Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet:
The emergent genre of painting from photographic references
Dedicated to my parents
Aileen (1923-2011) and Norm (1926-2010).
Both had the confidence in me, but unfortunately
could not be here to see it come to fruition.

Special dedication to my wife Marion, who has been everything to
me in this endeavour.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the University of Western Sydney for giving me the opportunity to carry out this research. I also wish to thank my supervisory panel Kaye Shumack, Peter Dallow, Ronaldo Morelos and Pamela James. Kaye and Peter have been with me on the majority of this endeavour and I am sure that I have created many headaches for Kaye along the way. I am very grateful of her persistence and for everything she has taught me over this journey, as I also am to Peter for his calming approach and the vast knowledge he imparted. Ronaldo was with me at the beginning, while Pamela came onboard in the final stages and I thank them for their very valuable input.

Others I would like to acknowledge for the assistance they have provided to me throughout this research are: Michael Hedger, Richard Steele, Mark Leon, Dino and Nicky Rogliani and Claire Aitchison and the Thursday Writing Circle in Australia, Stephen Baycroft and James Broomfield in London, Dirk Pauwels at S.M.A.K. in Ghent, the Stedelijk in Amsterdam, Peter and Angelika Menken in Bremen, Sherry Karver in America and all of the artist’s I have explored in the research. I would also like to thank Hercule and Gordianus as well as my Les Pauls, Telecasters and Overlanders for those other moments.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my Knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

March 9 2015
Table of Contents

List of Images vi
Abstract xiv
Chapter 1: Thesis Summary 1
   The emergence of a genre – painting from photographic references 3
   Some historical contexts behind the emergence of the new genre of painting from photographic references 4
   Embracing photography 5
   Narrative through memory 6
   Converging parallel worlds 7
Manet: A Modernist reportage 8
Building a critical theoretical framework for understanding this emergent genre 11
The research process 13
Approach to research: The theory of ‘material thinking’ 14
Artist case studies 15
Structure of the thesis argument 17

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Foucault’s *episteme* and Bourdieu’s *habitus* 22
   Approaching the emerging *episteme, habitus* and artistic *habitus* 23
   Distinguishing modes of landscape/portraiture 25
   The emerging *episteme* according to Foucault 28
   How the process takes place 29
   Artistic engagement through language 31
   *Habitus* as defined by Bourdieu 34
   Art practice as artistic habitus 36
   What is artistic habitus? 37
   Re-energising art practice through the emerging *episteme* and *habitus* 40
   In summary 45
Chapter 3: Literature Review: Photography, Painting and Modernism

Shifts in Modernist thinking about photography and painting

- Returning to the real
- Modernism and painting
- A speculative death
- Painting as a continuum
- Conflicting views
- Mediation/remediation
- Meaning, studium and punctum
- Conscious and Unconscious Vision and memory
- Everyday life in the Modernist context

Photography in the media landscape of today

- Photography as tag/index/idea
- Mediating memory
- New memory
- Assimilating memory
- Rethinking memory
- Engaging with memobilia
- The new phenomena of the citizen journalist
- Photography in mass media
- Performing photographs as auto-ethnography
- The gaze through mediated practices
- Mediation through reportage

Ocular interventions in painterly Modernist practices

- Rewriting perspective
- Dissonance
- Cubism: A photographic layering
- Sensibility and creative vision
- Disposable souvenirs: Francis Bacon (1909-1992)
- New spatio-temporal experiences
Chapter 4: Understanding the role of artistic habitus in studio practice

Intentionality and *artistic habitus*

Contextuality and *artistic habitus*

Drawing on *artistic habitus*

A material approach

Using the theory of ‘material thinking’ around studio practice

Materiality in handling

Practice as linked stages and processes

The Kentridge approach

In summary

Chapter 5: Six painters: Case studies in the field of painting from photographic references

Transforming Shadows: Gerhard Richter

Second-hand images and

  first-hand experience: Marlene Dumas

Painting the banal: Luc Tuymans

Every square inch made the same way: Chuck Close

Converting time into space: David Hockney

Humanising Social Realism: Liu Xiaodong

Comparing commonalities and differences: Aspects of art practice drawn from six painters for researching transferability and transformability of knowledge

Engaging with *artistic habitus*

Commonalities and differences

Exploring interchangeability and transformability

Chapter 6: Case Study from Personal Studio practice

Behind the practical exemplar: This researcher’s insight into the personal artistic habitus that governs his art practice

A short narrative on a personal *artistic habitus*
Makin’s artistic habitus: a relationship

with painting and photography 189
Where memory takes one 190
Accidents will happen 193
Employing photographic phenomenon 194
Chasing and breaking geometric shapes 198
Why painting? 200

Practical exemplar researching the transferability and transformability of knowledge in art practice 201
The artistic idea behind the project 202
Visual focus of testing program 203
Project approach 204
The photographic project 205
The painting project 208
The Encroachment 208
In Monēta Veritas 214
Walking along the path 220

Discussing the outcomes 226
The next engagement with these particular art processes 228

Chapter 7: Conclusion 230

References 237
Further reading 253
List of terms 258
List of Images


2.2. Becher, Bernd. (German. 1931-2007) and Hilla (German. b.1934). *Hochofenkopf, 1970 – 1994, 3 Ansichten*. Photograph; 3 panels, 40.5 x 31.5cm each. Collection Danae.


3.5. Richter, Gerhard. (German. b, 1932). *Uncle Rudi* (1965). Oil on canvas; 87 x 50cm. Collection of Lidige Gallery, Czech Republic.


3.11. Vermeer, Johannes. (Dutch. 1632-1675). *Officer and Laughing Girl* (c.1657). Oil on canvas; 50.5 x 46 cm. The Frick Collection, New York.


5.5. Richter, Gerhard. (German. b. 1932). *Grosse Pyramide*. Oil on canvas; 190 x 240cm. Collection of S.M.A.K., Ghent, Belgium.


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Gary N J Makin:

East India Docks (2011)

Painting/photography/digital manipulation
Abstract

When Gerhard Richter paints using photographic references, he considers that photography provides him with a “special kind of space” (Richter, 2009c, pp.30-35). This space is generated through of relationships between the object represented and the pictorial space engaged. Richter (2009a, p.14) also suggests that every engagement the artist encounters is influenced by, “the age we live in”, and is strengthened by past and present knowledge. In recent times, there has been considerable interest in the greater understanding about painting from photographic references, whilst at the same time these two mediums are often treated as distinctive separate practices. What is made clear in such dialogue is that a new critical language is required to better understand how painters work with photographic references. The reason for needing this critical language is so that a more vigorous and accessible dialogue can be had about the workings of these painters to account for the various stages in the evolution of an artwork. This dialogue is not an aesthetic argument, nor is it a formal one; it is about the depth of engagement that happens when an artist is working across both genres of painting and photography.

In light of this, this thesis proposes an articulation of critical language about how these artists work may be discussed and then better understood so that it might then provide a tool for other artists working in this context to unpack their own work. This new critical understanding provides a way to evaluate and identify individual artistic modes of practice as a form of artistic habitus - as new forms of critical contemporary painting practice. Whilst the development of these practices is shown to be highly personal, access to an inventory of methods for studio work based on an evaluation of artistic practice by other artists can be useful as ways to extend and
deepen an artistic engagement, while stimulating dialogues about how painting, in itself, as an emerging and contemporary genre, is important and continues to be so. In this manner, a more in-depth understanding about the working of artistic habitus – if possible - through case study evaluations that explore the workings of methods and processes in selected artists’ work. With this approach the work of selected artists can provide a framework that other artists could adapt and use for their own purposes.

By returning to, and studying, Modernist principles around art-making, this thesis identifies precedents that already exist for thinking through how such evaluations of practice through process might be carried out, and consequently, how a critical language could be articulated. To this end, this thesis firstly sets out that this working in painting using photographic references is a unique and different kind of space. Secondly, it identifies some of the precedents from Modernism and explores those, establishing a theoretical continuity that starts with Modernist experimentation with representational modes and meanings. Further to this, the thesis overviews photography and photographic theory to further establish a contemporary working context for the building of a critical language, and then proposes a model for understanding the way that painters of photographic references work.

This model proposes a theoretical grounding based on key premises that inform a renewed understanding about practices of painting from photographic references. In this discussion art practice generally is positioned as a space where new knowledge is often formed and shaped through, and as a result of, the personal world and life experiences of the artist. Further, painting practice that draws on photographic references is shown to be a particular engagement with personal experiential knowledge and background of the artist as a critical re-interpretation and re-invention of meaning through distinctive and applied forms of visual language. To critique these processes, this review introduces Foucault’s theory of the episteme as a way to better understanding the process of new knowledge creation; and then Bourdieus theory of habitus as a way to better understand the complex ways that personal life and experience can shape and inform an artist’s practice. These two
theories are being used in this thesis as foundations for an investigative model designed to reveal a more informed understanding of how the artist’s (painter’s) work develops when engaging with working from photographic references. An understanding of the theories of the episteme (Foucault), and habitus (Bourdieu), is used to then outline how these are woven into the process of practice as a working through of personal experience, as what is termed artistic habitus by Webb et al., (2002, p.19).

In this thesis, *artistic habitus* becomes a significant framework/model for deconstructing and analysing the selected case studies of painterly art practices, where personal and experiential strategies and approaches are applied and resolved using forms of visual language. As the thesis’ theoretical foundation, this framework is used to draw out strategies about art-making on both a theoretical and process level. The importance of this approach centres on it being a framework that provides a unique comprehensive means through which to interpret, and better understand, the interactions and dynamics that take place within the practice of painting from photographic references. In this manner, a form of unpacking of otherwise tacit processes and styles of working is introduced. In effect, *artistic habitus* provides a strong rationale for what takes place in an artist’s practice.

The bringing together of these three theories is the foundation for a critical language that can be used to unpack the work of other artists for understanding methods and the relationship between those methods and the personal experiential context of an individual artist’s practice. In this way, a methodological framework is provided that may then be adopted and adapted to become more engaged in the critical dialogue. In this thesis, this was tested through the development of a series of six case studies of selected artists who each work in a unique way with photographic references. By identifying a number of specific methods and processes that link their personal contexts to their art-making, a transferable generalised critical language based on an understanding about the visual production of their work is describes. Some of these methods have then been applied to a case study from this researcher’s own art practice as a way of testing this premise, to understand how useful an adaptation of selected methods could be to extend the
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

practice of this researcher, providing a framework for a drawing out of potential cause and effect in decision-making in studio work. For example, some of Richter’s early concerns were shaped as a child witnessing the destruction of Dresden in World War II. Chuck Close continually develops his approach to using grids as a methodical art-making process for working with his disabilities. David Hockney uses ‘joiners’, a particular method of collage developed through his own work that could be considered as having been shaped by the orderliness of his Methodist upbringing. Some of these approaches were adapted to this researcher’s own work in a way that, after applying aspects of my own artistic habitus, they became new modes of practice for my own art-making. This meant that the selected method was being used in context, and therefore, recognising its value for extending my own practice. Such an adaptation stimulates a fine grained, sensitive understanding of an artist’s work in a way that provides a critical insight that can be adapted and then taken into another artist’s work so that he/she can think about how they might engage with some of those concerns the artist is addressing, not directly, but as a method in context. It is within such context that this new critical language emerges. That language is the language of painting from photographic references.
Chapter 1

Thesis Summary

In 1964-65, the German painter Gerhard Richter (2009c, pp.30-35) wrote in his personal diary:

There is nothing strange about the fact that I paint from photographs... Everyone who uses photographs ‘paints’ from them in one way or another: whether with brush, collage, silkscreen or photographic canvas is immaterial. The only strange thing is that I want to produce just this kind of picture and no other: the kind of picture I can’t at the moment produce in any other way... The photograph makes a statement about real space, but as a picture it has no space of its own. Like the photograph, I make a statement about real space, but when I do so I am painting; and this gives rise to a special kind of space that arises from the interpenetration and tension between the thing represented and the pictorial space.


What Richter describes is the unique and special kind of space that arises through the practice of painting from photographic references. This thesis argues that the history and development of critical painting practice has been impacted and influenced in a major and continuing complex way by the changes in status of photography over the decades. This has been emphasised particularly by the rise in popularity of photography in social and digital media and the prevalence of photography in so many aspects of everyday life. I argue that for painters working with photographic references the particular forms of knowledge that govern each artist’s processes help shape a unique relationship with and through photography. With the rapid rise in usage of technologies such as mobile phone cameras and digital social media, photography has potentially become the most highly
engaged form of visual expression since early Modernism from Edouard Manet’s time. As photographic technologies advance the way one sees, the everyday world that appears changes with them. But not only this, the photograph has influenced and changed the art and act of painting in dynamic and complex creative ways as it provides a multitude of varied and different perspectives, directions and destinations for painting to traverse. Unquestionably, photography has changed the way painters view and represent the world. In this research these approaches are referred to as the genre of painting from photographic references. This genre emerged from early Modernist traditions and has since been developing in a myriad of practices that have expanded and extended the field of painting exponentially. For example, photography’s flattening of imagery and its fragilities of focus have introduced painters to many of the dimensions of the arts of geometric and expressionistic abstraction. One example of this is, the relationships between Pablo Picasso’s photographic layering in Cubism and Chuck Close’s pixilated portraits. This is only one example of the diverse and particular features of photography’s impact. As a result, painting genres such as landscape, cityscape and portraiture are no longer only about realistic representation, but have become increasingly complex and multilayered dynamic forms of visual knowledge practice. Thus, photography’s influence on painting is continually evolving in a dynamic and complex way, with a vast array of variations and nuances that emerge through the work of individual artists. This thesis explores how and why this has occurred, and seeks to articulate key aspects of these emerging and evolving practices that may be then adapted and discussed in terms of their contribution to the field of contemporary painting.

Within what Richter calls this ‘special kind of space’ between photography and painting, there exists an unpacking of the tensions and interactions that take place as a painter works with photographic references. The new critical field that this genre makes available is important for artists and critics alike. This new field opens a space for better understanding the scope and range of approaches that are taking place, and also opens a space for building a depth of critical knowledge about the changing nature of painting practice. In order to reach this point, this thesis summary includes a brief historical framing, which begins in the next section with a discussion on the emerging context of painting from photographic references.
The emergence of a genre – painting from photographic references

Painting from photographic references is a powerful and complex means for painters to interpret what John Berger (1972, p.18) terms the ‘isolation of the moment’ (the photograph). The photograph grants painters other ways of looking at the socio-political, economic and relational experiences surrounding them, through the eyes of the photographer. By re-animating and creating another sense and/or meaning, the painter also imparts a little of themself into the artwork. The artwork then provides a new interpretation for the observer to consider and question. This iterative approach to painting was demonstrated in 2007, when the Hayward Gallery (London) displayed the exhibition *The Painters of Modern Life*. The focus of this exhibition was the idea of interpreting and articulating the social landscape through the combining of painting and photography into a singular art practice. The emphasis of this singular art practice is in openly observing the world through two different perspectives to form a particular visual outcome. Representational painting, as Ralph Rugoff (2007b, p.6) argues, was transformed by the painters in this exhibition in a ‘conceptually-driven practice’ showing the synergies between both mediums. On one hand these synergies indicate the depth of social engagement possible through this particular form of art practice while on the other hand they depict how these painters deconstruct, reinterpret and reconstruct ‘reality’ in, and though, their art processes. From each painter’s engagement with the world through photography and the materiality of process in their art practices, relational experiences (the relationships between how one sees, feels and thinks) were developed which, in turn, informed their work. For each painter, like their predecessors in this genre, this occurred in differing ways and continues to do so now.

The Hayward exhibition consisted of twenty-two artists from North America, Britain, Europe and Asia, several of whom appear in this thesis. These artists put the social landscape on view. As Rugoff (2007c, p.11) suggests, they are deconstructing pictorial conventions, drawing on photography’s “accumulated memory of painterly traditions, framing the immediacy of contemporary experience within the history of an ancient medium”. For instance, in the exhibition Elizabeth Peyton harvests mass media, like newspapers, as a tag for creating an entry point into her field of interest. Peyton paints portraits of people she in some way has a close relationship with, juxtaposing the famous and obscure in a special space where the faces take on her visual features. In a way, she projected her own ‘self’ as a measure of the intensity of her own encounters. *Arsenal*
(Prince Harry) (1997) demonstrates this. The source image, taken from a British tabloid, created a space for her to place her facial features over all of the faces in the image except for the subject emphasising her relationship and concern for the subject. The exhibition also displayed some of the most well known works of Richard Hamilton, such as *Swingeing London 67* (1968-1969) and *The citizen* (1981-1983). These two works could be considered as representations of the shifting ideas and comments on the cultural and social intersections that gained rapid pace after the beginning of the American involvement in the Vietnam War. Much of his work at this time also explored the notions of reportage of what Hamilton (as cited in Rugoff, 2007a, p.87) called the “great visual matrix that surrounds us”. In both of these Hamilton works the visual ambience of this type of image comes forth as well as the contexts they present. As these examples show, the artists were examining the relationship between themselves, photography and painting as a dynamic and insightful research practice.

As Rugoff (2007c, p14) argues, the driving force in using photographic references for the artists in this exhibition lies in the flow of the painting surface (drawn from the photograph), engaging the observer in the shifting experiences of time, space and presence. The impetus for the painter comes initially from a subjective interpretation of the photographic image. The painter’s intent has the potential to draw out the shifting characteristics of the photographic reference and to restructure these as a form of witnessing that re-examines and re-presents secular events and situations from ordinary existence, based on their own personal interpretation of the photograph. Overall, this exhibition illustrates that the emergence of this genre depends on the painter utilising the photograph in whatever process is necessary, in the context of his/her direct relationship to the world in time and space, to create critical artistic representations about daily life. In this way, one begins to see the connection between the painter, the photographic reference and their own experience, coming together around the notion of the ‘episteme’ as a new emerging/evolving form of knowledge creation.

**Some historical contexts behind the emergence of the genre of painting from photographic references**

Painting from photographic references was explored by artists very early in the historical setting of photography in a variety of ways – from considering the pictorial dynamics of space to abstraction and then interpretation. When painters use photography in their
work they are visually creating a third space. The photograph removes the painting one more space away from its origins – the ‘photo-removed’ space. Historically, following photography’s arrival on the British and European art scenes in the nineteenth century, painting and photography became enmeshed in the experimentation of ‘new’ technologies. From its outset in the late 1830s, photography has often been considered as a primary device for capturing realism and documenting everyday life. Because of this, within the first couple of decades after photography became a dynamic and durable process, painting made a transition. In this context, Aaron Scharf (1968, pp.55-56) suggests photography came to be understood by the painters, like Manet, in this transitionary period as a dynamic technology for gathering information about the everyday that they could work from.

In its way, this was the beginning of an emerging mode of practice, which has continually been made anew and taken forward since Manet’s time by the interpretations of photography by such painters as Paul Cezanne, Francis Bacon and Richter. For example, Cezanne referenced photographs for creating dissonant linear perspective in portraits. Bacon used the photograph as a repository of figurative events, which he re-interpreted by deconstructing and distorting the imagery into a new figurative landscape. Richter’s interpretive approach, on the other hand, relies on the fragilities of photographic focus to engage the material and philosophical dimensions of the imagery by submitting it to the blurring of semblance (Hawker, 2006, p.127). Such interpretations shape the varying forms of this emerging genre into new individual modes of practice, the like of which takes painting and photography to new and differing levels of representation.

**Embracing photography**

The accessibility of modern photographic technologies has opened many spaces around art-making for painters like those in this emergent genre, for as Susan Sontag (1979, p.165) argues “It is not reality that photographs make immediately accessible, but images”. That is, photography has less to do with realities and more to do with visual representation. As a further development, the twenty first century has seen the visual representation of photography transformed into observation/memory practices, through the digital technologies of social media and internet practices. The consequence of this, William Bogard (2006, p.102) claims, is that these technologies “now [operate] at real-
time speeds over global networks, connecting multiple flows of information across a multiplicity of scales”. As a result, Bogard and others argue, the photographic image has been transformed to such a level that it now takes on the guise of a new memory resource. Whilst photography as memory has all of the connotations of the past emerging in the present it is not so much a representation of the past anymore due to the rapidity of its transmission. The place of the photograph within social media, such as in Facebook and YouTube, positions photography as a form of instant communication, which opens a space for another world within a larger world. These insights suggest some of the ways that contemporary painters are now engaging the photograph as part of their critical practice.

As Sontag (1979, p.87) predicted “Instead of just recording reality, photographs have become the norm for the way things appear to us, thereby changing the very idea of reality and realism”. John Russell (1993, p.68) also makes a succinct appraisal of photography’s contribution to art practice by maintaining that photography is not only providing individual images which open up time and space, it also provides for increasing one’s knowledge of appearances. That is, the photograph suggests possible realities that are seemingly creating endless questionings of the real, as Peyton’s and Hamilton’s engagement demonstrates.

**Narrative through memory**

Photography is the memory of today, according to Susanne Saether (2008, p.237). It is as memory that photography’s ability to question the real is drawn out. As Saether (2008, p.237) explains “Personal memory is intertwined with common history, [and] domestic issues coexist with international politics”. That is, through the use of externalised memory technologies such as the mobile phone camera all facets of personal and everyday life stand side by side and interact with each other at the same time. Memory has become more accessible through photography, which makes this a primary source of material for contemporary artists. For these artists, taking and sharing photographic imagery, according to Andreas Brogger and Karen Newman (2010, p.23), is an integral element of experience. They suggest that through the mobility of the camera, sharing these visual memories is now an in-built element of photography in contemporary society (Brogger & Newman, 2010, p.23). As the Hayward exhibition illustrates, conveying interpretations of these memories is a major drawcard for the painters of this genre.
In the late twentieth and the early twenty first centuries, the parameters of culture have become yet more globalised which, in many cases, provides a starting point for the work of artists today. Nicolas Bourriaud (2009, p.14) argues that due to this “artistic styles and formats must henceforth be regarded from the viewpoint of diaspora, migration and exodus” as a concept of identity. Then Josef Strau (2010, p.17) comments that the literary quality of photographic imagery is derived from its examination of the “various social and personal narratives” to which it bears witness. At the same time, Michael Bracewell (2010, p.9) notes photography has been recognised as being able to induce emotion as well as psychological sensation in the same moment. This researcher argues that artists such as Richter, Marlene Dumas and David Hockney (Chapter 5) draw out such conditions as Bourriaud, Strau and Blackwell put forward through the art practice of painting from photographic references. Moreover, such artists are fusing notions of identity, personal narrative and emotion through a variety of seemingly endless formal approaches. In this way, photography and painting become entwined as key considerations in the questions surrounding the representation of time, space and presence in art, as well as key research environments around identity and ‘self’ through narrative.

**Converging parallel worlds**

Painting, photography and painting from photographic references retain their distinctive and theoretical separateness as discrete strands of art-based knowledge. In their separateness, each of these genres developed epistemic qualities – as unique and distinctive forms of art practice and consequent theory. For example, Kathrin Yacavone (2012, p.49) suggests that within the singularity of image, and approach to process, a particular separateness transpires between photography and painting. This is as a consequence of what she terms the ‘relational event’ at the point of viewing the image, where the observer and the image and its subject meet, thus, creating an experiential relationship between the players. Because these singularities are experiential, they can be seen in different ways as Yacavone (2012, p.123) points out in her citing of the work on photography carried out by both Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes. The singularity of photography for Benjamin was ‘rooted’ in experiencing the ‘represented other’. Whereas for Barthes, it was more self-reflexive as a ‘dialectical relation between the specific and the general’ making it more of a relationship between the status of the image, representation and time. Victor Burgin (2005, p.1) intimates that separateness is comprised of “parallel worlds closely similar to the world we know, but in which our
counterpart selves pursue lives very different from our own”. Art practices are similarly affected, for example, photography and painting have ‘parallel’ approaches to selection and interpretation, but their ‘counterpart selves’ have different theoretical and process paradigms. At the intersection of these two art practices is painting from photographic references, which in itself is a ‘parallel world’, a space with its own ‘counterpart self’.

In the articulation of each particular genre, artists demonstrate a multitude of approaches. In particular, the genre of painting from photographic references is shaped by the individual experiences of artists themselves. Underpinning their decision-making processes are the influences consciously and unconsciously drawn from their place in the world. As an example, in regard to the selection and interpretation processes Manet’s relationship to his socio-political everyday world significantly structured his decision-making in the latter part of his career. The events that occurred within his daily life in this part of his career significantly shaped how Manet used photography in his painting practice. Manet’s use of photography, discussed next, forms an important intersection of knowledge indicating the emergence of this genre as a dynamic contemporary art practice in his time.

*Manet: A Modernist reportage*

Manet’s work is a significant intersection in Modernist art-making due to his creative development of different ways of seeing a painting subject using photography as a source. The thread of his Modernist approach becomes a mode for deconstructing and constructing an artwork as well as the events surrounding it. Therefore, it also becomes a model for analysing the impact and influences of photography on the work of other painters, especially in this thesis. However, according to Van Deeren Coke (1964, p.81) and Scharf (1968, p.62), it is unknown as to how much of Manet’s painting can be directly attributed to painting from photography. It was more than likely only one of his sources of inspiration. Moreover, his pursuit of light and dark, as well as his characteristic tonalities may have
allowed the photograph to play a part, though as yet there is little concrete evidence available to the extent of this (Coke, 1964, p.81). It is known that he used a daguerreotype to create a portrait etching of Edgar Allen Poe, to illustrate one of Charles Baudelaire’s translations (Scharf, 1968, p.65). It is also known that he asked a photographer friend for some prints to use as sketches, when executing a series of watercolour portraits (Scharf, 1968, p.65). Again, there is nothing concrete that could be regarded as evidence, except perhaps for the Poe daguerreotype.

However, when Manet did use photographs it was as a way of drawing different visions together as a representation creating meaning in a work, as The Execution of the Emperor Maximilian (1868-69) (Fig. 1.1.) shows. According to Scharf (1968, pp.68-70), Manet not only used several photographs to paint images of this event, but he also utilised the information received in the news dispatches coming out of Mexico at the time. In the Maximilian paintings, as Scharf (1968, p.68) suggests, Manet could almost be considered as acting like a ‘war artist’, in that he was carrying out an act of reportage. That is, the artist is bringing eye-witness accounts before the public. Manet’s painting pictured here, one of a series he did on the subject according to Patricia Wright (1993, p.25), has nothing in common with the collaged photographs of the event (Fig 1.2.) (Scharf, 1968, p.68). He only used these images to construct a representation of what he perceived as having taken place that would emphasise the shock, horror and all of the other emotions that would have been present. Moreover, he also used it to express his opinion of the perpetrators of the coup. Although Scharf (1968, p.66) considers that the paintings may have been straight-forward history recordings, he does consider that the anonymity of the executioners could just as easily be considered as a reflection of Manet’s criticism of the regime.

Manet’s approach shifts the use of photography in painting through the use of collage. The photograph has been transformed into a reconstruction of narrative (Scharf, 1968, p.73). In effect, the collage has created a new space away from the image’s origins – the eye, the photograph, the collage and the painting. This shows how photography has changed everything. The photograph of
the ‘landscape’ shifts the meaning of the painting, because the photograph is always there as another witness, whereas the painting has become not an imitation of the real, but an interpretation of the seen (Berger, 1980b, p.272 & Sontag, 1979, p.154).

Manet’s paintings of Maximilian received strong criticism from the authoritarian powers in France when they were first created and, according to Waldemar Januszczak in his TV documentary *Manet* (2006), they as yet have never been displayed in that country. The basis of this criticism, as Philippe Pirotte (2001, p.83) posits, was political as the authorities believed it incriminated France as opposed to Mexico in regard to what had occurred. Maximilian had been placed on the throne of Mexico by France’s Napoleon III, but after the execution public opinion considered he had been ‘sold out’ by the French Emperor. To discredit the work, the authorities claimed it was unfinished and created from unreliable sources, to which Manet did not agree. Pirotte (2001, p.83) argues:

> [Manet] claimed an artistic space for his painting not to voluntarily localise it outside political questions, but fully aware that precisely its ambivalence and the studied absence of dramatic rhetoric or an intrinsic moral stance were what made the purely ‘artistic’ *Execution of the Emperor Maximilian* so revolutionary and cause political resistance in France.

In other words, Manet challenged the idea that painting considered as vision defined by beauty could not be taken as a serious engagement with everyday life. Manet was suggesting the opposite, for as Scharf (1968, pp.68-72) has analysed, Manet used photography in this series as a construction tool, fabricating an image that conveys his interpretation of the image (as in Fig. 1.2.), which has been collaged together to tell the story of the event. The exploration and experimentation drawn out by the use of photographs in his painting practice resulted in a very new way of painting.

In a criticism that also reflects on Manet’s use of photography, Nicholas Wadley (1967, p.16) targets Manet over his use of ideas drawn from his observations of the work of other artists. Wadley (1967, p.16) claims that Manet “had little interest in the original invention of motifs”. But, this is Manet engaging all available sources of knowledge in order to expand his own art practice. Manet was looking for the new ‘original’. This approach is an essential process in a Modernist tradition that was finding some of its beginnings in Manet’s work. Manet brought the landscape into the studio and then brought the landscape into the portrait, which had its beginnings in *Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe* (1862-1863). Landscape, portraiture and new ways of seeing to Manet were as
important as each other, as he integrated each into the other to create a ‘portrait landscape’. This then was a new painterly language that he took further in the Maximilian paintings. In these works, he created dynamic portrait landscapes by combining other representational elements, which in this case amounted to photographs of an event he was unable to witness. This use of photography came from the beginnings of another Modernist tradition – creating artworks from found objects and the cross-pollination of art practices. The Maximilian paintings may be Manet’s only conscious foray into political art, as Wadley (1967, p.19) claims, but, I argue, they are amongst his most important works as it is these works that draw on a new form of art-making. With these works, Manet foreshadows the opening of space and process inherent in Modernist art. In essence, these works are a model for the opening up of space and process that later becomes central to the vocabulary of Modernist art-making and theory. Essentially, this opens the space for new Modernist traditions to emerge, which is an important consideration in undertaking this research.

**Building a critical theoretical framework for understanding this emergent genre**

In light of this, a new critical explanation and language is required as to how these emergent knowledge practices are located within a theoretical context. This thesis proposes such a model based on a three-way interaction/adaption of selected theoretical writings about the development of knowledge and experience through practice. The first of these is Michel Foucault’s theoretical notion of the emerging *episteme*, which is then read in conjunction with *habitus* as defined by Pierre Bourdieu. Foucault describes an episteme as a unique ontological configuration that occurs as a result of a synthesis of knowledge drawn from other relevant practices. Such configurations offer new and exciting formations that build and define emerging strands of new knowledge in any given field, in this case art practice. Bourdieu’s theory about habitus provides a way for understanding how individual artists interpret and create their own forms of visual language based on their life experience – as a deeply grounded relationship with experiential forms of knowledge. This theory is then further explored by way of the notion of *artistic habitus*, which specifically outlines the significance of the workings of applied knowledge within studio practice. These are important considerations for this thesis as the connectedness of this approach is the connection of Foucault’s ideas on the episteme and Bourdieu’s on habitus in the form of artistic habitus. What materials can do, how materials can be used, and how and why ideas are developed and brought to
fruition in art-making can be understood by adapting these complex theories. In this way, the modes of practice in this particular form of art practice engage with the complexity of knowledge creation developed through each and every artist’s life experiences and art practice. In turn, considering the dynamics of artistic habitus in studio practice leads to an understanding of how photography has impacted and influenced painting practice in the Modernist era.

To be clear, this thesis is not engaging the use of photography in painting as a demonstration of the concepts of the episteme (Foucault) and habitus (Bourdieu). Neither is it an exposé on the history of photography. This thesis is practice-led research into painting practices that use photography as part of their complex interpretive processes. Particularly, this research only engages with specific aspects of Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s concepts combined in a framework that also includes Bourdieu’s further theorising about ‘artistic habitus’ as an applied practice. Whilst Bourdieu’s habitus is a more generic application of the theory, artistic habitus, as recognised by Webb et al., (2002, p.19) in Bourdieu’s work, is specific to the artist and his/her life experiences, materiality of process and the structuring of their particular artistic strand of knowledge. By using this complex framework dynamic approaches are identified for unpacking the events and influences occurring in an artist’s practice when creating an artwork. In this regard, the thesis draws on, and is shaped by, an understanding about the Modernist period, where these principles and practices were initially identified, and whence they have emerged into Postmodernism practices. In particular, as seen earlier, Manet’s work within Modernist painting traditions is cited, where documentation of his process of working with photographic references shows the shift away from comprehensive representational realism in painting. As Manet’s work stems from the beginnings of Modernist painting and the use of photography in painting, his art practice offers a significant starting point for critically reviewing and theorising about the processes that take place in this painting genre.

Based on working through these theories and this researcher’s own experience of painting from photographs, a unique interaction emerges that takes place between the painter, his/her own world of everyday experience and how he/she interprets this through the mediation of the photographic reference. On this basis, an emerging aspect of contemporary painting exists that critically engages photographic references – as source image, as mediated worldview, and as memory. This engagement also draws in ideas of
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

identity and the emotional connections one has with one’s own life context. The synergies between photography and painting have taken the art practice of painting from photographic references to a higher level than just being about two individual mediums. In effect, it may be argued that as a result of the engagement with the photograph any knowledge formed about painting as a theoretical practice has significantly altered since Manet’s time. This researcher believes that the effect of photography on painting practice is a major factor in how this painting genre engages the world in contemporary practice. Thus, any ‘new’ knowledge of photography’s impact and influence on painting, I argue, needs to be filtered through epistemological experiences (artistic habitus in particular). Whilst there are many theories that can be taken into account when deriving any knowledge about photography’s impact on painting, I propose that this particular approach presents a significant shift in the history and development of painting as an art practice.

In summation, this thesis demonstrates that the art practice of painting from photographic references is a distinctive and unique bringing forth of an emerging episteme applied as a result of studio practice, as artistic habitus. Importantly, while the relationship of each painter with their artistic habitus is different, this theoretical framework draws together an approach to analysing art practice that may be drawn on by artist to explore the art-making of others. In essence, the workings of artistic habitus, as an intrinsic part of the creative and interpretative practices of most painters of photographic references, inform the creation of new modes of studio work that can then become integrated, and central to new modes of working in the painting practices.

**The research process**

In order to build a critical theoretical framework for understanding painting from photographic references, and applying it to this emergent genre, data collection began by treating the catalogue for the Hayward Gallery exhibition *The Painters of Modern Life* (2007) as an initial literature review. From this point, the leads provided by this review were expanded as a study of the Modernist approaches to art-making using artists from this genre as reference points. This brought forward many different references sources surrounding theoretical and practical approaches to this form of art-making. As a result of this expanded literature review, a lack of emphasis on process as knowledge came to
light and the data collection for this thesis was shaped around bridging this gap in the literature on this genre.

The bulk of the data selected was sourced over a period of 2½ years, from January 2010 to August 2012 and also includes information gathered for my other literary projects in the two years prior to 2010. This data was drawn from writings on theoretical studies on sociology and cultural practices as well as art theory and studies on particular artists’ practices. The focus was on addressing the social and cultural relationships that shape such concepts as objectivity, subjectivity and identity. This approach also covered the notions of how social processes, like the role of taste, attitudes and lifestyle, play significant parts in structuring an artist’s practice. Art theory and artist studies play similar roles to social and cultural relations, but also provide insights into the rationale of those artists’ practices.

**Approach to research: The theory of ‘material thinking’**

In order to clearly articulate and understand the workings of artistic habitus, my approach uses Paul Carter’s Grounded Theory approach of ‘material thinking’ as a way of understanding studio work and process that is similar to artistic habitus. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1990, p.23) define Grounded Theory as a theory that is “inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents”. That is, through developing the information that has been systematically collected, situated within a particular context and analysed to uncover or discover new concepts, new knowledge may be derived and substantiated through interpretation (Dinham, 1991, p.2). Carter presents his concept of ‘material thinking’ as creative research, where he argues that materialising ideas is a creative act (Carter, 2004, p.7). New and differing innovative ways of thinking brought into being through creative acts enables the embedding of the artwork as integral in the artist “becoming... on oneself in a particular place” (Carter, 2004, p.7). Carter’s approach offers a way to understand creative practice as a form of research. Donna Lee Brien (2005) adds:

> Creative ways of thinking and finding ways to describe this thinking so that it can be disseminated and shared with the community at large, thus not only provides a compelling rationale for pursuing scholarship in the creative arts, but also supplies a good working summary of the core concerns of a new kind of research as it is practiced and generated by artists.
In this way, through knowing and making, as Laurene Vaughan (2007) claims, conceptual thinking is brought together with creative research. Vaughan also suggests that where ‘material thinking’ happens is where the catalysts and the contexts for creation exist. In addition, as Estelle Barrett (2007) suggests, “studio production as research is predicated on an alternative logic of practice often resulting in the generation of new ways of modelling meaning, knowledge and social relation”. What Vaughan and Barrett are suggesting here is that a photographer’s, and a painter’s, own experiences become a relevant part of the iterative process.

Randall White (1992, p.540) argues, materiality of process in its barest forms implies cultural production involving three aspects of art-making. These are; (1) deciding on, and obtaining, the raw materials; (2) the skill and techniques of the artist in transforming the raw materials into conventional art forms; and (3) the processes of delivering up the ‘finished object’ to the audience (exhibiting and selling for instance). In a similar way to White’s argument, Carter’s method involves the active sourcing of reference material, the decisions made about selection of specific photographic references, followed by the execution of the work. Each is centred on a particular social, cultural and physical environment, and therefore, ‘material thinking’ takes into account the influences derived from most aspects of artistic habitus, including materiality of process. As the Grounded Theory process of ‘material thinking’ is a key approach for analysing the art practices of the painters selected for this investigation, each aspect of this approach is applied to develop an insight into what it is that painters and photographers do. As an artist’s experiences are partially based in materiality this mode of thinking draws out how artists conceptualise and execute their ideas as well as what their influences are. In this manner, artistic habitus becomes integral to the processes of ‘material thinking’. In addition, it brings about ways of addressing the research question through the examination of specific artist studies and artworks to illustrate how photography is used and has value in painting practice.

**Artist case studies**

Sometimes an artist hits the wall when it comes to ideas for their art-making and researching the work of other artists is a way of re-igniting the spark as well as for coming to terms with the intricacies and complexities of particular forms of art practice. The investigations into the practices key to this research, those of Richter, Hockney,
Dumas, Close, Luc Tuymans and Liu Xiaodong (in Chapter 5), are carried out using the available literature and include in-depth analyses of some of the artworks they have created. All of these artists, except for Close, were part of the Hayward exhibition, and all are well recognised practitioners in this painting genre. For this thesis, and art-making especially, the conceptual frameworks and materialities of process employed by these six artists provide a variety of differing approaches to art-making. Also, the work of these artists provides important insights into the theoretical frameworks within their respective art practices that demonstrate the influence of the complex associations between practice and life experience. Each of their individual art practices also illustrate how their theoretical approaches have been influenced by their own materiality of process, as theorised through Carter’s idea of the dual process of selection and interpretation. Using the approaches discussed previously and drawing intensively on the complexities involving photography and painting, the research follows a framework for reviewing and analysing the data available on each painter. The data for these key practices was collected from books, catalogues, magazines and the internet, as well as from seeing the artworks in person at the many art galleries and exhibitions I have visited in Australia and overseas in my lifetime pursuit of art appreciation and practice. The data was then analysed using critical, social and material forms of analysis to gain an understanding of the creative practices of these painters. This was achieved by applying Carter’s Grounded Theory approach of ‘material thinking’ as a research approach linked through Manet’s work and Foucault’s reading of Las Meninas as models for analysis.

In addition to investigating the work of renowned painters, testing took place of my conceptual findings, derived from the intricacies of their work, by applying them to my own practice. Deconstructing this researcher/artist’s own work in this manner provides an insight into the processes of a practitioner of painting from photographic references. The aim of this particular testing process was to draw out some new knowledge and processes that may develop, expand and enrich this researcher’s art practice further, whilst providing an exemplar as an approach for the research practices of other artists.

The testing phase involved a site specific project on the Thames River, London. This is an enduring theme (the Thames) in my work that involves a working river and the everyday life of a massive socio-economic, political and ecologically fraught environment surrounding it. In engaging this theme, a range of possible approaches to
the use of photography and how it can be read in multiple ways is used as a testing regime. To facilitate this process, a number of different replicable methods were drawn from the artist case studies in Chapter 5 for testing/using in a photography/painting project. Each of their theoretical and technical approaches provides different perspectives on art practice for comparing with my own. For instance, establishing the effects of their individual artistic habitus on their art-making enables a way to extend and challenge these aspects of my own practice. This is achieved by identifying modes of working, through building detailed insights into the art-making of the selected artists in the case studies. This then enables the reflection on these practices, and the use of these insights to challenge and extend this researcher’s understanding of my personal practice through comparison and reflection.

Similarly, the approach for researching the personal photographic/painting project developed to test out these insights was (1) to photographically document both banks of the Thames central to London, then (2) to analyse the photographs to determine the use of the conceptual frameworks found in the studies of the key artists in Chapter 5. Once this was configured, (3) a series of studio artworks were created, and documented both photographically and in note form, for later analysis. Through combining the theoretical with the level of materiality of process in this approach to art-making, theories arose about this art practice and the process of painting from photographic references at the same time. (It should be noted that the work produced in this testing program is not a body of work for assessment purposes in this research, as it is used as a referential series to facilitate the research into this researcher/artist’s process and the process of painting from photographic imagery).

Structure of the thesis argument

Contemporary art practice is about having a dialogue with the world that surrounds the artists. I argue that this public-facing dialogue is immediately affected by the artist having experienced an internal dialogue and the context within which he/she views the world – his/her habitus, and the ways each artist constructs his/her individual strand of knowledge about practice – shaped by his/her episteme. Therefore, as indicated earlier, Chapter 2 is a survey of the literature surrounding these key theoretical frameworks for unpacking the theoretical and technical experiences involved in the art-making as a basis for examining how they can affect intentionality and contextuality, as well as selection.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

and interpretation in art practice. The literature shows that drawing together aspects of Foucault’s ideas on the emerging episteme with Bourdieu’s on habitus within his more direct approach around artistic habitus, formulates a dynamic unpacking of the complex dimensions of the artist in practice and the theoretical and practical components of his/her art-making.

Foucault’s theory of the emerging episteme demonstrates a line of research about processes of new knowledge creation relevant to this genre of painting. The key elements here centre on his reading of Diego Velazquez’s *Las Meninas* (1659), which becomes a model for analysing the knowledge patterns within the artworks under discussion. Bourdieu’s direct approach centres on the artist and how and why he/she does a certain thing as opposed to another, that is, what the artist is disposed to. The key to combining these theoretical approaches as artistic habitus comes from Martin Heidegger’s thinking on the materiality of process. Even though Heidegger’s theories were formulated well before Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s concepts, his material approach laid the ground work that illustrates how these complex theories are linked. Reading this painting genre through these frameworks defines the argument for this thesis and in doing so, provides a way of filling in that part of the literature previously overlooked on this form of art practice. In this literature review, the key readings come from the work of Foucault, Bourdieu, Heidegger, Rosalind Krauss and Tony Schirato and Jen Webb, with the key examples involving the artworks of Velazquez and Hilla and Bernd Becher, as well as the art practices of Peter Doig and Vija Celmins.

Chapter 3 is a review of the literature on photography, painting and Modernism relevant within the context of painting from photographic references. This addresses the significant shifts in thinking relevant to photography, painting and the artist in everyday life in the Modernist context since Manet through the ideas of Clement Greenberg, Barry Schwabski and Rugoff. Further to this, photography’s role in the ‘death of painting’ debate and how painters have responded to this is examined through the work of Victoria Reichelt, Yves-Alain Bois and Douglas Fogle. Then, the thesis elaborates the theoretical differences between painting and photography as manifest in the thinking of relevant theorists such as Sontag, Berger, Barthes and Krauss, including theories on ways of seeing and concepts of meaning. Included in this section, theories on vision, memory and the artist’s engagement with the everyday are read through the writings of Anton Ehrinzwieg, Michel de Certeau, Guy Debord, Rita Felski and Henri Lefebvre. In
addition, ocular interventions through artists’ engagement with ways of seeing are related through epistemological underpinnings as modes of representation. The artist practices engaged here involve the approaches to painted imagery and photographic representation of Cezanne, Manet, Velazquez, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Johannes Vermeer, Picasso and Bacon. Whilst each of these artists project 2D/3D objects and experiences onto a flat plane, the discussion on Cezanne is particularly relevant as it places this way of art-making further into context with a critical reading of the role of perspective within Modernist art.

In order to place photography’s rise in popularity within the media landscape of today, this review also draws together the theories of how photography is engaged within that landscape. In addition, photography is positioned theoretically and historically within painting practice in late Modernism as it intersects the Postmodern. The key areas under review include how photography is embedded in the media landscape and the range of thinking that forms the present theoretical perspective on the mediatory gaze of the photograph. This discussion emerges from the points of view of photography as a tag/index/idea and new memory, through the ideas of such theorists as Anna Reading, Joanne Garde-Hansen and Andrew Hoskins. Within this dialogue, the literature review illustrates and configures how this is engaged through examples of artist’s dealing with some of the surveillance, witnessing and reportage practices in the early twenty first century media landscape. These examples include the work of William Yang and Sherry Karver, with some of the theoretical implications observed through the theories of Foucault, David Lyon and Jonathan Crary.

Following on from this, the role of artistic habitus is introduced in Chapter 4 to describe a dynamic means to undertake an in-depth examination of the complex personal and idiosyncratic knowledge creation and artistic processes that takes place within an artist’s studio practice. As part of this critique, Carter’s Grounded Theory approach of ‘material thinking’ is drawn on as a method for analysing critical painterly practices as forms of practice-based research, where the importance of process is highlighted within research activities (Carter, 2004). In this process, theories come forth through examining the critical literature available, critically reviewing the visual representations the artists create (paintings, drawings, prints and photographs) and establishing the artist’s materialities of process. The key points here centre on the dual processes of selection and interpretation, which also draws on Heidegger’s ideas on ‘knowing through
handling’. Those key arguments about knowledge in practice provide critical frameworks on materiality of process for understanding and theorising art practice. Combining aspects of Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s concepts, while drawing on Carter’s approach, demonstrates that the complexities of artistic habitus form a dynamic approach for analysing what an artist does in studio practice. Along with the writings of the theorist Foucault, Bourdieu and Carter, other readings here are undertaken through the work of Vaughan, White and Graeme Sullivan with the theories and observations applied to the studio practices of Judith Eisler, Howard Arkley, Ken Currie, Jeffery Smart and William Kentridge.

Chapters 5 and 6 are artist studies integral to discovering the way in which painting practice has been transformed by photography. Using artistic habitus around Carter’s Grounded Theory approach of ‘material thinking’, and Foucault’s reading of Las Meninas, Chapter 5 draws out elements of practice that govern the use of photography in their critical painting practices. This chapter critiques the art practices of Richter, Tuymans, Dumas, Hockney, Close and Xiaodong as exemplars of the effect of photography on painting practice. As indicated earlier, these painters were chosen, because they are some of the most innovative artists in this field of painting and their individual approaches differ to such a degree that they demonstrate multiple ways of making paintings using photographic references. In this manner, their art processes are representative of some of the vast array of approaches to art-making being pursued in critical painting practices at the time of undertaking this research project. The key discussions here surround the argument that each artist’s artistic habitus has influenced their practices separately and in a particular way. The chapter also explores how the selection and interpretation processes of each painter produce particular strategies and processes that may be developed for use in other painting practices. The key aims here are twofold. The first is to recognise some of the variable and particular ways photography is used in painting practice. The second, and more importantly for this researcher’s art practice, is to discover elements of these art practices that may be transferable to, and interchangeable with, other practices in creating emerging modes of practice and whether such knowledge can be made implicit/workable in other practices.

In Chapter 6, this researcher’s own art practice, as an exemplar of the dynamic synergies of photography and painting, engages the work of the six artist studies by testing the observations from Chapter 5. These case studies identify a range of different approaches
for testing in this researcher’s own painterly work, as an additional case study, as a way to engage and extend this new space of critical painting practice. After applying the findings of that chapter to a photographic/painting project, a theorising process takes place centring on my art practice and the impact and influence photography has had on it. Thus, these investigations of my own practice describe and demonstrate how applying selected artistic approaches in this practice-led research has enhanced and further enriched this researcher’s own painting practice/artistic habitus, and defines the development of a more enriched repertoire of possibilities than at the start of this research. In Chapter 7, the conclusion brings the findings of the research together to demonstrate that there are other ways of looking at the use of photography in critical painting practice and the impact and influence it has had on such practices.
Chapter 2

Literature Review: Foucault’s *episteme* and Bourdieu’s *habitus*

This chapter establishes a theoretical grounding for key premises that inform a renewed understanding about practices of painting from photographic references through a three-way theoretical construct using theories on knowledge creation and experiential practices. In this discussion art practice generally is positioned as a space where new knowledge is often formed and shaped through, and as a result of, the personal world and life experiences of the artist. Further, painting practice that draws on photographic references is shown to be a particular engagement with personal experiential knowledge and background of the artist as a critical re-interpretation and re-invention of meaning through distinctive and applied forms of visual language. To critique these processes, this review introduces Foucault’s theory of the episteme as a way to better understanding the process of new knowledge creation; and Bourdieu’s theory of habitus as a way to better understand the complex ways that personal life and experience can shape and inform an artist’s practice. These two theories are being used in this thesis as foundations for an investigative model designed to reveal a more informed understanding of how the artist’s (painter’s) work develops when engaging with working from photographic references.

In the practice of painting from photographic references a particular mode of understanding and interpretation occurs that can be understood as a new space for critical thinking about painting. This is largely as a result of the processes of triangulation taking place, as the artist selects the photographic reference, then adapts it,
then works from it to create a painting as a final work. An understanding of the theories of the episteme (Foucault), and habitus (Bourdieu), is used to then outline how these are woven into the process of practice as a working through of personal experience, as what is termed artistic habitus by Webb et al., (2002, p.19).

In this thesis, artistic habitus becomes a significant framework/model for deconstructing and analysing the selected case studies of painterly art practices, where personal and experiential strategies and approaches are applied and resolved using forms of visual language. As the thesis’ theoretical foundation, this framework is used to draw out strategies about art-making on both a theoretical and process level. The importance of this approach centres on it being a framework that provides a unique comprehensive means through which to interpret, and better understand, the interactions and dynamics that take place within the practice of painting from photographic references. In this manner, a form of unpacking of otherwise tacit processes and styles of working is introduced. In effect, artistic habitus provides a strong rationale for what takes place in an artist’s practice.

**Approaching the emerging episteme, habitus and artistic habitus**

The literature in this review shows the adaptation of these theoretical frameworks can demonstrate that in painting from photographic references, the practice is shown to be as much about the process and the self-development as it is about the production of the art object. Reiterating part of Chapter 1, in regard to these theories, this thesis draws on the Modernist period, which is where these principles and practices first came to light, and from where they continue to emerge in Postmodernism practices. To begin, Foucault’s theory of the episteme is addressed as a central structuring dynamic/space for drawing together the knowledge that underpins an artist’s approach to painting from photographic references. As part of this approach, Foucault’s critique of Velazquez’s *Las Meninas* (1659) (Fig. 2.1. p.24) in *The Order of Things* (1966) is used as an example, offered by him, about how his theory of the episteme can be applied in an art practice context of new and emerging knowledge. In *Las Meninas*, Foucault applies his premise of the episteme, as a process of knowledge transfer and transformation that has an historical basis: where Foucault (1966, p.xxiv) claims, “The order on the basis of which we think today does not have the same mode of being as that of the Classical thinkers”. The shift Foucault describes in his example highlights the move from the
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

classical idea of representation to a more dual notion of representation/self-representation in Velazquez’s art practice.

In a similar way to Berger’s (1972, p.10) idea on three ways of seeing creating separate lines of thought, Foucault’s approach creates a three-sided interpretation space – the painter, the model and the observer. In this triangulation, multiple focus points draw down the knowledge from these three ways of seeing to where one superimposes itself on the other. Each exists at the same time in a parallel space. Additionally, each of these focal points brings forward new sets of relations that define and clarify complex artistic processes. To traverse these vocal points, Foucault constructs a pathway between experience and otherness. The mirror, at the back of the room in *Las Meninas*, plays a small part in creating this pathway, as do all of the other elements of the painting. The mirror is that part of the pathway connecting the observer, and the model for that matter, to the painting itself and, therefore, the painter as well. The pathway itself, which is invisible, forms the basis for the interchange of knowledge, and the development of meaning, as the observer becomes the analyst of the work.

The meaning in *Las Meninas* is imposed by the separate gazes of the King and Queen, who are not visible (only a reflection in the mirror), the observer, who is also not there, and the painter, who is physically not visible where he should be and cannot be. Like the other two, the painter’s position is out in front of the painting. However, the painter also appears within this work, but only as another portrait/focal point within the landscape of the picture. Foucault (1966, p.4) suggests that a ‘compelling’ line is created by the gaze of the painter on the subject that links the observer with the picture. That gaze ‘embraces’ a myriad of complex engagements – Who is doing what? – Why is that happening? Even though the observer is often replaced by the assumption of the presence of the model (the
king and Queen) as the implied observer, Foucault (1966, p.5) suggests the addition of the observer’s gaze in *Las Meninas* creates new exchanges and interchanges of knowledge through discourse as that gaze meets the gazes coming out of the picture.

The arrangement of images within this composition create pieces within a puzzle; making separate images into a montage of parts; drawing separate strands of knowledge out to create a completely new epistemic mode/representation. The work itself brings different stories together – the Infanta’s, those of the dwarfs’ and those in the reflection (the visible), along with the lines of gaze, and sense of presence (the invisible). The reflectiveness of the mirror that gives visibility to what ‘resides outside’ is a re-invention within the analysis process for describing the knowledge that each part draws into focus, including painterly interpretation and artistic process. It also signposts what comes from outside as unique and informative, for instance, the observer brings his/her own knowledge to the work. In this work, the mirror is indicative of outside knowledge - the idea of the model, the observer and the painter in this case, and the identification of the presence of an emerging epistemic mode.

**Distinguishing modes of landscape/portraiture**

However, in other contexts, ‘words’ within a discourse assume other meanings. For example, Alan Goldman in his paper *The Aesthetic* (2005, p.257) describes the notion of ‘powerful’ as a reference to an anti-aesthetic property when applied to a ‘locomotive’, but an aesthetic property when describing a musical piece, like an opera. Applied to the ‘locomotive’ the word has a meaning in regard to physical strength, in music it is referring to an emotive response. Similarly, the concept of landscape painting finds its relevance within discourses such as those on painting, or on gallery and museum enterprises, as differing as they may be. For example, in *Las Meninas* the idea of landscape painting has its own particular meaning in a particular situation. Velazquez has created a landscape of portraits. The room and its content become figures in a landscape painted in the context of portraiture – unconsciously pre-grounding the evolution of a Modernist tradition of blurring lines well before that tradition became recognisable. *Las Meninas* is a landscape of a room, a portrait of others and a self-portrait. The painting is a self-representation of its own existence within its own frame of context as well as its place in a ‘Royal’ context, its own sense of place as a portrait landscape. Moreover, the observer can begin to read into Velazquez’s artistic habitus. The centre of the work may reflect the Infanta as a recognisable subject, but, I argue, it is about the painter as courtier
and the painter of the court. In this painting, the painter, the observer and the model share what Uziel Awret (2008, p.16) suggests is a ‘collective inter-subjective space’. That is, they share a common ground on which they both bring their own ‘self’ to the space, be they visible or invisible, defining that space in the same process. This is a notion that links this approach to Bourdieu’s ideas about ‘re-energising the field’ discussed later in this chapter. Las Meninas also defines how a new epistemic mode can come into existence, as it demonstrates the new/different idea of representation present. Velazquez’s painting delivers a different mode of ‘representation’ to what has gone before as the epistemic context changes. In this way, using Foucault’s reading of this work, Las Meninas becomes a model for theorising about other artworks.

Foucault (1966, p.5) suggests that within Las Meninas there are a “complex network of uncertainties, exchanges and feints”. Using these networks, his interpretation of this painting establishes that the theory of meaning found in the work is drawn from what is outside of it. What he is arguing is that the painting itself ‘controls’ the gaze. It is about what is seen and unseen. With this ‘control’, the interchange of gazes pulls the content of the painting and the observer into a space where the subjectivity of both constantly interacts. By observing this painting in this way, what is inside the painting and what is outside develops a wider, more comprehensive understanding of the image. This is important, because it signposts the argument that by studying these interchanges, the relationships come forward as a set of structures that organise and endow the content of the painting with meaning. In this thesis, Foucault’s analysis of Las Meninas is not being considered as a debate on whether Foucault was correct in his observations about representation, and neither is it another analysis of representation. The approach taken by Foucault in analysing Velazquez’s work is being applied as a model for deconstruction and critiquing the other artworks discussed in this research. In particular, what Foucault describes as the episteme is the formation of new knowledge based on configurations of knowledge existing as structures and networks of exchange and meaning involving the painting, the artist and the audience. This describes an epistemic mode of art practice.

Following this, this chapter unpacks the ways in which Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus can be used to draw out how life experience and materiality of process impacts on, and influences, the knowledge creation that forms a painter’s epistemic mode of practice. This theoretical principle is then further applied to what is termed ‘artistic habitus’ as
being specifically about the workings of personal tacit knowledge within art practice and processes, as applied knowledge working in a studio context that may pertain to a specific professional or technical field, as outlined by Webb et al., (2002). The work of Carter (2004) is also useful to support this perspective about the role of personal experience in knowledge creation.

Carter (2004, p.186) maintains that there has to be a connection between matter and mind, as well as between the artist’s materials and his/her creative disposition at the time the creative and interpretation processes are happening. This research specifically limits the engagement with Bourdieu’s work to referencing the notion of habitus as a guideline for understanding the ways a personal art practice is influenced by the artist’s life experiences, inclusive of his/her theoretical and physical relations in art-making. In other words, experience creates the influences that govern decision-making – what is done; when and where this ‘thing’ is done; how and why this ‘thing’ is done. With this approach an understanding may be reached as to how the combination of emotional, social and cultural relations links with the conceptual and physical in art-making to bring about artistic habitus as a critical element in painterly research. In this research, these processes are being investigated within the field of painting, and specifically, painting that works with, and from, photographic references. The research methodology that is used in this research is to introduce case studies at various points, about the workings of particular artists. This way, specific aspects can be focused on to highlight the diversity of approaches that may be taken, and to also highlight the commonality that occurs as the workings of the episteme and the habitus are merged as a process of artistic habitus. This chapter describes selected works of Doig and Celmins as examples of this application.

As is shown in Foucault’s reading of Las Meninas, his idea of the emerging episteme puts forward an approach for understanding how, as shifts in thinking arise, new and differing strands of knowledge emerge. He also illustrates where that knowledge may be found as well as the limitations that may arise in any given perspective. In contrast, Bourdieu’s idea is specifically about understanding what influences the decision-making in selecting a certain piece of knowledge for inclusion within a particular strand of knowledge. In habitus these influences are wide, drawing on many aspects of a person’s life experiences. Further to this, artistic habitus is more directly relevant to a person’s profession – in this case the artist’s practice. The idea of the emerging episteme sets out
the Foucauldian principle for structuring a form of emerging knowledge, like an art practice, and artistic habitus reflects on the influences structuring the selection and interpretation processes guiding the formation of a strand of applied knowledge, in this case, as painting outcomes.

In focusing on these selected theories, and working through case studies to demonstrate how these principles may be understood to work, there is no doubt an underlying engagement with the notion of ‘being’ that is taken up in the work of Heidegger. However, an in-depth engagement with Heidegger’s substantial work on ‘being’ is outside of the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge his work and its relevance to this research. The theory of ‘material thinking’ was developed by Heidegger in *Being and Time* (1927), as well as in his essays on art such as *The Origin of the work of Art* (1935), as critical and philosophical responses to art-making. This latter essay advances the concept of ‘knowing through handling’ by examining the idea of ‘being’, utilising the ‘artwork’ as a means for revealing his outlook on the ‘Being of being’. By understanding knowledge creation as a consequence of combining artist, tools, materials and theory, especially with his idea of ‘knowing through handling’, Heidegger brings together ideas about knowledge constructing epistemic modes and concepts of influence underpinning knowledge. In this manner, Heidegger’s work touches on both Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s concepts and offers a way to understand how the process of knowledge creation is integrally linked with the subjective, personal and experiential.

**The emerging episteme according to Foucault**

The Foucauldian idea of the episteme is a concept in which history, as a place of tradition, is not a structure of continuities and discontinuities (Foucault, 1966, pp.xxiii-xxiv). Instead, it is a structure of self-distinguishing strands of knowledge that impact on each other over time. What Foucault is suggesting is that photography’s and painting’s engagements with art practice, and with the world, are built on similarly derived relational experiences based around process and thinking. By this, Foucault is calling on relational experiences to offer up knowledge grounded in other similar artworks and processes in and around these two art-making practices. To traverse this approach, Foucault’s theory is discussed in conjunction with various interpretations and understandings of what an episteme is in art practice. In doing this, how it applies to art
and how such theoretical frameworks are engaged is examined within the frameworks of painting practices that utilise photography.

Foucault (1966, p.xxii) argues that history is composed of a group of epistemes. These groups are both linked and running in parallel as well as simultaneously, with a self-distinguishing episteme existing in each era of knowledge. In Foucault’s reading of *Las Meninas* he illustrates how the work is an example of such changes in the ways of art-making, which in this case argues that the restructuring of representation leads to a reconstruction of the traditional epistemic mode of art practice into a new emerging mode. Foucault (1966, p.xxi) further argues that no natural linkage between, or movement from, one episteme to another actually exists. This idea is important for this particular research as it opens the space for understanding the potential for interchangeability and transferability of knowledge between strands of knowledge by individual artists. The ideas Foucault put forward in his discussion on *Las Meninas* outline such interactions of knowledge and suggest that knowledge cannot be extracted from one strand of knowledge and placed over another. Rather, it argues that knowledge in any particular epistemological structure is there to be drawn upon, through synthesis and linking, to enable the shaping and structuring of an emerging strand of new knowledge into existence. This new strand of knowledge is not a replacement for what has gone before, but stands in parallel to be drawn on and used as required. For instance, an artist may draw on ideas on form and colour from his/her print-making endeavours for his/her painting practice. A new epistemic mode around painting comes forth, but his/her print-making remains unchanged as a separate, parallel mode. Therefore, Foucault’s idea of the episteme, as outlined in *The Order of Things* (1966), suggests that a particular art practice is not developed by knowledge taken away from other available practices, but rather, by privileging such knowledge and drawing it out in new and different ways of combining knowledge forms into new art practices.

*How the process takes place*

Foucault takes an approach to knowledge centred on his ideas about genealogy by tracing the theoretical and methodological dynamics of the work as historical causal explanations. By using a genealogical method of enquiry, Foucault brings out the hidden dynamics of the artwork as well as the obvious. Foucault identifies the accidents, the deviations and the deliberate as relevant ingredients for theorising about an artwork.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

(Foucault, 1998, p.374). His analysis not only obverses the intentionality and contextuality of the work, but he also explores the falsehoods and faults in and around the work. Moreover, Foucault’s diagnostic approach to the representation/self-representation in *Las Meninas* is an epistemic deconstruction process in the form of a discourse applied to the ‘realities’ present in the work about representation. In *The Order of Things* (1966), Foucault highlights the role of discourse in the complex process of constructing meaning. He also highlights the fluidity of social practices to inform discourse and demonstrates how the idea of the episteme engages other disciplines and strands of knowledge. Foucault’s (1966, p.47) comments on the relations between discourse and language accept that ‘things’ can exist in the world in a real and material way. His point is that a ‘thing’ can only become meaningful within discourse. In this way, *Las Meninas* delivers discourse surrounding the social and artistic conditions existing in the painting through the relationship of language to vision.

For analysing an artwork Foucault’s approach to *Las Meninas* argues that the complex relationship of language to vision needs to be held open to discourse, suggesting that this opening is a significant starting point for understanding such distinctive interactions. Foucault (1966, p.10) argues that the ‘starting point for speech’ lies with the ‘incompatibilities’ in a work, and should not be seen as obstacles to understanding the artwork. Foucault’s argument follows a similar pattern to Heidegger’s (1927, p.82) approach to the destiny of the artist being tied to his/her encounters with the world and dealing with what is thrown up, which Heidegger calls ‘facticity’. Within Foucault’s process of examination used here, the suggestion is that being open to what is thrown up is the first step of such analysis. That is, there are groundings existing within the complexities of the artwork that contain obvious influences as well as interwoven hidden ones. In this way, noting that Foucault (1966, p.48) suggests language only has value as discourse, the relationship of language to vision in analysing the visual, as shown in Foucault’s deconstructions of *Las Meninas*, is the nexus for understanding any epistemic mode of practice.

Foucault’s theory about discourse, illustrated in his account of Velazquez’s painting, is taken further by Stuart Hall (1997, p.44) when he suggests that discourse is:

A group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment... Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But...
since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do – our conduct – all practices have a discursive aspect.

In using Foucauldian thinking in this way, Hall is suggesting that knowledge is made meaningful by discourse which produces the particular concept of what is within a particular practice that gives rise to how one understands and reacts to ‘things’ and events. Foucault’s approach to ‘language to vision’ shifts the focus from language to discourse as a mode to exploring representation. In his analysis, Foucault dissects the concept of ‘representation’ (the ‘thing’ in this case) in *Las Meninas* by observing the various and different constructions surrounding representation in this work as a critical re-interpretation and re-invention of the meaning of the concept. As Heidegger (1927, p.103), with his ideas on ‘facticity’, would argue, there is a ‘co-responsibility’ between all of these ‘different constructions’ to reveal the possibilities at work in the painting, even though, as Heidegger (1927, p.103) also claims, all is concealed within the process.

**Artistic engagement through language**

Applied to art, drawing on Foucault’s thinking regarding *Las Meninas*, discursive and non-discursive forces, which can be found coursing through the positions artists occupy, construct the actions and meanings in an artist’s everyday life and art practice. Discursive formations, according to Danaher et al., (2000, p.21), structure modes of practice and provide the events that make it possible for discourse to occur. They also shape and define the ideas and/or concepts that draw out strands of knowledge. In this manner, an artist’s thoughts and actions are influenced, regulated and controlled by discourse (Foucault, 1966, p.366). The combination of disciplines, commentaries and authors constitutes a kind of action that separates anything that does not fit within the ‘discursive formation’ from what is relevant to the specific discourse (Foucault, 1969, p.210). Like in *Las Meninas*, this then signals an engagement with social and cultural practices through language, which in the case of this thesis is the language of painting from photographic references.

In 1972, Krauss provided an insight into the discursiveness of an art practice and how elements of that practice may be shaped into an epistemic mode. Krauss (2003, p.978) argued that “[within] each room the individual artist explored, to the limits of his experience and his formal intelligence, the separate constituents of his medium”. Krauss was talking about discourse in regards to tracing Modernism from Manet to Picasso and onward (Krauss, 2003, p.978). This discourse, significantly, illustrates that epistemic
modes/art practices may develop individually to where the structuring components can be drawn from the other modes found in ‘each room’. The effect of this, Krauss (2003, p.978) argues, is that it opens up doors simultaneously into the ‘new space’. Hilla (b.1934) and Bernd Becher (1931-2007), discussed below, demonstrates this in their photographs of industrial sites.

The Bechers take a series of photographs of an industrial appliance in situ, a blast furnace for instance, and re-presents them as a constructed group of images, as in *Hockofenkopf 1970 -1994* (Fig. 2.2.). The position in the world held by the industrial appliance takes on a whole new discourse as it enters the world of sculptural language. Through the discourse created by the photography, the blast furnaces have gone from Krauss’s room, out the door and into a new space. In *Las Meninas*, the epistemic mode has shifted from a discourse on traditional ideas of representation to interactions on representation/self-representation at the time of its making. Similarly, through the photograph the Bechers have taken the discourse from being about industrial appliances to a discourse on modern sculpture. By doing this, an emerging mode of practice comes forth. As shall be seen later in this literature review, what it also demonstrates, as Bourdieu (1979, p.67 & 2002, p.29) would argue, is that for the artist, other factors such as experience, derived through engaging with artistic habitus (inclusive of everyday life and materiality of process), are primary to the structures of art practices.¹ That is, the experience of the artist shapes how they take and interpret the photographic image in particular ways.

There are two features that characterise Krauss’ perception of art in the field as it expands from Modernism to Postmodernism. The first is the practice of the individual artist and then the use of the medium that she describes in terms of social and cultural practices of art-making. As Krauss (1998, p.46) emphasises:

> For, within the situation of postmodernism, practice is not defined in relation to a given medium... but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium – photography, books, lines on walls, mirrors, or sculpture itself – might be used.

¹ In Bourdieu (2002, p.29), Bourdieu presents ‘experience’ as ‘acquired characteristics’ borne out of social conditions.
Fig. 2.2. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

This reflects Foucault’s description of the relationship between discourse, language, and social and cultural practices as a framework for the development of what he terms the episteme (Foucault, 1966, pp.46-47). Not only do these statements potentially explain why art is an ever-changing process, again engaging with the interchangeability and transferability of knowledge, but also how art’s evolution is constantly taking place in ways that witness new emergent epistemic modes being created. The introduction of such things as social experience, degrees of education and cultural complexities, as demonstrated by Krauss’ references to the limits of experience and intelligence in the above quote, emphasise the complex structuring of knowledge creation inherent in the constant emergence of epistemic modes in everyday art practice.

Peter Dallow’s (2005, p.133) approach to knowledge in art practice provides a summation that may be implied in the work of the Bechers and in Foucault’s reading of Velazquez’ painting when he argues:

All knowledge is now thought of as culturally constructed, and in particular to be socially situated. That is, a specific set of knowledges... are embodied or perhaps more pertinently dis-embodied in an art project, are understood to operate within specific social, cultural and historical circumstances.

In other words, the creation of an artwork is influenced by the social, cultural and historical contexts that underpin the process, and in arguing this, Dallow provides a succinct approach to the artwork as part of an emerging mode of practice.

Dallow’s comments reinforce the perception of art practice being an execution of a variety self-distinguishing strands of knowledge (epistemes) pertaining to particular forms of engagement with the world, effectively building new strands of knowledge. In effect, a linkage with the Bourdieuan notion of habitus arises as the role of the
author/artist, illustrated in Dallow’s approach, is governed and shaped by their life experiences. As Foucault (1966, p.xviii & p.xxv) suggests, each of these practices engage separate epistemic processes of knowledge creation and yet operate in parallel and simultaneously as a broadening and opening of the spaces available for practice, where implicit and explicit modes and structures are created.

Essentially, Foucault focuses the role of the work in viewing the world as that where cultural and historical context create meaning, and the role of art as a vehicle for enabling people to consider art as a source of knowledge. This, in turn, conveys how the artist may perceive the world around him/her. This source of knowledge is defined by an artist’s aims, situations, purposes and relevance to a lived experience (Dewey as cited in Freeland, 2001, p.167). Advancing this perspective, Greg Noble (2008, p.104) argues that “We externalise or objectify ourselves into the things we produce, things that we then reabsorb through use”. That is, an artist’s mode of art practice defines his/her individuality; it defines the artist’s connection to society, in temporal, historical and procedural ways. Moreover, this approach incorporates a set of prime elements that can identify and establish an artist’s particular practice as epistemic. By relating this premise to the idea of lived experience, a space opens that may be defined using Bourdieu’s concept of habitus (discussed next).

**Habitus as defined by Bourdieu**

Bourdieu (1930-2002) has written extensively on habitus, for instance in his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979), and in Hillier and Rooksby’s *Habitus: A sense of place* (2002). However, he continuously resisted the idea of supplying a definitive explanation, preferring to leave it open for further interpretation. He saw habitus as cyclical and ever renewing, and its definition, therefore, as continuously open for redefining as it moves through time. Nonetheless, Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, as suggested earlier, is a significant way to better understand the many complex and dynamic ways personal life and experiences may shape and inform an artist’s practice. Bourdieu (2002, p.27) presents habitus as being ‘systems of dispositions’, in other words, why an individual is disposed to a particular kind of behaviour as opposed to some other kind. Habitus is connected to the phenomenon of habit, but it is not habit (Bourdieu, 2002, p.30). In painting practice it is far more complex as it is about the decisions a painter makes in his/her art practice based
on, and drawn from, his/her everyday reality. For instance, at the time Bourdieu first theorised about habitus, an artist who lived all of his/her life on a remote Asiatic archipelago, where the only ‘art’ practiced is wood-carving or body tattooing, may not comprehend what is involved in creating a Modernist painting such as Picasso’s Guernica, (according to Bourdieu 1979, p.xxvii). What Bourdieu is arguing here is that habitus is the artist’s world being brought to the world and this is integral to the complex processes of selection, interpretation and creation within a painter’s individual art practice.

This concept provides a foundation for understanding how context influences perception. Bourdieu’s idea of habitus is where a dynamic environment of influence is constructed by complex social processes and patterns of life (Bourdieu, 1979, pp.165-171). Whilst these processes and patterns are multiple, continuous and transferable from one context to another, within this environment, this concept also structures and organises practices, and the perception of practice, around perceptions of the social world (Bourdieu, 1979, p.166). Revisiting this concept in Habitus: A sense of space (2002), Bourdieu (p.27) suggests that habitus comprises those dispositions that internalise and structure the decision-making in an artist’s practice. This is a significant idea for this thesis as it opens up a space and guidelines for exploring the patterns of influence surrounding an artist’s practice.

Foucault presents a similar concept about the significance of culture, supporting Bourdieu’s habitus with his discussion on what an episteme is in The Order of Things (1966). Foucault (1966, p. xxii) posits:

The fundamental codes of a culture – those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices – establish for every man, from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home. At the other extremity of thought, there are the scientific theories or the philosophical interpretations which explain why order exists in general, what universal law it obeys, what principle can account for it, and why this particular order has been established and not some other.

In this account of the episteme, Foucault establishes the workings of habitus to ground the social and political development of an individual’s own strand of knowledge. Thus, habitus is integral to an emerging episteme as it grounds the dynamics of a painter and his/her art practice with their everyday experiences. In Reading the visual (2004), Schirato and Webb (p.17) make the observation that everything the individual observes
and analyses is grounded in a history of observation, meaning and understanding. This lends credence to Bourdieu’s concept as a particular habitus arises that orchestrates a disposition towards reading things in a certain way. In a similar way, the framing of what the photographer or painter considers worthwhile paying attention to becomes central to their personal epistemic modes of practice when producing the visual.

When reading the visual, Berger (as cited in Schirato and Webb, 2004, p.39) suggests that seeing is relational. By this he means that what one sees when looking at an object is the object defined by one’s personal relationship to it. That is, the observer’s approach to the object depends on the complex inter-relationships of his/her physical, social and emotive experiences, as well as the active thinking patterns of the observer at that particular moment in time/space. Developing this further, Bourdieu (2000, p.141), holding a similar view to Heidegger on Dasein and ‘being-in-the-world’, considers one’s “relation to the world is a relation of presence in the world, of being in the world”. Heidegger’s concept of Dasein defines the positioning that places everything within the world they live in and in which they move about (Heidegger, 1927, p.154). As Schirato and Webb (2004, p.40) argue, “[We] see and perceive not because we are looking at the world from the outside, as it were, but because we are part of everything within our gaze”. In essence, Berger, Bourdieu and Schirato and Webb are suggesting that the complex processes of seeing and perception are significantly related to everything that surrounds and involves the artist.

**Art practice as artistic habitus**

Bourdieu’s concept of artistic habitus suggests an applied practice, where a complex combination of inner and outer influences establish what engagement an artist has with the varying conditions of everyday practice that drive him/her to make representations of a particular social or political positioning. For Bourdieu (1979, p.166), where habitus is the framework for generating an individual’s ambitions, aspirations and dispositions, creativity and the practice of being creative combines with these and takes this a step further, as being creative emerges from the dynamics of an artist’s personal artistic life, or habitus. In this regard, artistic habitus emerges from the combination of the artist’s personal history and personal traits, inclusive of class status (past and present), family and education, and the artist’s personal artistic skills through art-making (Bourdieu, 1979, p.221 & 2002, p.29).
As indicated earlier, where Bourdieu’s habitus provides a general theory for the influence and shaping power of an individual’s personal narrative, the idea of artistic habitus speaks more directly about the internal and external drivers and shapers of individual studio-based practices. This concept is used to reflect on and reveal nuances and emerging forms of knowledge formed through action in an art practice. The dynamics of artistic habitus form a significant research framework in art practice as it encapsulates the ideas of the emerging episteme, habitus and materiality of process. Therefore, having a concise understanding of artistic habitus and how it can be theorised is important for this thesis as it provides a framework for unpacking the artists’ practices, especially for the case studies in Chapter 5 and of my own practice in Chapter 6. In the following, artistic habitus as an applied practice is analysed in order to derive its implications for art practices in this genre.

**What is artistic habitus?**

Heidegger (1927, pp.28-29 & 1993b, P.144) argues that shifts in understanding can only happen with the type of enquiry that places basic concepts in question. In an artwork, such questions can be found in the contexts of intentionality and contextuality in art-making in differing and complex ways that reflect on artistic habitus as an applied practice. Such enquiries draw on intentionality and contextuality in art practice, which Schirato and Webb (2004, p.19) describe as traits of the artist - the painter and the photographer in this thesis. These traits could be found in the type of subject engaged, which also ties them into the field of context in, and of, an image. These two traits could also be in how, in the case of this thesis, the painter presents his/her work or how the painter works with the knowledge of the process in creating the artwork. In this manner, intentionality and contextuality form an integral part of artistic habitus that Heidegger (1993, p.159) would define as intrinsic to the idea of ‘knowing through handling’.

In contemporary art practice, “The desire to enter into the game”, as Bourdieu (1979, p.25 & 1995) suggests, is also a significant trait. This is where identifying with the participants/field begins. As shown in Foucault’s discussion on *Las Meninas*, the subject and the topography of places and events intertwined in the artwork become apparent. It is the origin of the selection process. This is also where the artist intentionalises and contextualises his/her interpretation of ‘the game’ within the artwork. In *Free Exchange* (1995, pp. 20, 21, 23, & 29) Bourdieu determines there are many complex ways for
contemporary artists to join in ‘the game’, as there are multiple influences and processes in action. Each of the influences and processes are peculiar to the artist’s practice, which differs and evolves over time in a process of renewal. Artistic habitus, as an investigative model, is about working with those influences to create something new, bringing together the artist’s personal habitus, social and historical contexts and materiality of process as an epistemic mode of art practice. Again, Heidegger’s (1927, p.82) distinctive idea of ‘facticity’ comes forth, as from the artist’s encounters in the world a framework about knowledge emerges, which is integral to the painter’s own presence in the world. This is supported by Webb et al., (2002, p.171), with the argument that art is “a social product, made by someone who comes from a particular social background, and is working in a particular social context”. Reiterating, as painters, each brings his/her own world to the world. In this thesis, the art practice of painting from photographic references centres painting as a new way of engaging everyday life. Essentially, this genre is an emerging epistemic mode about painting everyday life from photographic references. Moreover, Heidegger’s ideas and Webb et al.’s observations distinguish artistic habitus as an applied practice and a definitive influence on this form of art practice.

In effect, artistic habitus consists of the dispositions (the influences) that are more central to the artist’s practice and his/her art-making. Why a painter selects an a particular image; why the painter interprets the image in a certain way; why the painter paints a certain way; what a certain medium can do in the hands of the painter and/or the photographer, are all relevant dispositions. These are also significant elements of an artist’s practice for drawing out what it is an artist does in structuring his/her own epistemic and practical mode of art practice in creating an artwork and why the artist does this.

In being in the ‘game’ (Bourdieu, 1979, p.25 & 1995), or ‘being-in-the-world’ (Heidegger, 1927, p.154), each painter, like Doig and Celmins (discussed later in this chapter), lives and works within the context of his/her own set of interactive influences. His/her own sense of presence thus establishes the possibilities and limitations that govern what painters do; how they do it; what they value and how they fit into the world (Heidegger, 1927, pp.39-87). In this manner of thinking about an artist’s dispositions, the lives and art practices of painters are not detached from the experiences of habitus and neither are the artworks they make, nor the episteme that governs their practices. In
this way, they are all part of the cyclical motion surrounding artistic habitus. Artistic habitus informs the artist, who engages the field, thus, changing it. That new engagement then becomes the restructured artistic habitus of the artist and that same distinguishing ‘new engagement’ creates a new emerging mode of practice.

As suggested, artistic habitus, like habitus, is cyclical in nature. Not only does it arise from the history of the artist, but once an artist takes up a particular position within a certain field of creation, such as photography or painting, his/her artistic habitus is transformed (Bourdieu, 1979, p.166). In this transformation, artistic habitus absorbs the values and norms of that particular field. Subsequently, the artist then exhibits the traits of that field, producing similar behaviours and characteristics. For instance, often when one finds an artist whose work focuses on aspects of social rebellion, there may have been a previous personal event that disposes the artist to this approach. Transformations such as these, discussed below, often inherently distinguish a painter’s, and a photographer’s, socio-political world, thus, placing the artist within a whole new condition.

The transforming situation for Dumas, as shall be seen in Chapter 5, was in spending her childhood in South Africa during the apartheid years that led her to use her artworks as symbols of resistance (Boogerd, 1999, p.44). For Celmins, later in this chapter, it was as a child involved with the migration of her family, through Europe and eventually on to the United States during World War II that brought about her long-standing interest in painting images of war machinery (Grant, 2007 & Knight, 2011). In Chapter 5, Richter (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009e, pp.354-355 & 2009f, pp.399-401) discloses that his transforming situation came as a child when he witnessed the bombing of his home city, Dresden, in February 1945. He considers that these bombing raids are the reason behind his paintings of Allied war planes dropping bombs. One element of habitus in general, and artistic habitus in particular, demonstrated in the discussion on the above artists, is that the construction of artistic habitus, begins early in life and continues to be reinvented over time as new epistemic modes. This idea confirms artistic habitus as cyclical nature, but this cycle is not a one-way rotation (Bourdieu, 2002, p.31). The causal link between subject matter and personal experience, as described here, is only one aspect of the workings of habitus. That is, the artist seeks to explore not only the factual or social, cultural experience, but also their own relationship and engagement with that experience which can take many varied forms.
Breaking this down further, artists such as painters and photographers, according to Bourdieu (1979, p.xxvii), are influenced as to which particular field they enter, drawing on their ‘desire to enter the game’, and ‘being-in-the-world’. Artists not only take on traits of the field, but the field absorbs and is altered by their energies. Subsequently, the ‘new’ created in the field re-energises the artist’s history and work practice, which then, in turn, re-energises the field again. Therefore, the artistic habitus of the artist is constantly evolving to draw out new modes of practice. As the art practices of Doig and Celmins, both of whom exhibited in the 2007 Hayward show, are examples of this occurring, they are used to illustrate this in the following.

**Re-energising art practice through the emerging episteme and habitus as artistic habitus**

British painter Peter Doig (b.1959) lived in Canada in his early years and was immersed in that culture and landscape before moving back to Britain for study and professional reasons. In Britain, he spent a lot of time painting pictures of Canadian life from memory and photographs (as cited in Scott, 2007, p.10). Illustrating the complexities of cultural context, these paintings had a different reception back in Canada to the one in Britain. This, according to Sarah Stanners (2008), led Doig to comment that “My paintings of lakes, canoes, and cabins were interpreted differently in a Canadian context. Canadians related to them in a way that other people didn’t”. That is, the Canadians recognised their own native connections in the work - giving each artwork a habitus of its own.

Doig’s source material is photographic imagery. His picture archive, according to Kitty Scott (2007, p.14), includes his own photographs as well as imagery from other sources, such as postcards, newspapers, magazines and other mass media sources. The source imagery that he prefers provokes memories of his experiences rather than being direct representations from his experiences (Scott, 2007, p.10). Whilst his work still contains certain autobiographical notions within it, his approach to photography and painting, as Doig (2007, p.131) suggests, drifts between ‘generic representation’ of landscape and utilising his own experiences of that landscape. Doig (2007, p.131) comments that he finds it difficult to work *en plein air*, as he finds it hard to focus on the image in front of him, which makes him unsure of what to include. He also has problems with distancing when placing content within the frame. Using photographic imagery overcame this.
problem admirably. In a way, Doig is utilising photography to create his own language about, and discourse on, landscape. Like Manet, Doig brings the landscape into the studio. The painter suggests that although photographic images are never based entirely or directly on memory or experience, his paintings made using such references pay great consideration to both of these phenomena (Doig, 2007, p.132).

In recent years, Doig (as cited in Scott, 2007, p.16) has looked to simplify his imagery, by rejecting the slickness of other contemporary art for a homeliness relationally expressed through combinations of architecture and landscape. He populates this imagery with figures to add a humanising element into the homeliness. This populating of Doig’s work, according to Adrian Searle (2007, p.52), is metaphorical, in that the figure is there as a substitute reading for displacement and re-placement, which extends the narrative that began in the photograph. In a similar approach to Manet’s collage of source photographs for his painting on the execution of Maximilian, in developing his narrative, Doig often constructs the painting image from several photographic images. Accordingly, this image creation process he employs is quite open to observer involvement in constituting the placement of meaning (Scott, 2007, p.30). In this process, Doig paints several versions of the work, refining the image each time. Each work is considered as a work in its own right, providing a narrative for the observer to digest, while what Doig is searching for in the painting, as related by Scott (2007, p.30), only appears in the final work.

After England, Doig moved to Trinidad in the Caribbean, all the while cycling and recycling his personal artistic habitus. The effect on his work of these changes in environment is demonstrated in one particular painting, House of Pictures (2003–4) (Fig. 2.3. p.42). This painting reveals one of Doig’s metaphoric substitution constructions. The image is of a man looking into the window of a particular commercial art gallery, Haus der Bilder Margarete Klewan in Vienna, a gallery outside of which Doig stood looking into frequently when living and working there (Lampert, 2011, p.357). He further relates (as cited in Lampert, 2011, p.357) that while standing outside looking in, he made many photographs of the outside of the gallery, preferring to leave what was inside anonymous. Catherine Lampert (2011, p.357) claims that Doig needed to populate the image to place his own ‘self’ into the situation intended in the painting, but it was
not until sometime later, when living in Vancouver, that he saw the figure that he needed. The subsequent photograph of the figure, a Johnny Cash type according to Doig (as cited in Lampert, 2011, p.357), had everything that he required to create the metaphoric representation of himself. From this, like Manet, he created a collage (Fig. 2.4.) as the first step in resolving the image from which the painting would be worked up. As, by the time of executing the painting, he was living and working in Trinidad he reconstituted the architecture in the image to reflect his new surroundings (Scott, 2007, p.34).

For many artists this way of practising is a complex, and often an unconscious, occurrence. In constructing Doig’s practice, this painterly narrative has taken the observer from the temperaments of the European art world to the laid-back environs of Caribbean life. This migratory lifestyle, which began in his youth when his family moved from England to Canada, was continually experiencing new modes of practice as he went along. In this way, Doig’s own personal habitus evolved into the beginnings of his artistic habitus very early on in life.

Searle (2007, p.52) argues that Doig has progressed from creating what were once ‘self-contained’ paintings to works that take the observer on a journey. His journey has been through his epistemic mode of practice. In constructing his metaphoric representations in such paintings as *House of Pictures*, Doig expresses the view that something more is going on than what is visible in the work. In expressing this, Doig is establishing that more memories may be there for the observer and the artist himself to explore. He is also bearing witness to how artistic habitus affects his decision-making, which is also reflected in the discussion on Celmins that follows.
American – Latvian painter Vija Celmins (b.1938), a former Abstract Expressionist, enveloped her art practice in painting from photographic references, because she (as cited in Grant, 2007) wanted to return to looking outside of her own mind for painterly inspiration. Photographs, for Celmins, held the object of her interest in a form that had already reduced it to a two-dimensional state. Moreover, Celmins (as cited in Rugoff, 2007a, p.71) informs us that in her work:

The photo is an alternative subject, another layer that creates distance. And distance creates an opportunity to view the work more slowly, a chance to explore your relationship with it. I treat the photograph as an object, an object to scan.

In a similar way to Manet’s use of photography in the *Maximilian* paintings, which at the same time created a separating and a joining layer between the artist and the subject, like the work the mirror undertakes in *Las Meninas*, the photograph for Celmins is another layer. Unlike Manet’s and Velazquez’s works, for Celmins, the photograph has become the object, a completely new layer that blurs the space between the artist and the subject of the photograph.

This approach was developed during an early stage of her career, as Kaja Silverman (2007, p22) comments, because Celmins at the time believed that life through the viewfinder opened up a different world. It was this idea that drew her into considering the camera as a see-through, rather than an image-making, device for seeing into the subjectivity of the captured image (Silverman, 2007, p23). That is, the camera is a portal into another moment in time and space, a way of accessing and bringing forth memory rather than only being a two dimensional picture of the past. For her, in this way, the camera was actively connecting everything and everyone, and thus, establishing a greater totality for her to work from (Silverman, 2007, p23). Her paintings, on the other hand, which are usually complex graphite or charcoal drawings in a painterly style, are created in what she terms a “deadpan way” (as cited in Grant, 2007). This provides Celmins with the opportunity to explore her relationships with the photograph and the medium.

Celmins, according to Simon Grant (2007), was a child in the war years (1939 – 1945), who, along with her family, moved from one country to another before escaping to the USA, after the Russian invasion of her homeland (Grant, 2007 & Knight, 2011). It is from this history that her interest in military planes has transpired. For her, these planes are representations of the complexities of violence she encountered in her formative
years and beyond. Her paintings of these planes, according to Christopher Knight (2011), are not meant to be historical paintings, for through these paintings Celmins wants the observer to realise that he/she is both the bringer of violence as well as the victim. She (as cited in Grant, 2007) accomplishes this through her process, which she considers involves trying to bring the photographic images back to life in such a way that putting them in a real space proves confrontational to the observer.

**Fig. 2.5. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)**

Confrontation of the type Celmins is aiming for, according to Knight (2011), is achieved by effecting a banal portrayal of events in sombre grey colours. *Flying Fortress* (1966) (Fig. 2.5.) is a painting of a damaged American Second World War B17 bomber plane that brings the everyday of her youth into the present. Viewed from another aircraft flying slightly to the rear left of the bomber, the plane appears to be routinely making its return from a mission. However, looking at the image more closely, the observer realises this is false, for there is nothing banal about the plane’s situation (Knight, 2011). The tail section is about to break away. There is no mimicry involved in the calm painting, for Celmins is representing the proposition of violence being boundless. The violence inflicted on the plane reflects the violence caused by the bomber fulfilling its mission. The damage to the plane, for Celmins (as cited in Grant, 2007), only hints at the violence and psychological pressures thrust upon the crew of the plane in carrying out their duty. Celmins’ collection of Second World War plane images, drawn from her own photographs and newspaper imagery, as Grant (2007) argues, are autobiographical in nature and bring her memories back to life, revisiting the traumas of her childhood. Her paintings, according to Grant (2007), “neutralise and re-describe [the photographic] images, and pin[s] it into its new space”. The painting remediates the photograph through Celmins’s touch and in doing so is remediating her artistic habitus around personal engagement, which, in turn, remediates the intentionality and contextuality constructed through such personal engagements within her work. What this signals is that Celmins’ engagement, like all artists, is personal. This personal art environment is the artist’s own artistic habitus. This is the encapsulation of Foucault’s theory of the emerging episteme and Bourdieu’s idea of habitus being drawn together through Heidegger’s ideas on materiality of process which consciously and unconsciously engulf the artist’s work practices.
In Summary

As readings of Bourdieu (1979, p.101) and Foucault (1966, p.xxii) suggest, for the artists discussed above, the particular social conditions of one’s everyday life impose themselves on an artist’s complex ways of thinking and working. The literature also illustrates that the critical re-interpretation and re-invention of meaning creatively engaged by painters of photographs reveal how social conditions influence and construct knowledge frameworks of perception and appreciation that derive meaning. Artistic habitus reveals the relationships existing between field and function within art practice as it becomes structured by materiality and social and cultural events in everyday life (Bourdieu, 1979, p.113). In this context, everyday life for an artist can be described as lived experience. What these experiences do for the artist is provide an objective approach to subjectivity. As the literature shows, in Heideggerian ways of thinking, painters are thrown into the world and transported through all facets of life by its possibilities and influences in its indeterminate course from one end to the other, like everyone else. As illustrated earlier, Heidegger (1927, p.82) describes this as ‘facticity’, which implies that the destiny of the artist is tied to his/her encounters in that world. From this a framework emerges, which, I argue, is defined by the culmination of the idea and process found within an artist’s personal practice as artistic habitus.

However, as illustrated in the critiques of the artists in the literature addressed in this review, materiality of process is as important as the notions of the emerging episteme and habitus. The interactiveness, interchangeability and transformability that encompass actions the artist engages within his/her practice (both theoretical and process) is demonstrated in the work of the artists critiqued here. Foucault’s analysis of Velazquez’s *Las Meninas* has been demonstrated as a useful and appropriate model for understanding how knowledge changes and becomes transformable between practices. In other words, how a new epistemic mode comes about in art practice. Using this form of analysis in combination with Bourdieu’s concept of habitus in discussions on Doig and Celmins the artistic habitus model is proposed as a unique and strong applied practice for understanding what is occurring within an artist’s practice, such as how and why they do things. This is where epistemological experiences meet materiality of process in art practice. I argue that this is an important concept for art-making, drawing on all of the theoretical and technical elements of complex creative processes. This model (artistic
habitus) is significant to this thesis as it draws on strategies about art-making that may be used for analysing an artist’s personal art practice.

At the same time as artistic habitus provides investigative strategies, using Foucault’s approach to *Las Meninas* as an interpretive model, it also has a personal consequence. Importantly, it also defines strategies for unpacking my own art-making that will lead to a more in-depth understanding and expansion of my own practice. In a similar way to how the approach to analysis defined here, and used all through this thesis, in the next chapter this is taken and applied to the artworks and literature reviewed surrounding the evolving and shifting relationships between photography, painting and the Modernist context.
Chapter 3:

Literature review: Photography, painting and Modernism

This chapter contextualises the use of photography in painting practice within the Modernist context. This critically positions a representative cross-section of the critical and theoretical discourse on photography’s relationship with painting practice, since Manet’s time, within an historical context. The relationship of photography and painting has often been considered controversial. Criticisms and reactions to the synergies of these two ways of art-making can be traced back to shifts in attitude that evolved in Modernist discourse, which now situate this genre of painting within a freer engagement between the two mediums in a Postmodernist context. This chapter introduces and frames discussions about painting from photographic references as a set of Modernist practices which are not merely about knowledge, but about privileging knowledge through the processes of art-making. This genre is an art-making process that positions the experience of painting as embedded with modes of seeing and representation, which discursively engage in discourses, such as those on ocular interventions, through the notions of referential relations and reflexivity, in irreducible and complex ways.

Also in this chapter, using the ideas of artistic habitus filtered through Carter’s theory of ‘material thinking’, photography’s place in the media landscape of today is conceptualised to identify what it is about photography that selected painters find engaging. I argue that photography in this field can be seen as a combination of surveillance, witnessing and memory practices - a process of observation, thinking and representation. I also argue that within these dynamic observational practices is where
photography, in the present climate, is significantly influencing and shaping the way painters engage it. This is achieved by drawing together some of the emerging theoretical frameworks governing and shaping new media landscape to illustrate photography’s importance at the intersections of Modernism/Postmodernism. Some of the key areas of discussion here involve how theorists have been thinking about photography (prior to and including the present environment), how photographers are engaging in surveillance, witnessing and memory practices and how photography is embedded in the media landscape. This includes a discussion on how digital media is used in today’s society, especially photographic technologies such as Facebook and YouTube and how it links the practices and frameworks of photography in this landscape to painting practice. This is an important discussion as it defines and emphasises photography’s rise as a critical art practice.

Initially, this chapter examines, through the work of Greenberg, Krauss and Schwabsky, some of the Modernist art contexts that brought about the shifts in thinking and art-making, which inform this particular painting genre. Also brought forward in this Modernist context are the ideas of, and reactions to, the ‘death of painting’ debate, as commented on by Adorno, Bois, Fogle and Reichelt, which is important for realising the tensions between the two practices. Additionally, theories on vision and visuality that have been informed, and shaped, by Modernist practices, are researched, drawing on the concepts put forward by Rudolf Arnheim, Barthes, Berger, Geoffrey Batchen, Robert L. Solso and Sontag, to form an understanding of how these ideas apply to painting from photographic references.

As a further insight, this chapter will also examine Ehrenzweig’s and de Certeau’s ideas on memory and Lefebvre’s, Debord’s and Felski’s theories on everyday life as a prelude to discussing photography in today’s media landscape. As part of the media landscape, photography is discussed as a kind of signpost, informed by shifts in thinking surrounding photography and memory, within the contexts created at the intersections of Modernist and Postmodernist art-making. Photography, as differing and complex practice, is framed as surveillance, witnessing and memory paradigms that are interchangeable and transformable spaces of knowledge and perception embedded within the media landscape. The key areas of discussion are presented through the theoretical approaches of Reading, Hoskins and Garde-Hansen at al., and explored through the art practices of Karver and Yang.
To expand the examination of visual theory further, the ocular interventions created by photography are explored through a discussion on the Modernist perception of perspective, based around the work of Cezanne. To illustrate the shifts in the perception of perspective, an in-depth look at two artists’ practices, Picasso and Bacon, are pursued. Picasso is a Modernist, who participated in some of the dynamic shifts in thinking on how photography can be used in painting practice. Bacon, in a similar way, not only bridged the Modernist era but the early Postmodernist as well, beginning at a point when approaches to art were rapidly changing.

Overall, in this survey of the field of literature, the resultant dialogue indicates that Modernist history informs many of the present art practices in different ways, especially painting from photographic references. In this chapter, many of these practices are shown to be significant Postmodernist approaches to critical art-making. However, it also demonstrates that practices, like photography and painting, are still drawing on the space of new ideas opened up in the Modernist era. Whilst these practices are again shifting, art practice still comes back to the individual artist. Why the artist makes certain decisions, how the artist responds to the media environment and how the artist constructs these responses in a way that is relevant and part of his/her art practice indicates that Modernist approaches are still coming through. However, what is also shown is that much of the literature overlooks the importance of the contributions of life experience and materiality of process in informing the complex creation of knowledge. This also points to the need for a new critical language around the genre of painting from photographic references. To begin unpacking some of the Modernist ideas relevant to this genre of painting the next section engages with the idea of painting returning to a referential and experiential medium through photography.

**Shifts in Modernist thinking about photography and painting**

**Returning to the real**

Coke (1964, p.7) argues that photography’s attraction for painters lay in photography enabling them, through observing an image in a flattened form, to easily recognise, mimic and understand the elements of two dimensional pictorial representations. In his view, it provides viewpoints for the painter not found in direct experience, which allows artists to instil experience into the painting (Coke, 1964, p.100). To this Craigie Horsfield (2006, p.52), a photo-artist, adds “Experience conditions other experience, this
happens in complex ways, insofar as we modify what we already know in the light of new experience”. In other words, experience begets experience, which Bourdieu would also suggest. Coke also elaborates that as the diversity of mass media was on the increase during the first century or so after the chemical based photographic process became viable in the early 1800s, the availability of source material increased with the proliferation of newspapers and magazines. This is still occurring at the time of writing this thesis through digital media practices, which are also discussed in this chapter. Over this time, photography provided a variety of ways for satisfying the quest of certain painters for what Hal Foster (1996, p.128) terms as the return of the real. That is, repositioning the art of the past into the art of the present, returning the image to the referential, or simulacral, aspect of representation.

Some painters, Coke (1964, p.109) further suggests, were influenced by the reductive power of the photograph, and some understood the camera’s expressive potential, while others found potential in the subject matter paraphrased in news imagery. Many of these painters, according to Rugoff (2007c, p.10), considered the use of photographs in painting practice as a way of renewing a painter’s interest in the visual world through a re-engagement with a more realist figuration and representation. At the time they were initially growing their art practices, from the 1960s onward, those particular painters Rugoff spoke about, like Richter and Hamilton, were doing this because they felt that both were often overlooked in other Modernist approaches to painting. In overlooking the figurative and representational, these other Modernist art practices, such as Abstract Expressionism, left gaps in the possibilities Modernist art practice offered. For instance, these other practices were missing the abstraction already present in the ‘real’ and the emotive presences that photography was emphasising. Through oversights like these, questions began to be asked about Modernist practices.

**Modernism and painting**

Nina Felshin, Krauss and Michael Fried are some of the critics and theorists who critically examined Modernist Art. For Felshin (1995, p.80), the Modernist idea of art had become isolated from the thinking and attitudes to art and everyday life at that time, while Krauss (2003, pp.976-979) struggled with Modernism’s distancing from what was happening around it. Fried (2003, pp.787-793) implied a problematic that may reflect on its declining in relevance toward the end of the twentieth century that opened a space for
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Postmodernist thinking. For Fried, Modernist art had become foreign to the critical concerns of modern society and its integrating cultures. Similarly to Felshin, Krauss and Fried, but from an artist’s point of view, Hockney was a campaigner against the restrictive practices of abstraction as championed by Greenberg, the American Modernist art critic. Like many artists in the 1960s, as suggested by Rugoff (2007, p.10), Hockney too considered that abstraction was becoming more of an academic sensibility, becoming sterile and restrictive in a creative sense (as cited in Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1988, p.17).

Greenberg (2003, p.775), in his seminal essay *Modernist Painting* (1960), asserted that the old masters treated the medium (the painting emulsions, colour pigments and the flatness and shape of painting surface) as a negative factor in painting. However, the Modernists, he comments, regarded it as a positive, embracing the qualities of the medium like texture and plasticity. Schwabsky (2007, p.26) calls into question Greenberg’s stance on Modernist painting by claiming that, in the present climate, photography and painting share what Greenberg considered unique to painting, which is the flatness and two-dimensionality of their imagery. Greenberg (2003, p.774) also posited that Modernist painting’s strength lay in its ability for self-criticism, which is also questioned by Schwabsky. Abstraction, formalism and autonomy were championed in Greenberg’s essay, but the American, Schwabsky (2007, p.26) argues, unknowingly set up the structure by which painting from photographic references would become part of the discourse of art. Greenberg did this when he discussed the uniformity of the painting surface and the associated hierarchical distinctions about form and aesthetics within the surface. According to Schwabsky (2007, p.27), what Greenberg failed to point out, or even realise, is that the sensations and hierarchies of different experiences “[correspond] to social, economic and aesthetic effects”, when photography enters the field of image-creation. For this reason, he considers this puts Greenberg’s, and Modernist painting’s, position on shaky ground. In effect, what Schwabsky is recognising is that the relationships of photography in contemporary painting practice signpost the emergence of new Modernist/Postmodernist traditions centred on painting from photographic references. However, prior to, and during, these discussions on the problems of Modernist Art, photography and painting were the subjects of much debate as well. Photography was/is considered by some the cause of what is often termed the
death of painting, which is still a controversial topic today and is discussed in the following.

**A speculative death**

Photography’s early days, according to Coke (1964, p.7), saw some observers fearful of it competing with the work of artists. For them it signalled the ‘death of painting’, thereupon, condemning the painter to the realm of impoverishment. Many disagreed with this, with the nineteenth century American landscapist Thomas Cole (as cited in Coke, 1964, p.7) arguing “the art of painting is creative, as well as an imitative art, and is in no danger of being superseded by any mechanical contrivance”. Reichelt also realises that there are many members of the art world not as ready as others to condemn such a significant form of art practice as painting to art oblivion. In Reichelt’s (2005, p.9) view, the declaration of painting’s death wasn’t announcing the end of painting per se, but declaring that it was no longer relevant. Further to this Danto (as cited in Reichelt, 2005, p.18) considers that it only indicated an end to the “historical way of thinking about art”. This approach, Danto argues, only prefaced an increase in status for other art media to an equal level. Painting now had to extend itself, not on its former representational level, but on philosophical and conceptual levels, to have any relevance (Danto as cited in Reichelt, 2005, p.18). Painting was moving in a different direction.

Reichelt does not see this shift of status as the imminent ‘death of painting’, but as a change in attitude to art and one of the reasons for this, as Bois (2001, pp.30-31) points out, is the commodification of art. Bois contends that industrialisation’s mechanical reproduction led to the commodification of art, even though Stephen Bann (2010, p.76) suggests that this was also happening a couple of hundred years earlier. However, prior to the arrival of photography, Reichelt (2005, p.11) argues, painting was a representational process that documented the ‘visual truth’ of nature. She found through her research that photography was considered to have freed painting from this documentary role simply because it was quicker, more accurate, and less expensive. On top of this, as Benjamin (1936, p.3) would suggest, it is technologically reproducible, that is, mass-producible. In lieu of this, the artwork’s status shifted from its documentary purpose to one of being an object/commodity, rendering it no longer significant in its old form. However, in his discussion on the ‘death of painting’, Bois (2001, pp.30-31) suggests the commodification of art impinged on the status of Modernist abstract
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

painting. He also argued that this effect on abstract painting paved the way for the emergence of many cross-media art genres in use today, including painting from photographic references.

Bois’s (2001, p.30) discussion on the ‘death of painting’ reflects abstract painting’s propensity for creating its own apocalyptic myth, which he speculates brought on the ‘death’ of abstract painting. Exploring this later ‘death’, Bois’s essay *Painting: The Task of Mourning* in the 2001 catalogue *Painting at the edge of the World*, discusses the emergence of the group of painters in the exhibition, which includes such artists as Dumas and Eberhard Havekost (who both took part in the Hayward exhibition), as well as Margherita Manzelli. In referencing a ‘mechanically produced medium’ (the photographic image), the work of all of these artists can be considered as illustrating painting’s continuum, as Fogle (2001, pp.14-15) suggests in the same catalogue. The commodification of art, brought on by industrialisation’s mechanical reproduction processes, made art dependent on “rarity, authenticity, uniqueness, and the law of supply and demand” in Bois’s (2001, p35) view, which meant that art lost its mysticism. The emergence of such cross-media art genres as video installation and painting from photographic references, as in this particular exhibition, suggested to Bois (2001, p.40) that if a style of painting is no longer popular, it doesn’t mean that painting is finished. As he argued, it’s like a chess match, a game may be over, but there are plenty more games before the match is over (Bois, 2001, p.40). That is, a painter’s desire to continue painting is always there, no matter what genre is in vogue.

*Painting as a continuum*

Fogle (2001, p.8) offers an interesting observation on the continuum that is painting, by suggesting that even though “figuration, abstraction, portraiture and landscape” figure prominently in Modernist painting, it is not confined to these genres anymore. He suggests that with the changes in attitude to the painted canvas, as the edge of the canvas becomes blurred, painters at the intersection of Modernism and Postmodernism not only apply the philosophy of painting to these genres, but they apply it to photography as well. Painting, Fogle (2001, pp.14-15) suggests, has this never-say-die attitude and the increased focus on it through the philosophy of painting illustrates this. Painting has been plagued by the idea of its on-coming death since photography began in the
nineteenth century, and its longevity is largely due to the transformations that it has gone through in relation to other media (Makin, 2009).

Whenever someone announces, or comments on the on-coming death of painting, Fogle (2001, p.14) suggests, a re-emergence occurs with great regularity. As Fogle (2001, p.14) declares, painting appears to be “dead yet very much present, and strangely lacking the rigor mortis”. The problematic with the proposition of painting’s death, I argue, is not ‘death’ per se, but with the process of bringing attention to new modes of technology that superseded it. The tactics for doing this is to declare its predecessor dead, in the hope of everyone else agreeing. However, as an individual approach, the philosophy of painting is planted within the artist at a very early age as a response to what is around him/her. For instance, when children are given a set of paints, they automatically paint pictures, on paper, walls and especially themselves, while looking at the camera. It is a natural inherent response to their environs, and creates an expansion of the relationship between painting and photography. Such an expansion goes well beyond the two mediums to where they play intrinsic roles in an artist drawing on his/her surrounding everyday life.

Commenting further on the ‘death of painting’, Horsfield (2006, p.63) argues that abandoning a medium is abandoning complex cultural associations. “Mediums are structures of convention”, Horsfield (2006, p.63) claims, “and the threatening structure’s loss is of an accumulation of associations and of knowledge – the loss that is of history itself”. Moreover, conventions become open to development and modification, such as those forced by social change, which evolve into different perceptions and narratives. In effect, this is habitus being recycled, constructing new epistemic modes. Such changes, or shifts, introduce ‘fluidity’ between mediums, which Bois (2001, pp.30-31) recognises in his discussion on ‘cross-media art’ practices.

While mediums can imitate each other, artists are always interested in testing art’s conventions. In this way, the artist and the medium expose limitations and explore the synergies that arise between the medium, the artist and the conventions of Modernist art-making. However, this does not prevent the cross-media process of painting from photographic references from being a contested space. In the following, a representative example of such confrontation is addressed in the discussion on the conflicting viewpoints that exist on these ideas in the work of Sontag and Berger.
Conflicting views

When Berger wrote *Understanding a Photograph* in 1974, photography was not considered a Fine Art in the way that it is now. This was, he claims (1980b, p.291), because it lacked the mystery that surrounds a work of art as it was easily accessed by everyone. Berger further argues that photography was not considered a rare commodity, like paintings or sculptures, and because of its mass-producibility, it was seen to have next to no value as property. The mistake being made, he (1980b, p.292) suggests, was in categorising things as art through relating them to their creation process. With this argument, the parameters of art-making became narrowed down to the point of every man-made object becoming an artwork. What one should be looking at, according to Berger (1980b, p.292), is photography’s social function as this would provide a better way for classifying it as artwork. This implication is similar to the position Jay D. Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000, p.70) assign to photography, wherein photography has a social nature in view of its powers of remediation (discussed later in this chapter). In this way, the field is opened up for allowing photography to be appreciated as an art form. John Hilliard (1999) strengthens Berger’s argument by drawing painting into the mix with “Art encompasses [a] wide range of concerns, from the purely intellectual to the purely sensual, and both photography and painting/sculpture are potentially employable throughout that range”, which Sontag expands further in the following.

Sontag (1979, p.145) elicited the ‘mythic pact’ between painting and photography, arguing that it “authorised both to pursue separate but equally valid tasks, while creatively influencing each other”. Similarly, Benjamin (1936, p.25) suggests there is a ‘natural distance’ between the painter and the object, while the photographer ‘penetrates deep’ into the object, which generates the differences in the image. Sontag also demonstrates the conflicting and sometimes confusing status of painting from photographic references. Sontag illustrates the differences and the synergies between painting and photography that are readily realised in this particular genre of painting, when she (1979, p.154) argues that:

Such images are indeed able to usurp reality because first of all a photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask. While a painting, even one that meets photographic standards of resemblance, is never more than the stating of an interpretation, a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects) – a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting can be.
In other words, she suggests that photography is a trace and an interpretation of the real, whereas for her, painting in, and of itself, is always an interpretation.

The complexities between painting and photography are found in the literature on these subjects. For example, Berger opposes Sontag’s view on photography in regard to interpretation and being a trace of the real. Sontag (1979, p.7) considers photography as having an interpretive power that is equal to painting. Photography’s passivity, its all-capturing of the real, for her, is the message that gives it this interpretive power. Berger (1980a, p.54), on the other hand, argues that photography is unable to act in this way, because it is a trace of the real, the footprint left when the button on the camera was depressed. He (1972, p.18) suggests that the isolation of the moment is the major factor surrounding the photograph, because this takes away that image’s timelessness and separates it from the experience. In painting from photographic references, as Berger (1972, p.10) might suggest, there are three ways of seeing; the photographer’s, illustrated by the subject matter, the painter’s by the process and the observer’s by the perception and appreciation of the imagery. This is where the processes of interpretation take form. By the interaction in this concept, interpretation brings a reinvestment of experience into the ‘moment’ of the photograph that, subsequently, creates a new narrative. Therefore, a new epistemic mode of thinking about the photograph emerges.

Even though Sontag brings up this ‘mythic pact’, she (1979, p.139) also points out factors such as imagination and taste have differing roles in each of these art practices. She is suggesting that both practices share the phenomena of innovation, which draws on an artist’s imagination, and is where they are implementing new and different formal schematic associations and/or changing the visual language. Each artist does this in line with their particular knowledge of their particular art process. In other words, artistic habitus underpins their art-making. Painting, Sontag (1979, p.139) suggested, has valuation processes based in criterias of both authenticity and craftsmanship, traced through such traditions as art school and institutionalised acceptance (in museums for instance). Photography, on the other hand, is a Modernist process affected by neither, as it often shows no ‘inner stylistic coherence’, or relationship to any school of thinking, according to Sontag (1979, p.139).

Berger (1980b, p.292) identifies the photograph as a witness to the photographer’s decision as to what is worth recording, and that this decision-making is all about choice.
Additionally, he (1980b, p.292) suggests that everything recorded in a photograph has equal power, relevance and importance, and there is no way of altering the photograph’s composition. On the other hand, Berger (1980b, p.292) also argues that painting is compositionally wide open to rearrangement where “Every relation between forms in a painting is to some degree adaptable to the painter’s purpose”. This is where Berger differs from Sontag as he is suggesting that the photograph interprets a situation in a particular way and captures it as an instant of time and space. In a similar way to Barthes’ (1979, pp.142-148) concept of ‘death of the author’, once captured, the photograph can no longer interpret that situation, but that instant can be re-interpreted in the afterglow of the photograph. The painter, however, may take the photographer’s interpretation and re-present it in applying his/her own reading in whichever way he/she chooses, which poses an interactive mediation/remediation presence.

**Mediation/remediation**

When reflecting on contemporary painters of photographic references, Chinese art historian Wu Hung (1999, p.146) presents the observation that ‘between painting and observed reality’, the critical role of mediator is played by the photograph. Through the photograph, painting goes through a more analytical approach to construction and creates a more intensive relationship with the subject. Mimesis – imitation in art, is in itself a form of mediation, according to Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf (1995, p.152), which operates “between interior life and the public sphere”. Mimesis also influences imagination, much like a photograph and a painting can when it is based in everyday subjects. However, not only is mediation being carried on here, remediation is also occurring through the interaction between the two mediums.

The gestural associations found in a photograph and a painting can be defined by the concept of remediation put forward by Bolter and Grusin (2000, p.60). They suggest that:

> Each new medium is justified because it fills a lack or repairs a fault in its predecessor, because it fills the unkept promise of another medium. In each case that immediacy is represented as a lack of immediacy.

In other words, when photography and painting are combined, photography is a representation of immediacy in the medium, as well as the immediacy of the moment. On the other hand, Modernist painting, created using photographs, is a representation of
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

a new immediacy, and both the photograph and the painting are embedded within a state of remediation. When combined, the older medium of painting is refashioned, analysing and interpreting the new challenges found within the newer medium of photography. Thus, a painting created by using photography as a reference is the reformed identity of the remediated photograph testifying to the intentions behind the painter’s action. But what is it about photography that draws the painter into the web of meaning and narrative these interactions suggest are possible?

**Meaning, studium and punctum**

Barthes (1986, p.42) determined that three levels of meaning can be found in any image, the informative, the symbolic or obvious meaning, and the signifying meaning. The signifying meaning, or as he prefers, the ‘obtuse meaning’, falls into the realm of disguise, which creates a blurring of meaning that is discontinuous and indifferent to the obvious meaning (Barthes, 1986, p.55). Barthes suggests the obtuse meaning can create a counter-narrative, a different story to that which is intended. He further argues that depending on the context in which the image is being considered, the meaning of the image has the ability to change to reflect each context (Barthes, 1986, p.57). However, whilst he was referring to photography, the same can be said for any imagery. Its identity is governed by its activity on the world stage, by the habitus of the observer and the artist. Such identities, Yacavone (2012, p.49) argues, are intrinsically linked to the “material being and presence” inherent in the image itself. However, through the varying identities inherent in photography’s social aspect, Batchen (1997, p.7) suggests, the photograph can be considered as a catalyst and focal point for looking, which lays it open to painting practice.

From this fertile ground, what appeals to a photographer and a painter, in regard to working in a field of imagery, such as political or family portraiture, is described by Barthes (1980, p.26) as *studium*. He refers to this as being of human interest, a personal taste drawn out by elements of the observer’s own experiences, but not one containing any particular visual point of interest. Breaking this down further Barthes (1980, p.27) identifies, *punctum* (that accident in a photographic image that pricks me) as the element of the photograph (or painting), which captures the observer’s attention. Barthes (1980, p.26) presents an analysis of *studium* when he posits that:
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

It is by *studium* that I am interested in so many photographs, whether I receive them as political testimony or enjoy them as good historical scenes: for it is culturally (this connotation is present in *studium*) that I participate in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the action.

What Barthes is suggesting is that for the artist, through *punctum* shaped, and informed, by *studium*, meaning is drawn out of the artwork. In particular, Barthes is claiming that in this way *studium* allows one to witness the intentionality within a particular artist’s practice.

However, citing James Elkins observations on Michael Fried’s (2008) application of *punctum*, Yacavone (2012, pp.153-154) claims that this idea is difficult to apply to “traditional artistic images” outside photography. I argue the opposite. In ‘traditional’ imagery like painting, the *punctum* is manifest in the observer and is that something which makes the observer interested in one particular painting as opposed to another. There are many paintings of Napoleon and his exploits (creating a certain *studium*), but different paintings of the Corsican attract different observers for different reasons. It is within these parameters that *punctum* for the observer becomes universal as it can apply to any form of artistic imagery. Taking Berger’s (1972 & 1980) ideas of looking and seeing, *studium* provides the field of looking (the sympathetic attraction), while *punctum* provides the impulse for seeing (the implicit exploration).

The co-presence of *studium* and *punctum*, Barthes argues, is always possible. In the case of Dumas’ painting *The Prophet* (2004), (Fig. 3.1. p.60), the *studium* of the source photograph lies in her sympathetic interests in the plights of marginalised cultures. However, the *punctum* is arguably based in a more personalised attitude within the artist’s psyche, in contrast to the more readable aspects of *studium*. The *punctum* for Dumas captured by the consciousness of the camera (Fig 3.2. p.60), it could be argued, may be the attitude of the man’s stance or the emotion registered in his face. What may be discounted from the image shown in the 31 March 2004 edition of *De Volkskrant* are the people to the right of the image, who do not appear in the painting. Possibly, the story behind the photograph and Dumas’ anti-apartheid up-bringing in South Africa played a part in the selection process. The figures, who Dumas may sense have a story to tell, are returning patients of a psychiatric hospital in Baghdad, which had been bombed in the belief weapons of mass destruction were being hidden there, according to Cornelia Butler (2008a, p.11).
Fig. 3.1. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

Fig. 3.2. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

Fig 3.3.

Eadweard Muybridge’s photographs of figures in motion (Fig. 3.3.) also illustrate the co-presence of studium and punctum that Barthes argues. The ‘capture of the real’ in Muybridge’s photography, for instance, held the studium and punctum of the imagery that drew Bacon, among many, into using Muybridge as a primary reference source (Coke, 1964, p.112). Bacon, discussed more closely later in this chapter, found Muybridge’s images could “reveal slices of time preserved with uncompromising candor”, according to Coke (1964, p.112). In such a manner, Muybridge’s work
delivered a presence up to the world, which was seemingly unconscious to the naked eye.

**Conscious and unconscious vision and memory**

Taking the perception of the consciousness further, the readings of Ehrenzweig (1971, pp.4-6) claim that one’s thinking is affected by what he defines as differentiated and undifferentiated influences, both of which help to form our identity. Differentiated is what the individual has consciously learnt which is retained within our memory, such as how to use paint or take a photograph or the more traditional beliefs in right and wrong. In this way, the photograph and the painting become vehicles of not only observation and interpretation, but also vehicles for self-reflection. This is what Foucault would term the structuring of an emerging episteme, but Bourdieu’s artistic habitus plays a role in Ehrenzweig’s approach to the idea of undifferentiated influence. Undifferentiated, for Ehrenzweig (1971, p.4-6), applies to unconscious perception, the peripheral and subliminal scanning of what goes on round the artist, which becomes locked away within subconscious memory. In effect, this unconscious perception becomes the essence of what the painter is contextualising within the painting space. In essence, the artist is relying on the unconscious interventions of artistic habitus.

The benefit of Ehrenzweig’s readings is in applying them to art practice in the guise of a theoretical framing of memory in the Modernist context. Memory is an important concept for this research as in many cases artists are dependent on memory devices, such as photographs, as part of their selection and interpretation processes. Ehrenzweig’s way of conceptualising memory appears to be decidedly different to when it was thought of as a recorder of impressions and a producer of responses. That vehicle of everyday life, the ‘train’, is used by de Certeau (1984, p112) as an exemplar of memory’s operational functions in which he sees the ‘windowpane’ of the train as being the thing that allows one to see, and the rail-line as the means of moving through that space. But how is it possible for such memory recall to be manifest? Ehrenzweig (1971, p.4) maintains that “The creative thinker is capable of alternating between differentiated and undifferentiated modes of thinking... [and the] creative work succeeds in coordinating the results of unconscious undifferentiation and conscious differentiation”. In other words, the creative thinker utilises both modes and it is within this coordination that Ehrenzweig believes the hidden order in the unconscious is brought forth and revealed.
The photograph, as de Certeau notes, can be read as a recorded image that is also a space where memory is mediated. “Memory”, de Certeau (1984, p.85) suggests, “mediates spatial transformations”. At the right time it produces rupture bringing about the possibility of modifying the ‘local order’. De Certeau (1984, p.82) also argues that memory “[Draws] its knowledge from a multitude of events among which it moves without possessing them (they are all past, each a loss of place but a fragment of time)”. In this way, events of the past are being brought into the present as referential paradigms. Such memory recall manifestations can be considered as a dynamic knowledge structure that forms part of what Foucault (1966, pp.xxiii-xxiv) terms the emerging epistemic mode of practice, which is also clearly influenced by an artist’s artistic habitus.

These concepts of consciousness and differentiation are key approaches to understanding how memory is engaged in the Modernist context and the role photography plays in painting from photographic references. The eye, with its impartial ‘syncretistic vision’,² as Ehrenzweig (1971, p.6) suggests, differentiates an image through focusing much the same as a camera lens focuses on a subject when making a photograph. Unconscious scanning takes in undifferentiated vision, which includes all that is out of focus and stores it in subconscious memory. Undifferentiated vision is also taken in by the camera, but instead of being stored in a subconscious memory bank it is laid bare alongside of the subject in a photograph (Ehrenzweig, 1971, p.8). As a further qualification, Ehrenzweig (1971, p.5) held the opinion that in order to complete a ‘reality’, the undifferentiated structure of low-level vision needs to be involved. For the photographer and painter, this undifferentiated structure, this unconscious scanning, integrates the artwork with the artist’s own personality, a personality which has been sculpted by the artist’s place in everyday life. However, there is a problematic in the defining of ‘everyday life’ for a photographer or a painter, according to Debord (1960) and Felski (2000, p.15).

---

² Ehrenzweig uses Piaget’s term ‘syncretistic vision’ to categorise the different ways a child looks at the world, which he describes as primitive and undifferentiated, to illustrate a different way of looking at the world for an artist.
In the views of Debord and Felski the problem lies in the reluctance of theorists to provide a definitive answer on what everyday life is. As an insight into this, everyday life is considered through concepts presented by Lefebvre, Debord and Felski, even though the differences between their views demonstrate how problematic a definitive description can be. Lefebvre, writing in the year 1987, regards the everyday as a concept and offers a definition which, at best, is only an overview when he defines it as a set of functions that connect a group of ‘systems’ which may have previously appeared to be separate and distinct. He also politically situates the everyday, in contemporary times, within the condition of consumerism, claiming that in conjunction with being defined as a set of functions, it is a product “in an era where production engenders consumption”. For Lefebvre, the everyday is the platform where consumerism takes over and controls society (Lefebvre, 1987).

Debord (1960) offers a view which reflects some of the issues found in Lefebvre, but also some of his own insights when he claims:

> Everyday life is not everything... [But] we still have to place everyday life at the center of everything. Every project begins from it and every accomplishment returns to it to acquire its real significance. Everyday life is the measure of all things: of the (non)fulfilment of human relations; of the use of lived time; of artistic experimentation; and of revolutionary politics.

In other words, ‘everyday life’ is a metaphor for an artist ‘being-in-the-world’ as Heidegger (1927, p.154) puts it, and ‘entering the game’ as Bourdieu (1979, p.25 & 1995) would suggest. Everyday life is a structuring dynamic of habitus. In a similar vein, Felski (2000, p.15) unwraps her frustration with the non-commitment of theorists by providing a simple, yet resonant, description of everyday life when she argues that it is “the essential, taken-for-granted continuum of mundane activities that frames our forays into more esoteric or exotic worlds. It is the ultimate, non-negotiable reality, the unavoidable basis for all other forms of human endeavour”. What these three theorists are demonstrating is that whilst there is this ambiguity about what constitutes everyday life, it is ‘essentials’ such as those indicated which provide key narratives about everyday life. This, then, provides the interactions from which painters may derive insights into the everyday as inspiration for their creative practices. For instance, the volume of found photographic references of everyday life, taken from many media sources, stored in folders by Dumas as source material is only one example out of many.
that demonstrates the search for inspiration from everyday life. This, in turn, illustrates Dumas’ approach to re-engaging with the ‘real’. However, her artistic approach to the real is far from realist. Her art-making involves an interpretive process, where, in the intersections of Modernism and Postmodernism, the laying bare of conscious, and subconscious, memory has taken on a new guise as photographic technologies rapidly expand the field, which is explored in the following.

**Photography in the media landscape of today**

Whilst the discussion on photography in the previous part of this chapter confirms photography as a process centred on Modernist traditions, in the present environment, photography has moved yet again. Therefore, this particular discussion draws on some of the emerging theories and observations that inform, and shape, new media landscape in the Modernism/Postmodernism context. Key discussions here involve how theorists think about photography, how surveillance, witnessing and memory practices impacts on photography and how photography is embedded in the media landscape through digital visual technologies. Additionally, these technological practices in this landscape are applied to painting practice. As reflected on earlier, these are important to understand as it places a definitive emphasis on photography’s rise as a critical art practice. In order to present these ideas, the first part of this section, beginning with photography as a kind of signpost, draws on some of the shifts in thinking on photography as memory brought on by the successes of digital media. This illustrates that photographic technologies present a new memory paradigm not only for artists, which is why this discussion is important to this research, but it also presents a new paradigm for the world at large. Secondly, imagery from photographic practices, such as photojournalism and documentary photography, is examined to gain an insight into how photographers are engaging with their process as a way into defining the complexities of photography’s position in this critical landscape. In addition, some painting practices are introduced throughout the chapter to demonstrate how painters engage photography within this environment, which also presents an understanding for discussing the role of artistic habitus in the studio practices of artists who utilise photography in painting practice (discussed further in the next chapter).
Photography as tag/index/idea

Through digital media the construction of our own identity in the archiving of the ‘self’ on-line, as Omar Kolief (2010, p.33) terms it, is enabled, wherein self-editing produces the richness in memories to be carried forward. That is, the engagement with visual memory through digital media and photography is an exploration of the ‘self’. In addition, Brogger and Newman (2010, p.13) suggest that “Today, moments of our lives are captured and revived on an unprecedented scale through the proliferation of digital cameras, camera phones and the increased popularity of social media websites like Flickr, Facebook and YouTube”. In light of this, Reading (2011, p.241) insists that “new media ecologies and virally globalised memories require a paradigm shift to new conceptualization of mediated memory with a concomitant epistemology”. What Reading suggests is that the mobility of the object and the individual in the world, through technologies that address the paradigms of globalisation, has reconfigured memory on a ‘transnational’ level. What this means is that artists, working in a similar tradition to Richter and Dumas, who physically keep and develop their own visual resource libraries, now have the option of sourcing, storing and using imagery drawn from an extraordinary range of digital visual memories. In this way, the field of memory for the artist, while connecting the object and/or the individual within time/space, also connects to past, present and future memory on an equal footing. Such connections occur almost instantaneously in both time and space through the photographic technologies in use at present. As these technologies continue to develop and change, the compaction of time and space into time/space will in itself become closer to an instantaneous phenomenon. What this means for the artists is that these ranging technologies act as an open-ended digital memory bank that supplements their traditional sources of images, which creates a greater connection between their art-making and the world.

Mediating memory

Memory is what embeds the individual, both publicly and privately, in space and time and the plethora of media available constitute the “instruments for the articulation of memory”, suggests Roger Silverstone (1999, p.126). He (1999, pp.127-129) also argues that the content of memory and memories are structured through the powers of the media and that media “fuse memory to a particular time”. Correspondingly, available
technologies create a space for memories, but that space is only effective within the capacities of the technologies at the time of their production. New technologies create new spaces and new possibilities of memory creation, storage and use, which are changing at every moment. Through time, Silverstone (1999, p.127) goes on, memory has been dependent on images, as imagery both “represent its structure and... its content”. This idea is aptly illustrated by Annette Kuhn (2003, pp.394-395), who describes the photographic image as not something that represents where we were at the time it was captured, but as something that marks how we were then. For her the photograph is the tag that invites recollection, an instigator of memory creation. However, Kuhn, via a photograph of herself as a child (Fig. 3.4.), makes the point that how these memories are formed engages both internal and external influences. The following passage (Kuhn, 1995, pp.13-14 & 2003, p.396) illustrates her view on the frameworks of memory:

Prompted by the photograph, I might recall, say, that the budgie was a gift from Harry to his little girl, Annette; that underneath two layers of knitted wool, the child is probably wearing a Liberty bodice; that the room in which the photo was taken was referred to not as the sitting-room but as the lounge, or perhaps occasionally as the drawing room. Make what you will of these bits of information, true or not. What you make of them will be guided by certain knowledge, though: of child-rearing practices in the 1950’s, of fashions in underwear, of the English class system, amongst other things.

Fig.3.4. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

Kuhn also argues that at each point of recollection, forces are at work, which restructures each new recall into a new narrative. Some memories are registered while others fall by the wayside, which Hoskins (2009, p.27) describes as the process of remembering and forgetting. This process is, he elaborates, “shaped by technological, political, social and cultural shifts that interpenetrate memory and memories, their makers, deniers and their (identified mistakenly or otherwise as) ‘repositories’” (Hoskins, 2009, p.27). What Kuhn (2003, p.399) is suggesting, which supports Hoskins’s notion, is that although photographs may be representations of the past, what matters is how photography is engaged in the present time. Photographs are not actually about the past, they are about engaging the present to structure memories within one’s present frameworks of recollection and place within the world. Richter’s painting of Uncle Rudi (1965) (Fig. 3.5.) reflects this notion. The original photograph taken during World War II was recalled by Richter in the 1960s and a painting created. The image of
the painting has been photographically reproduced in many books and catalogues since its creation. That image now, as sourced for this research, is almost instantly available on the internet. Richter’s image, in the present climate, takes on the persona of family memories and historical representation, whereas, closer to the time of its creation, it would have represented a more traumatic association to many observers.

**Fig.3.5. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)**

What is being dealt with here, according to Marko Bertamini (2010, p.7), is “the interplay of vision, memory and media”. Only through visual memories, he suggests, does one come to recognise and associate objects and events. Consequently, Rebecca Lawson (2010, p.11) suggests one’s ‘sporadic memories’ and ability to bring those memories out into the open is being altered and reshaped to a phenomenal degree through recording one’s life digitally. Photography, Hoskins (2010, p.76) argues, is visual media’s metaphor for memory. He also uses the term ‘new memory’, arguing that memory is ‘new’ in its “continually emergent state, shaped and understood through the metaphors, media and technologies of the day”. Within this framework, media, and its discourses, act reflexively in structuring patterns and effectiveness in the processes of remembering and forgetting.

**New memory**

Hoskins (2010, p.15) infers that photography has a ‘particular resonance’ in the notion of ‘new memory’. The diversities of memory, he argues, are drawn out and amplified though the form and content of this media. Referring to the iPhone and other similarly portable applications as “prosthetic nodes”, Hoskins (2010, p.75) explores the ‘self’, both in the personal and public networks of the now with connections to the past. This places the ‘self’ into a position whereupon one’s own sense of engagement with the world is being coloured by media and memory. Lisa Gitelman’s view on the ‘digitised
persistence of vision’, also applies this exploration of the ‘self’ to photography. Gitelman’s argument (as cited in Hoskins, 2010, p.77), is that a photograph is not only a two-dimensional visual representation of the object, but is also a presentation of evidence as well as being indexical, because the causality behind the photograph is centred in the “moment of the past that it represents”. However, whether the photograph is digital or not, there is a persistence of both materiality and presence in the photograph, as Hoskins (2010, p.77) argues, which derives its signifying processes from the way it is utilised. The simultaneous exposure to the many conversations and contributions occurring photographically in digital media today are openly tagging the ‘self’ into a mediated and mediatised ‘self’, easily findable and open to externalisation of memory.

In a similar way to Barthes (1980, p.98) describing photography as part of the “explosion of the private into the public”, Kolief (2010, p.34) argues that the photographic relationships of digital media homogenises identity by the very way this media is used. This new notion of the constructed ‘self’ is related by Kolief (2010, p.37) to the Foucauldian theories on individuality. That is, Foucault thought representation existed in the congested space between official history and unofficial memory making it only a discourse on the ‘self’. Digital media plays on this metaphysical state when constructing the ‘self’ as a new ‘real’ and, therefore, can be related to the photographic practices of memory in Modern/Postmodern society.

Assimilating memory

News media in today’s society, Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2011, p.214) argues, “play an important role in determining the topics that are at the centre of public attention and action and... are perceived as important by the public and the policy-maker”. She ties this into the notions of retrospective memory and prospective memory. What she is suggesting is that journalism today utilises retrospective memory, collective memories of the past, to position memory in the present, which then uses that memory as an agenda-setting device, a prospective memory, as Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2011, p.214) terms it. This is much in the same way Manet plays on memory in his Maximilian paintings, taking the collective memories produced by photographic and journalistic reportage to set his own complex agenda in the final paintings. Even though Manet was attempting to do something different, acts such as these are also acts of social assimilation, similar to Foucault’s ideas on the docile body (Foucault, 1979, pp.135-
Social assimilation and the docile body become entwined wherein such bodies are the product of a normalisation process brought about by the setting of agendas as a way of “managing bodies” (Danaher et al., 2000, p.53). In a way, like Manet, they are drawing the observer into their way of thinking.

This repositioning of memory in the present is how painters, like Dumas, utilise photographic references in their Modernist painting practices. Dumas, in a similar way to the other painters in this research, treats photojournalism as a retrospective memory, rich in data as source material and uses painting in a prospective memory approach to set the agenda within the imagery she is creating. As Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2011, p.217) suggests there is a form of social negotiation between retrospective and prospective memory. She argues that it is the relationship borne out through these negotiations that “shape the place and framing of... issues on the public and media agendas”, as well as within any complex activist/re-activist framework an artist may engage through art practice. In this regard, an artist’s habitus is being shaped and re-invented both generally and artistically.

**Rethinking memory**

Similarly to Reading, Garde-Hansen et al., (2009, p.1-2), argue that one has to rethink one’s approach to the idea of memory, because it is constantly changing through the presence of digital media. Digital media, with its storage and rapid delivery of visual media, as they posit, has placed memory in a position of ever being active and submitting memory to new contexts. Communication networks, social, public and private, are frameworks for utilising visual sources to a capacity never before considered. Garde-Hansen et al., (2009, p.5), also consider the blurring taking place between the past and the present shows that memory has become mediatised as the processes of memory become “increasingly embedded in a self-reflexive and self-accumulative ‘media logic’”.

As Brogger and Newman (2010, p.13) suggest, the quickening of these processes in digital media is part of the relationship formed with the proliferation of visual media being drawn upon in this post traditional media age. Today, the traditional forms of visual media, photography, film, television and newspapers, to name a few, have been drawn together with social networks and on-line news services. Thus networks like Facebook, YouTube and on-line newspapers and broadcasting have become the digital
cultures of mass media, which is how painters like Dumas are able to form an engagement. In this way, Paul Frosh and Amit Pinchevski (2009, p.1) argue witnessing is “performed in, by, and through the media”. What they are suggesting is that through media, in the present landscape, the observer not only witnesses the event in the media, but also through the eyes of the particular media with which they are engaged. Consequently, these actions render the observer as a witness to all within the same time/space framework. This suggests that the interpretation process is embedded within the observer’s knowledge and place in the world.

Witnessing in, by and through media is also another way of thinking about a painter’s process when engaging photographic references. The painter is all of those ‘witnesses’ demonstrated in Frosh and Pinchevski’s notion and then they are more. Consider Xiaodong’s, painting *Three Gorges: Newly Displaced Population* (2004) (Fig. 5.19., p.175). In a similar way to Manet, and Doig for that matter, Xiaodong takes the photographic memories of several separately recorded events and constructs a new event based in the present. The participants in each photograph were witnessing an event on a different temporal plain. While each photograph fulfils Frosh and Pinchevski’s notion on witnessing, Xiaodong’s interpretive painting has placed the objects (the photographs) and the individuals (the participants) into new embodiments of witnessing and memory creation based on everyday life and the observer’s current place within that life.

In regard to this, Garde-Hansen et al. (2009, p.6) suggests,

> Everyday life’s penetration by the continual documenting of the instant, portable and accessible digital media has produced new and more frequent intersections with the institutional and not least in terms of often free if not cheap content for the news media.

In this way, everyday life’s accessibility has rendered digital media processes as non-elitist and provides a language consumers have become comfortable with (Garde-Hansen et al., 2009, p.9). Consequently, each consumer has become a producer as well. Through this consumer/producer paradigm the differentialities of memory converge into a blurred condition of co-existence. Garde-Hansen et al., (2009, p.11), go on to describe the way media functions in this condition as an “externalisation of inner processes, sensation, thoughts and memories”. But, they are quick to point out, new ways of thinking about memory only come about in photographic practices through the sharing capabilities of digital media (for instance, through Facebook). Similarly to Barthes’ concept of photographs, Garde-Hansen et al., (2009, p.11), are presenting digital media
as a mediator that turns the private into the public as one form of media mediates another in re-establishing the boundaries of the usage of memory and digital media. In this manner, such mediation is expanding the rich and complex visuality of the moment. Garde-Hansen et al., (2009, p.14), posit new media, digital media, as “a process of reformulating, reformatting, recycling, returning and even remembering other media”. In essence, this cyclical pattern of reshaping and reusing can be applied to the most versatile forms of digital media, the digital mobile phone, which is developed further in the next section.

**Engaging memobilia**

The term *memobilia* was coined by Reading (2009) to situate the digital mobile phone within the media landscape of today. Reading (2009, p.84) marks the digital mobile phone as a primary tool in this landscape, because it is a memory vehicle which can be seen as “wearable, shareable multimedia data records of events or communication”. *Memobilia* is like the express newspaper, the telegram, the news flash on television and the family album. It has remediated those ‘old’ technologies into a one stop memory and communication station sitting in your top pocket, locating memory in time/space in an entirely new way. Reading (2009, pp.84-85) claims “They compress, change and reconfigure human beings’ experience in space/time through the inclusion of digital and video cameras, audio recording, music playback, radios, multimedia and text messaging”. It’s the wearable entrance to the networks on the public domain. Andre H. Caran and Letizia Caronia (as cited in Reading, 2009, p.86) suggest, “The present tense now governs storytelling on the phone. Narratives no longer inform others about what one did during the day but let them participate in what is going on while it is happening”. That is, ‘stories’ from the past have been replaced by acts of participating in the events as they occur. In this manner, Reading’s notion of *memobilia* sees human memory restructured on both a micro and macro level, where everyday life is re-coordinated as to how events and memories are engaged. In a way that would possibly overwhelm Manet’s expectations around photographic reportage the scope of information and the available systems of usage and storage have made digital media into a great resource for allied media, as well as creating a space for artistic selection and interpretation processes. However, there are many ways of engaging in digital media resources with news organisations being among the most reliant of such media as Reading illustrates.
The new phenomena of the citizen journalist

“News organisations”, Reading (2009, p.87) argues, “have responded to the technology by soliciting material from mobile phones, with major news events, including terrorist attacks and natural disasters now being reported”. What Reading is claiming is borne out by the imagery of the ‘Arab Spring’ up-risings in the Middle-East in 2011. Witnessed through the photographic resources of photojournalists, and the activists themselves, the images appeared in newspapers and television news programs almost as it was happening. On one hand, the photojournalist used conventional digital television and still cameras. The activists, on the other hand, corresponded with the world through their digital camera phones transmitting over digital social media sites and other similar outlets. The news organisations rapidly picked up these broadcasts and combined them with the work of the photojournalist to bring the events to the world.

On another level, the populous uprisings in Egypt in late 2011 and early 2012, as the aftermath of the Arab Spring continues, have demonstrated the shifts in thinking that have developed towards journalistic surveillance. Each faction recognised that the controlling apparatus (the camera) also needed to be controlled. In this case, the mobile phone camera became the point of resistance and the storyteller at the same time. But, resistance and storytelling has also been occurring in the interpretation of photographs by painters since Manet’s time. Such actions, as seen in Egypt, demonstrate that the digital media landscape is made up of many differing landscapes as lens data collecting provides new ways for the photographic message, as Barthes (1986, p.3) terms it, to be brought forth in the world.

Photography, the silent memory, through ‘instant access’ on the social and political level to digital media networks, as Hoskins (2009, p.31) suggests, is compressing, preserving, restoring and representing the past and delivering memory up to the present. Photography is the tag that invites the recollection, which is also indexical as it testifies to the moment, deriving a large degree of their cultural meaning “from their indexical meaning as a trace of the real”, as Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright (2009, p.32) claim. It is the idea that draws all of these moments and recollections into the digital media landscape of the present, which has links into many other facets of mass media.

Photography in mass media
The role of the popular press in mass media, which now includes most forms of digital media, such as *Flickr*, *Facebook* and *YouTube*, is referred to by Danaher et al., (2000, p.56), as social and cultural. Whilst there is a social and cultural impact inherent in mass media, in their assessment, such media act in a ‘surveillance/witnessing’ capacity within society. Kelli McCluskey (2006) discusses the relationship within mass media of surveillance images and documentary photography. Her understanding of this is drawn out of their propensity to bear witness as photographic evidence, providing a perspective that draws in photojournalism. McCluskey (2006, pp.28-31) argues that the “gaze of both types of camera, hand held and wall-mounted, meet occasionally when there is crisis”. The meeting of photographic technologies, such as those discussed here, quite often occurs in mass media - books, magazines, newspapers, television programs and *YouTube* to name but a few.

![Fig. 3.6.](image)

Often considered endemic to modern society, the everyday practice of surveillance is given an overview by David Lyon (2007, p.14), who argues that surveillance practices are determined by the particularity of each situation. They are “the focused, systematic and routine attention to personal details”, he (2007, p.14) suggests, “for purposes of influence, management, protection or direction”. The role played by mass media could be thought of as primarily a photographic surveillance practice, and such observation lends itself to other vision based practices like witnessing and memory. “Vision and visibility”, as Lyon (2007, p.47) argues, “have been central to surveillance since early modern times”. I would also argue that from the visuality and subjectivity of the photographic in mass media, painters draw inspiration for undertaking their research practices, such as the use of webcam imagery for *Oyster Bar* (2013) (Fig. 3.6.), by American multi-media artist Sherry Karver. Karver’s work is based in CCTV imagery and surveillance photographs she personally captures. This particular image, which she is using in an on-going project, shows a group of people eating at an oyster bar in New Orleans, completely unaware that they were being observed by Karver, who was in California at the time.
Karver utilises such authoritative gazes as CCTV as well as many other forms of surveillances imagery on a regular basis in her painting practice, where she uses various mediums like oil, text and resin over a photograph to convey a painterly image. She also uses personally captured surveillance images, or images downloaded from ‘public Internet Webcams’, as in *Oyster Bar*, or from airport security screening, as source material. In this way, her work becomes primarily a practice of social observation. In her artist’s statement on her website Karver (2011) claims:

> I realized that surveillance cameras have taken on another unexpected purpose. They have become the historians of our contemporary era. They capture us in our everyday lives, going about our business, usually unaware that we are being observed. Never before in history have we been so documented.

She (2011) also comments:

> Often our only interaction is through the Internet, rather than face to face. At any time of the day or night, we can watch and capture images of people anywhere in the world. We can be "somewhere" without leaving the comfort of our own living room. This creates an undeniable feeling of voyeurism, which in its own way helps to establish a kind of anonymous connection with the rest of humanity.

As opposed to the ideas put forward by Reading and Garde-Hansen et al., Karver is arguing that surveillance cameras and computer technologies amplify and highlight the duality of loneliness and alienation in society that participants can self-impose on their everyday lives when engaging photographic technologies.

Karver is drawing on similar Modernist traditions to those that were finding their feet in Manet’s time. That is, Karver, like Manet, is utilising found objects – found photographic information, as part of a selection process in art-making. Her artistic habitus, again like Manet’s, led to the interpretative decisions based around this selection process. Karver is using processes based in the interchangeability of information found in Modernist tradition and drawing them out into, and creating, a new Postmodernist tradition. Not only this, Karver is also drawing on globalised Postmodernist practices inspired by the constant presence of iterative Modernist processes. Like Foucault’s idea of the episteme, Modernist processes exist in parallel in Karver’s work and run simultaneously with her Postmodernist approach. She draws on one to transform knowledge to create a new epistemic mode within the other. Her practice is such that it is constantly evolving to allow new epistemic modes to emerge.
In the complex ways Karver uses CCTV, observation is paramount in an apparatus where witnessing and creating memories place the photographic in surveillance within the space of vision and visibility. In regard to this, Crary (1999, p.12) argues that vision is open to outside influences as the, “rapid accumulation of knowledge [over the last century] about the workings of a fully embodied observer disclosed possible ways that vision was open to procedures of normalization, of quantification, of discipline”. Such ideas may be easily applied to the surveillance, witnessing and memory practices of today’s photographic media as Crary (1999, p.13) then goes on to claim “it [vision and visibility] is embedded in a pattern of adaptability to new technological relations, social configurations, and economic imperatives”. These contemporary forms of visibility have been defined by William G. Staples (1997, p.51) as an “optical revolution engendered by a dizzying array of digitized, computer/video/telecommunication devices that have made watching and monitoring deftly penetrating yet seamless and hidden”. That is, photographic technologies through their proliferation of number and duality of process have made witnessing second nature. The gaze of the photographic apparatus, the camera, does not discriminate, what is there to be seen will be registered in the image it produces. It is how that image is used by mass media and authoritarian bodies that render the image as both controlling and productive acts of witnessing (Staples, 1997, p.52). Vision and visibility are both a defining trait of photography and a tool of hierarchical discipline, as ‘observation’ in everyday power struggles. In this vein, vision and visuality are spaces in a Modernist approach to art-making.

In this Modernist approach, the photograph, in the Foucauldian play, enacts the part of the “exchanger of knowledge”, as Foucault (1979, p.187) terms it, performing the movement of knowledge from the world to the observer, much in the same way as Karver has used it. At first the security system observed the exchange through the CCTV, then Karver over the net and then Karver’s own viewing public through an exhibition of her work. After this, in its new painterly form, it became available to the observer on the net once more. In essence, the media landscape of today is redefining the concept of ‘exhibition’ and its interactions with the audience. In this way, this observer, in Foucauldian thinking, also includes the photographer and the painter, with the photograph playing a role similar to the teacher, and the observer as the ever learning and interpreting pupil. Furthermore, the photograph, as an examination apparatus, falls within Foucault’s concept of the examination by opening up two correlative
possibilities. According to Foucault (1979, p.190), on the one hand, there is the possibility of bringing forth ‘a comparative system’ where overall phenomena can be measured and groups from a given population can be researched, dissected and characterised then placed within predetermined categories. On the other hand, there is the possibility of the individual as an object becoming both describable and analysable in everyday life.

In sum, vision and visibility, like that shown in Karver’s photo-paintings, provides dynamic and complex ways of witnessing and seeing everyday life. Foucault has, along with Lyon and Crary, demonstrated observation’s critical association with everyday life, an association which, by circumstance, is manifest in mass media. In these associations, the vision and visibility in the photograph are implemented in practices of social configuration and the normalisation of society as well as being tools of interpretation in art practice. The many differing dynamic and complex ways that photography witnesses and creates memories are further examined next through the work practices of William Yang who works in the field of documentary photography.

**Performing photographs as auto-ethnography**

Chinese/Australian photographer and monologist William Yang’s intentionality as a photographer is in researching the complexities of trauma, family and identity. In two particular photographic series, *Sadness* (1999) and *About my mother* (2003), Yang exhibits a compassionate research approach in documenting two significant events in his life. *Sadness*, both a photographic essay and video presentation, witnesses the trauma of the AIDS epidemic in recording a series of images and monologues about friends from his gay family, who became victims of the disease. It also witnesses the trauma of family and identity, in being a Chinese/Australian gay man, as well as his own fears of the AIDS epidemic. The images that illustrate Yang’s intentionality of concern and care, are portraits with monologues on the decline of his friends, like Allen (Figs 3.7.). These images and monologues draw out the fragilities of a very ill friend, and witnesses Yang’s own fragility as a friend and documenter in a time of crisis. By representing these images as conventional portraits, Yang is establishing that everyone is situated in conventional society and also signals how difficult a proposition that is. A similar thematic is represented in *About my mother*, where the concentration is upon the trauma of family expectations and one’s own search and expression of identity.
Yang, like Karver, is working in a Postmodernist context. His Postmodernist practice is one that explores complex Modernist traditions (photography and performance) that operate independently of each other except when brought together in a performance centred on an ethnographic reading of his life and art-making. In yet another form of exhibition in the Modernist/Postmodernist era, Figure 3.8., is an image of Yang performing a monologue on the series *About my mother* in front of the projected image of his late mother, Emma, with whom he had a difficult, yet loving relationship. However, it was a relationship in which Yang’s search for his own identity was often tested (Queensland, 2003). Yang created the series in remembrance of his mother, utilising his own photographs. However, when it became difficult to use these images for completing the photographic essay, Yang selectively re-photographed old family snapshots of her to compile the narrative he wished to present (Queensland, 2003). As acts of observation, these works of Yang’s demonstrate that subjectivity is of a primary concern in documentary photography. As referred above, this also supports the notion of photography being seen as a surveillance and witnessing practice, with Yang even submitting the family snapshot to the notion. This not only supports the idea, but Yang, here in particular, also exposes the proposition of the photograph being a memory device. Yang’s engagement, through text, performance and visual representation, reflects a strong emotive social bias. The political in his work is hovering below the surface as though it is an inherent consequence of an emotive social engagement. Thereupon, Yang’s act of documentary photography demonstrates the variable approaches available in art-making, and knowledge creation, in a particular genre of art practice.
The gaze through mediated practices

Kerry Tremain (2000, p.7) argues that documentary photographers, like Yang, are fully aware of the complexities and fragile truths in which they are involved, often undertaking long-term approaches to engaging with the people they photograph. Although it is a widely held belief that photography changes nothing, as claimed by Tremain, Yang’s photography would tend to support his argument regarding documentary photographer’s awareness factor. It is this awareness that is also found in many painting practices and, therefore, is integral to the relationship between these two practices. In addition, Yang’s work would also support Tremain’s (2000, p.8) belief that photographers find their “own suffering, their memories of their suffering, [make] them seek the suffering of others”. Beaumont Newhall (as cited in Abbott, 2010, p.10) provides an approach to this form of photography that gives us another view when he posits:

Documentary is a mode in which pictures can be used to engage and report editorially on the world. It is an approach that places emphasis on creating series of images in a straight, emotionally engaged fashion and organising them into persuasive sequences.

What Newhall is suggesting is that the documentary process is essentially an act of reportage, organising emotional witnessing into persuasive presentations of the events it captures from the world.

Mediation through reportage

Where documentary photographers appear mostly to have the freedom of choice in selecting their subject matter, within the framework of news media journalistic practices, freedom of choice does not exist. Photojournalists are often influenced by the interests of the corporate owners for whom they work. And more often than not, the photographs used in most mass media productions go uncredited. On the contrary, when credited it is not uncommon for the image to be assigned to the news agency that supplied the image, thus rendering the photojournalist anonymous. For example, in 2011, Kim Jong-Un became the leader of North Korea. On 11 February 2012, the Sydney Morning Herald ran an article based on email correspondence between Kim’s brother, and a Japanese journalist. The photographs shown in the newspaper were taken from file photographs and neither photojournalist is credited; only the news agency that supplied the image (AFP: Agency France-Presse).
Photojournalist events such as these are dealing with acts of reportage. For Ian Jack (1993, p.vi), reportage delivers a sense of something observed by the eye witness. The practical implications for John Carey (1987, p.xxix) are present in two different approaches to reportage. In one way, it is written by the eye witness to the event. Alternatively, in a similar way to how Manet’s Maximilian paintings can be considered as reportage, it is compiled and written from eye witness accounts. This latter approach is descriptive of how photography is engaged in painting from photographic references. Therefore, reportage, like this painting genre, depends on the eye witness for instigating a genuine response to particular events in bringing them to the world. Reflecting on Manet’s work, the information he utilised for the creation of his Maximilian paintings illustrates how reportage in itself is open to interpretation, framed by, and open to new spatio-temporal experiences in the fields of visuality and memory.

Scott McQuire (1998, p.60) considers that since the addition of the chemical process to the lens process in photography, the ascendant cultural dynamic (as posited by Barthes), has been the publicity of the private. This is what photography is creating in the media landscape of today. “The age of photography”, Barthes (1980, p.98) claims, “corresponds precisely to the explosion of the private into the public, or rather into the creation of a new social value, which is the publicity of the private”. This, McQuire (1998, p.60) suggests, emphasises that there appears to be very little differentiation between public and private photographic imagery. Hence, the proximity of the public and private in photography today, tends to submit to the notion that the boundaries between most forms of photography are blurred. It is within the blurring of these boundaries that the elements of influence on photographers and painters of photographic references are manifest. It is also within this blur that photography has impacted and influenced painting in contemporary art practice, which is demonstrated in the next section by exploring the practices of a set of artists, who play on vision and visibility in the form of ocular interventions.

**Ocular interventions in painterly Modernist practices**

Over time painters became aware of what was happening to the imagery in the photograph. One of the defining factors of this evolution is the painter’s engagement with the ways of seeing and perceiving informed by ocular interventions. These interventions are often produced by the mechanical flattening of the photograph, induced
by the eye of the camera. Within the eye of the camera, for William Henry Fox Talbot (1839), the ‘magic’ in the photograph lay in capturing shadows. The elusiveness of the shadow, Fox Talbot (1839) claimed, was no longer present. The photograph’s ‘natural magic’, as Fox Talbot suggests, reduces the ‘fleeting and momentary’ to a visual instant. Joseph-Louis Gay-Lussac (1839, p.255), in his addresses to the French Parliament, suggests that the ‘magic’ of photography “contributes to the progress of civilization”. Gay-Lussac (1839, p.256) comments that photography has its own way of informing, and shaping, the idea of perspective and the effects of light and shadow have on this, as this opens spaces for new discoveries to come forward. However, on a more practical level, Fox Talbot, at the time he was perfecting the process, saw photography, firstly, as something that could draw its own picture, and secondly, as a new tool for looking. He also saw it as something more, as he (1839) claimed that “The invention [photography] may be employed with great facility for obtaining copies of drawings or engravings, or facsimiles of MSS [manuscripts]”. In observing this, Fox Talbot is inadvertently predicting the evolution of photography into the photographic technologies that came to fruition during the Modernist era, as illustrated earlier. As technologies appeared in the Modernist era, photography, for painters, became even more of an intervention than Fox Talbot could have predicted.

One of the peculiarities of photography, which would have been observed by many painters since Manet’s time, is the difference between eyesight and camera sight. Outwardly, eyesight is binocular, as Solso (1994, p.44) posits, where the image taken by each eye is transformed into a single image by a function of the brain. The eye detects the visual world, according to Solso (1994, p.44), and then it is “transduced to neural energy and passed along to the visual cortex... where it is initially processed in terms of primitive shapes and forms”. After this they are analysed into more complex readings. On the other hand, the camera is monocular and only produces one image. Eyesight focuses inwardly onto something, while the camera sees and captures everything in front of it. The one relationship prominent between the two forms of sight is focusing. What the eye focuses on causes what is around it to become a blur, “[because] retinal sensitivity is so restricted”, Arnheim (1969, p.24) suggests, “the eye can and must single out some particular spot, which becomes isolated, dominant, [and] central”. Even though it captures everything within its field of vision, the same can be said to happen when the camera is focused on a particular point of reference in the subject.
The difference between eyesight and camera sight, however, is that in the case of eyesight, the mind shuts out the ‘out of focus’ elements, whilst they are still there in the photograph. A consequence of this is how the camera can record the elements of things in motion, such as Muybridge’s photographs of horses, and humans, in motion (Figs. 3.3, p.60). For photographers and painters alike, the camera’s ability to record motion was evident in Muybridge’s work. His work demonstrates that the speed of focusing involved in the mechanical process does not filter out the non-subject areas of the photographic image. Thus the capturing of the animal in motion by the camera shows every movement, albeit often in a dissonant way. The mind, on the other hand, as Muybridge’s work suggests, cannot register motion quickly enough. The focusing of the eyesight, due to the eye’s constant refocusing, fails to focus in a way that would delineate the image efficiently enough for the mind to perceive what is actually happening. The mind reads the images in motion as an out of focus blurring while the photograph is the imitator of what is there. The animal is faster than the eye; the camera is faster than the animal, which puts the classical notion of a static perspectival viewing point in crisis.

Rewriting perspective

Cezanne, according to Fogle (2001, p.166) in his exhibition catalogue based on the ‘death of painting’, has been credited with providing the break that brought on Modern art, when he simplified the imagery in his paintings. In this way, Cezanne reduced the dependency on ‘scientific’ (lineal) perspective (Fogle, 2001, p.166). The manner in which he accomplished this move away from a dependency on perspective, was by taking notice of the stereoscopic focusing of his two eyes, which is displayed in the laying forward of the imagery in Still Life with Apples and Oranges (1895-1900) (Fig. 3.9. p.82). Cezanne, according to Januszcak (2006), engaged the fracturing of angles that having two eyes is unconsciously developing. Two eyes, separated by a couple of centimetres, meant viewing the subject from different angles, therefore, upsetting the idea of conventional linear perspective.

Observing the fundamentals of focusing, Cezanne enthusiastically placed the art of looking under critical scrutiny. As Arnhem (1969, p.288) argues, the paradox that surrounds linear perspective is in trying to locate “the infinite in a definitively ordered representation”. That is, linear perspective is trying to place something that is everywhere
into a rigid space, where mathematical principles order the distribution of proportions, and not the eyes. Cezanne chose the eyes. This action in Cezanne’s painting opens up the possibility of seeing everything on the table, which would be denied to the observer in a conventional treatment of perspective. Cezanne worked on the principle that each eye observes the object from a slightly different angle to the other. Januszczak (2006) demonstrates Cezanne’s approach in his documentary *The Impressionists* by synchronising the image from two cameras, filming in unison and from two slightly different angles, into one on-screen image. The effect was a slightly blurred image which could be favourably compared to Cezanne’s still life paintings, which again is demonstrated by *Still Life with Apples and Oranges*. “All Cezanne needed”, Januszczak (2006) argues, “was a bag of apples and a new way of looking [to produce]... an optical tipsiness that is so Cezanne”.

Fig. 3.9.

Around the time Cezanne was beginning to work in this way Oliver Wendell Holmes recognised the ‘two-eyes’ effect in his treatise *The stereoscope and the stereograph* (1859), which, in a sense, saw the photograph (the Daguerreotype) as a new consciousness. The stereoscope is a vision instrument that views two separate images of an object, taken from two slightly different angles (in a similar way to Januszczak’s experiments) and causes the eye to see as one. What fascinated Holmes was how the stereoscope could take two two-dimensional images that had previously been captured from the three-dimensional world, and reanimate the images in creating a sense of the three-dimensional for the observer (Harrison et al., 1998, p.669). Holmes regarded this as an act of the ‘miraculous’, where when “the two eyes look on two different pictures, we perceive but one picture”. It is notions like this that demonstrate the space open to Cezanne to rewrite the concept of perspective in his own way. In essence, the stereoscope was an instrument that blurred the lines of linear perspective, drawing out the idea of perspective as a theoretical, as opposed to a physical,
phenomenon. However, Cezanne in this still life is not only entering a third space by addressing the deconstruction of perspectival principles, he is also entering another space of vision, an abstracted space.

Perspective had an intrinsic relationship with painting for centuries and with the advent of photography it was found to be inherently present within the photograph (Scharf, 1968, p.190). But photography also draws out the shifts in thinking about perspective in art-making. Aleksandr Rodchenko saw the photograph as a manipulator of perspective. His work on photography, using conceptual approaches informed, and shaped, by Russian Constructivism, was designed to “visually represent intellectual constructs” (as cited in Bunyen, 2011). Rodchenko’s photography, as Marcus Bunyen (2011) argues, emphasised “Destabilizing diagonals, harsh contrasts, [and] tilted views”. For instance, in similar ways to Karver, the photomontages Rodchenko created during 1923 fused photography, text and graphics together, drawing on the Modernist traditions explored in Constructivist approaches to art-making. In other works, he would capture extreme close-ups of faces, exploring extreme foreshortening and instilling overpowering presence in the photograph (Secher, 2008). Yet again, in other photographs, he would take images from above and from ground level that would turn buildings and people into semi-abstract forms. In Rodchenko’s hands, the photograph went from a representation of the real to a representational space full of geometric shapes. Nare Aleksanyan (2011) suggests that Rodchenko’s “carefully constructed compositions... were a way of discovering new visual opportunities... He intentionally stressed perspective and depth by choosing angles... that showed the object... from a completely new perspective”. By manipulating the perspectival presence inherent in the photograph, like Cezanne, Rodchenko brings forth a different way of seeing that is new in the way objects are observed and interpreted.

In Rodchenko’s images, as describes above, the two dimensional compression present in photographic representation, as shall also be seen later in the discussion on Vermeer, creates a depth of vision within a foreshortening process that reassigns volumes and shapes in the images in abstract ways. That is, the shapes closest to the ‘camera’ is much larger, and more distorted, than those only slightly further away, which gives a different, and yet, recognisable, sense of depth and space in a perspectival way. American painter Morris Kantor (as cited in Coke, 1964, p.67) suggests that such deconstructions of perspective are “interesting pictorial scheme[s] to add visual excitement”, when transforming the photographic image into their painterly interpretations. For instance,
Cubism, which is indebted to both photography and Cezanne’s Modernist approach to painting, as shall be seen later, reconstructs perspective from a single focal point at one particular moment in time to a space of multiple focal points structured over a period of time. In this respect, perspective is no longer rigid, as Ernst Gombrich (1982, p.253) idea of the ‘eye-witness principle’ (everything in the image is relative to the observer standing in one place) would suggest. According to Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.104), the infinite is everywhere, which means that perspective in the Modernist context can no longer be tied to one place or moment in time. What this meant for painting from photographic references was that perspective could be included, or reduced as Cezanne was wont to do, or it could be completely overlooked or remoulded as is demonstrated later in the work of Hockney (Chapter 5).

In Cezanne’s time, portraiture was, and probably still is, where the photograph was most frequently utilised (Coke, 1968, p.19). The advantage is that it can record the most accurate representation of the sitter and once it is recorded, the sitter is no longer required. This frees up the painter to carry on independently of the sitter. Cézanne indulged in this method a great deal as a frame of reference, Coke (1968, p.83) suggests, because he required such perfect stillness from his sitter it was virtually impossible to achieve in a real life setting. Apart from the convenience of relieving Cezanne of the terrors of the sitter, he was using the photograph as both a reference point and a point of departure (Coke, 1964, p.83). Cezanne deconstructed the photographic image to apply his own painterly language to reflect his way of seeing and perceiving painted imagery that disrupted classical ideas on perspective to engender motion within the work to create a new sense of space.

Whilst there are other ways of deconstructing the logic of linear perspective, which is primarily an invention of Western culture, other cultures have brought forth other nuances that widen the concept of what perspective is in Modernist approaches to looking at, and seeing, the world. For instance, in Chapter 5, it is shown that the work of Hockney has a relationship to Chinese ideas on perspective, while Xiaodong marries Western and Chinese concepts of perspective to his painterly representations. In effect, the idea of perspective has been altered by the clash of cultures in a way that reinvents habitus in each and every Modernist artist’s work. Perspective in a Modernist context is a more observer involved experience than being about a lineal construction for a greater reality in representation as characterised by Renaissance approaches to painting. In the Modernist
approach of Cezanne’s art-making, perspective is a constantly changing vision, for as the eye continually moves, it continues to evolve. Additionally, in present times, perspective also invokes memory as a foundation for instilling experience into the artwork. In this way, according to Erwin Panofsky (1991, p.41), perspective is no longer dependent on the vanishing point. It is now about mapping space, where space shrinks, or expands, relative to the observer’s sense of representation. In a similar way to Cezanne’s Modernist thinking on art-making, perspective can be implied by the manipulation of volumes, shapes and colours without reference to linear perspective, as Rodchenko illustrates. In this respect, the optical effects of the camera inherently produce a certain dissonance in the photographic images it flattens in its reworking of perspective. Some painters have explored this dissonance and created their own form of dissonant representations in the artworks they create. Some of these engagements with dissonance are discussed in the next section in order to observe some of the excitement Kantor encountered.

Dissonance

Dissonance, in the Modernist context, plays a role in both photography and painting. It can be inspirationally as well as intentionally and contextually employed, while it is often the message stick for the painter’s viewpoint. However, for many painters of photographic references it is also often a tool for creating interest in the viewing of their work. Solso (1994, p.101) describes dissonance as being the disparity when confronted by something that does not coincide with what one expects to find in an image, and this happens to each individual in their own particular way. The painting The Bar at the Folies-Bergere (1881-82) by Manet (Fig. 3.10.), as subtle as it may be, is an example of dissonance employed in painting. When looking at the painting on the wall in the Courtauld Institute (London), a sense of something not quite right comes forth. This is confirmed by Januszczak (2009) in his documentary Manet. Suzon, the barmaid, is looking straight at you as though you are standing immediately in front of her, but the reflection of you and the reflection of her back, which should be in the mirror right behind her, is not there.
Her reflection is out of place over to the right, while your reflection, in your coat and top hat, is seen farther away from where it should be according to the laws of physics. Interestingly, Wright (1993, p.25) confirms that there is more artificiality about the image, another dissonance so to speak, as the scene was not actually in the Folies-Bergere, but was constructed in the artist’s studio. This is Manet bringing the landscape into the studio in a literal way, which was a process he began embracing around the time he initially started referencing photographs.

However, by this time Manet was working in his studio exclusively, because he was almost paralysed by the disease that would soon take his life (Wright, 1993, p.60). The crowd reflected in the mirror was not there either and if you look at it closely the reflection becomes very reminiscent of a Renoir painting, perhaps indicating an interchange of ideas that Wadley (1967, p.16) was so critical of. The reconciling of the image is opposed by Manet’s approach to the construction of the composition. In the dissonance, Manet appears to be working on the notion that the everyday is often not quite what it seems.

There is also a relationship in play here. It is a relationship where each image is materialised by the way the artist and the observer sees them. The object’s presence is shaped by the historic approach of the artist and the observer through the dynamics of habitus and the image exists through the relational dynamics of sociability and interaction. Here, in the case of painting from photographic references, it is art being created/used through the existing forums of photography and painting, thus, visual dissonance forces the observer to look differently at the image. If one thinks of it, Cézanne’s apples and oranges would fall off the plate if his image coincided with the expectations of reality, which is not something that happens in the work of Vermeer.

The optic effects found in the paintings of Vermeer bear witness to the relationships in the photographic effect of focusing and foreshortening. This is demonstrated through Vermeer’s use of the modern camera’s forerunner, the camera obscura. Hockney (2006, p.58) observes that because of the way the camera obscura refocuses three dimensional objects into two dimensions, the “[foreground] objects and figures are sometimes very large; some things are painted in soft focus, or out of focus altogether”. Vermeer’s Officer and Laughing Girl, (c. 1655-60) (Fig. 3.11.) demonstrates this clearly in the way the officer, who is very close to the lens, is very large and out of focus, which is
Fig. 3.11.

Fig. 3.12.
the result of the lens being focused on a point between the officer and the woman he is talking to. The perspectival construction of space in this work is comparable with a photograph (Fig. 3.12. p.87) that this researcher took looking down Millennium Walk to the bridge over the Thames.

In the photograph, the focal distortions of a flattened image prove to be an alternative and new way of seeing and perceiving nature, compared to classical/Renaissance approaches to lineal perspective. The figure in the foreground of this photograph is large, but the sizes of the figures only a few metres further along the Walk are decreased in size dramatically. Notably, all are in soft focus, as the main focus, which is difficult to see in this small image, is deliberately much closer to the bridge, some 40 metres away. This dissonance in focusing can be exciting and this is why artists like Kantor (discussed earlier) would find these distortions of interest for their work. It is dissonances such as these that awakened Picasso to the possibilities thrown up by photographs and it was this engagement with photography that, Gertrude Stein (as cited in Baldassari, 1997, pp.9-12) suggests, led him, in collaboration with Braque, to research and develop the processes of Cubism (discussed next).

**Cubism: A photographic layering**

What is in focus here is the role photography may have played in the development of Picasso’s painting practice and his development of Cubism as an artistic practice and way of working. Even though there is a large amount written on Picasso and Cubism, there is only a limited amount on Picasso’s engagement with photography. Although others are referred to, for gaining an insight into photography’s role in Picasso’s practice and Cubism’s development, two books are key to this particular discussion, *Picasso and Photography: The Dark Mirror* (1997) by Anne Baldassari and *Cubism: As History and an Analysis 1907-1914* (1959) by John Golding.

In his review of the 1910 Salon d’Automne, which contained some of Picasso’s and Braque’s Cubist works, Roger Allard (as cited in Golding, 1959, p.10) claims:

> There is thus being born in opposition to Impressionism an art which instead of copying natural phenomena, offers to the mind of the spectator, in their pictorial entirety, elements that as a result of synthesis are fundamental and timeless.
As a working definition, Golding’s description of what is occurring in the processes of Cubism provides a way of understanding what Allard discusses. Golding (1959, p.10) describes Cubism as “the construction of a painting in terms of a linear grid or framework, the combination of several views of an object in a single image, and of abstract and representational elements in the same picture”. The results of the synthesis maybe “fundamental and timeless” (Allard, as cited in 1959, p.10), but it was also a new way of seeing and thinking about painting brought on by photography.

Scharf (1968, p.268) also wrote of this subject, however he was unsure whether photography affected Cubism in any way, but, at the same time, he was confident that Picasso was engaging photographic imagery during the period Cubism was being developed. Baldassari (1997, p.10), one of the compilers of Picasso’s archive after his death, describes Picasso’s engagement with the photographic medium as extensive in the first quarter of the twentieth Century. Baldassari maintains that not only did Picasso use photography as a compositional departure point for his paintings, but he also used the medium as a visual diary of the progress of a work that served him in two ways. Firstly, as a record of a work’s progress, and secondly, in a more important way, it gave him a developmental structure for planning further departure points within the painting being created. Baldassari (1997, p.19) explains “The photograph thereby marks the progress of the painting and indisputably contributes to an accurate understanding of the way it was composed”. The chromatic contrasts of Picasso’s photographs, Baldassari (1997, p.22) argues, reduced the painting to a “structure of shadow and light”, reminiscent of Manet’s ‘dark mirror’ image assessment processes discussed by Antonin Proust in his essay entitled Édouard Manet: Souvenirs (1913). Where Picasso used photography, Manet, Proust (1913) argued, used the reflection in a dark mirror of the painting he was working on to critically assess its structure and tonality.

Pierre Daix (as cited in Baldassari, 1997, p.35) suggests Picasso is demonstrating to the world and himself “that painting could borrow all of photography’s effects and wield them much more impressively”. Picasso used a box camera, which up to and including the period of time he was using it (1900-1930) were aptly known as ‘Detectives’, because they could seek out and capture everything visually available within the camera’s framing (Baldassari, 1997, p.14). His approach to painting from

---

3 Anne Baldassari, at the time of writing, had recently lost her position as Director of the Musée Picasso in Paris.
photographic references, as Baldassari (1997, p.35) describes, was to work “from a photograph yet to work only with the raw means of painting”, which she summed up by suggesting:

Picasso freed himself from the photographs that were his starting point by deliberately disordering his vision; all that he retained of his models was their discreet plastic appeal and the lingering aura of their fleeting passage before the camera (Baldassari, 1997, p.40).

Taking this further, László Moholy-Nagy (as cited in Scharf, 1968, p.270) was of the opinion that Cubism was directly and/or indirectly influenced by the “technique and spirit of photography”. In addition, Scharf (1968, p.270) cites the commonalities between Cubism and photography as “simultaneity, superimposition, and possibly the alternation from positive to negative planes and lines”, and so, what interactions led to the development of this process?

Picasso’s paintings from Horta de San Juan in Spain, as cited in Golding (1959, p.71), referred to as Horta de Ebro by the artist, are considered as some of the pre-eminent works in the early development of Cubism. Baldassari (1997, p.74) argues that this Spanish town is where one of the “decisive moments in [the] maturation of Cubism” occurred. Three photographs looking across the rooftops of the village, two depicting the reservoir (Figs. 3.13. & 3.14.) and one looking back across the village from the lower vantage point at the opposite end of the village to the first two photographs (Fig. 3.15.) are the important images here. These photographs, Baldassari (1997, p.74) believes, set the stage for the Cubist approach of fracturing the subject/object to reveal all sides in one view. *Houses on the Hill* (1909) (Fig. 3.16.) is the product of these photographic references, which also clearly shows indebtedness to the painting structures of Cezanne. Baldassari (1997, p.74) clarifies this idea with “[this] ambiguity affects the apparent contours of volumes and the layering of planes, thereby offering correspondences with Cezannesque principles of handling space by tipping it up toward the pictorial surface”. That is, the angularity of Cezanne’s image constructions is adapted to the layering and fracturing found in Cubism.

Not forgetting that Braque made a large contribution to the development of Cubism, Picasso, inspired by the concepts of form and space illuminated in Cezanne’s paintings, as Golding (1959, p.73) suggests, began to embed and synthesise these elements into his work. Taking the information ascribed from the varying angular views led Picasso to
apply such multi-perspectival angular language to natural forms in producing his Cubist compositions. Conceptually, the angulations inherent in tribal sculpture (Golding, 1959, p.72), and body adornment, are refined to deliver, in combination with the distending structuring of Cezanne, the stratified layering of Cubist figuration. The two ‘reservoir’ photographs were made from two different viewing angles and two different heights above the rooftops, which could be considered as emulating Holmes’ ideas on stereoscopic sight. The view from the other end of town, on the other hand, has a longer focus and plays with Picasso’s almost habitual approach, according to Baldassari (1997, p.14), of placing the camera low to the ground to create the impression of looking up into the subject in a similar way to Rodchenko’s ground level photography. Each of these views provide separate layers and points of perspective, which Picasso then draws into fractured multi-layered images centred on one point on the painting surface. In this manner, Cubism is a painterly photographic layering.

Even though Golding (1959, p.74) argues that he finds nothing scientific about the work of both Picasso and Braque, it is possible to find, on a closer look at their Cubist
paintings, an unconscious mathematical layering structure embedded into this almost formulaic approach to painting. This formula, this approach to their image-making, deconstructs the separate images of the subject. It then takes those images and repositions them in both space and time by fracturing the time involved in photography circumnavigating the object and representing this as a flattened form in a single image. By doing this viewing time is reduced from many moments to a moment, as opposed to the mathematical order of proportions found in lineal perspective, which witnesses a moment as a moment. Picasso’s Cubist rendering of the Horta de Ebro landscape photographs illustrates the various angles of the buildings captured by Picasso’s photographic expedition around the village supplied a repositioning in both time and space. As Golding (1959, p.74) further suggests this simplification of form invokes a reflection on memory in “the artist’s new vision of the world around him”. Golding is arguing that the condensing of perspective in Cubist imagery is divergent and the more the image recedes into the distance, the more it expands, to lay the circumnavigated subject fully open (Golding, 1959, p.75). Thus, the importance to this research of Picasso’s constructive use of photography in his painting practice is twofold. Firstly, it is embedded and delineated in the use of two different epistemological frameworks (photography and painting) to create another (Cubism). Secondly, the materiality of his painting process demonstrates the opportunities that experimentation provides with the engagement between a painter and his/her materials.

Sensibility and creative vision

The pictorial accuracy, the reductive power and the focusing qualities, such as fragmentation and blurring, which are prominent in the works of such painters as Picasso, Richter and Bacon, are part of photography’s attraction for painters. In this process, the photograph enables painters to understand foreshortening and tonality as principles of perspective, all of which are difficult for eyesight to detect. But whether it was through photography that painting was challenged over the representation of realistic imagery, or not, is speculative. For even though photography has been used in painting practice ever since the arrival of the photography of Nicéphore Niépce in the 1830s, the effect that one has had on the other has given rise to much complex and rich debate. From the photograph’s inception, according to Freeland (2001, p.35), imitating the real became less of an aim of the painter and became more about “an artist’s individual sensibility and creative vision”. Such sensibility and creative vision form
complex relations, like those witnessed in the work of Bacon (discussed next) and imprint themselves in much the same way that intention and context are impressed on the epistemological experiences that surround the use of photography in painting practice.

Disposable Souvenirs: Francis Bacon

“What I want to do is to distort the thing far beyond the appearance”, Bacon (as cited in Alphen, 2012, p.67) claims, “but in the distortion to bring it back to a recording of the appearance”. Bacon ran the whole gamut of the changing dialectic that existed between art and photography in his version of this practice (Harrison, 2005, p.8). Appropriation for the purpose of dismantling the imagery was his process for establishing what Martin Harrison (2005, p.7) describes as a “modern high tragedy”. The function of Bacon’s painting was to make reality unusually stressful in a completely new way, according to Russell (1993, p.183).

Photographic imagery, found in all manner of resources, such as snapshots, magazines, films and books, especially medical reference books and books on human motion, were vital to his creative process. Like Manet, Bacon appropriated his source images from these mechanical reproductions. These images could be situation based or portrait based landscapes, which would include photographic images of the people he knew. They could also be photographic reproductions of old or contemporary masterpieces, such as Masaccio’s fresco of the Trinity (c. 1424-28) (Fig. 3.17. p.94), which he used for his Painting 1946 (Fig. 3.18. p.94), or Picasso’s study for Baigneuse (1929) (Fig. 3.20. p.94) for Bacon’s Crucifixion, (1933) (Fig. 3.21. p.94). In these images, as in all of his other images, Harrison (2005, p.7) suggests, one can see how “the contingency and fragmentation of photographs” played an integral role in Bacon’s practice. This is well illustrated in his Painting 1946, as is his use of multiple sources, because he not only based this work on Masaccio’s Trinity, he also included fragments of Rembrandt’s Slaughtered Ox, (1655) (Fig. 3.19. p.94), which is also reminiscent of Picasso’s Baigneuse. Whilst Painting 1946 does not appear to have the emotive qualities of Manet’s paintings, in a similar way, Bacon morphed the narrative into taking an entirely new direction. Bacon had a Modernist view regarding photographic images. He treated them as found objects and it didn’t matter to him at all who the author was. His only interest in these images was in recontextualising them and then “completely
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Fig. 3.17,  Fig. 3.18,  Fig. 3.19.

Fig. 3.20,  Fig. 3.21.
altering their original meanings”, according to Harrison (2005, p.76). From his paintings Bacon eliminated all of the superfluous detail inherent in the photographic image. Irrespective of what the images looked like, and irrespective of whether he used singular or multiple images, his focus was on their transformative qualities to disrupt.

In the course of a work’s creation, its transformation from the original source material occurs due to Bacon’s openness to another Modernist tradition - exploring the accidental. Bacon (as cited in Sylvester, 1975, p.12) understood this process of utilising accidents meant that what worked one day on a painting did not necessarily work the next day. But, Bacon felt, the possibilities this opened up sent his images on “a kind of tightrope walk between what is called figurative painting and abstraction”. It is within the complexities of the tensions, this in-between world of juxtaposing figuration with abstraction, that Bacon found his creative space, suggests Ernst van Alphen (2012, p.65). The painting, in Bacon’s eyes, would transform itself, which meant that what he originally had in mind very rarely came to fruition (Sylvester 1975, p.16). His painting tools and his approach in applying his paint appears to have determined the result more than the development of any original intention.

Bacon’s support material was predominantly photographic imagery, a large amount of which was recovered from his studio in Reece Mews, London, not far from Paddington Station (Bond, 2013, p.29). Some smaller collections have also been turning up since his death. These images acted like a ‘visual dictionary’, in regards to which Harrison (2005, p.19) proposes that the “folding, crumpling and juxtaposing” of the images formed a strategic reference in Bacon’s painting practice. However, when studying Bacon, it becomes well apparent that the photographic works most influential on his painting were those by Muybridge.

Muybridge’s studies on motion, both human and animal, became integral to Bacon’s figuration and his process of fragmentation. This figuration and fragmentation, according to Harrison (2005, p.20), became descriptive and interpretive in the “fragile physicality” of this world, in exploring the trauma of everyday life. Whether Bacon appreciation of trauma is calculated is not obvious, but it appears that it could be a spontaneous reflection of his personal experiences. In these experiences the whole gamut of Bacon’s own personal habitus, and the memories involved, comes forward in the guise of his artistic habitus. From this evolving sphere of influence, the presence of
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Fig. 3.22.

Fig. 3.23.

Fig. 3.24.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

the epistemological experience that Barthes (1980, p.26) terms studium, highlights Bacon’s field of interest as defined by these experiences, in the same way they drew Bacon to Muybridge. The experiences drawn upon come from witnessing the decline of personal relationships and situations, along with the impersonal fragmentation of lived experience within an ever-changing socio-political environment. Perhaps, the fragmentation Bacon found in Muybridge is a metaphor for his life experiences. Perhaps this is why he often retorted, (as cited in Russell, 1993, p.84) “Who can I tear to pieces, if not my friends? If they were not my friends, I could not do such violence to them”.

That is, Bacon wanted to draw on the world immediately around him as this is where he found the confidence and inspiration for painting the way he did.

In regard to this, Bacon’s painting, From Muybridge ‘The human figure in motion: woman emptying a bowl of water/ paralytic child walking on all fours’ (1965) (Fig. 3.22. p.97), provides an insight into the differing ways he interpreted the traumas of life using Muybridge’s imagery. This ‘human figure’ painting is securely captured by the ambiguity of the blurred in-between spaces that exist in everyday experiences. The two figures metamorphosed by Bacon in this painting are found in a group of photographs comprising two set of images from Muybridge’s 1887 Animal Locomotion series. The Woman throwing a bucket of water (Fig. 3.23.) is in the top half of the painting, while the Handicapped boy crawling (Fig. 3.24.) is at the front left. Framing often plays a decisive role as this image (Fig. 3.22.) also shows. One frame, which looks similar to an inside-rail fence at a racecourse for horses (Bond, 2012, p.121), and would fit in with Bacon’s love of gambling (Harrison, 2005, p.1128), is where the two figures balance themselves, perhaps, holding Bacon’s life (or money) in the balance. Then he confines them further by imposing a box dimension/confinement in and around the improbably proportioned figures, separating them from any ‘normal’ everyday life. Whilst it would appear that Bacon was not interested in everyday subjects, his use of the photograph in this way would suggest that the human elements of the everyday were certainly engaged by him, albeit on an indirect level.

As indicated earlier, Bacon was not interested in where the photograph came from. Portraits taken in a railway station photo-booth seem to have been as good as any image by a photojournalist. His leaning (Bacon, as cited in Russell, 1993, p.66), was towards “journeyman-photographs in which human movement has been remade irrespective of the photographer’s conscious intentions”. Bacon (as cited in Russell, 1993, p.98)
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

elaborated further “I’ve always been more interested in what is called “behaviour” and “life” than in art. If my pictures come off, it is because of a chance conjunction between actual living and art”. This meant that he became more aware of behaviour, which was easier for him to discuss in painting than in an ordinary conversation with his acquaintances (Russell, 1993, p.98). Russell (1993, p.58) argues that:

The donnees\(^4\) of photography are completely subsumed in paint, which retains its authority intact while gaining a greatly enlarged vocabulary. It is this... approach which Bacon has followed in the many paintings which have the elasticity of the photographic image without any of its particular and by-now-predictable eloquence.

This suggests that Bacon translated the visual information of the photograph dynamically and discursively as his painterly language evolved. Russell (1993, p.65) also saw the photograph as an object of consumption for Bacon: they were “disposable souvenirs of ‘the way it was’”. Other than the references to Muybridge observed in Bacon’s early work, his source photographic imagery has been so reconceptualised and reinterpreted that any resemblance has been curtailed.

The dynamics of Bacon’s art practice come forth as a revealing, which takes place on the painting’s surface. In this revealing, van Alphen (2012, p.73) suggests, Bacon’s sense of art-making is set as a combination of creative process and reception of appearances. What is revealed, I argue, is a dynamic where Bacon demonstrates photography as a point of departure for which painting may provide differing ways of interpreting source references. In this process, Bacon posits a language fusion that has been and still remains controversial. It is this process of revealing that makes Bacon’s art practice significant to other painters, as it demonstrates some of the ways that epistemological and material approaches may be combined and used to structure other art practices, and, thus, signifying the importance of practice.

**New spatio-temporal experiences**

Contextualising the use of photography in painting practice within Modernist practice, illustrates that the relationships between photography and painting have often been shown to be historically controversial. Photography is controversial, but that controversy only arises because it creates so many alternative ways of seeing and thinking. The

\(^4\) Donnees: a subject, a theme, or motif of a literary work (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary).
criticisms and reactions that demonstrate the controversy have provided for the shifts in attitudes that have occurred, which in recent times has freed the engagement between photography and painting. Likewise, the criticisms of both painting and photographic practice manifest in Modernist art contexts illustrate the shifts in thinking and art-making which inform the practice of painting from photographic references. Modernist Art’s apparent withdrawn and self-indulgent approach highlighted by Felshin, Krauss and Fried opened the space for the changes in attitude toward art-making. Although Greenberg championed the Modernist art of Abstract Expressionism, Schawbsky demonstrated that Greenberg unknowingly also set the stage for the move towards cross-media art practices with his discourse of flatness and two-dimensional painting surface, which drew photography into the same frame.

The ideas on the ‘death of painting’ debate drew in discourse on changes in attitude toward painting practice caused by photography taking over its capturing of the real. The same can be understood regarding the reactions to this debate. These changes in attitude, as Bois (2001, pp.30-31) suggests, opened the space for the increased commodification of art through, for example, the mechanical reproduction processes inherent in photography. Fogle, Sontag, Berger and Barthes have shown that there have been, and still are, many varied and complex ways of thinking about art-making when photography and painting are combined. This is especially true when taking theories on vision into account, like the ideas Ehrenzweig, de Certeau, Solso and Januszczak put forward on dissonant imagery, which allowed the painter to interpret his/her photographic source image in dynamic and complex painterly ways.

Photographic technologies have delivered vision and visibility through photographic imagery into the space of surveillance/witnessing/memory, which also includes the dynamics of exchangeability/interchangeability, producing new spatio-temporal experiences. In this way, photography is engaging the digital media landscape of today in many ways. It is a tag, an index and an idea, all of which place it within the framework of memory on a multimedia level. Through digital media, as it was also in its traditional form, photography is an act of memory. The subjectivity of the photography, which awakens the memory, makes all forms of this complex memory device a dynamic source material for other art practices. Such material may be drawn from visual technologies by mining the relationships in mass media of photographic surveillance and
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

witnessing imagery to photojournalism, documentary photography and the digital media of social and communication networks.

Visual technologies, digital and celluloid, that are taken for granted on most occasions, such as magazines and newspapers, television and cinema, postcards and the family photo album, are rendered, in McQuire’s (1998, p.189) view, into new ways of observing and creating normative judgement. Moreover, the use of the various photographic technologies, including digital media such as mobile phone cameras and internet social networks, appears to escalate and extend social photography into a surveillance/witnessing/memory paradigm. This, in turn, raises photography to potentially being the most highly engaged form of visual expression in the twenty first century.

Photography, in all of these forms, presents the artist with multiple ways of seeing and perceiving. Through these photographic technologies, the invisible becomes visible in a form of ocular interventions. The ocular interventions inherent in the flattened photographic image demonstrate that at the intersections of singular (the camera) and binocular (two eyes) vision, a transformative feature exists. Such transformations also render the photographic as a source of primary engagement for other technologies, processes and art practices, with painting being one of those dynamic engagements. This is enthusiastically pursued in Modernist painting practices. Cezanne illustrates that the ocular features of the photograph disrupt and rewrite classical concepts of perspective in a Modernist way. Such an approach creates dissonance within the artwork, which has been demonstrated in the work of Manet (The Bar at the Follies-Bergere), Picasso (Cubism) and Bacon (juxtaposing the in-between world). What the work of these artists demonstrates is that photography has many complex multi-layered entry points for painters to explore in their creative practices. Selection and interpretation at the intersection of photography and painting is a dynamic interactive coming together that will expand and transform as photographic technologies branch and grow.

The digital space draws on traditions that came out of Modernist art practices. Modernist ideas, such as ocular intervention, the breaking up of space and the fluidity of the photographic medium are embedded in the media landscape of today. Still, there are painters and photographers working within these older traditions, thus expanding and enhancing Postmodernist concepts of practice. For instance, Yang uses still image
family narratives in an interactive performative way. Karver mines the internet, paints the image and then puts up on the net again. Both are creating new concepts of ‘exhibition’, cross-pollinating Modernist processes in Postmodernist ways. In this respect, I argue that despite the progression in the digital, artists are still responding to, and interpreting, photographic imagery within traditions that began as far back as Manet’s time. This is still continuing within the ever expanding open space that is contemporary art-making. However, there is a lack of emphasis on the process as knowledge creation modes within painting practices. This is the focus of this thesis. This lends itself to an alternative emphasis, one on how these knowledge creation modes work within, through, and by artists working with painting from photographic references. These practices are not merely about knowledge, but about privileging selected knowledge in a creative space and this leads to an understanding of what it is artists do in this form of painting practice. This is drawn out even further in the next chapter, where the role of artistic habitus, which is recognisably present in the artists explored here, is discussed in the context of studio art practice.
Chapter 4

Understanding the role of artistic habitus in studio practice

In this chapter, the role of artistic habitus in studio practice, as already described, is explored as an applied practice for drawing out a better understanding of painting from photographic references as a studio based practice. Focusing on the theoretical notion of artistic habitus, and its role in the studio, with reference to Carter’s and Heidegger’s theories on ‘material thinking’, painting from photographic references in a studio environment comes forth as a uniquely personal journey of discovery. This journey and its discoveries are linked to a depth of engagement by individual artists working with particular themes developed through this special kind of critical practice. Reiterating, artistic habitus is specifically focused on the workings of personal tacit knowledge within an artist’s practice as applied knowledge (theoretical and technical) in art-making. The key area here is in regard to an artist’s decision-making framing the dual process of selection and interpretation, drawing on the ideas of the emerging episteme (Foucault) and habitus (Bourdieu) and Heidegger’s notion of ‘knowing through handling’, as a way of theorising about studio practice.

Artists, such as painters and photographers, are always looking for new ways of seeing, new ways of infusing meaning and creating knowledge, and new ways of establishing relationships - materially, socially and culturally. Understanding artistic habitus as an applied practice in the studio brings all this to light. Artistic habitus is a way of constructing frameworks for considering the relationships between the theories and practices that define art-making. In one way, it enables comparison and in another way,
it acts as a translative form of research language. As Carter (2004, p.7) would suggest, this research language, as a method of materialising ideas, is a creative approach in itself. Being creative is a form of research. Consciously or subconsciously, when creating, one infuses all of the aspects of research into his/her creative process. The significance of this approach to research is the relationship of the role of artistic habitus to studio practice. That is, the possibilities materials bring forth, and how ideas are defined and translated, are key aspects of one’s creative endeavours that defines artistic habitus as a form of studio research.

The role of artistic habitus in studio practice is explored here by applying and observing the theory in action in the diverse contemporary art practices of Eisler, Arkley, Currie, Smart and Kentridge. Each of these artists work within a studio based regime, however, each of their individual concepts of studio is as diverse as their art practices. The focus on Eisler’s work surrounds her use of everyday photographic technologies, such as video, to construct an image and narrative in her paintings. In contrast, Arkley is important for his referencing of photographs in a gestural painterly process. Currie was selected for his use of photography as a psychological examination of human bodies in trauma. Smart was chosen because on some occasions he uses photographs as a constructive element in his art-making. Kentridge’s work, on the other hand, is referenced as he utilises photography from completely the opposite direction to these other artists. His work in the studio uses painting/drawing artworks to create a hand-made movie still that is collated and presented to the world as a performance in a short film. Within these studio practices the theoretical application of artistic habitus is manifest in the dual processes of selection and interpretation, which is informed, and shaped, by the epistemological experiences of intentionality and contextuality. To further this discussion, the relationships intentionality and contextuality have with the selection and interpretation processes are examined next, beginning with the idea of intention in an artist’s practice, reflecting on photography as a representative art practice.

**Intentionality and artistic habitus**

The intentions of the photographer and painter are there to be witnessed as the image is formed with particular criteria in mind. McQuire (1998, p.50) argues that due to the camera’s separation from the photographer, photographic meaning was also considered
to be separate from the photographer’s intentionality. On the other hand, McQuire (1998, p.50) also believes that Modernist thinking about art, which could also include Postmodernist and contemporary thinking, no longer denies the association between photographic meaning and the intentionality of the photographer. In a similar approach to Bourdieu’s idea on ‘entering the game’, McQuire (1998, p.50) comments that thinking this way witnesses the ‘personal vision’ of the photographer becoming a strategic element in the assigning of meaning to the photograph and in the way the artist works within his/her practice. Correspondingly, Ihsan Derman (1995) argues, “The photographer projects himself into everything he sees, identifying himself with everything in order to know it and to feel it better”. In a Modernist context, what McQuire and Derman are intimating is that in photography (like painting) the image is formed by the artist drawing on the essence of the artist’s creative process, from within his/her own personal artistic habitus, through a selection process, which is also illustrated next by the comments of photographers Harry Callahan and Ansel Adams.

Callahan (1912-1999) (as cited in Bunnell, 2006, pp.117-118 & Sontag, 1979, p.118) considers that what is exciting “are photographs that say something in a new manner... not for the sake of being different, but because the individual is different and the individual expresses himself”. For Adams (1902-1984) (as cited in Sontag, 1979, p.118) a great photograph has to be “a full expression of what one feels about what is being photographed in the deepest sense and is, thereby, a true expression of what one feels about life in its entirety”. This attitude, this exposure to artistic habitus, comes forth in Adams’ Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico, 1941. This particular image fulfilled Adams’s conception of photography to the point that within a modernist context of repetition, he was able to continue creating different and varied prints from this one negative for the rest of his life (Stillman, 2012, p.120). In this case, Adams’ artistic habitus, through the materiality of his photographic processes, has created the space for revisiting and recycling not only the artwork, but also the knowledge captured within his epistemic art processes. The role of artistic habitus informs the practices of Callahan and Adams in a way that suggests that the ‘individual’ photographer naturally structures a new emerging epistemic mode that instils excitement because each individual sees things in new and different ways.

As the role of artistic habitus suggests in the work of Callahan and Adams, the photographer and the painter both decide on the framing parameters in a process that
Derman (1995) argues, sees the artist as the dominant ‘operator’ in the selection process. In this Modernist framing, for the artist, the elements of the image are removed from their original context and placed in a relational circumstance of different meaning that bares no relationship to the original. In a way, it is creating a ‘reality’ of its own making. The framing through intentionality, as Derman (1995) denotes it, is also descriptive of its epistemological presence in the practice of painting from photographic references, where, like in a painting, the content and context of the photograph is determined by the photographer, whose context of practice is defined by his/her own personal disposition.

Further to this, Sontag (1979, pp.6-7) argues that image making/capturing is an intention placing act. She is arguing that intentionality is a human trait, a focusing of temperament regarding the photographer as Sontag (1979, p.118) suggests, and not part of any mechanical diaspora, like a camera, therefore, it is in tune with the arts of photography and painting. In this manner, artistic habitus plays its role in the studio in the form of intentionality, and underpins the focus of temperament Sontag considers significant to the artist’s process. Intentionality come from different ‘places’, different artistic habitus and different modes of knowledge, having different cultural literacy, trajectories and contexts, as Schirato and Webb (2004, p.18) would suggest. As this also demonstrates, each act of intentionality places the artwork within its own frame of contextuality, the idea of which is discussed further below.

**Contextuality and artistic habitus**

Contextuality in the Modernist context can be defined as that part of a discourse that implies true meaning within the discourse, thus, establishing its surroundings and its settings (Chambers twentieth century dictionary, 1972, p.280). This suggests that context means the environment where communication takes place, in which such dynamic and variable vehicles as photography, painting and text participate. Such an environment is found in the diverse field involving the community, the artist and every aspect of their respective histories. In light of this, as Danaher et al., (2000, p.9) argue, context exists where perception and meaning in the arts and acts of photography and painting are filtered through the discourses recurrent in an artist’s life experience.

McQuire (1998, p.59) argues that context also plays a significant role in the perception of meaning in a photograph. Therefore, it has much the same role in painting and painting from photographic references, as both create particular narratives within their
own particular contexts that are rich and iterative. Deconstructing this further, in a similar way to Foucault’s reading of *Las Meninas*, Derman (1995) suggests the contextual elements of the image, like the intentionality of the artist, are created for and within the boundaries of the frame. Moreover, being open to the dispositions that structure the artist’s decision-making, the boundaries of the frame are significant. It is these boundaries that separate the outside (ordinary reality) from the inside and bring about a transformation in, and the emplacement of, meaning, thus creating a new reality.

Even though Derman focuses on photography in this analysis, it is also relevant to painting, as Manet’s studio work regarding the Maximilian paintings illustrates. The ordinary realities Manet transformed are held in the various separate photographs he obtained on the event. It is within Manet’s photographic collage and the paintings created from them that meaning is transformed, bringing forward a ‘new reality’. Like this separation of realities in Manet’s work, with the photograph, Derman (1995) argues that whatever is selected within the frame, the relationship it had with reality becomes separated. Its context, like Karver’s *Oyster Bar* image, is held within the frame and the elements of the imagery (like the people in Karver’s image, who were unaware of being watched) have a new relationship with each other in the two-dimensional world of the photograph. The people captured on CCTV are no longer eating and drinking in Karver’s oyster bar, they are now contextualised within two-dimensional flat surface, within a further context of security surveillance. They have been removed from their relationships to each other, the bar, and the event that took them to the bar, and placed within a relational experience with Karver’s art-making and the act of photography.

Expanding this further, Noble (2008, p.108) argues that the physical processes within art-making, which in Karver’s case is searching on the internet, capturing the image and creating the multi-media artwork, draws out the meanings in the objects that surround that artist. For the artist, this results in an expansive temporal and spatial connection with the wider world. As this indicates, this new relationship is contextualised within the frameworks of the artist’s own personal artistic habitus. Moreover, within these views Noble and Derman are proposing that context is implicit to the situations that govern the positioning of subjectivity within the photographer’s and the painter’s ideas and is drawn out through their artistic habitus in relation to his/her place in art and in the world.


**Drawing on artistic habitus**

In order to situate the role of artistic habitus through modes of intentionality and context within the fabric of an artist’s studio practice, the work of two painters of photographic references, Eisler and Arkley, are briefly discussed here. Both are significant to this discussion as they represent two diverse approaches to art-making, where the roles of artistic habitus are equally diverse. In Eisler one finds an artist who engages with processes within a singular art project using everyday photographic technologies to develop a multi-layered image and narrative that converges on the painting surface. Arkley, however, takes a more formalist approach to art-making instilling a gestural presence into the image taken from a photographic reference. The Modernist studio approaches of both artists are discussed below, because, importantly, they provide a cross-section of art processes in which the structures of their respective epistemic modes of practice are influenced by artistic habitus.

American Judith Eisler (b.1962) and Australian Howard Arkley (1951-1999) are painters of photographic references and both rely on their artistic habitus for conceptualising and creating their artworks. Eisler works with painting as a concept (Scheyerer, 2006), while Arkley engaged with a bodily involvement as a form of gesture in which he used the airbrush to rework the ideas of landscape in a Pop Art way in an engagement with Modernist tradition (Gregory, 2006, p.115). Eisler, who predominantly lives and works in New Jersey, has a background in art that covers both the practice and the academic fields. As well as exhibiting in many art galleries, Eisler, a graduate of Cornell University, gained the position of Professor of Painting at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna in 2009 (Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, 2011). She continues to work in both fields and combines practical and academic approaches to differing mediums to inscribe a theoretical basis to her work. In this way, Eisler is utilising aspects of her own personal artistic habitus to structure a conceptual approach to her art-making in which
she builds her process within an experimental engagement with everyday visual technologies.

Eisler is a painter with an approach that is centred on the reproduction of images, through the Modernist approach of cross-pollinating processes. Similarly to Karver, Eisler’s studio process involves watching films on video, pausing and photographing possible source images when they occur and then painting the image she has the strongest response to. In this manner, Eisler is placing multitudes of spaces between the origin and the artwork. The imagery travels from origin to video, to TV, to video manipulation, to photograph to canvas, removing the image from one filmic experience to another before reinterpreting it into yet another medium. In a way, Eisler’s studio may take up many spaces, the media room, the computer and the painting studio, and possibly many more spaces. In another way, her work is similar to Manet’s drawing together of several photographs and utilising information received to create the Maximilian paintings. There is also a relationship to other contemporary practices, like Karver’s, where the complex myriad of photographic technologies is being referenced within a multitude of Modernist painterly processes. Overall, Eisler’s studio process is about transforming ideas from one epistemic mode into another, and, yet again, into another, thus, creating a new emerging epistemic mode of practice at the same time.

Eisler (as cited in Rugoff, 2007a, p.169) describes her aims and framework for working this way when she tells us:

I work from images from various films but I avoid specifically recognisable images as this makes the meaning of the work too laboured and determined. The paintings are not meant to reflect on the narrative or structures of the film. I am interested in the new narratives that inevitably emerge within the frame of the painting, and in emotional and psychological states of indeterminate action. The ambiguity allows the viewer to project his or her own prejudices onto the seemingly still image.

The “apparitions”, as Eisler (as cited in Scheyerer, 2006) calls them, take advantage of the shimmering, fractured, paused video image that almost delivers the painting into the realm of geometric abstraction. In her series entitled Anhauchen, a German word that loosely means using the warmth of your breath to effect a change on something, like a mirror or a fogged up window, Eisler contextually focuses on making the human breath visible (Scheyerer, 2006). In her paintings, like her portrait Smoker (Ewan) (2006) (Fig. 4.1. p.107), images are found of people smoking cigarettes or in foggy situations that stimulate the fracturing and blurring of light and shadow. In this way, Nicole Scheyerer
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

(2006) argues, Eisler creates emotionally transgressive imagery which takes one back to the archetypal visions of cinema in the mid twentieth century. Alternative visions, as Bettina Steinbrügge (2012) draws out, like Humphrey Bogart or Marlene Dietrich in their dramatised, smoke-hazed versions of everyday life. Eisler’s aim (as cited in Rugoff, 2007a, p.169), contextually and intentionally, is to transpose that essence of the film imagery into another key full of psychological atmosphere and suspense, describing the distance that is created through the interlayering of technological interference.

In contrast to Eisler, Arkley concentrated on his painting practice more exclusively, according to John Gregory (2006, p.1). Arkley was less academically minded than Eisler, for art became the outlet for his emotional positioning in life. This emotional positioning could be said to have come out of his childhood in Melbourne. His childhood, according to Edwina Preston (2002, p.7), was dominated by chronic ill health, which may have drawn him into the escapism of ‘recreational’ drug use that he later succumbed to, but this illness is also where his love for making art came from. To Arkley, as Gregory (2006, p.1 & pp.10-11) suggests, intentionality and contextuality are the primary elements in the materiality of his studio practice that reflect the emotive associations constructed through his own artistic habitus, which are presented in the guise of everyday life in suburbia.

Fig. 4.2. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

Arkley (as cited in Edelstein, 1994) claimed “Well, basically I’m a formalist – I actually believe in painting”. Graffiti Art has played a great part in the development of his epistemic mode of practice and his artistic habitus and in that vein, Arkley used the airbrush. His way of using this tool brought forth a gestural approach to image reduction using formalist flatness (Arkley, as cited in Edelstein, 1994). Computationally, Arkley used photographs, but in contrast to Eisler and similar to Manet, he often combined them to create an image for his painting using collage techniques, one of the Pop Art processes he was interested in (Gregory, 2006, p.115). His painting Shadow Factories (1990) (Fig. 4.2.) was painted from just such a collage. Like Manet, Arkley
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

removed the painting one step further from its origins into that special space of painting from photographic references.

Like most of Arkley’s other work, the subject in Shadow Factories appears to be a touch ambiguous, both in tonality and context. It is very reminiscent of old style commercial advertising posters and, as Gregory (2006, p.3) argues, it makes that Pop Art connection again, but this time it could be with Andy Warhol’s Campbell’s soup prints. Predominantly smooth and flat, the bright colours, with their strong, blurred outlines, are almost devoid of narrative. Similarly to Velazquez’s ‘observer’ in Las Meninas, this is reflecting on Arkley’s intention to essentially allow the narrative to be implied by the observer through his/her reactions to the work. Described by David Pagel (1999) in an exhibition review, as “warm, fuzzy and of the moment”, the painting reflects on the expansion of industry out into the urban landscape, as Arkley witnessed it during his childhood (Gregory, 2006, p.45). Painting images like this provided Arkley with an emotional connection between urban landscapes and developing environments. One can almost see the architecture from Fritz Lang’s Metropolis (1927) morphing into the imagery of this painting. Devoid of the imagery of the urban dwellers and urban space, the work, as in all his other works, is a product of a language. That language, as Charles Green (1995) suggests, is the language of time and space, which also proffers the intention of creating painting with formalist mannerisms and contexts, but in a figurative way. Arkley introduced his factory works in 1988 with the work Shadow Factory (a different work from the painting discussed here), which harks back to the urban changes that occurred throughout his life (Gregory, 2006, p.45). In a way, he saw factories standing as a metaphor for the Modernist/Postmodern conditions of industrialisation and technology, Gregory (2006, p.42) argues. Hence the added industrial edge, where one can almost feel the production line being replaced by the computer desk in the office-come-factory. One particular aspect of art practice that heavily influences an artist’s artistic habitus, recognisable in the work of Eisler, Arkley and the other artists in this discussion, is the importance of materiality of process.

Materiality of process and its role in artistic habitus is important to the artist’s artmaking. Its role here is derivable using Carter’s theory of ‘material thinking’, linked with the investigative powers of artistic habitus, as it connects the creative and interpretive processes taking place when painting from photographic references. This form of art-making is a communicative practice, involving the subjectivity of the
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

painter’s engagement with everyday life being explored through the elements of memory, space and place found in photographic references. Therefore, photography used in this manner, in synergy with painting practice, can be considered a prime research tool for painters looking to study everyday life - a process of painterly research that is rich and complex in many ways. In the following, the role of artistic habitus in studio practice is traced through materiality of process in painting from photographic references, by drawing on Heidegger’s concept of ‘knowing through handling’ as a framework for investigating and analysing an artist’s practice. This is in order to draw out and extend the knowledge of what contemporary artists do in their art studios and the role of artistic habitus in those studio processes.

A material approach

On the question of which is more important, the practical or the theoretical, Heidegger (1927, p.98) argues that theory and practice are two different entities, but one cannot exist without the other. That is, he argues that one can only have knowledge of the world theoretically after reaching an understanding of it through handling (Heidegger, 1996 p.65), in other words, through materiality of process. Understanding and interpretation in a Modernist context involves ‘doing something’ - physically working with materials and using one’s skills. “We become by ‘doing it’... I became a painter by painting pictures”, Barbara Bolt (2011, p.23) suggests. In this manner, Bolt is taking a Heideggerian approach to her work in that it is only through working and being involved with the materiality of things thrown up, that one finds meaning within one’s own world.

Cameron Tonkinwise (2008) argues that through knowing and making you create theory as you create the art work. ‘Making’ utilises knowledge through processes, materials and variations, therefore knowledge is essential to ‘making’ and to the painter, and the photographer. Decisions are based in knowledge, whether that is learned knowledge or an undifferentiated memory and, therefore, ‘making’, like theory, is an integral informative element of the knowing process. In the examples that follow, the complex approaches artistic habitus and Heidegger offers, which involve the concept of knowing through handling things that are thrown up at an artist in the process of art-making, are demonstrated in the work of Currie (below). Taking this further, the discussion on Smart’s work, which follows Currie, significantly draws on the studio dynamics of
artistic habitus centred on Heidegger’s approach, illustrating that all of the decisions made in creative practices are material ones infused with epistemological experiences.

Using the theory of ‘material thinking’ around studio practice

Fig. 4.3. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

British painter Ken Currie (b.1960), I would argue, is a painter of human beings, as opposed to a portrait painter, in that he is more interested in what is underneath, the skeletal construct and what comes out through the surface of the skin. In a Modernist way, he explores the emotive as well as the physical. Additionally, as an artist, he is very much involved with the materiality of his process and the epistemological experiences that form his artistic habitus. Currie grew up in the industrial north of England before removing himself to study art in the similarly industrial environs of Glasgow, Scotland (Baycroft, 2001, p.1). Much of his studio work revolves around visually essaying the complex lives and histories of middle and working class people, like those subsisting in the industrial spaces he associates with, many of which are found in cities like Glasgow. Josie Harrison (1995, p.4) suggests, Currie wants to show the realities of his times, but he is not necessarily interested in applying a realist painting approach in doing this, in effect, practicing a Modernist tradition in an expressionist way. Photographic references have been his connection to those realities ever since he was a student, and thus, are important elements for his approach to seeing the world. The collection of these references is drawn from a wide range of sources, mainly taken from documentary photography, photojournalism, and medical and forensic research, as well as from family snapshots (Currie, 1999, p.3).

Currie (1988, p.33) claims that “My concern [is with] physicality, muscle, motion and a sense of violence, enacted by human or animal forms”, which, he points out at the same time, especially draws from Muybridge through a strong engagement with the Modernist work of Bacon. “Currie is not seeking to convey a truth about the visual world”, Julie Lawson (2010) argues, “but rather giving embodiment to his own view of the world,
expressed in the language of painting”. In other words, he is visually showing the observer what he is thinking about. Along with found references, he also pursues his concerns through the dynamic visuality derived from photographs of friends or of himself, as can be seen in *Self Portrait with Skeleton Arm* (1995-1996) (Fig. 4.3.), which is the subject of further discussion below. Many of the paintings of himself and friends have been constructed by either modelling the pose on photographic images from medical texts and similar references, or taking the painterly image and applying it in a way that simulates the poses in those photographic references, in such paintings as *Fall* (1998-99). In this way, Currie is not only working within the materiality of his process, but he is also actively engaging in the shifts in how media is being used in this Modernist/Postmodernist period, as Currie is using the body as a tag (a signpost) in its photographic form. Effectively, Currie uses the photograph in two ways. Firstly, it is a reference that places the painting one step removed from its origins, similarly to Manet’s Maximilian paintings, and, secondly, he is using it as a parallel space when he addresses the work of Muybridge and the imagery in such references as medical books for painting ideas, as illustrated in *Self Portrait with Skeleton Arm* and *Fall*.

In *Self Portrait with Skeleton Arm*, based on a found photographic reference (Munch’s lithograph of the same name), Currie uses his own body. In this Modernist approach of using found objects for this painting, Currie has created an almost sardonic ghostly presence, which represents what he sees as the “terror of the end of existence and nothingness” (Currie, 1999, p.3). The image is underpainted with a deep blue, as Tom Normand (2001, p.3) describes, which Currie works back into with white spirit, dissolving the image to leave a ‘residue’ image, a residue of an existence, using one spirit to release another. The image was then over-painted in layers of glaze to fuse the paint surface together. The rich deep blue that surrounds the ghostly image is as significant as the figure depicted in chiaroscuro terms with the light playing off the dark. As Currie (1999, p.3) argues “This darkness not only represents an illusion of space around the form but is intended to function metaphorically as well, in that it represents a space beyond material existence – nothingness”. However, this darkness creates the space that situates this image.

As a way of illustrating Currie’s approach, Lawson cites an interview he participated in at the unveiling of one of his paintings. Of his process Currie (1999, p.3) explains:
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

You’re looking at a dream. If you want a likeness, take a photograph. A painting has a larger function, it has to touch on other issues... I don’t for one second claim to grasp the theory, but I do understand the sublime, and there is a sublime quality to it all, a beauty, an awe-inspiring quality. In some respects, the subject is quite terrifying.

The ‘large function’ Currie talks about, Lawson, J. (2010) argues, is preconditioned by the removal of the observer out of his/her comfort zone, placing the observer on the edge of an undifferentiated space. The marriage of paint and philosophical underpinnings found in this painting is typical of his work overall. Like Manet’s work, the engagement with photographic references is both a starting point for him and an invitation for experimentation in the act of painting. Moreover, Currie’s studio based painting practice examines the challenges of existence in his own time through the space within which his own art practice exists. In essence, Currie challenges his own artistic space. Smart, whose studio work is discussed next, is another painter who challenges the idea of existence through artistic space.

The Italy based Australian painter Jeffrey Smart (1921-2013) (as cited in Capon, 1999, p.12) claims “my only concern is putting the right shapes in the right colours in the right places. It is always geometry”. Smart made time stand still. As Edmund Capon (1999, p.12) suggests “the air is still, time is held in suspense and familiar symbols of practical modernity are impressed with the status of icons”. Nothing moves, and yet, everything is happening. These familiar modern symbols, these icons, these road signs, these buildings are significant to his compositions. Smart is presenting his habitus to the world through his artistic habitus. They are significant, according to Capon (1999, p.13), because they imbue his work with authority, coherence and harmony. While Capon imbues Smart’s work, Barry Pearce (1995, p.5) paints a picture of Smart as a Modernist artist who presents a world full of visual irony to the observer, in a way totally vacant of emotional engagement. He constructs a detached sensibility that separates his paintings “from any real sense of place” (Pearce, 1995, p.6).

Smart is a compositionalist, in that constructing the composition of the work is the most important part of the process for him. In this approach, he employs a process which is a three stage affair, the source stage, the drawing stage and the painting. The source stage is often one of memory recall. For instance, as Pearce (1995, p.6) relates, the yellow corrugated fence seen in Smart’s Portrait of Clive James (1991-92) comes from the memory of a fence he observed from a train while travelling in Japan. In some cases, the
memory is a photograph such as in *Sunday Morning II* (1975) (Figs. 4.4. & 4.5. p.116). The drawing stage serves two purposes – defining the imagery to be used in the painting and constructing the composition that will become the painting. Moreover, drawing is the recording and the manipulation stage all rolled into one, as Capon (2001, p.116) suggests, where the “composition props and visual punctuation marks”, like human beings, buildings and road signs, are placed. The painting is the refinement of all of these other stages, which like Currie’s process earlier, is reminiscent of how photographic media is engaging the ‘real’ in a multitude of spaces within today’s media landscape.

Compositionally, as in *Sunday Morning II*, the space created by drawing lays out an experimental field as a fundamental way for exploring the challenges that began with the initial conception of the painting. One can see the presence of Giorgio de Chirico in Smart’s painting with one vital difference. Whilst there is a similar presence of formalism in de Chirico’s work, where ‘life disappears’ through shadowy archways, in Smart’s paintings, there is a presence of solitude. This solitude in Smart’s paintings is the essence within his work that led to Germaine Greer (2001, p.22), considering him as being a painter who could, “bring us face to face with our own frigidity”.

The original idea for *Sunday Morning II* based its subjectivity on the power depot in Smart’s local village near Arezzo in Italy. The image was appropriated from an old photograph (Fig. 4.5. p.116) taken by the painter, but as Smart (2001, p.95) claimed the particular background buildings in the photograph were conflicting to his thoughts on the composition. His solution was to replace the building with a motif that he regularly used from his arsenal of props when painting Italian land/cityscapes - the ever present apartment block. His original sketch (Fig. 4.6. p.116), drawn from the photograph, places the tower and two figures on the central vertical of the painting space. He reworked this, reducing the phallicness of the drawing to a more balanced panoramic view. The two figures, or props, as Capon (2001, p.16) terms them, were taken from drawing portraits of two friends, Captain C. A. La Farge (Fig. 4.7. p.116) and Ian Bent (Smart, 2001, p.11). These props in the final painting are used in conjunction with the cloud column above their heads to form a compositional balance to the tower, which is now further to the right of the painting space.
Fig. 4.4, Fig. 4.5, Fig. 4.6, Fig. 4.7. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

Process wise in this work, in similar ways to Manet’s Maximilian paintings, Smart took elements from different sources and combined them in a way that situated his process of painting from photographic references as a foundational platform for his art practice. The use of ‘props’, therefore, demonstrated that Smart was working very much in the Pop Art tradition of collage, in a self-conscious way. Thus, the painting has moved many spaces away from its origins, raising issues of the ‘real’. In this way, Smart is drawing on Modernist traditions of appropriation and expressionist reshaping of space within a derivation of Pop Art and photo-realist representation.
Smart (2001, p.11), the compositionalist, believed that “great painting is based on good drawing”. For him, reducing the three dimensional to two revealed an artist’s understanding of form. He (2001, p.11) also accepted photography into the frame as he considered that it “enriched our visual world”. For Smart, the picture space, be it painting or drawing; was the space where appearances were imitated (Capon, 1999, p.14). The stillness is the glimpse into the frigidity of the world as he saw it from within the role of his artistic habitus, demonstrating his unconscious approach to the Heideggerian idea of care, discussed below. Smart’s use of photography, minimal as it was, was part of the first steps Smart took in bring the world to a sudden stop.

**Materiality in handling**

In an artist’s studio practice the Heideggerian concept of care (Heidegger, 1927, p.243), identifies ‘understanding’ as the care that comes from handling and working with things and it is this understanding that reveals possibilities. The revealing is what Heidegger (1993, p.197) considers to be the work of art. In studio practice it is from how one responds to, and cares for, one’s tools and materials, and not a practice of ‘mastery’, that the combination of artist, tools and materials emerges. Heidegger (1927, p.103) describes this as ‘circumspection’. This Heideggerian concept is intuitive when the artist becomes at one with his/her tools and materials, such as Michelangelo, his chisels and his marble. The process of art-making emerges and the theoretical fades. This oneness, this co-responsibility, reveals the possibilities of working that were once concealed within the process. As observed earlier in the work of Currie and Smart, the artwork itself emerges in much the same way.

Heidegger (1993, p.159) argues, “The equipmental quality of equipment consists in its usefulness”. One comes to know it as it comes to know us. The ‘tool’ moulds into us to become as one with our bodily processes of working as an integral part of an artist’s artistic habitus. The problem exists only when it cannot function as part of the glove that fits in the collaboration of tool-mind-and-body-in-process. As Bolt (2011, pp.90-94) notes “we don’t just ‘use them’, we are in a relation of concern... It is through our concernful dealings with our materials that something never-before-conceived is revealed”. In a similar way to Carter, this is where Tonkinwise (2008) argues that theory is created as the artwork is being created.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Bolt (2011, p.95) argues that artists are not seeking the ‘new’ when making an artwork; it is more that they are open to the possibilities that arise from the interaction between materials and artistic processes in studio practice as part of an interplay that Heidegger terms Poiésis. Heidegger (1943, pp.11-13) describes this as a bringing forth, which is where something goes through an arising from out of itself, turning what was previously concealed into something that is now unconcealed. Techné is one of these forms of bringing forth that Heidegger (1993, p.184) discusses, describing this as “a mode of knowing”. This idea is relevant to the complexities of the use of photography in studio painting practice as it not only refers to the physicality of art, but it also focuses on the theoretical. “In techné, through art and handicraft”, Heidegger (1943, pp.7-8) argues, “man [participates] in conjunction with other contributing elements – with ‘matter’, ‘aspect’, and ‘circumscribing bounds’ – in the bringing forth of a thing into being”. In Manet’s work, for instance, as his health began to decline, the photograph became an element in the rewriting of his art practice. As new physical practices were utilised, new theoretical approaches emerged. Additionally, Heidegger (1943, p.13) argues that as a mode of bringing forth, techné is not akin to, but, like a photograph and a painting, it is in itself a mode or process of revealing. In other words, the artist’s materiality of process and the epistemological experiences that he/she encounters in, and through, art become tied together as a way of revealing the meaning hidden in the art. Within the studio, artistic habitus is the structuring of processes and experiences that reveal meaning in art practice, which in the next section focuses the discussion on the idea of linked stages and process in studio practice.

**Practice as linked stages and processes**

Observation, knowledge of materials and process, and experimentation are all elements of knowledge and the processes in scientific research, which operates under the criteria of probability and plausibility that links in with applied practices in studio work. In a similar way to Smart being influenced by the memory of a fence in Japan, Graeme Sullivan (2005, p.72) suggests that in their applied practices memories and prior knowledge influences an artist’s responses at all times and at all times artists are adding information to their memories and knowledge. In this way, new emerging epistemic modes come into existence based around the artist’s artistic habitus. This added information comes out of art practice in the same way as information is derived through other forms of research. However, as Currie’s exploration of the human body and
Eisler’s use of multiple layers in art-making demonstrate, and Sullivan (2005, pp.72-73) argues, research also needs to consider possibilities. Having possibilities is especially important to an artist, whether in studio practice or other. Artists investigate possibilities in all stages of their practice, especially in the studio. What is derived from those investigations, as Eisler, Arkley, Currie and Smart illustrate, adds to the possibilities within the framework of knowledge creation that structures art practice, thus, enhancing and renewing the artist’s artistic habitus in an applied studio space.

The theories derived from studio art practice are experience based and involve the cognitive process of understanding. Knowing who you are and what you know is central to visual arts (Sullivan, 2005, p.74). It seems that the more life experience an artist has the more understanding the artist has and the more he/she is able to see becomes central to the complexities of art-making in the studio as well as in the field. To Sullivan (2005, p.74), art-making is the “central site of investigation that other derivative practices emerge [from], such as critical and philosophical analysis, historical and cultural commentary, and educational experiences”. In these emerging practices, within the studio each artist’s creative process involves art-making as a unique configuration of the dual processes of selection and interpretation. This again emphasises the presence of the concepts of the episteme and habitus in studio practice and the analytical powers of artistic habitus, which can be found in the studio work of William Kentridge (b.1955), whose approach is revealed in the following section.

The Kentridge approach

Kentridge’s art practice takes on many forms, as shown in his mixed media installation *Ubu tells the truth* (1996-97) (Fig. 4.8. p.120), and includes drawing, film and involves theatre, in which he is often the creator, or director, and/or performer. In this way, his studio practice falls into many different spaces. However, the part of his studio practice concentrated on here is his drawing and shadow imagery that regularly forms the basis of his film work. In this way, Kentridge’s work can be related to Heidegger’s ideas on ‘knowing through handling’ as applied through artistic habitus.

Kentridge, Bolt (2011, p.87) suggests, considers that the artistic process is at its best when it is physically active. This is when new ideas emerge and breakthroughs are made. An active process brings on new ways of thinking that build new epistemic modes
of practice. Kentridge’s problems are not solved theoretically, but physically, and ultimately this establishes its own way of seeing. Bolt (2011, p.87) argues that:

Kentridge’s drawing practice becomes a metaphor for and/or an intensification of our world. In Kentridge’s art, the ‘new’ does not just appear out of thin air, nor does it emerge as a preconceived thought. The new emerges in and through the process of drawing, just as our thrownness projects us into the future.

What is being suggested is that Kentridge’s studio work evolves as its making proceeds and that thinking while creating is integral to the resolution of something new.

Fig 4.8. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

The beginning for Kentridge is with an idea of where the drawing may be going, but as he progresses he makes discoveries and changes. That is, his practice is a space where new epistemic modes constantly emerge. His interest in content, Neal Benezra (2001, p.12) suggests, is drawn out of his process in a way in which “meaning accrues through making”, thereupon, his process of drawing becomes the testing ground of thought. On occasions, his source material comes from film and/or photographs, such as Tide Table: Raw (2003) for Tide Table: The Film (2003). His studio process has, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (2009, p.111) argues, “a reactive and interpretive/conversational mode rather than... the more active role of initiator of narratives”. In his process, Kentridge takes an image and continuously erases and re-draws it. Treating the original in a cyclical way, he films each drawing in a similar way to an animator’s cell was treated in analogue cartoon making, such as those animations created by Walt Disney. His process of drawing, erasing and re-drawing, over and over again, leaving behind fragments and traces of each drawing as he goes, instils a shadowiness. As Staci Boris (2001, p.32) suggests, these shadows remind one of the presence of the artist at work. Whilst the film of the shadows becomes an entity in itself, it also stands as a record of Kentridge’s changing thought patterns, how he reacts to, and enacts, the moment.

The ‘shadow’ of his work is presenting a resistance to the ‘purity and purification’ of the Modernist approach to art practice. These shadows, as Christov-Bakargiev (2009, p.116) argues, imply a doubt, a discarded-ness, an uncertainty, that is, he is almost presenting
the unpresentable. In the *Ubu* series, Christov-Bakargiev (2009, p.117) claims, he expands this as he delves into the recorded object’s positive and negative aspects. Kentridge takes this further in *I am not me, The horse is not mine* (2008), sections of which involve creating shadows from torn up pieces of black paper. Through this ‘act of tearing’, he makes shapes which he assembles into image/shadows to project onto spaces like walls, floors and tables. In a cyclical way, he then either reassembles them into new images or tears the pieces of paper up to make other shapes and images, which could be seen as a metaphor for how new epistemic modes of practice emerge within an applied practice. Each act of tearing informs Kentridge’s thoughts and actions.

Kentridge considers that it is his drawing practice that provides the grounding for his knowledge on identity and how that place in the world is used (Christov-Bakargiev, 1999, p.35). Drawing is another way of thinking for Kentridge, it is an applied studio process that may, “modify, consolidate or shed doubts on what you know” (Christov-Bakargiev, 1999, p.8). In a Heideggerian way, it is through using and handling that Kentridge gains knowledge of his involvement in the world. The physicality of the process defines his artistic habitus and his everyday being-in-the-world in a cyclical way. The privileged place of art, Bolt (2011, pp.88-89) argues, is derived directly from its capacity to create “a clearing, a space where we once again notice what entities are in themselves”. When discussed within the context of Kentridge’s studio work, Heidegger’s suggestion that through physical process (using and handling things), artist’s derive knowledge and understanding of their involvement in the world and not through theorising alone, focuses artistic habitus as having a definitive role in studio practice.

**In summary**

In the studio work of each of the artists discussed in this chapter, the role of artistic habitus, derived from the intersections of materiality of process and epistemological experiences (the emerging episteme and habitus), draws out and underpins the intentionality and contextuality within their epistemic processes. Intrinsically, intentionality and contextuality have been shown to be crucial to the dual processes of selection and interpretation in making decisions in art practice. Thus, the combination of these concepts, which elaborate on an artist’s studio practice as being open to influence, reveals a more uniquely complex and dynamic reading of painting from photographic
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

references. The role of artistic habitus demonstrates that the artists discussed above create artworks that express the complexities of life experiences, materialities of process and presence in being-in-the-world. In this regard, artistic habitus in studio practice is privileging the creation of selected knowledge within their art practices. In this way, studio practice shows that theory of the episteme (Foucault) and habitus (Bourdieu) are dynamically linked within the role of artistic habitus. The knowledge drawn out of the evaluation of these studio practices illustrates the importance of the concepts, theories and processes that form an artistic habitus for bringing forth knowledge of what it is that the painters of photographic references in this thesis do in their practices.

Each of these studio practices demonstrate that the various roles of artistic habitus here, are dynamic processes that are shaped, and informed, by their place within a Modernist context. Moreover, each of these practices illustrates a linkage to the continuous Modernist thread regarding practice that comes out of Manet’s studio practice. In this historical context, these painters are/were drawing on artistic traditions that are embedded within Modernism. Taking this further, in the next chapter, the study of the role of artistic habitus in art practice, and how the ideas of the emerging episteme and habitus are linked in this process, are analysed in the exploration of six specific case studies as exemplars of painting from photographic references. These case studies demonstrate the complexities of knowledge interchangeability and transformability within creative endeavours that inform, and shape, an individual’s art-making. Additionally, whilst there does not appear to be any specific books of this topic, only many varied and differing instances of discussion about this approach happening, the case studies show that the six artists of the studies, like the artists in this chapter, are also linked by the thread of process found in Manet’s work that exemplifies the presence of a Modernist tradition.
Chapter 5

Six Painters: Case studies in the field of painting from photographic references

This chapter critiques the creative practices of a selected group of six painters of photographic references - Gerhard Richter, Marlene Dumas, Luc Tuymans, Chuck Close, David Hockney and Liu Xiaodong. These artists were chosen as case studies because all of their practices are equally important for artists and critics alike, as all illustrate how this new critical field of painting brings forth knowledge of the wide ranging approaches photography avails to artists. In this chapter, the critiques of these art practices construct a dynamic base of critical knowledge about painting’s changing nature. In particular, the kinds of relations they ascribe to within and through this special space, open up an artist’s own personal artistic habitus for discovering how it has paved the way for understanding what an artist does in his/her particular art practice. This chapter, beginning with Richter, discusses the approaches of these six painters as exemplars that whilst shaped by their own narrative, can shed light as a set of approaches and create a kind of typology of painting from photographic references. Each is unique, but as a set, there are commonalities. The key features drawn out centre on the relationships the individual artist has with his/her process of ‘material thinking’, and his/her artistic habitus, which is presented as an emerging epistemic mode of practical knowledge. Apart from being well recognised practitioners of painting from photographic references, the practices of all six painters are important, because all demonstrate how this painting genre can be understood as engaging layers of meaning that characterise artistic habitus. Overall, the discussions here provide details about these
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

exemplars that will be taken up in the next chapter and applied as creative strategies for challenging and expanding this researcher’s own repertoire of artistic habitus.

As six art practices are involved in these case studies, a collective case study approach is used. Robert E. Stake (2000, pp.436-437) defines the collective approach as where a set of instrumental case studies are developed that enables a better understanding of what is being researched. In this case, painting from photographic references is being researched, and by using the collective approach more comprehensive theories and concepts may be formed from these particular studies. The particular case study methodology employed for analysing the work of the six painters in this study centres of two important approaches. Firstly, several artworks created by each artist were selected and reviewed through a first-hand viewing of each work. These artworks were then analysed by drawing on Carter’s and Heidegger’s approach to ‘material thinking’ and Foucault’s analytical reading of Velazquez’s Las Meninas. Secondly, the material written on, and by, these artists was reviewed to gain a comprehensive critical knowledge of their ways of thinking and art-making (their epistemic modes of practice) as well as the contexts of influence surrounding their work (their artistic habitus). In addition, where possible, discussions on these artists were undertaken with various international gallerist and art historians/critics. The data drawn out of the written and recorded material is also examined through Carter’s Grounded Theory approach to ‘material thinking’. This approach was deemed to be the appropriate methodology for these studies for two reasons. The first is that each artist was unavailable for interview; therefore, first-hand interaction was not possible. The second is that this particular research is looking at the ways in which painting from photographic references exists in a historical and developing contemporary context, where these artists are often drawing on older Modernist traditions in contemporary Modernist/Postmodernist ways.

The key enquires here centre on, and are limited to, each artist’s engagement with the Modernist traditions regarding time and space. These are drawn from their explorations of the ocular interventions found in photographic imagery through the fluidity of the medium. Specifically, these case studies are limited to exploring how these artists restructure time and create new spaces in art-making, and how their artistic habitus affects

---

5 Stake (2000, p.437) defines an instrumental case study as one that provides an insight into an issue that facilitates an understanding of something else.
this. The aim is to unpack how, in the hands of these six painters, the perception of landscape, portrait and perspective in art-making is reconfigured through the breaking up of space and the creation of slippages in time. In understanding these points, the commonalities and differences between these art practices may be compared and analysed. The argument is that Modernist traditions are embedded within contemporary art practice and that they are still useful pointers for understanding how painters, like these here, work when taking into account the emergence of digital photographic technologies and how those painters are incorporating their responses. Ultimately, the painter as an artist produces complex work, which is then situated within a social/cultural/artistic context. And so, the material that is written about their work, their own writings about their own work and the ways in which those works are referenced, and/or discussed, is verging on being as important as the artwork itself. The data used in the analysis of these key practices is drawn from books, catalogues, magazines, videos and the internet. It has also been derived from personally observing the selected artworks at the many art galleries and exhibitions visited in Australia and overseas in my lifetime pursuit of art appreciation and practice. This entire research interest began with the catalogue *The Painting of Modern Life* (2007) edited by Rugoff, which features all of these artists except Close. However, the written material on each artist varies greatly, ranging from many books and articles being written on the work of one in particular (Richter) to only a limited source, primarily on-line (the internet), for another (Xiaodong).

Richter’s work has been comprehensively covered in numerous books, catalogues, magazines, videos and television interviews. The most valuable resource for this study, amongst a multitude of others, has been *Gerhard Richter: TEXT: Writing, Interviews and Letters 1961-2007* (2009) edited by Dietmar Elger and Hans Ulrich Obrist. This particular book covers his career prior to, and since, leaving the GDR for a life in Western Modernist art-making. As the title suggests this is a compilation of the artist’s own critical writing, a wide variety of interviews with the artist by art historians and writers as well as the artist’s own letters. The information available on Dumas is, and is becoming more, diverse. But unlike Richter, hers appears mainly in catalogues and on-line, with two catalogues of particular value. *Marlene Dumas* (1999) edited by Dominic van der Boogard, Barbara Bloom and Mariuccia Casadio presents essays on this artist’s early career and the philosophy behind her art-making at the time. *Marlene Dumas: Measuring your own grave* (2008) edited by Cornelia Butler fills in the gap and brings the story of
Dumas’ art-making almost to the point where the writing of this thesis began. For Tuymans, the writing on his practice, which comprises mainly catalogue and on-line information, is only beginning to expand. However, for this research, a biographical analysis of his art practice, *Luc Tuymans* (2003 – expanded edition), edited by Phaidon Press, has proven the perfect base for gaining knowledge on Tuymans’ art practice.

However, the information available on Close is at the other end of the spectrum to Tuymans in that there are many books, catalogues, videos, and television and newspaper interviews available. However, for this research the various writings on Close by Martin Friedman, Robert Storr and Richard Shiff have been the most useful for analysing Close’s art practices and the influence life experience has had on these processes. It is a similar story for Hockney. The most enlightening works on Hockney come from the many book collaborations he has participated in, such as those with Paul Joyce, in which he discusses the many and varied approaches he has to art philosophy and art-making. A great contrast exists between the information available on these artists and what is available on Xiaodong. What struck this researcher the most after seeing his artworks in *The Painters of Modern Life* exhibition in 2007, was how little material there is available on Xiaodong and his art practice. There is basically one book, *Red Flag Collection: Liu Xiaodong* (2006), edited by Jean Marc Decrop, which appears to be a compilation and expansion of writings current at the time of editing, which includes information from a limited amount of past catalogues. Apart from that, there is only a limited amount of on-line articles available for the Western reader. It is from digesting the available literature and analysing the artworks of these artists when and wherever possible that these critiques have been constructed. By undertaking this methodology a full picture comes forth of how these artists’ work is understood and presented to the world, in the media and at a whole range of different levels of social and cultural contexts. This ranges from their own personal thoughts through to what is written in books, catalogues and specialist art magazines to what appears in videos and on television through to art criticism and art theory. This methodology has been applied in the same way to each of the case studies in this chapter.

*Transforming Shadows: Gerhard Richter*

Richter’s use of the photograph creates a special space for painting as his approach, according to Hawker (2006, p.118), addresses and engages the trauma of the photograph through “the non-signification of the blur”. Within the ‘blur’, Richter relieves the
photograph’s origins from any complicity in the action. It is through the ‘blur’ that Richter’s work disrupts the dynamics of traditional representation. That disruption also carries the complexities of signifying power derived through this action way beyond the normal realm of mimicry. The ‘blur’ forges the relationship between the photograph and Richter’s painted imagery as a form of dissemblance rather than one of resemblance, because the deceiving power of dissemblance, according to Hawker (2006, p.iii), provides the most direct expression of meaning in the work.

Hawker (2006, p.127) considers that Richter’s aim does not lay in exploring the boundaries of representation, but to use the dissemblance in the photograph to draw out an “emotionally felt response”. She (2006, p.123) argues that for some, the blurring in Richter’s work suggests the inconsistency and inaccuracy of memory, along with its own nostalgia for the past. Achim Borchardt-Hume (2011, p.167), on the other hand, argues that Richter’s ‘blur’, in a Modernist/Postmodernist way, invites and expands the observer’s interest in photographic detail. Richter (as cited in Hawker, 2006, p.101) sheds light on this and his overall intention in his painting process, when he claims: “I’m not trying to imitate a photograph; I’m trying to make one. And if I disregard the assumption that a photograph is a piece of paper exposed to light, then I am practising photography by other means”. This has created dynamic shifts in the perception of what a land/cityscape or a portrait is within his work. Not only is Richter blurring the painting to make another ‘photograph’, but he is also blurring the concepts of landscape and portrait as well as the notions of perspective. These three painting concepts become shadows in the photographic emulsion as illusions on a flat painterly surface. Whilst all may be recognisable, they have passed the point of consideration in his art-making. That is, the painting process has overtaken these concepts in the pursuit of a different kind of representation. In a Modernist context, he has removed these concepts from the language of painting and replaced them with his own language of the ‘blur’. In a similar way that Manet began to rewrite the concepts of landscape, portrait and perspective, Richter is again rewriting these concepts as they no longer exist within his ‘blur’. And so, what has happened in those shadows? Why are we looking at them and what is there to be seen? All of these questions may remain unanswered, but they, along with the other interpretative questioning of Richter’s approach, are still relevant to his process, a process in which his artistic habitus (discussed next) plays an important role.
Richter’s personal biography reveals a connection with the traumas of World War II as he was living in Waltersdorf when Dresden was destroyed by Allied bombers in 1945, which is an event that still lives in his memory. He (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009g, p.466) recalls:

I remember that we were out on the street during the bombing raid because it was being reported on the radio, and people were saying, ‘Can’t you hear the thudding?’ I think they were imagining it. But we certainly knew something terrible was happening.

Living in a small village, witnessing the German retreat and the Russian invasion, was a distressing time, which, in the throes of youth, Richter (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009g, p.466) also found exciting. The Allied bombers over Dresden and the Russian planes attacking the refugees and the retreating convoys, he found particularly thrilling. That was, he (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009g, p.466) relates, until an anonymous soldier brought him to his senses with the threat of a good spanking. He then realised the gravity of what was occurring.

After the transformation of East Germany into the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR), in the years immediately after the war, Richter joined the Free German Youth and then the Liberal Democrats (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009g, p.467). His stay with the Liberal Democrats proved to be short as he was devoting his energies to art-making by then, which he later studied at the Dresden Academy (Richter, 2009b, p.21). This led to Richter’s years as a Social Realist painter; the only acceptable form of art in the GDR. Richter (2009d, p.106) lived with Social Realism until he visited documenta II in 1959, which included much Abstract Expressionism that changed his way of thinking about painting. Pollock’s and Fontana’s work especially so (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009a, p.106). By this time, he was beginning to develop an anti-ideology attitude as a reaction to the socialism of the GDR, where he found that ideology was an absolute in the minds of the people. “People believe in such a thing for all reasons”, he claims (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009c, p.254), “It’s a kind of psychological illness, and apparently an incurable one”. These two events could conceivably be considered to have been the catalyst for his ‘relocation’, that is, his escape from the GDR to West Germany in 1961.

The first 20 years after his relocation proved to be developmentally problematic. His desire to be himself, as Christine Mehring (2011, p.31) comments, was in constant
collision with his need for support and inspiration, and, hence, this renewal of artistic
habitus was paradoxical. Paradoxical in that his struggles of that period challenged his
notions of certainty of place while also forming the knowledge about it, along with a
sense of identity and belonging. These were challenging, because it was these notions
that situated him in his artwork as well as him and his artwork in the world. His
relocation, however, was significantly influential on his art practice. It was almost like
stepping from the probabilities of Social Realism into the infinite possibilities of
Modernist art-making in the West. The expectations of the freedom in art in the West
came with the realisation of the loss of family and friends left behind in the East. It is
well known that he never saw his parents again. Further to this, the funding he received
for his art practice in the East was non-existent in the West, but for him there were many
other benefits. For Richter, the openness of the West to a myriad of different art
practices, the different choices of subject, ways of representation and ways of painting
itself, were illuminating.

Fig. 5.1. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

By 1965 Richter had begun to explore his own space by making personal paintings
about World War II, which at the time, was not being done by many other recognised
German artist. Historically, for many Germans, according to Daniel Arasse (2001, p.26),
the subject was considered *verboten* for quite some time after the war. As discussed in
Chapter 3, the much cited painting of *Uncle Rudi* (1965) (Fig. 3.5. p.67), dressed in his
army uniform, and who died in the war, bore witness to the emotions of both the
sentimentality of the family snapshot and to the traumas of German history. Another
painting from this period, *Bombers* (1963) (Fig. 5.1.), reflects an event that was
traumatic in a personal way as well as in Germanic history. The memories associated
with both images (*Uncle Rudi* and *Bombers*) remained manifest in Richter’s thoughts to

---

6 *Verboten* means forbidden in the German language.
be drawn on later and these memories may have been made more concrete by the environment surrounding of his early years in the GDR.

Although Richter also works in abstraction, which was a formative element in his work during the years after his relocation, he is equally known for his painting from photographic references. What brought him to this art practice was the influence of Pop Art and Fluxus. Richter (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009g, p.475) suggests:

Pop Art was the external impetus. From Fluxus I got the irreverent attitude... We're doing something new, something that is totally taboo and where your criteria [the sense of what you think a particular painting should be, good, bad, or acceptable] don’t apply.

It was through the exposure to these art forms that he gained the confidence to use photography as a base for this process. The process of using photographic references is recognised as being such an important process that a catalogue exists, entitled Gerhard Richter: Atlas (Friedel, 2006), which features only his photographic source material. However, the continual motivation in Richter’s process is to “question and challenge the medium of painting” (Reichelt, 2005, p.21). This draws on the Modernist attitude of taking nothing at face value, demonstrated by his escape from east to west, and is sustained by his photo-paintings, as he occasionally calls them. In this way, he is always looking at how he can use paint as a means of expression for exploring the subjectivity of the photographic reference. He is also constantly determining how he can use painting as a formal communication. In other respects, Richter questions and challenges the medium of photography by placing it into a position of being thought of in a different way, to examine the positives and negatives of that process in relation to another. In this way, he is continually re-inventing his ‘self’ (artistic habitus) through his materiality of process. Such re-invention allows Richter (2003, p.758) to claim that “Not having to invent anything anymore, forgetting everything you meant by painting – colour, composition, space – and all the things you previously knew and thought. Suddenly, none of this was a prior necessity for art’. In this way, colour, composition and space, like landscape, portrait and perspective, have been swallowed up by the ‘blur’. In a similar way to Manet’s Maximilian paintings, this ‘blurring’ is creating a linkage with other Modernist traditions, such as Abstract Expressionism and minimalism. Working in this manner, Richter seems to have found it quite uplifting to be able to paint whatever he wants to paint.
On a materiality of process level, the blurring process is what interests Richter about photography. The softening and flattening of the image in the photograph is suggestive of it replicating Modernism’s flat surface. There is a degree of positiveness about Richter’s use of the blur when he (as cited in Reichelt, 2005, p.23) confides:

I blur things to make everything equally important and equally unimportant. I blur things so that they do not look artistic or craftsmanlike but technological, smooth and perfect. I blur things to make all parts a closer fit. Perhaps I also blur out the excess of unimportant information.

His blurred paintings are representations of black and white photographs, in which he only mimics the structure, colour, tonality and subjectivity of the photographic reference. This is then blurred with a brush or a squeegee, to provide the photographic distortion that he requires. Most of this ‘blur’ imagery, from what this researcher terms his ‘almost photo-realist style’ to his abstractions, has developed as a response to the lack of definition found in cheap cameras (as cited in South Bank Show, 2003). The lens mechanisms of cheap cameras, prior to, and in, the time Richter was developing his process, were generally of a fixed focus design, set to a focusing distance of around one metre to reduce the costs. This would then throw any image outside of the focusing range into a field of undefined definition.

Using the same painting process as for photo-painting, he also produces large abstractions, but the painting tool here is a two metre long, custom made squeegee. Not only does he use this to blur the image, but he also uses it as an alternative instrument for applying the paint. Whilst his realist work is providing a narrative based on his experiences of life around him, his abstractions are reflective of his experiences of, and his conception of, nature being always in motion. This can be seen in such abstract paintings as März (March) (1994), which, according to Richter (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009g, p.477), “is a little reminiscent of thawing, of pre-springtime”. Here too, as his abstract painting exhibit indebtedness to photographic layering, the observer, like Foucault and the reflections in Las Meninas, may also wonder what is occurring in the shadows and why he/she is having a peek. As suggested earlier, the answer may not be easily forth coming, but such images as his Baader-Meinhof paintings illustrate the relevance to his process of such engagements with experience and questioning.

Richter’s 1988 series on the Baader-Meinhof group, a West German terrorist group affiliated with the Red Army Faction (RAF), was entitled Cycle, 18 October, 1977.
Hawker (2006, p.118) posits that like his paintings of the early 1960s discussed above, this series, "is thoroughly inscribed in trauma in that it explores a traumatic episode in German history by the means of the inherent trauma of the photograph". That is, in this series of paintings, through the ‘blur’, Richter deals with multi-layers of trauma. Correspondingly, engaging in representation in this way draws on Foucauldian notions of power and resistance as well as Heideggerian ideas around concern and care being shown through notions of handling (as illustrated in Chapter 2). Richter is showing resistance by questioning the German state and the group’s beliefs, while using subtlety in the image as a way of demonstrating concern and care in the in-between shadows generated by the two differing sides of the dialectic.

The Baader-Meinhof works mark a return to his blurred photo-painting style after spending many years working with abstracted and geometric forms. Although, he searched for a different way of representing the imagery, he realised that the ‘blur’ style was the only way he could deliver his interpretation of such complex imagery (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009b, p.222). Drawing on an artistic habitus deeply structured by past traumas borne of the repressions of World War II and the Cold War, the selection of his source material was made from mass media images of the group. They included images of the bodies and funerals of the group members who committed suicide in Stammheim high-security prison in West Germany, between 8 May 1976 (the death of Ulrike Meinhof) and the failure of the RAF attack on a Lufthansa passenger plane on 18 October 1977, which triggered the deaths of Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin that same day. Three paintings from the series are analysed here. Tote (Dead) (1988) (Fig. 5.2.), the image of the self-garrotted Meinhof, Erhängte (Hanged) (1988) (Fig. 5.3.), the image of Ensslin and Erschossener I (Man Shot Down I) (1988) (Fig. 5.4.), representing the body of Baader after he shot himself.

The selection process that Richter would most likely have used for the source material for these paintings was demonstrated in the TV documentary, Gerhard Richter (South Bank Show, 2003). A multitude of postcard sized photographs are laid out, very neatly and orderly, on several long tables in the middle of his studio. Many of these images appear to be the same, but they have subtle variations. Richter then spends a great deal of time studying these images before he settles on the one he thinks he can interpret the most effectively. Describing this process, Richter (as cited in Chevrier, 2000, p.34) elaborates:
Fig. 5.2. Fig. 5.3. Fig. 5.4. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)
I have to be careful that they are really lousy photographs that will allow the completion to take place in the painting. If the photograph is too good and can stand as a finished work of art by itself, there is no reason to make a painting from it.

In this way, he illustrates why he has a discerning use of, and interest in, ‘bad’ photographs. However, he also demonstrates that there is a duality in the complex notion of intentionality in painting. The duality being the ever expanding painterly intention, as shown above, and the ever developing intentionality in representation as brought to bear in relation to the Baader-Meinhof paintings as ‘new’ dynamic landscape/portraits of photographic moments. Richter’s intention was not to make a directly political set of paintings, as he was more concerned, he (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009c, p.252) claims, with the lives of his subjects, which was not what he ended up making. “But then I ended up with this tiny selection: nine motifs, and a strong concentration of death – almost in spite of my intentions”. The reference material for those motifs, was sourced through mass media, primarily newspapers and television, which he then proceeded to edit and crop until he had the images he desired. In his earlier works he applied grids to the source material for transferring the image onto the canvas. The Baader-Meinhof paintings, however, were executed whilst the chosen photographic images were being projected onto the relevant painting surfaces. Hawker (2006, p.123) makes an observation relevant to these works when she argues that “In this way, the paintings are produced as part of a long process of interpretation that is already in train in the press”. That is, the painting begins long before the first bit of paint hits the canvas.

**Fig. 5.5. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)**

Each of the paintings, Tote, Erhängte and Erschossener I, are like old negatives that have been left, uncared for, on a bench in the corner of the studio. Meinhof is shown from the shoulders up, lying on the floor, with the marks from her self-garrotting the most distinguishable feature. Ensslin, even though one knows she hanged herself, appears to be just leaning up against a bookshelf instead of hanging from the cell doors. With Baader, Richter has painted two objects situated just above his head. These objects could be pillows as Baader looks like he is asleep on his bed. The gun is not in the image. Perhaps, reflecting on Richter’s memories of the fragilities of war, the blur and the shadows in the paintings could be suggesting that the painting is the transitory space.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet between this world and the next for Baader, Meinhof and Ensslin. The photographs of this group in *Atlas* (Friedel, 2011) are as ghostly as these paintings. The transformation of shadows in these works, are suggestive of there being something more to be discovered, more questions to be asked, which is an effect that may be found in most of Richter’s photo-painting.

In *Grosse Pyramide* (1966) (Fig 5.5.), Richter is using the complexities of photographic modes to create dynamically different ways of making land/cityscape paintings. The surface of the paint is no longer the image of a blurred photograph, but a subtle combination of faint brushstrokes rendering an abstracted, shadowy dimensionality to the work. Standing within 30cm of the surface of a Richter painting, which this researcher did with this work in 2011 at the S.M.A.K., (the contemporary art museum in Ghent, Belgium,) opens up the dimensionality of the work. Expanding this researcher’s own life experiences, observing this painting in this way is very reminiscent of standing close up to any of Mark Rothko’s Abstract Expressionist paintings at the Tate Modern (London). The image becomes absorbed not only through your focused vision, but also through the periphery of that vision, it becomes emotionally consumed. This abstracted shadowiness of *Grosse Pyramide* also structures the Baader-Meinhof portraits.

However, some see the Baader-Meinhof series as glorifying terrorism as opposed to Richter’s aim of demonstrating the irrationality of ideology, and the coming to terms with relevant histories (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009d, p.325). For instance, Hilton Kramer (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009d, p.324) claimed that with this series, Richter “Bestowed upon the Baader-Meinhof gang the status of political saints and martyrs”. The Dresdner Bank (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009d, p.324) voiced its criticism by withdrawing support from the Frankfurt Museum of Modern Art, who owned some of the works. The reason for this was the murder of one of its chairmen, Jürgen Ponto, by the group in 1977. In a sense, the artworks were forming a kind of habitus of their own. However, what has been overlooked is that the series is about idealism and how it can go wrong. The works themselves, as Robert Storr (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009f, p.432) claims, became “implicitly idealistic... as it set a high standard for what painting could do, how much it could communicate”. This made Richter (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009f, p.432) realise that idealism exists and may be addressed.
Grigorio Magnani in 1989, (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009b, p.222) suggested to Richter that in his Baader-Meinhof paintings, there are elements of pity exhibited, to which Richter, exhibiting his argument as to the irrationality of ideology, replied:

There is sorrow, but I hope one can see that it is sorrow for the people who died so young and so crazy, for nothing. I have respect for them... Because they tried to change the stupid things in the world.

When asked if Baader-Meinhof actually changed something in Germany, his reply illustrates how his surrounding environment has affected his artistic habitus. Richter (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009b, p.222) replied:

I don’t know. On the other hand, authority is even more respected now. When the Baader-Meinhof appeared in the ‘70s, authority was weak in Germany, like everywhere... We are at the other end of terrorism, we want this order so that we can be a bit anarchist in our own homes.

When questioned about whether Baader-Meinhof was a good subject for art, he (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009b, p.223) argued that “Art has to do with life. There must be no scene which is taboo to art, whatever risks this may entail”. However, he (as cited in Elger & Obrist, 2009b, p.222) also points out that he has hundreds of Baader-Meinhof images available, but feels that there are no more paintings left for him to make from them. Richter, drawing on his own personal history, saw Baader-Meinhof as victims of their own ideologies and it was within this context as well as the context of his artistic space, that he made the images. His paintings differ from his source material as a result of his Modernist technique. Through his technique, he sees these works in a similar way to most of his other works, which is as examples of being ‘totally painting’ in nature, but still retaining the distinguishing features of the photographic image (Richter, 2003, p.758).

Richter’s painting technique in Grosse Pyramide also illustrates his reference to ‘totally painting’. From a distance you can identify the photographic presence of the image, but close up it is a different matter. The working of the paint, which is only visible when observing the work from the side, across its surface and with a suitable lighting presence, demonstrates that there are no distinctive lines established on the painting surface. What is there is only a conglomeration of faint brushstrokes that mould the surface into a tonal existence. In this special space, Richter uses paint as another chemical, like photographic emulsion, to create a photographic visual experience. As in the Baader-Meinhof works, the distinguishing features of the photographic reference are
present, but only as a shadow in the mind’s eye. In this manner, Richter has arrived at a
process that visually responds to his concept of making a photograph by a means other
than the process of photography.

In this respect, Mehring (2011, p.40) suggests that Richter’s cultural and personal
histories have embroidered the experiences that inform this art-making process.
However, the key features of Richter’s artistic habitus and the catalyst for the
development of his art practice is squarely placed within his emotive experiences of life
- the traumas of war, repression, escape and the exploration of possibilities.
Additionally, his associations with his materials and processes, in which he is a
transformer of the shadow world of the photograph, as Fox Talbot (1839) describes it,
have created the localised knowledge that supports his art practice and makes his
processes open to other knowledge creation dynamics. Engaging the processes within
which Richter’s work is situated, his background, how he carries out his art-making and
responds to his work, defines art and the practice of painting from photographic
references as emotional and controversial. His process of transforming a painted image
into a ‘photograph’, as he aims to do, decomposes the traditional notions of landscape,
portrait and perspective, and opens up new ways of perceiving what painting is about
through the use of photographic references. The richness of the banal is developed into a
complex interpretive essay on the everyday and on art practice itself, which is also what
happens in the work of Dumas (discussed next).

**Second-hand images and first-hand experience: Marlene Dumas**

Dumas (as cited in Jantjes, 1998, p.55 & Bloom, 1999, p.22) refers to her use of
photography in painting as “second-hand images and first-hand experience”. Her aim
with painting from photographic references, close associate Dominic van der Boogerd
(1999, p.45) implies, is to distort the “afterglow of chemical reproduction”, which in that
esday, Dumas (as cited in Boogerd, 1999, p.44) claims is filtered through natural
perception. The photograph is Dumas’ departure point for painting. Then colour, gesture
and texture distorts photographic flatness and the photograph’s ability to capture
everything within its frame. In this way, photography’s completeness is opened up.
Dumas (as cited in Rugoff, 2007a, p.121) argues that one does not manipulate the
photograph, what one does is make something different out of it. In a similar way to
Karver’s approach to the internet, the various streams of mass media Dumas draws on
for photographic inspiration is almost endless. In this way, mass media presents multiple
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

images in series for her to work with. Such media is a proliferating series, where things exist within a framework as a kind of narrative of multiplicity for Dumas.

In Dumas’s case, the painting facilitates the imposition of the painter’s intention, leaving the painter free of the restrictions inherent in the photograph (as cited in Rugoff, 2007a, p.121). In an interview with Barbara Bloom (1999, pp.6-21), Dumas intimated that she wishes to make her paintings more like movies or other art forms, as a manner of stimulating a reaction in the observer. She also indicates that her work is "about the politics of emotion and the politics of images...I’m interested in the politics of ambiguity, illusion, the politics of painting and deception" (as cited in Romano, 2003b, p.19). All of this, as Bloom (1999, p.21) suggests, is included in Dumas’ Modernist art practice, which is a balance between a traditional and a conceptual practice that is informed, and shaped, by her own personal artistic habitus (discussed next).

Dumas is a South African contemporary painter, born in 1953 in Cape Town, a former Dutch colony. She has been living and practicing art in Amsterdam since 1976 (Boogerd, 1999, p.32) and works in an entirely figurative way on canvas as well as paper, with the imagery totally based on photographic references. Even though in her early career in Amsterdam Dumas was discussed as a ‘born painter’ by one of her teachers, she rarely practiced the act of painting (Bloom, 1999, p.8 & Shiff, 2008, p.154). Although she was considered a painter with potential, Shiff (2008, p.154) elaborates, she wilted under peer pressure and for seven years indulged in many other forms of art before moving into painting fulltime. This return to painting, Shiff (2008, p.154) comments, was considered a courageous move in the art environment of the mid 1980s, but was a move that has proved most satisfying for the artist. Some of these early paintings address the subject of apartheid, which was a prime factor in shaping her way of thinking about art (Boogerd, 1999, p.44). Initially, Dumas (as cited in Bloom, 1999, p.23) was using old postcard photographs of similar subject matter as a source of inspiration that aroused the in-your-face approach of the resultant work, which, in a way, was employing photographic modes (zoom). This is her version of the ‘close up’ which has become a major device in her methodology. In a similar way to Manet’s rewriting of portraiture into portrait/landscapes in Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe (1862-1863), these ‘close ups’ indicate how Dumas’ use of photography has shifted her portrait painting into something more than only a different way of essaying the face and body. Through embracing new and differing artistic processes, these ‘close ups’ effectively
Butler (2008, p.55) claims the portraits of Frans Hals disciplined Dumas in the significance of avant-garde formatting, such as the dynamics of scale and accessing content. Compare Hals’s *The Lute Player* (c. 1620-22) (Fig. 5.6.) to Dumas’s self portrait *Het Kwaad is Bannal (Evil is Banal)* (1984) (Fig. 5.7.). What Butler was positing as recognisable in these two works is that the influence of Hals’s over-presence of the subject appears to have led Dumas, through experimentation, to develop her in-your-face imagery. With this approach, Dumas shadows the congestion in Hals’s imagery. Her engagement with the materiality of her process is why Bloom (1999, p.22) describes Dumas as someone who is not afraid to work through the complexities of the everyday subject and process. This process centres on her in-your-face approach, which Dumas (as cited in Meyburgh, 2009) suggests, turns the figurative image into an engagement with landscape (expanded upon later). Some things, Dumas (as cited in Bloom, 1999, p.22) realises, do not always work in a cross-media situation, and this forces her to consider what it is that the different mediums are able (and unable) to do. Through this engagement, Bloom (1999, p.22) argues, it is possible for observers to realise that they *may* have similar reactions to a given situation that the painter is researching. However, Dumas has sometimes struggled with having observers understand her meanings, to the point of referring to herself as *Miss Interpreted* (Bloom, 1999, p.26 & Boogerd, 1999, p.54)). In an attempt to counter this, Dumas (as cited in
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Bloom, 1999, p.28) claims that she is looking at her own work from a third person perspective in an endeavour to work against what she is doing in her practice. In this way, she is aiming to provide an opening for looking through and into the subjectivity of her imagery, as a way of taking a more objective approach.

Dumas’s initial references to photographic imagery came in the use of clippings from newspapers and magazines in combination with drawings as collage material (Boogerd, 1999, p.32). As she developed her art practice in relation to this imagery, she began to combine narratives from films and books, which has since been incorporated into a total engagement with painting from photographic references. When she began painting, according to Boogerd (1999, p.34), the vast topics being depicted in film, literature and music were seen to be outside of the genre of painting. However, Dumas (as cited in Boogerd, 1999, p.34) implies that she learnt the rules of imagination from film, thus giving her the impetus to develop a cross-media practice, as she has done with photography and painting. In doing this, the engagement has established the Modernist methodology for her everyday socio-political based practice. Like Karver’s and Eisler’s art-making, through media-awareness Dumas’ painting practice has developed into an interpretative device and not a representation of reality (Romano, 2003b, p.17). Butler (2008b, p.55) takes this further when she argues that Dumas’ paintings “are drawn directly from the events of our time, abstracted to resonate in content and form”. Her mass media based source material, Gianni Romano (2003a, p.22) argues, is political, violent and shocking, while the paintings are subtle, questioning and reflective imagery. He (2003a, p.22) also suggests that in her work, “Where the photograph might provoke political action, the painting evokes meditation”. This delivers a portal through which the observer may contemplate what it is that is being addressed.

Dumas (as cited in Shiff, 2008, p.151) contends that “Painting is about the trace of the human hand... It is about the skin of a surface. A painting is not a postcard”. She is implying that a painting is more complex than only being a form of message/communication. Dumas (1993) claims the content of the painting is inseparable from the richness of feel embedded in the painting surface. It is as textural as it is environmental, as it is visual. Moreover, her engagement with portraiture, according to Butler (2008b, p.43), is a visual exploration of the individual in today’s everyday environments. In such a way as this, Dumas (as cited in Hlavajova, 2008, p.108), engages the paradox of personal and public identity claiming, “[for] me a good portrait
conveys a point where attraction and alienation meet”. In her case, as Angela Vettese (2003, p.7) suggests, it is not the technique that directs the work, but it is her passion that leads the technique. “The source materials”, Dumas (as cited in Butler, 2008b, p.45) claims, “are about the political choices one faces. They are of the time they are made in. They are about whose side [one is] on”. Such an instinct of concern, developed at an early age, is based in the anxiety of never knowing what is ‘right’, or what the ‘right’ thing to do is (Shiff, 2008, 145). On a closer look, it is the ambiguities inherent in such anxiety that is subconsciously being brought forward in many of her paintings.

Fig. 5.8. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

In a collection talk by Dirk Pauwels in 2011, two Dumas paintings, No Exit (1992) and Glitter Bra (1999) were explored. No Exit is a painting that Pauwels suspects is of Dumas daughter and Glitter Bra is taken from a collaborative project she undertook with photographer/film-maker friend of hers, Anton Corbijn. Each work is similar in execution with the body in each case painted in layers of thin paint as a glazing that allows the canvas to show through. This allows for a delicate rendition of the features of the body, especially the eyes which appear to have great depth, like a vision into the soul. The surrounding areas are painted in a thicker paint in a block-in fashion. The overall effect of the paint gives the bodies in each painting a ‘coming out of the picture’ effect. The same painterly gestures have been applied to the majority of Dumas’ work, including Stern (2004) (Fig. 5.8.) (discussed next).

In her own way, in Stern, Dumas is commenting on both the image from the magazine and on Richter. Dumas (as cited in Shiff, 2008, p.155) made the comment, playfully according to Shiff, “I also wanted to see with Stern, if I could take Richter’s source out of its blur”. Like Richter, Dumas has created a painting of the deceased Ulrike Meinhof.

---

7 Dumas, cited by Butler from unpublished notes for a talk delivered at the Art Institute of Chicago, 25 February 2003.

8 Both of these paintings may be found at: http://www.smak.be/collectie_indekijker.php?la=en
Richter’s painting, Tote (Dead) (1988) (Fig. 5.2. p.133) is a considered study in distortive shadows, the fading of life; whereas, Dumas’s Stern almost suggests that she painted it only seconds after the act of suicide. The title is derived from the name of the German magazine the source image appeared in, but Dumas’ interpretation is far more graphic than the source reference. The painting’s intensity is suggestive of the ‘opening of the mouth’ ceremony the ancient Egyptians undertook in preparing the Pharaoh for the crossing into the ‘Afterlife’. Richter’s image is spatial, the negative space being as important as the positive space. Dumas, on the other hand, has continued her in-your-face confrontation with the observer.

Shiff (2008, p.155) argues that Dumas in Stern has “made the image of death less dead”. However, this image is not subtle and it is far from ambiguous. It is quite apparent that the woman portrayed is dead. The stillness, the open mouth and closed eyes decline the presence of life. Unlike the experience of the observer in Velazquez’s Las Meninas, no one is looking back. The ambiguity present is that which is instilled in the judgement of appearances. Here, much the same as Richter, Dumas is concerned with the rightness in choice, as Shiff (2008, p.155) suggests, “We grieve because we cannot prevent the tragedies that result from beliefs, ideas and causes”. Did Meinhof make the right decision to end her life? Was she working for the right cause? Is one doing the right thing by researching this imagery? Are Dumas and Richter right in exploring imagery that others, as seen in the reactions against Richter work, consider to be taboo? Here, again, the questions, which could be drawn from her confrontation with apartheid, may remain unanswered and yet pertinent to the research in art practice. The answers may be as ambiguous as the judgement passed on the subject, but even in her exhibitions Dumas is prone to developing the idea of the ambiguous.

When one witnesses an exhibition of Dumas’ work, as Jordan Kantor (2008) suggests, one realises that she has an “enduring engagement with a select set of concerns: the socially constructed body, the photographic gaze in painting and the historical”. In this way, her work is confrontational not only in the imagery, but also in how she displays her work in an exhibition. Dumas, like Karver and Eisler, is also changing the way ‘exhibition’ is performed in the Modernist/Postmodernist era. Her giant heads, for instance, confrontational in themselves, were installed on the walls of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 2008. In his review of the exhibition Kantor (2008) noted that the heads were above eye-line, or massed together in a double hang
configuration to establish an overpowering personality within the work. Now, since the turn of the Millennium, a substantial part of her in-your-face approach is taken up with exploring the imagery depicting the plight of the indigenous peoples of countries such as Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan.

In her engagement with this imagery, which was recorded in newspapers, magazines and on television, she is hoping to extend the awareness of such situations at a local and global level, according to Christov-Bakargiev (2007, p.36). This is demonstrated in The Blindfolded (2002) (Fig. 5.10. p.144), a work based on the detention of hundreds of Palestinians who surrendered to the Israeli Army in the West Bank city of Tulkam in 2002. In what could be considered a reversal of the ‘lines of sight’ in Las Meninas, but having a similar effect, the source photograph (Fig. 5.9.) shows a group of men secured with blindfolds and hand ties. The right side of the image is almost completely consumed by one detainee, who is facing the camera. Another takes up a substantial portion of the left side. This person is turned side on to such a degree that the fact his hands are secured behind his back becomes clearly visible. His eyes have been covered with a long shred of fabric, which drapes down his back past the shoulders. There are more detainees in the background, leaning on a wall. All are blindfolded and ‘looking’ in different directions. In front of them stands another. He is leaning dejectedly against a metal pole, and the illumination appears to be radiating from this pole’s summit. In a similar way to Manet’s lighting effects in the Maximilian painting (Fig. 1.1. p.8), the illumination here adds to the drama for the observer as the light beams reveal that the detainees have been herded into a compound, separating them from their world outside. “What faces reveal and what they hide – and the complex interchange between public and private selves – thus hangs in balance”, is how Kantor (2008) summaries Dumas’ way of approaching and assessing the subjectivity in her work. This is richly and complexly demonstrated in

---

Fig. 5.9.

---
Fig. 5.10. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

The Blindfolded. However, she ignores the details the magic of the photograph brings forth and pulls out those bits that expresses and enables her point of view to stand out.

This work is a triptych and each painting in it is fully consumed by a giant head. Dumas, in an opposite way to Manet’s collaging of three images to create the Maximilian paintings, has taken the impression of small heads in a 5x7 photograph, separate them and blown them up assaultingly on each 130 x 110cm painting surface. Each head takes up the entire surface of each painting with no background present to cause any distraction within the space, which in a way is about getting to the point. The enlargements are so dramatic that the heads cannot be contained within the frame of the painting. At the same time, the restrictions placed on the heads by the edge of the painting surface suggest forced detainment, which is verified by the blindfolds. In classical terms, her work is all about portraiture. However, there is no background, only body image. It is at this point that that body image becomes a landscape. In a way, these paintings are no longer about a portrait in the classical sense of the word. They are landscapes that map facial shapes in creating a narrative about presence and place. These are large mugshots, which, from the facial expressions that can be seen, suggest the subjects are not willing participants in what is happening around them in this confined world. Christov-Bakargiev (2007, p.36) argues that this painting, “repeats the necrophilic act itself of photography at a remove, and by so doing makes manifest the act of mourning that is embedded in the act of painting today”. The Blindfolded emphasises how the individual can become the anonymous in photography and how painting can reinvigorate the experience into the imagery (Makin, 2009). In essence, Dumas’ approach to contemporary art practice, in which she strives to provide a window
into global everyday life, illustrates that she leaves the middle ground to others as she exhibits her poignant points of view.

The work of Dumas shows a compelling desire to expose the system and does this by creating a place of intimacy. This intimacy is achieved through the action of focusing on the subject’s eyes. When the eyes are looking outward they are questioning and yet full of perception, they are confronting and yet intimate, they are nearly always focused on the observer. She also uses the focus of the eye in other ways. *The Blindfolded*, Jessica Morgan (2001, p.13) comments, serves as an estrangement from that intimacy with the eyes covered, but the intimacy is aroused in this work through its painterly forms and facial expressions.

By studying *The Blindfolded* (2002), without the supplied information about the work, one is still able to witness the emotional content of anguish and depression she extracts from the photograph and imposes into the faces. From this a sense of something not being right emerges, committing the observer to ask questions, much in the same way as those Dumas may have asked as the traumas of apartheid played their role on constructing her artistic habitus. The title only covers what one sees; leaving the context of the work in a state of ambiguity. Even before the history of the work and its source material is made available, an understanding of the socio-political stance she projects behind the work is brought forth. Her painting process, in creating her imagery, is as significant as what she is painting. The photographic image she starts with is transformed through her painterly application to only a resemblance of the photograph, and yet, her painting holds all of the implications of what she is trying to put across.

Dumas (as cited in Enright, 2004 & Shiff, 2008, p.145) describes the dynamics of painting from photographic references when she claims that “If you take a photograph, there’s always something in front of you, but with a painting there is nothing”. Her work is rich and complex, and Schwabsky (2000) contends that the crux of this work is that it shows a “painterly emotion in which looking and being looked at are inseparable, and showing one’s own gaze is to make oneself visible”, which is reflective of photography’s position in today’s media landscape as discussed in Chapter 3. This is an important factor in Dumas’ work, because what this sets forth in regards to her artistic habitus is that in her work emotionality, inseparability and sensitivity may be researched through painterly effect and the intensity of scale. Whilst the subtlety of the paint
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

application can be full of complexity, the filling of the painting space intensifies the trauma and the search for solution. Overall, Dumas’ work, like Richter’s, shows that her use of photography indicates how this medium has impacted on landscape/portrait paintings. It has shifted from being a representation as likeness to a participant in exploring social comment. In a similar respect, Tuymans (discussed next) also explores social comment, but he performs this in a much more subtle way to Dumas, and yet, he also creates a questioning perspective within his art-making.

**Painting the banal: Luc Tuymans**

Tuymans is a child of the television generation, a generation that has become overloaded with imagery, as television evolves into the age of digital media. In this way, he is a child of the Modernist era drawing on, and participating in, a digital Postmodernist context. This artist, like Manet, Richter and Dumas, also uses photography to create landscape/portrait paintings whose complexities expand painting into wider discursive fields and processes. But, in contrast to Richter, his special painterly space, like Eisler’s in Chapter 4, is removed many spaces further on from the original through the recording and editing frameworks of television and the added step of drawing. Through television, the image comes to Tuymans as a second generation vision, a second level of meaning, from a field of second-hand images as Dumas would (as cited in Jantjes, 1998, p.55 & Bloom, 1999, p.22) suggest. This is a very different space to the one Richter encounters, which gives a different sense of the pictorial and the nature of the space. Tuymans (as cited in Aliaga, 2003, p.12) posits, “[for] my generation, television is very important. There’s a huge amount of visual information which can never be experienced but which can be seen, and its impact is enormous”. His subject matter is firmly grounded in the ‘banal’, which comes to him through source material found in photographs, film and television. Tuymans (as cited in Harris, 2009) argues that as the imagery on television is not lived experience, such imagery is rendered as subjective to the point of untrustworthiness. In this, Tuymans appears to be discussing the ambiguities surrounding the creation of television images. It is this understanding that forms an underlying approach in his work that is deeply personal, and relies on the fragility of memory and history (Harris, 2009). In this way, Tuymans’ art-making is, first and foremost, about delivering his artistic habitus up to the world, and, secondly, conveying a meaning informed, and shaped, by that same artistic habitus.
Tuymans (as cited in Aliaga, 2003, p.26), who claims, “I am not into aesthetics; I am into meaning and necessity”, was born in Belgium in 1951, in a time that was still greatly affected by the changes brought on by World War II. Also affecting him personally is a tenuous memory in regard to his family derived from the war. His grandmother, as Gareth Harris (2009) claims, had been very pro Germany, her youngest son died, bayoneted in battle, as an SS mascot. The rest of his family had opposite views, which created much distancing within the family. In addition, to the people who grew up in World War II and its aftermath with the Cold War, like the Tuymans family, life from the late 1940s into the early 1960s was life-changing in itself. New rules, old and different enemies and new situations created a worldwide state of unease that also proffered new ways of seeing and thinking about what had happened and what was happening. Like the artist himself, television was/is their entry into the world around them, a source of memory and history.

For Tuymans, according to Ulrich Loock (2003. P.44), memory is repetition of the original, the past in the present. Loock was observing Tuymans’s painting G. Dam (1978) (Fig. 5.11.), and claiming:

Memory is easily connected with the sensation of inadequacy: the connection between memory and its object is so indeterminate that a memory can erase all the actuality and verifiability of the thing remembered, and take its place.

This memory effacement is descriptive of Tuymans’s concept of painting, which is of painting being the ‘authentic forgery’, an inaccuracy of the past, the artist’s impression (Loock, 2003, p.44). Taking this further, Harris (2009) classifies Tuymans’ palette as ‘reductive’, thus rendering it as a representation of the elusiveness of memory and history.

During a period in the early 1980s, Tuymans became aware of the processes that would govern his painting process. It was during this period that he concentrated solely on filmmaking (as cited in Aliaga, 2003, p.10). But it was not until the end of the 1980s that Tuymans made the return to painting, to where these ‘new’ processes could be applied.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

His experiences with film, according to Kenneth Baker (2010), made him sensitive to framing, sequencing, vantage points, the plasticity of meanings and the relationships of “pictorial scale and detail”. In other words, Tuymans is dealing with the ocular interventions, the breaking up of space and the fluidity of the medium found in photography and Modernist art. His work is almost minimal in the presentation of its content to the point that on some occasions, titles and/or captions have to be relied upon for a glimpse of what Tuymans is attempting. But even this is kept to a minimum to again allow the observer space. In this way, his past experiences could be said to be positioning Tuymans’s reconstitution of the banal as an introverted examination of his place in the world.

Tuymans’s argument (as cited in Harris, 2009) that “Art is not political, life is political”, expresses his philosophy on art and the Western world. This philosophy, developed through his selection and interpretive process, is drawn out of his past and centres on ‘progress through destruction’, a notion which one could consider as coming out of his early experiences of family. In an interview with Juan Vincente Aliaga (2003, p.25), Tuymans expressed how he applies his philosophy on art and the Western world as a structuring epistemology behind his approach to painting, claiming:

> There is a link between annihilation, hygiene, consumerism, production and propaganda. When you think about hygiene sometimes it can be connected to ethnic cleansing. This can appear as an economical and rational perspective. The final solution is something hidden, and I want to integrate that into the cultural discourse. It could be seen as a metaphor for the culture we live in. I see it as something that might happen again, as a possibility. I don’t want to take a moral stance, but I want to oppose the taboo aspect of it.

What he means here is his approach is not a moralist one, it is a conscious attempt to find solutions through discussion. As Baker (2010) argues, as observers, everyone is already uncomfortably part of the image-powered consumerist culture where all of the information being thrown up is readily believed, whether it has a proven source or not. Tuymans plays on this in his work by providing the space for considering one’s own position within a sphere of misinformation. In this manner, according to Harris (2009), what he is investigating through paint is the idea of the understatement.

Such understatement manifests itself in his work in various ways. Minimal content, which was reflected upon above, is one; other ways include application of medium and scale of image presentation. Tuymans applies only enough paint to establish a
consistency of surface and yet, reflecting a minimal dexterity. According to Pauwels, Tuymans chooses to inscribe this minimal dexterity by using cheap paint and old worn paintbrushes to produce an image of the banal from banal tools. Tuymans paints each one of his works in one sitting, and, in a similar way to Cezanne, his painting illustrates the difference between the eye of the camera and the eye of the painter. The photographic image he selects as source material is open to manipulation and, yet, everything is there as a starting point. From this starting point, Christopher Knight (2010) claims, Tuymans eliminates the parts he considers superfluous, using paint to capture the fragmentation within the photographic image. In this way, Tuymans is also continuing the expansion and deconstruction of the concepts of landscape and portraiture found in Manet’s work and the fragmentation of perspective recognised in Cezanne’s paintings. In a similar respect to Dumas, Tuymans (as cited in Harris, 2009) argues his ultimate aim is to “detach myself completely and look at my work as a spectator would, but that is a dream”. The photographic image, as Josef Helfenstein (1997, p.51) claims, gives Tuymans this greater sense of detachment.

According to Hans Rudolf Reust (2003, p.231), for Tuymans, “Painting is a ‘scar’ that develops from addressing colour in an extremely physical way. It closes the wound and holds it open in the memory at the same time”. That is, Tuymans’ paintings are scars that close the wound of creative representation. To Tuymans painting is physical, difficult to compromise and complex, with its practice being wholly concerned with the elements of timing, precision and detail (Harris, 2009). In the selection of his source, like Richter’s approach to ‘bad’ photographs, he looks for photographic images that offer an amount of ambiguity, where the image does not offer its own explanation. His colour range, with its pale greys and light pastels, can be thought of as accentuating a work’s ambiguity of meaning and its sense of fragmentation. In doing this, he makes the subjectivity of the photographic reference more explicit. With Tuymans’s source material, as Helfenstein (1997, p.53) comments, his interest lies in what he calls “the lucky shot”. This type of photograph acts as a candid form of documentary, where everything is reduced to an intense moment of silence that fills the void left behind.

---

9 Dirk Pauwels, Head Curator of Collections at SMAK in Ghent, Belgium, was providing a background talk on the works of Tuymans, Richter, Dumas and Close held in their collection space – 7 July 2011.
To Tuymans, the indifference in his paintings focus on there being something more violent taking place in the subliminal essence of the photographic reference. This suggests that within these works there is an underlying presence from his past life experiences. Such indifference also brings forth the temporal distance between the painter and the painting (Loock, 2003, p.26). Tuymans mostly paints on pieces of canvas, board or the occasionally found piece of paper, but rarely on stretched canvas. He also leaves it to the end of his preparation to decide on the size and visual focus of the painting (as cited in Aliaga, 2003, p.26). His drawings are small and quite precise, whereas his oil paintings are small, fragile re-interpretations. This way of working, reflects his attitude that in a smaller space there is a more direct bodily relationship with that space (Helfenstein, 1997, pp.42-43). Tuymans’ oil paintings are based on the idea of using the least amount of marks as necessary to release the right amount of information. This introduces a methodical structure to his process that may be seen as an approach which compensates for the fragility of his memories and past history.

In an interview, Tuymans (as cited in Helfenstein, 1997, p.35) explained that the way he becomes involved with a painting is through drawing. He makes various drawings from a photographic reference and does this because it is the process of drawing that stirs his thinking process. Much in the same way drawing is important to Kentridge’s work (Chapter 4), it is also important to Tuymans, firstly, as a control device within his process and secondly, as a means of image development. The importance of drawing to his image development comes from it allowing him to fully construct a work before he paints it. It is a way for him to clarify his conception of a work. As a result of subjecting his drawing to a final analysis the resultant oil painting is far less detailed, as he deconstructs the image and its narrative to its barest essentials (Helfenstein, 1997, p.36). The drawing for one of his most talked about paintings, Gaskamer (1986) (Fig. 5.12. p.152), was done on a fragmented, yellowing piece of paper picked up in a hotel he was staying at (Helfenstein, 1997, p.41). The image is ambiguous. Ambiguous, because it is just a painting of a room, only the title gives a hint as to what happened there. Tuymans appears to purposely only provide so much, to open up a portal for debate on something he has observed as requiring discussion.

According to Tuymans (as cited in Helfenstein, 1997, p.53):
The model for Gaskamer was a photograph of the gas chamber at Mauthausen. The photograph convinced me because it had a tendency to flatten the subject. The room became inaccessible as a result, it could almost be reduced to dots. This led to the idea to paint the water-colour.

The water-colour ultimately led to the 1986 oil painting. To look at, the image depicted in Gaskamer appears to be this banal empty room, perhaps a function room awaiting all of the food, tables and chairs for a wedding celebration. That whole attitude changes when the title of the work is introduced. In effect, Tuymans, by causing the title/text to become part of the painting, is drawing on older Modernist traditions, such as in Picasso’s use of text in the title and composition of Guitar and Bottle of Bass (1913). With the title, Tuymans’ painting, all of a sudden, becomes a horrid, threatening and distancing image. The possibilities are traumatised by the recall of memory and the subject’s place in the world. In it death is never seen, but ever present.

Tuymans’s paintings, as Loock (2003, p.55) suggests, are reliant on external discourse as an indication of its theme, mostly this is achieved through the title of the work, Gaskamer for instance, in others it is the occurrence of text within the image, as in Our New Quarters (1986) (Fig. 5.13. p.152). For Tuymans the meaning is the important factor in his imagery, not the image itself. The combination of text/image, or image/title, is supplemental to memory in its inaccuracy. It unconsciously develops another narrative, an allegory of memory. Loock (2003, p.55) suggests Tuymans realises this when he claims, “Our New Quarters reveals the transformation of the picture into writing as an additional means of questioning representation”. This image was sourced from an old postcard depicting the Nazi concentration camp at Theresienstadt, a model camp presented to deceive the outside world. The words across the postcard had been written in Czech and the English translation presented by Tuymans in large letters across the painting serves to strip away any meaning that the architectural imagery had to offer (Loock, 2003, p.55). The ambiguity of the text/image belies the trauma of the situation and yet implies a sense of insecurity. Perhaps, this shows a sense of introversion in Tuymans’s selection process. The words supplant the imagery with meaning regenerated, as Loock (2003, p.55) argues, by the representation through commentary. However, on the majority of Tuymans’s paintings, the ‘words’ are not present and the

---

10 Mauthausen was a Nazi concentration camp near Linz, Austria, operating from 1938 to 1945.

11 Theresienstadt Concentration Camp near Terezin in the Czech Republic.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Fig. 5.12. Fig. 5.13. Fig. 5.14. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

commentary is the interaction between the work and the observer, as it is in Silent Music (1993) (Fig. 5.14.).

Silent Music is a Tuymans work researched for this thesis at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. It is a small painting of a bedroom with a single bed, a clothing closet, a drawer unit and a table with a chair. The caption to the left of the work (Stedelijk Museum, 2011) suggested that “Despite being over-furnished, the space exudes an atmosphere of desolation and emptiness”. Tuymans (as cited in Aliaga, 2003, p.20) explains that this image:

Is not my room but a sort of universal kid’s room, turned into a prison, a cell. The objects are things you need to survive: a bed, a table, a chair, a cupboard. The colours are meant to be friendly and yet there’s a sense of claustrophobia.

This explanation adds strength to his argument that horror can begin with the banal, where coziness, as Tuymans (as cited in Aliaga, 2003, p.20) commented, can be made terrifying. The sombre colours in some places, suggest calmness, but, arguably, they can also be said to be controlling in a Foucauldian way. Is the child’s room at home, in a school dormitory, in a detention centre, in a hospital, or is it a room in Our New Quarters? Tuymans, in a similar way to Manet in the Maximilian paintings, is exploring the emotions in these possibilities through the underlying presence of the traumas of banality and violence.

In creating this new space in his painting, the essence of Tuymans’ work is in banality and each painting has its own banality, not only in its subject matter, but also in its construction and appearance. In this vein, Window (2004) is a larger than normal work for this artist, where at first the observer appears to be looking at a very pale and very blurred painting of the countryside, projecting a similar image to Richter’s photo-painting landscapes. Then one realises it is actually a painting of a sheer curtain, sheer enough to present an impression of the world outside the window. What could be more banal than a curtain, or in this case a painting of a curtain, and yet that banal curtain was also suggestive of being cut off from that outside world. This, in its own way, is the key feature of Tuymans’s art-making, where his past is subjected to a repressive element to hide these experiences in fragmented histories, to then bring that repression into question through an artwork. This painting of a curtain may be instilling a sense of the violence of isolation, on the one hand, or a sense of being safe from the violence of the outside world on the other. The painting also shows how Tuymans manipulates the photographic
image to construct a narrative. The source image has been cropped to only show part of the window frame making its position in the world slightly ambiguous, like he has done with the landscape beyond the curtain – the landscape that is not really there. Even though Tuymans (as cited in Aliaga, 2003, p.16) claims, “The idea of fear is pretty much embedded in my personality”, this painting, like his others, is a place that opens up spaces for questioning in his approach to the practices of everyday life, as well as in his approach to his art practice. It is an approach that is both the same as other artists and yet different in many ways.

Tuymans’ work deconstructs the photographic image in order to capture the essence of the picture. Initially, the photograph reduces the three dimensional world to a flattened two dimensional surface. Tuymans has used this to introduce new elements into painting practice as he wipes away the non-essential elements of the photographic reference, leaving only enough to play on the senses of the observer. Text, on the image or in the title, only serves to heighten that sensorial experience. In this way, Tuymans’ conceptualisation of an image is as a vehicle for conveying meaning, the creation of which is totally dependent, on one level, on his artistic habitus guiding the way and, on another level, like Manet, Richter and Dumas, on his rewriting of the concepts of landscape and portrait as an interactive iterative language in its own right. Thus, Tuymans work shifts painting from being a representation as likeness to a participant in exploring social comment. Such intensity and new approach to landscape/portraiture can also be found in the work of Chuck Close.

Every square inch made the same way: Chuck Close

The American painter Chuck Close (as cited in Shiff, 2000, p.12) once claimed:

The way to liberate yourself from the conventions and traditions of the past was to find a material that didn’t have historic usage and see what it would do...to find a process and go with it... I wanted to make a painting in which every square inch was made the same way, had the same attitude.

In a roundabout way, Close is not only referring to his use of photography, but he is also hinting at his expansion of the classical use of the grid from composing an image to pre-empting digital pixilation as a new way of representation. However, a defining element of Close’s process is that he predominately works large. He paints, draws or makes prints by utilising everything that is presented to him by his chosen source material. Close (as cited in Shiff, 2000, p.4) claims he paints “portraits of photographs of peoples’
faces”. The grid is primary to Close’s art-making as a way for making every inch the same. By using it he is referencing the idea of perspective and early scientific interpretation. The grid is a centuries old framing practice, a foundational principle of painting practice that Close references in new ways as he treats each segment separately and homogenously at the same time. Close’s use of photographic information, Shiff (2000, p.4) argues, verges on an abstract sensibility, where the whole is constructed from independent sub-constructs, which presupposes the pixilation in digital media. But not only is each sub-construct capable of existing as stand-alone elements in Close’s paintings, they are also capable of creating a homogenous entity.

Close, born in 1940, is a photo-realist who is not a photo-realist. He is very often categorised as one, but insists he is not, because he feels he has no philosophical connection to photo-realism. Photo-realists, as far as he is concerned, concentrate on everyday reality, whereas, he has a singular form of subject matter (Friedman, 2005, p.46). Such an attitude, Friedman (2005, p.46) suggests, allows Close to draw inspiration from the process, by-passing the subject’s realities, and in a sense, stepping outside of the frame of reality. Close is a painter who uses photography to open up new and differing ways of making portraits. The approach has been triggered by a life steeped in trauma, which is discussed below.

Close’s methodical approach was brought on by several disabilities. These are possibly the most important influences within his artistic habitus to understand as these disabilities set the parameters of his art-making both physically and mentally. Dyslexia, prosopagnosia (the inability to recognise people’s faces), and a spinal artery collapse, which occurred in 1988, all contribute to his way of art-making. He was what other children would have thought of as a bit of a misfit. From reading the biographical information available, much of it written by Friedman and Shiff, Close was probably that short kid who would be picked last on the team, because he wasn’t good at what the other kids were good at. But, he had other abilities. Through the encouragement of his parents he discovered his forte was in the arts (Friedman, 2005, p.19). First as a performer and then, more importantly, in the guise we see him today. The misfit scenario can more than likely be put down to dyslexia. Only realising in later life that he had many of the symptoms associated with this disability, Close noted, according to Friedman (2005, p.19), that in his school days he had to do things differently to get by. His refuge was the art room and in a roundabout way he has been in there ever since.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

More than likely because of the effects of his undiagnosed dyslexia, Close developed his own system for retaining information to where he is now strong in knowledge retention. Ehrenzweig’s ideas on undifferentiated vision come forward here as Close (as cited in Friedman, 2005, P.77) believes that he takes things in subliminally, and therefore, it is forever present in his subconscious to be recalled when appropriate. His slow methodological approach to such a system is a research process that enabled him to successfully make his way through his academic pursuits (Friedman, 2005, p.31). It still serves him now in his art practice of painting from photographic references.

Close’s spinal collapse occurred at the age of 48 whilst presenting at a prize-giving function in New York. This collapse left him paralysed and confined to a wheelchair. Prior to the on-coming of this disability, as Friedman (2005, p.73) describes, Close’s studio was like any other able-bodied artist’s. Finished paintings and works-in-progress lay in various places up against the studio walls, tins of painting and various other paraphernalia on the floor, on benches and on chairs, in no particular order at all. The disability changed all of that. To be more precise, these disabilities did not change what he painted, they only affected how he physically went about creating the artwork. He had to devise ways of working with his large canvases for a start and his desire for discipline, became more prevalent. Initially, according to Friedman (2005, p.73), he used a forklift as an easel, which was superseded later by a very high-tech easel designed by Yugoslavian artist Vladimir Kasa-Djukic, who also designed his special wheelchair. This easel is set against a studio wall and allows him to mount his canvases either on the vertical, or horizontal or on the diagonal, depending on which grid formation he is using. A slot in the floor beneath the easel allows him to raise or lower the canvas, and position it where he needs it to be. This suits his painting process as he works from top to bottom and left to right, when applying each layer of paint. Overall, Shiff (2000, p.13) suggests, Close became aware of the limitations affecting his work and developed his process to utilise and test those limitations.

According to Terrie Sultan (2003, p.9), Close’s work is centred on the intersection of two visual experiences – the intersections of representation and abstraction, which he represents as a visual metaphor that maps the world. Such a use of mapping, as Shiff (2003, p.37) suggests, allow his paintings to be “read from any direction... just as a route can be followed backwards”. In this response, the photograph has the advantage of removing the presence of the model from the painting process. Close exercises lateral
visual thinking to express an abstracted deconstruction of the memory of facial perception in what Arnheim (1969, p.97) would describe as the interaction of memory residue and direct perception. This is prudent in Close as he may not be able to recognise faces, but does know what a face is. The photographs he engages are of expressionless faces, which are formalised through the gridding up process applied to the photograph and the canvas. In this action, Close stimulates a certain precision in information transference, much as it has been throughout his career (Friedman, 2005, p.40). Close’s process of grid paintings, according to Storr (1998a, p.48), takes the photographic information and re-presents it on new terms, not another version of a ‘real’ thing, but another complete ‘real’ thing. His use of the layer inherent in digital information as a building block, Storr (1998b, P.99) argues, suggests that at a certain point his painted images pass from abstraction to recognisable in the observer’s perception.

In his formative years, Close was very unsure of how he could pursue figurative and abstract art, let alone marrying them together, for he was not prepared to give up either. Close came to the conclusion that he had to utilise the richness of abstract forms that make up the ‘real’ of figurative art (Friedman, 2005, p.35). Using photography and its flattening of imagery, gave him ready access to those abstract shapes he now looks for in all of his source material. The power of the photograph, Freidman (2005, p.42) claims, is its descriptiveness and its consolidation of abstract forms that provides the balance between figuration and abstraction, which is how Close utilises it. In developing this interaction between figuration and abstraction Jasper Johns has been an important influence on Close’s work as Johns’ imagery has a sense of neutrality about it, just as Close’s faces are impassive. It was through Johns, and other ‘Pop’ artists that Close was exposed to the resurrection of figurative art. However, prior to coming under the influence of Modernist practices, such as Johns, Close had gone through an extensive grounding in minimalism, which can still be sensed in his work today. Its reductiveness and neutrality of imagery flows through what he learnt from Johns and still applies. The anti-expressionist, impersonal approach of Conceptual Art is also there, but possibly the prominent presence is Process Art, in which the artist’s process is the defining concern in the art-making (Friedman, 2005, p.39). This is evident in Close’s earlier paintings (pre the mid 1990s). In these works, Close utilised the airbrush, where the airbrush, as suggested by Madeleine Grynsztejn (2005, p.109), is a gesture, “to develop a dispassionate style free of any indication of the artist’s handiwork”. In contrast, his later
works, where one appears to be looking at faces through a mottled glass window, saw a re-emergence of the experience of the artist’s hand with the brush, a disabled hand by this time.

Close’s selection of subject is mainly focused on people he cares about and who have a strength of image that have that ‘paint me’ feel about them (Friedman, 2005, p.54). The punctum (that something in the image which catches the attention of the observer) may be only a shape or an edge that cries out ‘paint me!’ But in Close, a sense of neutrality attracts him, because he is not interested in creating something that is not there in the photograph. This neutral expressiveness allows him to examine and compare the inner powers of the facial expression of each of his subjects. To achieve this, and in a similar way to Cezanne’s demand for his subjects to remain absolutely motionless, Close is quite pedantic about his subject being expressionless before his gaze (Friedman, 2005, p.52). This is another reason for using the photograph, especially for self-portraits. Grynsztejn points out that throughout his career, Close’s most enduring subject has been his own head, which she (2005, p.108) suggests, “even at its most exactingly rendered... his neutral features deliberately resist any larger psychological reading”. Close is taking advantage of the space the percept of portraiture photography is opening up in the media landscape as it evolves. In effect, Close treats portraiture more as a digital landscape, where he surveys every hill and gully the face has to offer to compile a facial landscape in a painterly space. The landscape of his ‘heads’, as Close (as cited in McDonald, 2004) prefers to call them, are in many respects colour field landscapes that may be compared to Richter’s similar work from the 1970s. The difference being, where Richter’s comprises separate blocks of solid colour, Close’s contains blocks of multiple colours that remove the stillness of Richter’s colour field images with an illusory vision of motion. Similarly to his other ‘portraits’, the idea as to how he reaches his conclusion to the journey appears more important than reaching the conclusion.

Whilst many crucial decisions are made during the creation of his paintings, Close also undertakes many similarly important decisions in producing the photograph he ultimately uses for painting. Close rapidly photographs all of his sitters, all showing the same expression and in the same pose (Friedman, 2005, p.56). Close uses professional photographers, whilst his assistants gridded up the photographs for the enlargement process (the painting) that transforms the image into a new identity (Friedman, 1980, p.13). This in turn, creates their own in-your-face pixilated dynamic. This dynamic is
Fig. 5.15. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)
different to Dumas’ in-your-face filling of the painted surface with a giant head, as Close’s in-your-face approach also combines scale of figure with the massive scale of the painting surface that he employs. But in both cases, they are making something new out of portraiture because the photograph maintains its own particular presence providing a landscape of transformative information. Each pose is similar, which sets the scene for Close to indulge in the subject’s inherent differences.

Friedman (1980, p.13) describes Close’s painting process as, “his beloved technique of building surfaces with minute increments”. These increments, these pixilated spaces, are reflective of revealing as much of the personal detail about the subject as possible. His painting technique is to mix colour on the canvas, not as in combining colours, but in a layering that mimics the layering process of photographic colour transparencies, concentrating on layering the primary colours involved (Friedman, 2005, p.56). This is a painterly process that Close has developed beginning with Big Self-Portrait (1968), which has evolved over time into his current ‘behind mottled glass’ connection to digitised imagery as seen in Self-Portrait (2004-2005) (Fig. 5.15. p.159).

In Close’s process the grid plays a major role for drawing possibilities to the surface. The grid is both a control device and a way of taking a deeper look into his source image. It is also a way of seeing deeply into the image on the canvas, where he often finds remnants of his own self caught up in the fibres (Friedman, 2005, p.75). These grids are horizontal and vertical or set on the diagonal, with the grid elements themselves being of varying sizes. The size of the grid determines the size of the painting. Large grids become small paintings, whereas, fine grids transfer to large canvases (Friedman, 2005, p.75). An element of chance in his work also revolves around the grid. In his early work, as in Big Self-Portrait, the grid was used as a process for identifying aspects of the photograph to be imitated, whereas in recent times the grid has become a recognised feature of the finished work (Shiff, 2000, p.5). Close argues, according to Cindy Nemser (as cited in Shiff, 2000, p.5), that “The surface of a photographic image is so consistent (that is, continuous, coherent) and yet the dots of which it consists have nothing to do with the images they project.” This may explain his approach to image creation in his later works, where he exchanges the dots for pixilated shapes. Creating individual images in each grid section like the individual photographic dots, has seemingly nothing to do with the overall image, but again like the dots, they complete the picture, thus presenting what is a uniquely Close vision. However, within
these mottled representations Close was pre-empting the coming of pixilation in digital visual media.

Colour reappeared in his work around the beginning of the 1990s when he felt he had what was needed to use colour intelligently (Shiff, 2000, p.12). His use of grid patterns, and the colourisation he equipped those patterns with, creates a place of bold contrasts, yet at the same time one of overall harmony. His use of grid patterns in pixel form has taken the grid from its stilted use as a guide for composition and drawing, popular since Renaissance times, to the point where it is now an integral part of the concept of his painting (Shiff, 2000, p.13). Close (as cited in Grynsztejn, 2005, p.110) suggests that only through the manipulations of these pixels can a transcendent experience be revealed, an experience which becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

Fig. 5.16. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

The shifts from hiding the grid under the paint to a feature of the work, which is so prominent in works like Self-Portrait (2004-5), can also be observed in Keith (1972) (Fig. 5.16.), a work synonymous with the transitional development of his art practice. The grid is obvious in this work and exhibits all signs of a painter who is treating each grid shape as an individual autonomous pixel that may be used in creating a harmony in the overall work. While Keith is enveloped in the black and white of earlier images, Self-Portrait (2004-2005) responds to Close’s re-engagement with colour. Each ‘pixel’ in this work is not representative of a realist interpretation as it is in Keith and Big Self-Portrait, each pixel is an autonomous abstract image in its own right. It is a breaking up of space in which Close has referred each pixel back to the one in the grid over the photographic reference and transformed the abstract shapes present in that photographic segment into a self-contained abstracted painterly figure. Each pixel represents the details of the source in a way that lifts the imagery to a different level of visual representation, where the harmony of the image is indeed dependent on the sum of its parts.
Harmony of process is a key element in Close’s practice as it features a process that uses a disciplined approach to art-making as a way of overcoming the physical and mental disabilities which have structured his life experiences. Ostensibly, however, the essence of Close’s art practice is in how the impact of photography shapes his imitative approach and provides the grounding of his interpretive and inventive translations as an expansive art process for painting ‘portraits’ in varying and differing ways. In effect, by employing pixilation, Close has moved the artwork away from any mimicry of perspectival presence. Whereas Picasso’s Cubist approach fractures and lays open time and space, Close’s breaking up of space creates a formalist rendering of space in which time becomes multiple in the observer’s gaze. This gaze, while dispensing with the classical concepts of portraiture, calls on memory as an aperture for dissolving the illusion to create recognition of the whole in the observer’s eye. Close’s portraiture is no longer portraiture. It is a hand-rendered digital mimesis of architectural geometric shapes, which pre-empted the pixilation of digital media by several years. The knowledge derived from such processes is transferable as Close illustrates in calling on older Modernist traditions in developing a contemporary approach to time and space in an artwork. In this way, the consequence of his artistic habitus has led to the creation of new emerging epistemic modes of practice. Other artists may profit from such processes, in their own way, to develop their own epistemological experiences and practices, as may also be observed in the work of Hockney.

Converting time into space: David Hockney

Hockney has a vast arsenal of Modernist processes in his repertoire. This includes, apart from photography and painting, such processes as appropriation and the breaking up of space. Consistent with this, he is possibly the most experimental of all of the painters discussed so far. For instance, the way he uses collage can be multiple when it comes to his photo-collages (his joiners, as he calls them), whilst in a similar way, his painting can draw on many different and varied creative approaches and disciplines. At times, his painting cross-references his approach to collage taking his photo-collage strategy and redefining it in a new painterly process. The key strategy in this particular endeavour surrounds the instilling of motion into the visual field. But, what is interesting about Hockney’s art practice is his engagement with theory through the materialities of process. This is especially so in his theorising on photography and the principles of perspective that he explores in his own photography and painting.
Hockney (as cited in Knight, 1988, p.25) argues that the flat surface of the photograph is nothing more and nothing less than another flat surface – “a painting”. Even though Knight (1988, p.25) claims:

> When [Hockney] began to consider seriously the possibilities of the camera as a tool in the late 1970s... it was in... mediumistic terms. Perhaps the only time photography can be true to its medium, he decided, is in making reproductions of paintings.

According to Hockney (as cited in Knight, 1988, p.24) he was always a taker of photographs, which became important as a source of material during the 1960s, and to dominant his art-making, in a love/hate relationship, from the 1980s onward. Although Hockney’s work is not strictly formalist, only having the sensibility through his art school training, it lingers within his process due to his respect for ‘truth in medium.’ Knight (1988, p.31) considers the formalist style as being “fundamentally linked to the legitimacy of abstraction as an organising principle for art”. However, Hockney, in a similar way to Arkley’s work (Chapter 4), demonstrates that the conventions of formalism can quite readily be ascribed into the realm of representational painting. An example of this is *Contre-jour in the French style – Against the day dans le style Français* (1974). This painting, Knight (1988, p.33) posits, “essays flatness and depth, inside and outside, the elusiveness of surfaces, naturalism and artifice, as well as other formal problems”. In this treatment, Hockney demonstrates his use of cross-over approaches to painting to establish what he sees as being truthful to the medium. This questioning of truth and reality (Knight, 1988, p.33), is an approach honed in early life.

Hockney was born in 1937 into a devout Methodist family in the Yorkshire industrial city of Bradford. His father was a conscientious objector during World War II, which did not make life easy for his family during or after the war. Out of this, for the young Hockney, Christopher Sykes (2011, p.60) comments, came an adherence to the adage - “[never] mind what the neighbours think”. This attitude, like his questioning approach, instilled during the formative years, has been present all through his art career and is possibly the defining feature of his artistic habitus. In this career, he has engaged in a constant learning regime through theorisation and experimentation processes. It is a way of life that has never wavered away from issues important to him, such as his sexuality. In this study, however, the importance is placed on some of his uses and theories associated with photography in painting.
Another structuring feature of his creative approach is the belief that a painting should have clarity and ambiguity. As Nikos Stangos (1999, p.152) suggests, Hockney asserts that clarity is visual, while the ambiguity ascribes to the visual as well as the emotional aspects of the painting. Also, ‘knowing through handling’, for Hockney, exercises authority and confidence in his working processes as to composition in his paintings, possibly reflecting attitudes engrained into his life experiences by his Methodist upbringing. On the other hand, Marco Livingstone (1987, p.73) considers that photography provides Hockney with an ability to undertake a neutrality or depersonalised control of medium application. The photograph, according to Livingstone (1987, p.73) provides the impetus for Hockney to execute a process of showing the intricately layered and connecting surfaces of colour, as a representation of the camera’s inherent process of revealing the world at large (Livingstone, 1987, p.73). The photograph provides the ‘odd little details’ that he includes with his ‘inventions’ in the painted imagery.

The process is important to Hockney. In relation to his painting practice, Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.206) claims that “When I start painting I get into a routine. I’m disciplined enough to concentrate for hours. I love it!” His knowledge of materials has been developed by experimentation throughout his career. As Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.206) posits, “I’ve learned a lot about transparent glazes in oil painting over the years; I’ve made it my business to”. His knowledge of the effects of light in the picture, on the canvas, on the subject and in the studio or en plein air has come from studying the work of other painters and personal experience. This is illustrated by a reference to a series of flower studies he created for an exhibition at the Annely Juda Gallery in London. Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.206) commented:

I decided the best place to paint the flower studies was at the far end of the studio, at the top of the stairs, just outside the loo. It might seem a bit peculiar, but that was where the north light came down in just the correct way, at a certain time of day.

Hockney’s approach, such as these flower studies illustrate, is highly interpretive, which Stangos (1976, p.160) argues, entertains a crudeness in the work which is intentional, for the aim, as opposed to Richter’s ideas, is not to make the painting another photograph. His approach to the photography, rendered in his personal ‘everyday’, differs from what Hockney (as cited in Weschler, 1988, p.80) calls “Everybody’s photo album”, where the images of family, friends and holidays are documented. Rather than take the photo-album approach, Hockney is more inclined to spend time photographing his
surroundings, for instance, his home or his travels, as an investigation of his own quotidian (Weschler, 1988, p.80). That is, his own everyday is the important space from which Hockney finds the inspiration for his work.

Fig. 5.17. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)

Hockney’s photo-collage work, which he begun creating in the 1980s, draws upon the relationships existing between painting and photography. His joiners, in a similar way to Close’s work, are a breaking up of space that could also be considered as pre-empting pixilation in digital media. Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.19) suggests that what he is interested in doing is putting, “time into the photograph more obviously than just in the evidence that my hand pressed the shutter and there it was”. His joiners take a number of hours to capture and he considers that, unlike a single photographic image, these joiners straddle layers of time. According to Joyce (2008, p.19), this alteration of the time factor associated with photography, as demonstrated in Don and Christopher Los Angeles 6th March 1982 (1982) (Fig. 5.17.), brings it closer to the experience of looking. This, Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 1988, p.18) feels, associates photographs with the time containments of drawing and painting. The joiners, because of the time factor involved in taking all of the images that make up the artwork, take on a similar time notion as drawing and painting for, similarly, it takes time to produce it (Joyce, 2008, p.19).

Several of his works, according to Hockney (as cited in Knight, 1988, p.34), are based on some of Picasso’s Cubist paintings, for instance Hockney’s Nude, 17th June 1984 (1984) resembles Picasso’s Seated Nude (1909-10), and is built around a resemblance of the fragmentations created. Because of this, Knight (1988, p.34) argues that Hockney’s joiners could have been derived from the breaking up of space found in Picasso’s paintings. In his work, Hockney has reversed his process of creating paintings from photographs by re-enacting Cubist painting through the placing of photographs of a scene into a photographic grid. In a process that may be considered as rewriting the perception of lineal perspective, is a much freer Modernist performance. The thinking
required here enables Hockney’s ‘artist’s vision’ to extend the photographer’s vision to
the multi-focused imagery found in his joiners (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.24). This
morphed the importance of the finished image into the importance of how the image was
made, incorporating a time, space and motion restructuring of perspective into the
previously ‘frozen moments’ aspect of photography.

Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.106) also considers his joiners, which could be read
as forms of colour field painting full of motion in a similar way to Close’s work, as
involving attitudes about space. This is because their process develops a greater amount
of space in the imagery than any single photograph can display. Hockney (as cited in
Joyce, 2008, p.106) believes that “the longer you look at it ... the more you create space
in your head because you’re converting time to space”. That is, the interchangeability of
time and space in the mind suggests that they are intertwined, the more one looks, the
more space emerges. Hockney suggests time and space are rendered relative to the
observer (Stangos, 1999, p.125), where observation and perception are different for each
observer. By treating it in this manner, he is attempting to create a new and different
kind of illusion and by moving ‘space and time’ around like this, he feels he can
accomplish the reinvigoration of illusion to the point of making something look very real
(Stangos, 1999, p.164).

One of the off-shoots of his joiners is the process of constructing grid patterns which
emulates each individual photograph in the joiners. These pixels, as they could also be
called, consolidate the perspective and yet, there are multiple perspectives involved. The
grid forces the observer to look into each pixel, while the grid takes one on a journey as
the eye moves from one pixel to another (Joyce, 2008, p.233). In classical Western
painting, the theoretical abstraction of perspective altered the way illusionary imagery
was made, and this concept of perspective varies from the representational approaches of
other cultures, such as in Chinese thinking. In particular, the Chinese approach is a way
of image making that Hockney pays much attention to (as cited in Joyce, 1988, p.34). In
the Western approach perspective involves a ‘frozen moment,’ which only varies from
the flattening process of photography in that Western perspective in painting uses a
process to create the illusion of depth and the fixing of space. In the Chinese approach
the image is read laterally. In this approach, according to Hockney (as cited in Joyce,
1988, p.30), there is a fluidity of movement that lends itself to storytelling, and it is an
approach that has recall in the Modernist context of his art-making. This, as shall be
observed in the next chapter, has become an important notion for this researcher’s own work and so needs to be explored further.

The time, space and narrative qualities of the Chinese scroll have also had an effect on Modernist concepts of perspective as reflected in Hockney’s sense of perspective and his sense of his physical position in the world. The scroll, for him, brought the realisation that one does not see the world from only one position (Stangos, 1999, p.128). Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 1988, p.35), illustrates the Chinese approach to perspective by discussing a particular Chinese scroll that he observed at the Sydney Moss Gallery in London. Another patron, in conversation with Hockney, recognised that some courtiers in the image were wearing a certain type of hat. To take this observation further, Hockney pointed out the image of the shop that sold the hats appears in another part of the scroll (Joyce, 1988, p.35). With a Western style painting the observer is always taking in the scene from the outside, whereas with the Chinese style, as in the Chinese scroll, the observer is located more within the story created by the imagery moving along with the narrative. The Chinese approach is more open involvement, as the imagery is all there for the observer to select what to observe and when. Such vision instils the ability to look backward and forward at the observer’s discretion, which due to the interchange of cultures has removed the Modernist idea of perspective another step further away from the classical.

“Perspective”, Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.95) suggests, “is only a theoretical abstraction”. The problem with linear perspective, as he observes it, is that it is dependent on immobility. With the slightest movement a new perspective is drawn upon. The lens moment, Hockney (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.29) argues, is enclosed in a single perspective – one photograph, one perspective. A painting on the other hand, a hand which is constantly moving across the painting surface, is open to many linear perspectives. The motion of the hand realises painting and drawing as having the possibilities available for the expansion of the human ability to apprehend things. The world is observed in multiple perspectives due to human motion being continuous; even when the human is standing still the eyes never stop moving. This is one of the differences between the photograph and the painting. Overlooking the inherent ocular interventions in photographic imagery, the photograph is static while the eyes of the painter travel all over. Technically, it could be said that the painting, once completed, is
also a static piece, only the difference here is that the time and motion in creating the painting has been inscribed into the work.

Hockney puts his experiments in perspective down to his need to learn. In this he demonstrates that his art practice is primarily a space for learning, which is another important element that takes focus later in this researcher’s art practice. Seeing is an intrinsic process of learning and, citing Picasso’s Cubist work, Hockney (as cited in Stangos, 1999, p.101) considers that distortion only enters the frame if one restricts oneself to only one way of seeing. Picasso’s way of seeing in Cubism is created through employing a slippage in time to expose and situate the observer inside the picture. At the time of developing his joiners, Hockney discovered a process for manipulating figures within a painting in a similar fashion to Picasso’s Cubist portraits (see Chapter 3). He also found this process compatible with his landscape endeavours that led him to paint A Bigger Grand Canyon (1998) (Fig. 5.18.), which is, at the time of writing, in the collection of, and on display in the foyer of, the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. He constructed this painting using many small panels, instilling the fragmentation of Cubism. Also, the continuity of the Chinese scroll/joiner approach comes out as each panel can be seen as representing a photograph from the collage version of the image. Similarly to Close’s recent paintings, each of Hockney’s panels can stand alone as an autonomous painting, but it reaches its zenith through the sum of its parts. Unlike Close, Hockney did not concentrate on painting one panel at a time. He developed each panel in relation to its neighbouring panel; in a more traditionally Western based approach to painting a picture. In this respect, for Hockney, in similar ways to Close and Dumas, the combination of the Cubist approach to portraiture with his landscape approach here is blurring the concept of portraiture and landscape. Hockney’s approach makes it more of a mapping of territory than any specific type of representation.
Hockney shifted from using a Polaroid camera to a single lens reflex camera for *A Bigger Grand Canyon*, which removed the element of structuring the next photograph in the sequence that the Polaroid camera would allow. This placed a greater reliance on memory. Memory and the unseen camera image, Stangos (1999, p.96) argues, solicits the accident as a partner in the creative process, as a situation that allows narrative to enter the frame. Reminiscent of Jacques Lacan’s ‘image-screen’ in his treatise on the ‘mirror-phase’ (Lacan, 2003, pp.620-624), Hockney places the illusion beyond the screen, or plane as he refers to it, and the observer in front of it, creating a separation. In Cubist form, the ‘image-screen’ melts away, to enable the witnessing of everything at the same time, in the same space. Hockney then achieves this melting away by moving his position for taking the photograph relative to that part of the image he wants to record. In turn, this enables the object to be seen from a position that negates the single perspectival gaze.

In the ways discussed here, the impact and influence of photography on Hockney’s painting practice is manifest in opening up the space of his art-making to the prospects of experimenting in processes. It also opens up the space for learning about process and the ‘self’ in the world at large, as a recycling of his artistic habitus. Although his multi-perspectival work is only one way that Hockney has used photographic references, it is through his use of photographic collage that he engages in the process of questioning pictorial perspective and its complexities. Hockney demonstrates that the gaze of the moving eye forces changes in perspective, which may be employed to produce an unrestricted viewing experience. This experience raises the ideas of representation through photographic references and the painting of those references to a higher level of transformability that is indicative of a space for higher learning, which questions the essence of vision. This is an exemplar of Hockney’s artistic practice in which the key feature that constructs it, as mentioned above, is his Methodist up-bringing. The Methodist approach to life experience is embedded in the concept of regularity of habit and manner and, more importantly for Hockney, the regularity of learning (Chambers twentieth century dictionary, p.825). This, I argue, is what Hockney’s practice has been built upon, his artistic habitus. Combine this with the certainty of his approach to lifestyle and the impetus for setting his art practice in motion comes forth. Xiaodong engages in a similar study of multiple perspective points, explored next with the difference being that he is not adapting Western processes to Chinese practices. Rather,
Xiaodong is deconstructing Chinese art-making practices within a Western tradition of painting.

**Humanising Social Realism: Liu Xiaodong**

Xiaodong is a Chinese contemporary artist, who (as cited in Decrop, 2006, p.15) claims, “in my painting I try to show more humanity because that is what has been lacking in China”. His approach uses painting as a vehicle. This vehicle, which is built on the processes of documenting and interpreting Social Realism, has been developed through rebellion against a repressive regime. He is described by Charles Merewether (2006, p.122) as an artist who strives to make visible the “affective conditions of contemporary life and measure of an historical epoch”. Merewether (2006, p.122) also sees Xiaodong as one who uses the lessons learnt from European Modernism, along with photographic and cinematic form and technique for disrupting conventional narrative. In this way, he is exploring an artistic habitus informed, and shaped, by Chinese influences, but in a Modernist (European) way. What is valuable about analysing Xiaodong’s art processes is in understanding how much photography has impacted on it. From realising this, it then becomes possible to understand how he conceptualises his imagery through selection and how he applies the materialities of his process in interpreting his selected imagery. In using a Modernist approach, as this case study shows, Xiaodong calls on Chinese visual traditions that are defined by the way they create motion in an artwork, to further develop Western styles of Modernist representation. By doing this, Xiaodong enters similar fields to the other paintings in this chapter that address the deconstruction of the ideas surrounding perspective, landscape and portraiture. Like these other artists, Xiaodong is also creating new emergent concepts about these three dynamics.

Xiaodong, according to Jennie Qiao (1999), was born in Jincheng, a small town in north-east China in 1963 and graduated in 1988 from the Central Academy of Fine Art, Beijing. After graduating, he became a teacher at the academy and eventually Professor of Painting. Consequently this grounds his art-making in a space of learning through exploring. Chen Nan (2011) implies that having studied at the academy, Xiaodong was considered to be one of the ‘New Generation’ artists. These artists, spurred on by the changes in China’s market economy, were thought to have made the shift from the concerns about the nation, outside world and the future inherent in China’s Social Realist art to an exploration of the complexities of the inner world and the concerns...
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

instilled in being-in-the-present (Nan, 2011). 1978 saw the Chinese government direct creative artists to use their work to promote the wholesomeness of the masses, the workers, the farmers, as well as the elderly and, of course, the military and the party. This primed his rebelliousness, Merewether (2006, p.103) suggests, as Xiaodong saw China’s ‘New Realism’ of everyday life as creating “politically motivated falsifications”. His reaction was to create politically motivated modifications to establish and express a ‘New Reality’. This reality was to express a truer socio-political and environmentally aware picture of the everyday in China. As Xiaodong (as cited in Decrop, 2006, p.15) considers every single person important, his aim is to show how ordinary people exist in their everyday ordinary lives, as a counter-balance to China’s social realist propaganda of heroic portraiture. The impact and influence of photography on Xiaodong’s artistic endeavours has been, and still is, in providing the means for exploring his aims, which have been sculpted by a resistance to a habitus defined by someone else (the Chinese government).

Revolving around three primary subjects, family relationships, friends and contemporaries and the Chinese people, Xiaodong’s work, Decrop (2006, p.15) suggests, is steeped in the Chinese tradition of showing respect to elders and family. The photographic references of these subjects play a large part in the development of his painting practice. The source for Xiaodong’s fascination with the lives of everyday people is described by Christine Yu (2010) as being due to the curriculum in Chinese art schools at the time he was studying. This curriculum requires students to go out into remote areas of the country and make work that represents the ‘real China’. It appears to have been this search for the ‘real China’ that stimulated the Heideggerian sense of concern and care governing his selection processes. It is within this space that Xiaodong recognised the conflict within the ‘real China’, which has become a structuring feature of his artistic habitus and a source of inspiration. As a source for painting, the photographic reference, Merewether (2006, p.122) suggests, is used by Xiaodong as a documentary medium, to create other ways of seeing and questioning, which may be used in the deconstruction of accepted academic painting conventions. The photographic references become a tool in Xiaodong’s reworking of Social Realism as a witness to everyday life in China. Painting is his interpretive tool; however, there is more to his interpretive engagement with painting as a practice.
Decrop (2006, p.12) observes that Xiaodong is not committed to the idea of any medium becoming out-dated as has been proposed by the ‘death of painting’ debate, but, on the other hand, painting is not important to him except as a form of expression. For Xiaodong, painting satisfies the hunger and is a convenient way to express his ideas and solve problems. This illustrates that his interests lie in the process. As Xiaodong (as cited in Decrop, 2006, p.35) argues, “there is a very physical involvement in the act of painting”. After observing him at work in Taipei, Decrop (2006, p.35) comments that Xiaodong concentrates to such a degree he sweats profusely and, due to exhaustion, can only work for short periods. He paints people because they fascinate him. Also, according to Merewether (2006, p.103), his paintings reveal Xiaodong’s interest in “facial expression” and body gestures as ways of denoting life and subjectivity. Although there is this relationship of artist with subject, Merewether further argues that Xiaodong’s approach to constructing his imagery is more analytical than a painting can be if it is only observing reality relationships. This indicates the impact and influence photography has on his art practice is significant. Additionally, by extracting the image from its original context and placing it within another, a step or two removed from its origins, temporality and spatiality become exchangeable. It also brings temporal and spatial distinctions into focus, for no longer is it only the basis of the painting, but it is the “tool box of scenes, gestures and expressions from which to draw” (Merewether, 2006, p.109). From this comes an important notion that may be applied to all painting from photographic reference processes in that through photography, plus film in Xiaodong’s case, painting goes through this ‘more analytical approach’ in regard to image construction and it brings out a more intensive relationship with the subject.

When Wu Hung (1999, p.146) reflects on photography as a mediator for painters, Xiaodong is one of the artists being specifically referenced. Xiaodong’s compositions, like Tuymans’, are constructed using drawings based on photographs and film stills. From these he imports, or exports, imagery that best expresses his desired frame of research. According to Merewether (2006, p.121), Xiaodong then turns small photographic references into large paintings, using scale as a visual scanning process that mimics the panning process found in cinematic films. Such mimicking produces a pseudo filmic effect on his work, placing emphasis on his concerns revolving around family, friends and countrymen (Merewether, 2006, p.121). As he creates his compositions, along with importing and exporting imagery, Xiaodong introduces
recycled imagery from his large file of source material (Decrop, 2006, p.15). What this
does is provide an alternative reading of the scene by shifting its significance, thereby,
creating what Merewether (2006, p.101) describes as, “a disruptive visual presence that
stands for a greater social disruption”. In other words, Xiaodong’s cross-pollination of
processes, photography, film, drawing and painting expresses his desire to utilise
whatever processes he needs for capturing the essence of contemporary everyday life,
because capturing this essence is an important intention and contextual framing in his
painting practice.

To Xiaodong’s own inner ‘self’, painting provides the means for researching and coming
to terms with his place and the place of others in the world. This is demonstrated when
he (as cited in Decrop, 2006, p.21) indicates that:

The people I represent, in order to reveal their inner personality I need to place
them in context. I sometimes want to show their conflicts... When I show the
conflicts in a painting, you can feel the tension on the canvas, you can feel the
pressure.

Xiaodong is exploring what he perceives as something different, and yet, recognising
how perceptions change as things become more and more common place in cultural
surroundings, as global habitus re-invents itself. In this way, he is revisiting attitudes
instilled in his life experiences whilst carrying out his duties in the remote areas of China
that the curriculum for his art studies required.

Two significant works demonstrates this. Both involve Xiaodong’s appreciation of the
consequences surrounding the Three Gorges Dam project. These works are Three
Gorges: Newly Displaced Population (2004), and Three Gorges: Displaced Population
(2003). In these works, Xiaodong expands his humanitarian aims by illustrating his
socio-political and environmental beliefs with regard to his native China. In Xiaodong’s
eyes, (as cited in Merewether, 2006, p.93) this project is a disaster and a tragedy, both
environmentally and socially. It has caused the loss of vast regions of historical
significance, fragile eco-systems and forced the displacement of over a million of the
country’s citizens. Xiaodong spent a great deal of time sourcing the reference material
for this painting, which came from in, and around, the dam’s construction site
(Merewether, 2006, p.93). Typical of his process, this source material, in a similar way
to Manet’s painting, took the form of drawings and photographs, which allows him to
mix and remix the imagery. It also allows him to recycle other imagery from his other
unrelated photographic source material until a suitable narrative can be created. It is when the painting enters this stage that the distinction between landscape and portrait becomes blurred. The painting is now a mapping of narrative that can be neither landscape nor portrait as it becomes an active response to the environs within which it has been contextualised. This mixing and remixing instils power into the narrative, which is a process expanded upon below.

Xiaodong’s Three Gorges Dam paintings are a series of interwoven very large landscape/portraits of local citizens and construction workers of various nationalities that demonstrates a deterioration of social cohesion. This deterioration manifests itself in the underlying theme of the breakdown of everyday life with the discontinuity of past and present societies and the subsequent displacement of same. Clifton Lemon, in his analysis of Xiaodong’s engagement with the dam project, signifies the important of this artist’s engagement with such research. Lemon (2005) argues:

> Cogent economic analysis on dam projects is beyond the grasp of the public (and, evidently, most economist and governments), so a glimpse into the lives of China’s displaced population through the eyes of one of its most eloquent and prominent artists can tell a story that won’t be told through other media.

The first of these paintings, *Three Gorges: Newly Displaced Population* (Fig. 5.19.), is an enormous work, three metres by ten, constructed using four panels and telling the story of the locally displaced citizenry. It is not a painting of a particular scene. It is a work, like Manet’s Maximilian paintings, that was constructed from many. Some of these scenes come from photographs or drawings of scenes directly associated with the dam, while some have been taken from Xiaodong’s source material files. The image of the painting has been divided in two by a large ‘V’ shape, employing a similar discussion to Foucault’s on ‘lines of sight’, and the ‘X’ compositional dynamic, in *Las Meninas* to construct its composition. The inner part of the ‘V’ represents the water storage, whilst the figurative portions of the image lay outside of the ‘V’ to the lower left and right of the painting. There is a sense of the image running downhill from the upper right to the lower left, with the active subject matter being situated on the uphill side and the passive, though only in the sense of image, is on the lower left.

The lower left shows one side of the dam with a village, possibly the administrative and workers village, far below the active subject on the right. In a way, this is distancing those elements of State Xiaodong has drawn out as repressive. The active begins in the
centre of the painting and progresses up the hill over rough ground. In the centre stands a slightly balding man with his back to the camera. This man and the one behind him, who stands sideways to the camera, have their hands in their pockets and are gazing down at the dam, with a body language that displays an amount of puzzlement and resignation. Halfway up the hill again are two more figures looking forlorn, one crouching, one standing. Slightly further up the hill is another two, this time they are side on and looking over their shoulders back to the camera. Between them, but a little further up are two girls, who look down onto the camera. It is these two girls in particular that demonstrate Xiaodong’s recycling of file material, for these are two of the Singaporean girls from his painting *Three girls watching TV* (2001), making an almost ‘Hitchcockian’ cameo appearance. Perhaps Xiaodong’s suggestion is that this project has consequences further afield than just China. Binding the two sides of the painting together is a group of three small children looking away from the dam at something on the ground. They are oblivious to what all this means and to how it may affect them in the future in the same way as those citizens who are not associated with what is occurring may be oblivious.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

The second to be discussed, *Three Gorges: Displaced Population* (Fig. 5.20. p.175), is only two metres by eight, but again four panels. Each panel is a point of perspective in itself and the paint, as in the previous work, is also applied in thick layers, sculpting the image into place. Again, like *Three Gorges: Newly Displaced Population*, each panel may be viewed straight on or from different angles or the panels may be taken in altogether, stressing the diversity of the manipulation of differing points of perspective. The foreground shows six itinerant dam workers spread across the image, while behind them is a panorama of the Three Gorges valley. In this respect, this painting, like the other work here, similarly features multiple figures in a way that is reminiscent of the structuring in Velazquez’s *Las Meninas*, where the main character, if there is one, is as equally ambiguous as the other figures in the image. The six figures appear to be floating in mid air as there is no obvious attachment of the Earth to their feet. They could be flying like those mystical characters common to Asian fantasy movies, only here they are being held in check, hindered from flying away by the metal pipe across their shoulders. The pipe is playing the role of reality, like every man being held back by the realities of everyday life, these flying figures are being brought back to Earth to face these responsibilities.

The pole itself does not line up from panel to panel giving the appearance of fracturing. This fracturing may be commenting on the fragmentation of everyday life, however, it is adding to the fracturing of, and rewriting of, the concept of lineal perspective. The pole comes into the picture on the right, but it is uncertain whether it starts at the edge or continues forward relentlessly like the powers of the authority that places the workers in this position. That is, the pipe is indicating the presence of multiple viewing points within the photographic source that demonstrate different heights in the capturing points drawn in to simulate a level field below the picture line. This again, has twisted the sense of perspective as the image of the ‘workers’ appear to be superimposed over the background, which is similarly fractured. The end of the pipe can be seen not far from the left edge of the image. At the great height that they are, at the end of the pipe is the fall into oblivion, indicating that this is all there is and there is nowhere else to go. Eternity awaits them, it seems to be saying. Being itinerant dam workers it may be safely assumed, in the gaze of the observer, that they are standing on top of the construction, but none of them appear to be very enthusiastic about being there. The pipe is on their left shoulder and their bodies are slightly open to the camera. Each is in a different form.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

of dress, perhaps suggesting that this project impacts all comers. Their feet have been cut off at the bottom of the image saying that they cannot stand alone, they must work through this together, but the facial expressions tell of the insecurity of their ‘being-in-such-a-world’. All of this is drawn and amalgamated from photographic images of activities occurring around the dam site.

In sum, the key feature of Xiaodong’s artistic approach is his attitude to concern and care developed through a traditional Chinese focus of respect for family and others. He is using processes and approaches, based on his reading of European Modernism, formed through observing repressive activities in alternative ways. Using his State education, he is educating others in the fragilities of the controlling processes of what Foucault (1979, pp.135-169) signifies as power and knowledge of the State (the Chinese government) as it is applied to the docile body (the Chinese people). The message for painters that comes out of the Three Gorges paintings is that scale and the employment of multiple points of perspective may provide an effective means for drawing attention to the intentionality and contextuality in their work. It also demonstrates that metaphor through imagery adds to the richness and complexities of storytelling.

Within his painting practice, like Manet, Dumas and Close, Xiaodong uses photographic references to creates his own in-your-face dynamic. But he does this in a different way to Dumas and Close, and yet, he employs a similar purpose. In a similar way to Manet, Xiaodong has not used the up-scaling of facial features, like Dumas and Close, but has used scale of imagery as an in-your-face confrontation. Xiaodong has also taken Hockney’s panel segments into a different form, whilst still maintaining the complexities of panelling. As opposed to the subtleties of the paint applications of Dumas, Richter and Tuymans, Xiaodong has demonstrated that sculpting paint provides its own tensions and pressures to the subjectivity of his painted imagery. Like the other painters in this chapter, Xiaodong’s use of photographic references has been the starting point and the referencing vehicle for drawing out the richness and complexities of the subjectivity. His constructive use of photographic imagery also witnesses a driving force in his work to represent and recontextualise the available information within it, including the perception of perspective, which in itself has a unique and complex impact on his painting practice.
Comparing commonalities and differences: Aspects of art practice drawn from six painters for researching transferability and transformability of knowledge

In the following, conclusions are formed around several aspects of the art practices of the six artists in this chapter. The focus here centres on the interchangeability and transformability of knowledge within painting practices that reference photographic imagery. Firstly, these six painters show that their artistic habitus is personal and individual, and of great influence on their work. Secondly, even though each of their artistic habitus is personal and individual, their work shows that their work is accessible to other artists as sources of knowledge. In this way, their work demonstrates that the unique space of painting from photographic references is one which can be explored in such a way that strategies can be identified as part of the process of ‘material thinking’. These strategies, because of their interchangeability and transformability, can be taken up by other artists and applied to their practices as ways to expand/challenge their own artistic habitus. In the next chapter, this researcher’s art-making process is challenged by drawing on the strategies indentified in the work of these painters with the aim of taking that artistic space to another level. Thus, as dynamic, complex and individualistic as their practices are, some elements of their practices have been identified, which may be transferable to, and transformable in, the practices of other artists. This next section summarises the aspects of the theoretical frameworks and processes identified above that have been selected for testing in the chapter that follows.

Engaging with artistic habitus

In the work of these six painters, artistic habitus has influenced the approaches to their art practices. Richter, who had direct engagement with the traumas of war, openly explores war and other terror related subjects, as in Bombers (Fig. 5.1. p.129) and the Baader-Meinhof series. The socio-political based practice of Dumas developed out of an association with South African apartheid and evolved into a much freer engagement with the traumas of marginalised societies expressed through an in-your-face mapping of subject. Tuymans, on the other hand, has a more introverted approach to trauma, which is reflected in his colour and paint application methods. It relates to the trauma uppermost in his memory, World War II and its aftermath, which is only there on an historical basis relating to his family, even though he draws on this often. Subtle as his approach is, these traumas have led him to engage in many ways with other similar
traumas. The influences on Close’s practice are different to the other five painters as his are centred on physical and mental disabilities. His disabilities can be considered as influencing his exploration of this inner ‘self’ in which he has had to restructure and renew his artistic habitus considerably on a materiality of process level. Again, like the other painters, his involvement with the arts reflects the importance of photography and the materiality of process to his art-making.

In a similarly diverse way, the influence derived from Hockney’s relationship with the everyday culminates in a practice espousing attitudes drawn from experience. His early Methodist upbringing, his father’s pacifist stand and his own sexual orientation, have all played a role in the development of his attitudes towards art-making. Hockney’s attitude to art is the same as it is to his presence in the world, in which he avoids nothing, within a process based on learning. Xiaodong’s influences come from a different direction to many to the other artists in this research. The art school practices of being sent out to other areas of China for the purpose of witnessing the lives of others has set up his engagement with people in the diasporas of family, friends, countrymen and others. Three Gorges: Displaced Population (Fig. 5.20. p.175) shows that Xiaodong’s activist/reactionary approach, through selection and interpretation, has taken the influences intended in Social Realism and reversed them to position his practice within what he perceives as a more legitimate grounding in everyday life.

**Commonalities and differences**

What these case studies show is that each of these six painters has used photography as a starting point for expressing their own particular approach to art-making that is rewriting and reinventing past concepts about painting. Specifically, these six painters, by drawing on older Modernist traditions within a Postmodernist context, demonstrate how the classical concepts of landscape and portrait painting and the theory of perspective has been deconstructed and reshaped in contemporary painting drawing on the usage of photographic references. Each artist has engaged the ocular interventions presented by the photograph’s flattened/compressed imagery. Using Modernist traditions, like Cubism’s breaking up of space that goes on to create slippages in time, each artist has reduced landscape and portrait painting and the use of perspective to the point where they are hard to separate in contemporary painting. I would suggest that the work of these artist’s calls for a new language surrounding an understanding of these emerging theoretical concepts.
The commonalities that exist between the practices of these six painters are that all participate in creating new emergent visual concepts about landscape and portrait painting, and perspective. The differences lie in the diverse ways they each approach the reshaping of these concepts. Richter asks the observer to see his imagery not as a landscape or portrait, but as another version of a photograph created using alternative materials to those that formed the original photographic image. The accentuation of photographic ‘blur’ has removed any lineal presence. Time, itself, becomes lost in Richter’s blur. As Hawker (2006, p.iii) suggests, resemblance gives way to dissemblance. The image is less of a breaking up of space in that it is more of a feathering of tonality. In this way, landscape, portrait and perspective take no part in Richter’s painting other than as an historical way of thinking about painting.

The concepts of landscape, portrait and perspective are even more deconstructed in the work of Dumas, Tuymans, Close, Hockney and Xiaodong. Dumas uses paint as a mapping of particular points of interest in the photographic image. Her in-your-face reconstitution of the subject, for instance the faces in *The Blindfolded* (2002) (Fig. 5.10. p.144), turns the portrait into a landscape survey of the shapes that make up these ‘faces’. Her portraits are figurative landscapes, which could be termed either as face, or figure, mapping. Dumas also uses the sense of the ‘frame’ as an integral structuring dynamic, where she not only breaks up the space, but compresses time into a cage (the frame). In a way, time becomes captured in the moment of the painting in a similar way to what happens to time in a photograph. The difference between the photograph and Dumas’ work is that time becomes mobile in Dumas’ painting as a trace of the artist’s hand.

In similar ways to Dumas, Tuymans has created new spaces that are figurative landscapes rather than artworks that can be recognised as either landscapes or portraits. In addition, Tuymans introduces a further process between the photograph and the painting in the form of drawing. This drawing is used to reconstruct the photographic image for the final painting. By using drawing, Tuymans reduces and repositions the content of the artwork to emphasise the essence of what it is representing. The parameters of perspective are displaced by the ways he moves the content about in recontextualising the final scene. Time in his work becomes misplaced in line with the reconfiguration of the content. As the space is broken up, and then reconstructed, time and space come into the present, leaving the photographic past behind. Close is different again. This artist has created digital artworks prior to the digital age. He is drawing on ideas from the Modernist theory
of gestalt (the whole is greater than the sum of its parts) in a process that breaks up space in a formalist way. In his hands, the grid becomes a field of pixels where time only exists in the eyes of the observer. The painting only clarifies its own being in the eyes of the observer. It is a field of multiple formalist abstractions, and yet, it is one field of pixilated particles that at its zenith becomes one. Landscape and portrait are replaced by the abstract field where time and space are broken up to become fracturing processes in image making.

Hockney calls on a more diverse engagement with Modernist practices, in that he also explores cultural artistic influences to reshape his ideas about landscape, portrait and perspective. In a way, he draws the ideas of digital imagery (pixels) together with the ideas of the Chinese scroll as a means for creating movement within the image. In his photographic work, he constructs images that mimic pixilation in a similar way to Close. He then takes this idea into his painting, as *A Bigger Grand Canyon* (1998) (Fig. 5.18. p.168) illustrates. The construction of this work draws on the Chinese scroll with its stretching of time and space that creates multiple perspectival points within the narrative. This ‘landscape’ is now a mapping that ties together multiple spaces (panels) as a form of narrative on changing ideas in art-making.

In an opposite way to Hockney, Xiaodong is a Chinese artist who draws on Western Modernist traditions. In a similar way to Dumas and Close, Xiaodong’s work is ‘in-your-face’. However, as opposed to these other two painters, Xiaodong calls on scale of image to confront the observer. Not unlike Hockney, Xiaodong uses panels to construct the narrative. This narrative is brought together from numerous sources, which are sculpted to fit the story. Xiaodong creates layered spaces on the painting surface that are constructed in a similar way to Tuymans’ images. In this, he brings in images from different sources to build a coherent narrative that reflects the artist’s ideas. In his process, landscape and portrait slide into each other to become a place of narrative. Perspective becomes multiple in the layering of imagery and the multiplicity of picture plains (panels). The effect is that time and space are stretched across the plains to where the narrative enters a state of continuousness as it would in a Chinese scroll. To Xiaodong, as it is for the other painters in these case studies, the concepts of landscape, portrait and perspective are historical theories about art-making. All of these artists have taken those older theories and rewritten them in ways that fit into their own Modernist approaches to art practice, which, in effect, create new emerging epistemic modes within each of their art practices.
This research shows that each of these painters has used photographic references as a way for removing the artwork one or more steps way from its origins, thus, creating a new special space for the art-making process. The photographic image has been used as a different reading of the original and as a way of restructuring imagery. It has been used to recontextualise meaning using television, film, news media and art processes such as collage as well as deconstructing and reconstructing the reference through drawing. In another way, the use of scale in composition as well as size of work, as played out in the work of these painters, is an explorable element of practice. Each painter is challenging the attention of the observer in different ways, requiring the observer to rethink and look again at the vastly different ideas emerging from their practices.

**Exploring interchangeability and transformability**

In this chapter, a wide and expanding variety of different approaches to art practice have been identified. In addition, in-depth critical knowledge of the changing nature of painting practice is made available to this emerging critical field for artists to explore. The six art practices studied here, through Carter’s Grounded Theory approach of ‘material thinking’, establishes that each particular practice is influenced by the variabilities of the artist’s artistic habitus, which includes his/her engagement with everyday life, memory and the materiality of his/her processes. The intention now, is to take the knowledge, derived from these case studies and apply it to this researcher’s own painting practice in the next chapter. The aim is to verify the transferability of knowledge from one art practice to another and to experiment with this knowledge, new to this researcher’s art practice, to explore its propensity to develop and renew that practice. The focus of this testing is on how these painters have engaged the older Modernist traditions surrounding, firstly, the breaking up of space, which leads to the creation of new spaces about art-making, and secondly, the restructuring of time within an artwork. With this approach, a better understanding will come forth as to how the concepts of landscape, portrait and perspective have been affected by this researcher’s engagement with photography. Overall, in these experiments, photography’s effect on painting is demonstrated within a particular practice illustrating that whilst photography’s influence is multiple, its impact on an artist’s practice is personal and individual.
Chapter 6

Case Study from Personal Studio Practice

In this chapter, a range of different approaches to painting from photographic references identified in the case studies of the previous chapter are tested, as a means of engaging and extending this new engagement with critical painting practice. These approaches are adapted and applied through a site-specific painting project that relates to this researcher/artist’s own personal artistic habitus. How these approaches were selected and applied, is described and demonstrated, as well as how this researcher/artist’s own painting practice/artistic habitus has been enriched and expanded by this testing. In this way, photography’s impact on this researcher/artist’s practice is tested both directly (by the processes) and indirectly (through the work of Richter, Dumas, Tuymans, Close, Hockney and Xiaodong - Richter et al.) and establishes that photography’s effect is both personal and individual. This, in turn, opens up painting from photographic references for painters, and critics, to further theorise about how photography affects painting practice.

This chapter is structured along similar lines to the case study methodology utilised in the discussions on the painters in the previous chapter. However, the case studies in that chapter were a ‘collection’ of instrumental case studies, whereas this particular study is an instrumental study of an individual’s practice that expands on a larger theme. Because this individual practice is that of this researcher/artist, this study not only draws on the analysis of artworks from his past catalogue and written material, like the studies in the previous chapter, it also reflexively draws on the researcher/artist’s own vast
knowledge of his own art practice. As this practice is set on a lifetime involvement in art-making, and the theorising behind that art-making, this reflexive exploration brings out a deeper knowledge of what happens within an artist’s practice. Like the analysis of the artworks and written material in the previous chapter, Carter’s Grounded Theory approach to ‘material thinking and Heidegger’s response to this theory is applied to this case study. Foucault’s analysis of *Las Meninas* is also employed and used as a guide for exploring the artworks involved. In this way, a better understanding of what is being researched comes forward. Further to this, using Carter’s theory, this researcher’s view is firstly presented on how the influence of artistic habitus acts upon the development of his art practice. Then, in conjunction with this, an overview of this researcher/artist’s art-making is provided to underpin his approach to the testing processes undertaken.

For the next step in this case study, an in-depth investigation is made into the transferability and the transformability of knowledge from a set of differing epistemological experiences to another (from the six case studies to this researcher/artist’s art practice). In combination with elements of the theoretical and philosophical dynamics exhibited in the work of the six painters, this chapter also discusses the different ways of observing and coming to terms with the shifts in thinking around the Modernist painting practices that these painters engage, such as those relating to the concepts of landscape, portrait and perspective. In their practices, the six painters developed new and different complex ways of understanding what is meant by the terms landscape, portrait and perspective. The approaches explored here are limited to the processes that led to their shifts in thinking around these concepts. To facilitate this complex exploration, the processes selected for testing from the practices mapped in the case studies, involve the ways they go about the breaking up of space and the restructuring of time. With this approach, how they create new spaces and processes in their art-making can be tested.

In relation to the above research parameters, this chapter explores how artists deal with the subjectivity found in photographic images and how paint can be used to express this. In this way, this researcher/artist comes to realise, through his engagement with Hockney’s work that his own art practice is a space for learning. This engagement with new knowledge and the epistemological relationships it has with emerging epistemic modes of practice and the role of artistic habitus, is demonstrated in this researcher/artist’s own art-making through a set of experimental approaches to. This is
expressed through an art project that engages both photography and painting on an equal level. As a reminder, the works produced in the following experiments are for discussion and not for assessment in this thesis.\footnote{It should also be noted here that the painting side of this project was carried out in this researcher/artist’s own studio as the facilities available at the University of Western Sydney were not suitable to his needs.}

**Behind the practical exemplar: This researcher/artist’s insight into the personal artistic habitus that governs his art practice**

In order to construct a platform from which to engage the new knowledge and epistemological experiences drawn out of researching Richter et al., this first section is devoted to this researcher’s own artistic habitus and its relationship to his art practice. This examination is important to this testing process as it provides a background into how influences have been engaged in this researcher’s life’s journey that have led him to this point in his career. This reflexive approach also establishes the personal factors relevant to the decision-making carried out in the testing process. The importance of this section is that it provides an insider’s view of an artist’s artistic habitus as an exemplar of ‘influence’ in action. To instil an objective approach to something that has such a personal nature, the following discussion on this researcher’s own artistic habitus is written in third person narrative to embed it, from a distance, into the ‘real’ of his art practice. For the following, this researcher/artist is referred to as ‘Makin’, or ‘this artist’, or ‘this painter’ in the relevant places.

**A short narrative on a personal habitus**

From almost the time that Makin began to consciously remember things, he can recall his father’s use of his little Leica camera. Makin’s mother gave him his little plastic Kodak camera not long after entering primary school. It looked just like Dad’s, so this budding artist thought he was the number one kid on the planet, especially because it used ‘real film’. At the time, this particular artist didn’t realise that film was an integral part of the process and, therefore, would naturally be used inside a camera. When colour film became readily available, Makin and his father went mad with enthusiasm. Around the time his father bought his first car (1960), this artist started to do representational drawings, which entailed copying images from Fred Flintstone comics - the first things
that he consciously tried to read. Makin, like Close, did not know it, but he was dyslexic, so reading was not his forte - everything he did was based on non-textual visuality.

His father’s car was a 1960 Holden Station Wagon, with tail fins and, hence, it was perfectly suited to Makin’s *Flash Gordon* childhood sci-fi fantasies. In this car, the family went for long drives on the weekends and the two cameras onboard worked overtime on the way. The difference between his father’s images and his was simple. His father captured images of bushland and beaches, and lined people up next to their cars to take posed portraits of them. Makin, on the other hand, was sneaky, clicking the camera at everything - people, bush, beaches, cars, trains, buildings and rivers. Whether it moved or not, did not bother him, so he was probably subconsciously interested in everyday life already and possibly dancing with a whole field of Foucauldian notions. What emphasised the difference between these two photographers was that his father was fascinated by how much brighter the colours in the photograph were than they appeared to be in real life. However, the lack of reality in the colour sent Makin in the direction of being more interested in the shapes and tonality of the imagery and to have a more documentary approach to the subject matter. Makin had become a 10 year old who wanted to photograph what was there and what was happening; making visual memories available to a later present. He had no notion as to why he was doing this, it just happened that way.

The event, which seems to have affected Makin’s work the most, occurred in what would seem a very uninspiring place with no camera or pencil in sight. This event is probably most responsible for the blue/grey tonalities in his paintings, as *Garden Island* (2008) (Fig. 6.1.) illustrates. It is also possibly the reason for his delight in black and white photography and his fascination with everything architectural and industrial. Makin was 14 years old, the day was overcast and he was on a suburban train travelling from Granville to Sydney, going with a school friend to the ‘Flicks,’ as the movies were referred to in those days. The train stopped at the Clyburn railway worker’s station (which no longer exists), and like most industrial sites it was coloured a dull grey or dusty black, with all of the things that were supposed to be white tinged with industrial dust and grime. It was the end of the shift, ‘knock off time’ for the workers who were

---

13 *Flash Gordon* was a sci-fi television series that Makin watched during the first years of television transmission in Australia.
coming across the pedestrian bridge that took them from the sheds to the station. This could have been a scene from an Evelyn Waugh novel. It was as though the workers were conforming to the Foucauldian notions of normalisation. They all wore dull grey suits of differing tonalities, with hats the style of which had been around since the 1920s. Everyone was carrying his rectangular, box-like, dull brownish work bags. Makin couldn’t stop thinking of two things. Firstly, exhibiting the pretentious attitude of youth, he didn’t want to end up being one of those dull grey humans, plodding along in mediocrity. Secondly, it made him think of how much life here resembled a black and white photograph. From then on Makin began to see this black and white world everywhere, as an on-going, continuous photographic world.

Painting began for Makin in early high school. Because of a lack of money, he began by ripping up Masonite flooring from derelict shops and houses in the local area to paint on. His approach then was expressive, even though he had no idea what that meant at the time. Life was very full for him in the late 1960s. Apart from going to school, which was avoided as much as possible, Makin was a mad photographer, a painter and attempting to become a professional footballer (the Football Association game); along with this he was becoming a rock musician and had discovered girls. However, he admits, girls were number four on the list at that time. Football was his ‘life’s ambition’, but music and painting both ran a close second, at a similar, interchangeable level, depending on what day of the week it was. With all of those time constraints, photography became his source of imagery for painting and has been so ever since.

After football, music became Makin’s driving force until the late 1980s when his attention refocused to include photography and painting, on an equal footing with music. During this earlier time, in the 1970s he met and married a German woman, who still struggles along with him today. This created a great conflict within his father’s family at
the time, and is therefore an important factor in the development of his personal habitus, which also plays a defining role in his artistic habitus. The family’s conflict was a reaction to Makin’s grandfather being wounded by the Germans in World War I. This conflict became important to his decision-making at that time as it affected his attitude towards others. The grandfather over ruled the family, demonstrating that influences have their place and decision-making is personal. In addition to this, to support himself during those years after football didn’t happen, many differing and varied types of employment were pursued. The money in music in Australia was not good. To supplement this, a few years were spent in various positions in the newspaper industry, attempting, without success, to obtain a position in the News Ltd art department. This was followed by a short period as a cabinet maker, an even shorter period in an engineering occupation, and then an accountant for 11 years. However, as alluded to at the beginning of this paragraph; Makin saw the light in the late 1980s and dedicated his working life to the arts.

On top of this, much of the early part of his childhood had been spent in bed with a respiratory condition, which has now returned with a vengeance. This early restriction is where Makin’s interest in observing everyday life arose. Getting out and seeing things, places and people, became important. Bed was boring. Possibly due to this confinement, a detached sensibility has arisen as to the way he see things. Wandering the streets of London, and other cities, taking photographs, he always feels like the unattached, anonymous observer of the hustle and bustle. Is he really there? He is never quite sure. Crary (1990, p.98) suggests that observation is tied to the physiology of the body and thus, temporality and vision become increasingly inseparable. In this notion, Crary (1990, p.98) claims, “The shifting processes of one’s own subjectivity experienced in time became synonymous with the act of seeing, dissolving the Cartesian ideal of an observer completely focused on an object”. This idea sums up Makin’s detached approach to photography and, subsequently, his approach to painting from photographic references. What this means to Makin’s approach to subjectivity is that he relates what he sees to what he already knows as a way of creating meaning in the work, as the object has no meaning until this occurs. This means he may have to research the object more, because the object of his seeing only enters his discourse after he has implied a meaning.
Makin’s artistic habitus: a relationship with painting and photography

Makin’s art practice is a studio based affair, which uses photographic references as a means for bringing the landscape into the studio. His art-making involves painting, print-making and photography, with photography providing the basis for the other two. The enduring theme in this practice, the Thames River, works as a theoretical representation of the processes of everyday life, which is another less prominent, yet recurring theme. This, along with the social and cultural ties that come out of this theoretical approach, form part of further research within his art practice. The main tactic in Makin’s process is the use of photography, which invokes memory and acts as a transformative space where memory is reanimated into recalling things that were happening at the time the photograph was taken. In this way, the memory stored in the photograph is brought forward into Makin’s thoughts within the context those ‘present’ thoughts are situated. Recently, a telemovie which had been filmed a number of years ago in Hatfield House, Hertfordshire, brought back memories of having lunch there and exploring the house and gardens, as well as sleeping in Queen Elizabeth I’s old palace next to the main building. These past photographic memories that replicate his photographs of the place went from memories of the past to memories of the moment. Consequently, plans were hatched at the time of watching the movie to make a return to the house for a painting/photographic expedition. In this way, it is the essence of memory and temporalities that his painting process explores as the photographic image, is both of these and more.

Considering Berger’s (1972, p.10) idea of every image embodying a way of seeing, reflected upon in earlier chapters, painting from photographic references involves three ways of seeing - the photographer’s, the painter’s and the observer’s. Makin realises that his ability to be the observer is considerably limited. However, as an artist in this genre who predominantly utilises his own photographic imagery, Makin considers that he, in a similar way to Dumas, is privileged to be able to engage with all three ways of seeing, to a certain degree. Firstly, as a photographer, he is not looking for the ultimate photographic image; in fact he does not consider himself as that kind of photographer. The mechanics of the camera are not important to him. If he is lucky enough to capture a good photograph through his visual experimentations, it is accepted with glee. The capturing of the sublime moment is not Makin’s aim either, because, as Edmund Burke (1998, p.101) might have suggested, the instant it occurs, it passes into memory as it
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

“hurries us on by an irresistible force”. However, documenting what he is doing, where he is going and what is happening around him is where the interest is, much as it was in his childhood. What changed, which aligns Makin’s work with that of the artists researched in previous chapters, is that he is now more conscious of the socio-political, economical and environmental aspects of everyday life. Makin does not claim that anything can be done, but recording these aspects invokes memories and memory creates its own possibilities.

Where memory takes one

Memory is everything to Makin’s work. As a painter, what is observed in a photograph, and then utilise from it, is that which triggers a memory. That memory may draw on thoughts and feelings present at the time the photograph was captured, or when Makin came across the image in the case of the occasional found photograph. For instance, the memory that came forward for Makin’s painting *The Belfast in the Pool* (2008) (Fig. 6.2.), which came from Paul Barkshire’s 1983 photograph *Pool of London* (Fig. 6.3.), was drawn out of the fog in the photograph. This fog reminded Makin of many freezing cold mornings wondering along the Thames River in winter, where everything was crisp and clean, and yet much was hidden. For Makin, it is also possible for the memory to be of a preceding moment or of something that has happened before or since the taking of the photograph. It could also represent an unrelated memory, which has been instigated by something he is painting. The fog in *The Belfast in the Pool* acted in this way as it brought back a memory not only of cold mornings, but of the smoke screen at one of the Rock concerts he performed in, which turned out to be a fire in the kitchen behind the stage. Why it should do this, cannot be answered, but this is how Makin finds it sometimes works in his practice. The photograph when observed becomes the means for ‘storytelling’ by invoking memory, especially as a means for researching everyday life. How the complexities of memory are played out through photography is significant in the ‘material thinking’ processes of painting from photographic references.

In this process, with its subjectivity based in everyday life, the memory of the photographer and the painter provide the meaning and narrative through selection and interpretation. This is achieved by the photographer and the painter through intentionality and for the painter also, through the reinvestment of experience into the so-called ‘frozen moment’. In Makin’s work, both create new and differing narratives in the
Fig. 6.2.

Fig. 6.3. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)
process that are open to further selection and interpretation, as is demonstrated in the photograph and painting discussed above. Makin, in this case, is both the photographer and the painter. Photography, for him, sees the image established by the photographer through a selection process that forms the essence of his creative process, and facilitates interpretation and creation of meaning. As Derman (1995) suggests, this is made evident by the photographer’s framing of the image and the relationship this has to the arrangement of the image at the time it was captured. In this way, meaning is directly determined by what the frame seizes upon. As indicated in an earlier discussion, Makin’s photographic intention witnesses the particular criteria he is addressing. In some painting practices, such as Makin’s, the intentions in using photographic references are to invoke and stimulate memories about place, experience and identity. In this process, the selection of what is left in or out of the painting, and the photographs, is reflective of a particular memory that is in need of unpacking.

Whether Makin applies de Certeau’s concept of memory as he would, where de Certeau likens it to the train window as an enabler of a field of vision and the rails as allowing movement through the field (de Certeau, 1984, p.112) is not the debate here. But when this notion is applied to Makin’s photography the photograph appears to be much the same as an active ‘windowpane’. What leads Makin through this captured space, enshrined by the windowpane, is memory. To Makin, what has become apparent through analysing his own practice is that memory is invoked by the vision held within the photograph and draws out, dismantles and reconstructs the relationships beyond the ‘windowpane’, hence providing a space for interpretation.

As suggested in an earlier chapter, memory is not static; it requires other influences, like a photograph, to open up the space. For instance, when observing a horse galloping around a racetrack Makin subconsciously realises that at certain points of the gallop all of the horse’s feet are off the ground at the same time. What has created the space for Makin to realise this is the memory of Muybridge’s photographic demonstrations of this phenomenon, which were shown to him in the early days of his youth. As susceptible to Photoshop as photography is, as the painting is to the slippery hand of the painter, memory as a recall process is intrinsically linked to everyday life in Makin work. Therefore, another space that photography opens up for him, and others, is the discussion of the representation of everyday life, which is reflected upon next.
In the Modernist context, everything in the everyday, as illustrated throughout earlier chapters, has become traceable and interwoven as everything is interconnected through all forms of mass media. These notions may seem daunting, but Makin considers that the differences between individuals are formed in relation to how such complex knowledge is used and how one feels about the events, relationships and values incurred in everyday life. As a painter, everyday life provides a space for furthering the knowledge of what it is a painter is involved in, with photography providing the research tool for many painters to engage this space, Makin included. The painting surface in Makin’s work is a space for reconnecting the present with the recollections of the everyday memories recalled by the photograph.

Due to what Makin perceives as his ‘detached sensibility’ as to how things are looked at as an observer, speculated upon earlier, Makin considers he is permitted to assess the photograph, and the painting for that matter, in a similar way to assessing the work of any other artist. This is to push himself in a similar way to Dumas when she endeavours to look at her work from a third person perspective (as cited in Bloom, 1999, p.28). Often the memories brought out drift back to where and when the reference image was captured or selected. For this artist, these memories don’t necessarily invoke the reason why the photograph was captured. As Makin attempts to do in his paintings, the photograph often seems to create another narrative relating to the situation. An added advantage of being the painter, and something not usually open to an independent observer, is that on occasions, the work will allow Makin to recall other memories of things that occurred during the painting’s creation. Not only memories of what happened when carrying out the physical work, but even unrelated events, such as remembering a special event attended during the period the painting was being worked on. For instance, *Fractured Homecomings I* (2008) (Fig. 6.7. p.196) reminds Makin of the Jethro Tull concert the night before the painting was finished, which probably put him in the mood to resolve the work. This may be an accident of emotional recollection, but this is also an example of where accidents are the cracks that let the light in, as Leonard Cohen (1992) claims.

**Accidents will happen**

As inferred previously, Makin is a firm believer in what Ehrenzweig (1971, p.102) claims about ‘accidents’ as being the fragmentation that mirrors the artist’s personality.
In the accident, Ehrenzweig theorises, the conscious intentions the artist is invoking become ‘frustrated’ by the resistance of the medium, which causes the artist to draw more from the subliminal structures of his/her personality. Ehrenzweig (1971, pp.57-58) suggests:

Taking back from the work on a conscious level what has been projected into it on an unconscious level is perhaps the most fruitful and painful result of creativity... Hence utter watchfulness is the first demand of craftsmanship, a split-second reaction to innumerable variables which will enforce a subtle change of plan and make us respond willingly to the ever new shapes growing and interacting before our eyes.

What this means is that accidents in photography and painting can be taken advantage of, especially in the practice of painting. Makin’s disposition towards ‘the accident’, possibly drawing from his ‘sneaky’ experiences with the camera in his youth, can be observed all through *Fractured Homecomings I* (Fig. 6.7. p.196). For instance, the un-primed canvas has resisted the paint creating many interesting dialogues. The orange building to the right of Tower Bridge came from an overflow of under-wash, which drifted in the direction it wanted to go instead of the direction planned. The top of the towers on the bridge are the ink underdrawing bleeding into the canvas. Each in its own way has reshaped the discourse within the painting’s narrative. This shows Makin recognises that there is a beneficial conflict, as British artist Heinz Koppel (as cited in Ehrenzweig, 1971, p.57) suggests, that occurs between the point of departure and the resistance that transpires in the medium used. It is from within this space that Makin’s ideas becomes emergent.

**Employing photographic phenomenon**

For this artist, another interesting facet of ‘the accident’ in art was illustrated in the initial stages of photography’s development. Photographs were devoid of people, animals and everything else that moved, as the emulsion used at the time did not react fast enough to capture the phenomenon of motion. The accident is evident in Louis Daguerre’s two views of Boulevard Du Temple (Figs. 6.4. & 6.5.). In response to these Daguerreotypes, Samuel Morse (as cited in Batchen, 1997, p.135) observed that anything that moved, pedestrians, carriages and animals, have not been captured in the images. The figure having a shoe-shine in the lower left quarter of one image disappears as he moves away in the other image. For Makin, what Morse may or may not have overlooked in these two photograph is the effect of time. The available light and
directions of the shadows indicate that quite some time has passed in the capturing of the two images, which is possibly an inherent occurrence with the slow reactions of the emulsions used. Whilst this has most definitely been remedied, it has a relationship to this artist’s painting, in that this is emulated by deliberately leaving most of his images unpopulated. This is to allow the observer to witness Makin’s experiences and to allow the observer to have the experience of being the accident that observes what this artist has to say about that particular image. Occasionally, an image is populated, but only when the observer is required to experience being the outsider. By placing the observer beyond the visual space of the artwork Makin is trying to provide alternating ways of seeing, in an attempt to influence the way the observer may perceive what he is doing within the work. Whether either of these aims is achieved is not the debate, but taking this approach helps to instil a direction in Makin approach towards the observer. The population found in the photograph, omitted from the painting, belong to a different world of memory and by depopulating the painting this artist is allowing the observer to introduce his/her own memories into the equation.

After taking up painting seriously in the early 1980s, Makin tried to combat his sombre tonalities by using his father’s philosophy on bright colours, but the blue/grey of that day in Clyburn has come back to dominate this colouring. This colouring is delineated by applying minimal amounts of various other colours, in paint or pastels, as an emphasis. An example of how Makin’s work has been approached in the past is Fractured Homecomings I (2008), which is primarily the work that has led this artist to the subject in the investigative project for this thesis. In this painting, Makin tests his relationship with photography and painting, and his relationship to a city he believes is his spiritual home, London. Centred on the River Thames, this work is situated in the everyday industrial, working environment of a city and its waterways. The photograph and the
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Fig. 6.6.

Fig. 6.7.
Fig. 6.8. Painting (Fig. 6.6. & 6.7.) are very different in appearance. The photograph is bright and sunny, but the painting is dark and gloomy, both reflecting the artist’s experiences of living there. “Dark and gloomy is not always a negative, but it remediates my approach, from a descriptive one to one of interpretation” (Makin, 2009). The colouring of the ‘Homecomings’ painting harks back to Clyburn railway station, and is a development of his expressive approach as to what he sees as a personal interpretation.

In regard to the grey colours used, like Close (for example, Fig. 5.16. p.161), Makin consciously chose this colouring as part of his process. As opposed to Close, who saw it as introducing discipline into his work, a conscious change was made to reflect an emotionally expressive feel within the visual space of Makin’s work. This creates a disciplining action in one way, but in another, it provides a rich base for developing other complex layers of action within the space. This artist’s interest in Payne’s Grey came from Sir Arthur Streeton painting, *The Railway Station* (1983). In this painting, this gives the effect of rainy reflections on the ground. This work, as Jane Clark and Bridget Whitelaw (1985, p.160) observe, is a ‘painters of modern life’ style painting with “Whistlerian ‘arrangement’ and tonal impressionism”. Streeton’s painting is also
reflective of Monet’s *Le Gare St. Lazare* (1877). Both paintings use paint to create an atmosphere that suggests what is happening, rather than providing any clarity of observation. *The Railway Station* is a painting about rain, while *Le Gare St. Lazare* is about smoke, thus both works are about atmosphere created by these elements.

Why Makin paints figuratively can be assigned to his early fascination with photography. Whilst enjoying Modernist abstraction, especially Mark Rothko’s work, Makin’s key influences have all been figurative artists. Alberto Giacometti, Joan Miró, J.M.W. Turner, John Constable and Claude Monet, none of whom painted from photographic references, except perhaps Turner as some speculate. However, these painters opened the space for this artist to embrace and experiment with alternative optic expression, and painterly textures and imagery. From these influences, the most direct connection to this artist’s painting comes from Giacometti’s *The street (street corner of Rue Hippolyte-Maindron and Rue du Moulin Vert)* (1952) (Fig. 6.8. p.197), as his *Paradise Deranged* (2005) (Fig. 6.9. p.197) demonstrates. Ironically for Makin, Giacometti created this painting the year he was born, but after he observed it at a Beyeler Collection exhibition in the mid 1990s it become central to his art-making. Struggling for ideas at the time, this painting was important because it introduced a new direction into his painting practice that drew him away from only using paint as a tonal layering of geometric shapes. This new emerging epistemic mode pointed him in the direction of combining line drawing with tonal geometric shapes, as well as approaching colour in a reductive way, as a key interpretive process in his work.

**Chasing and breaking geometric shapes**

As the above illustrates, Makin uses his art practice as a space for experimentation and therefore, he is always seeking other ways and processes to expand this practice, such as chasing and breaking geometric shapes. Figures 6.10., 6.11., and 6.12., are all examples from his past catalogue that clearly show this process as searching for something ‘new’. *Harbour City* (2005) (Fig. 6.10.) was an attempt in the recent past to simplify the line and geometric shapes that represent the image of the harbour/city scene using paint only and feels like a poster rather than a painting. Then, after working and studying in the UK in 2007, the approach changed again. *Bath* (2007) (Fig. 6.11.) is a product of that

---

14 At the time of writing, Heather Wadsworth at the University of Hertfordshire is investigating the notion of Turner using photography as part of her Masters thesis, which at present is unpublished.
Fig. 6.10.

Fig. 6.11.  

Fig. 6.12.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

change. On a bus trip to Bath in the West Country, many photographs of the inside of the Roman baths were captured and this particular image is of part of the floor where the water flows from the spring into the main bathing pool. In the UK, synthetic polymer paint (acrylic) dries much slower than it does in Australia and so it can be used in a pseudo oil painting manner. Advantage was taken of this to distort and corrupt the shapes the photographic image delivered. *Cockatoo Island II* (2009) (Fig. 6.12. p.199) goes even further, as this painting on canvas isn’t about distorting the geometric shape as much as about exploding shapes into minute fragmentations similar to the very early photographs. From this it is easy to see Makin’s frame of mind developing towards structuring his research dynamics as a learning space for expanding his work to its greatest potential.

**Why painting?**

The reason that this artist paints at all is that, on a metaphysical level, the painting surface is a visual space for him to dream in paint. Not dreaming in a cultural sense, like ‘The Dreaming’ as practiced in the Koori cultures in Australia, but as in the extraordinary and complex thought processes in the visual space of the mind that unconsciously guides the act of painting. When he paints, the action in the painting space transcends the conscious thinking about the work and becomes a flow of excitement, as though his movements are only a dream sequence in a movie. It is not until Makin wakes up that everything falls into place. On a physical level, one can brush paint, scrape it, rub it, wipe or wash it off. Paint and the visual space becomes, as Heidegger (1927, p.98) suggests, a part of Makin as he becomes a part of it. The intentions involved in these actions draw upon how this artist intends to use the material, what effect is being explored and developed and in what manner these representations come into existence. It impacts on the accidental aspects of handling the medium and for this artist, it also reflects on the emotional contextualisation of the work. Each time he applies paint, different and emerging emotions are discovered that anchor each and every emotion into a new context and new time and space. This leads to the materiality of this painter’s relationship with his medium having duration in time and space. The dreaming movements and engagements of a painter, his/her medium and the time and space in which the art is created, for Makin, makes the act of painting special, in all of its forms. If black and white suggests death and life, Makin’s greys may be suggestive of an in-between world, a space hovering neither here nor there; an
atmospheric ambiguity as in Monet’s *Le Gare St. Lazare*. However, in this painter’s work, an ambiguity exist that exhibits a lack of belonging or some kind of neutrality that emphasises a regenerative approach to life. It is like the tide flowing in and out, so to speak. In addition to the dreaming quality of paint, Makin paints to see what happens next. He wants to see what happens to the image chosen as a source. Ultimately, he wants to see which part of his own ‘self’ connects with the photograph and appears in the visual space (the painting). The dreaming in that space is key to this artist’s quest to recognise his place in the world. The way photography impacts on his practice is as the key for unlocking the door to where the everyday phenomena of the industrial and the city are drawn together by the physical pathways that create the flow through the sites being explored. The photograph is his eyes and memory. But the industrial and the city, like photographic technologies, are both paradoxical – everything they create leads to advancement – a greater world – and yet, the processes of this creation pollute and are a danger to the world it is advancing, as Xiaodong’s work shows. Like the photograph, this paradox is a metaphor for everyday life. There is political awareness about Makin’s work, but there is no political agenda other than awareness, for awareness as he see it, is a tool for researching the everyday in the same way as the visual spaces created by photography and painting. This is what maintains Makin’s interest.

**Practical exemplar researching the transferability and transformability of knowledge in art practice**

This exemplar of Makin’s studio practice demonstrates that he has a particular approach to art practice which, as borne out through Carter’s ‘material thinking’ research approach, is an individual way of thinking about how the use of photography has impacted and influenced painting practice. The key aim here is to discover whether the strategies and tactics established in the art practices of Richter et al., are transferable and whether they can be made implicit in informing Makin’s practice. The value to his practice, and the art practices of others, is that it demonstrates how being open to possibilities thrown up by outside influences, and practices, may provide frameworks, epistemologically and materially, for transforming their art practices into a new space and, thus, to a new level. Using Carter’s model of analysis around Foucault’s reading of *Las Meninas* is a means of confirming this artist’s arguments that photography has had a major impact on painting and that they are intrinsically linked in and through practice. Through this form of practice-led research, the epistemological frameworks of
intentionality, contextuality and artistic habitus are deconstructed through referencing the work of the six painters in the case studies. This is important as these factors may be considered as having an intrinsic role in the creative and interpretative practices of most painters of photographic references. To maintain an objective approach to researching these particular ideas in this artist’s work, the following continues in third person narrative. In this way, Makin’s own knowledge about how the influences of the painters researched and the epistemological frameworks derived affect his work will be enhanced. This brings forth how photography itself is influencing his practice. By doing this, what has led to Makin’s work being the way it is, becomes visible and shows how his art process, like his artistic habitus, is a space for learning about art practice. Importantly, it will also recognise that this artist’s art process is a space for learning about his ‘self’.

The artistic idea behind the project

What is important about art is that one has the scope to evolve theories and processes. Equally, it is important to test those theories and processes, because through such experimentation painters’ processes may be improved, developed and expanded into new spaces. As this is occurring, the process continually revitalises the painter’s soul and his/her art practice. Experimentation tests the application of theories and processes as to their feasibility within the applied contexts and sets the platform which underpins the creation of other theories and processes within that context. In doing this, such practices recontextualised. Without testing, theories and processes remain speculative activities. For this particular research endeavour, the experiments are important because they focus on utilising any new approaches, new knowledge, new insights or new ways, theoretical, philosophical or procedural, derived from the studies on Richter et al. In this manner, whether they can be replicated in the processes of other artists and, if so, how, may be brought forth.

This new knowledge, derived from these tests, provides a basis for Makin to expand his own practice, not to change what he is doing, but to develop it further. After undertaking the studies into the work of Richter et al., a series of tests engaging the insights and approaches that link concepts through experience into materiality of process, were carried out to analyse the findings. Thus, this section combines with the other parts of
the research narrative as a way of recognising how photography impacts and influences contemporary painting practice, of which this painting genre is an exemplar in itself.

**Visual focus of testing program**

Why London and the Thames? Ever since Makin was an infant London and the Thames River have been mythologically entrenched in his psyche. The first image of the city he remembers was an old drawing of the Pool of London, the stretch of river that passes the Tower. What fascinated him about this image, possibly from the seventeenth century, was the texture made by the masts and yards of the many sailing ships unloading their cargoes. Castles and sailing ships, he was hooked. Over the years, even though he has not been there as much as he would like, this city and its river have become his home, spiritually rather than literally. Makin is far more renowned amongst his friend for being able to give directions around London than the Sydney suburb he lives in. Makin’s football team, which he has been slavishly associated with for over fifty years, is in White Hart Lane, North London. Many of the artworks he admires most are displayed in the National or the Tate Galleries, the latter of which Makin has been a member since the Tate Modern opened. Most of the music he listens to and plays as a musician has been written, performed and recorded in studios such as Abbey Road in St John’s Wood or Basing Street Studio (Island Records) in West London.

Much of the knowledge Makin has of the city and the river comes from researching their environs, the historical literature and television, plus from much walking. This is a city from which an empire was once ruled. In this same city a new religion was brought into being to appease the carnal cravings of one man and it is also a city that was once a trading port for another more ancient empire (Roman) as it again was for the later empire. The river has been used by Kings, Queens and the non-royal as a mode of transport. The city is the home of millions of people and is also the focus of their everyday lives. The river for centuries has been the lifeblood of the city. While walking along the riverside, from one side of London to the other, two thousand years of history passes.

Makin’s association with the Thames has led him to explore other rivers through his art practice. Rivers such as the Clarence in northern NSW, from which some of Makin’s earlier painting were made, and the Weser in Bremen, Germany, where his wife comes from, have both become intimate in his painting practice. These rivers have been the
subject of many of this artist’s photographs, paintings, prints, drawings and computer art and join the Thames as a space for learning about his ‘self’. With each walk along the Thames Makin is looking for its part in his history or if he has a role to play in its history. This search for identity in the environs of London and the Thames has been the underlying/hidden enduring theme in this artist’s work and, apart from going off on occasional tangents; it will continue to be so for much of the time he has left. This city, and its river, has formed Makin’s identity, at least the one he has discovered so far, in ways that are significant to him. He classes himself as a Londoner with a funny accent.

The title of the painting series is *Sweet Thames; run softly till I end my song*, derived from *The Fire Sermon* in T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922). That waste land he recites about, with the tourist attraction west of Tower Bridge and the financial system, centred in Canary Wharf to the east, is where “the loitering of city directors, Departed, have left no addresses”, as Eliot (1954, p.58) alludes. But it is more than that, this is only one layer and there are many others. It is a layering of cultures and their histories and the river offers the space to explore this. The layers of history and social and cultural diversity has led Makin to appreciate the art practices of other cultures, the different cuisines and customs (social and cultural), which in turn have caused him to believe that he fits in somewhere.

**Project approach**

Makin’s approach to testing Richter et al.’s., practices for replicable theoretical approaches, methods and processes was to photographically document both banks of the Thames River, from the Vauxhall Bridge to Greenwich Pier as well as the surrounding stages of these environs. The resultant photographs were analysed to determine how the conceptual frameworks derived from the six artists might be applied to draw out some new knowledge or process that may extend and develop his work further. Subsequently, a number of artworks were created, which were documented both photographically and in note form, to be drawn upon in this research.

The particular approach this artist takes differs from his usual processes, which he has followed, not rigorously, but generally, for most of his art-making career up to this point. In this previous approach, the photographic and the painting processes were considered as two distinctly different engagements. Generally, the artwork was not conceptualised prior to the photographs being captured. The photographs themselves
were never conceptualised as artworks or material for artworks, but as documentation regarding his life experiences. Whenever making the decision to create a painting, all of the photographs are researched until he hears the music in his ear. In the case of creating a painting series, the associations emerge from the photographs belonging to a certain tour of local or overseas regions or to a particular event in his journey through life, and not a pre-conceived idea. As may be witnessed here, this ‘usual’ approach has now taken on a new dimension, which, in turn, continues to expand his artistic habitus.

Originally, the paintings for this project were conceived as two very long paintings that represented each shoreline separately in juxtaposition. However, after reviewing the photographs the idea behind the works changed. The present framework for these works consists of a series of painted images of various sites along the river and an extended ink drawing in two parts that juxtaposes two continuous images, one bank of the river opposing the other. At a later date, after the conclusion of this research, Makin’s intention is to create a DVD by filming the collaged source photographs as well as the subsequent drawings. This will then be edited to sequence the imagery and a soundtrack applied. This soundtrack will be written, performed and recorded solo by Makin and then the DVD will be released on social media.

The analysis of the paintings and drawings was undertaken through comparing the artworks and discussing the notes taken, as well as through analysing the photographs. Comparing the source photograph to the photographs of the process and final image was also undertaken. Following this, these comparisons were applied against the imagery relating to the particular painter’s study referred to, while taking into account all of the other images and discussions represented throughout this research to determine an outcome.

The Photographic Project

While Richter et al., all used their own collection of photographs in particular ways, this photographic project is based in various ways on Hockney’s multi-perspectival joiner photographic process. The photographs that make up a Hockney joiner are not taken from one single point of reference, for each photograph has its own. The joiners are constructed by Hockney positioning and repositioning the camera for each particular image. The image, when assembled, creates a flatter observation than would be produced using a single point of reference. In this way, the process is mimicking the
multiple imagery of the moving eye. Utilising this notion of image framing, the photographic project was undertaken in London during June and July 2011. Initially, the objective at this location was to concentrate on capturing photographic imagery of both banks of the river between Vauxhall Bridge and Greenwich Pier, an overall walking distance of 24 kilometres (see map Fig. 6.13.). The idea was to then collage the resultant photographs into two continuous images to serve as a reference for a painting project. It was proposed that the paintings would be interpreted into very long painterly representations of each bank of the river. During the photographic capturing process other images associated with the river were discovered, and found relevant to this artistic research. These other resultant images have also been considered during the testing process.

One aspect of the photographing of the river was that the actual taking of the images, in certain situations, mainly from Tower Bridge eastward, became almost automatic for Makin. However, his underlying thought was how to get these images connected. Where can the photograph be taken from to capture both the continuation of the image and the angle required? In a lot of places the interesting parts were not observable from directly across the river, so many overlapping multi-angled images were captured to facilitate reconstructing this survey to overcome the difficult observation points. Sometimes, turning around and shooting away from the river became necessary to fulfil the aim of consolidating a body of knowledge to assist the decision-making process.

What is behind the trees is as important to the investigation of the development of the river as the environmental and beautification considerations that involve the trees. Also, turning around and capturing the images behind the trees provided image points that would later assist in the reconstruction of the images of each riverbank into a legitimate mapping of those shorelines. It gave a context to what was being observed, what is there and why it is there, thus initiating a feeling for the environment. The process is like archaeological excavations. The base of the dig is the natural. What is between the two naturals, the sky and the ‘base’, is the archaeology. In this project on the Thames, the river is the base and London is the archaeology in both the sense of the physical and human dynamics.

Further to the photographic work on the river, photography is the archaeological record of the present. In past times archaeologists have used maps, drawings, paintings and wall
Fig. 6.13.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

carvings to reference ‘dig sites’, now, and in the future, photography enhances this service archaeologically, ethnographically, socially and culturally – a non-dig form of research. This provides a fascinating framework of possibilities for this artist to work with and, subsequently, photography is used in many referential ways. In Makin’s process, like Picasso, at the end of each painting session, as he has done for the past 20 years, the painting being worked on is re-photographed. In this way, each set of photographs establishes a cyclical framework for seeing and reinterpreting the imagery. Referencing and comparing past results, as such photographs do, was used here as a dialogue for establishing the direction to be taken in each new session. Makin does this with all of his work.

**The painting project**

In this section, a set of practices, selected from the case studies of the previous chapter, are applied to Makin’s painting practice for testing the interchangeability and transformability of knowledge from one practice to another. In this research, to facilitate an in-depth exploration, the particular paintings created here are treated as exemplars of the process of painting from photographic references. The three artworks chosen for this testing, that best serve this exploration, are *The Encroachment*, *In Monéta Veritas* and *Walking along the path*, all of which were created between September 2011 and December 2012 as part of the *Sweet Thames* series. In these experiments, the various forms of knowledge derived from the case studies of Richter et al., when applied in particular ways to Makin’s art-making processes, indicate that the possibilities researched here may be applied to art practices other than those of their origin.

**The Encroachment**

The sub-title of this particular work in the Sweet Thames series is *The Encroachment* (2011) (Fig. 6.14. p.210), which was conceptualised as a layering of history, one layer being consumed by another. Contextually, it is the story of the industrial port becoming a remnant of the past, about to disappear as the modern city encroaches. This modern city is a mapping of economy based socio-political institutionalisation and associated residential development, which devours and suffocates earlier forms of industrialised spaces. This is much as it has been done, although in different ways, over the 2000 years of London’s existence. This mapping also resembles the tangled web weaved by Foucault’s ideas on power and knowledge as abstracted through Lefebvre’s and de
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Certeau’s complexities of everyday consumerism discussed in earlier chapters. However, for Makin on a personal level, this work is a metaphor for all of the different directions his life and career has taken and the angst that endures in searching for an identity.

The photographs used for this work came about due to a well known occurrence in everyday life - industrial strike action. This particular morning it was on the London Tube and hindered the possibility of reaching the part of the river selected for that day’s photographing. Makin and his friend walked down to the Thames near where they were living to explore the alternatives. The area that attracted them, from Charlton to the Thames Barrier, was not initially within the parameters of Makin’s project, but being open to the possibilities that arise, as an artist should be, this changed. Discovering what was in this area, its relevance to the project came forward as representative of the changing layers of history in which Makin was interested.

In a similar way to Manet’s Maximilian paintings, the starting point for this painterly image is a composite of three photographs (Fig. 6.15. p.210) that were taken from a disused wharf approximately 100 metres up river from the Barrier. The daring of youth returned to the veins of Makin and his friend as they climbed through a tight hole in an old boundary fence to get onto the wharf. The three photographs give three different points of perspective to work with and the opportunity of engaging Hockney’s and Xiaodong’s differing theories on multi-perspectival viewing points. In Hockney’s visual thinking, multiple points of perspective exist everywhere, due to the mobility of the eye (as cited in Joyce, 2008, p.24). The eye never stops moving, therefore, perspective is ever-changing. Makin also believes that because of the eye’s motion, perspective is an instant in time and space in itself. Unlike a photograph, the perspective of the eye is constantly disappearing and being renewed simultaneously, thus, renewing time and space at the same time.

Correspondingly, Xiaodong’s Chinese background delivers an inherent relationship with multiple perspectives drawn together over the thousand or so years the scroll has been used in Chinese art. He uses it to bring narrative components together, thereupon creating a greater voice by grounding it within the consciousness of a Western art approach. For The Encroachment both of these attitudes have been applied by taking their concepts of panelling on a multiple perspectival construction basis, such as in
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Fig. 6.14.

Fig. 6.15.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Hockney’s *joiners* (Figs. 5.17. p.164) and Xiaodong’s large works (Figs. 5.19. and 5.20. p.175). In drawing on Xiaodong, Makin’s interest is in linking narrative from one perspectival field to another. In Hockney, on the other hand, each panel, like his *joiners*, can be seen as perspectival fields in their own right. These fields come together visually as the mind’s eye reconstructs the image as a whole narrative in a similar, yet differing way, to Xiaodong’s conjoining of imagery. However, Hockney’s approach, more than Xiaodong’s, forms the basis for Makin’s construction of this work, because of the close linking between his *joiners* and the utilisation of grids.

**Fig. 6.16. (Unavailable due to copyright requirements)**

Two canvases were employed as a diptych, so as to take advantage of using these multiple perspective points. In his own act of rewriting the concept of perspective, to defuse the notion of a central perspective point, Makin inserts a gap of 20mm between the canvases to create a dissonant visual fracturing. In a similar way to Xiaodong’s drawing from outside of the source image, advantage was also taken of the memories of the storms that sweep over England’s capital during the time he spent working on this project to tie the multiple perspectives together. Makin uses the storm in the painting as a metaphor for the deep-rooted conflicts of change. This is now of more relevance for Makin as during the 2011 riots in the UK, which occurred only a week after leaving London, a couple of the buildings represented in the painting were destroyed, including the supermarket near the O2 where he shopped daily.

This was the first time ever that Makin utilised grids to establish the composition on the canvases. In this work, Makin draws on and paraphrases Hockney’s *joiners*, such as *Pearlblossom Hwy* (1986) (Fig.6.16.). In this paraphrasing, Makin is using a series of photographs structured in pseudo grid formation, to create an overall larger ‘landscape’ of multiple points of perspective. By viewing Hockney’s *joiners* as a model, allows this artist to constantly draw each square/pixel back into the framework of the narrative.
Looking at it more closely, the ‘landscape’ is now no longer a landscape; it is a mapping of multiple points of perspective, collaged together in the mind’s eye, creating an impression of the whole image. The three photographs of the source image were pieced together in a way that flattens out the image, containing the separate perspective elements of each photograph within the one reference. Additionally, this particular painting draws on the dynamics of infusing the confrontational qualities of an image into the artwork, as Dumas has done in *Models* (1994). This work of Dumas’ is a massive cluster of in-your-face individual facial images placed in parallel (vertically and horizontally) that creates its own presence in overpowering the observer. She utilises these works in a similar way to Hockney’s early *joiners*, with particular attention being paid to the juxtaposition and separation of each panel. By engaging their processes in this way, the multiplicity of using separates panels may be considered. Each could stand alone, but they only reach their zenith when considered together.

The interpretive approach in this painting began with a process this artist has employed since 2006, which constructively experiments with a painting method appropriated from John Virtue and his *London Paintings*. Like Virtue, Makin applied black ink onto the canvas using a spray bottle and old clothing to push it around and into the canvas. Titanium white acrylic paint was rubbed into the inked areas to bring up differing degrees of grey colouring that in association with the stark black and white of the untouched areas of ink and paint create the chiaroscuro, the battle between the light and the dark of the storm effect in the sky. However, in the end-of-session photographs, the results of this particular application of mediums were found to be lacking the intensity desired. As a remedy, a mixture of paint, Payne’s Grey and Titanium White, was added to create a deeper, more harmonious rendering to emphasise the coming storm as a metaphor for the new city encroaching on the old industrial remnants of the outer city.

In the finished painting the buildings are not clearly defined, because the painting is not about the buildings, as Makin’s desire was to have them sink back into the storm. Much in the same way that Richter brings his sense of trauma forward in *Bombers* (Fig. 5.1. p.129), where the observer cannot see what the bombs are crashing into, what is being enveloped by ‘progress’ is being translated as obscure by the overwhelming storm. Whereas Richter’s sense of trauma, which comes out in *Bombers*, is borne not from strictly a direct effect of the crashing bombs, but from oblique witnessing and an accumulated sense of repression through the pressures of communist society, Makin’s
sense comes from a different direction. His sense of Richter’s trauma, instilled into *The Encroachment*, comes from films, television documentaries and books. In this vein, Makin’s sense of trauma is more referential than eyewitness. It is a different sense of conflict, which manifests itself in an engagement with marginalisation and repression disguising the deeper trauma of identity. The painting is about the storm as a metaphor for the present suffocating the past. Yet, on another conceptual level to seeing the painting as a space for layering history, it is also a space where Makin can search for a place within that history as the past disappears, which places it into another set of traumas that is no longer referential but personal.

Conceptually overall, similarly to Dumas’ concerns, this London work is centred in the discursiveness of socio-political issues, with Makin’s approach focusing on the politics of the ‘self’, the problems of changing identity and belonging. In a similar way, the work of Richter, Hockney, Close and Dumas, touched on above, demonstrate the variety of approaches to selection and interpretation, that as Carter posits, may be carried out in different ways and for different reasons. The photographic reference is, therefore, a form of portal or doorway into a creative practice, where the processes of selection and interpretation lead into the space for the reconceptualisation of the imagery in a discursive way as shown in this artwork.

Here, the photograph establishes a space for building tension as meanings are revealed and/or restored. At the same time, the interplay of representation between the photograph and the painting provides an entry point that leads both into the space of painting as a questioning, meditative, open-ended form of enquiry in a similar way to how Doig (Chapter 2), Hockney and Xiaodong engage visual interpretation. By constructing an image from the source photographs, like these painters, the mapping that occurs takes the questioning of the space of painting past the painter’s point of resolution into the epistemological field of the observer.

*The Encroachment* reflects the dual processes of selection and interpretation, which continually evolves, changing, revealing and restoring, and provides a rich source of material. Through this work, the knowledge Makin has found most transferable and transformative, and possibly creating a new emerging epistemic mode in his work, is the notion of engaging multiple points of perspective, which has significantly changed his visual thinking process. The idea of the eye never being immobile, and therefore
creating different points of perspective on a continual basis, opens a space for critically thinking about vision in ways this artist has never previously engaged. This new way of thinking about both photography and painting and the impact one has had on the other has transformed the concept of landscape/portrait and perspective in Makin’s work. The manner in which the work is painted is different. Because of the mapping, perspective has become mobile and the landscape/portrait has become a field of emotional presence.

This painting brings Makin’s relationship with this work into question. Is it about the fragilities of his history with this particular location, in a similar way to Tuymans’s ideas of the fragilities of history and memory? Is Makin dealing with the notions of trauma in the everyday, again like Tuymans or is it more like Richter expressing sorrow for the idealistic Baader-Meinhof group? Or is it more like Dumas’ and Xiaodong’s approach, where they express an engagement with concern and care in a Heideggerian way. Maybe the concern and care instilled into this painting is more of a matter of concern and care for his ‘self’. Perhaps, this painting, with its intrinsic turbulence and trauma, is telling this artist, as the researcher of his own identity, that where he fits into this everyday life may never be resolved. Maybe it is telling him that this is a learning process that never ends, which would please Hockney’s view on art practice. As a painting, it provides new insights for Makin to deal with in his creative practice, which may be drawn on in later work. Like Manet’s Maximilian paintings, this painting is also an act of reportage that draws on acts of witnessing, which is, on one hand, an eyewitness report (the photographer), and a second-hand, or compiled, report (the photograph) on the other. It is an exploration of the interpretive powers of painting as a format for Modernist/Postmodernist research. Makin’s painting is a space where older Modernist traditions of art-making come together as a way of questioning everyday life experiences.

*In Monéta Veritas*

The selection process for *In Monéta Veritas* (2012) involves Makin’s perception of the socio-political juxtapositions happening in his photographic reference. The photograph here, is of the view west over Hungerford Bridge at Charing Cross, depicting the London Eye and the environs of Westminster. Like the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the London Eye (Fig. 6.17.) was only supposed to be where it is for a short period centred around the Millennium festivities. The decision to place it where it is was made in the
building in the background, Westminster Palace, the British Houses of Parliament. The revenue the Eye generated led to the economic decision made in the same palace to keep it there. This tourist icon, as it has become, along with the political one in the background, for Makin, in a Foucauldian way, symbolises the capitalist power structures of today’s societal dependence on monetary over humanitarian considerations. For this artist, this makes the image a valuable representation to research in paint.

On a materiality of process level, *In Monēta Veritas* (Fig. 6.18. p.216) was conceptualised as a space for taking the processes of certain ‘portrait’ practices and embedding them into a painting practice based on industrial and city centric landscape. In this way, Makin is creating his own dynamic reading that, like Manet’s work, puts a new emerging face on the concepts of landscape and portrait. The predominant engagement is with Close’s process of making each of the grid squares on the canvas into a small abstract painting that could be seen as autonomous images in themselves, as demonstrated in Close’s *Self Portrait* (2004-2005) (Fig. 5.15. p.159). When those
Fig. 6.18.
abstracts are related to the other small paintings in the grid in an overall view, they form a figurative image. This relates to the pixels in a way that can only be described as employing a Gestalt psychology, wherein the image is seen to be greater than the sum of all of its parts. The challenge was to find a way of applying Close’s approach to his own work. On an epistemological level, this became an engagement with art practice as a space for learning, in a similar way to Hockney’s practice.

Hockney’s approach centres on everything one does in life creating a new piece of knowledge, epistemologically and materially, to be used as and when required. Close’s practice is similar in that he treats it as a way of learning about the ‘self’. In this respect, theories and processes evolve as each new piece of knowledge is engaged and, like Close, the work becomes part of Makin’s search for the ‘self’ and a place of belonging. Makin learns from the possibilities found in being open to where the painting process may take him in the arising of, and in advancing, the epistemological and materiality of process approaches of the art-making. One of the ideas drawn from the selection process behind choosing Close’s work as a reference for testing in this exemplar was to subject an image to his underpainting regime. Observing Close at work in Marion Cajori’s documentary Chuck Close: A portrait of a leading contemporary painter (Cajori, 2009), Close creates his artwork by applying three layers of paint. By creating his layered image he is experimenting in how each underpainting affects the next layer. Close’s
layered squares, rectangles and diamonds posed a radically new dimension for this artist’s practice. It was a way of creating juxtapositions all through his work. This is the approach settled on for *In Monéta Veritas*, but even that was a struggle. The idea for creating the colour design for the grid pattern came from a quilt, *Quilt* (2010) (Fig. 6.20. p.217), by the Modernist quilter, Marion Makin. The combination of strong, bright and dark, colours in this quilt is reflective of Close’s colour constructions and even though this was not a considered colour approach engaged by this particular textile artist, it provided a way for Makin to experiment with Close’s process as an underpinning for the final layer of paint in Figure 6.19. (p.217).

After brushing the colour into the grids, the final layers of paint were cajoled and scraped on with a paint spatula in colours familiar to Makin’s work - Paynes Grey and Titanium White. What was being attempted here was an engagement with the conceptions of visual dissonance, which in this case takes the form of a disparity of imagery through the discomfort created by fragmentation. In this way, the landscape space is being broken up into smudges of time. To bring forth this expressive deconstruction, Makin drew on a photographic image he has previously referenced as a visual guide in the fragmentation of imagery, as illustrated in Cockatoo Island II (2009) (Fig. 6.12. p.199) The reference is Nicéphore Niépce’s *View from the window at Le Gras* (1826) (Fig. 6.21.), which was one of the early chemically produced photographic images. Clarity in the Niépce image suffered greatly due to the instability of the process at the time he was experimenting with it. The image itself appears to be made up of hundreds of small blotchy stains impressed into the support material’s surface.

To implement a similar visual dissonance to Niépce’s photograph, in the outer layer of the painting, short strokes and scraping actions were employed when applying paint with Makin’s favourite paint applicator, a 25mm battered and bruised paint spatula. This visual dissonance is in the sculpting of the painting and in this manner the image becomes a fragmented blurring of line and tonality dependent on its chiaroscuro. This is
an attempt to stimulate the observer’s cognitive processes in recognising and constructing their own interpretation of what the image represents. Similar to Close’s under-layers having an effect on colours and tonalities, the underlying colours in this work make their way through the mire of splotches and scrapes of the grey layer and increase the fragmentation of the image. This similar engagement with Niépce’s fragmentation of imagery, as it is in most of Makin’s other artworks, is purely an exploration of the act of painting. However, in this work, the act of painting is more complex than it has ever been before in his process.

Correspondingly, the impact and influence of the photograph for this painting has been superseded by the act of painting, whereas the progress photographs have served as references for taking the work into a different direction from the original concept. On one hand, the attempt to engage Close’s way of using rich colourings with abstract shapes in a framework of small squares that overall create a figurative image has, to a degree, been reconceptualised. On the other hand, as a learning process, it provides Makin with an insight into the complexities of underpainting and the rich results that may be obtained from this painterly process. The way the paint has been applied to *In Monéta Veritas* expresses a fracturing of the concepts of landscape and portrait, which, in a way, has become more of a mapping of space in this work. In another way, the fracturing of space has also amplified the presence of the impact of the photographic interventions found in the source image. This knowledge is important to Makin’s art-making as the purpose of knowledge here is to know what suits and, as importantly, what does not suit your painting process and art practice. The value to this artist’s art practice of this particular experiment is in discovering that knowledge is transferable from one art practice to another, but only in combination with the artist’s own art process can such new knowledge be made implicit to one’s own art practice. Therefore, *In Monéta Veritas* is engaging new knowledge drawn from other practices emphasising the methods and processes of art-making and photography’s varying positions within it.

Through this particular painting, Makin has come to recognise a new emerging epistemic mode within his practice that has been defined by a developing artistic habitus, structured through experimenting with past and present forms of knowledge, derived from the practices of other artists, on a painterly surface.
Walking along the Path

Walking along the Path (2012) (Figs. 6.22., 6.23., 6.24. & 6.25.) is possibly the most complex artwork undertaken by Makin in this testing project as this is where it becomes possible for new ground to be broken in a significant way. The beginning of this artwork, as described earlier, was as two very long paintings that would represent a painterly interpretation of Makin’s 2012 Thames River photographic ‘survey’. As also disclosed, the ideas for this artwork changed. When one walks along a riverbank, spending many hours over several weeks as he did, many ideas and memories pass through the mind. All during the walk the major question for Makin was whether a painting was the right answer for the visual engagement with such a complex and rich phenomenon like the Thames River. The answer, or thought, that kept coming to mind was to simplify the approach. Makin’s selection and interpretation processes needed to be paired back to the very essence of what the imagery was telling him, much in the same way as Tuymans does in his work. Tuymans often, through his drawing processes, deconstructs the photographic reference to remove what he deems unnecessary detail (Helfenstein, 1997, p.41).

For the testing processes in this particular piece of research, two distinctive elements form the nucleus of this artwork - the photographic representation and the painter’s representation of the photographic one. The selection and omission processes for the photographic representation began in 2009, while compiling the application to undertake this research. After reading Stephen Croad’s Liquid History: The Thames through Time (Croad, 2003), which is a compilation of photographs of various everyday activities on the river between 1850 and 1996, a framework for undertaking a similar expedition was formed. While Croad’s compilation is a sporadic essay of the river from Staines, some 25km west of Tower Bridge, to its mouth some 50km to the east, Makin chose a more concise region for this exploration. His fascination for this river has always been held within the area between Battersea Power Station, the place where Pink Floyd’s giant blow up pink pigs escaped from, and the Thames Barrier (east of the city). In light of this, the expedition was confined to the area from Vauxhall to Greenwich. Chiefly, this stretch of the river was selected because it covers most of the dramatic changes that the river has witnessed through the centuries. It is also a strong representation of the everyday life of the river as well as the everyday of Londoners themselves. More
Fig. 6.22. (Detail).

Fig. 6.23. (Detail).

Fig. 6.24. (Detail).

Fig. 6.25. (Detail).
importantly for Makin, this is the one area in the world in which he feels most at home and yet, he struggles with the sense of identity that this brings on.

There were many obstacles to overcome in completing this survey. One of the problems was a faulty camera, the internal focusing mechanism needed to be adjusted on many occasions; a hammer does come in handy at times. The main obstacle, however, turned out to be the Thames Path, which this artist relied on for making his way along the river. The path east of Southwark Bridge does not actually run along the river in many places to grant easy access. Consequently there was some difficulty in obtaining square-on images; therefore, some licence has been taken in the framing process.

Interpretively, the engagement is with the notion of visual thinking, which in this case centres on the consignment of a massive series of multiple points of perspective into a coherent survey of what the artist is looking at and seeing as he walks along the river. To consolidate this, the first part of this artwork is a photo-collage of differing photographic viewpoints, which emphasises some of the impact of photography on Makin’s art-making processes. This may be best described as Makin’s photographic Chinese scroll. By engaging with the artwork in such a way, his intention is to treat it as an ever expanding narrative on the complexities of everyday life, as the river progresses from point to point and life goes from day to day. In this way, this artist is engaging the complex time, space and narrative qualities of the Chinese scroll as a painterly discourse. With a similar logic to Hockney, Makin considers that the multi-perspectival play in such scrolls affects vision and narrative. Therefore, the photo-collage is a narrative for moving backward and forward in time and space. In these particular ‘scrolls’ of Makin’s, there is no beginning, middle or end intended. There are multiple places and space to join in and observe the life of the river.

In these ‘scrolls’, Makin, like Hockney and Xiaodong, is taking the idea of perspective in new emerging directions. Makin’s performance of perspective in Walking along the path becomes an interchange of viewing points. Like in the ocular interventions of a photograph, perspective has been flattened. And yet, at the same time, the time and space perspective creates is being stretched and reconfigured within a field of vision that is determined by the motion of the observer’s eye as well as the motion of the observer as he/she travels along the flattened scroll. In working this way, one of the interesting complexities of obtaining the photographic information for the collage comes directly
out of the capturing process and its application to the multi-perspectival construction. The river winds around many bends as it flows through London, however, the photographs, which emphasise an anomaly of photographic representation negate this phenomenon. The river, because it is basically level at the waterline, loses any sense of turning when presented in scroll form. It is not until one looks at the distant images, beyond the waterfront, that one realises the river must be turning. Particular landmarks, like the towers in the Elephant and Castle area of south London (Fig. 6.26. & 6.27.), show up in several different positions in the progression along the photo-collage. This added dimension, subtle as it may be, instils a sense of motion into this time/space narrative being developed by the accident in the imagery. It could be argued that this phenomenon is also stretching the concept of perspective by remoulding it from being dependent upon a single point in space to a reaction to time and motion. This is an element also experimented with in the drawing created from the work and so each collage serves as an artwork in itself and a reference for other artworks as well.

Not only does the photo-collage illustrate multiplicity of vision, but in Walking along the Path there is a sense of multiplicity of time and multiple narratives being drawn into a continuously evolving story. The value of understanding multiple points of perspective and the multiplicities of narrative and time, for Makin on a materiality of process level, lies in it being as a different and new framework for conceptually composing an artwork. On an epistemic level, the value sits in this different notion on perspective repositioning Makin’s visual thinking into a space that challenges classical theories, and yet, embraces Modernist thinking about painting and representation. With such a framework it becomes possible for this artist to drive his artwork, and the selection and interpretation processes behind it, into new ways of art-making he has never engaged before.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

Overall, by constructing what amounts to two associated collages (the north and south banks of the river) has created frameworks for exploring the next part of the project. Firstly, as visual frameworks, the photo-collages are photographic artworks (Fig. 6.22. p.218) in their own right. Then, as a process framework, a visual practice-led research into the possibilities of not only the exploration of everyday life being brought forward, but also for Makin, a way of using his conception of Hockney’s art practice as a space for learning and the artwork as a space for experimentation arises. It is the impact of photographic actions such as these that avail themselves to the interpretive processes of the painter. Walking along the Path has shifted Makin’s way of critically thinking about the selection and interpretation processes into reconceptualising art practice as a space for learning and experimentation, but it has not all been a flowing melodic song.

Taking the photo-collage and creating a painting from it quickly became a bridge too far. The sheer scale the final work with the parameters initially ascribed would dwarf Monet’s Waterlilies in the Orangerie, Paris. Instead, a process Makin carries out on all of travels was chosen. Makin always keeps a travel diary in which he draws images of the places visited and the activities undertaken. This method enables this artist to create the artwork as a pair of visual diaries, one for each bank of the river. In this vein, like Dumas and Karver, a new way of ‘exhibition’ was designed for these drawings that use older Modernist concepts, similar to those found in La Prose du Transsibériens (1913) by Blaise Cendrars and Sonia Delaunay, as alternative ways of structuring a ‘folding’ artwork. For this new form of exhibition, the pages of two sketchbooks were separated and the drawings done on only one side of the paper, across the double page which enables the connection of the end of each double page with its corresponding page to form a concertina style drawing. Thus each sketchbook may be drawn out to form a continuous image (Fig. 6.24. p.221). In keeping with the travel diaries, black ink was used and a grid applied to construct the image. This may be a well worn way of transferring an image onto another surface, but this was new approach to Makin’s work, as previously accuracy in his drawings was not a concern.

A combination of approaches was employed in drawing Walking along the Path with the ideas on grids used by Richter and Hockney being the most strongly referenced. Richter’s more traditional use of transferring imagery is the most useful for these drawings as this form of grid facilitates accurate positioning while allowing freedom in the art-making process. Following Hockney’s approach, grids (joiners) and multiple
perspective (Chinese scrolls) have aided the conceptualisation of the artwork and perceiving the procedures required to resolve the work. Studying the individual grid squares of the photo-collage enables the pairing down of the elements of each ‘pixel’ to understand the essential components of the imagery.

Another possibility that ‘pixels’ opens up for these drawings is that, through discovering the essential components of the imagery, painting and drawing may be reduced to its simplest form. The practices of Tuymans, Richter and Dumas, demonstrate that reducing imagery to its simplest form opens the space it has created for critiquing and interpreting the essence of the photographic reference. The significance of this reduction is embedded in how ‘simplicity’ is used in expanding the painter’s process. The use of black ink on white paper has already reduced the work to the essential factors engaged in the photo-collage. Whilst the stark black and white battle of chiaroscuro has been emphasised by the collaboration of the black lines and white paper of the drawing, tonality has been replaced with the distinctive presence of line, negating any three dimensional effect chiaroscuro can bring on. This is much the same as the painterly flatness achieved in the paintings of Tuymans. In contrast to Richter’s work in which he is attempting to make a photograph, the negation of tonality through the use of line takes Walking along the Path in an opposite direction that involves higher levels of interpretation. Along with this engagement of higher levels of interpretation, Walking along the Path, similarly to Tuymans’s work, and Dumas’ for that matter, indicates that simplicity of action is all one needs to impose the essence of the narration into an artwork.

In a similar way to how Tuymans uses the title to prepare the way for what is seen in the artwork, the title, Walking along the Path, centres the artwork not only on what is seen during the walk, but, in a similar way to Las Meninas, it also places the observer in the frame as the walker. However, the significance of this experiment lies in the knowledge transferred from the practices of other artists and the adaption of this information into Makin’s own particular process to create this artwork. What has been engaged here is (1) the knowledge behind the processes of artistic representation and deconstruction, (2) the varying levels of presentation that photography has impacted on, such as those engaged by Richter et al., and (3) the value of simplifying one’s own approach to art-making. The impact and influence of photography on this artwork shows that the two parts of the artwork, the photo-collages and the drawings, have produced two distinct and
contrasting resolutions. Firstly, the photo-collage exhibits the combination of minimum and maximum scale, minimising the vast array of information found on the river, while maximising the effect of distance to its strongest outcome. In addition, these collages and drawings are remodelling older Modernist concepts about art-making into newer emerging artistic epistemic modes. Also, in a similar way to Richter et al., the reduction of everything to the essence of what is being explored, as in the drawing, brings forth a contrasting and yet, implicit adaption of other processes. The processes brought forth encapsulate new knowledge at the moment of creation with new art practices driven by that new knowledge.

**Discussing the outcomes**

This project began as a process for testing two possibilities. Firstly, the testing focused on whether practices, epistemological and material, may be transferable from one art practice to another. Secondly, the aim was to discover whether that transferred knowledge can be explored within other practice, which then becomes new knowledge within that other practice. In addition, the underlying quest of this testing was to recognise and understand how photography has impacted and influenced this researcher’s own painting practice. What has been learnt by this researcher/artist from this process is how his art practice works as an internal/external dialogue. This practice, like the work in this project, is firmly grounded within the conception of art practice being a space for knowledge creation as Hockey suggests. Having never engaged the work of other artists in the way he has in this project, this researcher/artist now has an approach to the processes of art-making that is more open to the possibilities thrown up by both the influences of others and the encounters of artistic habitus. This approach, whilst drawing on older Modernist traditions around art-making in a Postmodernist context, renews this researcher/artist’s critical thinking about art-making by returning it to the attitude he held towards being confined to bed as a youth, where he wanted to get out and see things. This then becomes the basis that reforms his painting space into one of learning. The impact of photography on this researcher/artist’s practice has been in opening up the space for him to realise his position within this art practice, within his artistic habitus, is as a researcher within a space for learning.

Through this project, this researcher/artist’s practice has been expanded to include several new approaches to art-making. By testing the knowledge derived from each of
the painters engaged, a number of new and different ways of thinking about painting practice emerge from within his process that emphasise how photography is able to impact such practices. What this means for this researcher/artist, in similar ways to how Dumas and Tuymans look at painting from photographic references, is that his art practice is now able to consider creating something different each time he selects a photographic image to work from as he has an extended repertoire of methods, tools and processes around using photographic references towards painting. Each of the artist’s processes drawn from the case studies for testing, illustrate that the way to create something different out of the photographic reference is by concentrating on breaking up the space and restructuring time. For instance, via the work of Richter, Hockney and Close, this researcher has become familiar with the principles of using grids as a first step in deconstructing the space in the photograph. Each of these artists also demonstrates that painting technique is a process for breaking the space even further. Tuymans and Xiaodong show other ways of doing this by drawing on the older Modernist traditions found in Constructivism to build a new visual narrative to the original photograph, which in its own way fractures and reconstitutes time within their imagery.

Time has also been recontextualised in this researcher/artist’s ‘test’ artworks through the layering and blurring of imagery drawn out of the work of all six painters. Slippages in time have been created in his paintings, especially in Walking along the path (2012), by engaging the theories of the moving eye creating multiple points of perspective, which in itself frees perspective from its static classical past. This researcher/artist’s way of using Hockney’s and Xiaodong’s approaches to using Chinese ways of seeing (the scroll) in Western Modernist art-making illustrates how these shifts in thinking on perspective may be applied in art-making to create these slippages in time.

This researcher/artist’s engagement with the practices of Richter et al., demonstrates how knowledge can be interchanged between art practices. Importantly, in a way that is reminiscent of Manet’s engagement with photography, it also illustrates how knowledge can be made implicit/workable in other practices. However, these testing processes have also shown that even though knowledge is interchangeable between practices it is not until the knowledge drawn on is combined with the knowledge already present in an individual’s art practice that the knowledge can become implicit/workable. In this way, new emergent epistemic modes of practice are born.
On a personal level, more through the discussions on Tuymans and Dumas than any of the others, the use of photographic image in this researcher/artist’s painting practice is a means for dealing with his traumas regarding identity, which is something still to be resolved. The subject matter, as in the places and spaces that form part of the myth of his existence (as this researcher/artist often calls it), and the way he depopulates the image when painting, point to this identity trauma. Due to this research, other ways of working with this complex identity exploration through new ways of conceptualising and drawing on the materiality of process opened up by photography have been absorbed into his practice. Returning to the idea of taking work in new directions, the conclusion is drawn that the ways Richter et al., conceptualise and materialise their art processes provides many new complex and rich ways of thinking about photography and art practice, which this researcher/artist has never considered before. Thus, this research provides painters of all kinds with other ways of understanding their own practices, as well as a framework of possibilities for drawing knowledge from other practices. Importantly, this researcher/artist’s work, along with the artists in the case studies, provides other artists with an understanding of some of the different and complex ways photography impacts and influences painting practice. Above all, apart from being beneficial, this project has shown this researcher/artist that the affects of photography on painting practice is personal and individual.

**The next engagement with these particular processes**

At present, this researcher/artist is formulating three new projects, in a similar vein to *Walking along the Path*. The first of these is based on riding on the Manly Ferry across Sydney Harbour, after that there will be another ferry ride from Bremen to Bremerhaven on the Weser and a walk along the Thames from London to Oxford. At present, the Manly Ferry project is the most advanced and, therefore, a glimpse of this may indicate some aspects of this researcher/artist’s work moving in a new direction.

The Manly Ferry criss-crosses Sydney Harbour for most of the day and night, everyday of the year and, apart from the bridge and the opera house, the ferry service is an iconic symbol of Sydney. It takes a significant number of the working population and the tourists back and forth, passing through the histories of colonisation, migration and capitalism in Australia. But what do these travellers see, or what are they not seeing? This is what this researcher/artist wants to find out. The aim of the lens will be focused
on the shoreline as it comes closer and moves away on the journey. The difference between this photographic project and *Walking along the path* is that two inbuilt parameters of this researcher/artist’s new camera, the still camera and the HD video camera, will be employed. The still images, at present, may be used as in the earlier project, as a collage from which painted and drawn images may be created, both singular and continuous representations. The HD video is to stand alone as a recording of what makes up this part of the harbour that many do not see in their journeys. In his own way, this researcher/artist will be engaging the photographic impact on his own practice to a greater degree and in new and different ways. The painting/drawing aspects of the Manly Ferry project, to be exhibited at a regional art gallery on the harbour’s northern shore, are very much still in the thinking stage. However, a Chinese scroll is looking very favourable. Whether these new works are treated in the same way as *Walking along the Path* has not yet been resolved, but that work and this project has certainly had an effect on this researcher/artist’s way of working.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

Photography has impacted and influenced painting practice since Manet’s time in many varied and different ways as a dynamic, rich and complex source of knowledge transference and adaption. This research has sought to explore a deeper engagement with the significance of these connections, as a contribution to new knowledge in the field of art theory and studio practice. To this end, this research has initially proposed a theoretical framework for the epistemological underpinnings of painting derived from photographic references. Secondly, it has demonstrated how this framework may be understood through in-depth evaluation of selected artists’ works. Thirdly, the thesis explores how by extracting specific approaches from the works of selected artists, based on an understanding of their experiential context, these methods might then provide ways to enhance and extend studio work on other practices. This premise is tested through the application of selected methods from the case studies to this researcher’s own studio practice. Overall, the intention has been to develop a new critical language about how painters work with photographic references. This critical language provides a more vigorous and accessible dialogue about the critiquing of painters working with photographic references that accounts for the various stages in the evolution of an artwork.

Importantly, a link has been identified between the Foucauldian notion of the emerging episteme, and the process of materiality through practice around the adaption of the notion of habitus as defined by Bourdieu. That linkage is implicit in Webb et al.’s way
of looking at art practice through the lens of Bourdieu’s artistic habitus – as the application of personal experience in a working studio context. The bringing together of these three theories is the foundation for the critical language presented in this thesis. In this way, a methodological framework is provided that can then be adopted and adapted to become more engaged in the critical dialogue. This thesis has demonstrated that this new critical language about how artists work can be useful as a tool for other artists to unpack their own work. This new understanding leads to a way of evaluating and indentifying individual artistic modes of habitus as new forms of critical contemporary painting practice. Whilst the development of practice is highly personal, such practices may also be adapted as methods for studio work that might extend and deepen the engagement, while stimulating dialogues about how painting is important and continues to be so. Such an adaptation stimulates a fine-grained, sensitive understanding of an artist’s work in a way that provides a critical insight. This insight can then be adapted and taken into another artist’s work so that he/she can think about how they might engage with some of those concerns the artist is addressing, not directly, but as knowledge in context.

The key premise is that painting and photography, which have often been treated in the past as separate cultural artistic practices, are both art practices from which knowledge is drawn and used in individual practices as constructed and entwined approaches. These ideas are specifically linked here to the intrinsic practices of artists painting from photographic references. The basis for the argument presented in this thesis involves art practice as a self-distinguishing body of knowledge that instils practice with the governing factors that make up each and every painter’s life and art practice. That is, an art practice is a self-distinguishing body of knowledge. In that body of knowledge, there are complex processes, philosophies and influences that both structure an artist’s practice and their place in the world, while guiding them through those spheres of engagement in a disciplined way. In this respect, this self-distinguishing body of knowledge is an artistic habitus made up of a dynamic collection of complex individual epistemic modes of practice. Each mode may combine with other modes within the practice, or with modes from outside of the practice, to create a new emerging epistemic mode. In turn, this art practice is remade new each time these combinations occur. Such factors are formed in complex and particular ways as these life and art practices are developed by drawing on aspects of the painter’s particular relationship with habitus.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

(life experience) and materiality of process in the form of artistic habitus (application through studio work). In this way, groundwork is established that underpins a painter’s artistic process. This groundwork and these relationships for each painter are different. However, the notion of artistic habitus has an intrinsic role in the creative and interpretative practices of most painters of photographic references, and, thus, provides a tool for drawing on other painter’s work as a means for extending and enriching one’s own practice.

Epistemologically, the photographic reference is a rich and complex source of information, an aid to memory in pictures. The photographic image, as a memory source, is a tag, an index and a carrier of ideas that has become increasingly important as a communication and referencing device in the media landscape today. Through such technologies as digital media, time and space are being rendered as immediate, shifting the understanding one has about the temporal relations of the image – as one negotiates an instant time/space engagement. In addition to this, photography is also dynamic in painting from photographic references as the memory it brings forth is often the stimulus/influence that triggers the painter’s engagement with the medium and the subject matter.

These kind of influences from today’s media technologies affects the intentionality in the work of the painter and the context of the subjectivity and objectivity of the painter’s selection processes. These influences also affect the intention and context that epistemologically underpins his/her art practice. This is demonstrated in the differing approaches to intentionality and context in using photographic technologies found in artists’ work – for example, the work of Dumas and Karver. Karver’s art practice (in Chapter 3) is grounded in the use of digital media technologies, having been exposed to these modern technologies as part of her everyday life from an early age. Her approach incorporates processes often found in other contemporary art forms such as ‘installation’, that is, she takes advantage of everything that is made available to her by today’s media landscape. She does this to the point of using a photograph, almost ‘hacked’ from on-line image sources like security surveillance, as the base layer for her artwork. By taking this image and reconceptualising it into a new visual language built on layers of other material fixed to the photograph’s surface and then exhibiting it in a gallery and on the internet, she is shifting the idea of what an exhibition is. Like many artists who engage these technologies, Karver is demonstrating the need for the language
of exhibition to be also revised around this ever-shifting complex notion. Dumas’ approach on the other hand, is grounded in a more traditional engagement with photographic imagery, in that she finds and explores ‘hardcopy’ sources of material, newspapers and magazines for instance. These found images, along with her personal collection of photographs, form a more ready-to-hand source as opposed to searching the web for images. This is a process that was established in the formative years of her practice when digital imagery was not available. As this illustrates, the localised knowledge of the painter (and artists of other disciplines), have often been formed in childhood and through family environments over the distance of time (their habitus). It may also stem from contemporary associations in occupational structures and their place in the world at large. The influences have also determined how they work with the photograph through the structures of their artistic habitus.

As a source of creative material, photography is used as a tool for observing and exploring the issues and situations of everyday life thrown up within the photographic and, hence, the painterly frame. To engage this in their respective art practices, many painters of this genre, like Richter, Dumas, Tuymans, Close, Hockney and Xiaodong, call on older Modernist traditions of art-making and apply them in a Postmodernist context. That is, they use these painterly traditions in combination with the photograph exploring a variety of Postmodernist approaches to art-making that exist in the twenty first century.

The adaption of older Modernist traditions into these Postmodern contexts of art-making means that many prior approaches to classical concepts about art-making have been reconceptualised, and continue to be. The shifts in thinking about landscape and portrait painting, and the theory of perspective, discussed in the case studies, are only limited examples of these reconceptualised approaches. The reconceptualising begins with the photographic image, which through its flattening of the imagery is already distorting perspective and playing with spatio-temporal recognition. Further shifts in thinking takes place in the Modernist practices of breaking up the visual space and restructuring the way time is read in the artwork. As was found in Karver’s engagement of the media landscape of today around the emergence of a new language about ‘exhibition’, the artists in the case studies are producing new visual languages regarding landscape and portrait painting, and perspective. In these new visual languages, the distinction between landscape and portrait become blurred to the point that they are as one in the mapping of
field, space and time. Perspective has also become part of this field, but one that is no longer related to any historical formulaic theory as it was in classical times. Perspective appears to have been replaced by the fracturing of space and the fragmentation of time that mapping the visual presents to the artist.

How a painter sees plays a role in the building of the painter’s personalised body of knowledge (artistic habitus) that is his/her art practice. This also situates him/her in a set of engagements with the world. Epistemological and materiality of process influences of all kinds construct a painter’s epistemic mode, reflecting the development of the attitudes that have established the painter’s position in the world. These factors are embedded in a painter’s practice governing how he/she is drawn into this artistic framework. The language involved here also bring forth how painters, who work from photographic references, deal with the frameworks of influence derived from social, cultural, physiological and psychological contexts, such as habitus and practice. Hence, such influences are paramount in the creation of the epistemological experiences that is a painter’s practice. Therefore, they are also paramount in the structures and frameworks of contemporary language about painting practices that engage photography.

The ambiguous, barely distinguishable and yet, impartial photographic surveillance image, along with the clarity of the family snapshot, the documentary and photojournalist photograph, social photography and digital media, are all relatively contrasting forms of visual language. Although there are degrees of objectivity in all of these forms, it is their implied subjectivity, based readily in what could be considered as emotional representations of the act of witnessing everyday life, which engage the attention of the painter. Thus, photography for the painter can be seen as a complex array of witnessing and memory practices - a process of observation, thinking, reconstruction and representation. In coming to an understanding of the photographic practices discussed here it appears that the act of witnessing, and the subjectivity found within the photographic image, are where the links exist between photography, the media landscape of today and painting practice. In light of this, painters in the twenty first century, as demonstrated in the case studies, draw on a critical language that develops a range of complex Modernist epistemologies to drive their practices.

The primary use of the photography of everyday life, which has impacted widely upon painting practice since Manet, is as a vehicle for transferring knowledge.
Correspondingly, painting, photography and more importantly, painting from photographic references are artistic languages that privilege knowledge in visual discourse frameworks that are both referential and reflexive. The value to this researcher’s art practice, and the practices of other painters, drawn from this research and the particular experiments undertaken is in discovering that contextual knowledge is transferable from one art process to another, but this knowledge in its transferred state may not be fully adaptable in that form. It is only through the artist combining it with elements of his/her own art process and lived experience that such new knowledge context can be made implicit/workable in the language of their own art practice. In other words, this new critical language is organic as it continually evolves and grows as new modes of contextual practice are brought into existence. This establishes that a painter’s reaction to the effects of photography on his/her own practice is personal and individual, thus highly contextual. Personal in that the artist’s own artistic habitus is structured by his/her own life experiences and the artist’s involvement with their art-making process. It is individual, because each artist draws on his/her own emerging epistemic modes of practice to create an artwork. These aspects provide the impetus for the generation of an art practice as contextual knowledge. That is, even though there may appear to be similarities in their approaches, each artist has built their own particular process for making art with knowledge drawn from other artists’ practices. These are some of the ways photography impacts and influences painting practice in the twenty first century.

Each time a painter carries out this creative process, the new contextual knowledge created within the painter’s practice becomes potentially transferable to and transformative in the practices of other painters. This opens the space for the painter to make that knowledge, in their own particular way, implicit/adaptable to their own contextual processes. The richness and complexities of the photography of everyday life is the starting point for many painters who use the medium of photography to reference everyday life and their position within that life. The selected contextual knowledge drawn out of the practices of the six painters critiqued in Chapter 5 was found to be transferable to this researcher/artist’s own practice. The transferred knowledge was also made adaptable and implicit to this researcher/artist’s creative practice in certain ways that presents a re-contextualisation of those processes. This supports the notion that a painter’s practice is an epistemic mode of practice in that it draws on the principles presented by Foucault in his notion of the emerging episteme. That is, it draws
knowledge from other past and present epistemological experiences and restructures it in association with knowledge already present in the painter’s practice to form and bring forward a new contextual space for practice. Thus, painting from photographic references is an art practice, and a new language about art practice, that re-contextualises and reconceptualises art-making, as it invites in and utilises perceptions, concepts, knowledge and processes from other places to create new and complex contextual epistemological experiences in and through art.
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet

References


Bertamini, M. (2010). What is there to study about vision and memory? In A. Brogger and O. Kholeif (Ed),. Vision, Memory and Media (pp.7-9). Liverpool and Copenhagen: FACT/Nikolaj CCAC.


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


239


240


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


251
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


Further reading


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


255
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet


List of Terms:

**Artistic habitus:** The environment, localised in the individual artist, within which the epistemological and materiality of process configurations surrounding the artist combine to form the localised knowledge platform from which the artist derives his/her creative practices. (This notion was derived by Webb et al., from Bourdieu’s theory of *habitus*).

**CCTV:** The surveillance process/technology for observing members of society in relation to other members of society as a means of orchestrating procedures for the physical control of the everyday activities of society.

**Constructionist:** In painting from photographic references, this is a compositional technique, where fragments of photographic imagery are combined to create a new image that expresses the narrative the painter wishes to impart into the painting. Drawing, collage and models created from photographic cut-outs are often used in this technique.

**Contested status:** The negativity surrounding certain ways of thinking, such as the conflict around the use of photography in painting practice.

**Contextuality:** the process on positioning a discourse within associated or particular surroundings.

**Deconstruction:** The process of reducing an image to its barest or most relevant condition.

**Digital media landscape:** The segmentation and sequencing of the information available within a digital photographic image that is analysed, recontextualised and interacted with using Internet social, political and news applications available in the present media climate.

**Episteme:** The Foucauldian idea of the *episteme* is as a self-distinguishing body of knowledge structure by the notion of history not consisting of continuities and discontinuities, but existing as separate structures of knowledge relevant to their own time (Foucault, 1966).

**Epistemic mode:** An *epistemic* mode is a structure for engaging with knowledge on an epistemological and materiality of process level that influences and defines an artist’s
Gary Makin: Photography’s impact on the painted image after Manet practice, thus providing a process discipline for art-making that is both theoretically and materially based.

**Frameworks:** The process in which knowledge is organised for application in, and analysis of, ideas and practices.

**Habitus:** Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* demonstrates how context influences our perceptions. *Habitus* is the engagement of an environment of influence constructed through a social process of patterns of life, patterns which are continuous and are transferrable from one context to another.

**Influence:** Influence is the process of manipulating someone else to work, react, think and understand things according to the way one wants them to approach things.

**Intentionality:** A plan of treatment focused on an object or process.

**Lived experience:** Lived experience is a complex negotiation in everyday life defined by how we socialise, our politics and how we live. Our experiences, how we make our living and where we live, tends to identify us, which is reflected in how we dress, what we eat, what we consume and how we treat the environment.

**Local knowledge:** The framework of knowledge manifest within an individual artist, or the combined knowledge centralised within a collaborative art practice.

**Material thinking:** This is an art research practice that can be used to explore the creative and interpretive processes taking place in a particular artist’s practice.

**Multiple perspective:** Creating a image that has a number of points of perspective, as in Chinese scroll paintings, as opposed to the practice of using one point in classical linear perspective for reducing three dimensionality to two in painting and multi-media practices.

**Normalisation:** Using the Foucauldian approach, ‘normalisation’ is the application of ‘standards’ for the control and management of populations. This is where social ordering strategies become intertwined with socio-political practices to bring about ‘safer environments’, for those who deem it necessary.
**Painting:** The application of pigmented mediums to a surface such as canvas or paper. This includes the application of oil, acrylic, watercolour, tempura and ink mediums by brush, spray-cans or bottles, use of body parts, cloth and Gladwrap amongst many other forms. Applications involve such processes as painting, print-making, screen-printing, drawing and lithographic work.

**Painting from photographic references:** The process of using a photographic image as a referent for creating an artwork in painting practice.

**Photography:** For this research, photography involves the capturing of imagery by either analogue or digital processes. The analogue approach includes heliograph on glass, daguerreotype (direct images on copperplate), calotype (forerunner to modern film negatives) and all forms of film negatives and positive prints and movie film. Digital processed photography includes all forms of photographic digital media, such as mobile phone cameras, digital cameras (still and motion) and computer interactions on social media, like Facebook and Flickr.

**Recontextualisation:** The process of taking an image or fragment of an image out of one context and supplanting that image into a new context in order to create a wholly new narrative about the image.

**Representation:** Representation means using language in arts, which not only refers to writing, but also takes in painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, performance, music and culture. It can be figurative in nature, or it can contain abstracted shapes, both of which can be combined with text as a means for communicating certain ways of thinking about the world to the world.

**Resistance:** The process of applying opposing views and practices to counter what one sees as unacceptable.

**Surveillance:** The system of observing the everyday activities of all aspects of society.

**Textualisation:** The introduction of text onto the surface of a painting as a way of imparting information about the painting.