mother's womb. In other words, this is an amazing case of inheritance of acquired characteristics. [41]

You might say that Blake understood that we all have the ability to raise ourselves to tremendous heights of visionary consciousness simply by using this power which God has given to the human race in separating it into two sexes. Usually little boys discover this once they discover how attractive little girls are. And I can clearly remember at the age of six or seven sitting in my class, and on the seat

behind me a naughty kid called Harry Housby was sitting there with his cock out trying to persuade the little girl who sat next to him to touch it. And she was giggling and saying, 'no no no, I wouldn't.' Obviously he discovered early on this extraordinary difference between the sexes... The real problem about that, and I was intending once to write a book about this, is that if you pursue it too far you might not turn into a William Blake but into a Fred West or a Ted Bundy. [42]

### **Let me take you back to art. What is inspiration in art? [43]**

Well, it is simply getting down to this basic thing which you know and believe. It is a way of seeing, just as in Francis Bacon's example. And once you have acquired this way of seeing of things, you can then see the way it leads Cézanne to see things in a strange geometrical way. You might say to Cézanne, 'But you know things don't really look like that', and he would reply, 'That's the way they appear to me when I put my inspirational spectacles on, and that's the nearest I can come in trying to paint and tell you the way I feel the world should be.' [44]

You might say that Van Gogh was trying to do the same thing by making the world practically explode and shine through the paint. He was saying, 'This is what reality is basically.' [45]

### **Madame Blavatsky shared many insights about bettering life. Are these insights useful for today? [46]**

We are in a way getting back to the same question earlier with Yeats. Once you have a belief that something is wrong in the world as shown to us by our ordinary senses, then you have what Blake called double vision. Blake actually said that he had a fourfold vision. If you read *Ulysses* you can see that Joyce has only 'single vision', which is what E.M. Forster meant when he said that the book was an attempt to cover the universe in mud, i.e. the world is such that it induces the feeling that Sartre called la *nausée*, nausea. [47]

Once, like Yeats, you firmly believe in the supernatural, in the fairy vision, then you say, 'No no, I know a reality that contradicts your reality.' Yeats learned it partly as a result of going along to Madame Blavatsky, because Madame Blavatsky made him see that these things are quite real. She saw that other reality, just as Blake and Yeats did. Interesting, isn't it, that Yeats started off by doing an edition of Blake's poems. [48]

### **Do you study or experiment with natural homeopathy or alike? [49]**

No. [50]

9 Dec 2008

Interview conducted via audio recording and email correspondence, Nov/Dec 2008.  
Colin Wilson is based in Cornwall, UK. Gil Dekel is based in Southampton, UK.

### **Where the Unthinkable can be Expressed.**

**Short interview with Patricia Bickers, art historian, editor and critic.**

**Gil Dekel: What motivates you to speak about art and explore it? In what way art touches you? [1]**

Patricia Bickers: I like the fact that while you may learn a great deal about art through experience as well as research, you can never, in the true sense, be an expert because the field is so subjective and ill-defined. Even better, unlike an historical event, art objects – even conceptual and ephemeral ones – continue to exist in some form for future generations to comment upon so that your view is not definitive. [2]

**Do you see your critical essays as artefacts, or as observation on the art of others, perhaps? [3]**

In most cases – if not all – criticism is a reactive form and therefore it cannot, in my view, be regarded as creative in its own right. [4]

**Do you feel that editing removes personal opinion from analysis or exploration of art works? [5]**

No, I do not think editing removes personal opinion, but then, *Art Monthly* magazine (which I edit) does not have to maintain the supposed balance of an institution like the BBC. [6]

**Do you need to be 'inspired' in order to analyse a work of art? [7]**

I wouldn't put it quite so grandly, but certainly you need to be stimulated by a work of art to write about it. [8]

**How do you see the role of contemporary artists in society? Has this role changed over the years? [9]**

This is too big an issue for a short interview like this. I will only say that artists in the 21st Century are much closer to their public(s) than they were in the previous century. As to the first part of the question, I don't think the role of artists has been decided since the Renaissance uncoupled the artist from the Church and the State. I do believe, however, that art, and therefore artists, provide a vital discursive space where the unthinkable can be thought and expressed. [10]

**Do you have preference to specific periods, or art movements, in the history of art? [11]**

The Renaissance period in Florence, where I began, and modern and contemporary art. [12]

**Did your upbringing affect your creative expression as an editor, and the way you perceive art? [13]**

I don't think so, except, perhaps, to give me a fascination with history (my father was an historian). [14]

**I am sure you have made many choices while editing the interviews book *Talking Art* (2007). Can I ask you specifically why did you choose to include Naum Gabo, Jasper Johns, Joseph Beuys, Gilbert & George, Anish Kapoor, Sol LeWitt and Gustav Metzger? [15]**

There are so many reasons to include Naum Gabo. He was one of the few bona fide pioneer modernists who actually lived in Britain for a while (as opposed to going to New York). His politics also chimed with those of the magazine, an

element in the choice of many of the others, like Gustav Metzger, though obviously not in the case of Gilbert & George! [16]

Jasper Johns is so important, not least as an artist who took painting out of the cul-de-sac that Abstract Expressionism had become, while Sol Lewitt is one of the key artists of this or any generation and was very much associated with the magazine's early days. [17]

Anish Kapoor was largely chosen because he had been selected to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale, marking a welcome break from heavy metal sculptors. [18]

15 September 2008

© Patricia Bickers and Gil Dekel.

Interview conducted via email correspondence (September 2008).

Patricia Bickers is based in London, UK. Gil Dekel is based in Southampton, UK.

### **Listening to Yourself.**

#### **Dr. Amikam Marbach interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: You have developed a method that employs words to help people become aware of their prior knowledge, or inner insights. With your method people can articulate these insights in a way that can help to express them, to make a good use of them, rather than keeping them locked inside. [1]**

Dr. Marbach: Yes, I believe that being aware of yourself can help you know where you are coming from and where you are going to. Since people are different, it is beneficial to provide them with tools by which they can better know themselves, rather than put them through a system that forces them to accept similar knowledge and identities. [2]

My method was developed in the framework of the academy, and it provides students with tools to develop their ideas into a coherent PhD thesis. So, I will talk here about writing theses, but you will see how you can apply this method to anything you do in your daily life, including developing your ideas for art projects if you are an artist. [3]

The starting point of research in academia is usually to ask the student to go to the literature sources – the library, the internet – and to read thoroughly. Then the student should find a gap in the literature, something that is missing, and from that he is supposed to develop his topic of interest for his thesis. [4]

That process can be problematic because students usually go to the library without having the tools to deal with the vast amount of information that is available today. They do not know how to approach books in terms of their content. And yet they are supposed to accept the literature as a truth and build upon it... [5]

The other difficulty is that students are constantly fed ideas from the literature, which means that their intuitive ideas are limited to previous knowledge. Students are confined to the limits of the knowledge which is accessible to the academy, ignoring other sources. And indeed you can see that most students tend to follow a path which is set by the past. Of course, the problem is not the knowledge in the literature (which is vital to any research), but rather the starting point, which

does not take into account the inner abilities and prior knowledge of the students. [6]

If you do not start with your prior knowledge, but start with taking ideas from the literature first hand, you are then like a servant of other people's ideas. You do not progress with your own creativity. But, if you start to draw from within and manage yourself then you develop ideas from your own creative thinking as well as finding it easier to manage the literature outside you. [7]

**How then can students come from where they are, and not from where the literature is, and yet at the same time back up their ideas on the literature? [8]**

I propose a method where you start by making a decision about what you want to do, without referring to the literature; simply decide upon a topic that interests you. At this point you should be concerned with one thing only, which is what you want to achieve. What is the end result you wish to see from your PhD? Or, what do you seek to express in your art work? What do you want to see happen in your life? The thing that you want becomes your sole concern and the topic for your work. [9]

Once you decided on a topic you then describe the need to examine it. You have to say what is the need, what is the problem that you feel we need to tackle. Then you want to say how you propose to deal with the problem, in what way will you tackle it. To do so, you define a few criteria by which you will examine the topic. Criteria will make up what I call a 'world of content', which is a vocabulary of terms relevant to your work. [10]

Then you write a conclusion, which is a hypothesis really, because it is based on your assumptions and own ideas. It is not yet based on reading the literature. [11]

The reason you have not referred to the literature up to this point is to allow you to work freely with yourself; from your own intuition and prior knowledge. If you learn to listen to yourself, to your own ideas, you will then be able to listen to others. You will be able to learn from other researchers, updating your own ideas, and developing them to new realms of knowledge. Most of all, it will teach you one of the most important things in academia – being modest and humble. You will arrive at a point where you will be humble to accept other researchers that you will find in the literature. And this acceptance will not come from having to write a thesis and draw from authors that your course leader instructed you. [12]

My aim is to teach tools by which you can make sense of your own ideas and thoughts and write them in a coherent way that can be understood by other readers. [13]

**So, how does one begin? [14]**

On the first day of the course I start by giving the students two minutes to think of the topic that they would like to explore. Two minutes, no more. If at a later point a student faces a problem with his chosen topic, he cannot change it, but rather he will have to deal with the problem and solve it. If he cannot solve issues that he himself raises, then changing the topic will not help. Being stuck with himself, he might get stuck again. [15]

**Let's say I choose the topic of creativity in art. [16]**

OK. Now you define the topic based on your knowledge of it. You do not follow any definition or framework that the literature had decided upon, making sure that what you define is relevant to you, to where you are. Many times someone can pick up a topic, but unless he defines it, he might not understand what he is saying. By defining it you create tools to observe what you think. [17]

**So, for the topic of creativity in art, I would like to choose the following definition: a process in which artists are inspired to create works. [18]**

Good. That definition comes out of your interests, your background and intuition. It does not come out of reading the literature. [19]

Next, you have to define each word you have used; in our example the words are: process, artists, inspiration, works. And then you sum up all these definitions into one collective definition. [20]

At this point you have to develop a background, and this is very interesting. I have been teaching thousands of students for many years now and have found that the backgrounds that students come up with, which are based on their feelings about the topic, are very close to the backgrounds and frameworks that the literature presents. I observed that students usually describe an accurate framework, and this indicates that something is happening in the realm of intuition, which is beyond academia, and is no less good in describing and framing topics. [21]

By now, you have chosen a topic, defined it and decided on a framework. So, your topic may be creativity in art; your definition of it is a process in which artists are inspired to create works; and your framework?... [22]

**...Artists in the last 150 years. [23]**

Next you want to start examining your topic, by building up the categories that make it. Any topic should be examined by categories; however, you do not borrow categories from the literature but rather you make those categories. [24]

I have found that if you choose two categories you then create a two-dimensional work where two things play like a ping-pong game, one against the other. There is no depth to that, so I ask that you choose three categories. [25]

**I would like to choose the following three categories: stimulation, internalisation, and application. [26]**

Good. These are the three categories that interest you and that make up your topic. They will also make the chapter titles of your thesis. Next, you develop each category into three subcategories. For each subcategory I ask you to produce a conclusion which is your assumption, the hypothesis, since you have not yet read the literature. Now you can sum it up in a diagram. [27]

Topic →	Creativity in art:
Definition →	The processes of inspiration, conception and application in art making.

Categories (will make the thesis chapters) →	Stimulation			Internalisation			Application		
Subcategories →	Sensing	Feeling	Reflecting	Colour	Shape	Line	Place	Audience	Material
Sub- subcategories →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective unconsciousness</li> <li>• Silence</li> <li>• Listening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation</li> <li>• Expansion</li> <li>• Urge to create</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Word</li> <li>• Image</li> <li>• Sound</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vivid</li> <li>• Light</li> <li>• Transparent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abstract</li> <li>• Fluid</li> <li>• Structured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Painting</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Installation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature</li> <li>• City</li> <li>• Room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group</li> <li>• Individual</li> <li>• Self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paint</li> <li>• Body</li> <li>• Object</li> </ul>
Conclusions →	Giving meanings to strong feelings			Translating meanings to artistic forms			Putting artistic forms into practice		
Overall conclusion →	The processing of collective universal artistic sources into individual unique forms through the artist								

Diagram 1: Graphic presentation draft for thesis, based on experiencing prior knowledge. [28]

Here you have completed a draft skeleton of your PhD thesis. You can use this method for anything, even for the simplest things in life, such as deciding why you need to go and buy something in the shop. [29]

You have created this draft from knowledge that was within you, from what you want, rather than from an outside source, such as books and what the books want. [30]

### **How do you listen to you prior knowledge and to what is within you? [31]**

Simply by doing what you love. What you love, you probably know a bit about. And if you know how to work with your own prior knowledge then you will also know how to work with other people, because when you learn to listen to yourself you cannot manipulate or change what you say. You learn to listen to other people as well, without manipulating what they say. I think we all tend to manipulate what we hear in one way or another. Starting from a place of prior knowledge means that you start by exploring and overcoming your own restrictions. [32]

At this point we need to connect the inner prior creative ideas in your draft to the literature. We want to back up the assumptions that we built up on the basis of inner intuition, on the literature out there. So, now you go to the library and read the relevant literature to support your work. The literature does not interfere with your choice of topic or the way you go about investigating it. The literature backs it up and updates it. [33]

**Your book describes how to handle the vast literature available, and how to find the relevant material for a student's work. But I want to ask you about your approach in general. Your method after all is well structured and well defined in itself. Aren't we supposed to do the exact opposite, i.e. to be unstructured, in order to nourish creativity? [34]**



In any creative process there must be what we call 'an end of discussion', a point where you stop (and where you can start a new project if you wish). You must stop at one point, otherwise, you could be stuck in the same project, studying it forever, wanting to reach for something that does not really exist, but that you want simply because you do not have it... [35]

This is a problem that we may face in the Socratic way of teaching, where a solution is not accepted but rather reconstructed anew, so that you need to continue searching. The comedians Laurel and Hardy made a good illustration of this. In one of their adventures they find diamonds laid down in a long row on a road. They pick up the diamonds, one after the other, following them on the road, until they find themselves in a village of a cannibal tribe... So, you can be very rich but that may not help you... In the same way, you can think but where does this thinking take you? We want to allow for creativity, to structure the thinking process and to direct it to a useful and communicative result. [36]

Socrates teaches us how to look at a phenomenon and a dialogue, and how to inspire students to continue asking questions. It is a remarkable thing, but one thing is missing here – the result, the finding of a concrete thing. So, I developed this method, which helps you to open up to intuition as well as requiring you to define the end result. You do not think without limits, but rather you think in order to build up a product that can contribute something useful for you. In academia there is a framework, a method and a product. [37]

**Can I ask you further – Why do you think that words are a useful tool by which we can know ourselves? [38]**

We think through words, and we communicate through words. [39]

**Is thinking the best way of knowing oneself? [40]**

I agree that words are limited; for poets words are problematic because they reduce the experience. For politicians words are useful, because they can create experiences... With one word you can stir up a whole nation... [41]

Now, some things are involuntary such as the will and desires. These things have no limit since they are not confined to logic. Yet, some people say that even will is just a form of thinking, in the same way that logic is a form of thinking. [42]

Naturally words are made of shapes that are confined on the paper. Thought and will, on the other hand, are much more open, they are not confined by their shape or space or time, and so they are infinite. And this is why I am using words. Words are a tool that can confine and thus make concrete the incredible infinity of thoughts, wills and prior knowledge. Without words it would be impossible to grasp or use our thoughts and wills. Words are a gate between the concrete and the infinite, allowing us to arrive at a result, and at an end of discussion. [43]

28 November 2008

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Interview held in Haifa, Israel, 18 May 2008, and via email/telephone correspondence, September and November 2008.

**The Search for Explicit Self.**

**Dr. Iain Biggs interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

**Gil Dekel: I get the feeling that your paintings suggest a sense of environment, a sense of “earthiness”... Is this correct? [1]**

Iain Biggs: “Earthiness” means such different things to different people... but I can say that I am concerned with making images that in part – and only in part – grow out of my response to particular places, for example, the small parish of Southdean on the English/Scottish border. I am also concerned with the interweaving of the physical practices and matters of painting and similar craft activities used in image making – in paintings, enamel pieces and, more recently, drawings into old roof slates – with the mysterious business of image as somehow an evocation, an almost-sign. [2]



Figure 1: *Resident Migrant 4* (2008), Various media on paper and card, 40cm x 30.25cm. [3]

**Are you using your body to empower the messages in your works? [4]**

The kind of work I make is very much the result of a physical process and, inevitably, that's a bodily activity through which the piece is “performed” into being. So I guess the short answer is “yes”. At a less literal level, much of the research and just plain wandering about that informs the work comes from walking in the physical landscape, smelling it, getting cold or hot or wet in it; paying attention to sound and wind direction and light is also important to my sense of wellbeing. To some extent this probably informs the way I approach the work. But there's also more cerebral stuff cutting across this – stuff to do with mapping, for example – and then there's also the whole business of practice as a conversation with what other people who make material images have come up with, a conversation carried out through the body pushing stuff around. [5]

**How do your paintings change in relation to changes in your life? [6]**

My work has changed fundamentally as a result of my daughter becoming increasingly seriously ill. Some of this had to do with what I realised – in retrospect – was a preoccupation with kinds of images that allowed me to mourn my daughter's loss of an active life. Much of it has to do with the logistics of balancing different responsibilities – as a parent, a partner, a full-time academic, a back-up carer, somebody who needs to make images, who likes to work collaboratively, who needs to write, etc. And then there's part of it that has to do

with getting older – I’m now two years off sixty... and the quite proper shift in one’s priorities and understanding that follows from that. [7]

**Can art practice be said to have a therapeutic effect? Can it help release emotional burdens? [8]**

Although I have worked closely with art therapists in an educational and training context, have read post-Jungian psychology most of my adult life, and spent a long time in counselling, I’m still very uncomfortable with seeing art practices as strictly therapeutic in any privileged way. Is making a painting more therapeutic than building a dry stone wall? It surely depends far more on who you talk to while you’re going about it? [9]

I need to add that my reluctance to see art practices as privileged therapeutically has nothing to do with the common art world snobbery about the status of “therapeutic art”, but rather with the way many people understand therapy as being about “cure” rather than an exercise in attention – about exchange in its broadest sense as paying attention to, caring for, the other. I learned from James Hillman to understand the term “psycho-therapy” in something like its original Greek sense – as “care of/for the soul”. [10]



Figure 2: *Juniper Fuse* (2007), Various media on paper and card, 46cm X 38cm. [11]

**Do you think we could talk about the role of art in society and how can art benefit people? [12]**

“Art” and “Society” (capital “A”, capital “S”) are all too often cultural “Power Words” that people use like big sticks to fight battles with; battles that are very often far more about their own personal power and prestige than the complex realities that make up our complicated and contradictory experience of the arts and of societies. I’m what might be called a “secular polytheist” (that is, a polytheist in a psychological, rather than theological, sense). So I prefer to think in terms of the different roles of the various very different arts and of the many different roles and approaches adopted within the same art, and about how all these differences (and the commonalities too) inform and function within different societies and sections of societies. [13]

**It seems as if you have a kind of a vision of ‘uniting all artists’. Is this correct? [14]**

No. I try to avoid having those kinds of visions, particularly if they involve artists, since, psychologically speaking, it's all too often the case that the visions of unity end up "having us" in fairly horrendous ways. My mantra – if I were to have such a thing – would almost certainly be Geraldine Finn's statement that, "we are always both more and less than the categories that name and divide us". I always feel the ethical and social force of this observation particularly strongly whenever I hear somebody say, loudly and in a public place: "I'm an artist". [15]

**You have suggested that doctoral studies in the arts be seen as a means for empowering students to deepen their practice, and thus create new knowledge. How can art practice inform theory, and how can it act as a method, resulting in a PhD thesis? [16]**

I don't think we "do" doctoral studies *in* the arts so much as with and through an arts practice and our reflecting on that practice. [17]

There are at least four closely interwoven but ultimately distinct aspects to doctoral work that involves art practice as an active research element. I'll try and say something general about these but, obviously, they each take on a very different status and importance depending on what each different student wants from her or his studies. [18]

One pair of strands is institutionally located in a formal sense within the university, but inevitably involves us always looking over our shoulders at the institutions of the art world and at the specifics of our own particular creative practices. Of these two strands, one involves us in learning to negotiate the PhD as an institutional "gate-keeping" exercise. After all, traditionally a PhD bestows the academic authority that then licences the successful candidate to teach in a university. The second strand here is educational in what I would call the "proper" sense. It's the process by which we assist in our own transformation through engaging in the experimental processes of genuine learning. This institutional/educational pairing is more or less exactly mirrored by the two other strands. These have to do with navigating the tension between two understandings of art. On the one hand "art as research" as understood by those of us who work full-time in universities while retaining some toehold in the "art world". That is art as a prospective and thoughtful psycho-physical activity for exploring (researching) our experience of the world. On the other hand art as understood as a commodity in the free-for-all of the art world as a marketplace and all that goes with that. [19]

All this can be seen as a (very real and serious) four handed game played out in the "debatable land" between the official networks, values and institutional politics of the university. Of course we've got to remember that the university is both the site of the production and authorization of "official" knowledge and, *at one and the same time, also* the site of educational possibility. In the same way, of course, the apparently anarchic (sometimes knowingly nihilistic) world of the art market - an even more highly institutionalized site than the university – is, *again at one and the same time, also* the site of imaginative work as the medium of an educational possibility. I think this is why Joseph Beuys told me long ago to always remember that education is more important than art – something it took me a good while to understand and even longer to accept. [20]



Figure 3: *Resident Migrant 1* (2008), Various media on paper and card, 40cm x 30.25cm. [21]

To navigate all this the student has to learn to “dance the dance” without forgetting that it’s just that, a formal dance for which it is necessary to learn the steps but within which variation and innovation are possible – albeit of course a dance in which one can win prizes or, alternatively, fall down and hurt oneself. [22]

Secondly, yes, there’s the business of new knowledge – perhaps better seen as new understanding. Maybe this is sometimes achieved by showing theory the wonder(ing) of the particular, even of the unique. That’s important because Theory (in its “pure”, “militant” or “fundamentalist” incarnation) needs to be constantly reminded of what it too often forgets. A “forgetting” that often leads to marginalization and bullying of people whose lived experience does not “live up to” theoretical expectations or demands. This takes us back to Geraldine Finn. But of course it’s also important to say that we need theory, it’s rigor and overview... [23]

Interwoven into all this there’s also the all-important business of how, at the end of the day, this process helps the doctoral student pay her or his rent! [24]

**It sounds as if you talk about the notion of changing the role of art from passive to active? [25]**

Possibly, but I’m less interested in attempts to “change the role of art from passive to active” than to try and see my way around our obsession with preserving some predetermined notion of “the role of art”. In my view, what’s most interesting about what we call the arts is that they provide a body of unstable but longstanding practices that, like old folksongs and the best children’s games, constantly mutate into something almost new without ever quite letting go a certain something that we find both obscurely useful and deeply satisfying. [26]

The “role” of art – if we can say that - is, at least in my view, closer to certain understandings of play as a mediation between the known and the not known than of change/therapy in its instrumental form. [27]

All human activity that involves the exercise of some degree of care, skill and attention in its execution has some aesthetic dimension. A large part of “our” problem with regard to the arts is that we still believe that “aesthetics” is something invented in Western Europe by modern philosophers. I was fortunate enough to be taught at the Royal College of Art by the late Philip Rawson. He

introduced me to Indian aesthetics and specifically to the Tantric aesthetics based on *rasa* that was set out by Abhinavagupta (who lived from approx 950 to 1020 AD). As a result, and in line with the thinking of James Hillman, I've come to think we need to pay far *more* attention to the enactment or performance of the aesthetic in human experience, not less. We need to do so precisely because it engages us environmentally with sensate "messages and wisdom" in their felt immediacy. [28]



Figure 4: Image from *Between Carterhaugh and Tamshiel Rig: A Borderline Episode* (Bristol, Wild Conversations Press, 2004). [29]

**Some artists argue that practice, such as painting, is an act that goes with 'no thinking', or that it is 'to think visually'. In a way, paintings can be seen as patterns of thoughts. Would you agree? [30]**

In practice (!) of course there is no such thing as Practice – only various practices and the historical traditions that inform them (painting among them). Currently the conscious mind is seen as analogous to a tiny island floating in a vast sea of so-called "unconsciousness", which links to the whole issue of tacit knowledge. Yes, paintings, but also of course wallpaper, can be seen as "patterns of thought" but what matters is less whether we "think visually" but whether we work with images (in the fullest sense). Do we let them work on us in ways that are imaginatively transformative of our habitual life and understanding, or that are "enchanted" in an ethically restorative sense? [31]

I don't mean to sound impatient with the question, but so much of what artists argue about seems far more concerned with allowing them to see themselves and their practices as "special" and/or "exclusive" when what is important is common to all sorts of imaginative practices at large. [32]

**How do you see the author of art then? As a mediator between an artistic source and the viewer, or as the source itself perhaps? [33]**

One way to answer this question would be to regularly remind ourselves that Roland Barthes was quite happy to receive his royalties as a named author until the day he was killed by an ambulance! [34]

Seriously, we're all thrown into the world as plural beings in which an almost infinite number of prior beings have some kind of an afterlife, whether through genetic or cultural influence. So "who" exactly would we name as writing the book, painting the image, etc. as "the author"?... [35]

20 November 2008

Images © Iain Biggs. Text © Iain Biggs and Gil Dekel.

Interview conducted via email correspondence Oct/Nov 2008. Iain Biggs is based in Bristol, UK. Gil Dekel is based in Southampton, UK.

## **Chanting artist:**

### **The Energy Behind the Sound.**

**Spiritual chanting artist, Russell Jenkins, interviewed by Gil Dekel.**

#### **Gil Dekel: How did you develop your chanting abilities? [1]**

Russell Jenkins: I have a hearing of an *Aum*. It is like you look at it and you think, 'Oh, it's a star that I can pluck out of the sky.' But it is so far beyond from what I can produce with my voice through chanting. Sometimes I feel that I am really close to it, and sometimes not. [2]

#### **Do you try to 'go' up there to that star, or would you try to 'bring' it down to you? [3]**

I have the sound in my head, and my aim is to replicate it through my voice. Most often what I can produce is so limited by comparison to what it is that I can hear. [4]

#### **How do you hear it? [5]**

I hear inside. I probably must hear myself from the outside as well. My own *Aum* I hear within my chest. [6]

My spiritual guides told me that the reason I cannot fully express what I hear is because there is even a higher sound than the one I hear. The original sound is still in a process; it is still being produced. Far from it being a one-off sound that is just created, it is a sound in progress, and it is the creating of everything else out of it. A kind of a source from which sounds are created. And it has not yet been finished being 'sounded', so it's hard to fully re-produce it in chanting. [7]

Video 1: Russell chants *Aum*, Sep 2006. [8]  
[the video is included in the CD attached to this thesis]

I am so pleased because I have had a sore throat all morning, but it seems to work fine now. [9]

There is one tune that I used so many times in meditation classes. I was given it in a series of spiritual works to do with the Keys of Enoch. It has to do with healing and purifying the blood, but it goes much further beyond that. This chanting goes prior to the moment of conception, trying to remind us of the moment when we all knew we were One. When we fall into conception, into this life, all of the sudden we know less, and less. Children know more than we do... Give them five years and they might know considerably less, and at your age, my age, even less. And then there is that re-awakening within. The singing of this chant, it's a Hebrew chant, seems to activate the memory within the cells of the body. It is called *Min HaAdama*. Do you know what it means? [10]

**It means 'from the earth.' The words earth, man and blood, share the same root in Hebrew, sounding like this, respectively: Adama – Adam – Dam. [11]**



If I come across words I do not know, such as Hebrew words, the best thing for me is to have that written down so I can read it and have a play around it in my head. Have a feeling of it. [12]

Some chants are quite good with regards to comparing the busy mind to the state of the heart. So you get something, sort of... quite all over the place, and then you come to this really still sound. [13]

Other chants are really useful, specially now in regard to this world. I was given the following chant, again during the work with the Keys of Enoch. I used to have it in Hebrew and Arabic at the end of my emails. It is to do with walking in peace. The reason I really like this one is because in the word *Shalom* there is an *Aum* sound already sort of tagged in, which is just lovely. [14]

Video 2: Russell chants *Leh Le Shalom* ('Walk in Peace'), Sep 2006. [15]  
[the video is included in the CD attached to this thesis]

### **How do you feel the chanting? [16]**

When I chant I feel it like an expansion going from the heart, constantly pulsating. I feel my energy field. I love it. The repetitiveness takes your head out of thinking about anything else. [17]

### **Can chanting heal? [18]**

A few months ago I was working energetically on something on my body; looking for the root of the issue in my mind, in the way that I was thinking. I was asking for help, to identify the root and to actually look at that and bring balance, which then will bring balance to the body. And it was to do with fear. I went to bed late at night, and I was thinking, 'I really want to let go of this fear and to bring balance in this body.' I woke at four in the morning, with my body literally bouncing on the bed. And there was all this light on top of me. I used to sometimes wake up in the middle of the night. I would be lying and feel somebody is on top of me and I could not move. I know what it was. It was me being out of my body, trying to get back to my body, but my body is waking up too quickly. But it is really frightening; you really feel that someone is on top of you. I would chant something and all this would stop immediately. On this particular evening I had all this light, and I was bouncing on the bed. And I just thought, 'I am going to die now.' So I thought, 'OK, if this is it, then Amen!...' As I was chanting, 'Amen!', everything stopped, and I thought, 'My God, I must have waken Cherie,' because I was saying Amen pretty loud... [19]

### **The word Amen can wake even the dead... [20]**

Yes. I have a feeling about Amen in relation to the mystical poet Hafez. Hafez refers to God as a friend, calling him, 'My friend the Beloved.' He says that God wants us to be quiet and rest, so Hafez came up with this poem: 'Just sit there / Just rest / For your separation from God is the hardest work in this world. / Let me bring you trays of food and something you like to drink / You can use my soft words as a cushion for your head.' [21]

I always felt the need to say Amen at the end of this poem. [22]

Video 3: Russell chants *Amen* ('I believe, I agree'), Sep 2006. [23]  
[the video is included in the CD attached to this thesis]



The energy and the intention go with the chanting. That is the reason why you can say a statement and three people will pick it totally differently. I think it depends on the way the person is feeling and receiving the message. If they are vulnerable, they can be threatened by a message which another person receives as quite an innocent one. [24]

I once went to a sound workshop, and we sung a little tune *How I Love You*, based on the Do Re Mi. Then our tutor says, 'At lunch time I want you to go out to the street, and sing it to people.' That was in Bristol; we went to this restaurant, looking around, and there was a dad there sitting on a chair by the exit. On his lap was his son. We looked and we just knew. So, we sung it to the child, and he went dancing, so happy. On the second day of this workshop, the waitress was clearing the tables, and we decided to sing it to her. You could see she was embarrassed and yet absolutely loving it. We walked out towards the door, and there were two women sitting there. And you could see in their faces that they were asking, please sing it to us as well... [25]

Video 4: Russell sings *How I Love You*, Sep 2006. [26]  
[the video is included in the CD attached to this thesis]

I think that communication may not be so much about the specific language (English, Hebrew, French etc') but rather about the energy that is behind the sound. [27]

21 June 2008  
Interview held in Portsmouth, UK, September 2006

## Content analysis of interviews

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Installation artists \_\_\_\_\_ page 272

### Poets

	Maggie Sawkins	Anne Stevenson	Sylvia Paskin	Myra Schneider	Clive Wilmer	Alan Corkish
<b>Audience</b>			What you write is very specific to you, but on the other hand, why do people enjoy reading poetry? They want to read a poem because it speaks to them. [7]		[Donald Davie:] Poetry is not about addressing the audience, but about addressing the subject. [55]	...the impact of this [life] beautiful ... is private and personal ... no point in trying to explain it to you or to anyone else. [36]
			On the one hand the emotion in the poem is private. On the other hand it is something that anyone can read and understand. [19]		The reader should be moved by the poem just as the poet was moved by the experience... something intrinsic in the experience that is going to get to the reader. [55]	
			There is a lot self-identification in poetry, and it is important for people to say that this is their work. [28]			
			With a poem it is very easy with just a few lines to reveal yourself, unlike a book which is made of thousands of lines. [29]			
<b>Authority</b>			It is always the author of the poem who speaks. Even if you write about a forest, it is you who speaks from your poem. The forest is not coming your way... [28]			
<b>Beauty</b>						... while walking I concentrated on the sheer beauty of 'now' ... [24]
						... I'm an anti-theist... But, life is so beautiful... [28]
						...the impact of this [life] beautiful... [36]
<b>Collaboration</b>		... there are connections between you, or what you call you, and your experience, and your feelings about things and words, and so forth, that no analytical psychologist can explain. [9]	And around this set of feelings you find yourself writing about it. [2]	[writing poem] is a mix of imagination, flow-writing, association and... logic. [20]	[Donald Davie:] Poetry is not about addressing the audience, but about addressing the subject. [55]	A poem needs crafting... [8]

		[group work in workshop]... lost their individuality. A gifted poet has to find his or her own way... [14]	...you can't understand how it got from a lot of different feelings, different emotions, to a finished poem. [2]	Writing... helps ... sort out ideas... crystallising thoughts and emotions... outside you... you can understand it much better. You have partly separated yourself. [24]	... poet had a duty to what exists, to the nature of reality... [57]	... true poet uses wit, experience, passion, intellect, even genius to sculpt it into shape. [14]
			Joseph Brodsky...said: 'It is not poets who create language; it is language which creates poets.' [13]			Creativity is capable of altering the inner state... [32]
			You have to trust yourself that what you write has inner integrity – this is the only way a poem can work. [26]			... I believe in nothing except me... maybe... I actually communicate ... with the person inside whom we repress for most of our lives ... [37]
			If you mess about it trying to be clever the poem will show this... poems that work best have integrity, just like a person. [26]			
			A poem is quite immediate, and it feels powerful for the writer. Very rarely do people write poems together. [29]			
<b>Collective archetype</b>	[poetry is] Range of emotions...[15]	[for communicating in poetry] communion is needed ... working with language, old and new... [15]	[Shakespeare] ...says is a universal truth... [7]	Writing... helps ... sort out ideas... crystallising thoughts and emotions... outside you... you can understand it much better. You have partly separated yourself. [24]	...language ... is not something that we have invented out of nothing; it is something that we share with other people... words have a substantial presence, just as a painter's materials do for him. [16]	
	You could dream similar dreams to someone who lives in Africa. [15]	...poetry is literally untranslatable. However... you can transfer the spirit of it from one language to another. [27]	...a poem can't just be emotional. If it were just emotional there would be no boundaries...emotion has to be filtered in a way that it has structure and clarity. [9]		Language ... belongs to the race; it is not a private thing. Language already includes meanings. [20]	
					... language is already an art, a communal, collaborative one. [20]	
<b>contrasts</b>	...different processes for different poems. Sometimes it is two things that seem opposites... [2]	... a balance of knowing and not knowing. [8]	What you write is very specific to you, but on the other hand, why do people enjoy reading poetry? They want to read a poem because it speaks to them. [7]	[writing poem] is a mix of imagination, flow-writing, association and... logic. [20]		The difference between such moments and viewing the 'daily activities' of life lies within. Exactly the same moment at another time or on another day might pass me by entirely... [29]
	...it is two contrasts that make a good poem. [23]	True poetry is usually ambiguous... rarely anything definite or finite about what it means... A poem	These are tremendous [language] decisions to make. And then you need somehow to bring in the emotions,	Writing... is a way of release. [24]		

		should be clear and ambiguous as well. If the poem is ... completely ambiguous you get no pleasure ... But if it's completely clear, you might ... say [it] ... in prose. [48]	the feelings, the experiences. [14]			
	Emotion... linked with an object; something visual. [23]		I thought to myself, 'Can I write this poem? Can I actually say what I want to say?' Because what I wanted to say was shocking. [19]			
<b>Emotion</b>	Emotion... linked with an object; something visual. [23]		[words] Often they come as a burst of emotion. [2]			
			... we start with emotion, and there is a process where you have to leave emotions, put them aside, and deal with the language that needs to be adequate... it isn't enough just to write what you feel. A level of understanding has to come in... [14]			
<b>Image</b>	... poetry does use images to try to convey abstract thoughts and feelings in interesting poetic ways. Poetry is concrete. [17]		A poem is on the page, it has to have a look [14].			... photographs often capture unexpected pointers or markers to other things. [23]
			[poem writing] Yes, it is architectural. [16]			
			...Hanging Poems. These were poems embroidered in silk and hung in the streets. [17]			
<b>Individuality/personality</b>		[group work in workshop]... lost their individuality. A gifted poet has to find his or her own way... [14]	It is always the author of the poem who speaks. Even if you write about a forest, it is you who speaks from your poem. The forest is not coming your way... [28]			
<b>Inspiration from inside</b>	[contrast] come from inside. [25]	... there are connections between you, or what you call you, and your experience, and your feelings about things and words, and so forth, that no analytical psychologist can explain. [9]	[words] Often they come as a burst of emotion. [2]	I kind of heard an [inner] sound... of my father... I was shocked... because my father was dead... So, I wrote a poem about this. [10]		You presume I'm inspired? ... If you sit around all day waiting for inspiration you'll not write much of anything. [7]
	Emotion... linked with an object; something visual. [23]	[inspiration comes from] Listening. And reading aloud a lot. [19]	The poem speaks from a place that you might not have such an easy access to. [6]	Let go of consciousness [by taking] a starting point, a sentence... See what words are coming... from the unconscious and flowing to the surface. [17]		Sometimes I sit and just tell myself to write a poem ... At other times something moves me deeply... [15]

						... Shakespeare was so prolific that it's hard not to believe that much of his work was so inspired. [18]
						The difference between such moments and viewing the 'daily activities' of life lies within. Exactly the same moment at another time or on another day might pass me by entirely... [29]
						Creativity is capable of altering the inner state... [32]
						... I believe in nothing except me... maybe... I actually communicate ... with the person inside whom we repress for most of our lives ... [37]
<b>Inspiration from outside</b>	Emotion... linked with an object; something visual. [23]	Simply seeing or finding something sets lines going. [2]	Sometimes I hear or read something, or something happens to me. [2]			
		... there are connections between you, or what you call you, and your experience, and your feelings about things and words, and so forth, that no analytical psychologist can explain. [9]				
		[inspiration comes from] Listening. And reading aloud a lot. [19]				
<b>logic</b>	Poetry uses images to ... convey abstract thoughts. [17]	...I have is a sense of lines occurring, and ... I mess them around. [8]	...you can't understand how it got from a lot of different feelings, different emotions, to a finished poem. [2]	I realised it wasn't by chance that I had the image of a cave [in image exploration technique] [10]	Very often I know that a particular body of subject matter is going to produce a poem. At other times it would be a word or a phrase or a line or even a rhythm... [16]	... a word, a letter, an image are all simply things viewed which convey information. [4]
	[writing a poem] is not... a struggle, trying to write. [25]	I have is a sense of lines occurring, ... I mess them around, a bit like a crossword. At that stage you bring the conscious mind. [8]	With any poem, even if you think you finished it, you have to let it. [3]	[writing]... was a way of looking at these feelings. [12]	So I spent a lot of time reflecting on that analogy, and then quite out of the blue some lines came to me. [16]	... true poet uses wit, experience, passion, intellect, even genius to sculpt it into shape. [14]
		... knowing when to stop forcing it... [8]	...a poem can't just be emotional. If it were just emotional there would be no boundaries...emotion has to be filtered in a way that it has structure and clarity. [9]	Flow writing... what comes... without planning. [17]	Often you write your best poems when you feel least engaged by the matter... [40]	... I'm an anti-theist... But, life is so beautiful... most of the time we take it for granted until zap, something seems to hit us in the solar plexus... emotional tsunami. Then, for a split second, I could almost believe in a God and was

						saddened because my brain won't allow me to. [28]
	Where would it come from? I don't know. [8]	... we start with emotion, and there is a process where you have to leave emotions, put them aside, and deal with the language that needs to be adequate... it isn't enough just to write what you feel. A level of understanding has to come in... [14]	Let go of consciousness [by taking] a starting point, a sentence... See what words are coming... from the unconscious and flowing to the surface. [17]	... in order for a poem to happen, we need to put a part of ourselves asleep. [40]		
	... a balance of knowing and not knowing. [8]	... some poets will tell you that when you do have a very strict form [like Haiku] it makes it easier because there is so much you push away and so you get to find the point. [16] ... a process of refinement to get to what he wanted to say... [17]	Logic copes with one layer of meaning at a time. [19]	... rhyme does the job of occupying the mind... [40]		
	...recognise when a line is right and when it's wrong. [9]	If you mess about it trying to be clever the poem will show this... poems that work best have integrity, just like a person. [26]	Writing... helps ... sort out ideas... crystallising thoughts and emotions... outside you... you can understand it much better. You have partly separated yourself. [24]	... you name the emotion, but it is unlikely that you are going to generate it in the reader's mind. That's the problem with abstraction. [52]		
	... there are connections between you, or what you call you, and your experience, and your feelings about things and words, and so forth, that no analytical psychologist can explain. [9]			Writing is at such a deep level of your personality that I think you can't really know what it is that makes you write. [40]		
	True poetry is usually ambiguous... rarely anything definite or finite about what it means... A poem should be clear and ambiguous as well. If the poem is ... completely ambiguous you get no pleasure ... But if it's completely clear, you might ... say [it] ... in prose. [48]					
<b>Object</b>	Emotion... linked with an object; something visual. [23]					
<b>Place</b>		I have written a poem at the hairdresser's. Any time will do. [12]				... while walking I concentrated on the sheer beauty of 'now'... [24]

<b>Point of view</b>						The difference between such moments and viewing the 'daily activities' of life lies within. Exactly the same moment at another time or on another day might pass me by entirely... [29]
<b>Self discovery through art</b>	...poem... reveals something about myself... [13]	Writing ... is not so much a process as a way of feeling my way in the dark. [2]	You look and think to yourself, 'That is how I actually feel!' This can be very powerful. [5]	I needed to go [write]... myself, and find out what was going on. [10]		
			... the poem helps you to understand things about your life. [6]	[writing]... was a way of looking at these feelings. [12]		
			The poem has to be considered and worked out to make sense. But it is valuable to cope with difficult emotions, and poetry does that. [24]	Writing... helps ... sort out ideas... crystallising thoughts and emotions... outside you... you can understand it much better. You have partly separated yourself. [24]		
			With a poem it is very easy with just a few lines to reveal yourself, unlike a book which is made of thousands of lines. [29]			
<b>Senses</b>						... I like the sound of the words... [2]
<b>Surrender</b>			If you let it be it grows, and you find yourself having a poem. Sometimes you read what you have produced and you think, 'How did all this come?' You don't even know what was inside... [2]			
<b>Symbol</b>	[poetry is] symbols... [15]		Such a word [love] carries with it feelings. But ... a table, which may not have a feeling in itself but has a meaning to you. [11]	A metaphor... takes you beyond logic. [19]	The words are the wrapping within which the message comes. [54]	... a word, a letter, an image are all simply things viewed which convey information. [4]
						... photographs often capture unexpected pointers or markers to other things. [23]
<b>Transcendental reality (independent of artist)</b>		...realised that the poem wanted to go in a different direction. [2]				
		Where would it come from? I don't know. [8]				
		... the deeper creative process is very mysterious. [9]				
		... you have to recognize that a lot				

		is going on in your head and in the world which is much more mysterious than we normally imagine. [9]					
<b>Transcendental reality (independent, and communicated through physical)</b>					I am interested in the way that the spirit communicates through things... the spiritual... seems to me to be <i>in</i> things. [10]		
<b>Transcendental reality (which connects through artist)</b>		Lines come to mind. [2]	[words] Often they come as a burst of emotion. [2]	Flow writing... what comes... without planning. [17]	Very often I know that a particular body of subject matter is going to produce a poem. At other times it would be a word or a phrase or a line or even a rhythm... [16]	...life is so beautiful... most of the time we take it for granted until zap, something seems to hit us in the solar plexus... emotional tsunami. Then, for a split second, I could almost believe in a God and was saddened because my brain won't allow me to. [28]	
		[Poem] came to me long before I knew its subject. [2]	If you let it be it grows, and you find yourself having a poem. Sometimes you read what you have produced and you think, 'How did all this come?' You don't even know what was inside... [2]	Inspiration comes as you work through. [20]	So I spent a lot of time reflecting on that analogy, and then quite out of the blue some lines came to me. [16]		
		...I have is a sense of lines occurring, and ... I mess them around. [8]	Sometimes the word just comes to you, and it is just 'the' word. [4]		You say things which you didn't necessarily mean to say, because the words say them. [20]		
			The poem speaks from a place that you might not have such an easy access to. [6]		The reader should be moved by the poem just as the poet was moved by the experience... something intrinsic in the experience that is going to get to the reader. [55]		
			Joseph Brodsky...said: 'It is not poets who create language; it is language which creates poets.' [13]				
			You have to trust yourself that what you write has inner integrity – this is the only way a poem can work. [26]				
	<b>Transcendental reality (which the artist connects to )</b>					... you also have to be in love with what is beyond language. [35]	
						Writing is at such a deep level of your personality that I think you can't really know what it is that makes you write. [40]	



					... poet had a duty to what exists, to the nature of reality... [57]	
<b>Unconscious</b>		A poet has to keep a door open to the unconscious almost all the time. [6]	The poem speaks from a place that you might not have such an easy access to. [6]	Let go of consciousness [by taking] a starting point, a sentence... See what words are coming... from the unconscious and flowing to the surface. [17]		
<b>Urge to create</b>	It makes me feel good if I have written a good poem. [27]		[words] Often they come as a burst of emotion. [2]			... I have no control over my inner state... [34]
<b>word</b>			[words] Often they come as a burst of emotion. [2]		...language ... is not something that we have invented out of nothing; it is something that we share with other people... words have a substantial presence, just as a painter's materials do for him. [16]	Language is complex... [2]
						... I like the sound of the words... [2]
						...the impact of this [life] beautiful ... is private and personal ... no point in trying to explain it to you or to anyone else. I may write a poem about it, but ... it doesn't come close to the 'experience'. [36]
<b>Words/image relation</b>	Poetry... is a condensed use of language... the shape across the page. [11]		Over time... [the poem] begins to make a kind of a shape or a form. [2]	Image exploration... technique ... you make [say] a suggestion and people ... fill in their own ideas... [9]	Poems are in language so they exist in time... But a poem is also a thing, it is a kind of monument. It has a shape on the page. [38]	... a word, a letter, an image are all simply things viewed which convey information. [4]
	Poetry uses images to try to convey abstract thoughts. [17]		A poem is on the page, it has to have a look... [14]	I realised it wasn't by chance that I had the image of a cave [in image exploration technique] [10]	Language ... belongs to the race; it is not a private thing. Language already includes meanings. [20]	
			Such a word [love] carries with it feelings. But ... a table, which may not have a feeling in itself but has a meaning to you. [11]		The words are the wrapping within which the message comes. [54]	
			... we start with emotion, and there is a process where you have to leave emotions, put them aside, and deal with the language that needs to be adequate... it isn't enough just to write what you feel. A level of understanding has to come in... [14]			
			Poetry is about the beauty of the words... [26]			

			With a poem it is very easy with just a few lines to reveal yourself, unlike a book which is made of thousands of lines. [29]			
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## Painters

	Natalie Dekel	Paul Hartal	Felice Varini	Barry Stevens	Melanie Chan
<b>Audience</b>	...I see you now, but ... other information about you which is not from now is coming from the past... and I want to depict it. Perhaps it will be a message for you about what carries on within you. [25]		Once the painting is done it starts an independent life, having a relationship with the space, which has nothing to do with me or the viewer. [7]		
			[painting] is not born to create specific shapes that need to satisfy the viewer. [12]		
<b>Authority</b>		... art is completely concrete, and therefore a significant source of authentic empirical knowledge. [46]			
<b>Beauty</b>	Each time I see a person I can see something which is ... exploration of another aspect that I do not have, do not know about, and is beautiful. [21]				I see the beauty of nature in flowers, and I am amazed by their perfection and their symmetry. [2]
					... impermanence of the flower is... beautiful... [6]
<b>Collaboration</b>	As I drew I had to ask him... I would ask the question, and would be given an image... [32]		The painting exists as a whole, with its complete shape as well as the fragments... [12]	... recognition that a greater or higher power is working through one and that one does not actually exist independent of the whole... there is no longer an "I" or "you"... [6]	Once I start painting my mind starts to become calmer, as if the flower is encouraging me to be in the moment. [2]
	If I have a feeling it may be like asking oneself, 'Remember omelette?'... [34]		When two people are in love they do not love the same person but each other...yet they are perfectly able to understand and share that love. [14]	I don't do anything special as an artist to experience it... [12]	I prefer to be quiet when painting; it is in the silence... that the communion with the flowers can take place. [14]
			What is the next step in the history of art after Mondrian ... My answer is to work on the three-dimensional reality instead of the canvas. [31]	Art is part of the process as is everything else. [37]	...necessary ... to pay attention to nature and it is then that I get ... urge to express that relationship. [19]
			... once I choose a space I start a new thinking process with it. [32]		I am looking intently yet ... gently at the flowers ... and it draws me into a non-verbal communication experience. This is why I prefer to be quiet when painting. [28]
<b>Collective</b>	... feeling for the person drawn. [9]	... all art disciplines share common traits... in		... recognizing that there is no alternative! ... you	

<b>archetype</b>		different forms... specific set of symbols. [5]		know that you are a part of an infinite matrix... [9]	
	You become this beautiful meditation, a part of the scene... [10]	...intuitions, imagination, emotions, ideas, memories, thoughts and dreams are not independent events of an autonomous brain and nervous... They take place in a body that interacts with the biosphere. [8]		... awareness of being beyond time and space. [10]	
	Each time I see a person I can see something which is ... exploration of another aspect that I do not have, do not know about, and is beautiful. [21]			External and internal are for me like a spectrum or a continuum. [33]	
	[translating feelings to colours] ...is perhaps a thought, a word, a feeling, or just an urge... an unexplainable feeling for a particular taste?... [35]				
<b>contrasts</b>	... there is no such thing as one definition of art... [12]	Creativity is a cognitive process that results in new outcomes. It generates original ideas. [2]	When two people are in love they do not love the same person but each other...yet they are perfectly able to understand and share that love. [14]	External and internal are for me like a spectrum or a continuum. [33]	
<b>Colour</b>	Colour builds up emotional layers. [2]				
	[translating feelings to colours] ...is perhaps a thought, a word, a feeling, or just an urge... an unexplainable feeling for a particular taste?... [35]				
<b>Creativity</b>		Creativity is a cognitive process that results in new outcomes. It generates original ideas. [2]			
<b>Emotion</b>	... feeling for the person drawn. [9]		When two people are in love they do not love the same person but each other...yet they are perfectly able to understand and share that love. [14]	Inspiration flows through me as a sense of connection and flow; a sense of well-being and feeling in tune with life... inner peace... discovery... [28]	When I am painting ... I ... forget my emotions and lose myself in the moment... [14]
<b>Expression</b>	What attracts me is the expression. [9]				Artistic expression ... exceed the conceptual boundaries of language... [26]
<b>Image</b>		A painting is a frozen picture in time... [32]			... the flower's natural perfection cannot be recreated entirely. There is a loss somehow in the translation process into a painted representation. [6]
		Poetry pleases, moves and elevates by word choice and word form, the interaction of style, pattern, sound, image and idea. Great poetry expresses heightened thought, intensified emotion, concentrated observation and soaring imagination. [24]			... painting results in an image, which lasts longer than the flower itself... [6]
<b>Individuality/personality</b>	... it depends on the personality, not on the work. What I see is what interests me as a person. [12]			... recognition that a greater or higher power is working through one and that one does not actually exist independent of the whole... there is no	Creativity is life... painting is a part of who I am...it is an expression of life and intrinsic to life, like breathing or eating. [24]

				longer an "I" or "you"... [6]	
<b>Inspiration from inside</b>	As I drew I had to ask him... I would ask the question, and would be given an image... [32]		It is not a source of inspiration 'falling' on you... Painting is about choices, attitudes... a desire to discover something new. [49]	I feel inspiration flowing through me. [26]	I tend to get a feeling that draws me... impulse to create, is inner one based on a mood or memory. At other times it might be external... a scene which might draw my attention. [17]
	If I have a feeling it may be like asking oneself, "Remember omelette?"... [34]			Inspiration flows through me as a sense of connection and flow; a sense of well-being and feeling in tune with life... inner peace... discovery... [28]	... inspiration is there most of the time, but usually my mind is elsewhere... [19]
				External and internal are for me like a spectrum or a continuum. [33]	Inspiration is the creative force of life... [21]
<b>Inspiration from outside</b>			I do not believe in inspiration... Instead, I explore the space... look through ... make decisions, and then it all clicks right into place. It is like writing... it happens. [47]	External and internal are for me like a spectrum or a continuum. [33]	I see the beauty of nature in flowers, and I am amazed by their perfection and their symmetry. [2]
					I tend to get a feeling that draws me... impulse to create, is inner one based on a mood or memory. At other times it might be external... a scene which might draw my attention. [17]
					Inspiration is the creative force of life... [21]
<b>Intuition</b>		Intuition and imagination play a ... role in both art and science. Transcending the state of existing conditions necessitates innovative leaps into uncharted areas. [24]			
<b>Line</b>	Line is ... a thought personified and the evolution of it. [2]				
	You need to learn the topography of the face, and the lines of emotions... become a psychologist of the person. [40]				
<b>logic</b>	Line is ... a thought personified and the evolution of it. Colour builds up emotional layers. [2]	Creativity is a cognitive process that results in new outcomes. It generates original ideas. [2]	When two people are in love they do not love the same person but each other...yet they are perfectly able to understand and share that love. [14]		Once I start painting my mind starts to become calmer, as if the flower is encouraging me to be in the moment. [2]
	Sometimes you let go and let your hand choose for you. You don't think. [37]	... creativity originates in the irrational... [4]	... once I choose a space I start a new thinking process with it. [32]		... inspiration is there most of the time, but usually my mind is elsewhere... [19]
		... we can gain deeper insights about the true nature of the universe through our senses than through our intellect. [14]	[art is about]... thinking and choosing. [53]		Artistic expression ... exceed the conceptual boundaries of language... [26]
		While I paint or write I focus on the work itself and do not reflect on theory... [17]	... there are moments of ambiguity... uncertainty is necessary ... it makes us ... human beings. [55]		
		Aesthetic philosophies depend on context and history... [30]	... the questions themselves keep evolving... [57]		

		...science does not discover how real is real. Instead, it discovers what it can say about nature in human language (which includes mathematics). [43]			
		... scientific creativity, similarly to artistic creativity, incorporates irrational components. [45]			
		Intuition and imagination play a ... role in both art and science. Transcending the state of existing conditions necessitates innovative leaps into uncharted areas. [24]			
<b>Place</b>			... the reality itself to be the installation...and I am working with it...in order to reach for new forms, new lights and new colours. [35]		...necessary ... to pay attention to nature and it is then that I get ... urge to express that relationship. [19]
			My relationship with the space is trying to discover more things that we can not normally see. [37]		
			I do not believe in inspiration... Instead, I explore the space... look through ... make decisions, and then it all clicks right into place. It is like writing... it happens. [47]		
<b>Point of view</b>	... there is no such thing as one definition of art... [12]		I start my works from one vantage point... simply the height of my own eye level. [6]		
	... it depends on the personality, not on the work. What I see is what interests me as a person. [12]		The painting exists as a whole, with its complete shape as well as the fragments... [12]		
			My concern is what happens outside the vantage point of view. [12]		
			... once I choose a space I start a new thinking process with it. [32]		
			[art is about]... thinking and choosing. [53]		
<b>Self discovery through art</b>			Every day you can discover something new... [32]	Inspiration flows through me as a sense of connection and flow; a sense of well-being and feeling in tune with life... inner peace... discovery... [28]	
			I discovered the world of painting ... and ... my desire to paint. It was a strong feeling; I would 'burn' in the middle of a painting. [46]	I had a strong feeling that a way to explore consciousness deeply was to turn within... a power pulling me inwards ...art was ... a way to facilitate that... [47]	
			It is not a source of inspiration 'falling' on you... Painting is about choices, attitudes...a desire to discover something new. [49]		
<b>Senses</b>	I saw a white outline, a symbol. [32]	... we can gain deeper insights about the true nature of the universe through our senses than through our intellect. [14]	My relationship with the space is trying to discover more things that we can not normally see. [37]		I prefer to be quiet when painting; it is in the silence... that the communion with the flowers can take place. [14]

	If I have a feeling it may be like asking oneself, 'Remember omelette?'... [34]	... genuine knowledge can be only achieved by the experience of the senses... [46]			...necessary ... to pay attention to nature and it is then that I get ... urge to express that relationship. [19]
	[translating feelings to colours] ...is perhaps a thought, a word, a feeling, or just an urge... an unexplainable feeling for a particular taste?... [35]				I am looking intently yet ... gently at the flowers ... and it draws me into a non-verbal communication experience. This is why I prefer to be quiet when painting. [28]
<b>Surrender</b>				For this to occur one has to surrender to the process [of creativity]. [4]	
				Surrender involves the recognition that a greater or higher power is working through one and that one does not actually exist independent of the whole. [6]	
				When I surrender into the centre there is the awareness of being beyond time and space. [10]	
<b>Symbol</b>	I saw a white outline, a symbol. [32]	... all art disciplines share common traits... in different forms... specific set of symbols. [5]	... I move the concept, and can remake it... [22]		
			... I began to think of painting without any representation. [46]		
<b>Transcendental reality (independent of artist)</b>	I am trying to convey the soul and the emotion behind it; a soul which is contained in a bottle, a body. [46]	... the sources of creativity transcend the individual. [5]			
		...the world as a mysterious place, full of magic and wonder. [19]			
<b>Transcendental reality (independent, and communicated through physical)</b>	I am trying to convey the soul and the emotion behind it; a soul which is contained in a bottle, a body. [46]	...intuitions, imagination, emotions, ideas, memories, thoughts and dreams are not independent events of an autonomous brain and nervous... They take place in a body that interacts with the biosphere. [8]	[use of simple shapes:] A mountain side has curves that affect the circle, and change the circle's geometry... The same goes for colours... reality exists with its own qualities, shapes, colours and light conditions. [18-20]		
	The way you wear your body shows who you are. [50]	I envisage the existence of a universal field of consciousness which permeates the cosmos. Our own consciousness originates from this spectrum. [10]			
<b>Transcendental reality (which connects through artist)</b>	I had a feeling that I am here on Earth by a mistake... [20]	... we can gain deeper insights about the true nature of the universe through our senses than through our intellect. [14]	Once the painting is done it starts an independent life, having a relationship with the space, which has nothing to do with me or the viewer. [7]	... recognition that a greater or higher power is working through one and that one does not actually exist independent of the whole... there is no longer an "I" or "you"... [6]	Once I start painting my mind starts to become calmer, as if the flower is encouraging me to be in the moment. [2]
	It is right behind you. This information 'bombards' me and I want to depict it. [25]		I do not believe in inspiration... Instead, I explore the space... look through ... make decisions, and then it all clicks right into place. It is like writing... it happens. [47]		
	Sometimes you let go and let your hand choose for you. You don't think. [37]				

	I am trying to convey the soul and the emotion behind it; a soul which is contained in a bottle, a body. [46]				
<b>Transcendental reality (which the artist connects to )</b>	I just look ... I have a feeling about it. I see them. [27]	Poetry extends beyond language. [26]		...the experience of having gone as far as one can go. Then one encounters infinity ...which is consciousness or awareness unqualified by a perceiver. I call this Oneness. [52]	I see the beauty of nature in flowers, and I am amazed by their perfection and their symmetry. [2]
					I prefer to be quiet when painting; it is in the silence... that the communion with the flowers can take place. [14]
					Painting... is ... being open to ... inspiration, and allowing it to flow through me and gain expression. [26]
					...paying attention and spending time looking at the flower... brings me to a state of relaxed awareness... entering into a sort of communion or shared experience with the creative impulse that forms each living thing... [28]
<b>Unconscious</b>		Another major source of creativity originates in the irrational realm of dreams and the unconscious. [4]			
		Meaningful archetypal dreams surface through the personal unconscious, from the deepest layers of the psyche, what Jung calls the collective unconscious... [9]			
		...nuclear physicist Amit Goswami has advanced his credo that the universe is an unconscious entity, which becomes aware of itself through human consciousness. [13]			
<b>Urge to create</b>	It's a compulsive urge... [15]	Art is an impulsive thrust, a spontaneous wave of excitation. [30]	I discovered the world of painting ... and ... my desire to paint. It was a strong feeling; I would 'burn' in the middle of a painting. [46]		I tend to get a feeling that draws me... impulse to create, is inner one based on a mood or memory. At other times it might be external... a scene which might draw my attention. [17]
	... past experiences that I feel compelled to express and show. [25]				...necessary ... to pay attention to nature and it is then that I get ... urge to express that relationship. [19]
	It is right behind you. This information 'bombards' me and I want to depict it. [25]				
<b>word</b>		Poetry extends beyond language. [26]			...words conceptualise and divide the world into binary categories of subject and object. [26]
		Poetry... is a verbal composition, an emotional or mental event moving through linear time. [32]			Artistic expression ... exceed the conceptual boundaries of language... [26]
		...science does not discover how real is real. Instead, it discovers what it can say about nature in human language (which includes mathematics).			...academic words about art ... are formal processes which are different from making art... [27]

		[43]			
<b>Words/image relation</b>		A painting is a frozen picture in time...Poetry on the other hand is a verbal composition, an emotional or mental event moving through linear time. [32]			I am looking intently yet ... gently at the flowers ... and it draws me into a non-verbal communication experience. This is why I prefer to be quiet when painting. [28]

## Installation artists

	Ken Devine	David Johnson	Katayoun Dowlatshahi	Roi Vaara	Russell Jenkins (chanting artist)
<b>Audience</b>				[use body so] ...performances are meant to create a common ground with the audience. [4]	
				...create an art experience where everyone could feel something... [9]	
				I felt that performances would be much more direct... [17]	
				My art is designed for the purpose of having a direct communication between one person and another... [29]	
				I feel energized, happy and satisfied, and I wish I could trigger such experiences in other people as well. [31]	
				I am looking for ways to share moments of life with other people, and to convey feelings of existence... [17]	
				...it did not make much sense to try to catch those [nature] phenomena in paintings or in photos, because they were much richer in reality. [39]	
<b>Authority</b>					...sound in my head... my aim is to replicate it. [3]
<b>Collaboration</b>	Meanings make our relationships with concepts and with objects. [21]	[inspiration is]... things will be randomly joining together at various points. Then an image would come to my head... combination of two ideas will produce the right thing. If you ... think too theoretically ... it ends up one-dimensional... [40]	I allow the process to slowly unfold, I don't push it... You have to experience it first. [28]	A good art experience is for me like a powerful feeling of being alive. It is like being under a spell or a trance. [31]	...sound in my head... my aim is to replicate it. [3]



	All colours are in relations to other colours. They sit side by side... there is no 'stopness' about red. [27]		I had trust in the process. [29]		I was working... I was asking for help. [19]
	Grey... It is the only place that has no complementary colour. [31]		... allowing the internalisation and processing of those images to influence a work of art. [28]		
			My ... epiphany happen when I ... a deeper connection with myself... don't fully understand it but sense... [36]		
			... my art is my life. [38]		
<b>Collective archetype</b>	...you could ask anybody the question, 'What is your favourite colour?' [2]	The experience of the world is immediate. The mind in itself is part of the world... [25]	...many individual fragments ... we reflect that one light source... [7]	...we are as much part of the biosphere as a sunset is, the complexity of life remains an inexhaustible source for art. From this point of view everybody is not an artist, as Joseph Beuys manifested, but rather everybody is art itself, I would say... [39]	Moments we were One. [10]
			... glimpse of other fragments reflecting light from the same light source as you. [36]		
<b>contrasts</b>	Language has that ability because ... People change continually. So, you have to think of all the gaps in between truth and untruth... [16]	... the human eye and the inner eye, the confusion about the two becoming the same thing. [36]	To appreciate and understand light you have to embrace its shadow. [6]	...contrast between the black and white... [10]	
	Whether something is true or false, that is a matter of position, a point from which we see it. [24]		Though nature inspires me, it is the edge, the unknown that beckons. [40]		
	Colour... is so concrete and yet totally abstract. [29]				
<b>Colour</b>	...you could ask anybody the question, 'What is your favourite colour?' [2]			...colours carry different meanings within different cultures. [14]	
	... people talk about colours in terms of emotion... object ... event, or a person... there are those who have a very clear rational idea... [8]				
	All colours are in relations to other colours. They sit side by side... there is no 'stopness' about red. [27]				
	We tend to think of colours as existing on points, but a point has no dimension... [28]				

	Colour... is so concrete and yet totally abstract. [29]				
<b>Emotion</b>	... people talk about colours in terms of emotion... object ... event, or a person... there are those who have a very clear rational idea... [8]	[in moments of inspiration] An intense feeling of living. It is as though there is an extra light in the mind that suddenly sparks in full capacity. [46]	...experience epiphany... analysis of it I would ... see connections with thoughts and ideas, and be overwhelmed by strong emotions. [33]	I feel energized, happy and satisfied, and I wish I could trigger such experiences in other people as well. [31]	I have a hearing of an Aum... [2] I hear inside. [6]
	... profound responses from people who were honest, rather than trying to be profound... [9]		I would end up in tears ... I as the conscious artist was not fully in control of my process. I was only able to bring my understanding to it after the work had been created. [33]	I am looking for ways to share moments of life with other people, and to convey feelings of existence... [17]	Chant... feels... expansion from the heart. [14]
	We represent things by creating things, and our creations can be concrete or abstract, or feelings. [17]			... I had a phase where I suddenly felt that I had done all I could do in art, and that there was nothing else for me to add. [24] ...I had to accept the situation. This acceptance somehow solved the problem. It made me leave behind all that I had done before and so I became more open to embrace new ideas... [26]	
				...it did not make much sense to try to catch those [nature] phenomena in paintings or in photos, because they were much richer in reality. [39]	
<b>Expression</b>				I feel energized, happy and satisfied, and I wish I could trigger such experiences in other people as well. [31]	
				...it did not make much sense to try to catch those [nature] phenomena in paintings or in photos, because they were much richer in reality. [39]	
<b>Image</b>		... the idea of something that you could not see yet is the centre of the work... things you cannot see but know about, therefore affect the way you see: the non-visible. [18]	... allowing the internalisation and processing of those images to influence a work of art. [28]	I am an artist, originally a painter who now presents his visions in a live format. [2]	
		[inspiration is]... things will be randomly joining together at various points. Then an image would come to my head... combination of two ideas will produce the right	... allowing the internalisation and processing of those images to influence a work of art. [28]	Art can show us the image of ourselves in the changing world. [34]	

		thing. If you ... think too theoretically ... it ends up one-dimensional... [40]			
<b>Individuality/personality</b>			I do not impose my personal identity on the work in question...I allow the context to influence the work. [15]		
			...it did not make much sense to try to catch those [nature] phenomena in paintings or in photos, because they were much richer in reality. [39]		
<b>Inspiration from inside</b>	... there is inspiration in anything, not just in art. [35]	[inspiration is]... things will be randomly joining together at various points. Then an image would come to my head... combination of two ideas will produce the right thing. If you ... think too theoretically ... it ends up one-dimensional... [40]	... allowing the internalisation and processing of those images to influence a work of art. [28]		I have a hearing of an Aum... [2] I hear inside. [6]
	Inspiration, probably, is a uniqueness that comes out of parts of a person, which did not come together before... [35]				Chant... feels... expansion from the heart. [14]
<b>Inspiration from outside</b>	... there is inspiration in anything, not just in art. [35]	[inspiration is]... things will be randomly joining together at various points. Then an image would come to my head... combination of two ideas will produce the right thing. If you ... think too theoretically ... it ends up one-dimensional... [40]	I do not impose my personal identity on the work in question...I allow the context to influence the work. [15]	Practical things which belong to daily life take up most of my time, and they are the source from which the ideas for my performances are coming. [19]	
			... allowing the internalisation and processing of those images to influence a work of art. [28]	It is inspiring to find new surprising ways about life...the everyday life and other cultural phenomena are the sources for inspiration. [37]	
<b>Intuition</b>		... the idea of something that you could not see yet is the centre of the work... things you cannot see but know about, therefore affect the way you see: the non-visible. [18]	.. not to try to force yourself ... but to allow your intuition to guide your process. [19]		
<b>logic</b>	Someone can say something about red which is very similar to what someone else said about blue... it creates a new set of relationships that we may have not been aware of before. [10]	... the idea of something that you could not see yet is the centre of the work... things you cannot see but know about, therefore affect the way you see: the non-visible. [18]	...experience epiphany... analysis of it I would ... see connections with thoughts and ideas, and be overwhelmed by strong emotions. [33]	... I had a phase where I suddenly felt that I had done all I could do in art, and that there was nothing else for me to add. [24] ...I had to accept the situation. This acceptance somehow	Repetitiveness takes your head out of thinking. [17]

				solved the problem. It made me leave behind all that I had done before and so I became more open to embrace new ideas... [26]	
	... logical argument ... an absurd position, because you are limited to logic. [11]	... ambiguity is very important both in art and philosophy. [28]	My ... epiphany happen when I ... a deeper connection with myself... don't fully understand it but sense... [36]	...it can be very satisfying to figure out things and create order using different elements. [37]	...communication... not so much about the ... language... but rather about the energy. [27]
	... behind the 'simple' things that people say lie complex relations that they have with life, and they use language to convey that. Language is illogical... [13]	... the human eye and the inner eye, the confusion about the two becoming the same thing. [36]			
	Thought ... is saying something which is partly true and partly false. Rarely can you say a complete truth... [15]	Quite often it will be months or years after that I suddenly realise what the ideas deal with, and it never occurred to me before. [41]			
	We represent things by creating things, and our creations can be concrete or abstract, or feelings. [17]				
	Meanings make our relationships with concepts and with objects. [21]				
	Rationality is ... trying to ... be replicated... [23]				
<b>Object</b>	... people talk about colours in terms of emotion... object ... event, or a person... there are those who have a very clear rational idea... [8]	... postmodernism ... allows us to think we only have surfaces of things. [22]		[use body so] ...performances are meant to create a common ground with the audience. [4]	
	We represent things by creating things, and our creations can be concrete or abstract, or feelings. [17]			Usually I use the sound that the actions in the performance create... [7]	
	[Middle Ages] 'happy making' technology... Objects are not the driving force in life. [19]				
	Meanings make our relationships with concepts and with objects. [21]				
<b>Place</b>			I do not impose my personal identity on the work in question...I allow the context to influence the work. [15]		

<b>Point of view</b>	Someone can say something about red which is very similar to what someone else said about blue... it creates a new set of relationships that we may have not been aware of before. [10]		...many individual fragments ... we reflect that one light source... [7]	...colours carry different meanings within different cultures. [14]	...say...and three people will pick it differently ...depends on the way the person is feeling and receiving the message. [24]
	Language has that ability because ... People change continually. So, you have to think of all the gaps in between truth and untruth... [16]		... the relationship people have with light is different around the world. [9]	...it is up to our personal beliefs alone how we see and understand things around us. [26]	
	Whether something is true or false, that is a matter of position, a point from which we see it. [24]			When circumstances change, the ways we look at things change as well and new opportunities appear. [34]	
	... meanings are created through... the way in which we frame what we see and thus frame what we decide to exclude. [25]				
<b>Self discovery through art</b>		Quite often it will be months or years after that I suddenly realise what the ideas deal with, and it never occurred to me before. [41]			
<b>Senses</b>	... having your eyes open...in every moment... [37]	... the idea of something that you could not see yet is the centre of the work... things you cannot see but know about, therefore affect the way you see: the non-visible. [18]	My ... epiphany happen when I ... a deeper connection with myself... don't fully understand it but sense... [36]	Usually I use the sound that the actions in the performance create... [7]	
		... the human eye and the inner eye, the confusion about the two becoming the same thing. [36]			
		... when I think of an idea I may not be aware of all the implications ... But I am aware of a sort of depth of possibilities ... You can do that intuitively, have a feeling for that. Artists' sensibility is very close to the spiritual attitude to life. [42]			
<b>Surrender</b>	... having your eyes open...in every moment... [37]			... I had a phase where I suddenly felt that I had done all I could do in art, and that there was nothing else for me to add. [24] ...I had to accept the situation. This acceptance somehow solved the problem. It made me leave behind all that I had done	

				before and so I became more open to embrace new ideas... [26]	
				A good art experience is for me like a powerful feeling of being alive. It is like being under a spell or a trance. [31]	
<b>Symbol</b>	We represent things by creating things, and our creations can be concrete or abstract, or feelings. [17]				
	Meanings make our relationships with concepts and with objects. [21]				
	Colour... is so concrete and yet totally abstract. [29]				
<b>Transcendental reality (independent of artist)</b>		... the idea of something that you could not see yet is the centre of the work... things you cannot see but know about, therefore affect the way you see: the non-visible. [18]	... unaware of our whole being... [36]		[the sound is]... far beyond from what I can produce. [2]
		Words are ... sort of one removed from the world. [34]			The original sound is still in a process; it is still being produced. [7]
<b>Transcendental reality (independent, and communicated through physical)</b>			...draw something so intangible, like light? [2]	...it did not make much sense to try to catch those [nature] phenomena in paintings or in photos, because they were much richer in reality. [39]	
				...life is art in itself. [19]	
<b>Transcendental reality (which connects through artist)</b>	Inspiration, probably, is a uniqueness that comes out of parts of a person, which did not come together before...	Quite often it will be months or years after that I suddenly realise what the ideas deal with, and it never occurred to me before. [41]	...experience epiphany... analysis of it I would ... see connections with thoughts and ideas, and be overwhelmed by strong emotions. [33]		
		... when I think of an idea I may not be aware of all the implications ... But I am aware of a sort of depth of possibilities ... You can do that intuitively, have a feeling for that. Artists' sensibility is very close to the spiritual attitude to life. [42]	I would end up in tears ... I as the conscious artist was not fully in control of my process. I was only able to bring my understanding to it after the work had been created. [33]		
<b>Transcendental reality (which the artist connects to)</b>	...a moment of recognition... Of whatever it is that lit a fire in you. [35/37]	... find a way to experience the world in a spiritual way, while not believing in anything beyond this world. [23]		I create art in order to participate in the process of the continuous creation of the world. [32]	

<b>Unconscious</b>			When I am in my creative process I have these moments... [of epiphany] [39]		
<b>Urge to create</b>			... I am not a kind of a person who could spontaneously create... [27]	...art makes me live. [19]	
				... I had a phase where I suddenly felt that I had done all I could do in art, and that there was nothing else for me to add. [24] ...I had to accept the situation. This acceptance somehow solved the problem. It made me leave behind all that I had done before and so I became more open to embrace new ideas... [26]	
				A good art experience is for me like a powerful feeling of being alive. It is like being under a spell or a trance. [31]	
<b>word</b>	... behind the 'simple' things that people say lie complex relations that they have with life, and they use language to convey that. Language is illogical... [13]	If you try to formalise ideas then you fix them ... justifying one path only... whatever I am saying, I am cutting out a whole lot of possibilities that should be left in. [32]	I am very careful not to use certain words to describe the nature of my work... but I do feel ... spiritual without being religious. [5]		...communication... not so much about the ... language... but rather about the energy. [27]
	Thought ... is saying something which is partly true and partly false. Rarely can you say a complete truth... [15]	Words are ... sort of one removed from the world. [34]	... difficult to articulate my spiritual values and beliefs. [25]		
	Language has that ability because ... People change continually. So, you have to think of all the gaps in between truth and untruth... [16]				
<b>Words/image relation</b>					Poet Hafez: '...You can use my soft words as a cushion for your head.' [21]

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