BENEATH THE SURFACE:
THE ROLE OF INTUITION IN THE CREATIVE PROCESS

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Declaration

This paper, and the paintings presented for examination have not been submitted for a higher degree at any other institution.

William Millward
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Throughout this exegesis I have referred to the artist and the viewer as “he” or “him”. This is only for my convenience and to help with the flow of the text. It is not my intention to alienate female readers or to negate female contributions or their position in contemporary art.
Abstract

One question that I have alway raised when creating, evaluating and appraising art work is “How do we know what we know?” This exegesis attempts to answer this by establishing the important role intuitive knowledge plays in decision making in general, and within my own art practice specifically. The study reviews some of the literature on intuition from philosophical and psychological perspective in order to validate intuitive knowledge and intuitive decision making within contemporary art practice.

However, just because intuition may drive the process, it does not mean that the product of intuitive practice is necessarily good or has any value. Consequently, the importance of aesthetics, and the values of integrity, honesty and truth are explored from a philosophical perspective. These are discussed in relation to the art practice of other artists from this century as well as that of the writer.

Having constructed a philosophical framework to work within and be guided by, the final part of this study documents the development of the practical work and how this framework influences the art practice and the outcomes of that practice. It is hoped that the results of the study will reassert the validity and relevance of this form of art practice and philosophy within contemporary art practice.
Introduction

Leo Tolstoy believes that Art is a human activity whereby, "one person consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them" (Dickie 1971, p. 40). How this is achieved varies from artist to artist, but in my view, in order to communicate these feelings the artist must use his intuitive faculties in order to access the influence of the unconscious. Consequently in order to appreciate fully any work of art, we must use the same sense of intuition as the artist, together with our conscious knowledge of other works of art, in order to judge the quality or value of that work.

One of the cornerstones of my philosophy is a belief that something of the artist's personality, philosophy, spirituality, and integrity is present and conveyed through their works of art, that painting is in essence the artist's handwriting. This belief has been shared by many artists particularly in this century. Robert Motherwell for example, has said that:

You learn from Japanese calligraphy to let the hand take over....... When the viscosity is right, it is close to mindlessness, or to pure essences, with nothing between your beingness and the external world. As though your beingness were transmitted without intervention; so that you think of the hand as not being yours. It is more what you unconsciously know than what you think. In fact I would say that most good painters don’t know what they think until they paint it (Flam 1983, p. 23).

Most academics and scientists have placed a higher value on rational thought as the only reliable process of human consciousness. Such things as feelings or intuition have been regarded as irrational and could not be taken seriously. It is through reason that the mind can follow logical and systematic steps towards knowing and
understanding. “But human beings have another way of apprehending reality: an experience of blinding intuition, a sense of certainty and completeness as convincing as any reason provides” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, p. 10).

It is then, the role that intuition plays within my own art practice that has intrigued me and has encouraged me first of all to accept the validity of it within a world where the theories of post modernism and post structuralism dominate.

The first part of the exegesis will focus on intuition as a valid and important form of knowledge, and will be explored within both a psychological and a philosophical framework with particular reference given to the established views of Jacques Maritain and supported by Benedetto Croce, Immanuel Kant, and Carl Jung amongst others. In addition there will be some consideration given to Zen Buddhism.

When making intuitive decisions within one’s art practice the issue of aesthetic judgements based on intuition is raised. Consequently the second part of this exegesis will explore some aesthetic considerations.

Whilst an intuitive approach may be the dominant force in my art practice and my aim is to produce works that rely on a strong aesthetic appeal, it is the values of honesty, integrity and truth that I strive to retain in my practice and subsequently in my work. I agree with Robert Motherwell when he says that, “the artist’s essential function is to retain integrity at any cost in an essentially corrupt world which seduces and destroys all of us” (Arnason 1982, p. 12). The third part of the exegesis will attempt to define what these values are and how they may be retained within one’s art, and how they influence and are influenced by aesthetic considerations.
Relationships between intuition and creativity will be explored within the art practice of artists such as Mark Rothko, Robert Motherwell, Patrick Heron, and Howard Hodgkin. The value each one places on intuition within that practice, and how each one strives to retain integrity within their art will be discussed.

I value the intuition within the process of making art but believe that the subconscious needs to be fed as intuition is only as good as the knowledge and experiences that feed it, thus the last part of the exegesis will document the development of my own art practice within this programme and how I have attempted to resolve the dilemmas presented along the way.
CHAPTER 1

INTUITION

Introduction

For over a century, various disciplines have defined and investigated a variety of mental phenomena from telepathy, precognition, clairvoyance, extrasensory perception, psi, out of body experience and near-death experience. Some of these terms are derived from popular culture, others from field research and others from laboratory experience.

Intuition may mean different things to different people. It has a long tradition of use in philosophy, mathematics, business, psychology, engineering, linguistics, music, literature, religion, and science, particularly with reference to the creative process. According to the Universal English Dictionary, intuition is “a faculty of the mind whereby there is immediate apprehension or cognition without the process of conscious reasoning,” or, ”knowledge derived from this manner”. Intuition, then, is ‘knowing without knowing how you know.’

Wild (Wild 1938) believes that rather than being an alternative to reason, intuition forms the basis for reason to function, and allows the mind to deal with things that are unable to be described or experienced through reason or the senses. Some social scientists have suggested that intuition is nothing more than the brain’s capacity for subliminal computation. Others view intuition as nothing more than learned habits and social conditioning. Still others believe that intuition is predicated upon biological instinct, for example, the intuition of a
salmon in locating its spawning ground. Intuition may be all of these, as well as others.

Because of the nature of intuition, we may never fully understand it, but the continuing investigation of it by people of such wide ranging areas of knowledge and disciplines ensures that the ensuing debates will be interesting. Philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, for example, maintain that it is through intuition that we construct and maintain the basic elements of our world -- our sense of space and time, our sense of identity, our sense of the truth of things, our sense of beauty and goodness. Intuition, derived from the very structure or essence of our minds, is viewed in his philosophy as being prior to all perception and all reasoning (Smyth 1978).

Some contemporary research attempts to establish the possibility that a developmental process begins in the womb and that intuition is the first psychological function in the human psyche followed by the functions of sensation, feeling, and thinking. G. A. Lenhart (Lenhart 1996) postulates that intuition is the beginning of consciousness in the unconscious, and leads to the original state of oneness, and is the basis of the soul complex.

Intuition has been the starter of an enormous number of discoveries and inventions in all the fields of human endeavour. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that describe how discoveries or inventions have been made. Some claim to remove the problem or subject from the 'objective' side of the mind, and consign it to the 'subjective' side of the mind. There it spontaneously ripens until it comes out. Others claim that ideas come when they least expect them, often whilst half asleep, or day-dreaming. Still others state that they either sometimes wake with a new idea, or it comes "in a flash," or it comes in "the
period of relaxation," or "in the bathtub," or suddenly, when engaged in a different kind of work, and so on (Sorokin 1941).

It does not exclude the fact that in many cases the intuitional revelation comes after labouring over a problem through more rational attempts at solving it. What is important is that the solution comes through intuition.

Jasper Johns said that he woke up one day with the idea of painting the American flag. The next day he did, and subsequently that work has had an enduring influence on the world of contemporary art (Tejada-Flores 1989).

Mozart describes his experience of the creative process thus:

What, you ask, is my method in writing and elaborating my large and lumbering things? I can in fact say nothing more about it than this: I do not know myself and can never find out. When I am in particularly good condition, perhaps riding in a carriage, or on a walk after a good meal, and in a sleepless night, then the thoughts come in to me in a rush, and best of all. Whence and how -- that I do not know and cannot learn. Those which please me I retain in my head, and hum them perhaps also to myself -- at least others so told me (Sorokin 1941, p. 110).

Further on, he describes how the "crumbs" spontaneously join one another into a whole, grow, and finally assume a finished form in his head. Finally, he puts the work on paper, and since it is practically ready in his mind, "it gets pretty quickly on to paper" (Sorokin 1941, p. 111).

With regards religious creations, they are overwhelmingly derived from intuition. All great religions are founded by mystics endowed with the charismatic gift of the mystic experience such as Buddha, Mohammed, and Christ, and as religion has been one of the most important creations of human culture this testifies to the important
role played by intuition generally, and mystic intuition particularly in the development of the human race (Sorokin 1941).

This short introduction demonstrates that there is and has been an enormous number of people who have recognised the existence and nature of intuitive knowledge in the development of new knowledge and inventions, and although in recent times the reliance on rational thinking and purely scientific discoveries has been more valued by society, there seems to be a growing appreciation of the role intuition may play in all aspects of modern life not only by scientists, philosophers, and artists, but even by accountants and business managers in the world of commerce.

A philosophical background

Intuitive knowledge and the works of creative imagination are linked with the unconscious and this guides us in our decision making in a way that is different to more conscious decision making (Sorokin 1941).

Plato describing the origin of the ideas in our mind, believed that we must receive them immediately from a higher source, and they must be innate in our soul since these ideas cannot be derived from the senses:

In that former existence, before its union with the body, the soul beheld the ideas and possessed intuitive knowledge. That knowledge still remains with us, but, clouded and darkened by the life of the body, it abides in the soul as a dormant memory, and it is by gradually reviving it that the quest of wisdom enables us to reconquer our original intuition and truth. Thus man is a pure spirit forcibly united with a body. The human soul lived before it animated the body, to which it is tied as a punishment for some pre-natal sin, and after death it enters another body (Maritain 1937, p. 59).
By contrast, Aristotle's belief was that our ideas are not innate memories of pre-natal experience, but derived from the senses by an activity of the mind (Maritain 1937).

Whether intuition is a mental activity or it is something the mind does, or something the mind submits to, Croce believes that, "This intuitive activity of the mind is entirely free from and independent of any suggestion of intellectual activity. The intuition can stand alone" (Carr 1917 p. 62).

Croce states that:

Knowledge has two forms: it is either intuitive knowledge or logical knowledge; knowledge obtained through the imagination or knowledge obtained through the intellect; knowledge of the individual or knowledge of the universal; of individual things or of the relations between them: it is, in fact, productive either of images or of concepts (Croce 1922, p. 1).

Intuitive knowledge is not a form of day-dreaming but an active way of constructing the world. Croce places intuitive and aesthetic knowledge at a more fundamental and prior level than conceptual or intellectual knowledge (Croce 1922).

The role of intuition as the ultimate basis of any knowledge, of the truth of the senses and of reason, was recognised by Kant who distinguishes between the empirical world of nature, which is the object of scientific knowledge, and the noumenal world, which in some sense lies behind the world of sense and of which we cannot know anything (Dickie 1971).

According to Maritain (Maritain 1953, p. 67), "Poetic intuition is born in the unconscious, but it emerges from it; the poet is not unaware of this intuition, on the contrary it is his most precious light and the primary rule of his virtue of art. But he is aware of it on the edge of the
unconscious". He contends that everything depends on "the recognition of the existence of a spiritual unconscious, or rather, preconscious". He adds that:

There are two kinds of unconscious, two great domains of psychological activity screened from the grasp of consciousness: the pre-conscious of the spirit in its living strings, and the unconscious of blood and flesh, instincts, tendencies, complexities, repressed images and desires, traumatic memories, as constituting a closed or autonomous dynamic whole. The first kind of unconscious he named spiritual unconscious, the second the automatic or deaf unconscious (Maritain 1953, p. 67).

Maritain was a very religious man of the Roman Catholic faith which may explain his belief that:

we possess in ourselves the Illuminating Intellect, a spiritual sun ceaselessly radiating, which activates everything in intelligence, and whose light causes all our ideas to arise in us, and whose energy permeates every operation of our mind. And this primal source of light cannot be seen by us; it remains concealed in the unconscious of the spirit (Maritain 1953, p. 73).

Although I would distance myself from the flavour of his beliefs I have some admiration for his philosophy, and when he describes the pursuit of the creative intuition as "an obscure grasping of his own Self and of things in a knowledge through union or through connaturality which is born in the spiritual" (Maritain 1953, p. 84), I am reminded how tenuous this link with our intuitive knowledge is.

Maritain was one of a number of philosophers in the 19th century who were interested in the noumenal world and developed a philosophical theory known as Romanticism which reacted against scientific and reasoned approaches to knowledge in an attempt to reach another form of knowledge that was believed to be vital and important. Consequently a strong sense of religion and mysticism surrounds Romanticism (Dickie 1971).
When philosophical Romanticism was applied to the world of art:

it generated a new role for the artist and a new interest in artistic creation. The artist was conceived to be a means of getting in touch with vital sources and of attaining a kind of knowledge which science could not give, and artistic creation was identified or at least associated with the release of emotion. In this context, emotion assumes an importance it had not previously had; it is somehow involved with in attaining a superior kind of knowledge. Art then becomes the vehicle of this knowledge and a competitor of science (Dickie 1971, p. 39).

Zen

Intuition has long played a vital part of Japanese life even in the way they perceive the Chinese characters within their written language. According to the Japanese philosopher Nishida Kitaro the sight of these characters brings to mind, "innumerable relations and nuances which may not be explicitly contained in the thought, but which form an emotional background" (Nishida 1958, p. 3).

In general it may be stated that Japanese thinking is intuitive and directed by mood, atmosphere, and emotion, rather than by a calculated intellect or reason. Problems and concepts becomes intuitively clear once they have been considered in their totality (Nishida 1958).

A fundamental feature of all Japanese philosophy is the respect for nature as something sacred, pure, and complete in itself. In addition, the ancient religion of Shinto demonstrated reverence for tribal ancestors and heroes to the extent that there seems to be a communion between the living and the dead, "an eternal presence of the past" (Nishida 1958, p. 8).
However, Mahayana Buddhism has dominated Japanese minds and has ruled intellectual life for the past 1500 years. Its main idea is that "Buddha is in all things, and that all things have Buddha - nature. All things, all beings are potentially predestined to become Buddha, to reach salvation" (Nishida 1958, p. 10).

Zen Buddhism is neither a theory; nor is it based on theology:

Zen is a living practice based on the desire for salvation...... Zen is essentially non-rational ...... it is based on an immediate and inexpressible experience......When Zen speaks, the speech is inevitably indirect, circumscriptive and suggestive, and it indicates a singularly individual and personal religious and metaphysical experience (Nishida 1958, p. 13).

The goal of this experience is enlightenment (satori) but once this enlightenment is reached the experience is not easily expressed in words. The principle of Zen is silence, and therefore the essential experience remains inexpressible. However, according to indications from Zen writers, "satori" means "the discovery of the Buddha-nature of the universe within one's own heart. It is the gate leading directly to one's heart, and to the possibility of becoming Buddha, by introspection into one's own essence" (Nishida 1958, p. 15).

According to Nishida when enlightenment occurs, "the soul becomes transparent. All things, too, of a sudden, obtain a crystal-like transparency. The divine depth of all Being shines through all beings...... The enlightened one does not comprehend Buddha, but becomes Buddha" (Nishida 1958, p. 16).

Zen considers enlightenment the essence of Buddhism and practitioners strive towards this goal through the practice of meditation. It is believed that intuition is then able to "open the door from within" (Nishida 1958, p. 17).
Psychological perspectives

Psychologists involve themselves with the task of discovering how we know what we know, but the intangible nature of intuitive knowledge poses a huge challenge for them and initially they fell into two camps: the Gestalt psychologists who believed that past experience was central to the development of intuitive knowledge, and the Behaviourist psychologists who believed that knowledge is acquired only by doing (Bastick 1982).

From a review of all the recent literature it does seem that current thinking believes that the left side of the brain tends to control the right side of the body and seems to deal with rational logical analysis, the sequential, convergent and verbal; while the right side deals with the intuitive, the simultaneous, the divergent, the visual and the spatial.

One main difference between intuition and reason is that intuition relies on feelings whereas reason is more analytical and independent of feelings, “Analytical thought is based on detailed defined relations between two elements at a time. Intuitive thought is based on an emotional state associated with all the elements in the field of knowledge” (Bastick 1982, p. 61).

The process of intuition is not linear but one where information is gathered from more global perceptions. “In contrast to analytical thinking, intuitive thinking characteristically does not advance in careful, well-defined steps. Indeed, it tends to involve manoeuvres based seemingly on an implicit perception of the total problem” (Bruner 1960, p. 58). This might account for our inability to verbalise the intuitive process adequately and explain why intuition has played a vital role in the visual arts.
Bastick identifies twenty properties commonly associated with intuition [see appendix A] and declares that, "intuition is a product of accepted psychological processes of thought and behaviour that occur under particular conditions of personality, environment, and experience" (Bastick 1982, p. xxiii). They are not mystical and are conditions that all people are familiar with.

Bastick investigates these twenty properties thoroughly and synthesises all his research into a theory that claims that, "we emotionally encode information. Our thoughts and behaviours are the decoded versions of this information which, associated by their contiguous common feelings, tend to be recalled when we re-experience these emotions" (Bastick 1982, p. 355). He thus claims that intuition is a fundamental process of thought and behaviour that results from the organisation of these properties.

Jung proposed that the basic psychological function of humans were, thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition, and regards intuition as a "basic psychological function....that mediates perceptions in an unconscious way" (Jung 1971, p. 453).

He adds that:

The peculiarity of intuition is that it is neither sense perception, nor feeling, nor intellectual inference, although it may also appear in these forms. In intuition a content presents itself whole and complete, without our being able to explain or discover how this content came into existence. Intuition is a kind of instinctive apprehension, no matter of what contents (Jung 1971, p. 453).

The psychologist Bruner sees sensation, intuitive and analytical knowledge as three systems we have for representing reality. He calls them by different names, the enactive - where we know directly through the senses by actually doing things; the ikonic - thinking in images, which enables us to hold in mind absent objects and events;
the symbolic - where language and other rule-governed systems and
conditions of thought extend the possibilities of abstract reflection
and communication (Bruner 1966).

Jung differentiates between concrete and abstract forms of intuition.
Concrete intuition is reactive, responding to given facts and relates to
things perceived; whereas abstract intuition needs an act of will to
perceive ideas. He also states that it is an irrational function that
perceives realities that are not known to consciousness and therefore
come by way of the unconscious (Jung 1971).

Jung’s concept of the unconscious is not a philosophical one. He states
that, “the unconscious is a psychological borderline concept, which
covers all psychic contents or processes that are not conscious” (Jung
1971, p. 484). He later distinguishes between a personal unconscious
comprised of one’s individual experiences and perceptions, and a
collective unconscious whose contents “do not originate in personal
acquisitions but in the inherited possibility of psychic functioning in
general, i.e. in the inherited structure of the brain (Jung 1971, p. 485).

The environment in which intuitive practices can be encouraged is
important. There is a need for a non-repressive environment where
an individual can feel comfortable and encouraged to explore
possibilities. Bruner writes, “It [intuition] is founded on a kind of
combinatorial playfulness that is only possible when the consequences
of error are not overpowering or sinful. Above all, it is a form of
activity that depends upon confidence in the worthwhileness of the
process” (Bruner 1979, p. 102), rather than being right all the time.

This sends out a clear message for all people who engage in intuitive
decision making within their work practice that a comfortable, non
threatening environment where the conscious mind can become
active, is desirable.
CHAPTER 2

AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

Collingwood argued that art can effectively communicate many things that concepts cannot convey (Collingwood 1938). As I have stated in the introduction, my main aim is to create paintings that communicate an aesthetic experience and strive for an aesthetic appreciation. Consequently some time must be given to explaining what I understand by concepts of beauty and aesthetics.

Beauty is relative, what may appear beautiful to some may not be to others, therefore, things may be beautiful and ugly at the same time depending on who is perceiving it and depending on the environment it is being perceived.

"Beauty is in the things of sense, it is also in the things of spirit" (Maritain 1943, p. 172).

"The beautiful is the revelation of the absolute through the medium of personality" (Nishida 1958, p. 41).

Beauty belongs to the transcendental and metaphysical order. Of the instinct for beauty, Buadelair writes:

It is that immortal instinct for the beautiful which makes us consider the world and its pageants as a glimpse of, a correspondence with, Heaven. The insatiable thirst for everything beyond, which life reveals, is the liveliest proof of our mortality. It is at once by poetry and through poetry, by music and through music that the soul perceives what splendours shine behind the tomb; and when an exquisite poem brings tears to the eyes, such tears do not argue an excess of enjoyment but rather attest an irritation of melancholy, some peremptory need of the nerves, a nature exiled in the imperfect which would fain possess
immediately, even on this earth, a paradise revealed (Maritain 1943, p. 175).

It is through poetry, or music, that we can more readily experience a transformation of feeling and find ourselves moved to tears not of pleasure, but more likely a sorrow at "our inability to grasp now, wholly here on earth, at once and for ever, those divine and rapturous joys of which through the poem, or through the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses" (Maritain 1943, p. 175).

The challenge for the visual arts is to produce works that engage the viewer in an aesthetic experience that can move them not in the same manner as poetry or music but in such a manner that the information in the work of art fuses with information in the viewers memory, and encourages an expansion of the viewers consciousness through linking with the consciousness of the artist via the work of art. Emotion in art can be expressed through its content or through the manipulation of the medium by the artist and it is through the expressive arrangement of line, form or colour, and through gestures that the American Abstract Expressionists produced an aesthetic experience and found a way to communicate their emotional states with the viewers of their work.

But what is this aesthetic experience? Csikszentmihalyi defines it as a heightened state of consciousness that is, an experience that is more "clearly focused than everyday life which occurs in response to music, painting, and so on" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, p. 9).

According to Kant, "aesthetic pleasure results from the union of inclusion and understanding, and, according to Croce it results from the process of expressing a formerly unformulated intuition" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, p. 11).
Aesthetic experiences are different for each person Bourdier reminds us that a person can never have a pure, immediate aesthetic experience, “whenever we gaze at an object our reaction to it is historically grounded, inseparable from ideologies and social values” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, p. 17).

According to Nishida, beauty is the appearance of eternity in time. At the same time art is “boundless unfolding of the free self” (Nishida 1958, p. 40).

When I regard the natural landscape I am aware of a certain feeling that is produced in me. It is hard to articulate in words but relates to the gulf between Nature and humans not only in scale but in time. It is not within my ability to describe Nature within a painting and do justice to it, but what I try to do is create a work of art that allows a link to be formed between myself, the viewer, and the experience I have in perceiving the world.

To see a piece of art which is an expression of the artist’s personality is to perceive something of the artists background, and logical, rational thinking is not helpful in determining that metaphysical background. The only way to do so is to engage in a transcendental experience and to do that the viewer needs to be open and willing to engage in that experience.

Thus in describing the work of Goethe, Nishida writes:

something like a friend’s eye and like a friend’s voice which comforts our soul. ....In Goethe there is no inward and outward; all that is, is as it is, comes from where there is nothing and goes where there is nothing; and just in this coming from nothing and going into nothingness there is a gentle sound of humanity (Nishida 1958, p. 44).
Further on he adds, "This is the art of perfect peace of mind. The light of eternity is reflected in the bottom of the soul, like moonlight which shines undisturbed in the depth of a well" (Nishida 1958, p. 45).

When painting, the Chinese painter becomes one with things in order to seize upon his own inner spirit. He suggests their spiritual meaning, he values their inner beauty, and invites the viewer to share this vision, "and to reveal at the same time their affinities with the human soul" (Maritain 1953, p. 14).

The search for beauty however is not the main preoccupation of the Chinese or medieval artists. They may undoubtably enjoy the beauty of things but want only to make a "good" work, often for some spiritual or religious function. But as Maritain contends, "the search after beauty for the sake of beauty, or as supreme, transcendent end, is present and paramount in the unconscious, intrinsic dynamism of Chinese art, and of medieval art as well" (Maritain 1953, p. 15), and it is this attitude that I feel is essential for the works to retain some spiritual integrity.

A piece of art, according to Nishida, "is a relief cut out of the marble block of eternity" (Nishida 1958, p. 42). The block is an essential part and is not to be separated from the relief. Nishida feels strongly this background of eternity in Buddhist and early Christian art. He feels that in seeing those works, "we are touched by the metaphysical vibration of the artist" (Nishida 1958, p. 42).

As for Maritain:

The work of art has been pondered before being made, has been kneaded and prepared, formed, brooded over, and matured in a mind before emerging into matter. And there it will always retain the colour and the savour of the spirit. Its formal element, what constitutes it of its kind and makes it what it is, is its being controlled and directed by the mind (Maritain 1943, p. 7).
He maintains that this is crucial and that technical skill and manual dexterity are not important, and that attitude of mind is more important. This is evidenced in countless works of art throughout history particularly this century and is particularly evident in the work of Emily Kngwareye who’s work often contains technically inarticulate line work but conveys a universal aura or spirituality.

Maritain believes that people are isolated from each other and are only really united by the spirit and it is through an involvement with art amongst other things that “contact is established and souls communicate” (Maritain 1943, p. 33).

Abstract art liberates the artist from merely describing or interpreting the landscape or everyday objects and provides us with an opportunity for contemplation, and through this contemplation we may forge links with some spirituality or human consciousness. For me I must admit that it happens very rarely but it is what I search for in artworks and what I strive to attain within my own art practice.

Other artists that I admire share a similar valuing of the aesthetic within their artworks; Jasper Johns valued the process within his art making and claimed he was producing paintings of things the mind already knows about (Tejada-Flores 1989). Lichtenstein said he was not interested in knowing the ideas behind a painting as he might not find it interesting. He enjoys the act of looking at the painting (Waldman 1971). Christo maintained that the wrapping of the Reichstag was based on an aesthetic consideration rather than political (Gunn 1996).

In conclusion then I value above all the aesthetic qualities within artworks and believe that although during an aesthetic experience a viewer may initially be seduced by the painterly beauty of its craftsmanship, if he should simply stand in front of the canvas and regard it for some time in passive contemplation then he may be able
to make a connection with his own humanity through that of the artist’s. From my own experience sometimes images linger for a long time after the initial viewing and I feel that my life is enriched not only by the initial experience but by the ongoing memory of the work and the interpretations that I may bring to the work.

For me, the value of a work depends on its ability to produce an aesthetic experience in its audience, therefore if my work does not produce aesthetic experiences in viewers then I will have failed.
Chapter 3

Values of Integrity Honesty Truth

Mark Rothko worried that his paintings might be "mere facades, beautiful decorations lacking human or spiritual sustenance" (Breslin 1993, p. 374).

Jasper Johns resents illusion when he recognises it. He likes what he sees to be real (Tejada-Flores 1989).

Motherwell states "Painting must be sensual - this is its nature - but it must not be pleasing or decorative. The artist's essential function is to retain integrity at any cost in an essentially corrupt world which seduces and destroys all of us" (Arnason 1982, p. 11).

What is truth? When I say that I value truth, honesty and integrity this may sound like valuing motherhood. These words are spoken with ease but to really practice art with these values underpinning my philosophical framework they need to be examined and investigated.

Sorokin identifies three main systems of truth. "They are the ideational, sensate, and idealistic systems of truth and knowledge" (Sorokin 1941, p. 81). Ideational truth is the truth of faith and usually derived from religious beliefs. Sensate truth is based on our senses and how we perceive the world around us. Idealistic truth is a synthesis of both, derived from the process of reason (Sorokin 1941).

However, the truth of faith today may be derived from intuition, inspiration, extra-sensory perception or mystic experience, and so on. We may not know exactly the nature of this source of truth and must
admit that it does not always guarantee the truth, but we can not deny the existence of such a source of truth.

Some would claim that intuition is the real source of knowledge, different from the role of the senses and reason. If so, then the truth of faith, derived from and based upon intuition, is a genuine truth just as much as the truth of the senses and of reason, and it becomes especially important when trying to explain aspects of truth in the case of the visual arts.

It seems that in contemporary art practice we have many truths and many theories that can validate any particular truth that is presented. We have the truth of faith, of reason and of the senses. In trying to ascertain the whole truth we may need to integrate these three because when each of these systems of truth becomes separated from the rest it may become less valid. Intuition in particular, if uncontrolled by the truth of reason and of the senses may very easily go astray, and gives us an intuitive error instead of the intuitive truth (Sorokin 1941).

Therefore, just because intuition may be used in either the production or assessment of art works this does not necessarily validate it. Not every intuition is valid; some of them probably are misleading and produce error rather than truth. But truth derived from the senses or from reasoned analysis may not always be without error either. Some knowledge may be believed to be true for a moment and then found to be inadequate by further experience. In other words, intuition, sensory experience, discursive reasoning, each may be true and false (Sorokin 1941).

This then is the dilemma in claiming and seeking truth within the practice of making art, but for me it comes down to the honesty of intention. Maritain writes, "If you want to produce Christian work, be a Christian, and try to make a work of beauty into which you have put
your heart; do not adopt a Christian pose” (Maritain 1943, p. 70). Therefore an artist must be true to himself and true to his own conscience.

Maritain writes;

The ugly in art [said Rodin] is the fake, whatever grins at you without cause, senseless affectations, pirouettes and capers, mere travesties of beauty and grace, whatever tells a lie....... I want you [Maurice Denis adds] to paint your people so that they look as though they were painted, subject to the laws of painting, and don’t let them deceive my eye or my mind: the truth of art consists in the conformity of the work to its means and end (Maritain 1943, p. 52).

So truth to the subject does not mean a servile imitation of the subject. Photo realistic works may be stunning to look at and indeed may present one kind of truth but for me this goes against the essence of what art is. What is required is not that the representation shall conform exactly to a given reality but, as Maritain believes, that:

Through the material elements of the beauty of the work there shall be transmitted, sovereign and entire, the brilliance of form - of a form, and therefore of some truth; ...... But if the joy produced by a work of beauty proceeds from some truth, it does not proceed from the truth of imitation as a reproduction of things, it proceeds from the perfection with which the work expresses or manifests form, in the metaphysical sense of the word, it proceeds from the truth of imitation as manifestation of a form. (Maritain 1943, p. 60).

Therefore it does not preclude realism in art from possessing some universal artistic value but to do so I believe the artist has to have an honest intention to express or manifest form in a work. Then, “the joy of imitation is brought to bear. And it is that which gives art its universal value” (Maritain 1943, p. 61).
The challenge for artists is not to aim merely at copying the appearance of nature or at depicting "the ideal", but at making something beautiful by the display of form with the help of visible symbols.

One way for the artist to engage in the act of creation is to study the environment, both manufactured and natural. Maritain believes that the artist or poet is a person:

who sees more deeply than other men and discovers in reality spiritual radiations which others are unable to discern ..........But to make these radiations shine out in his work and so to be truly docile and faithful to the invisible Spirit at play in things, he can, and indeed he must to some extent, deform, reconstruct and transfigure the material appearance of nature (Maritain 1943, p. 63).

It is this personal and unique connection that the artist makes through his interpretation of the information in front of him that sets artists apart from each other.

This is especially true with portrait painting where a painting may have a likeness of its subject; but great portrait paintings are those that convey something of the inner person, the soul of the subject, and preferably interwoven with the soul of the artist. Rodin’s aim may have been to slavishly copy Nature, but he had to admit that he emphasised, accentuated, and exaggerated in order to reproduce not only “the exterior” but “the spirit” as well (Maritain 1943).

I believe that it is these ‘distortions’ produced by the painter or the sculptor that sets great artworks apart from the merely descriptive. Importantly though, these ‘distortions’ are usually quite spontaneous and are a result of a personal vision rather than the effect of deliberate calculation. If an artist contrives to interpret then the integrity is lost. “If I have changed anything in Nature,” said Rodin, “it was unconsciously on the spot. The feeling influencing my vision showed
me Nature just as I copied it .... If I had wanted to modify what I saw and embellish it, I should have produced nothing of value" (Maritain 1943, p. 203).

So, to retain integrity in artworks the representational artist must simply and honestly believe themselves to be copying Nature, "whereas in fact they are expressing in matter a secret which Nature has communicated to their souls" (Maritain 1943, p. 203). This simplicity, spontaneity, and unself-conscious approach, is what Goethe considered the most precious gift the artist can have, "a unique gift so gratuitous does it seem to be and beyond analysis" (Maritain 1943, p. 203).

Many things can conspire to corrupt the artist whether it be vanity, greed or pride, and when this deceit occurs, integrity is lost and consequently I believe the art suffers. For example, an artist may develop a particular style in the production of his art but if he becomes seduced by that facility the engagement of that facility may become driven by the intellect and thus become contrived. Once this happens the process becomes corrupted and thus lacks integrity. As Maritain writes:

Do not separate your art from your faith. But leave distinct what is distinct. Do not try to blend by force what life unites so well. If you were to make your aesthetic an article of faith, you would spoil your faith. If you were to make your devotion a rule of artistic operation, or turn the desire to edify into a method of your art, you would spoil your art (Maritain 1943, p. 70).

Although a certain amount of manual dexterity and personal skill is desirable in good artwork, a spiritual virtue can still be transmitted by inarticulate or inexperienced hands. For example there is more than mere charm in some Primitive or Naive art, there is often a sincerity that is communicated and perceived by the viewer.
Art is fundamentally constructive and creative. The art I value often involves the act of producing something new, something original that is capable of moving the human soul. As Maritain puts it, "The new creature is the fruit of a spiritual marriage uniting the activity of the artist to the passivity of a given matter" (Maritain 1943, p. 63).

When this marriage occurs it is capable of communicating to a wide range of people as in the case of Motherwell's "Elegy to the Spanish Republic." Here, Motherwell, referring to that particular series of work, believed that:

There are quite a few people not liking abstract art who are moved by that particular image. Therefore the image by definition has something that is beyond or outside art; exactly what it is; I don't know.... There is something about the Elegy pictures .... an explosive energy, cropping and compactness, some kind of directness that is "beyond" painting, or to put it another way, is something painting can do, and very rarely does (Arnason 1982, pp. 228-229).

This then is the challenge that artists like myself accept, to produce art that communicates with the soul of humanity and retains its integrity.

Finally, Paul Klee likened the artist to the trunk of a tree through which the sap rises to put out sprouting leaves. "Standing at his appointed place the artist does nothing other than gather and pass on what comes to him from the depths. He neither serves nor rules - he transmits" (Smith 1975, p. 61). So it is when the artist imitates not Nature's products but her processes that integrity is retained.
CHAPTER 4

OTHER ARTISTS’ WORK

John Graham wrote, “The purpose of art in particular is to re-establish a lost contact with the unconscious......with the primordial racial past and to keep and develop this contact in order to bring to the conscious mind the throbbing events of the unconscious mind” (Waldman 1978, p. 39).

To the Surrealists the absence of any control exercised by reason is central to their practice together with “pure psychic autonomism” (Smith 1975), which means a total abandonment of any conscious intellectual decision making and a reliance only on the powers of the unconscious and of an imagination. They were not interested in any aesthetic or moral considerations (Arnason 1982).

There were many ways that artists in the Surrealist movement accessed their unconscious, Miro stated that he frequently started his pictures in a state of hallucination. This presented him with images for which he was entirely irresponsible, but from there the process of developing the work was one of calculation (Smith 1975).

Man Ray loved to shock himself by revealing the unexpected contents of his own mind and enjoyed the challenge to explore them further. He invited the spectator to explore the recesses of his own mind in order to discover the possibilities of meaning in the work, and thus recognised the viewers’ contribution to the creative act (Smith 1975).

The theoretical procedure of the Surrealists may have been “psychic automatism” and so it was for Abstract Expressionism, but the two movements produced art totally different from each other. For the
Surrealists, the vision and ideology took priority over painting and aesthetics whereas the Abstract Expressionists used the procedure to focus on the act of painting itself to influence the outcome of the painting and thus create an aesthetic experience and appreciation.

Sam Hunter describes Abstract Expressionism as:

An art of passionate gesture, extreme mobility and freedom. The registration of the act of creation as a unique and dramatic event, and as an episode in a process of personality, was its main subject matter, or concern. All the exhibited marks of freedom, in handling and execution, were left in visible evidence in the finished works to document the artist’s dilemmas of choice and decision: whipped lines, torn shapes, emendations and erasures, and smeared colour. The artist’s subjective self - involvement in the creative process also expressed itself through a fragmented visceral or mythic imagery, and references to tradition and the grand manner (Hunter 1981, p. 106).

For Motherwell, automatism was both a way of probing the subconscious and a way of confronting the medium. Working intuitively and letting the painting evolve allowed him to focus on the process of making art, a process in which he believed one’s own being is revealed, willingly or not. He felt that although the process of reaching the preconscious may be the same for everybody the manifestation of an aesthetic response would be different for everybody and dependent on each person’s own ability to manipulate the medium used (Arnason 1982).

Motherwell recognises the importance of abstraction, and of feeling in his work. He values the emotion that can be evoked by poetry and music not by description but by suggestion. Above all else he wanted to infuse his work with meaning, “meaning knitted into the fabric; meaning that is dispersed throughout the organic composition” (Arnason 1982, p. 9).
It is through the process of painting that Motherwell's paintings evolve, he allows the painting to grow on the canvas rather than in his conscious mind. Here he describes the process talking about Black and White No. 2:

I realised that the picture had been painted over several times and radically changed, in shape, balances, and weights. At one time it was too black, at one time the rhythm of it was too regular, at one time there was not enough variation in the geometry of the shapes. I realised there were about ten thousand brush strokes in it, and that each brush stroke is a decision. It is not only a decision of aesthetics - will this look more beautiful? - but a decision that concerns the inner I: is it getting too heavy, or too light? It has to do with one's sense of sensuality: the surface is getting too coarse, or is not fluid enough. It has to do with one's sense of life: is it airy enough, or is it leaden? It has to do with one's own inner sense of weights: I happen to be a heavy, clumsy, awkward man, and if something gets too airy, even though I might admire it very much, it doesn't feel like my self, my I (Flam, 1983, p. 12)

For Motherwell the qualities that emerged in the Spanish Elegy paintings were those that he had been seeking to express throughout all his painting, "a tragic sense of life coupled with a sense of its visual radiance" (Flam, 1983, p. 30). Once the series had been named, the associations for the spectator, and undoubtedly for the artist himself, continued to grow, "black as the symbol of death; white as the symbol of life; the monoliths as the architecture of a mausoleum, a chamber of death; the ovals as living forms, sometimes in the process of being crushed by, sometimes liberating themselves from the enclosing rectangles" (Flam, 1983, p. 30).

When he was beginning to explore the Spanish Elegy in 1948, he was also thinking about Jung's theories of creativity. Jung suggested that there are hidden forces that generate symbols that strike a universal chord in all living souls, and Motherwell believes that he achieved that link in that series. He was not making a conscious political statement, instead making one that observed that a terrible death had
occurred and should not be forgotten and somehow he created a series
of images that communicates to the universal soul in all of us
(Arnason 1982).

Motherwell also recognises links with oriental painting, especially
Japanese Zen painting which emphasise the importance of space and
its relationship with the figure within that space. This affinity can be
seen in Motherwell’s passion for black and white figuration, for
calligraphy, for the importance of brush gesture, and for abstract images
loaded with meanings but not specified (Arnason 1982).

Other artists such as Still, Newman, Pollock, de Kooning, and Rothko
shared similar values and concerns to Motherwell, but were producing
totally different results.

Rothko believed that the artist had to have faith in his own abilities to
produce the miracle that each painting is, and describes the process of
creating a painting thus:

I think of my paintings as dramas; the shapes in the picture are
the performers. They have been created from the need for a group
of actors who are able to move dramatically without
embarrassment and execute gestures without shame. Neither the
action nor the actors can be anticipated, or described in advance.
They begin as an unknown adventure in an unknown space. It is
at the moment of completion that in a flash of recognition, they
are seen to have the quality and function which was intended.
Ideas and plans that existed in the mind at the start were simply
the doorways through which one left the world in which they
occur (Breslin 1993, p. 239).

He believed that shapes are unique elements in unique situations,
“They are organisms with volition and a passion for self assertion.
They move with internal freedom, and without the need to conform
with or violate what is probable in the familiar world” (Breslin 1993, p.
240).
Essentially Rothko’s paintings are simple but are not simplistic. They encourage us to engage with the works but the viewer has to forge his own connections and interpretations, and as each one of us is different we each take our own histories with us (Breslin 1993).

In a letter co-signed by Adolph Gottlieb to the New York Times 13/6/43 he wrote:

We favour the simple expression of the complex thought. We are for large shape because it has the impact of the unequivocal. We wish to reassert the picture plane. We are for flat forms because they destroy illusion and reveal truth (Waldman 1978, p. 39).

Rothko appreciated that there is always a certain mystery about how you go from one stage in a painting to the next, but that gradually a final image materialises that is unique to the artist (Breslin 1993).

Howard Hodgkins also acknowledges that his finished paintings are as much a surprise to him as to the viewer and admits that, “Somehow, I still don’t know how I do it” (Holmes 1996, p. 63). Unlike Motherwell who titles his work at the completion of the painting Hodgkins begins with a title and then proceeds to create the painting (Parker 1996). The titles might indeed be what the painting are about but because of the use of colour and method of painting the final results can be as abstract as any abstract expressionist and the titles can thus lead to much speculation and interpretation. Personally, I prefer to enjoy the aesthetic quality that the paintings possess in themselves, and rather than try to interpret a painting via the title, I believe that the title can offer an opportunity to link with the original emotion not through literal interpretations but through a transcendental process.

Hodgkin’s paintings are about emotions rather than ideas. They are representational in sense but not in the traditional meaning of representational, they are “representational pictures of emotional
situations” (Holmes 1996, p. 68). He goes on to describe this painted emotion as being like “painting the Scream without the figure” (Holmes 1996, p. 68). The feelings are triggered by places, and memories of encounters with other people.

His paintings may take years to complete and are only finished when the subject finally returns to the picture. They are constantly reworked during that time so that there are many layers of paint with glazes as well as thickly applied pigment covering previous layers. These surfaces are not contrived but a consequence of the process and of the deliberations and decisions made over the life of the painting, he says:

The little humps and bumps are irritating, but I discovered long ago that if you start cutting them off and tidying up the drips, it interrupts the flow of what you’re doing. You get in a race with the marks. You see, I think that marks are naked, and if you make a hesitant mark, it’s always going to look hesitant (Holmes 1996, p. 66).

I would also add that it would then be contrived and consequently some honesty would be lost from the process.

Even before Clement Greenberg was developing a theory of art that was to embrace the work of Motherwell and Rothko, in England Patrick Heron was developing his own theory which declared that the essence of art springs “not from its subject matter, but directly from the plastic facts of the picture’s abstract reality” (Morley 1994, p. 13). For Heron the meaning of art is to be found in the autonomous qualities of the artwork and the viewer is required to contemplate the aesthetic qualities above all and use his imagination to enjoy the pleasure of seeing for the sake of seeing. He believed that all that is required to understand a painting is our ability to see the formal qualities of the work, any iconography, symbolism, social context or biographical details get in the way because they are not perceptual. In fact he
thought that concepts and symbols are the enemy of painting (Heron 1974).

Heron’s main preoccupations have been space and colour. Space became the subject, but the experience of space depends on colour, for colour can alter our perception of the picture plane. This then becomes one of the big points of difference between himself and some of the American artists who were eliminating illusion and emphasising the flat surface of the painting. Heron valued the forces that came from the tension between the flat surface of the painting and the sensation of depth that can be created using colour (Heron 1974).

Heron has denied any conscious relationship between his environment and the images he creates and believes that knowing where the images come from would block the intuitive and creative process. He prefers to work spontaneously focusing on the seen rather than what is known, he wrote:

> if one focuses the whole of one’s consciousness on one aspect of a creative problem, one’s natural instinct will thus be freed to resolve things on another level and on its own terms. And I think this means, in relation to painting, that, if the artist concentrates his mind upon his vision, his hand will take care of all those complex matters of design of which the finished painting primarily consists (Morley 1994, p. 15).

Heron’s paintings evolved through the intuitive manipulation of shape and colour like a drama unfolding the focus always being the relationship of colour to colour. In his paintings after 1965 he began to draw the shapes first before painting them. The hard edge between each shape allowing him to explore the visual interaction of the colours more clearly as well as testing the limits of these relationships in huge compositions. The process was still intuitive though and the compositions were drawn within seconds (Heron 1974).
CHAPTER 5

HOW THE USE OF INTUITION GUIDES MY ART PRACTICE

The benefits of doing this research programme is that it has enabled me to focus on my art practice and put it into context. In the process of examining and understanding how intuition as a form of knowledge guides my art practice I have been able to clarify, build onto and justify the philosophy that underpins that practice.

It is important to know where one’s own art practice is placed within contemporary art practice. It is like knowing your identity, your roots, where you come from. For the Maori in New Zealand knowing where you come from and your whakapapa [genealogy] is important. Once you can identify where you are coming from it gives you ‘Mana’, confidence and authority.

Greenberg saw the essence of Modernism as, “the use of characteristic methods of a discipline to criticise the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence” (Greenberg 1993, p. 85). Consequently Modernist art in this century has had many forms and styles beginning with Impressionism and probably culminating in Minimalism. My art fits within the context of Modernism but has continued to move away from the refinement of Minimalism that was the emphasis of my work up until the mid 1980’s. Since then I have been trying to put back into painting its ability to communicate. The challenge has been to be able to produce paintings that work, that make a spiritual connection, that make the paintings vital without making them simply decorative. Rather than produce art the same as that produced in the Greenbergian
era, I want to revisit some of the values and philosophy of that time and produce art that evolves in a new direction.

"The object of painting," said Poussin, "is delight. Such joy is not the joy of the simple act of knowing, the joy of possessing knowledge, of having truth. It is a joy overflowing from such an act, when the object upon which it is brought to bear is well proportioned to the mind" (Maritain 1943, p. 57).

Reading the literature on intuition has helped me to formulate a philosophical framework that I can work within. It may be that the viewer of a work of art makes a connection with a collective unconscious as Jung describes (Jung 1971), and that the work may be generated by accessing the collective unconscious. It may be that some mystical or spiritual connection is made in the production of the paintings. In the final analysis it does not matter what it is. As I have demonstrated, there is a growing body of knowledge from a variety of disciplines that confirms the existence of some form of other consciousness.

For me, I prefer to believe that I am expressing a humanity and a spirituality that is within me. It is not linked to a universally shared spirituality but is a reflection of a universally shared consciousness or spirituality. That is why people can generally recognise that spirituality within a work of art. It is a spirituality that is known to them but is also unique to them. Each person has an individual spirituality and a consciousness that is part of their ancestry, and because we all form part of the human race this consciousness forms a collective common knowledge which is within each one of us. It is within each one of us and is unique to each one of us.

This belief allows me to distance myself from any association with formal religious bodies or new age philosophies whilst recognising
common experiences and practices shared by them. Motherwell has said, "In a sense, all of my pictures are slices cut out of a continuum whose duration is my whole life, and hopefully will continue until the day I die" (Arnason 1982, p. 12), and this is how I feel about my work.

My experience as a visual artist enables me to appreciate a wide range of visual stimuli and see possibilities in either reproducing them or interpreting them. What I want to do is to share my vision of things, to encourage others to appreciate some of what I see. I can understand why landscape artists want to capture and record or interpret nature. However, I do not want to try and imitate nature in the same way, as I believe there are less obvious perceptions of beauty or interest presented to us all the time as Patrick Heron also observes and writes:

The painting, 12-30 March: 1994 ...... Although at one point in this canvas there are some shapes which come close to the forms of a giant plant, I feel that it is evocation rather than description that is involved. I would like to think that the various brushings, calligraphies and scribbled area of somewhat atmospheric, colour mixtures, are all evoking rather than defining the spatial realities of the garden that surrounds me (Heron 1994, p. 36).

I want to produce paintings that have some substance to them, paintings that communicate something of the soul of the artist. I want my paintings to engage the viewer and enable a transfer of thoughts, experiences, perceptions through a transcendental process. As Maritain puts it, "The need of the intellect to manifest externally what is grasped within itself, in creative intuition, and to manifest it in beauty, is simply the essential thing in the fine arts" (Maritain 1953, p. 41), and thus the artist.

He adds:

The painter looks at Things, at the universe of visible Being - intent to grasp in it some reality beyond appearances and some hidden meaning. He receives the poetic spark ..... then he sets out
to express what he has grasped, not by simply transposing the
natural appearances of the objects involved, but a totally new
creation totally contrived of his own spirit (Maritain 1953, p. 155).

This then is one of the fundamental beliefs that influence me in my art
practice. Above all, I am trying to produce works of art that have an
aesthetic value and prompt an aesthetic experience for the viewer. I do
not want to engage in narrative or symbolic forms of art. My interest is
in the influence of recognisable imagery, but through the freedom of
abstraction avoid the restrictions of the narrative.

To observe the primary rule in the case of the fine arts, the artist,
according to Maritain, “is to follow purely the pleasure of his eyes in
the colours he will be responsible for” (Maritain 1953, p. 44). With
regards my art, I want the paint to have its own indulgence; colour and
texture without gestural qualities, but something constructed layer
upon layer so that the image is built from below, emerging at the
surface in its final form. I am concerned with the materials themselves
and the application process, like Matisse whose paintings created
sensations of depth through the heightening of our awareness of the
surface, whilst at the same time dealing with expression and emotion.

As regards spirituality in my work, much is said and written about
spirituality within contemporary art and indigenous art in particular.
There is a characteristic that we call spirituality that refers to what we
cannot see but only feel through the power of imagination. Within
Australia’s own art history there have been many artists who have
sought the spiritual, for example John Ford Patterson describing his
philosophy of art writes, “.....A kind of suggestion, a hint o’ promise,
something evanescent. ‘Tis a kind of spirituality o’ things I’m after. A
dream picture that’s real, and yet ye canna put your hand to it.” (Burn
1991, p. 27). More recently Emily Ngwarreye has demonstrated a

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spirituality that communicates to a wide audience embracing both the indigenous and the more international contemporary art worlds.

For Kandinsky the highest goal of art was to express and communicate the spiritual, the vibrations of the artist's soul into colours and forms which would in turn set up corresponding vibrations in the soul of the viewer. "The artist", he wrote, "must train not only his eye but his soul, so that the soul can weigh colours in its own scale and thus become a determinant in artistic creation" (Smith 1975, p 51).

My notion of spirituality is connected to an identification with human life. I want to make art that addresses the beliefs described above by Kandinsky and I think abstraction is best suited to this. I believe that with elemental forms painted from deep within the self, it is possible to make these connections. For me that is my challenge and what drives my art practice.

Maritain writes:

> Far beneath the sunlit surface thronged with explicit concepts and judgments, words and expressed resolutions or movements of the will, are the source of knowledge and creativity, of love and supra-sensuous desires, hidden in the primordial translucent night of the intimate vitality of the soul. Thus it is that we must recognise the existence of an unconscious or preconscious which pertains to the spiritual powers of the human soul and to the inner abyss of personal freedom, and of the personal thirst and striving for knowing and seeing, grasping and expressing; a spiritual or musical unconscious which is specifically different from the automatic or deaf unconscious (Maritain 1953, p. 69).

Thus the art making process is of vital consideration. The emphasis on 'process' comes out of a strong desire to show that the way you do something is very important. It is a moral, ethical stance; the process should be evident in the result, and it should have a relationship to the result which is still in the work. Tony Tuckson was appreciative of the directness and lack of pretence in Australian aboriginal art and
pursued this practice in his own work. James Gleeson writing in the Sun Herald 22 April 1973:

What he [Tuckson] is on about is the act of painting. His pictures are about what it feels like to paint a picture - and as Tuckson feels it a large part of it is agony …..Making a painting or indeed any kind of art is a kind of birth. There is labour involved ….. Tuckson isn’t interested in the art that conceals the effort. He shows the making of a painting with all the travail fully exposed, without prettification or pretence that it hasn’t hurt; there is something shocking in the completeness of the exposure (Legge 1989, p. 40).

In the end Tuckson succeeds because he does communicate a sense of urgency through the painting. And for me this provides a link with the nature and soul of the man and as Gleeson concludes, “The viewer who takes the risk of opening himself to these works will be rewarded by a rare glimpse of the emotional and physical costs of creativity” (Legge 1989, p. 40). I can identify very strongly with these sentiments as sometimes when my work is not going very well it can be depressing, and finding a way to resolve the work difficult.

Having set the philosophical framework above it might be useful to chart the development of my work over the period of this research and to see how the framework influences the art practice.

I began this body of work having arrived from New Zealand with only limited possessions, and a limited amount of art materials. I welcomed the challenge to embark on a new series of work that was different to the work I had been doing in New Zealand. I had some ideas about pursuing the influence of the gesture in art works and the direction of my reading supported this position.

However, whilst pursuing this line of thought I was also aware of the need to play with the limited materials I had at my disposal. Consequently I began to produce some small mono-prints on A4 paper.
These were completed by rolling printing ink onto glass then applying the paper and pressing by hand, a typical primitive mono-printing technique. I was quite interested by the textural qualities of these and explored the differences created by varying the amount of ink and the amount of pressure. The work was created with minimal conscious decision making, instead allowing the images to evolve intuitively. In fact some of the first images where there was some conscious intentions applied seemed lacking in any real aesthetic qualities and were unexciting. When the process was given free rein, certain unplanned qualities emerged and I was encouraged to exploit these. Whilst still allowing for the spontaneity I was able to make certain decisions about size and placement of image area, amount of ink, and amount of pressure applied.

When I had finished the process and once I had edited them by selecting areas within each image that could be focused on I was quite happy with some of the results [Figs 1-2].

![Fig 1](image1.png) ![Fig 2](image2.png)

Although the main considerations when composing were made intuitively there was an awareness that these areas could represent certain ideas or philosophies that had been evident in my work for some time, and although I believe they exist mainly in the
subconscious it is possible they may have been the driving force in influencing the intuitive decision making process. It was also the relationship and interaction of these areas and their plastic form that was also interesting to consider.

I began to produce some monoprints using ordinary household paint. I painted an area onto cardboard and applied a piece of paper to receive a reverse image of what I had painted. The initial results were fairly bland and uninteresting and there was some problems finding suitable surfaces to paint on. I tried formica, card, and wood. All gave different effects and some of the cards 'broke down' in that after a while the surface became saturated and lifted. However, with this process I knew I had a potential language to pursue further, I just didn't know what I wanted to say.

This did not bother me too much because as Kandinsky said, "Never was I able to contrive a form, and consciously planned form was repellent to me" (Smith 1975, p. 52). He described his non-objective "Improvisations" as "a graphic representation of a mood, not a representation of objects" (Smith 1975, p. 52). Thus, in my own practice, with a minimum of conscious effort besides choosing the colour, size, placement and pressure, the works were allowed to materialise intuitively and incidentally. As a consequence of always painting in a certain direction and always placing the paper square on to the card there was a certain repetition and order in the format of the finished selected and edited images [Figs 3-4].

I liked the quality of the texture and shape that was obtained by this process. I liked the fact that the integrity of the shape was retained through this process whereas when I consciously apply paint with a brush sometimes the results are unconvincing and seem pretentious. It was at this stage that I became more convinced that it is the
subconscious intuitive marks that have the qualities I am looking for, and therefore I have to value the intuitive incidental process.

Fig 3

Fig 4

It was my intuition that was driving this body of work and the words of Rothko describing his paintings as dramas, kept echoing in my mind and encouraged me to continue.

The question of aesthetic value was raised continuously. Some of the work soon came to look repetitive and bland, and it is at such times that self doubt crept in. Some of the paintings were looking a little overworked and had lost some of the freshness that some with less layers of colour retained. Yet this position has some value. It forced me to examine what had been produced in order to identify the problems and find a way of resolving them. In the past it seems that whenever I have reached this stage of despair I have persevered with the work refusing to accept it as precious and by radically changing it intuitively, moved it in a different direction.

However, I think that at this stage I was in fact making the results I had so far produced too precious, and therefore became more cautious in the making process. Also I was becoming too conscious in the composition of the paintings. This is because I was trying to temper the intuitive approach with a more considered and analytical approach.
of the honesty and integrity that can be achieved when working unselfconsciously.

Part of what I had been worried about had been the compositions I had been creating. I thought that in some ways it would be a lot easier if I had had a more clearly defined subject to research. Yet I kept coming back to the belief that although travelling in the massive arena of abstraction through the subconscious and accessing intuitive knowledge is challenging, and the journey is overpowering at times, if I persevere and retain the belief that I can succeed, then some value can be achieved from the results.

I was reassured by reading Arnason, who, on describing Motherwell's intentions says:

Even before he had discovered what he wanted his art to look like, he seems to have had a firm idea of what he wanted it to do. He wanted to create an art that would deal with the universal rather than the specific, yet be charged with feeling; that would be true to its medium, be quintessentially what it was physically, yet also evoke powerful reverberations beyond its mere physical appearance. The goal of Motherwell's art, like that of Symbolist poetry, has been one of compression and condensation, of making apparently simple relationships of form and colour be charged with as much feeling, and as much meaning, as possible (Arnason 1982, p. 19).

One of the great challenges in producing abstract works then, is to produce images that resonate in the minds of the viewer. Images that suggest a new awareness or lead to a shared knowledge or allows unconscious liaisons to be formed.

I explored ways of resolving some of the small paintings by rendering them in monochrome to focus more on the composition. Unfortunately the first few drawings did not resolve anything and in fact they looked weaker and more contrived than the small paintings. However this allowed me to consider other imagery in order to
continue exploring the process of drawing. Circles had started to creep into the paintings because I had some small wooden circles available from previous explorations. After completing some drawings that were suggestive of and inspired by cactus plants I returned to the circular format in the drawings because the square or rectangular drawings were too formal and stable. The circular format allowed the drawings to be symmetrical yet still fluid and be reminiscent of flower heads. I was encouraged by the results and so I decided to explore similar compositions using colour.

I laid a base of yellow or red watercolour before working over them with coloured pastels. Although I enjoyed the process, the limitations of the pastels within the working process influenced the results to the extent that they became too stiff and controlled. The vigour that the charcoal drawings had was lost. However I felt that they would transfer well to a larger scale using paint.

In addition to these activities I had been looking at road markings and road repairs. For example when part of a road is dug up to access key services or facilities, or fill in damaged areas, the material used may be different to the original. Consequently you get a different colour and texture to the original. In addition the joins are sealed with a bitumen product. I believe that through the continual observation and recording of these I was feeding my unconscious mind which in turn empowered the intuition to influence the art making process. The intention was not to try and imitate or represent these observations but to value the incidental way they are created and the aesthetic quality they possess.

What I find interesting is both the linear qualities of the sealant but also the relationship between the different surface areas. They reminded me of some of Rothko’s work and the incidental way they
reminded me of some of Rothko's work and the incidental way they are created lead me to think about the hidden order of aesthetics within both the manufactured world and the world of nature. The production of these images were practical. There were no conscious aesthetic decision behind their construction. They were created to perform a function, purely and simply. However I find that they possess an aesthetic quality that I find fascinating, intriguing, and enriching.

Consequently, in order for my art to possess some 'spiritual integrity' - to display and communicate some passion - to demonstrate some intuitive knowledge of what works visually I needed to value the incidental happenings that occur during the process of production or creation of a work of art. For example when Francis Bacon is working on painting part of a face the movement of the brush is made intuitively and the marks made can be accepted or rejected.

![Fig 5](image1.png) ![Fig 6](image2.png)

At this time I produced some different works by scraping some printing ink over a piece of cartridge paper. At the back of my mind was the divisions in the roads and various cracks and road markings I have been thinking about. I had recently been out to photograph some cracks and grids in the road in the immediate environment and these observations influenced the work. I was pleasantly surprised by the strong graphic results that produced some interesting textural effects.
were very much like the aging white markings on roads. [Figs 5-6] They were black and white images with a simple composition of two or three vertical stripes exposing the process in which they were made. Sometimes arcs were produced. The simple composition added to the strength of the high contrast between light and dark. I believed that they would transfer very well to a large 8\"x4\" format but there would have to be some exploration of the process to be used in order to retain the quality of the smaller ones.

The word consequential is probably a more suitable word than incidental when talking about these works. The images and nature of the forms created are a consequence of the way the medium was applied to the ground.

I felt quite enthusiastic about the possibilities that these new works offered, and when I went to Sydney to look around the galleries I spent more time focusing on grids, cracks, and road markings. I came back from that day more stimulated by what I had seen on the ground than what I saw in the galleries.

I began to explore similar compositions on a larger scale using charcoal [Figs 7-8]. The different media and method of working influenced the outcomes, and so although there may have been some compositional similarities with the smaller ink ones the textural qualities were definitely different. The shapes were softer compared to the crisp contrast created in the ink ones. I was not trying to copy exactly the shapes of the ink ones or the photographs I had taken. Instead, I created similar images, allowing them to develop intuitively and thus influence the composition and the textural forms. I think that by allowing the medium to influence the process these drawings retained their own integrity and identity.
These results demonstrated a marked contrast to the first drawings I did of the small paintings. I believe that this is because the earlier drawings were subordinate to the paintings. Because they were trying to recreate another image they lost any life of their own, and if a work of art is to be successful it must have a life of its own. This happens when a work is finished and is passed on to somebody else but within the process of creation the work itself must be allowed to influence the outcome. This means that the artist must be sensitive to the work in progress and open to the possibilities that are presented throughout the production of the work.

These large drawings then, had their genesis in the earlier monoprints and the photographs of road markings. There was a consciousness present within the creating of the composition but there was also an intuitive process in action as well because the drawings did not follow rigidly the photographs or the monoprints. The development of the drawings proceeded intuitively allowing the forms to develop without any preconceived plan. However within this process there was a constant reflection and analysis of the progress and development of the drawing and this influenced the intuitive process.

For me, although I value the intuitive process in the development of a work of art, there has to be some knowledge and skills available in
order that the intuitive decisions can be realised with some degree of success. Mere expressiveness, spontaneity and intuition are not enough in my view to make good works of art, one has to have at least a basic visual literacy, and the more comprehensive this visual literacy is the more scope there is for successful outcomes. However, I am reminded by Maritain who provides some balance to this belief and writes, "It is only through the poetic intuition that the intellectual baggage and acquired knowledge can take on a formal part in artistic activity", and later, "action and theme are nothing in the work if they do not emanate from, and are not permeated by, the original spirituality of creative emotion and poetic intuition" (Maritain 1953, p. 262).

Trying to reproduce the quality of the monoprints in paint on a large scale proved more difficult than anticipated. The main problem was trying to replicate an effect that has its genesis in a different media. The qualities of the monoprints were particular to the process and materials used, and the integrity of the process was acknowledged and valued. Trying to impose those qualities onto a different medium whose inherent qualities are different exposes the deceit and denies the inherent qualities of that medium.

So when I talk about integrity within artworks, besides valuing the honesty of intent, I am also referring to the honesty in the production process, that is, allowing the nature of the medium used to influence the outcomes, and not using it to replicate the qualities that are alien to it. Therefore I either had to develop a process that was similar to the way the monoprints were produced, or like the charcoal drawings, use the compositions of the monoprints and the photographic references as starting points and allow the works to develop using a process that exploits the inherent qualities of the paint medium.
I began to use a more painterly style with the paint so that I retained some of the inherent qualities of the medium. However it is the construction of the forms that were then lacking in integrity. They were being contrived and this deceit was communicated in the overall result. I realised that the only way for the forms to retain some integrity was to allow them to determine their own shape. This implies that the forms have a life of their own separate from the artist as both Motherwell and Rothko believe.

Some underpainting was used in some of the works at this time. I was convinced that this was an appropriate approach after seeing Motherwell’s painting in the National Gallery in Canberra. His simple composition was given more power and authority because of the looseness in which a tightly controlled composition was painted. The underpainting suggested that the painting had a life with a past prior to the final resolution, and thus had an influence on the final outcome. However in my case, this again could be seen as a contrived action and would have to be done for valid reasons, and not to merely facilitate an aesthetic value.

Producing paintings based on the photographs that I had taken of the road markings did not proceed as easily as I had thought. I did not try to replicate them faithfully but to allow the composition of particular ones to infiltrate the consciousness within the production of each painting. What was lacking was the innate qualities of the original photographic images. As I have said earlier the integrity of the forms were lost because they had been reproduced in a manner that was different to the way they were originally produced.

I believe that I was trying too hard to make the process work and consequently the results were looking too contrived. I needed to develop a process that retained some integrity within the forms that
were being produced and yet reflected the way in which they were produced.

The earlier transfer methods I was using at the beginning of this body of work was one way that I thought may solve this dilemma but I was not confident of reproducing them on such a large scale. Another was to develop a process that has some sympathy with the images. The thickening of the paint with sawdust and then trowelled onto the board had some merits but that process was rejected after some less than satisfactory results.

Fig 9  Fig 10

At this time I produced a number of paintings that I thought were resolved in a number of ways [Figs 9-10]. I believed at the time that they retained the spontaneity and integrity that I value yet the composition has some conscious determination. They addressed the issues of intuitive practice and linked with the road markings that I had been focusing on. The initial interest in the gesture and the loaded values that is implicit in the making of the gesture was also present. However on reflection I saw that they were particularly lacking in the aesthetic qualities that I value and in fact were pretentious and contrived. I think I knew this at the time but was falling into the trap of being
seduced by the idea of producing beautiful work rather than beautiful work being a manifestation of the process of making artwork.

Maritain writes:

Art [and thus artists] has to be on its guard not only against being carried away by manual dexterity and servile imitation, but also against other foreign elements which threaten its purity. For example, the beauty to which it tends produces a delight, but the high delight of the spirit, the absolutely contrary of what is called pleasure, or the agreeable tickling of the sensibility; and if art seeks to please, it commits a betrayal and tells a lie. So its effect is to produce emotion, but if it aims at emotion, at affecting or rousing the passions, it becomes adulterate, and another element of deceit thereby enters into it (Maritain 1943, p. 65).

He adds:

Do not separate your art from your faith. But leave distinct what is distinct. Do not try to blend by force what life unites so well. If you were to make your aesthetic an article of faith, you would spoil your faith. If you were to make your devotion a rule of artistic operation, or turn the desire to edify into a method of your art, you would spoil your art (Maritain 1943, p. 70).

This then is the crux of the matter and although it is easy to profess a certain philosophy I find I am frequently seduced into adopting a pose that poisons the art. Hodgkins also recognises the traps in developing a personal language:

An autograph mark is actually used mostly by rather bad artists, but when you do virtuoso squiggles, all it means is, this is a painting by X. Certain marks become habitual and begin to take the place of anything meaningful. So I want them to be impersonal - dots, stripes, or lines. I want my pictures to be things. I want them to be made up of marks that are physically and individually self-sufficient. I've gradually become more fluid and fluent as a painter, but the ingredients are all the same...... I once did make "autograph marks." Jasper Johns has used the same kind of marks with great success. You can make a mark that looks like a mark, but it's actually ironic and distant. And he's done that quite often (Holmes 1996, p. 65).
I then began working on some paintings on AO size card. [Figs 11-12]

Fig 11

Fig 12

I spent a few days producing background textures using a relief printing type process as described earlier. I had intended to use these to add some other shapes suggestive of the road markings I have been focusing on. The background textures were quite interesting and so once again I became a little precious about them and was reluctant to add anything else in case I spoilt them. This is where a conscious aesthetic appreciation conflicts with the act of producing work that retains its integrity. Maritain believes that, “The road of creative intuition, however, is exacting and solitary, it is the road to the unknown, it passes through the sufferings of the spirit. Artists are always tempted to prefer the road of technical discoveries” (Maritain 1953, p. 154). This is the trap that I continually fall into and is an annoying reaction because I think it prevents the works from flowing spontaneously and with vigour because the conscious decision making takes over.

Consequently the results looked contrived and lacked the honesty and integrity that I value. Some of them looked quite tasteful but that was not the quality or characteristic that what I was primarily seeking. This was disappointing as I thought that by using this method of image making the results would retain some integrity. I didn’t know how to
resolve this dilemma and so I started to re-examine the philosophical framework I had constructed for myself. I began with Maritain who said, "When man seeking for his own inner universe takes the wrong road, he enters the internal world of the deaf unconscious, while believing he enters the internal world of the spirit, and thus finds himself wandering in a false kind of self-interiority, where wildness and automatism mimic freedom" (Maritain 1953, p. 69). Incidentally, he believed that the Surrealists had fallen into this practice.

An intuitive decision is as valid as a considered decision, it simply uses aspects of consciousness that are not accessible to language. It often cannot say or explain, but it can show. Some of the decisions I make within my practice are rational and considered, but are driven by intuitive knowledge rather than intellectual knowledge. However the intuitive knowledge is informed by the intellectual knowledge. For example the choice of colour is decided on intuitively. I rarely refer to any knowledge of any colour theory yet that intuitive decision will be informed and perhaps influenced by a knowledge of colour theories. Similarly with the emerging composition, the composition evolves through a process of decision making that is sometimes carefully considered and sometimes thoughtlessly constructed. There is some conscious intention to keep the compositions simple and stable so that the viewer can contemplate the painting quietly, yet both these rely on intuition to guide the final decision.

I am reminded also of Maritain's words, "If creative intuition is lacking, a work can be perfectly made, and it is nothing; the artist has nothing to say. If creative intuition is present, and passes, to some extent, into the work, the work exists and speaks to us, even if it is imperfectly made" (Maritain 1953, p. 45).
With the final body of work, the process of image making that I am engaged in involves a practice that distances me from the image making, in that the act of applying the paint is often removed from the direct 'hands on' application of paint from a brush. In a way it could be said that I am empowering the process to influence the outcomes. It is perhaps a partnership with the process in that I make some decisions about colour, form and placement but the eventual surface quality is determined by the nature of the material used, the density of the colour, and the application process. Through experience I may be aware of the likely outcome but I have less control of the outcome than if I painted a square with red paint in a more conventional way.

It is perhaps the fact that this process that I am engaged in is exploratory and playful that gives it its power. If I could predict the exact result of this process it would have less power and influence on the outcomes. The results may then be predictable and lifeless, a mere design rather than a work of art.

The partnership between the empowered process and the actions of the intuitive artist is thus one to be valued and preserved. I have noticed that whenever I take too much conscious control of the developing painting, qualities that I value seems to be lacking. I believe these qualities of integrity and honesty are only present when a certain detachment from conscious thought is present. Hence when I take too much conscious control of the painting, the integrity and honesty is missing, and in their place is contrivance and pretence.

Thus, it is the empowering of the process that permits integrity and honesty to reign. The challenge then is how to retain integrity and honesty and at the same time have more conscious control over the application of the paint? These qualities are only present when I work in partnership with the medium and method of application. For
example, when using a brush with paint I must be confident in the use of that brush and allow the qualities of the medium to be fully exploited and respected, rather than consciously dominate it. As Nishida says, “Only from within, from the middle [which is not localised in the head, but in the ‘Tanden’, the centre of gravity of the body], flows the vigorous, quiet force of the painter’s brush and the warrior’s sword” (Nishida 1958, p. 19).

Finally then, artists from all movements in the twentieth century have valued an intuitive approach to their art making process. Jasper Johns allows paintings to grow and develop unpredictably (Tejada-Flores 1989). Robert Klippel, describing his approach to his sculptural constructions, “literally hurls the primary forms into space then sets it aside” (Queensland Art Gallery 1987, p. 31). The right moment comes, and it is then finished. Works can remain in progress for years until the resolved configuration appears Zen-like to the artist (Queensland Art Gallery 1987). With Motherwell, “his was not a deliberate program thought out in advance but a general sense of what he wanted, fed by a complex interaction of recent ideas and experiences” (Arnason 1982, p. 68). Patrick Heron states that, “For years I denied any connection between this astonishingly powerful scenery [his garden landscape] and my consciously non-figurative painting. But by 1983 I was at last prepared to acknowledge certain formal overlaps between the landscape and my abstract colour shapes” (Heron 1994, p. 36).

In conclusion then, my final body of work began without any conscious knowledge of how they might develop. It is through focusing my attention on certain aspects of the environment and developing a process of image making in sympathy with those aspects that I no doubt influence the intuitive decision making that determines the final outcomes. It has been an interesting journey and I
present a selection of the results of that journey here for examination.
[See appendix B]
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study began looking at the role that intuition plays within the development of new knowledge and presented information that validates the contribution intuition has made and can still make in all aspects of life. The question that I first posed at the beginning of this study, "How do we know what we know?" still resonates in my mind. I am more informed about how intuition is valued as a form of knowledge, but more importantly, I am convinced that the role of intuition in all aspects of decision making is as valid today as at any time in our history.

In Csikszentmihalyi's book (1990), a significant number of participants in his study (who were professionals within the art establishment, usually gallery directors, curators or historians), said that their first response to a work of art was emotional. Something other than the concept that was conveyed or the historical perspective it represented came first. There is a recognition that some gut feeling or intuition is also present in reading a work of art. Maritain adds:

> Intelligence does not exist for the senses, but the senses exist for intelligence. Hence it is that in the order of natural origin the senses exist, as it were, from the intellect, in other words, proceeds from the essence of the soul through the intellect. .... Consequently, we must say that imagination proceeds or flows from the essence of the soul through the intellect, and that the external senses proceed from the essence of the soul through imagination. For they exist in man to serve imagination, and through imagination, intelligence" (Maritain 1953, p. 76).

Today the values of post-modernism dominate intellectual and academic debate and in the visual arts the concept of the traditional
aesthetics of 'beauty' and of 'uniqueness' are rejected. However, I believe that even in the work of the arch post modernist Sigmar Polke there is a strong aesthetic presence that emerges intuitively, and in other realms of society such as commerce there is a growing understanding and valuing of the role that intuition can play in decision making.

Contrary to current thinking then, but in line with this renaissance of thought surrounding intuition, I believe that some quality of form can be produced if the environment - the mental environment - is cultivated. As I have stated earlier, I want to produce artworks that give the viewer an enriching aesthetic experience. I am not expecting anybody to experience the strong feelings that can be inspired by music or literature, but I would like that aesthetic experience to be pleasurable and that the pleasure experienced be long lasting and to linger in the mind. I would like the viewer to engage with the artwork so that a transcendental experience occurs. That experience may be different for each viewer. I do not mind how the viewer reads the painting, he or she will bring to it their own experiences, beliefs, memories, perceptions, and prejudices to the viewing. The painting becomes a catalyst for the development of a dialogue.

Berenson spoke of works of art that remain:

ineloquent, mute, with no urgent communication to make, and no thought of rousing us with gesture. If they express anything it is character, essence, rather than momentary feeling or purpose. They manifest potentiality rather than activity. It is enough that they exist in themselves (McDonald 1997, p. 14s).

It is indeed enough for me that they exist in themselves.

The term spirituality has been used many times in this exegesis, but is there any real possibility of investigating spiritual intuitions? How can we begin to probe and understand the realm of the spirit and of the
human soul? It is beyond this study to even attempt to address these issues with the respect due, without getting swallowed up in a complex range of modern philosophies from Aldous Huxley, to post-modern deconstructivist theories, and New Age philosophies. I have had to constantly remind myself that the main focus of the research is manifest in the paintings, and although it is valuable to understand the issues and subjects presented here, the subjects can only adequately be researched by scholars of philosophy, psychology and theology.

When it comes to manual dexterity Maritain claims that this is not important to our overall aesthetic appreciation of art as long as that link with a spiritual entity is formed (Maritain 1943). I agree with this to a certain extent, but I also feel that an artist who has developed some technical and personal skills is in a better position to free himself from the conscious manipulation of those skills and thus allow the intuition to influence the process. After all, although we need to be receptive to whatever may come within the development of the art making process we also need to be able to discriminate between what works and what does not work.

In my experience, I notice that whenever I am consciously aware of performing actions with a particular medium, besides that consciousness, the contamination of another consciousness creeps in. This is the consciousness of aesthetics, and when this intrudes too far, the process then begins to lack integrity and consequently the pathway to the spirit or soul or the collective unconscious is blocked.

I believe that I have to maintain a fine balance between my conscious rational decision making and the intuitive process and appreciation of aesthetics. Both are important and this examination of my art practice has enabled me to be more aware of when and where these deviations are made and thus make it easier for me to ‘get back on track’.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Numbered Properties of Intuition and Insight (Bastick 1982, p. 25).

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# Appendix B

## Details of Paintings

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