

MA Visual Art Fine Art Digital (Camberwell)

Project Proposal - First Draft

Working Title

Pictopoiesis

Towards a Systematic Materialisation of the Painting's Poetic

Aims

- To reveal photographically the time-based aspects of painting
- Research and develop a time-based strand for the painting - a symbiotic union with the narrative nature of poetry

Objectives

- Painting new works.
- Capture sequential imagery of each painting.
- Research software possibilities to edit and format these photographic records.
- Seek technical guidance in creating animated sequences out of the imagery.
- Compile a series of animations using the sequential imagery.
- Experiment further including: the arrangement of the animations, their juxtaposition with respect to the paintings and working with digital printing.
- Printing the sequenced images for various uses such as a flipbook.

Context

Once a botanist at Manchester University, I continue my cultivations, not as cultures in Petri dishes but as ideas in the form of paintings. I studied painting in Florence, Italy, living there for almost ten years before coming to live in a village in rural Lincolnshire. My studio and home is a former chapel - all one big space, invisibly divided so that my fellow artist and husband, and myself can live and function artistically. I paint every day but have never felt lonely or isolated as I have constant companionship.

Pictopoiesis has arisen out of the painting practice I have sustained over many years. It is the process by which the thought of the painting itself, its making, is actually the subject matter. As I paint I go in and out of the studio, write continually and search for correspondences between what I am doing and other fields of thought and disciplines. I find so many that it becomes difficult to know which is most pertinent. The fields of thought in which I find correspondences include: Poetry, Philosophy, Psychology, Art History, Cosmology, Biology, Geology, Anthropology, Neuroscience, and Music.

Through the internet, I have become increasingly aware of a renewed interest in the poetical in art. This I see as having come out of the reality that poetry in art was increasingly lost or hidden throughout the Postmodern era; Olafur Eliasson, for example, is one who successfully reintroduces the poetic through his medium of installation.

Successfully engaging with the poetry world has been a key moment of connection for me. In putting my work forward to Jeffrey Pethybridge at Like Starlings, who paired me with poet Nicholas Gulig, I have been able to formulate my painting in terms of Negative Capability; a notion which has its root in the letters of the poet Keats. Negative Capability in itself has found many applications in the world at large, for example in the work of Roberto Mangabeira Unger. Whitman's *Song of Myself* tells of the potential capability residing in each of us, to encompass the entire universe and be within in it at the same time.

The context of this MA is now all-important in that I am able to continue in the studio, engaging more fully with the *art world*. I find that everyone in my peer group, like me, is feeling their way. In using a traditional medium, I am aware of the weight of art history that I have on my shoulders and that I stand on the shoulders of artists who have come before me; my bibliography indicates a few. Their influence is perhaps more obvious than I realise. In spite of this I have wanted to do something that is not consciously based on the work of others. I still do.

In Florence, which is a living museum of art and history I was taught sound techniques of oil painting and conservation. This context has influenced my practice where it matters to me that the painting has an after life, that it is in the world, corporeally, when I am no longer here.

Methodology

Pictopoiesis is about painting-making in the context of traditional studio practice. The architecture of my methodology is one which weaves the painting world, here in the studio, with the digital environment. I see it as a counter exchange system of the material physical reality and the illusory world of the virtual.

The dialogue I have with a painting as I am making it is collaborative. The painting is taciturn but I listen to it, empathise with it as I cultivate it, find shape for it from its very beginning state of Negative Capability. A homeostatic-like system establishes itself naturally; how to keep it *alive* I constantly ask myself.

Circular gestures run through a painting as a unifying element of complementary dynamic aspects that form its structure. The lines that delineate circles act as metaphors, they are not present as lines in themselves. The horizon, the apparent line that encompasses the earth, does not really exist. I see this in the Lincolnshire landscape where it is constantly evident. There is no actual line between the positive and negative space of a painting (Cezanne made that clearest of all). The line does not exist, it is invisible, it is the visible invisible, the space across which exchanges occurs, homeostatic exchanges...

I feel as I paint that the idea of homeostasis is a marker of being alive, that it embodies exchange both physical, human, and virtual. All this exchange requires

permeability throughout in all directions into and out of the painting. Oil paint like no other medium is fluid, elastic, sensual, and *alive* (it was once living as linseed).

The paint can be stretched so thinly as to imply a permeable membrane an mediator of exchange between an interior and external world, between myself and the work, between the work and others.

The translucence of oil paint varies depending on the pigments used. The balance of transparency and opacity implies variation permeability as light passes through the paint layers. I build up a painting in this way. Former selves of a painting become reincarnated, former lives overwritten palimpsest-like, paintings become history within a painting.

Eventually a painting comes to rest, but much of its history is now hidden. This is where the digital timelines take it further. The time-based nature of a timeline discloses the story of a painting.

The compilation of an animation is undertaken in tandem with the subsequent painting. The two go hand in hand as the painting's progress is informed by my assessment of it on screen. I orientate it variously, experiment in many ways, which also has to be documented as I go during the process, likewise writing which includes free writing - moving towards my own way with words.

I like the gif format because of the way its dynamics moves the images, it seems alive. However, the format does have challenges with regard to display hardware. To solve this I will need an independent computer to be used in conjunction with the images. This can be bought or built specifically for the purpose. The hardware can then be used with screen or projector giving me flexibility as to the means of display as well as the scale. The software needed is very simple, an html web browser. The GIF format code is also simple and flexible. This gives the work longevity in the rapidly changing digital environment with the ability to adapt to future software and hardware developments.

Outcomes

For now just to produce the first animations to see them as screen based, time-based new form. Then to gradually develop a thought trajectory that incorporates them and integrates them with the actual paintings.

A projection or wall of screens (my last blog post called *Wall* shows a digital maquette of the idea.

The creation of a flip book as a physical time-based strand.

An edition of sequenced archival digital prints.

An installation which includes the above as aspects of my research period.

If I think too far ahead I lose a sense of the instant, and I become detached from the very particular reality that painting is, and which ultimately I am trying to clarify.

Pictopoiesis is perhaps like a lens through which I might be able to focus it all.

Work Plan - an open itinerary

- Photographic capture of the progressive phases of the painting.
- Editing, processing, and assembling of the timelines.
- Prepare hardware and software for the final installation.
- Prepare images for digital printing.
- Prepare container/presentation for digital prints.
- Research and development of flipbook construction

Bibliography

Books

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[Vincent by Himself](#)

[Cezanne by Himself](#)

[Paul Klee: The Visible and the Legible by Annie Bourneuf \(book\)](#)

[Paul Klee, Pedagogical Sketchbook](#)

[Johannes Itten, The Elements of Colour](#)

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[STRUCTURE OF THE VISUAL BOOK by Keith A Smith](#)

[The Mind in the Cave: Consciousness and the Origins of Art by David Lewis-Williams.](#)

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Homeostasis explained and animated on youtube

Cezanne, archives of writing Van Gogh's letters

Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel - God Creating Adam

Michelangelo pieta in Florence, Pieta in St Peters

[Paul Gauguin, WHERE ARE WE FROM WHAT ARE WE AND WHERE ARE WE GOING](#)

[Leonardo da Vinci, Vitruvian Man](#)

Gregor Mendel

(to be continued)