IMAGES OF THE URBAN EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY PAINTING.

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This research is submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Creative Art, Contemporary Art

School of Contemporary Art
University of Western Sydney, Nepean
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PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

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SECTION A.

OVERVIEW
ABSTRACT

This research entitled *Images of the urban experience in contemporary painting* began as an investigation into the consequences of urbanism such as human alienation and personal detachment. As a studio based research, this practice was based on five individual exhibitions of contemporary paintings accompanied by four underlying theoretical exegeses. These components together with the involvement in various group exhibitions, awards and professional practice documented in a research portfolio were developed over a three-year period. As each series of paintings was exhibited, new priorities and directions were established. These developments ranged from documentation of the decline in the conscious organisation of urban life images to the utilisation of media and techniques to promote greater fluidity and painting spontaneity. The theme of human alienation in this investigation developed into a focus on the existential predicament of place-bereft individuals. As the nature of location was brought into focus, an exploration of the influence and question of place emerged. This concept gave rise to an investigation into place-panic or human anxiety at the prospect of an unknown place.
SECTION A.

OVERVIEW
OVERVIEW

This research was based on images of the urban experience in contemporary painting. The general theme was comprised of the consequences of urbanism such as human alienation, personal detachment and urban conflict. Various factors or consequences of high population density such as pollution and overcrowding were discussed but the focus was placed on human alienation. Personal experience of urban life in many cities contributed to the issues that have supported this studio based research and practice. A number of painting series was developed to present images of an urban experience. These paintings attempted, through process and the incorporation of symbolic forms to convey the urban experience.

As each series developed it became apparent that the work was based on past experiences and general recollections. A more specific direction was taken in the inquiry in an attempt to reflect those dynamics that affected current cultural mores. The inquiry took on more immediacy in the documentation of a specific urban infrastructure. Consequences of a specific aspect of current urban life were presented as a conclusion to this program.

This studio based research and practice was based on five exhibitions of contemporary paintings. The first series of paintings was exhibited at a gallery in Sydney; Australia but the final four exhibitions took place in Melbourne, Australia. Accompanying exegeses outlined the theme of the urban experience, associated issues, processes and priorities developed throughout the inquiry.
The first exhibition outlined various prevalent aspects of the urban experience encompassing human alienation, detachment and displacement.

The second exhibition attempted to translate relevant experiences through personal technique development and the influence of other artists and works.

The third exhibition focused more upon the process of painting to suggest the theme of urban experience.

The fourth exhibition saw a transition towards more contemporary painting media being utilised whereas the last exhibition attempted to combine technology and painting. The final series was the result of concentrated documentation on one geographic location rather than reliance upon the recollection of past experiences.

Goals were identified prior to production of the artworks. As each series of paintings concluded, new priorities were established.

In exegesis one it was found that the urban experience was widely depicted in recent contemporary artworks. These images of urban life and associated themes contributed to the further development of artworks. It was recommended that further works be based on societal observations and personal experiences.

In exegesis two it was found that personally alienating experiences could be translated effectively into the painting theme. It was evident that other artists' works assisted in the development of personal techniques and theme depiction. It was found that the recall of personal experiences provided a barrier to spontaneity. It was recommended that immediate imagery would eventuate without preconceived notions.
The third exhibition saw the introduction of more fluidity in the paintings to suggest the theme. Personal direction indicated a limitation of the image and a brief investigation into contemporary art history paralleled a decline in the conscious organisation of the image. It was recommended that the sole use of acrylic paint (rather than previously used oils) would promote further fluidity without technical limitations.

Exhibition four saw less dependence upon regularity in composition and the development of further suggestive techniques. Images were limited to less human forms and objects within the rectangle through the use of acrylic paints.

It was found that without the dependence upon recall, more immediate images of the urban experience could be evoked. The final exhibition saw the introduction of technology, the use of acrylic paints and huge canvases. These works were based upon immediate raw data. They consolidated irony in the suggestion of conflicting yet interdependent forces. These aspects of the urban experience were symbolised in patterns of human organisation. These general findings were presented in the final exegesis within.

These exegeses and painting exhibitions contributed to this inquiry in conjunction with considerable professional activity. Many selected group exhibitions, spoken addresses, public presentations were recorded as part of professional activity during this research. Many applications to arts grants, awards, residencies and prizes were made without success.

One successful application returned the international Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant for the year 2000. Another saw the writer awarded with the University of Western Sydney's Research Award for 2001.
All these aspects of associated professional activity are documented in this research. Due to the complex nature and extent of documentation, this research has been presented in seven sections: six written sections and one painting exhibition. Whilst the paintings are reproduced within sections B through E, the final exegesis makes up Section E.

Section F summarises and documents professional activity that support this studio based research and practice. This research portfolio documents all activity within the arts industry. Section B is comprised of the first exegesis whereas the second exegesis is reproduced within section C. Section D is made up of the third exegesis.

The research portfolio is presented in section F as a summary of all professional activity and documentation. All supporting material including congratulatory letters, international communication and exhibition reviews are situated in section G.

Whilst a simplified research overview can be viewed at a glance within chart 1, the total documentation appears best summarised in the following contents section.
SECTION B.

EXEGESIS 1: Imagery and Origins
IMAGES OF THE URBAN EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY PAINTING.

Exegesis 1. Imagery and Origins

Bruce Earles

This exegesis is submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Creative Art, Contemporary Art

School of Contemporary Art
University of Western Sydney, Nepean
September 1999
I certify that the exegesis entitled:
Images of the urban experience in contemporary painting:
Imagery and Origins
And submitted for the degree of Doctor of Creative Art
Is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and
that this exegesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a
higher degree at any other university or institution.

Signed

Date
ABSTRACT

This paper as part of a series of five exegeses in conjunction with a number of painting exhibitions outlines the theme of the urban experience. Images portraying aspects of alienation, detachment and displacement form the basis of subject matter in the body of paintings. The work with exhibition 1 entitled Imagery and Origins describes verbally and visually aspects of the human condition that remain consequences of personal urban experiences. Other contemporary artists' works were reviewed to outline similar subject matter. A parallel was drawn with other artists' works and the underlying theme in the accompanying body of artworks.
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CHAPTER 1. THE PROBLEM
1.1 Introduction

The objective of this research was to investigate images of modern urban life. More specifically, images of the urban experience of alienation, detachment and displacement were focussed upon. A body of paintings delineating the theme of alienation constitutes the basis of this research. These artworks whilst based on personal experience were aligned to theoretical investigations into contemporary artists’ usage of similar themes such as urban conflict, the human condition and the immediacy of the urban experience.

1.2 Background

My recent exhibitions of artworks were an attempt to depict aspects of the urban experience, elements of anonymity and related human values. Contemporary artists are involved in reassessing ideas of depicting such areas of the human condition as alienation, displacement and conflict. After previous research into these themes, (Earles, B. 98) it became apparent that a parallel could be drawn between my personal experiences, artworks and that of other contemporary artists.

From a recent inquiry into themes used by contemporary artists, it was evident that the urban experience of alienation and anonymity in humans formed the basis of many artists’ subject matter. A literature search on art critics and writers’ reviews of international exhibitions over the past five years revealed the significance of artists’ focus on detachment, alienation and the urban experience. This depiction of urban anonymity, displacement and related
human conditions was a necessity in outlining the nature of the city experience.

Having spent many years travelling throughout the world it became apparent that alienation, conflict and displacement were ingrained in the culture of the urban experience. Personal lifestyle and experiences have formed the basis of my paintings over the past ten years. The exploration of other artists’ depiction of these themes allowed me to further redefine subject matter in my paintings.

The research is not a political statement but an aesthetic inquiry with the paintings acting as records of everyday experience with the urban culture. The body of works is the first in a series of paintings based on images of alienation and displacement.

This research can assist us to more easily conceive of new visual understandings of the urban experience. Identifying, analyzing and comparing the subject matter in artists’ works has drawn a parallel to my own paintings. The production of my own original work assists in advancing the community’s understanding and perception of contemporary art.
1.3 Statement of the Problem

It was my intention to exhibit a series of artworks incorporating the theme of the urban experience, more specifically the concept of alienation. A number of exhibitions were proposed to fulfil this objective. This was the first in the series. This particular body of works attempted to depict the theme of alienation and an accompanying investigation into aspects of the human condition outlined other artists' works in this field.

One major aspect of this research was to analyze and translate personal experiences, recollections and artists' themes into a series of large paintings. These artworks, were an ongoing record of my investigations and the consequence or recollections of first hand experience. Isolating these personal experiences based on the immediacy and consequences of the urban experience was one stage in the production of the paintings exhibited.

Particular aspects of the urban experience were presented visually but the investigation included a theoretical component to understand and define images of urban life as utilized by contemporary artists.
1.4 Purpose of the Study

The underlying purpose was to examine issues relating to a body of paintings and to see in what ways relevant theoretical understandings might help in making sense of the practical considerations. The overall project was to create a series of exhibitions along with a number of accompanying exegeses. This particular exegesis has considered some of the overall specific research questions.

One purpose was to examine what aspects of the urban experience were depicted in recent contemporary artworks. Specifically the study attempts to outline in what ways the theme of alienation applies to the writers’ current artworks and other visual artists’ works.

One purpose was to ascertain whether contemporary artists attempted to identify the reasons for human alienation and displacement. Were these discussed, elaborated upon or taken for granted in the depiction of images?

Which particular artists recently depicted the urban experience and who specifically focussed on the areas of alienation, detachment and displacement.

Another purpose was to ascertain what personal experiences and influences had a bearing on the final artworks produced.

The artist/writer’s future direction also had a bearing on this study. The research also attempted to address the question on whether there were any viable ways to extend the employment of the human condition iconography in paintings.
1.5 Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that the urban experience has been widely depicted in recent contemporary artworks. It was also hypothesized that human alienation, as part of the urban experience was evident in the themes presented by contemporary artists. The hypothesis was that by reviewing a number of publications, images of urban life as portrayed by contemporary artists could be paralleled to a body of artworks personally produced.
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW
2.1 Introduction

In order to investigate images of the urban experience, certain aspects of associated human conditions such as alienation, detachment and displacement are discussed in the section on subject matter. Themes used by other artists and myself are usually referred to as subject matter. This section outlines many definitions, viewpoints and conceptions of the human conditions associated with urban life.

This investigation briefly covers images that are used to depict the many aspects of the urban experience. This wide field of themes is discussed in order to give a basic understanding of the artists' depictions. Aspects of the urban experience are investigated in the section General Imagery. Various areas of the urban experience are elaborated upon to create a more specific focus of the subject matter utilized by artists.

Exhibition reviews, criticisms and writers' opinions are sought to identify artist's depictions. Images of urban life utilized by contemporary artists are investigated in the section titled Contemporary Usage. This section covers the broad areas or aspects of the human condition as discussed in the section on general imagery.

As the focus narrows to include alienation, detachment and displacement, specific images in these fields are examined. These aspects are discussed in the section on Specific Imagery. Again, published reviews and criticisms of artists' works are examined to focus on these specific images.
It is obvious that many contemporary artists work with the fundamental theme of human alienation but the question remains as to whether or not they attempt to outline the reasons for such. This question is addressed in the section on *Reasons for Alienation*.

The parallel between other artists' works and my own paintings are discussed in the final two sections of the review. The section titled *Origins of Personal Imagery* outlines my own personal experiences or urban lifestyle that has led to the underlying theme in the accompanying body of works exhibited.

Specific images used in the body of works exhibited are discussed in the section *Personal Imagery*. The theme of human alienation is portrayed and briefly compared to other artists' depictions.
2.2 Subject Matter

Alienation is used to describe a state of estrangement of the individual from the natural environment, social life or the self. Depending on the user's bias or inclination, the term can mean different things to different people. For instance, psychiatrists see alienation as a symptom of an individual's maladjustment to society whereas philosophers view society as foreign thus alienation should not be taken as an indication of the individual's condition. History has shown us that religion, western intellectual traditions and phenomenology have all assigned the term alienation to different concepts. Contemporary psychology, politics and sociology used the term to denote widely different concepts.

In order to elaborate upon the use of the term alienation as subject matter, it is necessary to briefly outline the various meanings. Such analysis provides a narrower focus in the usage of this term. The following perspectives (however bizarre) briefly describe some usages of the term 'alienation'.


2.21 Self estrangement

Alienation is commonly described as a condition. The causes of this human condition, whether from cultural shifts, societal goals, economic hardships or identity loss, shall be discussed more fully in the later chapter of this paper. The human condition known as alienation encompasses the feeling of being lost or not belonging to the environment, group or society in general. Many people if not all, face this condition at some times of their lives. Most commonly it is the youth that face lack of identity and bear the brunt of this post modern condition.

Anomie has to examined under recent socio-cultural transitions that in early nineties have been described in the post-industrialized societies as postmodern condition... With the consequent public sphere in retreat replaced by the private space as enforced by the triumph of technologically mediated virtuality, youths stand today in crucial crossroads-to use a fashionable expression-between desired solidarity and socially imposed mass-mediated privacy. Actual anomie phenomena interpreted under this point of view, take the dimensions of protest and decided (partial) marginalization from a complicated society with confused values and misleading messages. Anomie and alienation (1999)

Social isolation, confusion, loneliness and urbanization are all part of this condition known as alienation. More generally this condition has been described as a normal part of urbanization:

Humanity is experiencing a new loneliness: it is not in the face of a hostile nature which it has taken centuries in subdue, but in an anonymous crown which surrounds men and women in which they feel themselves to be strangers. Urbanization, undoubtedly in irreversible stage in the development of human societies, confronts humanity with difficult problems. How are men and women to master its growth, regulate its organization, and successfully accomplish its animation for the good of all? A Call to Action, #10 Catholic Social Teaching(99:1)

The term is used to describe a number of situations but to place this inquiry and the works into context it is necessary
to narrow the meaning or interpretation. This section has attempted to point out that the self as a social product is confused in its identity formation. The emphasis has been upon this society generating confusion and the individual’s resultant estrangement.

Alienation has been described as an estrangement from the self. Individuals feel isolated and powerless as a result of this estrangement. Another of alienation’s multiple aspects is the psychological. Self-estrangement occurs when humans are not able to discover psychologically rewarding activities.
2.22 Psychological perception

Contemporary psychology uses the term broadly with the emphasis upon two main areas. Schools of psychology maintain the viewpoint that an integrated person can exist today but alienation is merely a symptom of individual's maladjustment to society. There is also the theory that alienation is a normal function of the mind in order to process information effectively.

2.221 Societal maladjustment

In our postmodern society the distance between self and society has widened. Whereas the philosophers and some sociologists assert that the reason for this rift is based on society's confusion or the 'foreigners' of the urban environment, the psychologists lay the emphasis upon the individual as being maladjusted. Social isolation can arise because the individual is not properly adjusted to the needs of society, which make it difficult for them to function in the community.

Regardless of the cause consequences or the viewpoint, the situation is maintained in that alienation is inherent in the current society. Another conception is that the "mechanism of internal alienation" is necessary for the social self. Socialization depends upon relationships with others and the self depends upon a healthy consciousness.

*Nature Individuals may be at war with themselves, torn between different attitudes and values. This is particularly true where the value-system ingrained during the years of youth is later confronted by alienated from his tradition, which gives rise to guilt, doubt and confusion and considerable inner suffering. Individuals may also lose their self-worth. In its intense form psychological alienation is pathological and sociopathic. Union of International Associations (99:3881)*
2.222 Intra psychic alienation
When people say, "it will come back to you" or "let go of it for a while" when faced with a mental block they are exercising a kind of unconscious mental processing. This kind of consciousness is hidden but has been defined as a necessity of normal mental functioning. This mechanism of internal mental alienation is sometimes called "intra psychic alienation".

*Presumably the subliminal material is perceived and "processed" somehow outside the awareness of ordinary consciousness, in some hidden "department" of the mind.*

Adams, B. (98:6)

Adams continues his discussion explaining the necessity of alienation for the proper functioning of consciousness. The ability to overcome this alienation has been outlined as people learning to understand their own motivations and satisfactions. Psychotherapy and meditation have been presented as contexts for the "exploration of transcendental consciousness."

For the purposes of this inquiry, this necessity of alienation and its internal mental mechanism shall be considered as a minor discussion topic. Other areas of alienation are deeply rooted in history. As a major perspective of 19th Century thought, alienation also dates from the early Christian era.
2.23 Theological Concerns

Early Christian thought was based on the "innately sinful nature" of man. This being the alienating factor between man and God. Alienation and reconciliation declined as central theological concerns when man's nature was no longer viewed as essentially evil and that God was not conceived of as a personal being.

However the condition of alienation is still recognized as a reality in Western society by theologians. Whether it is due to the organization of human society or the fragmentation within humans, the church view alienation as a major concern of the 20th century.

2.231 Marginalization and Exploitation

Members of the contemporary church believe that man is alienated due to industrial organization and the unrest economic system. As man is alienated from others due to economic competition and class hostility, he is also alienated from his work. As man plays no role in deciding what or how to do it and because he has no control over the product of his work he becomes alienated.

Yet alienation is still in Western societies, because of consumerism, that does not help one appreciate one's authentic personhood and because of work, which shows interest only in profit, none in the workers, considering them to be mere means. Donders (99:1)

The thought that human society has become alienated and alienating due to its organization, production and consumption is the focus of current theological interest. Of major concern also is the thought that man suffers from alienation to the extent that he does not realize the full potential of his being.
2.232 Spiritual values

Regardless of the underlying beliefs of denominations of the underlying beliefs or denominations of the church, the attitude is widely held that the cultural value systems of today are among the least spiritual ever offered to a human community.

The vast majority of human beings are living in a state of alienation from reality and from their own essence. Instead of living life directly and knowing themselves directly, they are besieged by mental and emotional distortions... Because we are thus fragmented within ourselves and in conflict within ourselves, we exist socially as fragments in conflict with each other with little hope of achieving anything but temporary reconciliation based on these conflicted, fragmentary selves.

K. Helminski (99:4)

Many theologians believe that our current system does not uphold economic, religious and ethical freedom. There is also a common view that humans are no longer receptive to or connected to spirituality but a balance between spiritual realization and human fulfillment can be obtained.
2.24 Intellectual construct

Western intellectual traditions have assumed a condition of alienation. The Romantic Movement in philosophy and literature viewed civilization as corrupting and alienating man from nature, Georg Hegel asserted that man strives to attain based on consciousness, physical objects and mores. His view of phenomenology was based on the belief that these bases impede man's full realization and that they are actually an alienation from self.

Bruno Bauer proposed that religious beliefs caused a rift between man's received idea of the world and the world as he experienced it. This separation of man's consciousness was the major course of self-alienation. Ludwig Feuerbach stated that traditional organized religious was alienating by forcing man to locate his humanity in an external idea.

Hegel and Feuerbach's concept influenced Karl Marx in developing a secular view of alienation.
2.25 Marxian thought

Marx believed that man suffers from alienation, as he does not realize the full potential of his being. His writings outlined that man is alienated from his work because he has no control over the product of the process of his labour. The nature of the industrial organization and the capitalist economic system stunts man's powers of perception, orientation and creation. Marx's notion was that self-alienation is inevitably self-negating and destructive. His concept of alienation was set out in the "Economic and Philosophical manuscripts" but had little impact on social and economic philosophy until the middle of the twentieth century. Since then it has become the focus of interest in postmodern sociology.
2.26 Sociological theory

As the psychiatrist labels the individual as maladjusted to society, the sociologist outlines alienation as a consequence of social organization and culture.

Emile Durkheim used the term anomie in 1897 to describe the phenomenon that affected all categories of the population. According to Durkheim, a breakdown of traditional community and religious mores led to man's mobility to formulate patterns of happiness.

Max Weber believed that personal relationship and individual values were dwindling due to "the increasing rationalization of bureaucratic life". Overwhelming social forces, historical heritage, external culture and the techniques of life according to Seeman were the basis of tension in humans seeking to preserve autonomy and individuality.

Current sociological theory includes not only Marx's model of estrangement from the self but a modification to include our free time as well as labour time.

*Individuals feel isolated in their private space and this is the "powerlessness" aspect of alienation as described by Seeman in his well-known classification of 1949.*

Anomie and Alienation: (99:22)

It is this powerlessness along with the meaningless aspect of alienation that is the focus of this inquiry. Other aspects of postmodern alienation include the characterization of students related to education, knowledge transmission, aesthetic-typed youth and fashioned abnormal behaviour. These areas of alienation are often viewed by
sociologist as conditioned or a prerequisite for controlled consumerism. Living in a world of false impressions, according to the sociological model, has caused the fragmentation but according to the existentialists, alienation is inherent in human nature.
2.27 Existential viewpoint

Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus believed that man is a stranger in the world. Their works were based on the thought that some degree of desolation of the self in thought and life is inescapable. The underlying viewpoint of the existentialist is based on the belief that man merely exists without basic reason or social allegiances.
2.28 Alienation -other usages.

There are numerous usages of the concept alienation but for this inquiry just a few major areas will be covered. Marx outlined that man has been alienated from his work due to lack of personal control. Workplace alienation has been cited as encompassing the lack of human rights, physical alienation and differing human value systems.

2.281 Workplace Alienation
Physical alienation as with alienation of human rights often exists in the workplace. Poor working conditions, lack of pride and the absence of social interaction all contribute to workplace alienation. Lack of respect for a worker's ability, compromised care and low pay alienate a worker from his colleagues and self-respect for human values may increase production rates but it also necessitates the infringement of privacy, environmental degradation and personal alienation.

2.282 Creative alienation
Whereas spiritual integration and realization were discussed in the section of theological concerns, creative fulfillment was not. Free human creativity is the right of every individual in a market economy. Unfortunately many communities do not see the true value in free expression and repress any individual deviance. Kurt Cobain from the famous rock group Nirvana felt alienated from other kids in Aberdeen when he was alive as a child. The local community frowned upon his desire to follow his art rather than aspire to logging at the local mill. Fortunately he moved, practised his creativity and became known worldwide for his free expression.
2.283 Global alienation
The efforts of globalization on national identity and cultural differences are becoming more alienating. Many countries, regions and geographic areas have specific cultures or identities. Some members of these areas are afraid of the homogenization of globalization. Such regions as Korea are apprehensive of encompassing certain aspects of Western Culture. In Western culture independence and individualism are highly valued whereas Eastern culture is based on relation. Such difference in values and cultural perspectives can result in the inhabitants becoming alienated and isolated. British Columbia as a province of Canada shares little in common with other areas of the country. It has been argued that the Province has been isolated from the rest of the country as the Confederation visions originate from Quebec. This lack of unified identity promotes a multifarious population but at the same time causes divisions in a country. Regional alienation results. The spread of culture and identity also encompasses the globalization of information. The Internet offers wider opportunity for the democratization of communication on the one hand but it is argued that it limits the social milieu of those who use it. Such limitations can often lead to virtual alienation.

2.284 Virtual alienation
The Internet has been posed as the free arena to academic communication, the facilitator of empowerment through accessible information attainment, and the expander of one’s self interest and as fostering antonomy. It seems clear that the Internet is a highway to recovery but many assert that it
merely creates cloned information, typecast aesthetics and unified, stereotype values.

Whilst the internet has been quoted as the great leveler or the ticket into a global society, the user is alienated from the real social world. Contact with people worldwide can be a source of support and an opportunity to gain esteem and respect. Then it has been argued that the computer user who is constantly zoned into a monitor has no real social interaction. Such activity (or lack thereof) is the beginning of social isolation and alienation.

2.285 Artistic effects
Most of the previous viewpoints have been definitions of discussions about alienation as a form of isolation or estrangement. There are many varied studies in alienation but some minor definitions should be briefly outlined. A technique known as alienation is used in the performing and visual arts to distance the spectator. In theatre for instance, the objective world is alienated by convention, highly personal style or by abrupt shifts between verse and prose or between the serious and the comic. The alienation technique of human society is not self-evident. In visual art, famous artworks are used to put well known themes into a new context. Compositional alienation is used to describe the positioning of objects or subjects in relation to others or to the rest of the composition. These alienation effects are used as an illusion but the term alienation also has other meanings.
2.286 Miscellaneous
Whilst alienation means emotional isolation, emotional
dissociation, it can also mean the act of transferring
properly to another. Alienation may be voluntary, such as
by gift or sale or involuntary by "eminent domain or
adverse possession." In the political sense alienation has
also been used to describe voter passivity.

The business meaning of alienation and the voter passivity
element are not issues of importance to this inquiry. They
have been briefly outlined in order to dismiss these
definitions.
2.3 General Imagery

Many aspects of the urban experience are evident in the recent themes of many contemporary artists' works. Such themes as the deconstructed self, identity crises, the fragmentation of society, the disenfranchised, disenfranchisement, displacement and human alienation have been widely used recently.

Artists have presented the urban experience in terms of personal isolation, dehumanization, disconnectedness and human repression. Many times these are presented as a reflection of society or current cultural values. Often they are a statement of repression of forced conditions due to governmental structures and technological advances. Such statements are not only observations but also a direct result of the artists' personal relationships and lifestyles. Recent forerunners depicting these contemporary themes as far back as the 1930s could include Edward Hopper, George Segal, Francis Bacon and Giacometti. As with some of Bacon's paintings, Giacometti's thin figures seemed to be lost, acting as complete strangers to one another. Huyghe describes this as "A figure on the frontiers of nothingness..."

Edward Hopper's realist paintings of the 1930s, the depression era, present as a portrait of inner city and industrial desolation. Segal's vision of the everyday and commonplace is presented as a severe social concern.
On reviewing a Segal retrospective in 1998, Gran describes Segal as an:

...intense critic of post war alienation and depersonalization. His identification with those living on the fringes of society is palpable in the white plaster figures, presented in forlorn isolation or in groups, for which he is best known. Gran (98:107)

The artists mentioned here as forerunners are but a few from the recent past presenting work with social concerns. More specific examples of artists’ usage of these themes are outlined in the next section of 'Contemporary Usage.'
2.4 Contemporary Usage

Artists have been depicting the urban experience for centuries, but the current urban experience can hardly be compared to that of earlier decades. It is not the intention of the writer to research current social conditions or human interaction but to outline artists' usage of the theme 'the urban experience'.

2.41 Isolation

Many of the varied themes mentioned in '2.3 General Imagery' could be seen in art work of the past twenty years. Of particular note is the work by Jean-Michel Basquiat. This artist, working from New York, became famous worldwide in the 1980's for his bold paintings. His own life was a mixture of disconnectedness, detachment, fragmentation and alienation. His work was not only a biography of his own lifestyle but also a reflection of societal fragmentation.

Some argue that Basquiat was elevated to high status as an artist due to his race, as "the chosen black man: in a caucasian dominated art world." Others believe that his dedication to recapturing aspects of black athletic history and heroes overshadowed his own survival.

"The reputation and heritage of which particular tribe is being salvaged here: the "African", the Afro-American, the Puerto Rican [African, or Spanish or Afro-Spanish?], the Haitian [African or French or creole?]. Or maybe he was redeeming the culture of the tribe of educated upper middle-class Brooklyn accountants to which his father belongs? Maybe he should have stuck to saving his own skin..."

Hebdige, D (92:66)

Basquiat's own personal isolation was also due to his insistence upon an "explosive mix of drugs, sex and
notoriety." His vision and creative thought was increased with his ability to disconnect into drugs, paranoia and the mass media. His isolation was a safeguard from being typecast:

Basquiat felt like a bum. He pretended he came from the street, and in the end he went back to the street— for drugs. It was his way of perpetuating his feelings as a disenfranchised person—as a son, as a citizen, and as an artist. Hoban (98: 15)

Even at the peak of his success he felt disenfranchised and uncomfortable with himself. His immediate urban experience as well as his observations of societal fragmentation influenced his work. Basquiat felt alienated but was also making references to society in general. In his own words he described his works:

The musician of disordered sound, the poet of decomposed language, the painter of fragmented visual and tactile world; they all portray the break up of the self, and through the reassembly and rearrangement of the fragments, try to create new structures that possess wholeness, perfection, new meaning. Hoban (98: 84)

Basquiat's portrayal of the urban experience included his own disconnectedness and disenfranchisement, the fragmentation of society, the deconstructed self and human alienation. Another general theme that is portrayed by many artists as integral to the urban experience is dehumanization.
2.41 Dehumanization

There are many environmental factors of the urban experience that insist in alienating humans. Artists have portrayed these factors in their themes of the urban experience. One particular artist known only as Pretzel depicts the experience of contemporary life with inner-city tensions, homelessness, gender and class-based stress. In the artist's attempt to explore the theme of dehumanization due to high technology and "unresponsive governmental structures in a post-industrial world s/he has outlined the human alienation against the parameters of the machine. This physical disconnectedness is echoed by other artists' depictions of toxic cultures.
2.42 Disconnectedness

The previous artist was an example of one outlining a dehumanizing physical environment. Gablik believes that we live in an environmentally toxic culture and spiritually or culturally suppressed society. It is this artistic view that poor psychic and social structures exist to maintain a balanced cultural identity with subjective practice. Whether or not the intensification of the aesthetic process is in a void due to the inability of present institutional models to bring about transformation, it is evident that a feeling of connectedness is subsiding.

It is this disconnectedness that is the basis of many artists’ works either as portrayal or reaction via no-context works. The "hazardous remains of our industry and technology" have brought about the self as separate or self contained rather than relational. Whether these aspects of modern society are intentional or not, they exist. Some artists believe this disconnectedness to be part of an intentional repression.

2.43 Spiritual Repression

The Western world demands a personal dependence upon logic, rationalization and controlling ego. Many artists believe we are losing the power of imagination, myth and the dream due to this repressive dependence upon reality. This spiritual repression has been the basis of some contemporary artists’ depiction of the urban experience. Fern Shaffer, a Chicago artist has attempted to abolish the "blocked system of conditioning" by creating works based on myth and experimentation with magical perception. She
believes that the spiritual existence with nature can be obtained by channeling personal intuition.

This artist has presented works based on society's repression of total human development. It is the power of authority that brings this next artist to reach a similar conclusion.

2.43 Vision denial.
Whilst the feeling of belonging to a certain community (or the desire to) is the basis of many artists works, The Grand Poobah has established works based on the effects of power on man. The artists' constructions and photos portray man's attention to work, authority and power to the detriment of his normal "vision". Man is seen as suppressed and alienated from daily life or separated from the rest of his environment.

These have been a few examples of themes used in the depiction of the urban experience. Many other contemporary artists have presented an extensive range of associated themes. For the purpose of this paper these few are presented as examples but hardly represent the total variety of themes based on the urban experience.
2.5 Specific Imagery

As these varied themes of the urban experience are widely used, this paper focuses on one aspect of such human conditions. The term 'alienation' has been analyzed in the previous section concerning subject matter utilized by artists. For the sake of this review, the term alienation shall be taken as meaning a state of estrangement of the individual from the natural environment, social life or the self.

This focus of alienation is evident in a variety of artforms utilized by contemporary artists. After researching a number of recent exhibition reviews, this theme was evident in paintings, drawings, sculpture, installations, film, photography, performance, video and landscape art. Whilst this investigation is based on themes in contemporary paintings it would be negligent to ignore this theme in other artforms.

2.5.1 Drawing

One drawing exhibition with a significant focus upon alienation was that of Toba Khedoori in 1996. This artist presents large drawings with wax, stains, hairs and lines that act as traces of absent inhabitants. The work has a theme of urban and industrial nonplaces, an environment indicating the void and leftover fragments or traces of the once evident dwellers.
2.52 Painting

Robert Farber produced a series of paintings in 1995 chronicling his substance abuse, homosexuality, terminal illness and the severity of alienation. Koslow-Miller reviewed the work believing that Farber produced his finest work in the five years prior to his death from AIDS. The paintings and mixed media works paralleled the AIDS virus with the 1348 Black Death plague. Farber presented not only the modern day crisis but also his personal alienation and the consequences of such.

Another painting exhibition in 1996 by Lena Cronquist dealt with the theme of alienation with an autobiographical basis. After a temporary mental illness she began to depict a world beset by tension and unstable relations. Anxiety, fear and tragedy pervade the works echoing her personal alienation.

In 1994 Jonathan Barbieri exhibited paintings depicting lone expressionist humans in a state of vacancy or the void. The reviewer Katie Simon believes the theme to be outdated or depressing:

*Such a show as this one, in which every painting emanates a sense of alienation, pessimism, and despair may have been brave or revolutionary in the 1980's. Now it engenders merely listlessness and depression.* Simon (94:cover)

Outdated or not, the artist was merely depicting a theme based on personal experience and observation. As was Matthew Radford's painting exhibition in 1994. The streets of Manhattan inspired this painting exhibition. According to the reviewer Gill Polonsky the artist presents "gritty images of urban alienation" built up from many layers of thickly applied paint.
2.53 Sculpture
Apart from the Segal retrospective as mentioned previously, other exhibitions of sculpture were reviewed as depicting the theme of alienation. Of particular note was the work of Stefan Lindfors: large scale sculptures indicating extreme personal alienation. As suggested by the reviewer Von Ziegesar (95:100), "Lindfors' alienation has led him to view artists as a kind of foreign species."

2.54 Contemporary Art Forms
This inquiry disclosed some significant information regarding exhibitions in the form of film, photography, installation, performance, video and landscape art. It was found that all these artforms lent themselves well to depicting the human condition especially alienation. From installations of silence and indifference punctuating the alienation of the world to the examination of light and space that activate peoples alienation or integration - all were presented as a result of personal experience, observation of current cultures or both. Of particular note were the group exhibitions of artists originating from a particular nation. Urban video, performance and installation artists depicting cultural contradictions and political censorship were of particular note. (Reviewed by Kurt Hollander)

Five Mexican artists with shared sensibilities presented installations, performances and videos about schizophrenia, melancholy and alienation. (Reviewed by Ruben Gallo)
Seventeen Korean photographers presented alienation in the form of entrapment, techno-culture, oppression and industrial wastelands. (Reviewed by Michael Weinstein)

These are just a few examples of contemporary artists presenting the theme of alienation in their works. In the past ten years this specific imagery of alienation has been quite evident in art exhibitions. Artists have used a variety of artforms to depict this specific theme and at times have offered the causes of self-estrangement.
2.6 Reasons for Alienation

In order to ascertain whether or not certain artists outline the reasons for human alienation it is important to discuss some of the various causes of this particular aspect of the urban experience. Many viewpoints and definitions of alienation have been elaborated on in section 2.2 "Subject matter." The general description of alienation as a state of estrangement of the individual from the natural environment, social life, or the self, has briefly encompassed causes of such. Major causes of this separation may lie either within the individual or with the external world of work, politics, social norms or society as a whole.

2.6.1 Causes of alienation
The state of estrangement of the individual from the self could be extracted from the psychiatrists’ viewpoint of alienation. The most obvious is intrapsychic alienation as discussed in section 2.2.2 whereby unconscious mental procession of problems takes place. This internal mental alienation works below the threshold of awareness allowing intuition, creativity, feelings and so forth to exist. One reason why this type of alienation exists is to allow objective reasoning to exist without being overwhelmed by "constant subjective distractions."

Another cause of self-estrangement is failure to establish personal identity or tension within a person seeking to maintain autonomy and individuality in the face of adverse social forces, historical heritage and external culture.
Estrangement from the natural environment and social life may be easier areas to discuss as urbanism is more widely understood as the state of human settlement with high population density, fast pace, personal anonymity, ethnic diversity and other such characteristics.

_The dangers which threaten existence in an urban environment are such that man needs a secluded refuge today as much as his primitive ancestors did. He is assaulted by a multitude of sensations he would like to exclude from the space he needs to reserve for his own use. Subjection over a long period to vibrations and sound can be psychologically damaging; vibration, in fact, contributes to neuroses. Odors, mostly from industrial sources, can be not only disagreeable but positively harmful. Pollution in general is not only a danger to health but is also psychological menace._

_Uunion of International Associations_ (99:6299)

There are those that believe that we are all living in a state of alienation from reality and from our own essence. The reason is that we are besieged by mental and emotional distortions.

_In the best of these times people’s minds are filled with everything but the truth: images from consumer culture, manufactured desires, superstitions, hallucinations, beliefs, allergies to beliefs, the cliches of neurotic individualism, and so forth. In the worst of times, human minds may be occupied with mass psychoses of nationalism, fanaticism, racism, tribalism, or religious fundamentalism._

_Helmsky_ (99:2)

Modern urban housing is often a source of problems. Aggression, anxiety and tension increase as contact with neighbors and nature decreases. Nervousness and anxiety can be caused by the fear of being overheard by others. Economic pragmatism has produced housing with thin walls and large panes of glass.

Other physical aspects such as overcrowding lead to negative attitudes, loss of sensitivity, emotional disturbances and diminution of initiative and creativity.
The physical and psychological stress of the urban environment creates severe health problems.

*Nature* By the turn of the century, half the 6.2 billion population of the planet will be urban. The unplanned and often chaotic growth of mega-cities will mean that at least half of their inhabitants will live in crowded tenements, shantytowns and slums without basic amenities. Overcrowding, filth and squalor encourages the spread of infectious diseases and poses massive threats to urban health. Even in the developed world, ill health as a consequence of urban living is prevalent.

*Union of International Associations* (99: 3881:1)

The distance of social division between the individual and the community promotes social isolation. Estrangement from social life or personal isolation in modern communities is a major cause of alienation. The current tendency is for the individual and the community to operate for their own respective interests. The individual rarely sees himself as responsible for the community and the community rarely represents all its individuals. The resultant lack of mutual concern or involvement causes social isolation.

2.62 Artist’s deliberations

There are many artists who depict the environment, urban locations and industrial spaces. These portrayals of the physical environment constitute an opinion of urban conditions but are not primarily depicting the causes of alienation or estrangement. The consequences of such an environment are hinted at but not necessarily included in the works.

One particular example of this would be the installation called Stasi City by Jane and Louise Wilson. This work as reviewed by Brooks Adams documents the artists’ presence in weird derelict spaces. The large wall projections of abandoned offices punctuated by ‘an enervating audio track’
were the tools used for the Wilsons' delirious archaeology of the Eastern bloc. This installation portrayed the physical environment and placed the spectator into a feeling of discomfort. Whilst presenting an alienating environment, the artists did not primarily elaborate upon the causes of this estrangement.

Another example is the work portraying the inner city of the London Docklands project. According to the reviewer Paul Antick, the photos by a group of London artists did not address the social and cultural problems but:

...predictably rearticulate conventions traditionally deployed to articulate an inner-city aesthetic of the "little horrors" of urban life.

The urban conditions are depicted but the causes of alienation or estrangement are not included in this particular exhibition.

Artists seldom verbally elaborate upon the causes of alienation but there is evidence that the urban experience, the effects and causes of such are presented in many contemporary artworks.

A number of exhibitions based on the theme of the urban experience were sought. Exhibitions specifically depicting alienation were generally reviewed as based on artist observation rather than autobiographical. It was personally thought that a majority of artists would not include the reasons for alienation in their works. After careful inquiry, it was found that an equal number of exhibitions contained the causes of alienation as those that portrayed the environment.
It could be assumed that in addressing the social and cultural concerns, reasons and causes of alienation played a major role in the artworks presented. One specific example would be the work of Julian Opie. This English sculptor concentrated on detachment and alienation due to so-called functional spaces. He reconstructed such spaces as airports, waiting rooms and public offices presenting them as major causes of human alienation.

In the film L'eclisse, Antonioni addresses causes and chief effects of alienation. The artist presents the positive dimensions of alienation in an attempt to present the main character as changing for the better. According to the reviewer Kevin Moore:

The logical goals of positive alienation are most apparent in Antonioni's L'eclisse, part of the Eclipse Trilogy that also includes L'avventura and La notte. In the film, Vittoria, the main character, wants to divorce herself from the deadening claustrophobia of high modern culture, represented by her lover of ten years, Riccardo, in order to reinstate herself within the enabling conditions of authentic cultural production. Mooré (95:22)

This visual elaboration upon the causes of alienation is a positive attempt by the artists to address specific social and cultural problems. Although many of the works are derived from observation and not based on the artists' personal experience, they attempt to explain the human condition. The reviewed artworks with images based on the urban experience originate from artist observation or personal experiences.
2.7 Origins of Personal Imagery

My personal imagery is the development of specific techniques and icons over the past fifteen years. The themes are the result of my personal experience of at least ten years movement through highly populated major cities in America, Europe, Asia and Australia. My past research on the appeal of anonymity to artists has led to a concentration upon the urban experience and associated human conditions.

The next three sections (from 2.71 to 2.73) briefly outlines the origins of my personal imagery. Whilst discussed separately, each of the areas is interrelated to the others in some way.
2.7.1 Past Research

My past research included the exhibition of a series of artworks incorporating the concept of anonymity. An accompanying exegesis constituted an inquiry examining aspects of the human condition and issues of personal expression for the purpose of outlining the appeal of anonymity to the artist. The literature review of this research revealed current themes used by other artists. Upon researching recent exhibition reviews, certain aspects of anonymity and related human values were isolated.

It was obvious from this past research that not only were some artists alienated from the rest of society but also many artworks depicted the condition of human alienation. The artists were expounding upon incidents in their lives. Many were depicting observations of situations and environments around them.

As this past research was based on anonymity, it became apparent that more evident themes as alienation, detachment and other aspects of the urban experience could be isolated. This past research was a major influence in developing the themes for this exhibition and theoretical investigation.
2.72 Personal experience

In exhibiting my works of the past twenty years, I have found myself in most of the major cities of the world. My exhibition schedule saw me travelling between New York City and Tokyo for a number of years. With exhibitions in Seattle, Melbourne and Anchorage Alaska my frequent flier points accumulated. In order to further my exhibition schedule and keep abreast of contemporary arts, I found myself in cities such as Paris, Sydney, Kuala Lumpur and Washington D. C. During this extensive travel, I found myself constantly alienated as part of the urban experience. I was also constantly aware of alienation that I observed in the populations of many cities. It is this personal and observed alienation that forms the basis of my paintings presented with the theme of urban experience.

On a number of occasions I found myself in that hard to resist city of Manhattan. With millions of people living within a few square miles, alienation was evident in the faces of many. A thriving mega city where harmony exists with pockets of proportionally insignificant danger zones. Nevertheless these places exist with many displaced or alienated people as residents. The "search for the self" exists alongside the rational desire to survive.

Upon exhibiting paintings in Tokyo the overwhelming technological aspects of the human environment were evident. One million transients passing through one train station per day are greeted by a giant outdoor video screen showing the latest in western rock bands. The public temperature, humidity and pollution monitor alerts the
commuter to environmental safety and danger zones. The myriad of square miles of sky neon advertises the best department stores, restaurants or electronic goods. Just a few examples of high technology produced and situated to assist citizens are often alienating to many.

The variance in language, customs, laws, religious differences existing in Asia approach the traveler as fast as the regional boundaries and borders. The cultural conditions in Australia condone the expectation of interactive knowledge. Isolation and alienation in these regions are severe and a widespread part of the urban experience.

My personal identity was not lost in the urban experiences but richly enhanced. There are no depictions or suggestions of a loss of identity in any of these works. Identity constantly changes but the memory of the self is never subsumed.

As an immigrant, visitor, traveler, itinerant and resident of many cities in the world I was constantly aware of not only my own but other's displacement, detachment, alienation and isolation. In this way my works are not only autobiographical but also observational.
2.73 Technique development

The themes are a direct result of part experience and research whereas the imagery used in the paintings have developed over the past fifteen years of practice. The imagery is a balance of icons and planes using color and texture to place the figures in a field. The icons or shapes representing humans, the architectural and natural environment are suggested with simplicity. Such simple shapes allow spontaneous application of paint allowing undercoat colors to remain. The elongation of shapes unifies the form and creates strength in the composition. The depiction of the urban dwellers is not stereotype or static in the final image nor is it in the production application.

The severe textural overlays of paint serve as an indication of the history of the city and the experience of every individual. Whilst the people come and go within the metropolis the cityscape remains virtually intact. Progress and development do often change the face of a city, but the evidence of by gone days remains in the shape of historical architecture, over layered surfaces of walls and paths. Just as the cities are built up in layers, these works are overlaided with many coats of paint. Opacity exists in the paint with areas of deliberate omissions allowing the underlayers to show through. The solidity of the work indicates the clarity of physical objects, buildings and people.

The technique of reduction is utilized to maintain solidity of form and brilliance of color. The figures are only created
to give the suggestion of a large urban population after many layers of brilliant colours are applied. These layers help to give the illusion of the many coloured clothing apparent in the population as well as creating a sense of multitude. This technique allows some forms to recede and others to jump out depending on shape, texture and color.

The cities and immediate environs are built of from old buildings, new ones and many structures in between. The surfaces of the city buildings have been over painted or resurfaced many times in their existence. The textures of my paintings allude to these "built up" locations. Many coats are applied with a dry brush technique to create depth but at the same time maintaining opacity for strength. Much of the undercoating shows through with this method of paint application.

The colours have been chosen purposefully and applied from dark to light with a first dark coat (made up from many cool colours) the brighter colours are dry brushed for contrast and texture. These brighter colours are applied in small strokes to give a large variance in the reduced figures. Once the figures have been "carved" from the large colour field, a neutral darker tone is applied over the background. On top of this a lighter tone and then sometimes another lighter tone or white is applied for further textural qualities.

These techniques have been personally developed over a number of years and are used to create images of the urban experience.
2.8 Personal Imagery

As already mentioned, my works generally depict the urban experience and associated human conditions. These personal images are briefly examined in this section. It was not my intention to represent enigmas by offering no immediate solutions or interpretations. The works themselves are completely open to interpretation but the initial priority was not communication. The focus was more aligned to the process of painting rather than the purposeful production of recognizable icons or themes. There was always the task of observing memories in the production of the pieces but the process played a major role in rendering a painterly result.

In reviewing some paintings by Lain York and Gerald Habarth in Nashville, David Ribar suggests a similar strategy:

It's a strategy many contemporary artists have successfully followed: Self-conscious primitivism are posed as an antidote to the technological exactitude of our computer culture or to the mental and physical drain of maintaining rational consciousness. This contemporary use of enigmas is one means or recapturing the authentic and personal in painting--an art form long declared dead by modern critics.

_Nashville Scene_ (97:3)

In 'documenting' the urban experience, I was also making a conscious decision to isolate or advance personal experiences. I don't agree with Ribar that the works were presented as enigmas but they certainly were antidotes to technological exactitude and rational consciousness. My works presented are definitely personal but not intended as enigmas, although some may view them as such.
The paintings exhibited were not so much intentionally produced as a reaction to rationality or the computer culture but were the result of subjective practice. Whilst it was not my intention to produce works of a realist nature, it was also not my intention to represent mystery and myth. There is no alluding to romanticism, reference to other artists’ works or conjuring of dreams, just the cold reality of spaces. The characters are not recognizable from their features and the works don't exactly tell stories but they do outline the severity and fragmentation of the urban experience. The works reflect authentic human experience yet local themes are not so much interpreted or depicted. The buildings, objects and people appear as separate entities yet existing in an overall form. The themes could be applied to most urban cultures. Deborah Clark sums the dislocation of living in the mobile twentieth Century:

Moving from one city to another is now effortless and largely inconsequential, an effect of the globalization of the culture of cities which effaces difference. Clark, D (96:517)

It was not the intention to produce a work based on a singular place of origin nor were they produced with internationalism in mind. Whilst a national identity attitude does not pervade, the process was not one of striving for international universalism. The "suburbs in your system" or the recognizably modern tradition of representing the urban experience linked to a place was not the objective in producing these works. The term displacement or cultural displacement does not refer to site specificity of the artwork but rather to subjects depicted in the work. The fragmentation is not concerning the deconstruction or loosening of the material objects but of the humans depicted and their lack of ties to any one particular strata of society.
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY
3.1 Overall Design

In reviewing this research it is important to consider the overall design of the project. This exegesis constitutes only part of an overall theoretical investigation. The exegeses are also only part of the overall design that includes the production and exhibitions of paintings. Each exhibition of paintings constitutes a section of a whole series of works related to the urban experience.

Figure 1 represents the overall design of this investigation whereas figure 2 gives a brief indication of the design for the first part of this research. Figure 3 outlines the steps taken in the theoretical investigation for this first exegesis.
Overall Design

EXEGESIS 1
Imagery and Origins

EXHIBITION 1
Major paintings

EXEGESIS 2
Imagery and Origins

EXHIBITION 2
Major paintings

EDIT
SUMMARISE
Paintings and theoretical investigations

EXEGESIS 3
Imagery and Origins

EXHIBITION 3
Major paintings

EXEGESIS 4
Imagery and Origins

EXHIBITION 4
Major paintings

FINAL EXHIBITION OF SELECTED PAINTINGS ACCOMPANIED BY EXEGESIS

Figure 1. Method design Chart indicating steps of the overall investigation.
3.2 Imagery and Origins Design

This first exhibition is based on the theme of the urban experience, but more specifically human alienation. This exegesis is based on personal imagery, other artists' imagery and the origins of these images. This first exhibition with accompanying exegesis is made up from a number of interrelated steps.

The following chart can best sum up the design of this particular exhibition and exegesis.
First Exhibition/Exegesis Design

**PRODUCTION OF ARTWORKS**
Oils on canvas

**THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION**
Exegesis Research

**PRESENTATION PLANS**
Organize, manage

**EDIT DOCUMENT**
Frames

**LITERATURE REVIEW**
Research artist information

**VENUE**
Exhibition space

**PARALLEL THEMES**
Personal and other artists' themes

**EXHIBITION OF ARTWORKS**
Oils on canvas

**RECORDING**
Prints, slides

**SPOKEN ADDRESS**

**FEEDBACK**

*Figure 2. Method design Chart* indicating steps of the first investigation.
3.3 Theoretical Investigation

Whilst the artwork production is more or less straightforward, the theoretical investigation of this exegesis has many stages and directions. Investigation of artists' subject matter alone has extracted numerous viewpoints or definitions of the one term 'alienation'. As this is just one aspect of the urban experience, other general images of associated human conditions are elaborated upon.

Researching and analyzing recent art magazines, the internet and art books has uncovered a myriad of contemporary artists depicting the theme of the urban experience and more specifically human alienation.

My own personal imagery and the origins of such are investigated and presented as a parallel to other artists' themes. The design of this particular exegesis can best be seen in the following chart.
Figure 3. Exegesis design Chart indicating steps of the theoretical investigation.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS
4.1 Presentation

From reviewing the literature it was evident that the urban experience was a complex concept. Specific aspects such as human alienation appeared to be just as involved. Artists’ depictions of these areas were quite common over the past ten years. The utilization of their own personal experience and observation of society provided a rich subject matter for many contemporary artists. Some artists portrayed the consequences of an alienating environment whilst others used human alienation as a springboard for channeling personal intuition.

Because of the nature or complexity of the theme ‘urban experience’, it was necessary to provide a narrower focus towards human alienation. The term alienation in itself had not only many definitions but also many interpretations as well.
4.11 Understanding Definitions and viewpoints.

With the focus on human alienation as part of the urban experience, it became evident that the term alienation meant not only a state of estrangement but voter passivity and the act of transferring property to another. Even when the term was narrowed in definition, the review outlined the different usages or viewpoints. The term was used broadly to describe many different concepts. Whereas psychiatrists lay the emphasis upon the individual as being maladjusted, the sociologists outlines alienation as a consequence of social organization and culture. In the political sense, alienation was used to describe exploitation, the industrial organization and the capitalist economic system. It was also used in association with globalization and the effects on regions and not just individuals.

Many other viewpoints and concerns were outlined but the term alienation, for the purpose of this project was taken as the state of estrangement of social life or the self. This was but one aspect of the urban experience utilized by artists.
4.12 Urban Life Images

Some aspects that were evident in the themes of contemporary artists included the fragmentation of society, the identity crisis, the deconstructed self, disenfranchisement and displacement.

Cultural contradictions and political censorship generated many urban images amongst groups of artists with shared sensibilities and similar national origins. Discomforting documentation of their own presence in derelict spaces is common to the many contemporary artforms.

4.13 Contemporary Depictions

Many of the contemporary artists themes were the result of personal lifestyles as well as their own particular urban environment. In other words, the depiction of the urban experience was not only autobiographical but also a reflection on societal fragmentation. The one particular aspect of the urban experience described as alienation has been implied in many varied themes.

4.14 Reasons for Alienation

Some of the multitudinous causes of human alienation were isolated in order to ascertain whether any artists outlined the reason for this particular aspect of the urban experience.

Some of the causes of self-estrangement that were outlined ranged from failure to establish personal identity, adverse social forces, pollution, poor housing, stress of the urban environment to overcrowding and emotional disturbances. Many more causes were outlined but basically the major
causes of estrangement can be refined to lie either within the individual or with the external world of work, politics, social norms, cultural expectations or society as a whole.

4.15 Depicting causes of estrangement.

Of the exhibitions reviewed, it was found that most of the artworks deemed autobiographical included a possible cause of estrangement. Such causes of human alienation depicted included the artists' trauma involved in becoming a parent, contracting the AIDS disease, schizophrenia, drug addiction and melancholia.

Many of the works that could be classified as observational were produced using the contemporary artforms such as installation, performance and multi-media. Such works including the causes of alienation were few. The causes depicted included entrapment, techno-culture, isolationism political oppression and dysfunctional spaces.

The autobiographical works were more concerned with internal causes such as personal trauma and disease whereas the observational pieces had an external pressure of force acting upon the individual.
4.2 Other Findings

One particular objective was to isolate personal experiences based on the immediacy and consequences of the urban experience. These experiences and recollections along with other artists' themes were translated into a series of works exhibited in conjunction with this paper.

My personal imagery was developed through specific reduction techniques, personal experience of traveling through major cities and past research on anonymity. Some of these experiences were isolated as a basis of the accompanying paintings. These experiences were discussed along with the techniques and a basic outline of past research.

Some artworks reviewed had an autobiographical basis whereas other exhibitions were of an observational nature. It was found that it was difficult to distinguish between purely autobiographical and specifically observational works.

One specific reviewer's belief that the issues are not being addressed without the artist's inclusion of alienation causes should be taken into consideration. It may be significant that works with self-estrangement themes and no inclusion of their causes are negligent in addressing social and cultural concerns.
4.3 Summary of Results

The literature revealed that the urban experience was a complex concept to define but nevertheless was outlined to include various viewpoints and associated theories. Once the definition was narrowed, certain aspects including disenfranchisement, alienation and societal fragmentation were investigated.

Many causes and reasons for self-estrangement (being part of the urban experience) were sought. Whilst the investigation was not concerned so much with who or what was to blame for the situation, a number of reasons emerged. Adverse social forces, cultural expectations, the external world of work or overpowering politics along with the individual’s failure to establish personal identity were isolated as some causes of human alienation.

The results showed that there was a vast amount of artworks of the last ten years with images of modern urban life. With a narrower focus upon human alienation as part of the urban experience, it was revealed that contemporary art contained a multitude of these themes in various mediums.

A number of exhibition reviews were investigated to outline the urban experience and more specifically human alienation. The exhibitions reviewed encompassed most of the artforms including contemporary media. The works were reasonably evenly divided between autobiographical and observational.
It became apparent that half the artists reviewed gave reasons for the alienation they depicted whereas the other half merely presented the consequences of alienation.

Of the exhibitions reviewed it was noted that those of an autobiographical nature contained mostly internal causes of alienation such as trauma and disease. Those works of an observational nature were more aligned to external causes such as political oppression and the cold world of techno-culture.

By translating personal experiences, techniques and past research into themes for a series of paintings, a parallel was echoed with other artists' themes. It was noted that, many artists presented causes of estrangement whereas the series of paintings constituting the basis of this research presented the consequences of alienation.
CHAPTER 5. EVALUATION
5.1 Significance of the Review

This review has significance to my personal development as an artist. It has provided a parallel of working themes with other contemporary artists. It has also outlined the many aspects of urban life ranging from conflict to spontaneity. Definition of the urban experience has been useful in placing many contemporary artworks in context. A current history of urban lifestyles, influences and various cultural consequences as outlined in this paper could be useful for other artistic, sociological or philosophical investigations. The discussions around artists’ themes would definitely be useful in studies of contemporary art.

5.1.1 Personal Theme Development

By investigating and outlining personal experiences I was able to make further recollections and consolidate a theme for the accompanying paintings. Particular aspects of my most recent urban life could be conceptualized as consequences of the overall urban experience. This personal experience along with recent urban observations laid the foundation for the image development in my paintings. The investigation and results were a large influence upon my practical visual presentations. The isolation of personal experiences and verbalization of such assisted in the thematic formation and development of personal imagery. The review was significant in terms of personal motivation and the final products viewed by others.
5.12 The Urban Experience
This investigation outlines many components and consequences of urban life and describes particular aspects of the human condition. The review is significant in terms of defining the urban experience, emotional isolation, alienation and self-estrangement. It provides many and varied viewpoints to these aspects of the urban experience.

5.13 History and Context
These viewpoints are important undercurrents in modern history. The definitions alone state the importance of dominant aspects of the human condition. The review's identification of adverse social forces, cultural expectations and the stress of the urban environment provides an important current social and cultural context. The increasing occurrence of human alienation alone is significant enough for many artists to depict aspects in their themes.

5.14 Contemporary Artists' Themes
The descriptions provide an important framework of contemporary artists' themes such as human alienation. The review gave an overview of many artists' depictions using urban life as a basis for images and themes. The review's elaboration upon these themes was significant by indicating the increasing conditions and consequences of 'postmodern industrial' urban life.

Images of the urban experience as portrayed by other contemporary artists provided an important parallel with my own art production. By reviewing the works of other artists, it was obvious that my own paintings were placed in context, not only with societal and cultural influences but other artists' works.
5.2 Critical Assessment

The review covered a number of published outlines and reviews of art exhibitions. Criticisms, descriptions and reviews were widely sourced from books, magazines and the Internet. The literature is limited to include only those artists being reviewed and published. Whilst only a small minority of existing (and past) exhibitions are reviewed in magazines and books, a wider number and variety are included on the internet. Nevertheless, those reviewed face a severe selective method approach before being considered as suitable for publication. In this way, the review is limited or exclusionary.

The published reviews of artist's works are merely the opinion of the writers. Without personally attending the exhibitions outlined, I can not assess or form opinion on the works.

The review depends upon a generated opinion of the artworks unable to be confirmed or negated without personal judgment of the works.
CHAPTER 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
6.1 Summary

A series of artworks incorporating the theme of the urban experience were produced and exhibited as part of an ongoing number of exhibitions. This first exhibition was titled "Imagery and Origins" as the accompanying theoretical investigation outlined specific images of the human condition based on the consequences of personal urban experiences.

Some personal experiences of urban life in many cities throughout the world were recollected, isolated, analyzed and translated as influences with bearing on the final artworks. These verbal descriptions were intertwined into a review of other artist's works with similar subject matter.

Urban life was portrayed with a particular focus on human alienation. Many other aspects such as societal fragmentation, disenfranchisement and the deconstructed self were investigated in published art reviews and arts criticisms. Images of urban life utilized by contemporary artists included in the review also investigated causes and reasons for self-estrangement. This self-estrangement and its causes constituted a focus for this study or one particular element of the urban experience. A wide range of these causes was outlined including overcrowding, pollution, poor housing and failure to establish personal identity. Most of the causes could be attributed to the external world of work, politics, social norms, cultural expectations or society as a whole. Other viewpoints isolating the major reason for self-estrangement lay within the individual's inability to adjust to the environment or society.
Whilst most contemporary artists did not elaborate on the reasons for human alienation some did concentrate on depicting these consequences of the urban experience. Of the exhibitions reviewed it was noted that about half the artists included the causes of self-estrangement whereas the other half depicted the alienating environment. Most of the works deemed as autobiographical included personal or internal causes of alienation such as disease or trauma. The exhibitions of an observational nature appeared more aligned to external causes or oppression such as technological advances political decisions or cultural changes.

Images of the urban experience as portrayed by other contemporary artists provided an important parallel with my own art production. By isolating components of my own personal experiences I was able to consolidate a theme for the accompanying paintings. By reviewing other artist's works it was noted that the parallel included an autobiographical and observational basis to the artworks.

The parallel to other artist's works overlapped to include the theme of “suburbs in your system”. Whilst many other artists followed the theme of representing the urban tradition linked to a particular place, this was not my intention. The body of works while influenced by experiences in particular cities did not reflect this one place only.

It was also significant that of the works reviewed, those addressing social and cultural concerns provided the causes of alienation.
6.2 Conclusions

Many and varied aspects of the urban experience were depicted in recent contemporary artworks. Whilst many artists depicted urban life, some artists focused specifically upon aspects such as self-estrangement human alienation and disenfranchisement. Most notorious were such artists as Jean Michel Basquiat in his portrayal of his wild lifestyle, personal alienation and societal fragmentation. Of historical importance were Hopper’s paintings of industrial desolation and Segal’s depiction of post war alienation and depersonalization.

Isolating personal experiences with the objective of developing painting themes proved to be a more difficult task than expected. It was concluded that other artist’s works with similar themes to my paintings were autobiographical and observational. The body of paintings accompanying this review was based on personal experiences as well as the observation of societal occurrences and environmental influences. Most reviewed works of an autobiographical nature contained personal causes of alienation but were not completely insular in their appeal. In other words, these internal causes of self-estrangement were relevant not only to the artist’s personal experience but also to society in general. The portrayal of personal alienation due to contracting aids was not just self-indulgence but an address to today’s social and cultural concerns.

As many causes and reasons for human alienation and displacement are outlined in this paper, it was found that
such causes were included in a significant number of exhibition reviews. Reviewers even presented the concern that artists presenting works with the theme of alienation without including the causes were not addressing the social and cultural issues. Whilst many causes and reasons for human alienation and displacement are outlined in this review, it was found that few artists attempted such an explanation.

By reviewing literature, it was found that aspects of the urban experience such as the dehumanization through high technology and unresponsive governmental structures were barriers to complete integration and human interaction. The review included images of urban life as utilized by contemporary artists. Such investigation proved fruitful in the further development of personal artwork themes.
6.3 Recommendations

This review, in defining the urban experience and stating the dominant aspects of the human condition will be useful in the development of later works. The outlines of these increasing conditions and consequences of the 'post industrial' urban life contained in this review have been of assistance in personal thematic development. They will also be a good grounding for further theme development. It is recommended that these findings be utilized in the production of further artworks to be exhibited.

It was noted that the causes of human alienation were included in the works of a significant number of artists. It is recommended that the causes of personal alienation be taken into account in the depiction of the urban experience. Not so much the inclusion of the causes in the works themselves, but the isolating personal reasons for self-estrangement, these experiences will be more easily recollected and translated into a series of paintings.

It was noted that the isolation of appropriate personal experiences proved to be a difficult task. The body of paintings produced, as a basis of the research was autobiographical and observational. From this inquiry it was noted that other artists' works were based on either or both of these categories. Those of an autobiographical nature had relevance to the artists' personal condition and to the wider community.
Observational works also presented the situation, the human condition and the nature of the urban experience. It is recommended that future personal artworks continue to be based on societal observations and personal experiences. It is also recommended that the modern tradition of representing the urban experience linked to a place be neglected in the personal production of works. This began as an initial objective of this body of works and should be personally continued.
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SECTION C.

EXEGESIS 2: Focus and Techniques
IMAGES OF THE URBAN EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY PAINTING.

Exegesis 2. Focus and Techniques

Bruce Earles

This exegesis is submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Creative Art, Contemporary Art

School of Contemporary Art
University of Western Sydney, Nepean
February 2000
I certify that the exegesis entitled:

*Images of the urban experience in contemporary painting:*

*Focus and Techniques*

And submitted for the degree of Doctor of Creative Art

Is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and

that this exegesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a

higher degree at any other university or institution.

Signed

Date \[12/6/2002\]
ABSTRACT

This paper as part of a series of five exegeses in conjunction with a number of painting exhibitions outlines the theme of the urban experience. Images portraying aspects of alienation, detachment and displacement form the basis of subject matter in the body of paintings. This paper isolates personal experiences and influences that had some bearing on the final artworks. Recall of personal experiences assisted in the development of the painting themes. The recollection and translation of these alienating experiences provided the focus for the paintings. Personal techniques are analysed in relation to other artists' works. Outlining of techniques and influences assisted in defining the current focus and future direction for the production of paintings.
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CHAPTER 1. THE PROBLEM
1.1 Introduction

A body of paintings focusing on the theme of the urban experience constitutes the basis of this research. This visual focus originated from personal experiences and past research on anonymity and human alienation. The exploration of this theme required personal recall, editing and isolation of specific experiences. After recollection, these experiences were analysed and translated into a body of works.

The production of the works, techniques utilised and the final paintings were influenced not only by personal experiences but also by the work of other artists. Memories of past exhibitions in New York, membership of artist collaboratives in Melbourne and Tokyo as well as a severe existential lifestyle obviously had some bearing on the techniques and themes depicted in this exhibition. A parallel was drawn between the accompanying body of works and other artists' work on similar themes.

The theme constituted the focus for the paintings whereas personal techniques were analysed to isolate any particular influences. While the theme is briefly revisited, the emphasis of this paper lies in the discussion of personal techniques and any possible influences. Works exhibited in conjunction with this paper are reproduced here and analysed in terms of themes, techniques, arts elements and personal objectives.
1.2 Background

The experiences of vast worldwide travel, past exhibitions in major cities and personal involvement in collaborative artist groups laid the groundwork for this research. In this sense the works are autobiographical, but much of the theme portrayed is also based on observation. An existential lifestyle required awareness and acute spontaneity for survival. This experience allowed me to observe human interaction and aspects of the urban experience on a worldwide scale.

Past research on anonymity and human alienation outlined specific imagery used by other contemporary artists. Exhibition review searches revealed the theme as widespread. Alienation proved to be a prevalent theme used by contemporary artists of all media. This past research outlined other artists’ depictions of the urban experience but did not elaborate upon techniques.

The accompanying body of paintings whilst autobiographical and observationally based has been influenced by other artists methods. These artists, methods and techniques have never personally been isolated or elaborated upon. This paper provides an avenue for personal recall and the isolation of influences.
1.3 Statement of the Problem

This is the second exhibition in a series of artworks based on the theme of the urban experience. The first exhibition focusing upon human alienation was accompanied by a theoretical component. The exegesis outlined particular aspects of the urban experience, defined images of urban life and analysed contemporary artists' works with similar themes.

This second exhibition is related more to focus and techniques. Furthering the theme required the isolation of personal experiences and influences. What particular personal experiences were appropriate to the theme included in the final artworks produced?

Other artists’ depictions of the theme *the urban experience* had little bearing on the accompanying paintings but other's techniques provided some influence. The recollection of exhibitions visited and other artists' works provided information relating to the influences on the final works. What particular exhibitions of artworks had a major bearing on the techniques utilised in the accompanying paintings?

The problem was based on the isolation, recollection and translation of particular experiences into a body of artworks.
1.4 Purpose of the Study

The underlying purpose was to examine issues relating to a body of paintings and to see in what ways relevant theoretical understandings might help in making sense of the practical considerations. The overall project was to create a series of exhibitions along with a number of accompanying exegeses. This particular exegesis has considered some of the overall specific research questions.

One purpose was to recall personal experiences appropriate to the theme of the urban experience.

**A few specific questions relevant to themes arose:**

- What particular experiences could be constituted as human alienation?
- What types of estrangement were personally experienced?
- What relevant experiences could be translated effectively into the painting theme?
- What personal experiences and influences had a bearing on the final artworks produced?

Another purpose was to ascertain which particular exhibitions; artists or groups had an influence upon the techniques utilised in the production of the accompanying paintings.
Specific questions in relation to personal techniques needed to be addressed:

Which particular exhibitions visited had an impact on my own personal production of artworks?
Which artists or groups of artists had an influence upon my own current techniques?
In what ways did my personal techniques develop as a result of other artists’ techniques?

These are some of the questions that are examined in the body of this exegesis.
1.5 Hypothesis

It was hypothesised that personal experiences and influences could be recalled and translated into a body of artworks. The hypothesis was that by isolating personal techniques and recollections of the urban experience, a theme could be established in the paintings produced.
Second Exhibition/Exegesis Design

PRELIMINARY DRAWINGS

Contemporary Artists

Artforms

Techniques

LITERATURE REVIEW

ISOLATE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND INFLUENCES

Travel, Exhibitions, Involvement

Galleries, Artist Groups

Personal Alienation

Societal Interaction

OUTLINE TECHNIQUES USED BY OTHER ARTISTS

THEMES, FOCUS OF PROPOSED WORKS

PAINTING PRODUCTION

EXHIBITION OF FINAL ARTWORKS

Figure 2. Method design Chart indicating steps of the second investigation.
CHAPTER 2.

CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS PARALLEL
2.1 Introduction

An investigation into the artworks of other artists provided an important parallel to the work of the accompanying exhibition. By reviewing the available literature on contemporary artists' exhibitions, a comparison could be made. A brief investigation of exhibitions, reviews, criticisms and art writers' opinions was conducted to indicate other artists' depictions of the theme *images of urban life*.

The urban experience was evident in a variety of *artforms* utilised by contemporary artists. The literature searches revealed that the theme of alienation alone was portrayed through all artforms especially drawing, painting, sculpture installation, film, photography, performance and video.

Within the field of painting it was evident that many varied *techniques* were utilised to depict the theme of urban experience. As themes, artforms and techniques are investigated, a parallel could be drawn. This investigation assisted in ascertaining whether other contemporary artworks had any bearing on the accompanying works exhibited.
2.2 Themes

The first exegesis in this series (Earles 99:26) outlined many aspects of the urban experience in the themes of contemporary artists. Giacometti and Segal's sculptures along with Hopper and Bacon's paintings were presented as recent forerunners depicting the theme of alienation.

The wild lifestyles of the 1980s lent force to many artists' exploration of personal and social issues arising out of contemporary life. A variety of styles and techniques evolved raging from Keith Haring's graphic-like works relating to the human condition to Jean-Michel Basquiat's scribbled "Twombly-like" images of fragmentation and alienation. Many such exhibitions were personally affirmed as a consequence of living in New York City. Such existence is discussed further in a later section of this paper.

From a brief search on exhibition reviews relating to the urban experience, a number of themes were isolated. This inquiry was refined to include exhibitions of the 1990s, more specifically late 1990s artworks with the theme of the urban experience. Within this theme many factors were portrayed ranging from contemporary life with inner-city tensions, homelessness, class-based stress to spiritual repression. Previous inquiries noted that this particular theme was popular with installation, performance and video artists. Of note was the installation work by Jane and Louise Wilson as reviewed
by Brooks Adams. The work incorporated large wall projections of derelict abandoned offices and other alienating environments. By presenting such themes these artists attempted to address specific social and cultural problems. Such prevalent concerns included personal alienation due to the consequences of modern crises such as the disease AIDS, schizophrenia, political censorship and cultural contradictions.

It is evident that the comparative themes were isolated from three sources: past research, personal experience and a brief literature search. The search on this particular theme uncovered a number of artists utilising a variety of artforms to focus upon human alienation.
2.3 Artforms

The search uncovered artists using traditional artforms such as drawing, painting and sculpture to depict the urban experience. Mixed media drawings by Toba Khedoori in 1996 focused on urban and industrial 'non-places' whereas Robert Farbers' paintings of 1995 echoed the harrowing times he experienced prior to his death of AIDS.

Stefan Lindfors' large-scale sculptures presented artists as a foreign species thus indicating his extreme personal alienation. These examples indicate not only the various types of urban alienation but also the variety of artforms used to depict the common theme.

The inquiry also outlined non-traditional or contemporary artforms including film, photography, video, installation and performance art.

"From installations of silence and indifference punctuating the alienation of the world to the examination of light and space that activate peoples alienation or integration-all were presented as a result of personal experience, observation of current cultures or both" Earles (35:99)

As a variety of artforms were used to depict a common theme, a diverse number of techniques were used by the reviewed artists.
2.4 Techniques

In each of the artforms a variety of techniques has been used. A parallel can be drawn throughout the themes depicted in all artforms but the paintings accompanying this inquiry cannot be compared to techniques in other artforms.

Most writers included the themes in their reviews of the artworks but only a few included the artists' techniques. The painting techniques that were outlined by reviewers would be of interest in this inquiry but were seldom elaborated upon in the publications.

Gill Polonsky as inspired by the streets of Manhattan reviewed a painting exhibition depicting a theme of urban alienation. This painting exhibition by Matthew Radford in 1994 included images built up from many layers of thickly applied paint. This technique aspect is not dissimilar to that of the works accompanying this paper. Although a parallel can be tenuously drawn, this search uncovered such exhibitions and techniques after the consolidation of personal techniques. In this way, the techniques revealed in the search could not be constituted as influences upon the accompanying paintings.

Although the search uncovered some contemporary similarities in themes and techniques, the largest factor in determining the accompanying paintings was based on personal experiences.
CHAPTER 3.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND INFLUENCES
3.1 Societal Interaction

As mentioned previously, in order to maintain progress in my artworks and exhibit on a wider scale, I was faced with extensive worldwide travel. For example, during the ten-year period from 1980 to 1990 I found myself shifting countries over 25 times and living in over 40 major cities worldwide. This particular lifestyle either required a sound personal economic basis or substantial painting sales. Unfortunately neither of these applied to me with a few sales at exhibition and some casual work within Australia. Something had to be sacrificed and it was usually personal comfort and often human necessities.

Such an existence required wit and perseverance. At times I found myself taking the next flight or bullet train just to gain a sleeping place. ‘Armed’ with some pre-booked tickets or limited expiry coupons, it was often easier to keep moving than settle in one city. These survival techniques not only contributed to personal alienation but also placed me in a situation of observation. From the airport transit-room sleepers to the back-alley loungerooms, alienation existed.

The worldwide urban experience provided me with a strong background. Common aspects of alienation were observed in many different cities. I was personally placed in various situations of alienation. Recollection of these ‘types’ of alienation centred around situations and events.
3.2 Personal Alienation

As outlined in a previous study, there are many types, descriptions and causes of alienation. For the purpose of this study, alienation is used to describe a state of estrangement of the individual from the natural environment, social life or the self. Such estrangement or separation may be either within the individual or with the external world of work, politics, social norms or society as a whole.

The previous study (Earles 99:37) also outlined many reasons for human alienation ranging from overcrowding, modern urban housing, social and cultural problems to the lack of mutual concern between the community and the individual. As a result of this extensive personal worldwide travel and existential lifestyle, many types of alienation were observed. They were not only observed but personally experienced through a variety of situations. These situations constituted purposeful alienation and accidental alienation. Certain dissimilarities, prejudices and types of discrimination often contributed to personal alienation and severe estrangement.

The following is a summary of brief recollections constituting various types of personal alienation experienced within the urban environments. These accounts are best described through simple anecdotes.
3.21 National Origin

Many instances of prejudice were observed in some European cities. Speaking English gave the impression to local inhabitants that I was an American or British. Whilst this was not a cause of alienation, similar experiences in Tokyo was. Japan’s largest city is an international centre with breath taking urban super structures. Local inhabitants seemed to be well catered for in terms of social, economic and cultural benefits. In my experiences all foreigners were considered as ‘Geigin’. A term to describe inhabitants of other national origins often used in a derogatory manner.

Whilst locals maintained a certain degree of personal or private space, real estate for Geigns was limited to the few. (Of course the business-sponsored individual was well catered for with a choice of hotels and traditional Riokans and tourist type accommodation). Share houses or group accommodation was available commonly labelled ‘Geigin House’. These spaces housed foreigners of many nationalities: Europeans, Americans, British and Australians. In a way, group accommodation with other foreigners is easier in terms of sharing a common language. Unfortunately the local demands, service refusal and widespread discrimination against foreigners helped to create a state of estrangement.

The label ‘Geigin’ and all that was associated with it constituted an alienating experience. Apart from the cultural differences, a more determining factor contributing to personal alienation was being unable to speak the language.
3.22 Language

Without being able to speak the national language meant severe difficulty with communications. Put simply, all the necessities of life such as food and shelter were difficult to obtain without being able to communicate effectively.

In a similar situation to the Tokyo experience, I was faced with other communication problems. Armed with 4 years of secondary school French, I found myself in Paris bound for the Bastilles area in search of contemporary galleries. On becoming completely lost, I decided to request some directions from a local law enforcement officer. My French absolutely baffled the Gendarme as he reached for his map and the written word.

Being lost is disorienting but being unable to speak the national language can be an alienating experience. Communication through a common language can alleviate this alienation but often accents can also contribute to confusion.
3.23 Accent Intolerance
As English is being quoted as the universal business language, it is also one of the most popular worldwide languages. Unfortunately using specific accents can be alienating. In Tokyo, many Japanese students sought English speaking people as tutors. Most sought after were the Americans for the specific accent. All the accents were ranked in popularity ranging from American, Canadian, and British to Australian and New Zealand ones.

In New York City I found myself continuously repeating requests or statements. The English I spoke was accompanied by an Australian accent that was becoming increasingly intolated in the fast moving city. As with specific languages, accents can contribute to what could only be called an alienating experience.

3.24 Cultural Dissimilarities
In the centre of Tokyo, I found myself staring at some "moving boxes". Upright cardboard boxes with eyeholes cut out of them serving not only as clothes but also portable housing. The moving boxes were not so much a symbol of desperation nor were they explicitly performances. They were a mechanism for anonymity. A similar situation in the Bowery in New York City proved not to be a statement but occurring out of necessity. People were living in cardboard boxes to protect themselves against the elements. Both box situations are examples not only of alienated people but also of alienating experiences.
3.25 Racial Variants
Living in New York City and Washington DC was a totally alienating experience. Although transport systems in these cities is of an excellent quality, racial segregation appears to exist based on economic abilities. The plight of the African-American, Arab-American and Chinese-American generally seems far from the economic abilities of the Caucasian residents. As many inhabitants appeared alienated from the mainstream culture, my own living experiences within lower socio-economic neighborhoods included personal alienation.

3.26 Religious Differences
In crossing Asia, a new country did not just mean a new national boundary and language. A host of various religions exist within national boundaries but crossing a border meant experiencing various cultural differences, customs and religions. Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Christianity and Moslemism are but a few religions existing within Asia. The customs associated with each are just as various. A personal example of this could be summed up by this recalled experience.

As the continental bus stopped at a non-existent physical national boundary, food sellers approached with their wares. Had I chosen the rice based foodstuff, I would have insulted the religious group insisting I purchase the potato-based food. And vice-versa. These different customs and religions extended the already existing alienation effect.
3.27 Physical Conditions

One of the most alienating experiences resulted from severe physical conditions. The heat, being extenuated by the physical surroundings of New York City appeared to be relatively easy compared to the thirty degrees below zero in Alaska. As a visitor to a city you are not only unaware of the weather conditions but more at the mercy of it unless you are fortunate enough to be a part of the business-oriented hotel/taxi/conference lifestyle. Chill factors, LCD humidity monitors, heat reflection and absorption are all examples of various aspects to be taken into consideration when facing a new human environment.

Technological aspects of the human environment situated to assist inhabitants can be alienating to many.

Upon exhibiting paintings in Tokyo the overwhelming technological aspects of the human environment were evident. One million transients passing through one train station per day are greeted by a giant outdoor video screen showing the latest in western rock bands. The public temperature, humidity and pollution monitor alerts the commuter to environmental safety and danger zones. The myriad of square miles of sky neon advertises the best department stores, restaurants or electronic goods. Just a few examples of high technology produced and situated to assist citizens are often alienating to many. Earles (99:44)

The ability to quickly adapt and to take mental note of local advice on conditions was a skill used to alleviate alienation dependent upon physical conditions.
3.3 Thematic Influence

Dissimilarities of language, customs, accents, cultural and physical conditions, race and religion; all proved to contribute to personal estrangement and alienation. These differences, conditions and experiences formed the foundation of personal alienation on a number of occasions. Those previously described are but a few examples of the many and varied contributors to personal alienation.

Whilst these experiences can be verbally outlined not everyone can be visually depicted. These experiences have been outlined in an attempt to suggest some of the influences acting upon the artworks. The artworks themselves do not describe these incidents but do suggest the feeling of alienation associated with them. Thus the theme adopted in the body of paintings exhibited is the direct result of personal experiences and observations of the urban experience.

Whereas these experiences had a bearing on the theme, techniques used in the production of the paintings were influenced by other events. Personal involvement in artist groups as well as gallery visits assisted in the development of personal techniques.
3.4 Collaborative, Groups and Galleries

As an artist I originally worked in seclusion without extensive interchange with other artists. As the need arose, I began to work in shared studios, exhibit and participate in collaborative artist groups and galleries. At times this involvement created constant conflict with personal space and the ability to produce works. A simple example of this type of conflict was described by Russell Cook in discussing the opening show paintings to be hung at Roar Studios in Melbourne:

*The tensions that arose in the collective over the issue of selection dissipated over time and all involved are still good friends. Cook, R.*

(93:A3)

Constant interchange of thoughts and experiences between artists had a positive influence on my own attitude to work. Many artist collectives and collaborative groups were well into operation by the early 1980s in New York City. Alternative spaces such as ‘The Kitchen, PS1 and collectives such as Fashion Moda and Urban Guerillas were established for the common good of non-mainstream artists. As a regular visitor to these venues and their associated galleries and locale, I was well aware of contemporary trends and techniques used by other artists.

To a certain extent the establishment of these collectives and alternative spaces made many non-mainstream artists (myself included) feel less alienated. Just knowing about and visiting these venues built personal confidence, gave a sense of
belonging and alleviated many feelings of self estrangement. A few self assuring thoughts often came into mind:

*other artists worked this way also* and

*many other artists share these concerns* as well as

*everyone here is facing similar circumstances or conditions.*

These New York experiences combined with my participation in many Melbourne based collaboratives and Tokyo group involvement definitely influenced my production of paintings. Overall, this shared experience had an impact on the production of my work and on the final product.
3.41 Artist Collaboratives and Collectives

In the early 1980s most of the Melbourne mainstream galleries played the safe stable of artists with little introduction of new exhibitors. Any work that was not commercially oriented remained outside the status quo. There was obviously a need to expose the works of contemporary non-commercial artists.

The Melbourne Fringe began with a mission to accelerate the interests of non-mainstream artists. Visual artists, performers and writers were loosely grouped by a small band of committed organisers to promote the non-mainstream art. At first the organisations had very little Government or corporate sponsorship. Paintings were hung in city banks, shops and space kindly donated by various businesses.

The Artworkers' Union was another group of artists that were committed to furthering the arts in Melbourne. Individual artists associated themselves with this innovative group. Specific shows and annual exhibitions of members work were part of this organisation's promotion of art.

Roar Studios was another group of non-mainstream artists that banded together to further the arts in Australia. With regular meetings, exhibitions and performances, individual artists no longer remained alone or secluded.

These three collaborative groups had a bearing on the development of my work in some manner. All groups gave me
the confidence and impetus to continue to produce and exhibit my artworks. My involvement in these associations allowed me to produce without the underlying need for a commercial basis to my artworks. (Although at times a few sales would not have gone astray.) My work practices, attitude and viewpoint were influenced by these groups. The question remains: was the product influenced in terms of techniques used or themes applied?

I believe that these groups did have a bearing on the techniques that I used. My artworks developed with more fluidity and spontaneity utilising little regard for the accepted formalities. By the mid eighties my technical skills in painting were well developed. In a sense, it could be said that anything after the 1980s had little bearing on the techniques used in the production of my work.

These collaboratives were definitely an influence but not the only influence on my work. Themes were constantly evolving according to issues of the day. Personal experience had a huge impact on the themes adopted for my artworks. International travel, overseas artists and various exhibitions at major galleries had a greater bearing on my artworks.
3.42 GALLERIES AND SPACES
The collaborative groups developed or utilised public spaces to establish associated galleries. Roar Studios became famous for the non-mainstream art exhibitions and performances. Other alternative spaces worldwide also became famous for promoting contemporary art. In the 1980s makeshift galleries were established for 'one-show only' exhibitions and then disbanded. Districts emerged as artist-based or exhibition centres. My travels to New York City saw the greatest emphasis on the art centre shift from Greenwich Village to SoHo to East Village and eventually Alphabet City.

With my travels through these centres as well as to similar worldwide alternate spaces and mainstream galleries I was influenced to produce work at a greater rate. Spontaneity, simplicity, colour stimulus and form were all improved and developed as a result of my gallery-saturation travels.

I was able to attend openings and galleries showing contemporary artists responses to their own situations. These works reflected upon the artist’s situation, environment or concern. They were also relevant to society in general providing an insight into the individual’s perception of the culture. Many new themes and techniques were utilised in these artworks. By viewing these works I gained a great insight into techniques utilised by other artists.
CHAPTER 4

TECHNIQUES OF OTHER ARTISTS
4.1 Introduction

The following is a brief account of personal experiences, exhibitions visited and techniques utilized by other artists. These recollections outlined some of the influences upon the development of my own personal techniques. As my techniques were firmly established by the late 1980s many influences can be recalled as originating in the early 1980s. Many aspects of these techniques are evident in my current artworks.

Other artists works and techniques are briefly outlined in an attempt to isolate the specific elements of their work as having some influence upon my works. Specific types of image formation, paint application, colour usage, composition and design elements are discussed in relation to the accompanying exhibition of paintings.
4.2 Scale

Having viewed the sculptures of Jonathan Borofski in contemporary exhibitions in New York City, I was aware of his techniques, contemporary materials and themes on important social issues. At a later date I exhibited my paintings in a large gallery in Seattle. By this time Borofsky's works were largely popular and touring the world. When a major exhibition of his works was mounted in Seattle, the scale of the pieces amazed me. Huge steel sculptures incorporating strength and movement indicated the plight of the worker. Phaidon Press published an example of Borofsky's work with the following explanatory text:

The giant, black silhouetted figures reach high up to the gallery ceiling, filling the space with a majestic aura.

These very large pieces had an impact that his smaller works lacked. It was the scale of these works that influenced me to work larger for maximum impact. While my pieces do not have the majestic aura of Borofsky’s, the larger paintings do have more impact than the smaller ones.
4.3 Spontaneity

As a regular visitor to the New York galleries, I sought out the Annina Nosei gallery. As I entered the empty space, vivid images jumped out of the canvases. Being awed by the fluidity and what was obviously swift application of paint. A man with a striking hairstyle approached me. After a brief conversation, I congratulated him on the severity and appeal of the paintings. It was not until years later that I realised that I was talking to Jean Michel Basquiat; an artist rocketed to world fame in the 1980's.

The works were recognised for their freshness, vitality and spontaneity with little regard to exact proportion or formal conventions. Basquiat's colleague Eric commented on the production of some large scale works in Italy:

I was really wondering whether Jean was going to be able to handle something of this scale... But he seemed totally unfazed. He had no preconceived notions of what he was going to do, and he just began painting. The spontaneity was incredible.

**Hoban, P.** (98:117)

Basquiat's earlier works had a great influence on my attitude to painting. I was comfortable with personal expression and figurative themes portrayed through spontaneity.
4.4 Form and Colour

An earlier exhibition of works in New York City starred a major collection of Rothko paintings. I have vivid memories of walking through a large gallery room of his major works. The stimulus of the colour, tonal qualities and simplicity of form had an uplifting effect on the viewer. The large paintings with their simplicity of form maintained a proportion of strength. This experience and these paintings had a major influence upon my own works. The colour field format had a strong bearing on my earlier works but his use of and the effects of colour have remained a large influence on my works.

Rothko expressed himself through the use of color rather than gestural marks on the canvas. My works incorporate specific color usage and color stimulus combined with representative images. The power of Rothko's color usage and associated emotional responses were indeed a great influence on the development of my current techniques.
4.5 Simplicity

Having lived in New York City on a number of occasions, it was a necessity to use the efficient subway system to visit galleries and exhibitions. In the early 1980s, these frequent short rail journeys across town provided me with constant experiences. What struck me were the large advertising billboards in the subways promoting the latest product or venue. Occasionally a small corner of these glossies had been torn off revealing the black underlay. There were also large blank black spaces obviously for potential advertisers. The most amazing thing was that these black spaces began to appear with small chalk symbolic drawings. Throughout the Manhattan Subway system it became a challenge to find these "radiant child" drawings or what Phaidon describes them as his own unique set of interacting animal and human figures.

The works of course were those early pieces of Keith Haring, another artist shot to world fame in the 1980s. The simplicity of these small drawings had a large bearing on my paintings of the 1980s. Although my human figures and images do not resemble the primitive like ones produced by Haring, simplicity still remains an objective in the production of my current paintings.
4.6 Concepts

Visiting galleries and contemporary exhibitions obviously had a bearing on my work. As mentioned previously, so did the collaborative artist groups with which I was associated. The symbolism of Haring's work could be compared to the conceptual work put forward by Yoshiyuki Fujii. In the mid 1980s I lived in Tokyo and joined a group of progressive Japanese artists called "The Fight". We exhibited on a number of occasions in Tokyo.

All members of the group had a contemporary attitude portraying issues of modern urban life. All these artists had a bearing on my attitude to work and the final products. One sculptor in particular, Yoshiyuki created large soft sculptures often emphasising the concept of good and evil, morality and indifference.

These works had an influence on my work of the time but can not be readily seen in my current paintings. None of Fujii's sculptural techniques can be said to have had any bearing on my artworks. His attitude towards simplicity, painting spontaneity, strength of form and portrayal of urban issues definitely had an influence upon the development of my techniques.
4.7 Universal Symbols

Upon touring Europe, I found myself living briefly in Barcelona. One of the most inspiring exhibitions that I witnessed was that of Torres-Garcia. Whilst his early bas-relief products were often made from found objects, the theme was often related to the human form. Torres-Garcia created human beings as universal-symbols. Not unlike the Borofski brief case carrying city worker, Torres-Garcia attempted to depict the stereotype human being. While my work is not attempting to depict the stereotype or the universal human form, I have incorporated simplicity in human forms. Torres Garcia attempted to make reference to the fundamental elements of human existence through the depiction of specific signs and representative images. My works bear no resemblance to this theme but my techniques have been influenced by the works of Torres Garcia.

In utilising an economy of strokes without regard to correct human proportion, I am able to paint with fluidity whereas Torres Garcia attempted to create "universal constructions" by combining "Forma", "Abstracto," and "Concreto". My works are more concerned with speed of application, immediate imagery and simplicity of form.
4.8 Reductionism

Reductionism can be loosely described as utilising underlayers of paint from which to form images. By blocking out unwanted areas and forms, certain images can be maintained and enhanced. The printing process and serigraphy introduced me to reducing undercoats to specific forms. The predominant American artwork of the 1970s reminds me of this particular technique.

The work of Rauschenberg incorporated the use of the printing process and blocking underlying areas in his screen printed paintings. The first instance of witnessing this technique was when I viewed the watercolour and gouache paintings of William Wiley. Many commercial galleries in San Francisco and corporations across USA proudly show examples of this artist’s works. While automatism is not utilised in the selection of forms, the brilliant underlayers of colour are isolated and maximised.

In the collaborative group Roar in Melbourne 1980s many artists began experimenting with overlayering and recycling used canvases. By reducing certain areas of applied colour and shapes, new forms can emerge. By the mid 1980s, I began to experiment more widely with the methods of reductionism. Some very rich and intriguing interiors of forms were produced by painting over previously finished works. The principle of ‘fat over lean’ had to be adhered to in order to prevent paint cracking upon drying. The works on exhibition have not incorporated the recycling of old images and works but have developed with reductionism in mind.
This is but one technique that has been consolidated and used in the production of the accompanying paintings. All of these artists and techniques have had a bearing on personal techniques employed in painting.
4.9 Selective Bearing

The techniques and art forms described have been isolated in an attempt to outline some of the influences acting upon my own work. The artists, groups and galleries have been mentioned as examples of institutions and individuals that have had a bearing on techniques used in the production of my own artworks. All the works described did not so much consciously induce me to adopt the methods described.

Upon reflection it appears that the Borofsky sculptures influenced me to work with more impact. The Basquiat paintings personally viewed had a great influence upon my imagery and spontaneity. A room full of Rothko's had an emotional effect upon me and directed me towards using the stimulus of colour to its fullest. The Haring chalk drawings, Fujii's sculptures, Torres Garcia's symbols and the technique of reductionism all had an impact on the development of my current techniques. These incidents and experiences have been recalled as relevant and are outlined as brief examples from my own varied background.
5.1 Works Exhibited

As an Australian artist living in Melbourne, I have been fortunate enough to be able to gain studio space at a major hospital. St. Vincent’s Hospital appointed me as Artist in Residence allowing me space to produce the exhibited works. The initial exhibition (consisting of the 6 works reproduced here) was conducted at a regional gallery in Sydney Australia. The 6 works appearing as reproductions throughout this paper were combined with 6 new works for exhibition at a new gallery (Goya Galleries) in the Central Business District of Melbourne Australia.

Originally I had intentions of producing larger works but the logistics of space and transport between major cities and exhibition venue limited the scale of the paintings. The exhibited pieces consist of six oils on cotton duck. The smaller four works measure 5 foot by 5 foot square. The two larger pieces are diptychs, each consisting of two 5 foot by 5 foot canvases.

The titles are an indication of the themes suggested in each painting and are not intended as descriptive. All works have been reproduced and appear on the following pages.
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS

Figure 1. Gravy Train Station, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas, 5'x 5'
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS

Figure 2. **Use and Move Zone**, 1999

**BRUCE EARLES**, Oil on canvas, 5’x 5’
Figure 3. Detail of: *Use and Move Zone*, 1999

**BRUCE EARLES**, Oil on canvas, 5' x 5'
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS

Figure 4. Lamington Avenue, 1999
BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas, 5' x 5'
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS

Figure 5. Splinterthroat Street, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas, 5’x 5’
Urban Murmer, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas, 10ft. x 5ft. (2 x 5ft. x 5ft.)
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS

Figure 7.

Chocolate Box Hood, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas, 10ft.x 5ft. (2 x 5ft. x 5ft.)
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS

Figure 8. Detail of: Chocolate Box Hood, 1999

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas, 10' x 5'

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Figure 9. Detail of: Chocolate Box Hood, 1999

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas, 10’ x 5’
5.2 Themes Depicted

The overall theme of the urban experience and alienation is suggested in the paintings but this did not essentially remain a priority throughout the production of this series. The works were originally intended as a product of analysis and translation of personal experiences and recollections. The compositions were presented indicating general human conditions and aspects of the urban experience rather than specifically describing an estranged individual within the environment. For instance a person was not illustrated in the works as being alienated by urban conditions.

The pieces could be interpreted as portraying overcrowding, an invasion of personal space, poor urban housing or perhaps even the cultural cringe. This was not the immediate intention of the works. Nevertheless they

\begin{quote}
are completely open to interpretation but the initial priority was not communication. The focus was more aligned to the process of painting rather than the purposeful production of recognizable icons or themes. There was always the task of observing memories in the production of the pieces but the process played a major role in rendering a painterly result. \textbf{Earles} (98:48)
\end{quote}

This was mentioned in the first exegesis on the urban experience. While a specific verbal description of the themes depicted remains evasive, an outline of what the themes were not intended as proves to be helpful.
By comparing the exhibited works to modern traditions or practices of representation, a clearer understanding of the intentions can be gained:

Whilst it was not my intention to produce works of a realist nature, it was also not my intention to represent mystery and myth.

There is no alluding to romanticism, reference to other artists' works or conjuring of dreams, just the cold reality of spaces. The characters are not recognizable from their features and the works don't exactly tell stories but they do outline the severity and fragmentation of the urban experience. The works reflect authentic human experience yet local themes are not so much interpreted or depicted. The buildings, objects and people appear as separate entitles yet existing in an overall form. The themes could be applied to most urban cultures.

It was not the intention to produce a work based on a singular place of origin nor were they produced with internationalism in mind. Whilst a national identity attitude does not pervade, the process was not one of striving for international universalism. The "suburbs in your system" or the recognisably modern tradition of representing the urban experience linked to a place was not the objective in producing these works.

The term displacement or cultural displacement does not refer to site specificity of the artwork but rather to subjects depicted in the work. The fragmentation is not concerning the deconstruction or loosening of the material objects but of the humans depicted and their lack of ties to any one particular strata of society.

Earles (98:49)

The overall themes were a suggestion as a result of the process of painting rather than a description or an attempt to communicate the experiences. While the theme appeared evident, it was not prevalent in this body of works. The greater priority or focus lay within the techniques or processes involved in painting.
5.3 Techniques Utilised

In order for the techniques of reductionism to be effective, many layers or coats of paint need to be applied to the canvas. In using reductionism the original layers can be rough paint sketches of the final images or patterns of colours. The works on exhibition are made up of reduced colour fields or loosely applied patterns of bright colours as underlayers. The images are "carved" from these colour fields and a dry brush technique is applied to add textural effects. Many coats are added and reduced from dark to light colours to add surface depth and textural qualities. As many as ten coats of paint are applied from thin to thick across the surface.

In the production of this series, a slight shift in composition appeared. The earlier pieces consisted of an overall amalgamation of images with the suggestion of distance or depth occurring in the plane. As this form was developed fully, experimentation with recessing and fragmented images occurred. As groups of humans and buildings were placed, spaces were introduced to give full effect to the surface texturing. Figures 1 to 5 give a clearer indication of the earlier works with the overall plane or surface placement of images. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the shift in composition. These works clearly indicate recessing and fragmentation of grouped images. The placement of these groups determined the overall form of the paintings. This new focus appeared more visually appealing yet more complicated than the initial overall image placement works. These types of forms were just one of the elements in the artworks that can be analysed.
5.4 Elements

The **form** was modified during the production of the series. As mentioned previously the overall **size** of the paintings was limited. The scale of the images remained an important part of the **composition**. The earlier works utilised smaller images in order to include a maximum amount on the canvas. As the image size increased, the composition appeared less cluttered. By comparing figure 1 with figure 7 the compositional modifications become more evident. Figure 1 uses small images to give the suggestion of massing humans amongst buildings and urban structures. Figure 7 shows the groups as recessed thus giving more credence to each image. As the space recessing was introduced, the composition appeared stronger.

Throughout this series the underlayers of bright **colours** remained constant but the application of such was varied. Application ranged from small dabs to thin line strokes of various colours. These dabs constituting the brightly coloured undercoat are evident in figure 8. Notice inside the human forms portrayed in the bottom left of this section of the painting. The initial colour fields are clearly evident inside these reduced images.

As each piece is finished new developments emerge. Modifications in technique, composition and form are introduced as **personal objectives** are consolidated.
5.5 Personal Objectives

This series saw a major modification of form evident in the new works. Earlier paintings exhibited overall qualities with a single plane established on the painting surface. Later works saw the emergence of fragmented but structured form with sections of images separated by surface texture. As this form was established, further fragmentation was instituted to give full precedence to the textural surface area and to merely suggest the theme.

This technique maximised reductionism over a number of layers thus isolating only the most important images for strength and dynamism in the composition. As each layer was applied over a previously dried surface, many images were negated or reduced either in size or overlayered altogether. Some images were accented or highlighted with different layers but others were left with original outlines. This technique was developed to produce a many-layered surface of images with varying importance to the composition. It also allowed various textural and tonal qualities to be consolidated.

As the images were reduced, the theme became less evident. Plasticity of the material remained a priority whereas communication of the theme subsided. A number of other points need to be noted at this stage. As the paintings developed the image sizes reduced in order to contain a maximum variation and number in the composition. The smaller images could not be reduced in size and appeared less pleasing in the composition.
Although the cluttered images added to the theme of the urban experience, the structure was less appealing. The first few stages of the painting process involved a high degree of spontaneity in image formation. These original images are often modified throughout the reductive process but should begin with maximum fluidity.

Composition consolidation develops in the process of the painting allowing some of the original spontaneous fluid images to remain. Those techniques and personal objectives have been noted in an attempt to maintain best qualities in personal practice and to develop a future direction.
CHAPTER 6. FUTURE DIRECTION
6.1 Personal Priorities

The current focus of my work indicated the use of spontaneity, the reductive technique, the emergence of new form, perseverance with textural qualities and subsidence of an evident theme.

It is envisaged that technique formation will remain a priority over the communication of a theme. New accentuation and emphasis emerge with the image reduction. Whilst this often diminishes the evidence of a recognisable theme, a suggestion remains. As the theme remains suggested, the qualities of the paint, surface application, textural and tonal qualities are enhanced. These qualities allow movement and direction in the overall composition of the work. The strength of composition remains a priority but not at the expense of spontaneity.

Most important is the fluidity of the image formation in the initial stages of the work. In order to maintain quality of direction and image 'freshness', more spontaneity needs to be developed. This can occur with the adoption of an attitude not dissimilar to that of Basquiat. The use of immediate imagery based on no preconceived notions would enhance not only the images but the composition and technique. Earlier works were produced with the aid of preliminary drawings but the final pieces appeared too stagnant or contrived. This practice was dropped in the further production of works.
6.2 Formal Qualities

It is obvious from the works, that scale is important. In order to maintain maximum impact and visual stimulus, the works need to be scaled-up. A larger format should be developed for more complex compositions while retaining the image simplicity and size. Figure 7 is a reproduction of a larger scale piece. The image grouping, combination of humans and urban structures is evident in this work. Image simplicity is maintained through the adoption of a larger surface area.

Colour plays a major role in the works exhibited. The initial colour fields layers were varied with each painting. Experimentation was undertaken in the application of the paint. Methods ranging from paint splashing to uniform strokes of various colours were applied to initial thin layers of darker colours. As the images were reduced from this, only the vivid colours and strong applications stood out with any significance.

The dry brushed undercoats and intricate small brush strokes of various colours did not appear as effective as the dabs or regular sized brushstrokes. As the images became smaller, the smaller strokes became ‘blurred’ into what appeared as an amalgamous undercoated brown. Figure 3 is a close up of the work in figure 2. Instead of multicoloured blobs laid down as an undercoat, intricate layers of colours were dry brushed. As a colour field, this was very effective but when the images were reduced, the colours appeared less striking. Note this particular effect in the truck below the rail line in figure 3.
The technique of reductionism was initially used to isolate images. On later works this technique was used in a number layers revealing various areas of emphasis. It was concluded that best effects could be obtained by applying this technique to specific areas rather than an 'all-over surface decoration'. By reducing some areas on the canvas rather than the entire surface, a strong and varied composition with depth and contrast eventuated.

Form is strengthened with initial area demarcation. Within these areas, images are reduced to provide a thematic indication. The previously mentioned "all-over surface decoration" can be avoided by strengthening the form and applying recessing to the images. This provides contrast and allows space for textural applications.

These findings have provided the basis for future direction in the production of my art. Much of these findings and directions have been summarized in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
7.1 Summary

Personal experiences were outlined in an attempt to isolate significant influences on the themes in the artworks exhibited. Personal involvement and participation in artist groups and associations along with selected exhibition attendances formed the basis of techniques utilised in the exhibited works.

Focus and direction was established by analysing and evaluating current work practices and products. Aesthetic decisions were based on the use of themes, techniques and the isolation of personal priorities.

7.11 Theme Basis

A number of avenues were taken to ascertain the basis of the theme depicted in the current works. A literature search of exhibition reviews, recall of personal experiences and observed alienation were briefly described as an attempt to isolate any influences upon the works accompanying this exegesis.

An investigation of recent exhibition reviews revealed many artists using a variety of art forms depicting the theme of the urban experience. In the paintings reviewed, a diverse range of techniques were applied in outlining aspects of human alienation. It was evident that the themes could be compared to the work accompanying this paper but the techniques involved in the various art forms were hardly relevant. While a parallel could be drawn between the themes of other contemporary artworks and personal works, little if any influence could be established.
Personal experiences were recalled in an attempt to outline my participation in the urban experience worldwide. A constant state of estrangement was the result of various types of personal alienation. These personally alienating experiences were based on: National origin, different languages or accent toleration, cultural dissimilarities, race, religion and various severe physical conditions.

Examples were outlined in an attempt to indicate what bearing each had upon the theme suggested in the current works exhibited. It became evident that the themes were developed autobiographically and through personally observed human alienation.

7.12 Technique Basis
Although my painting techniques are continually developing, the basis of my personal techniques was consolidated years ago. As the literature review revealed little influence upon personal themes depicted, personal experiences had a huge impact. As well as alienating experiences, personal involvement in artist collaboratives and groups worldwide had an influence upon the accompanying artists exhibited. Extensive interchange with other artists worldwide had little bearing on the theme depicted in personal artworks but did have an influence on techniques utilised. This paper outlined some of the professional groups of artists in the 1980s that had an impact on my direction and the eventual development of my current work. Collaborative galleries, alternate space and mainstream galleries provided me with a positive influence.
Personal experience and involvement in the *arts industry* had an influence upon my current theme and technique. By recalling experiences and incidents, certain influences were isolated. The works of Borofski, Basquiat, Rothko, Haring, Fujii and Torres-Garcia were exhibited in the 1980s-1990s in various parts of the world. These artists' works were briefly outlined in this paper to indicate the influence each had upon the development of my current techniques. Having visited many galleries and exhibitions worldwide, these artists' works were more readily recalled as having some bearing upon my work.

Various *formal elements* of these artists' works were analysed indicating what particular aspects had an influence upon personal methods of production. Aspects ranging from scale, spontaneity, colour and form to symbolism were outlined as becoming influenced or developed in current personal techniques.

### 7.13 Focus and Direction
The current focus was explained taking note of the themes depicted, techniques utilised and the emergence of new priorities in the accompanying works.

*Current techniques* utilised in the production of the artworks provide greater emphasis on composition, surface quality and tonal direction. The emergence of this emphasis diminishes the evidence of a recognisable theme but increases the strength and spontaneity of the artwork. Whilst the theme subsides it remains evident in the form of suggestion only. Many formal qualities of the works assist
in the suggestion of the urban experience but this ‘promotion’ is not a priority in the process.

**Formal qualities** such as colour, scale, form and texture are major considerations in the current direction of the works. Image *simplicity* should be retained but on a larger scale canvas. The method of paint application in the initial colour field created a significant basis for the images. As these images were reduced from the colour fields it was found that the larger dabs of multi-coloured paints appeared more vivid.

Throughout this series, the **form** of the works was modified. The earlier ‘all-over’ surface form evolved into stronger form through area demarcation for image inclusion.
7.2 Conclusions

It is obvious from the summaries that personal experiences, involvement in collaborative artist groups and gallery visits had a definite influence upon the theme depicted and techniques employed in the production of the accompanying paintings.

It appeared that personally alienating experiences such as cultural estrangement could be translated effectively into the painting theme. Whilst the painting theme did not describe particular personal experiences, a suggestion of the urban experience and human alienation was evident.

Personal involvement in collaborative art groups appeared to have a large influence upon the development of personal techniques employed in the production of paintings. What appeared to have an even larger impact was the constant stream of personal gallery visits during the early 1980s. The early works of Basquait could be considered as having some influence upon the spontaneity of my work. The large colour fields of Rothko had some bearing on my use of tone and colour stimulation. The early works of Haring, Fujii and Torres-Garcia had an influence upon my image formation and symbolism.

By recollection of personal urban experiences, the painting themes could be consolidated. While the series theme was already established, the recall of personal experiences was translated into the body of artworks. These personal recollections of the urban experience were not individually described in the artworks but suggested in the themes.
7.3 Recommendations

Throughout this investigation it became clear that particular issues needed to be addressed in the production of further paintings. Consideration needs to be given to the thematic subsidence at the expense of surface qualities. Technique formation should remain a priority over the communication of a theme. With the reduction of the images comes the enhancement of textural qualities. Eventually the compositions are strengthened but it is recommended that this not occur at the expense of spontaneity. Increased fluidity in the application of the paint is recommended for future works to be exhibited. In order to achieve this end, consideration should be given to the use of larger, wider brushes with an increased speed of paint application. Immediate imagery could be enhanced by approaching the raw material without preconceived notions or sketches.

It is also recommended that the technique of reductionism be expanded to isolate images. This technique when applied to specific areas rather than over the complete surface allows for further reduction with new colours. Such a method provides many areas of different colours.

It is recommended that the form of further paintings include stronger contrast through initial area demarcation. Such ‘zones’ of image formation provides a simple but strong overall structure. As well as the images being isolated, it is recommended that fewer, larger ones are considered in further works. Perhaps consideration should be given to the inclusion of underlayer images as well as the colour fields.
Recommendations are not confined to themes and techniques of future works. It was evident that recall of personal experiences and other artist's works assisted in the development of personal techniques and theme depiction. As most personal techniques are already established and the theme of the urban experience quite entrenched in current works, further recall should be decreased. The recall and translation of personal experiences are required less as previously mentioned techniques are enhanced.

With the objective of producing pieces without preconceived notions it appears that the recall of personal experiences provides barriers. Spontaneity requires immediacy but not at the expense of composition and technique. By combining the attitude of no preconceived notions with speed of application and reductionism, immediate imagery should eventuate with balance.
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SECTION D.

EXEGESIS 3:
Immediacy and Translated Experiences
IMAGES OF THE URBAN EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY PAINTING.

Exegesis 3. Immediacy and Translated Experiences

Bruce Earles

This exegesis is submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Creative Art, Contemporary Art

School of Contemporary Art
University of Western Sydney, Nepean
August 2000
I certify that the exegesis entitled:

*Images of the urban experience in contemporary painting: Immediacy and Translated Experiences*

And submitted for the degree of Doctor of Creative Art

Is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this exegesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution.

Signed

Date 12/6/2002
ABSTRACT

This paper as part of a series of four exegeses in conjunction with a number of painting exhibitions outlines the theme of the urban experience. Previous exegeses elaborated upon images portraying aspects of alienation, detachment and displacement in the body of paintings. This paper briefly revisits the translation of personal experiences into the final artworks. Alienating experiences were previously depicted through specific iconography in the paintings. This paper addresses the previous series' shortfall in personal techniques and theme development. New objectives emerged through the process of painting with more emphasis being placed upon immediacy being depicted via methods and processes rather than iconography. Personal techniques focused more upon the process of painting than the production of communicating iconography.
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CHAPTER 1. THE PROBLEM
1.1 Introduction

A body of paintings focusing on the theme of the urban experience contributes the basis of this research. This exegesis outlines particular aspects of the urban experience; both observed and personally experienced. The objective of this series of paintings was to depict the theme and its associated aspects. By translating personal experiences with expression a theme was intended to be suggested in the body of accompanying paintings.

In the production of these works it became evident that personal recall, the translation of experiences and the overall depiction of the theme was a barrier to fluidity, spontaneity and expression.

While the theme, subject matter and translated experiences are briefly revisited; the emphasis of this paper is based on spontaneity, immediate imagery and fluid techniques. This exhibition and exegesis is capable of standing alone as a total work but it should be noted that the previous work or background be taken into consideration.
1.2 Background

This is the third series of paintings exhibited with a focus on the urban experience:

The first exhibition outlined various prevalent aspects of the urban experience encompassing human alienation, detachment and displacement. The first exegesis sub titled Imagery and Origins discussed personal experiences of alienation as well as observed examples of societal fragmentation. Definitions, descriptions, examples and interpretations of human alienation were discussed setting the focus upon a state of estrangement from the environment and society. It covered general aspects of the urban experience in contemporary artworks as well as the basis of personal imagery.

The second exhibition attempted to translate personal experiences with specific painting techniques. Accompanying this body of paintings was exegesis 2 subtitled Focus and Techniques. Its underlying purpose was to record the relevant experiences that could be effectively translated into the painting theme. It outlined personal technique development, the influence of other artists and the impact of personally visited exhibitions.

This third exhibition focuses more upon the possibility of the technique suggesting a theme rather than the iconography. This exegesis sub titled Immediacy and Translated Experiences outlines spontaneity and immediacy depicted via techniques utilised in the production of the artworks.
1.3 Statement of the Problem

The first two exhibitions utilised specific iconography in an attempt to depict the theme of the urban experience. A focus on one specific aspect of human alienation emerged in these two exhibitions. Personal experiences and the recall of alienating situations provided a basis for the suggestion of this theme in the body of paintings.

By investigating the translation of relevant experiences into the painting theme it became apparent that such recollection was a barrier to personal technique consolidation. Fluid application of the media was impaired by insistence upon specific iconography.

Whereas the problem of the previous exegesis was based on the recollection and translation of experiences into artworks, this particular problem is based upon the outcome of the previous investigation. Spontaneity, fluidity and immediacy were being hampered by the apparent need for content and communication.
1.4 Purpose of the Study

The underlying purpose was to examine issues relating to a body of paintings. In what ways did relevant theoretical understandings assist in making sense of the practical considerations? The overall project was to create a series of exhibitions along with a number of accompanying exegeses. This particular exegesis has considered some of the overall specific research questions.

A few specific questions arose:

- *What iconography was previously utilised in theme depiction?*

- *Could the theme of the urban experience and more specifically human alienation be depicted via technique rather than previously utilised iconography.*

- *Would content be impaired by prioritizing spontaneity and immediacy.*

These are some of the questions that are examined in the body of this exegesis. This investigation is specifically aligned to the production of a body of paintings. It is expected that these questions be addressed through the process of painting and by examining the products.
1.5 Hypothesis

It was hypothesised that the theme of *the urban experience* could be depicted more spontaneously than previously suggested through specific iconography. The hypotheses was that by applying paint with more fluidity and spontaneity, the content of a body of artworks as personally judged would not be weakened.
CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY
2.1 Method Design

The following page gives an overall view of this inquiry incorporating the practical artworks and the theoretical component underpinning the production. The *Method Design Chart* overleaf provides a quick reference to the vital stages of the investigation. As a flow chart it indicates the various steps at a glance acting as a working guide to directions, stages, interactivity of the steps and relativity of the practical and theoretical stages.

This flow chart provides the context of this investigation by placing the third exegesis in relation to previous exegeses and exhibitions. It indicates how some theoretical considerations were established through the delivery of a paper at a postgraduate symposium. It also denotes such things as studio production through the assistance of an artist in residence program by a major city hospital. The Method Design Chart provides not only context but acts as a quick reference to various stages of this investigation.
Third Exhibition/Exegesis Design

Exhibition/Exegesis 1
Conclusions, Recommendations
Exhibition 1 Maling Gallery, Casula, Sydney

Exhibition/Exegesis 2
Conclusions, Recommendations
Exhibition 2 Goya Gallery Melbourne

Practical Component
Series of Paintings

Theoretical Component
Exegesis 3
Immediacy and Translated Experiences

Immediacy of the Urban Experience
Translated Experiences
Personal Experiences Overview Brief analysis, recall of relevant experiences

Subject Matter
Immediacy depicted in themes

Techniques
Immediacy depicted via methods and processes

Previous Works
Theme and techniques

Painting production
Artist in residence
St. Vincent’s Hospital Melbourne

Personal Objectives
Immediacy via techniques

Contemporaneity
Basic Principles of contemporary artforms

Spoken Address
The Inclusiveness of Diversity
Postgraduate Symposium UWS

Experimentation
with techniques

Personal Techniques

Spontaneity, Fluidity, Iconography

Exhibition 3

Chart 1. Method Design Chart indicating steps of the third investigation
2.2 Practical component

From the design chart it can be seen that this series of paintings is integral to the whole investigation into images of the urban experience. Certain conclusions, recommendations and techniques were utilised in the painting production. An exhibition of paintings was the final product but many steps were interwoven into the entire process.

The objective was to produce a series of paintings with considerable aesthetic value, impact and sociological significance. A number of experiments were conducted into media usage and ground suitability. It was expected that the paintings could be produced more freely than the previous works and without the dependence upon specific iconography. The production of these paintings was supported through the Artist in Residence Program at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Melbourne.

Various priorities emerged throughout the full development of the three exhibitions. Works on exhibition were the result of not only media and composition experiments but from the desire to utilise spontaneity in the process of painting. The paintings are a natural development from the two previous series exhibited and are integral to the whole investigation. As works progressed and new priorities emerged, each individual painting began to change or modify according to the theme, composition, media manipulation and the elements of design. The final product no longer seemed the goal as each piece developed during production and alternatives were utilised. The process involved in the act of painting became more of a priority to the finalisation of a product.
2.3 Theoretical Component

Exegesis 3 entitled *Immediacy and Translated Experiences* was conducted on the recommendations of previous investigations. It was noted that the theme of the urban experience with a focus upon human alienation was suggested through the use of specific iconography. This exegesis analyses previous iconography and suggestive symbols as the basis of the underlying theme. Priorities of technique consolidation through composition, textural applications and spontaneity emerged.

The objective was to create the series of works without reliance upon previously utilized iconography. Spontaneity and immediacy were prioritized and the process became the focus. The product was personally judged according to fluidity, content and context.
CHAPTER 3 ICONOGRAPHY
3.1 Alienation and the Urban Experience

3.11 Consequences of Urbanism
In previous exhibitions, my paintings depicted various aspects of the Urban Experience. Such themes as human alienation, personal detachment, urban conflict and the human conditions emerged. Modern urbanism has been the topic of contention for a number of years. The consequences of a high population density within a limited state of human settlement are many. Individuals suffer due to various forms of pollution and overcrowding. Dangers threaten our urban environment with man subjected to a multitude of sensations. Not all of such are agreeable. With odours, sounds, sights and vibrations that contribute to neuroses, psychological damage, harmful physical health and the desire for refuge, the urban lifestyle can be limiting.

Modern urban housing often fails to provide adequate refuge. Thin walls and large glass areas are often the source of problems. Nervousness and anxiety can be caused by the fear of being overheard by others. Aggression, anxiety and tension increase as contact with nature decreases. Overcrowding can lead to sensitivity, emotional disturbances and the diminution of initiative and creativity. Societal fragmentation, disconnectedness and personal alienation appear integral to the urban experience.

The distance of social division between the individual and the community promotes social isolation. Estrangement from social life or personal isolation in modern communities is a major cause of alienation. The current tendency is for the individual to rarely see himself as responsible for the community and the community rarely represents all its individuals. The resultant lack of mutual concern or involvement causes social isolation. All such aspects of the urban experience point to individual alienation.
3.12 Human Alienation

Alienation has been described as a state of estrangement of the individual from the natural environment, social life or the self. Depending on the source, there are many causes or reasons for this self-estrangement. The viewpoint of contemporary psychology maintains that alienation is a symptom of the individual's maladjustment to society. Contrary to this thought, current sociological theory outlines alienation as a consequence of social organisation and culture. The existentialist would describe alienation as a normal part of life or as inherent to human nature. This viewpoint is based on the belief that man merely exists without basic reason or social allegiances.

Regardless of the causes or reasons for human alienation, it appears an integral part of the urban experience. These descriptions and viewpoints have been presented as basic outlines to themes used in previous exhibitions. Such aspects of the urban experience have been observed in various cities. Along with this observation many of these situations have been personally experienced. This personal experience of urban life in many cities has formed the basis of personal painting themes.
3.2 Translated Experiences

As previously mentioned it has been necessary to travel to many major cities worldwide. Such a lifestyle necessitated a continual state of estrangement in the urban environment. Cultural differences, communication difficulties and severe physical conditions formed the basis of such disorientation.

Experiences within the urban environment worldwide as well as personal observations formed the basis of a theme adopted for previous exhibitions. Two series of paintings based on these translated experiences were exhibited to depict the urban experience.

3.3 Subject Matter and Theme

Thus the urban experience was established as the theme with a focus upon human alienation. Various incidents of alienation have previously been described verbally but the paintings exhibited gave a suggestion of the theme. With the recollection of personal urban experiences, the painting themes were consolidated through symbolic images.

The themes were iconography depicted using subject matter only with little suggestion from the technique and composition. The specific iconography in the paintings indicated the theme of the urban environment.
3.4 Personal Iconography

The themes previously presented were a reflection of society and current cultural values. Personal iconography was developed through the use of suggestive symbols. As well as a multitude of people in various stances, objects representing buildings, spires, construction zones, and parks were produced. Some of the past works are reproduced on the following pages:

Figure 1. Shows a painting entitled *Use and Move Zone*. From this reproduction, it can be seen that a large number of images were constructed to suggest the theme. Details of this painting can be seen in Figure 2. This smaller section of the painting gives a clearer indication of some for the images. Located centrally in this detail is a small section of rail and locomotive indicating the railway. Along with a simple image below representing a truck and at the top an aeroplane, this iconography suggests transport and its importance in the urban environment.

Figure 3 shows a reproduction of the painting *Chocolate Box Hood*. This reproduction gives a good indication of the structure of the work. Although the reproduction is not perfect, the various image groupings are distinguishable in relation to the whole composition.

Figure 4 is a detail of Figure 3. This later work shows groupings of images indicating zones or various neighbourhoods. These brief examples outline the various iconographies representing the themes. The priority of these earlier exhibitions was to utilise such iconography to symbolise aspects of alienation and the urban experience. Techniques used in the production of the artworks provided greater emphasis on composition, surface quality and tonal direction.

Figure 5 is a larger painting titled *Moodswing Circus Ground*. This work shows the personal iconography on a larger scale.
included in the overall effect of image placement. Figure 6-titled O2 O Kudosai is on a similar large scale but with a more structured approach. This piece is similar to the Figure 3 Chocolate Box Hood in that the overall effect has been abandoned and image groupings are more evident. The iconography is similar to other works but the composition is beginning to be structured according to areas of high occurrence and linear planes. This was a deliberate attempt to indicate the differences in the urban occupation of humans, structures and vehicles of conveyance.

Figures 7 and 8 give an indication of the loosening of the overall effect. Many icons have been overpainted or reduced in favour of a more textured surface and space between the images. Figure 7-titled Jump City Bypass maintains the overall effect with icons spread 'evenly' across the canvas. The foreground has been modified allowing the images more space. Figure 8 is a detail of this painting showing a section of the midground of Jump City Bypass. Notice how the iconography is evident but the reductive technique is beginning to blur the edges allowing a more textured approach to the overall work.

Figure 9 is titled Cheers Flagman: a somewhat smaller painting with similar images evident in the work. The difference with this piece again involves the image groupings or spread of the personal iconography. A highly textural piece, this painting underwent many modifications leaving all images relatively similar in size. The iconography has an overall effect but the plane is not angled with smaller images at the top. This piece was successful in that the images were almost pushing against each other in an overall effect but the flat plane did not involve proportionally sized iconography.
Figure 1. *Use and Move Zone*, 1999

**BRUCE EARLES**, Oil on canvas,
60 x 60 inches (153 x 153 cm.)
Goya Galleries Melbourne
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS: Exhibition 2 Urban Paint

Figure 2. Detail of: Use and Move Zone, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas,
60 x 60 inches (153 x 153 cm.)
Goya Galleries Melbourne
Figure 3. *Chocolate Box Hood*, 1999

**BRUCE EARLES**, Oil on canvas,
10ft. x 5ft. (2 X 60 x 60 inches) (306 x 153 cm.)

Goya Galleries Melbourne
Figure 4. Detail of *Chocolate Box Hood*, 1999

**BRUCE EARLES**, Oil on canvas,
10ft. x 5ft. (2 X 60 x 60 inches) (306 x 153cm.)

Goya Galleries Melbourne
Figure 5.  Moodswing Circus Ground, 1999

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas,
72 x 84 inches (213 x 244cm.)
Figure 6.  

$O_2O$ Kudosai

**BRUCE EARLES**  
Oil on canvas,

72 x 84 inches (213 x 244cm.)

Below: detail of this painting
Figure 7.  *Jump City Bypass, 1999*

**BRUCE EARLES**  Oil on canvas, 152cm. X 137cm.
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS: Exhibition 2 Urban Paint

Figure 8. Detail of: *Jump City Bypass*, 1999

**BRUCE EARLES** Oil on canvas, 152cm. X 137cm.
Figure 9.  

*Cheers Flagman, 2000*

**BRUCE EARLES**  
Oil on canvas, 102cm. X 92cm.
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS: Exhibition 3

Figure 10. Street Waiters, 2000

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas,
153cm. X 137cm.
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS: Exhibition 3

Figure 11. *Walking Camping*, 2000

**BRUCE EARLES**  Oil on canvas,

153cm. X 137cm.
Figure 12. *Market Mahem*, 2000

**BRUCE EARLES** Oil on canvas,

153cm. X 137cm.
Figure 13.  

*Sunset Close, 2000*  

**BRUCE EARLES**  
Oil on canvas,  
153cm. X 137cm.
EXHIBITED PAINTINGS: Exhibition 3

Figure 14. Underpass Motel, 2000

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas,
153cm. X 137cm.
Figure 15.  *Waving Goodbye to Myself, 2000*

**BRUCE EARLES**  Oil on canvas,

153cm. X 137cm.
3.4 Personal Iconography (continued)

As the production of the series progressed, it became evident that more emphasis was beginning to be placed upon increasing surface qualities, composition strength and spontaneity. With the completion of each painting, new priorities emerged. As each painting progressed, new directions were taken including textural qualities, tonal merging, and gestural importance and composition modifications. Paintings were emerging rather than being constructed. Flexibility rather than mechanical techniques were beginning to be employed. The process of painting was becoming more important than the dependence upon the use of personal iconography. The most important fact was that the direction of each painting and production priority was constantly changing.
3.5 Emerging Priorities

With the reduction of the images came the enhancement of textural qualities. The third exhibition showed signs of increased fluidity and spontaneity of paint application. The priority was no longer aligned to the use of iconography to suggest the themes. More emphasis was being personally placed upon immediate imagery, rich textural qualities and dynamic compositions. The following page shows examples of the progression of personal works. The examples from the first three exhibitions give an indication of the diminished dependence upon iconography and the emergence of a more fluid approach.

Through personal judgement, a conscious decision was made to approach the raw materials with no preconceived notions. This investigation began by recollection and translating personal experiences. A new priority emerged whereby personal recall acted as a barrier to immediacy.

The iconography of previous works was still evident in the new paintings but the spontaneity of the initial coats of paint remained more evident. The images were not obliterated through overpainting but were severely restricted to much less than previously utilised. The following page gives an indication of the painting progression. From an overall dependence upon the iconography in the first example, to a different placement or composition in the second example, and finally much less usage of the images to convey the themes.

Initial painting production began by depicting the general theme through specific iconography but progressed to suggest the theme through technique. The theme utilised in these exhibitions was set in a current context with considerable sociological significance.
EXHIBITION 1.

This example shows the dependence upon iconography, a single plane or overall decorative type composition.

Gray Train Station 1999,
BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas,
60 x 60 inches (153 x 153cm.)

EXHIBITION 2.

This example shows more loosening of technique yet more structure in composition. Colour variation and surface treatment is becoming more important than iconography.

Chocolate Box Hood, 1999, BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas, 10ft. x 5ft. (2 x 60 x 60 inches) (306 x 153cm.)

EXHIBITION 3.

This example shows more fluidity and less dependence upon icons for composition.

Saturday Central, 2000,
BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas,
72 x 84 inches (213 x 244cm)

Figure 16. Emerging Priorities: examples from 3 exhibitions
CHAPTER 4 THEMES
4.1 General Themes

Throughout the ages various themes in art have manifested themselves. Whether the images were used to represent the real, the romantic, the void or human failures, they were all dependent upon external conventions. Such themes recorded the preoccupations of generations.

Whether by deliberate intention, or coincidence, common themes in art have emerged. Images of man and the surrounding world, objects and emotive forms are but a few types of theme depictions. By using specific images, iconography and/or subject matter, various themes in art have been established. Throughout the known history of man themes varied but similarities existed.

One of the earliest records of art is the Australian aboriginal cave paintings. These symbolic artworks drew upon narratives from the ‘Dreaming’, a spiritual, natural and moral order of things. Apart from the symbolic dot paintings, the rock art themes centred around animals and fish as well as mythical characters.

_X-ray views of people, animals and fish, as seen in the rock painting from Anbangbang in Arnhem Land, provide another stylistic tradition that we recognise as belonging to Aboriginal artists._
_Aland, J. and Darby, M._ (97:9)

Similarities can be seen in the themes of the Palaeolithic artworks of around 30,000 years ago. Forms of animals, men and women predominated the themes whereby subjects were also drawn from nature to convey the spirit or character of the animal:

_Most cave art has hunters and animals of the hunt as its subjects. Palaeolithic artists were evidently keen observers of the habits and attitudes of these animals. The painted animals looked quite realistic in the gloom of the caves._
_Williams, D. and Vance Wilson, B._ (98: 1)
Mesopotamian art (3100BC-550BC) ideas were transmitted through symbolism whereas the themes included real and imaginative animals drawn from mythology, ritual and propaganda. Egyptian art themes included icons of gods and goddesses and subjects drawn from mythology and daily life. Greek and Roman themes included the idolisation of Gods and Goddesses and human figures in relaxed forms. Byzantine art also presented representative forms whereas Medieval art utilised iconography based on symbols of religion iconography based on symbols of religion and allegory.

Religion also formed the basis of Renaissance themes but humanity and nature dominated the themes of Romanticism and 19th Century Realism. Modern art has seen the rise in landscapes, portraits, still lifes and the impact of machinery. Futurism drew themes from modern technology whereas Surrealism often had themes based on dreams or recollections:

*One is reminded, too, of the general comment made by the Greek- American writer Nicolas Calas: 'In surrealist art, the artist viewed as dreamer becomes the subject of art.' Lucie-Smith, E. (77.53)*

Contemporary artworks have drawn upon popular culture, relationships, gender identities, concepts, ideas and other sociological issues of the time for their themes.

*Social commentary and criticism continues to be a concern for many contemporary artists, who have variously addressed a wide range of issues including racism, sexism, the environment and AIDS.*

Stockley, M. (98 :259)

This very brief review of art themes indicates the changes over time. Theme choices have been largely dependent upon the surrounding culture of the time. Personal theme development has been no exception to this generalisation.
4.2 Theme Development

This current theme of human alienation and the urban experience has evolved from many past exhibitions. From personal works based on social consciousness exhibited in the 1980s to more recent personal research on anonymity and human alienation, this theme has developed. The immediate stages of this theme developed over three exhibitions:

The first exhibition concentrated upon particular aspects of urban life and analysed contemporary artists’ works with similar themes.

The second exhibition focused upon personal experiences and observations of human alienation. While this second exhibition was related to techniques personally utilised, the theme focus was clearly evident. This second investigation did not extend to the use of particular techniques to suggest themes but relied upon images and particular iconography.

This third exhibition tends more towards the theme based on immediacy of the urban experience. The movement of not only man and machines but of information and concepts has set the stage for transportation, architecture, communication and technology in the third millennium. The sense of urgency is conveyed through media manipulation and the process of painting rather than relying upon the images themselves. This use of gestures, action and the reliance upon the process is further explained in section seven of this paper. The theme of urban immediacy is further explained on the following page.
4.3 Immediacy of the Urban Experience.

With vast technological changes evident in society, decision making has developed as a major priority. The corporate decision has required precision and immediacy. In order to survive, the individual's ability to make decisions quickly has also sharpened. Just to cross the street requires speed, precision and the initial decision to act in order to make it before the light changes. This is just a simple example of the skills required in order to progress safely in a fast moving urban environment.

Cities not only maintain solidity through the size and power of buildings and architecture but manifest vitality through movement, instantaneousness and simultaneity. In any urban environment such immediacy is evident. Such movement, speed and immediacy have been depicted in themes of recent artworks. Motion has been portrayed through realist subject matter, representative objects and specific techniques of various artists.

The Impressionists placed characters amid gestures creating movement within the environment. Expressionism included action dependent upon instinct and emotion. Cubism presented generalised objects and humans often in a state of movement. Marcel Duchamp's *Nude descending a Staircase* was an attempt at capturing swift movement using a multitude of shapes and lines. If Cubism was the art of the machine age then Futurism was the art of the metaphysical based upon the retinal perception of movement. These 'mileposts' of modern art are but a few examples of motion depicted via subject matter, objects and planes. The images and themes being dependent upon external conventions were incorporated into the developments of events and culture of the time. The themes of motion, instantaneousness and immediacy were depicted via representative images. Picasso and Dubuffet used representational subject matter and technique to depict
immediacy whereas Hans Hartung, Jackson Pollock and Mark Tobey used the act of painting as the prime instrument of expression. Action painting and abstract expression utilised gesture and technique to suggest power, tension, movement and immediacy.

Such immediacy of the urban experience has been depicted using specific iconography and techniques. One purpose of this exegesis is to investigate the portrayal of this theme with the emphasis on technique, or more specifically the depiction via technique rather than iconography. Such an investigation should necessarily encompass spontaneity in painting, specific processes and context of the work.

This emphasis on technique is supported through a brief investigation of contemporary art. By presenting a summarised history, inherent generalised principles of contemporaneity were isolated. The isolation of these principles supported the necessity of immediacy and technique suggestion of themes.
CHAPTER 5. CONTEMPORANEITY
5.1 Didactic Art

Mass literacy did not exist until well after the Industrial Revolution. Before mechanised printing, information was spread mainly through the spoken word and visual images. Painting and sculpture played a major role in the instruction of the public. The artists were conveyers of public taste, religious and political instructors as well as the social teachers of the time. The sole objectives of art were concerned with communication and decoration.

After mass printing techniques were well established, painting and sculpture maintained a didactic role but not to the extent of previously. The role was not so much instructional but art did maintain social and intellectual issues. Techniques changed, as did the roles of art but the basic art forms of painting and sculpture remained static. New artforms were established with the introduction of new workable technologies in society. Printing initially took over the didactic role as the social function of painting widened to include propaganda, commemorative art and art as an expression of dissent.

Paintings began to escape from the depictive role with the emergence of Futurism and the *machine age* artists of the early 1900s. With the advent of the automobile and industry applied technology came the emergence of not only new painting styles but also new artforms.
5.2 Emergence of New Forms

What has been called contemporary artforms actually dates back almost 100 years. The beginning of such has been attributed to the movement known as Futurism. Marinetti has been dubbed the initiator or inventor of Futurism. In the early 1900s public performances were conducted using techniques such as simultaneous sound poems, nonsense verse and audience confrontation to attack history and promote social reform. The emergence of many of these artforms has been attributed to the increase in applied science and technology of the time.

The impact of Einstein theories and crystal radiology provided new directions for information on the substructure of nature. New techniques such as X-ray photography not only assisted medical advancement but also provided the impetus for the creation of new artforms. Sequential photographs and primitive cinematography were inspirational to the Futurist movement of Italy and Russia around 1910.

These less conventional formats were well into the experimental stages when they were incorporated into the Dada movement around 1915. Duchamp’s Readymades made use of found items as temporary objects and installations. Photomontage, collage and visual narrative were utilised widely for political impact, satire and anti-art statements. These artists and movements are not exhaustive in describing the emergence of new artforms but act as a few examples of the early 1900s developments in the arts. Beyond this, printmaking and photography were used as artforms and became known as traditional methods of art production. Installation, assemblage and performance emerged out of the twentieth century as new artforms. The Surrealists of the 1920s established performances and events to promote provocation, contradiction, chance and automatism.
5.3 Forerunners of Popular Artforms

These contemporary artforms did not re-emerge until the 1950s. This time the usage was not confined to Europe but re-emerged on a world wide scale:

Performance
Paris audiences of the 1950s were introduced to the public antics of Georges Matthieu. By combining painting and performance he was able to produce huge paintings on stage in a matter of 20 minutes. The popularity of performance art had spread to many other countries. In the 1950s in New York, John Cage established similar performances. In Japan the Gutai Group incorporated artists using the body as a medium for performance pieces. It was Joseph Beuys' early performance artwork that attempted to liberate art from the traditional meanings towards gesture and action.

Readymades, Combines and Installation.
Just as Joseph Cornell's surrealist objects of the 1930s and 40s made use of discarded household rubbish, Rauschenberg in the 1950s used products of consumption or disposable objects for assemblages. His freestanding combines were inspired by and constructed with the abandoned merchandise of the streets in a similar fashion to Duchamp. These, along with Hamilton's collages and Oldenberg's installations of the 1950s were the forerunners of contemporary artforms.

These events of the 1950s were the basis of conceptual and temporal work of the 1960s. The emergence of these techniques and artforms led to the popular happenings and installations.
Happenings
The 1960s also saw the rise of Pop Art which led to Pop Happenings and Pop Environments often as simultaneous events involving such artists as Oldenburg, Jim Dine and Red Grooms. Such performances and the creation of events led to the increase in improvisation and non-institutionalised theatre.

Environments
The 1960s also saw the rise of Minimal Art which led to Earth Art and Environmental pieces like Christo’s wrapped environments.

Conceptual Art
Conceptual work gained its basis from the Environmental and Performance Art pieces where the emphasis was on ritualised behaviour rather than object production. Conceptual pieces also gained the verbal content from Pop of the 1960s.

Video Art
The 1970s saw the emergence of Video Art as an attempt to address the oppressive politics of the time and to act as a kaleidoscopic stimulus. Like many other contemporary artforms, video art utilised or applied technology to abolish traditional artforms.

It appears that many of the contemporary artforms are based on the accomplishments of the mid-twentieth century. Many performances, installations and even forms of body art can be traced back to the confrontation of the Dada movement, the sensuality of the Surrealist movement and ritual therapy associated with Expressionism.
5.5 Principles of Contemporary Artforms

In presenting this brief history we can isolate some of the basic principles inherent in contemporary artforms. For instance, since the early 1960s performances and events have been based upon:

- Responses to political climates
- Making ideas accessible to a wider audience
- Ritualistic behaviour as therapy for the performer and audience.

One principle was based on absolute presentness and immediacy of the experience set in the current context. Early works were based on responses to political climates. All gestures were considered meaningful when relating to or meshing with the world around them.

Another principle was based on the priority of process rather than product. Object production was not the aim but a ‘by-product’ of the artists’ behaviour and expression. Further principles inherent in contemporary artworks include making art accessible to a wider audience, using or applying technology to remove traditional artforms and the kaleidoscopic or stimulus effect.

In a historical sense, these early accomplishments (as with current artforms) established contemporaneity through context, technique and process:

- **Content** by relating to present situations and current climates
- **Technique** through focusing on the act or process rather than the product.
- **Immediacy**, spontaneity and presentness as applied to the context, process and the technique.

In isolating the principles of contemporaneity, it can be seen that immediacy and spontaneity play a large role; Immediacy where presentness is applied not only in terms of significant sociological content but also to media application. The spontaneity is presented via technique being evocative of the moment or spirit of the time. The current culture or essence of society as the context is consolidated via the theme and techniques.
CHAPTER 6. SPONTANEOUS TECHNIQUES
6.1 Spontaneity in Painting

Fluidity in drawing and painting was mainly confined to sketches and drafts for final works until the early 1900s. Expressionism with roots dating back to the Gothic period revolted against all previous styles of painting. Spontaneity of expression and strong colour were evident in the works by German expressionists, the Fauvists and to a certain extent the Russian non-representational artists. In the 1950s Abstract Expressionism emerged with spontaneity being the chief catalyst to techniques. Action painting was an attempt by artists to express their feelings quickly with immediate techniques.

The theory of spontaneity in painting maintains that barriers are established with the dependence upon all the formal elements of art. Even the insistence upon recognisable images impairs immediate expression. Figurative paintings were considered traditionalist and laboured works. Such works were constricting and not allowing the artist to freely express their feelings about a subject.

The limitation of the image was surpassed by the spontaneous methods of painting. Surrealists advocated the unconscious control or automatism as starting points for works of art. Conscious organisation of the image were considered unnecessary by the time the Abstract Expressionists promoted the void consciousness:

"Point zero" has been reached; the final traces of a tradition acquired over centuries are now effaced. Resuming the earlier attempts of André Masson, Pollock and the painters of the new American School have tried to paint using gestures governed by chance; the study this chance result in order to participate in it, to react to it, and to turn this reaction to good account. Conscious control is seemingly eliminated...."

Huyghe (61:248)
Such dependence upon emotion was not a new concept in modern art. Ganguin and primitive artists, Kandinsky and the Russian Non-Representationalists, Lamink and the Fauves shunned the limitations and artificiality of rational thought. The German Expressionists of the early 1900's based their work on expression:

"Die Brucke artists introduced a new freedom and expressiveness to German art by basing their art on subjective personal feeling and responses. They created images with great nervous energy and emotional and visual impact but brutally simplifying forms, and by using strong contrasts of colours or tones and vigorous brushwork." Stockley (98:179)

Kandinsky shunned the depiction of objects to draw upon his imagination and subconscious to create many 'improvisations' with no preconceived plan. While recognisable images were a barrier to expression for Kandinsky, spontaneity was a priority.

Kandinsky abandoned his practice of depicting objects for the expressive use of art elements like colour and line. Although recognisable subject matter and the use of iconography were abandoned, it occasionally appeared in his work. It was not these recognisable images that conveyed the theme but the technique. In reference to Improvisation 30 (Canons), Stockley describes the abstracted forms as the most suggestive:

When we look closely we can also begin to recognise a canon, a city and some people. Despite these references, it is the explosive force of the colours and lines that most powerfully expresses the destructive force of warfare, and also gives the painting great beauty. Stockley (98:181)

The major form of expression in Kandinsky's work suggested the theme, as did later artists. Matisse was often referred to as the leader of the Fauves or Wild Beasts as his work followed extreme simplicity.
In reference to his still life *Goldfish and Sculpture*, Janson describes the immediacy via techniques thus:

*Here the quick 'handwriting' of the brush betrays no personal anguish; it tells us, rather, that Matisse had strong feelings about one thing only— the act of painting itself.*

Janson (61:228)

Perhaps the most significant historical movement was that of the Abstract Expressionists of the American 1950's. With the aim being the total rejection of the processes of rational control, the abstract expressionists favoured spontaneity, movement and the process itself. Pollock, de Kooning, Kline and Motherwell aimed; to convey expressive content: to communicate hidden experience, mediated through emotion, to be embodied in the visual form.

**Hoffert, Wingate, Love, Bak and Modesti** (88:100)

Many artists since the Abstract Expressionists have exercised their freedom of expression and utilised spontaneity in painting. The significance of these works was in the creative processes rather that the dependence upon representation in the traditional sense. Communicating experiences (as mentioned earlier) and the expression of emotions through the use of techniques were a product of spontaneity in painting.
6.2 Immediacy via Techniques

As the conventions of representation differ between artists so do the images or iconography. Often the theme is suggested through the subject matter or images portrayed. Seldom are the themes suggested via the techniques alone. Often the iconography combined with the technique provides the viewer with thematic keys. In discussing Hockney's *Double Portrait of Ossie and Celia*, Lucie-Smith refers to the contemporaneity, context and thematic suggestion via the technique:

*It is undoubtedly intensely contemporary, in that it distils the essence of the fashionable London world of the late Sixties. In this respect it resembles works such as John Singer Sargent's portrait of the Wertheimer sisters, which performs the same service for the Edwardian age. But the contemporaneity of Hockney's painting goes further than this. We find in it a way of arranging the forms, a response to certain colours, even to a certain kind of light, which makes it intensely evocative of the moment at which it was created. Now that the Sixties are already fading one can see that it evokes the spirit of the time as no other work could do. Yet it is exactly this quality—and the painter's keen eye for social nuances—which makes it seem anachronistic compared to the art since the Second World War.*

*Lucie Smith* (77:455)

It is this spirit of evocation that is echoed in the works of the Abstract Expressionists. The placement of forms, choice of colours and intensity of tone are all indications of the painter's feelings at the time. Often the unspecific forms do not depict or describe the theme but the overall technique evokes the viewers' senses and emotions. Jackson Pollock's own words:

*I want to express my feelings rather than to illustrate them,* are consolidated by Bryan Robertson's statement:

*Pollock was never concerned with communicating in the sense of description.* (*Smith, L.*, 77:58)
The technique or process of painting became the priority with the Abstract Expressionist movement.

_The Abstract Expressionist movement emphasised the act of painting, the surface quality of the canvas, the importance of spontaneity and the creation of personal marks...._ Malcolm and Dewar continue to describe Jackson Pollock's work as spontaneous and to a certain extent interactive:

_In Blue Poles Jackson Pollock has created a large energetic painting which relies on line and movement for its effect. The painting demands a reaction from the spectator, provoking participation with the artwork._ Malcolm and Dewar (89:7)

Not only is the spectator reacting to the artwork but also is the artist in using unconscious control, gestures and 'reconstruction'.

_...Pollock and the painters of the new American school have tried to paint using gestures governed by chance; they study this chance in order to participate in it, to react to it, and to turn this reaction to good account._ Huyghe (61:248)

The Neo-Expressionism of the early 1980's utilised an urgency of technique and a vigorous style to suggest the themes. As with Pollock, the Neo Expressionists did not prioritize communication through description. Compared to the "Abstractionists" the Neo Expressionists did illustrate themes. Feelings were expressed through technique. Themes were suggested through recognisable iconography as well as immediate techniques.

Basquiat used paint, screen-printing and oil sticks to create urgent images. As images were produced by printing, so they were deconstructed through paint application and the addition of drawn lines. The context was definitely established via visual, literal and verbal images. Communication was an occurrence but not so much a priority especially through description. Themes were suggested through not only reference to symbols, words and iconography but by method or technique. The urgency and immediacy was well established through the techniques.
6.3 Process and Representation

The spirit of evocation can be enhanced through the process of painting. If spontaneity remains a priority in the painting process, then personal marks indicative of the theme (or artist's mood) are created. Representation does occur but not in the traditional sense of the word or at the expense of energy involved in the process. The action painters significance was in the creative process. Emphasis was placed upon the making rather than in the representation.

The structuring of 'emotive chaos' as presented by Pollock is echoed in the works of Franz Kline. Full gestures were obvious to the viewer. The power of the work lay in the technique and its immediacy.

"...in the work of Franz Kline, the material of the modern city, industrial steel, is abstracted to black calligraphic strokes. The drama of black on white, the absence of harmonising colour and the mammoth gestural stokes all evoke an emotive power and convey the awe with which Kline was responding to the monoliths of modern culture."

Hoffert, Wingate, Love, Bak, Modesti (88:102)

Tension,' immediacy and aggression' are most evident in works by de Kooning. The severe marks, dramatic gestures, and the expressive features are evident due to the rate and type of paint application. The technique (or rather results of such) evokes a state of mind in the viewer and promotes emotional communication.

*Willem de Kooning pushes the expressive language of paint still further in Woman V....Here the garish hues create a vivid tension, with no attempt to harmonise these acidic combinations of colour. Slashes of angry paint built an aggressive, even repulsive, emotive experience. The antagonism felt by the artist to the slick advertisements built round*
the female stereotype is driven home with great power.
Holfert, Wingate, Love, Bak, Modesti (88r102)

Works can combine the significance of the process with thematic evocation through the use of spontaneity and suggestion. A work can demand a reaction from the spectator through the technique utilised. How the work was made, technique recognition, processes involved and method interactivity assist in evoking a theme or mood. It is this type of gesture interaction that has formed the basis of the techniques introduced or utilised in the third exhibition.

It is the spontaneity of these artists along with impulse oriented techniques that evokes a mood or theme. The techniques are utilised out of the sense of immediacy. The context is suggested through presentness or simultaneity and immediacy. As suggested in chapter 5, the principles of contemporaneity include current context through presentness, technique focusing on the process and immediacy via context and technique. The areas of spontaneity, presentness and immediacy are the current focus or priorities of personal works shown in the third exhibition.
CHAPTER 7. PERSONAL APPLICATIONS
7.1 Recent Objectives

The first exhibition/exegesis of this inquiry titled *Imagery and Origins* outlined specific images of the human condition based on the consequences of personal urban experiences. The objective was to recollect, isolate and translate these urban experiences into specific subject matter. Aspects of the human condition such as societal fragmentation, disenfranchisement and human alienation formed the basis of a theme for a series of paintings. The objective was to convey this theme based on personal experiences, observation of societal occurrences and environmental influences. The theme was suggested through the use of specific iconography. The images in these earlier works provided the key to thematic recognition.

The second exhibition saw a further development of this theme related to the urban experience with a focus upon human alienation. Personal objectives began with a similar direction to exhibition one. A new focus did develop through the painting process. The theme was now being suggested through iconography and technique. New objectives emerged through the process of painting with more emphasis being placed upon suggesting the theme through technique rather than iconography. This direction provided a huge challenge in the production of personal works. A number of issues emerged through decreasing dependence upon iconography.

These recent objectives were to become superceded with the further production of paintings. As painting practice continued, new objectives emerged. The works were to develop towards a totally new direction. The process of painting was becoming more important than the production of communicating iconography.
7.2 Iconography Decline

The objective of this series of paintings was to express the feeling of human alienation through technique. As the priority was to rely less upon iconography to suggest the theme, communication in the descriptive sense became obsolescent.

The second exhibition saw the consolidation of textural dry brush techniques and the introduction of tonal overlays. The first reproduction overleaf is from the first exhibition as an indication of the overall colour, tone and textural application.

The introduction of tonal overlays and textural colour variation can best be seen in the detail of the second reproduction overleaf, a painting from the second exhibition.
EXHIBITION 1, *Lamington Avenue*. Bruce Earles 1999, oil on canvas, 58 x 5 ft.

EXHIBITION 2, *Chocolate Box Hood DETAIL*. Bruce Earles 1999, oil on canvas, 58 x 10 ft.

**Figure 17** Iconography Decline: comparison of paintings
As the final stages of the processes appeared established, the focus lay upon the spontaneous approach to the initial stages. Immediacy became the objective keeping in mind the overall design or composition. This reproduction gives a clear indication of the continued use of colour variation, tonal overlays and fluidity. The use of reductionism is more evident but the reliance upon a decorative or overall finish is less evident.

EXHIBITION 3. Central Heating (below DETAIL). Bruce Earles 2000, oil on canvas, 6ft x 8ft.

Figure 18 Spontaneous beginnings: comparison of paintings
This third exhibition attempted to combine spontaneity, reductionism, textural overlay and tonal modification to suggest the theme of the urban experience. Obviously a more open structure or dynamic composition was a key objective in the painting process. Composition and technique emerged as conflicting elements of the personal painting process.
7.3 Composition and Technique

In the first two exhibitions, iconography and placement of images formed the basis of a busy but balanced composition. As more images were reduced for the formation of tonal and textural surfaces, the overall plane or structured composition became less obvious. Figure 10, as representative of three exhibitions show the shift from iconographical based compositions to surface texture/tonal structured composition and finally to less formally based compositions.

Experimentation with various lift grounds or resist techniques were implemented to maintain spontaneity of image creation. As noted in the previous section, the earlier stages of the painting process required investigation to promote fluidity rather than rigid iconography. A series of trials with sugar based water paint and seriagraphic block out liquids was conducted to establish initial reduced images. These experiments were attempts to consolidate the composition yet maintain fluidity. Small canvas boards formed the basis of grounds for experimental block out reductionism. As these methods proved cumbersome and ineffective, they were abandoned as part of the process.

Further media manipulation and technique experimentation included applying acrylic paint as a basis for overlaying oils. Please see Figure 14, Process Sequence: foundation/action based. A bolt of canvas was laid directly on the studio floor and paint was applied through roller, brush, and bucket and action methods to form a quick and spontaneous effect as well as forming the underlayer. Over this, two coats of bond crete were applied to stabilise the undercoat and canvas.

A further coat of brightly coloured oils were then placed to enhance less brilliant areas of the undercoats. From this, icons were reduced from some areas but a greater area or action areas
were left without severe reduction. More residue was evident outside the icons rather than just within the reduced areas. This allowed further spectator interpretation and composition direction.

The following sequences indicate the three stages of production:

- **Foundations**, various methods were used in production and some are indicated, for example: Action based underlay of acrylic paint with oil strokes overlaid;
- **Reduction**, icons reduced from some areas of the various undercoats or foundations;
- **Surface**, tonal/textural overlays omitting residue areas.
1. Broadly brushed areas of darker or cool colours using large chisel brushes over the top of a black background.

2. Smaller brushstrokes using large brush loaded with warmer or brighter colours over the top of previous coat. Each layer applied over a dry surface. At least 3 days drying time between each coat.

3. Consistently applied brighter colours and smaller brushstrokes attempting to 'cut' and 'bridge' larger strokes.

4. Thinner, brushstrokes using brighter and lighter colours. White mixed with warmest colours for final coat. Once this foundation layer is dry, the next stage of reduction is applied.

Figure 19. Process Sequence: foundations/brushed areas
**Action Based Underlay**

As an alternative to previous foundation application, this method (as described previously in 7.3 *Composition and Technique*) tends to provide a more varied surface to reduce. In this example acrylic paint is applied rapidly (but each colour layer allowed to dry before the application of next colour) as a foundation.

This type of foundation allows greater interpretation in reduction. It also allows accidentals to be used in background, greater contrast in texture and the use of composition accents. This finished example indicates some of the large, diluted rapid strokes to *survive* the entire process. Note the lower part of this work showing untouched parts of the canvas, some diluted red and blue areas.

**Figure 20**  Process Sequence: foundation/action based
Drip Underlay

Prepared canvas was first painted black or dark colour with very thin oil.

First coolest colour applied using ariel strokes and allowed to dry.

Second coat applied in a criss-cross method using warmer colour.

As each colour dried, further warm colour coats applied until fully covered.

Figure 21. Process Sequence: foundation/ Ariel application
Using dry foundation as a base, images are found and/or constructed.

Images are placed using a dark colour, ensuring thick, fluid dark lines.

Background is reduced using thick strokes of dark colour/s.

Figure 22. Process Sequence: image reduction
Images are reduced using one or more dark colours. Fat over lean principle adhered to with all coats of paint.

Thick lighter colours are applied leaving some darker areas around images.

Lighter tones are then applied over some parts of the textured surface areas

Figure 23 Process Sequence: tonal, textural overlay
7.4 Spontaneity, Fluidity, and Iconography

The objectives of this exhibition were concerned more with spontaneity and fluidity rather than communication via recognisable iconography. The theme of urban life was left to suggestion via fluid techniques. The immediacy of the urban experience was reflected in the use of fast application of paint and 'masking fluids'.

 Accidentals were utilised in the image formation but the fluidity was accentuated without the use of preconceived iconography. While certain iconography was included in the works much of the residue was left to purposefully suggest movement, swiftness, action and the complexity of urban life. The fluidity of application, spontaneity of technique, primacy of figures and build up of textures were purposeful in the suggestion of the urban landscape.

The initial action based acrylic underlayer was reduced in some areas but many areas of high interest or dynamic movement was left as suggestive qualities. These areas were intentionally left as contrast and as symbols of movement. Flowing paint is recognisable in technique to most viewers and the resultant accidentals were utilised to juxtapose the slow and laboursome overlaying technique.

The technique of reductionism was used for this exhibition but on a "looser" scale. While less icons appeared in later works, more underlayer became evident. Instead of reducing the entire surfaces except for the icons, more of each reducing layer was intentionally left for the sake of technique.
Earlier works used each layer for texture build-up and to emphasise the icons displayed in the composition. Most of the underlayers were almost completely covered except for specific areas acting as tonal emphasis of the reduced images. Later works intentionally displayed more of the various underlayers for fluidity and textural gradation rather than tonal gradation alone.

*Genetic Spillway,* (detail) Bruce Earles 2000, 6ft. x 8ft.

The following page gives examples of these emerging priorities. The first reproduction shows a painting from the first exhibition where the images alone were reduced using many coats but only the final coat most evident. The second reproduction shows a painting from the third exhibition where reductionism was more evident. Many of the various overlaid coats of paint stopped short of covering each layer. This allowed successive layers to be reduced on a lesser scale.
EXHIBITION 1 painting showing images reduced by overlaying coats of paint. Notice yellowish layer just evident around images then almost completely reduced with a layer of white.

EXHIBITION 3 Genetic Spillway, Bruce Earles 2000, 6ft. x 8ft. This painting showing much of the initial layer of action marks still evident. Notice the various coats have not completely reduced previous layers.

Figure 24. Fluidity Development Examples
7.5 Gesture Interaction

The initial layer of acrylic paint was swiftly applied using large brushes, sponges and splashed on with open necked containers. Darker colours were applied first, left to dry and then contrasting brighter colours were applied in a similar manner. Fluid action marks were the result of this process. The intention was to create a sense of urgency as well as a vibrant underlayer to complement the reductive process.

The process was one of creating gestures or the extension of movements to express the feeling of immediacy. Such marks were created purposefully to evoke a response from the viewers. The intention of urgency, immediacy and movement is conveyed via the technique or use of gestural marks. Viewers can understand the process undertaken in the initial stages of the painting and interact with them to gain a better understanding of the theme and mood of the works.

These initial action marks were reduced, integrated and merged into the whole final composition but remained evident. Further reduction and textural addition gave the works a sense of contrast with the speed of application and media manipulation. Personal urban experiences including the sense of immediacy could be translated through the intentional images and the process of paint application.
7.6 Process Limitations

The intention was to create works of more fluidity but the resultant works were dependent upon many technical considerations. The techniques used were varied and combined many processes personally developed over years of practice. Some of the processes were beneficial to the spontaneity of the works whereas technical barriers or process limitations did exist with some methods of paint application. The following pages provide a few examples that remain limitations to the personal processes used in creating current works.
7.61 Fluidity of images
The biggest consideration with using oil paint is the rule of *fat over lean*. Each layer of paint must be consistently *fatter* than the previous layer to ensure a satisfactory surface. Cracking will occur if overlaid paint is thicker than underlayers are. The thickness of the paint depends upon the *medium* or mixture of the solution combined with the pigment. Paint that is diluted with a medium results in a runny consistency whereas paint straight from the manufacturers container is thicker with little medium added. (Different manufacturers add varied amounts of oil as well as a varied type of oil base. For instance one company supplies oil paint in tubes with a linseed oil base where another company supplies paint with a base made up of a combination of siccative oils.)

Fast lines are dependent upon the consistency of the paint. The addition of a medium to the paint provides a consistency that promotes the application spontaneously. The amount and consistency of the medium added will determine the flow of the paint. Each layer of paint applied should have a less amount of medium to prevent cracking. As the foundation colours are made up of at least eight layers, the last foundation colour becomes quite thick. This determines the consistency of the next layer applied. As the images are reduced or cut from the background colour fields, the resultant linear images are dependent upon the paint thickness. Little (or any) medium is added to the paint used for image construction. The foundations are reduced further with thicker paint still. Further textural and tonal applications require absolutely no medium in the paint. Often the last layers require mixing days in advance to dry the consistency in the air before application.

It is evident with this method that the images must remain less fluid due to the fatness of the paint applied. Oil paint requires such consistency and the lines are drawn with paint more slowly than is often required. This remains the major process limitation with the current techniques used.
7.62 Creation of images
The spontaneity of the images is dependent not only upon the paint consistency but also upon the overall composition of the work. Placement of images within the overall composition is dependent upon movement or consequential eye direction. Often the elongation of images determines the composition of the works. Creating the images often takes this into account. Spaces between images, image size and simple planes determine the balance and composition of the works. Creating a dynamic composition requires a certain degree of spontaneity, challenge and interest to the viewer. The overall final composition remains a minor limitation in the spontaneous application of paint.

7.63 Movement and direction
The viewer's eye movement across the canvas is dependent upon the incorporated shapes, images, and colour and paint consistency. A larger shape or image will provide a focus or anchor to the viewer's eye movement. Smaller images contribute to the overall composition by allowing faster eye direction. Brighter colours demand attention whereas cooler colours tend to recede within the composition. Lighter tones create a smoother surface for faster eye movement. Eye movement across the works is not only determined by the colour and tone placement. A thick consistency of paint creates a delay in eye movement across the composition. A thinner consistency of paint provides a surface that promotes constant direction without barriers. These observations must be taken into account in the application of previously mentioned techniques. Eye movement and direction are often a component of dynamic compositions but a barrier to the spontaneous application of paint. This remains a process limitation but should only remain minor with prior consideration.
Central Heating, Bruce Earles 2000 6ft x 8ft.

Figure 25. Integrated Action Marks Example
CHAPTER 8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
8.1 Summary

This exegesis was integral to a series of investigations into the theme of the urban experience. The first exegesis and exhibition of paintings utilised specific iconography to depict the theme. The second exegesis and exhibition focused upon the theme of human alienation and began in a similar manner to the first investigation. As painting production progressed, new priorities of fluidity and spontaneity emerged. This third exegesis and exhibition investigated the suggestion of a theme through the use of techniques rather than iconography.

The theoretical component included the analysis of iconography and techniques previously and currently used in the production of personal paintings. The practical component included painting experiments, production and the exhibition of a series of paintings.

In order to present the theme of human alienation and the urban experience, personal iconography was developed through suggestive symbols. Throughout the series production it became evident that more emphasis was being placed upon surface qualities, composition strength and spontaneity.

While the theme was still set in a current context with sociological significance, it was now being emphasised with technique more than iconography. Various themes in art were investigated in order to emphasise context and personal theme development. A brief discussion was presented encompassing the depiction and suggestion of motion, instantaneousness and immediacy throughout contemporary art history. This discussion indicated the shift from the dependence upon representative images to the use of techniques to suggest the themes, instinct and emotions.
A brief history of contemporary art isolated some inherent general principles. It was found that contemporaneity was established through context, technique and process. The content by relating to present situations, technique through focusing on the process of painting rather than the product, immediacy as applied to the context, process and technique. The isolation of these basic principles confirmed the need for spontaneity in painting. Immediacy was now the priority being established through technique investigation.

This series of paintings attempted to combine spontaneity, reductionism, textural overlay and tonal modification to suggest the theme of the urban experience. However certain limitations prevailed with the current processes and techniques. The speed of paint application was dependent upon the paint consistency. Current technique depended upon many layers of paint applied to the surface. To avoid unwanted surface cracking thick paint was necessary for image delineation. This process proved to be a limitation in a spontaneous application of the paint. Images appeared less fluid than desired. Overall composition, eye movement and direction also determined many aspects of the images. Such limitations proved to be a barrier to spontaneity.
8.2 Conclusions

The objective of this series of paintings was to depict the theme of the urban experience with more spontaneity and less dependence upon images. It was concluded that the majority of this body of works appeared more fluid than previous works. As the works were presented with more spontaneity the themes were suggested more through gesture, processes and techniques used.

While the paintings were enriched with a more fluid application of paint the themes remained evident and the content was strengthened. While the works appeared stronger in fluidity, further spontaneity could evoke more theme suggestion. It was concluded that the consequences of modern urbanism be continued as a theme in the next series of paintings. Individual states of estrangement and human alienation could remain as basic subject matter but the themes could expand to include more positive aspects of society. The themes had developed throughout the three series of paintings but a brief investigation into the contemporary elements of artworks confirmed personal objectives.

Contemporary art history outlined less dependence upon the image and the suggestion or evocation of moods through technique to consolidate themes. Personal direction indicated a limitation of the image and the brief investigation paralleled a decline in the conscious organisation of the image. It was concluded that spontaneity continue to be an objective in the next series of paintings. Further to this, spectator responses to the techniques and processes indicated less dependence upon representative images.

It was also concluded that barriers existed to the spontaneous application of paint. In order to maintain less dependence upon conscious organisation of the image, work processes and/or materials used had had to be adapted. With a priority of techniques had to be investigated. Alternative methods and media were trialed but further consideration should be given to their limitations.
8.3 Recommendations

It was recommended that the theme of the urban experience be expanded to incorporate more positive aspects of society rather than just human alienation. The theme should depend less upon image creation and more upon evocation by techniques utilised. In this way the process of painting would be prioritized over the product gained.

Consideration should be given to spectator interactivity. Spectators respond to images but also to gestures and processes utilised in suggesting the themes. It was recommended that spectator interactivity be promoted through further development of suggestive techniques.

It was also recommended that spontaneity continue to be an objective in the process of painting. With current process limitations it was suggested that the modification of media and techniques would result in more fluidity. The methods whereby undercoat acrylic paint was applied in an action manner resulted in greater fluidity and more dynamic compositions.

The dependence upon the sole use of oils would rely upon the modification of techniques. It was recommended that less undercoat or foundation layers would result in a more fluid delineation of images. The foundation layers could be thinned ever more with turpentine saturated medium or applied in a more vigorous manner.

It is also suggested that acrylic paint be utilised without thicker oil paint coating. The sole use of acrylic paint would promote more fluidity without the technical limitations of oil paint. Such techniques may result in poorer surface quality and less textural effects but could provide an impetus to fluidity and spontaneity.
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SECTION E.

EXEGESIS 4: Place, Symbol and Process
IMAGES OF THE URBAN EXPERIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY PAINTING

Exegesis 4. Place, Symbol and Process

Bruce Earles

This exegesis is submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Creative Art, Contemporary Art

School of Contemporary Art
University of Western Sydney
March 2002
I certify that the exegesis entitled:

*Images of the urban experience in contemporary painting:*

*Place, Symbol and Process*

And submitted for the degree of Doctor of Creative Art

Is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this exegesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution.

Signed

[Signature]

Date ..................
ABSTRACT

This paper is the culmination of four exegeses in conjunction with five individual painting exhibitions outlining the theme of urban experience. Locatory influences and cultural dimensions are presented as a basis of prevalent social concerns within the urban environment. Human alienation and urban conflict have been explained in terms of cultural implacement and the individual's conscious sense of belonging. This inquiry engages the question of place as contributing to the issues supporting this studio-based research. It addresses these underlying themes in relation to a body of paintings exhibited in Melbourne, Australia. This paper outlines the works in terms of symptomatic elements, contextual images and painting processes.
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CHAPTER 1. THE PROBLEM
1.1 Introduction

This studio-based research has culminated in an exhibition of paintings focusing on the theme of the urban experience. This exegesis forms a theoretical component to accompany the exhibited series of large paintings. These paintings attempted, through process and the incorporation of symbolic forms to convey the urban experience. Whilst past works conveyed general aspects of the urban experience, a more specific focus was developed for this section of the inquiry. Previous series of paintings concentrated on issues not specific to any one urban environment but general to most cities. This series attempts to elaborate upon urban issues by concentrating on one particular geographic location. Personal experience of urban life in many cities contributed to the issues supporting previous studio based practice. This series of paintings depended upon current and immediate data rather than memories or past experiences of the urban environment. The emphasis of this paper lies in the elaboration upon fluid techniques and suggestive symbolism contributing to issues of the urban experience.

While this series of work is complete as a visual interpretation and professional product it is presented in association with this exegesis. It should be noted that previous work has formed the background to this exhibition and exegesis. Some consideration of previous work places the culmination of professional development into perspective.
1.2 Background

This was the fifth series of paintings with a focus on the urban experience.

The first exhibition of paintings attempted to convey prevalent aspects of the urban experience in general. These works were based on personal experience within various urban environments. Initial practice presented themes such as human alienation, detachment and displacement. The first exegesis included a discussion on the consequences of contemporary urban environments based on personal experiences, observation and examples of societal fragmentation. It presented definitions, interpretations and a review of current literature relevant to the theme. It outlined personal imagery and symbols used in the accompanying artworks as well as examples of other contemporary artworks with similar themes.

The second exhibition focused on the theme of human alienation and the consequences of urban environments. The paintings presented the theme through the incorporation of symbolic forms based on personal experiences. Each painting conveyed specific aspects of the urban experience such as pollution, overcrowding and/or poor housing based on anecdotal evidence. An exegesis to accompany this exhibition was presented. The underlying purpose was to record some relevant experiences verbally in comparison to the pictorial depictions.

The exegesis covered techniques used in the paintings, themes and influences of other artists. It noted the development of symbolic forms and the representation of a theme general to many urban environments. A brief literature search of contemporary art exhibition reviews outlined other artists' similar social and cultural concerns.
The third exhibition focused on similar themes with less dependence upon specific iconography. These paintings attempted, through process and the incorporation of symbolic forms to convey the urban experience. Techniques were utilised to depict environmental aspects such as immediacy and urgency. The accompanying exegesis outlined examples of personally developed spontaneous techniques. A brief investigation of contemporary art history revealed some common elements such as less dependence on representative images and the development of suggestion through process or technique. This investigation recommended personal modification of techniques and materials to promote fluidity and theme suggestion.

The fourth exhibition was relatively smaller showing a transition between the use of oils to acrylic paints for theme suggestion. The acrylic paintings presented more specific aspects of larger environments focussing on a few human images and forms. This was a deliberate attempt to present a sample of urban life intended to represent a larger population and region. These paintings were presented as compositional studies for larger works. It was found that even more fluidity could be introduced through the use of acrylics and larger canvases. This method left open the possibility of overpainting in oils for textural effects.
1.3 Statement of the problem

Paintings from the first four exhibitions underwent many modifications and development. There was a shift away from the dependence upon specific symbolism to the theme suggestion through technique. The emergence of specific aspects of urban environments from general representations allowed compositional development. Throughout these developments, the problem of recollection as a barrier to spontaneity existed. Previous exhibitions presented the theme as prevalent social and cultural concerns within the urban environment in general rather than attempting to express locatory influences and aspects of cultural dimensions. The paintings were not representative of any one geographic location or city. Whilst the painting themes were modified to include more specific rather than general aspects of the urban experience, the works were indicative of many cities. The problem lay in the nature of contemporary artworks being set in a current context. Past works in this inquiry presented the problems of the past that may or may not still be relevant to the current climate. They were attempts at presenting the consequences of urban life based on past experiences and accounts. The final exhibition attempted to address the problems of urban life in terms of cultural influences. By incorporating spontaneity in technique with a focus on the painting process, a deliberate attempt was made to evoke a content relating to the current climate.
1.4 Purpose of the study

The underlying purpose was to examine issues relating to a body of paintings. This body of paintings was the culmination of five individual exhibitions and numerous selected groups exhibition. The overall project was to create these series of paintings along with a number of accompanying exegeses. Past exegeses have considered some of the overall research questions such as:

- What aspects of the urban experience are depicted in recent contemporary artworks?
- Do contemporary artists attempt to identify the reasons for human alienation and displacement or are these taken as accepted in depiction of images?
- Which particular artist focuses specifically upon these areas of the urban experience?
- What are the personal experiences and influences that I would bring to bear on the final artworks produced?
- Are there viable ways to extend the employment of the human condition iconography in paintings?

The overall objectives of this research was to:

- Understand and define images of urban life as utilised by contemporary artists.
- Isolate personal experiences based on the immediacy and consequences of the urban experience.
- Analyse and translate these experiences, recollections and artists' themes into a number of series of large paintings.
As the overall inquiry developed a few specific questions arose:

- Could the theme of the urban experience and more specifically human alienation be suggested more through techniques rather than the dependence upon symbolism?
- Could the paintings content relate more to the current climate rather than to personal recollections?
- What methods of documentation could be employed in the collection of data to ensure relevance and current content?
- What particular ironies were evident within the urban environment that indicated conflicting yet interdependent forces?
- What particular influences effect the cultural dimensions of place?

These questions were addressed in the body of this exegesis and the painting processes by examining the products. Many of these overall questions have been addressed in previous exegeses whereas this part of the inquiry has focused upon the influence of place.
1.5 Hypothesis

It was hypothesised that a body of paintings though painting techniques and symbolic reference could suggest cultural influences upon current human values. The hypothesis was that the paintings presented, through process and the incorporation of symbolic forms could evoke the spirit of a current urban experience.
CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY
2.1 Method Design

The overall research incorporated five individual exhibitions of paintings in the Australian cities of Sydney and Melbourne. These exhibitions were supported by a number of exegeses. Parallel to these components were numerous group exhibitions, spoken addresses grant applications and associated professional activities.

This was the fifth exhibition of paintings as a conclusion to the whole investigation into images of the urban experience. The total research can be seen at a glance by the flow chart overleaf. It provides the context of this investigation by placing these exegesis and exhibition in relation to the whole inquiry. Various stages of this research can also be referenced in this Method Design chart overleaf. Various processes involved in this fifth exhibition can be viewed in the chart on the page following the Method Design Chart.

It can be seen that the practice component involves many stages in preparation for the exhibition. The theoretical component is placed in relation to previous exegeses and follows on from their recommendations and conclusions.
Method Design Chart; Exhibition Five

EXHIBITION 5
Painting Exhibition March 2002
Goya Galleries Southbank
Melbourne Australia

ARTIST COLLABORATION
Group exhibition
of 5 artists from Sydney Australia

STUDIO PRODUCTION
Production of 20 paintings
Oils on linen

EXEGESIS 4
Place, Symbol and Process
Theoretical Investigative Component
2.2 Practical Component

From the previous design charts it is evident that this series of paintings is the culmination of many previous exhibitions. Overall at least eighty paintings had previously been exhibited in this investigation. This series of works was based on experimentation, techniques, conclusions and recommendations reached from previous exhibition and analyses.

The overall objective of this exhibition was to situate the works in context to one geographic location. In this part of the inquiry, the city of Melbourne, Australia serves as a field of empirically observable data. Data was collected with videotape but not actually presented in documentary format. These images were utilised in the studio to evoke the spirit of the city via static elements. The data was not presented empirically but in allegorical form. It was not intended to illustrate urban life but to symbolise activities, capacities and perceptions of the individual subjected by such a place. Paintings were created to evoke the spirit of the time and place. This exhibition presented large oils on linen created over an eight month period. Works exhibited a combination of techniques including gestural lines, reduction and textural overlays.

The exhibition itself was intended as a group exhibition with the intention of presenting an exploration of work in various media which reflects the influence of location on art. Artists from Melbourne and Sydney approached this theme from various perspectives reflecting in the work the influence of local dimensions on the question of place.
2.3 Theoretical Component

Exegesis 4 entitled Place, Symbol and Process was conducted on the recommendations of previous investigations. This part of the inquiry analysed work processes, underlying themes, issues, techniques, symbols and context associated with the exhibited series of paintings. Personal observations combined with a brief literature review have contributed to the issues that have supported this studio-based research and practice.
CHAPTER 3. DEVELOPMENT
3.1 Theoretical Investigation

This investigation into *images of the urban experience in contemporary painting* has encompassed:
- The *definition* and interpretation of urban experience;
- An analysis of *images* depicting the urban experience;
- Contemporary paintings *themes and techniques*.

The urban experience was analysed in terms of aspects of human conditions to include various *definitions* and viewpoints on the state of alienation. Literature reviews dealt extensively with the individual's state of estrangement from the natural environment, social life and the self. Personal experience and observation provided a backdrop to subject matter or themes investigated. Anecdotes including personal experiences of alienation as lived in subjective isolation were presented.

*Images of the urban experience* were outlined in the presentation of artists' subject matter. General images were discussed in relation to various artists' depictions of the human condition. Specific images of human alienation were investigated and widely sourced from exhibition reviews published in books magazines and the internet. Personal images were analyzed in terms of theme depictions and compared to other artists' works.

*Contemporary paintings* were investigated to outline themes that significantly indicate increasing conditions and consequences of *post modern industrial* urban life. It was noted that contemporary works suggested themes through specific techniques and that theme depiction relied less on symbol than fluidity of process.
Themes and issues were presented in an attempt to portray an urban experience. If alienation is a state of estrangement from the natural environment, social life and the self, then it follows that a review of mental and social space would be integral to this investigation. The underlying theory developed into an inquiry about place as being a condition of all existing things.

While contemporary psychology maintains that alienation is merely a symptom of an individual's maladjustment to society (as discussed in exegesis one), sociology outlines alienation as a consequence of social organization and culture. This inquiry briefly outlines alienation in relation to psychical and physical space but the focus lies within identity, based on location and history- determined by place and time. Personal identity and cultural identity are examined in relation to place.

Thus the theoretical investigation into the individual's state of estrangement developed into a focus upon the existential predicament of place-bereft individuals. Chapter Six of this exegesis outlines the fundamentals of place important to this inquiry. Further to this underlying theory a series of paintings was developed based on the concept of place.
3.2 Practical Outcomes

As the theoretical investigation developed over a number of stages, the practical component of this inquiry evolved accordingly. Initial exhibitions contained paintings depicting various aspects of urban experience. Such themes as human alienation, personal detachment and urban conflict were presented. These themes were attempts to reflect those dynamics that affected current cultural mores. The priority of the earlier works was to utilise iconography as symbols of human urban experience.

Images of personal urban experience took the theme of human alienation by incorporating symbolic forms and personal techniques. Personal analysis of these works revealed that various images were contrived through repetition. Suggested symbols were devised to depict images relative to the theme. As these images and personal techniques were compared to other contemporary artists' works. It was concluded that a priority of theme depiction proved a barrier to fluidity.

Techniques were developed to promote greater fluidity. Media manipulation and the process of painting became the focus for suggestion rather than the depiction of themes. The use of gesture and action processes assisted in suggesting the themes as the series developed.

This research culminated in a final exhibition of paintings. Consequences of urban life were presented through symptomatic elements, contextual images and painting processes. The themes emerged as a result of all previous stages of in the development of theoretical and practical components. New directions were taken based on the inquiry into place. Paintings developments are discussed and examples are analysed through a selection of reproductions.
CHAPTER 4. SYMBOL AND IMAGES
4.1 Image Capacity

Initial paintings in this inquiry attempted to present the values prevalent within our society. Symptomatic elements were created through regular shapes interspersed with varying spaces to depict these values. It was found that such practice was more documentary or limited in terms of sociological and aesthetic value. Images with the intention of communicating current values declined as this inquiry began a new direction of reflecting upon cultural influences. Such reflection could also be taken as having limited capacity. New works were not so much intended as a reflection of the world as such but as comments on cultural influences.

Images have the power to transform or influence values and beliefs. Burgin took this discussion further to state that the beliefs, values and desires of individuals and nations are formed through images:

*Images are now as much a material force in and between societies as are economic and political forces. Contemporary visual culture-the combined product of "the media" and a variety of other spheres of image production -can no longer be seen as simply 'reflecting' or 'communicating' the world in which we live of this world.*

Burgin (95:22)

Although Burgin's attention was more focused towards the mass-media and images presented through their impact, this power or capacity of images can have a considerable effect with more static artforms.
4.2 Representative Symbols

The theme adopted in the body of paintings exhibited was the direct result of personal experiences and observations of various urban environments. (The theme itself was fully discussed in exegesis 2 Focus and Techniques). While the themes appeared evident, the symbols used were not descriptive nor were they an attempt to directly communicate the experiences. The content of the works was an attempt to relate to current climates and to suggest images of an urban experience. The symbols were representative of larger systems within the environment. The works themselves consolidated irony to suggest conflicting yet interdependent forces. Patterns of human organisation were symbolised in an attempt to suggest how enabling cultures create alienation. For instance, habitation structures are created with the intention of providing greater living space for privacy and security. The irony lies in the economic drive to create thin walls, greater glass surfaces, overcrowding and imposing barriers to freedom.

Mutual respect for others along with urban values has led to interdependence yet irony lies in the observed behaviour whereby each individual demands personal space. This personal space is best illustrated through the 'sidewalk shuffle': a little dance whereby pedestrians mark out their intended walking passage and invariably end with the 'baulk' to pass by oncomers. Transport systems were established to provide greater access to places but the irony lies in the control denies access to specific places. These ironies were suggested through symbols or symptomatic elements.
4.3 Suggestion

Exegesis Three; Immediacy and Translated Experiences discussed the use of symbols and techniques to provide the viewer with thematic keys. It outlined how the spirit of evolution could be enhanced through the process of painting. The works presented were an attempt to create a tension and to build an emotive experience. The symbols combined with expressive gestures were attempts to evoke a state of mind in the viewer. The suggestion of place in relation to physical surroundings, perception subjective space and cultural dimensions are discussed in chapter six. The idea of suggestion and the importance of such in artworks was presented by Bergson in the early 1900s at the emergence of contemporary artforms:

*Even the faint suggestion of an idea will then be enough to make the idea full the whole of our wind. Thus art arms at impressing feelings on us....it suggests them to us....every feeling experienced by us will assume an aesthetic character, provided that it has been suggested, and not caused.* Bergson (10:16)

In the work presented, images were created with reference to simplified forms and suggested through immediate techniques. Works developed as the technique or process of painting became the priority in providing the viewer with suggestions.
CHAPTER 5. PROCESS AND GESTURE
5.1 Media and Processes

This studio-based research has been supported over past years with the exhibition of over one hundred paintings. Whilst some of the works consisted of smaller gouache on paper, the majority exhibited were major oils on canvas. As personal techniques developed, it was found that the sole use of oil paint was a major limitation in the fluidity of images formed. This technique dilemma was discussed more at length in Exegesis 3 Immediacy and Translated Experiences. Acrylic paints were introduced (used alone and used as a basis to oil paintings) in an attempt to alleviate barriers to the process of spontaneity. Personal techniques were developed to assist in the spirit of evocation rather than maintain a dependence upon representation in the traditional sense.

The basic premise of this exhibition was confined to one location rather than many cities. Previous exhibitions were dependent upon past personal experience of various cities. In order to create works set in the current context it was decided to focus on aspects of one particular city; Melbourne, Australia. Rather than works based on recall (or 'translated experiences' as previously named), a new media was applied to collect data. A digital videotape recorder was used to collect images for painting purposes. These tapes were replayed during the painting process in order to mesh the works with the present situation and place. The object was not so much to create postcards of landmarks or recognisable objects but to evoke a spirit of the time and place to which viewers could interact.
5.2 Gesture and Interactivity

In order to enhance this spirit of evocation, the process of painting became integral to the forming of content. Previous exhibitions presented formula-driven work based on the techniques of reduction and textural overlays. Initial layers consisted of action marks and fluid areas or patterns to be reduced at later stages of the process.

This new series of work saw the introduction of underlayers of 'sketching'. Long brushes and thin paint was applied loosely and swiftly to suggest forms. As each layer was reduced some original forms remained and new images emerged. The process was one of creating gestures to purposefully evoke a response from the viewers. In gaining a better understanding of the mood, viewers had more opportunity to interact with the works. The free-flowing gestures were a deliberate attempt at promoting interactivity. As with the Abstract Expressionist movement, the process was the catalyst for viewer responses.

*In Blue Poles Jackson Pollock has created a large energetic painting which relies on line and movement for its effect. The painting demands a reaction from the spectator, provoking participation with the artwork.*
Malcolm and Dewar (89:7)

Themes have thus been developed in this series of works through symbol reference and painting techniques. Past personal experience contributed to the issues that have supported this studio based research and practice. Current context was consolidated with the use of video tapes and the focus upon one location. This basis of time and place is discussed at length in chapter six.
CHAPTER 6. TIME SPACE AND PLACE
6.1 Place-Being and Place-Panic

The decision to concentrate upon one location occurred as a natural development of this inquiry. The initial theme encompassed the urban experience and was later refined to human alienation. The focus shifted throughout the inquiry from presenting the current situation to reflecting the influences upon culture. The urban experience as presented in terms of personal isolation, dehumanisation and disconnectedness developed into an inquiry into place-bereft individuals. Casey suggests that the influence upon the current culture depends upon place or more significantly the concept of no-place.

*The prospect of no-place is dismaying not only when pulling up stakes or in wartime..., but at many other times: indeed, everytime we are out of place, whether we are lost in a snowstorm, or our house has burned down, or we are simply without lodging for the night. In such situations we find ourselves entering into a special form of panic: place-panic. For we confront the imminent possibility of there being no place to be or to go. We feel not so much displaced as without place.* Casey (93.ix)

This description of place panic echoes Heidegger's view that the character of a particular space stems from one's experience of that space and that space itself. Anything beyond that space appears difficult to comprehend and often the thought of a void creates human anxiety.

*Space - does it belong to the primal phenomena at the awareness of which men are overcome, as Goethe says, by an awe to the point of anxiety? For behind space, so it will appear, nothing more is given to which it could be traced back. Before space there is no retreat to something else. The special character of space must show forth from space itself.* Heidegger (69:4)

Casey precedes his description of place-panic with thoughts on a lack of place-being. As the individual's identity is thought to be undermined through the inability to cope with unfamiliar places, imaginary or familiar places are substituted.

*...place panic: depression or terror even at the idea, and still more in the experience, of an empty place. As some people find the prospect of an unknown place even a*
temporary stopping place on an ordinary journey—quite unsettling, many others experience a wholly unfamiliar place to be desolate or uncanny. In both cases, the prospect of a strict void, of an utter no-place, is felt to be intolerable. So intolerable, so undermining of personal or collective identity in this prospect, that practices of place fixing and place filling are set in motion right away. Casey (97:6)

An individual's identity as with national and cultural identity is constantly changing. As a lack of place-being seriously challenges an individual's identity, changes naturally occur. Burgin believes that an identity implies a location and a history—thus determined by place and time:

_A lost identity is lost not only in space but in time. We might better say, in "space-time"._ Burgin (96:36)

Burgin emphasizes that physical environments and temporality are necessarily inseparable cultural influences. These influences are necessarily discussed in the following passages.
6.2 Time and Place

As the focus of this inquiry was directed towards the concept of place (or lack thereof) it became necessary to review other considerations, influences and dimensions of place. Philosophers, psychologists and sociologists have noted the relativity of place with time, the inseparable qualities of mental and social space and the cultural dimensions of place. This chapter necessarily explores these concepts beginning with the interrelationship of time and place.

Casey's viewpoint regarded temporocentrism as "the whereabouts in the name of space" and discussed place as subject to time. In determining location in space, time is taken into consideration. Indeed the measurement of space is taken by time, Casey describes current dependence upon time as:

"We are lost because of our conviction that time, not only the world's time but our time, the only time we have, is always running out or down. All time seems, is "closing time". No sooner than we hear "Hurry up, please! It's time!" Casey, E.S. (93:7)

We are thus required to move to another place due to the time element. As the dependence upon place shifted towards time in the Western world, the language associated with place was transferred to include time. The description, idea, perception and measurement of time had naturally arisen from place. Bergsen asks if duration has anything to do with space. His conclusions include:

It is presumed that time, understood in the sense of a medium in which we make distinctions and count, is nothing but space.....we are compelled to borrow from space the images by which we describe what the reflective consciousness feels about time and even about succession. Bergsen (10:91)

Casey investigated duration in his review of time as subject to space. The perception of and indeed the language of place were developed into descriptions of time. For instance time is measured in intervals
(before, after)– these intervals are spatially oriented. A short or long
time – such duration is relative to place in that they describe the time
taken to transverse a certain place. Casey's view holds that:

*My conviction is that time is an extension of the
extensiveness of place itself as superimposed, or
subincised, on time-so forgetfully so that we do not realise
how many of time's supposedly ingredient properties are
borrowed from place to start with.*  
Casey (93:13)

Casey's view on getting back into space stems from the current
dependence upon time – and that time or its characteristics originating
from place itself. Bergsen believes that an order of succession is
created out of a sense of space. When something succeeds another, it
comes after it...a thought based on the concept of place; one thing in
front of another. Without space the perception of a series of events is
not possible:

*I make out an order of succession ....I display the faculty
not only of perceiving a succession of elements, but also of
setting them out in line after having distinguished them: in
a word. I already possess the idea of space.*
Bergsen (10:102)

As we have become dependent upon time, the language of place has
become subsumed or borrowed to assist in our perception of the
concept of time. Casey believes that time has been and is completely
dependent upon place and our perception of time has arisen from our
concept of place:

*There is no (grasping of) time without place; and this is so
precisely by virtue of places actively delimiting and
creatively conditioning capacities....Time arises from
places and passes (away) between them....For the
"positions" of time are its effective limits, without which it
would not appear as time at all—indeed, without which time
itself would not be able to present itself to us, would not be
timelike or temporal in the first place.*  
Casey (93:21)

Bergsen believes that images and the idea of number imply a visual
image in space. As with time, a symbolic representation is perceived
in which a necessary element is space. An analog clock is measured
by moving hands or the hands are read according to their position in space around the circumference. Time (its elements, capacities and measurement) and our perception of such depends upon our images of space. Our perception of space, considered in relation to physical space is discussed in the following pages.
6.3 Mental and Social Space

Physical space is actual space whereas social space has been described as human experience of that actual space. Mental or psychical space is that space we perceive and all that it contains or all that we think it contains. Many believe that without mental space, the social space could not be experienced. Burgin acknowledges the condition of alienation (or more so exile) as belonging to mental space and real space:

*Said recognizes...when he defines exile as a "condition of terminal loss," which also acknowledges that the space of exile is a psychical space as much as it is physical.*
Burgin (95:118)

At this stage the distinction between *space* and *place* should be noted. Casey believes that many writers wrongfully assume that place can be discounted or set aside for the sake of space. He explains that the familiarity of space determines object orientation; when space is familiar to us, it becomes place.

*Confronted with the actual emptiness of modernist space, each of us attempts to move from the discomfort of disorientation in such space to the comparative assurance of knowing our way about. We do so by transmuting an initially aimless and endless action, thereby constituting a dense placescape that, in close collaboration with our active bodies, guides us into orientation.* Casey 93:29

Heidegger considers that place only occurs when an individual experiences a space and that place infers wider boundaries; including characteristics that consist of larger networks.

*...making-room prepares for things the possibility to belong to their relevant whither and, out of this, to each other. In this making-room, the yielding of places happen. The character of this happening is such a yielding... Place is not located in a pre-given space, after the manner of physical technological space. The latter unfolds itself only through the reigning of places of a region.*
Heidegger (69:6)
Despite Heidegger's early insistence on the primacy of temporality, Casey believes that he eventually prioritised place as a subject of importance.

_Heidegger's way back to place is a middle way, a via media between body and mind....As such, Heidegger's assessment points to place in its middle course: neither sheer location in world-space nor dwelling in depth, but place-as-pragmatic-as the realm of worked-on things._

Casey, E.S. (97:246)

This middle way between body and mind is consolidated by Casey when he states that place is more then locatory or situational. Casey's view considers place as a condition of all existing things. It includes the argument that place-being is part of an entity's own being.

Burgin believes that the relationship between mental and social space is not conditional but interwoven. Such psychological and physical space according to Burgin is inseparable:

_The city in our actual experience is at the same time an actually existing physical environment, and a city in a novel, a film, a photograph, a city seen on television, a city in a comic strip, a city in a pie chart, and so on._

Burgin (96:28)

A description whereby the mental space and social space are inseparable is where the image of reality takes precedence over the appearance of the real world. What one thinks, feels and is 'fed' about a particular city (mental space) not only influences personal experiences of that physical space (social space) but is inseparable.
6.4 Place Connotations

The concept of place gives rise to further considerations or aspects such as extended networks, surrounding sites and cultural dimensions. In considering a place-based system of location, Malpas believes that place has further connotations including ideas, perception and memories.

The interconnectivity of place provides people with sets of ideas, thoughts and memories of elements contained within that place. The mention of a particular place conjures up thoughts of structures within that place. Conversely, elements or structures within a place can suggest not only that particular place but the character of the surrounding region.

*The way in which a spatial or place-based ordering allows for the nesting of things or places within other places, and in relation to other things, indicates something of the way in which such ordering allows for a unifying of diverse elements within a single structure....one can specify a location in particular terms and without having to specify an entire co-ordinate system at the same time. Consequently, a place-based system of location is one in which objects can be located through being referred to a place rather them to some sort of abstract co-ordinates....In being acquainted with a larger network one is also thereby acquainted with a larger network of places.* Malpas (99:104)

*Psychogeographical* articulations of modern city according to Debord include passages based on perception. How one perceives a part of a city will determine one's behaviour and time spent in that section.

Place and identity are determined by representations and individual perceptions. Spatial localisation and components of a city determine the navigation of urban space. It is not only the particular architecture of a city and surrounding sites that form the identity of a city but the perception of such things as movement spaces, passages, exits and defences. *Psychogeographical pivotal points* are those perceptions that indicate such representations.
Recognition, perception and judgements are also determinants of orientation. The measurement and perception of place has further connotations.

The estimation of one's position can rely on landmarks, the recognition of navigable concrete objects, personal experience or probable judgement. The perception or recognition of streets and landmarks compared to a map is determined by the individual's ability to form a mental image of the scene. Malpas points out that maps are methods of orientation but the reader must be capable of abstracting or positioning oneself within this flattened out images.

Recognition of a place according to a map is a mere positioning mechanism but not a method of knowing one's place.

*The places that precipitate out from the body-landscape interplay are cultural entities from the start. Their cultural dimensions help to distinguish them from the bare positions at stake in the determination of longitude in modern Western at sea is not-not yet-to know your place there. Casey (93:31)*

In considering place, other dimensions are necessarily conjured up or perceived; the elements within, structure and regional characteristics of that place. The difference between place as locatory and place identity is personal involvement and perception of that place.
6.5 Place Identity

The cultural dimensions of place are dependent upon the experience of being. Places are something we experience. Among all existing things are human cultures. Every place has a particular culture—every culture is implanted.

*If a position is a fixed posit of an established culture, a place, despite its frequently settled appearance, is an essay in experimental living within a changing culture.*

Casey (93:31)

This subjective spatiality is explained by Casey as the experience of being. The cultural dimension of place is subject to that experience along with one's involvement with that place.

*What matters most is the experience of being in that place and, more particularly, becoming part of the place. The time of cultural implantation (and the time experienced in that implantation) is that which informs a place in concert with other human beings, through one's bodily agency, within the embrace of a landscape.*

Casey (93:33)

Malpas extends this viewpoint to discuss the interconnection between perception, experience and human actions. He discusses spatial orientation as dependent upon a person's experience and past activities.

*The ordering of subjective spatiality, then, is an ordering in relation to action, and, inasmuch as mental states are also ordered in this way, so the ordering of subjective space and the ordering of an agent's thoughts and experiences are closely interconnected.*

Malpas (99:99)

If these actions and activities are fundamentally fragmented then that person may suffer mental fragmentation and disorientation. It is this subjective spatiality that is explained by Casey as the experience of being. The cultural dimension of place is subject to that experience along with one's involvement with that place.
Malpas explains this locatedness of experience as "embeddedness in place". His discussion includes place as a necessary 'ingredient' of our personal identity.

Recognising our inextricable tie to our surroundings means also recognising our own finitude and mortality. Further more, in as much as our mortality is a consequence of our necessarily located existence (and so is not to be understood merely in terms of the inevitability of our deaths) it is also the case that such locatedness is a necessary condition for our very capacity to experience—our mortality, our capacity to think and feel, and our embeddedness in place, are bound together as part of the same structure that makes us what we are.
Malpas (99:192)

It is this personal identity and cultural dimension that Casey wrote about six years earlier in his discussion on experience or person in place. A person is not considered part of a place, but has the capability of experiencing places. While Malpas believes in the embeddedness of place as a necessity of our personal make-up or identity, Casey views this 'anchor' of place as something that humans experience.

A landscape seems to exceed the usual parameters of place by containing without apparent end; nothing contains it, while it contains everything, including discrete places, in its environing embrace. The body, on the other hand, seems to fall short of place, to be 'on this side', the near edge, of a given place. Nevertheless, body and landscape collude in the generation of what can be called 'placescapes', especially those that human beings experience whenever they venture out beyond the narrow confines of their familiar domiciles and neighborhoods.
Casey (93:25)

Lefebvre considered identity as subject to place - an influence that goes beyond traditional ties associated with a cultural or conscious sense of belonging. His three moments of social space; the perceived, the conceived and the lived, described as spatial practice present as complex yet powerful influences upon human identity.

Today everything that derives from history and from historical time must undergo a test. Neither 'cultures' nor the 'consciousness' of peoples, groups or even individuals can escape the loss of identity that is now added to all
other besetting terrors .... nothing and no one can avoid trial by space. Lefebvre (86:161)

This argument was cited over two thousand years before in a lost treatise on place. 'To be is to be in place' was the message that Archytas stated in pre-temporocentric Western times. This message goes beyond the idea that events are subject to place to imply that existence, (objects and events) identity and culture are dependent upon place.

Since everything that is in motion is moved in some place, it is obvious that one has to grant priority to place, in which that which causes motion or is acted upon will be. Perhaps thus it is the first of all things, since all existing things are either in place or not without place.

As cited by Simplicius 'In Aristotelis Categorias Commentarium' Casey (93:14)
CHAPTER 7. PLACESCAPES
7.1 Person in Place

The cultural dimensions of a place are subject to the experience of being and one's particular involvement in that place. The identity of the place is directly influenced by or dependent upon our experience within that place.

A conscious sense of belonging is the result of one's perception of, experience and involvement with that place. There is a two-way or mutual interconnection between one's personal identity and the cultural dimensions of a place. Place-identity is dependent upon human experience whereas the conscious sense of belonging is dependent upon human experience and involvement with that place. What 'makes' a place and how one becomes 'part' of that place are both determined by personal perception, experience and interaction.

Our involvement with a particular place is directly influenced by how we perceive that place. The physical environment or actual space is that which exists without human interaction. Experiences within this particular environment emphasize the difference between a location and a place. As human participation can lead to a conscious sense of belonging, human perception can influence orientation, implacement and place-identity. How a person perceives a particular place or how this place has been presented to this person will influence that person's involvement and interaction with that place.

Social interaction appears another necessary ingredient of cultural implacement. A person can be within a place but not actually feel or become part of that place. This cultural implacement is dependent upon the psychical, social and physical space.
7.2 Cultural Influences

As the mention of a particular place conjures up the containing elements and character of a greater region, the painting symbols were an attempt to represent larger systems within the environment. Symptomatic elements created were an attempt to suggest cultural influences upon current human values. Early paintings attempted to depict values prevalent within our society whereas later works focused more upon these cultural influences.

One strong cultural influence was discussed within chapter six. The image of reality often appears stronger than the appearance of the real world. The mental and physical space are inseparable. What we are fed, effects our judgement and perception of a particular place. The reputation of a place often precedes the experience of that place. Burgin's review of Freud outlines the view that the psychical space has determined the physical space long before the actual experience of that space.

*Freud’s discussion of the uncanny is only a special case of his more general observation that what appears to come to us from the outside is often the return of the which we ourselves have placed there....* Burgin (96:95)

Our actual judgements and perceptions of a physical environment have been effected by childhood experiences. Certeau believes our experiences and practices in and of the city are subject to 'infantile determinants'.

*The childhood experience that determines spatial practices later develops its effects, proliferates floods private and public spaces, undoes their readable surfaces and creates within the planned city a 'metaphorical' or mobile city....* Certeau (88:110)
The cultural dimensions of a city are thus influenced by one's experience of that place; physically and mentally. The mass-media suggestions, analysed data, childhood experiences and reputation of a place, conjure up thoughts and memories that effect our perception of that place.

Place-being is an important part of personal security and well-being. The conscious sense of belonging is subject to the identity of that place. As the identity of a place is dependent upon our experience within that place, it is ultimately determined by our amount of access. How we connect to the landscape determines our experiences or involvement within that 'placescape'. Personal mobility, security and the availability of survival necessities are all access determinants of our cultural connection. The influence of place is not only a strong determinant of our experience but a necessity in our quest for a conscious sense of belonging.
7.3 Personal Applications
7.4 Urban Experience, Alienation and Place

This research originated with an investigation into images of modern urban life. It focused upon human alienation and urban conflict and developed into a focus upon the existential predicament of place-benefit individuals.

If we are to assume that human alienation is a consequence of social organisation and culture, it follows that a review of cultural influences would expose values prevalent within our society. This inquiry has outlined the breakdown of traditional community mores, the increasing rationalization of bureaucratic life, historical heritage and social forces as cultural influences. At the base of these influences (and other consequences of social organisation) lies the question of place. Chapter six outlined the cultural dimensions of place as dependent upon being. This chapter elaborated upon the concept of place-panic as contributing to disconnectedness and isolation.

Exegesis One presented place-identity and the conscious sense of belonging (or lack thereof) as a major cause of increased human alienation. "The current tendency is for the individual and the community to operate for their own respective interests. The individual rarely sees himself as responsible for the community and the community rarely represents all its individuals. The resultant lack of mutual concern or involvement causes social isolation." It was also suggested in this exegesis that place-identity and how we connect to the landscape determines our involvement within that 'placescape'. The basis of this inquiry has necessarily evolved into the question of place. The underlying causes of human alienation or factors contributing to self-estrangement have been outlined not in terms of locatedness but in relation to cultural implacement and place-being.
CHAPTER 8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
8.1 Summary

This exegesis is the culmination of five painting exhibitions and a theoretical investigation into images of modern urban life. This investigation has outlined symptomatic elements, contextual images and processes involved in the paintings exhibited. It has encompassed the symbolic reference and painting techniques in evoking the spirit of current urban experience. The paintings involved deliberate comments underlining cultural influences upon human identity. Culture, identity, existence and events have been explained as dependent upon place.

The paper continued to explain self-estrangement as a consequence of social organisation and cultural influences. The concept of place-panic or the lack of a conscious sense of belonging was described as a major contribution to isolation and self-estrangement. A focus on the concept of place outlined the interrelationship of time and place, as well as stressing the interdependence of psychological and physical space. It encompassed place identity as involving personal involvement, perception and experience of that space. It was found that a conscious sense of belonging and indeed personal orientation is the result of one's perception of experience and involvement with that place.
8.2 Conclusions

Symbolised systems or patterns of human organisation were presented within the painting themes as a deliberate attempt to suggest cultural influences upon current human values. These symptomatic elements with contextual images and painting processes assisted in evoking the spirit of a current urban experience. This sprint of evocation was assisted through the use of fluid images and symbolic reference.

A review of cultural influences assisted in exposing values prevalent within our society. Cultural influences including the breakdown of traditional community mores, the increasing rationalization of bureaucratic life, historical heritage and social forces were outlined along with the emphasis of the cultural dimensions of place.

It was found that one of the major influences upon human identity was the personal embeddedness of place. A mutual interconnection between personal identity and the cultural dimensions of place emerged as a major influence upon a current urban experience. The influence of place or place-being was found to be a determinant of our cultural connection. This cultural implacement was found to be dependent upon psychical, social and physical space.

How one experiences particular environments in inextricably linked to our perception of that place. The interconnectivity of place with certain ideas, thoughts and character of the region were presented in a series of paintings.
SECTION F.

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO
ABSTRACT

These document copies are provided as a record of personal commitment and achievement within the arts industry during doctoral candidacy. Original articles documents and correspondence are available as enclosed copies include abstracts rather than full publications. This record is presented in seven separate sections although some may be interrelated. A coloured face page with a detailed summary of section contents denotes each section. This is provided as brief explanation and for ease of reference. The sections basically include studio practice research, publications, professional activity, public presentation and exhibition, professional interface with authorities, reviews, citations and publicity. The final section includes additional documents not filed within previous sections at the time of publication. These include recent communication, replies to applications and further achievements.
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CHAPTER 1. OVERVIEW
1.1 Introduction

This research portfolio is presented as a record of professional activity and artistic achievements during the doctoral program. This overview explains the basic artist procedures, methods of research, papers presented and the overall integration of these reports.

Further chapters outline studio practice research, publications, public presentations, interface with authorities and reviews. Although some articles, documents and records are interrelated each section provides a brief explanation and summary for ease of reference. These chapters refer to actual documentation that is presented in the supporting material section of this paper. Whereas the initial overview that follows explains general artistic or arts industry procedures, the sections following present personal procedures, involvement and achievements during this inquiry.
Method Design Chart; Overall Investigation

RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

EXEGESIS 4
Place, Symbol and Process

EXHIBITION 5
Goya Galleries
Melbourne 2002

REVIEWS, PUBLICITY
At least 15 published articles/works in newspapers/magazines

COMMUNITY ART PAPERS
The Inclusiveness of Diversity,
Moonee Ponds Creek Public Art Strategy

EXHIBITION 4
Urban Spaces,
Dagmar Art Consultants
Melbourne 2001

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY
Artist in Residence St. Vincents Hospital Melbourne 1999-00
Pollock Krasner Art Award, 01

EXEGESIS 3
Immediacy and Translated Experiences

EXHIBITION 3
Uptown Goya Galleries
Melbourne 2001

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

EXEGESIS 2
Focus and Techniques

EXHIBITION 2
Urban Paint Goya Galleries
Melbourne 2000

GROUP EXHIBITIONS
Contributed to over 12 shows

EXEGESIS 1
Imagery and Origins

EXHIBITION 1
Maling Gallery, Casula
Powerhouse Sydney 1999
1.2 Procedure

This section is presented as a brief explanation of procedural methods or activity within the arts industry during doctoral candidacy. It outlines basic procedures from the creative desire, and processes, artistic product to exhibition, public relations and promotions.

The following flow chart indicates briefly the general procedure of professional activity. The flow chart titled Research Overview indicates the integration of procedures during this inquiry.
1.21 Studio Practice

All artistic activity begins with the thought, feeling and desire to create. Preliminary inquiries, drawings and studies often follow. Studio inquiry and experimentation often determines the methods, techniques or processes involved in creating the works. This inquiry began with drawings, works on paper small paintings and eventually major works on canvas. Earlier works were based on personal experiences and witnessed events in major cities. The final exhibition narrowed the inquiry to one specific geographic location with a focus on human alienation. While early pieces were based on drawings as initial studio practice the final exhibition recorded raw data using a video camera.

Studio practice involved more than mere paint on canvas. Selection, collection and funding for initial materials required technical and logistical research. Space to create required more than a back room with an easel. The establishment of personal studio space required time, effort and funding. Many residencies exist for artists ranging from 'pay for space' to 'space with stipend'. Locating these artist in residency positions required documentation, application and personal dedication.
1.22 Exhibitions

Exhibitions are not a natural evolvement in the creative process. Many management, documentation and public relations processes exist in this phase of the arts industry.

The artist had to find the way throughout the maze of *pay for space* galleries, gallery commissions, vernissage, advertising, contracts and costs. Many galleries require two years notice before consideration will be given to exhibiting an artist's work. Public relations played a great role in terms of artist availability, explanation of the works, press releases, advertising, reviews and publicity of the exhibitions.

1.23 Documentation

Written reports to accompany the exhibitions include exegeses, spoken addresses and further proposals. Visual documentation or reproductions of the artworks include slides, prints digital photos and raw data in the form of videotape.

Management of this documentation required careful planning and organisation of photographers, transport and gallery staff. Timing of documentation was a priority due to publication dates, advertising deadlines and magazine editing schedules. Reproductions, press releases and information about the works needed to be established before and after the exhibition.
1.24 Presentations

This information and visual reproduction was then reworded, edited or summarised into suitable formats for publication, spoken addresses and presentations. Newspaper, magazine and article reviews required different time frames, formats and wording to formal publications and demonstrations. Results of inquiries, relevant issues and the exhibition works were presented at Postgraduate Symposia. A brief overview of presentations involved in this inquiry can be seen in the diagram of integration.

1.25 Promotions

Previously mentioned documentation was edited to provide an indication of the artworks, issues and objectives of the creative process. Such edited packages were presented in the arts industry for funding, employment and opportunities.

Awards, grants and residencies were dependent upon the quality of the proposals and artworks presented. These opportunities provided avenues for promotion of the artist and artworks. Community involvement such as local council groups, club presentation benefited its members and the promotion of the artist's work.
CHAPTER 2. STUDIO PRACTICE RESEARCH
2.1 Five Exhibitions

Apart from group exhibition participation, a total of five individual exhibitions were held during this inquiry. Each exhibition was based on a particular theme and/or technique. Overall the paintings were based on images of the urban experience but each exhibition maintained an individual focus dependent upon personal and professional development. All five exhibitions included major works of art as well as minor studies. Large oils on canvas, acrylic and gouache studies were presented with each show. Completely new works were exhibited with each show constituting a total of over one hundred new works produced during this inquiry.

2.2 The Urban Experience

The first of five painting exhibitions was held at the Maling Gallery, Casula Powerhouse, a Sydney Regional Gallery. Six medium sized major works were exhibited in what could be described as a small gallery space. Whilst these were initial works nonetheless were major pieces suggestive of the Urban experience. Strongly textured oils on canvas were shown for a month late in 1999. Four works were square (153x153cm) and two were double panes diptyches (153x305cm) Further descriptions of the works, issues involved, themes, techniques and processes involved in these works are presented in the accompanying exegesis 1 Imagery and Origins. The reproductions that follow represent a sample of work exhibited in this first exhibition. Further documentation including invitation, catalogue and reviews are presented in Section C supporting material.
EXHIBITION 1

The Urban Experience

Bruce Earles
Painting reproductions: a selection of works as exhibited

October-November 1999
Maling Gallery, Casula Powerhouse, Sydney Australia.
Use and Move Zone, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas,
60 x 60 inches (153 x 153cm.)
Goya Galleries Melbourne
Detail of: *Use and Move Zone*, 1999

**BRUCE EARLES**, Oil on canvas,

60 x 60 inches (153 x 153cm.)

Goya Galleries Melbourne
Gravy Train Station, 1999
Oil on canvas,
60 x 60 inches (153cm x 153cm)
Goya Galleries, Melbourne
Gravy Train Station, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas,
60 x 60 inches (153 x 153cm.)
Goya Galleries Melbourne
Lamington Avenue 1999, Bruce Earles
Oil on canvas, 150cm x 150cm.
Chocolate Box Hood, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas,

10ft x 5ft. (2 X 60 x 60 inches) (306 x 153cm.).

Goya Galleries Melbourne
Detail of *Chocolate Box Hood*, 1999

**BRUCE EARLES**, Oil on canvas,

10ft. x 5ft. (2 X 60 x 60 inches) (306 x 153cm.)

Goya Galleries Melbourne
Urban Murmer, 1999

BRUCE EARLES, Oil on canvas, 10ft.x 5ft. (2 x 5ft. x 5ft.)
2.3 Urban Paint

The second exhibition was held in a major commercial gallery in Melbourne, Australia. Goya Galleries was a new gallery of medium size established in a favourable part of the city business district. Thirty works were shown at this exhibition. Eleven smaller pieces in this exhibition were from previous shows but nineteen new works were created and shown. This exhibition filled 'Urban Paint", was reviewed favourably and was accompanied by the second exegesis titled; Focus and Techniques.

The following reproductions represent a sample of the new works exhibited at the second exhibition. Further documentation including catalogue and reviews are presented in section C of this portfolio.
EXHIBITION 2

Urban Paint

Bruce Earles

Painting reproductions: a selection of works as exhibited

February 2000
Goya Gallery, Melbourne, Australia.
Saturday Central

Bruce Earles, oil on canvas,

72 x 96 inches (213cm x 244cm.)
Central Heating

Bruce Earles, oil on canvas,

72 x 96 inches (213cm. x 244cm.)
O2O Kudosai, 2000
Oil on canvas,
72 x 84 inches (213cm x 244cm)
Goya Galleries, Melbourne
Below: detail.
Cheers Flagman, 2000

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas, 102cm. x 92cm.
Jump City Bypass, 1999

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas, 152cm. x 137cm.
Detail of:  *Jump City Bypass, 1999*

**BRUCE EARLES**  Oil on canvas, 152cm. X 137cm.
Moodswing Circus Ground 1999

Bruce Earles, Oil on canvas

72 x 84 inches (183 x 214cm.)
Genetic Spillway

Bruce Earles, oil on canvas,

72 x 96 inches (213cm. x 244cm.)
2.4 Uptown

The third exhibition assisted through the funding of the Pollock Krasner Foundation Award was held in 2001 at Goya Galleries, Melbourne Australia. Nineteen new paintings were produced over a twelve-month period to be exhibited at this gallery. Ten of these works were large pieces whereas the other nine oils on canvas were of a medium to small size.

This exhibition was accompanied by exegesis three entitled "Immediacy and Translated Experiences." This exegesis can be seen in the following chapter on Publications. The following reproductions represent the paintings exhibited during the 2001 exhibition.

Further documentation regarding this show are presented in section C of this portfolio.
EXHIBITION 3

_Uptown_

Bruce Earles

Painting reproductions: a selection of works as exhibited

March-April 2001
Goya Galleries, Melbourne, Australia.
Walking Camping 2000
Oil on Canvas 153 x 137cm

Market Mahem 2001
Oil on Canvas 153 x 137cm
Street Waiters 2001
Oil on Canvas 153 x 137cm

Shuffle Station 2001
Oil on Canvas 153 x 137cm
Artwork:

The Underpass Motel 2000
Oil on Canvas 153 x 137cm

Clock and Flower 2000
Oil on Canvas
Inside Out 2000
Oil on Canvas

Factory Flowers 2000
Oil on Canvas
Waving Goodbye to Myself, 2000

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas,
153cm. X 137cm.
Sunset Close, 2000

BRUCE EARLES  Oil on canvas,

153cm. X 137cm.
2.5 Transitions

The fourth exhibition was held at another gallery in Melbourne Australia. This small gallery developed over a need for storage and office space by an art consultant. Having consigned pieces to Dagmar Art Consultants of the twelve months previously I was invited to exhibit at the new gallery. Dagmar Art Consultants Gallery was a small gallery located in North Melbourne, an inner suburb of Melbourne Australia. Overall twenty paintings were created and exhibited in May 2001. Eleven paintings were oils on canvas whereas nine works were created using another medium, acrylic on canvas. The works were of medium size with one central large oil on canvas.

The following reproductions represent the works shown at Dagmar Consultants Gallery. Further documentation including catalogue and reviews are presented in section C of this portfolio.
EXHIBITION 4

Urban Spaces

Bruce Earles

Painting reproductions: a selection of works as exhibited

May- June 2001
Dagmar Art Consultants, Melbourne, Australia.
Sanctuary, oil on canvas  112 x 204cm

Greeting Meeting  oil on canvas 102 x 112cm
Hammerdown  oil on canvas  102 x 112cm

Shadow Walkers  oil on canvas  102 x 112cm
The Procession  acrylic on canvas, 102 x 107cm

Ragdoll and Rockman, acrylic on canvas, 102 x 107cm
Grounded  acrylic on canvas, 92 x 102cm

Stickball Stars  acrylic on canvas, 92 x 102cm.
Missed by a Bus  acrylic on canvas, 92 x 102cm

Dress Ups  acrylic on canvas, 92 x 102cm
2.6 Placescapes

The fifth exhibition was held at a large gallery in Melbourne Australia. A new gallery, established by Goya designed to stage concurrent exhibitions within the one large space. In effect the building allowed for three one person shows to run at the same time. This exhibition was a combination of artists from Sydney and Melbourne working in contemporary media. This exhibition brought together Artists from diverse yet related zones of creative practice. Sound and image were combined in video and audio installations alongside digital prints and paintings that share a common theme. The artists included in this exhibition all described an enthusiasm for an investigation of the ways that landscape is settled and affected by human interaction.

Overall my contribution to this exhibition included major oils on linen alongside medium sized oil on canvas. A number of pieces were edited and stored due to space sharing and professional collaboration but a majority of works were exhibited. A total of seven major works (oil on linen) and fifteen medium sized paintings (oil on canvas) were produced for this exhibition.

The following reproductions represent a sample of the works shown at Goya Galleries, Southbank, Melbourne Australia throughout March 2002. Further documentation are presented in section C of this portfolio.
EXHIBITION 5

Placescapes

Bruce Earles

Painting reproductions: a selection of works as exhibited

March- April 2002
Goya Galleries, Melbourne, Australia.
Concrete Crowd 2001
BRUCE EARLES
Oil on Canvas 92cm. X 112cm.
Goya Galleries, Southbank Melbourne
Malfuction 2001
BRUCE EARLES
Oil on Canvas 92cm. X 112cm.
Goya Galleries, Southbank Melbourne
Eavesdroppers 2001
BRUCE EARLES
Oil on Canvas 92cm. X 102cm.
Goya Galleries, Southbank Melbourne
Ticket To Ride 2002
BRUCE EARLES
Oil on Canvas 92cm. X 112cm.
Goya Galleries, Southbank Melbourne
Heatwave 2001
BRUCE EARLES
Oil on Canvas 92cm. X 102cm.
Goya Galleries, Southbank Melbourne
Promenade 2001
BRUCE EARLES
Oil on Linen 183cm. X 183cm.
Goya Galleries, Southbank Melbourne
Incomplete 2001
BRUCE EARLES
Oil on Linen 153cm. X 306cm.
Goya Galleries, Southbank Melbourne
Placemakers 2001
BRUCE EARLES
Oil on Linen 153cm. X 306cm.
Goya Galleries, Southbank Melbourne
CHAPTER 3. PUBLICATIONS
3. Publications

Each exhibition was accompanied by an exegesis outlining themes, techniques, processes and issues involved with the artworks. Four exegeses were compiled explaining the various stages of the artist's development. Results of the first exegesis were presented as a spoken address during a Postgraduate Symposium at the University of Western Sydney. This paper was to be published by the University in 1999-2000 under the title 'Occasional Papers'.

Some of the exhibitions were reviewed and/or published in newspapers and magazines. These reviews are listed in this chapter whereas full documentation can be found in section C supporting material.

The artist was also involved in community projects parallel to this investigation. Results of one such project was published in June 2000 under the title: 'Moonee Ponds Creek Public Art Strategy'. All preceding publications are discussed more fully in the following pages whereas the full documentation is located under section C supporting material.

3.1 Imagery and Origins

A major literature search was conducted with exegesis one to delineate the theme of the urban experience. This paper outlined the painting themes with a focus on human alienation. It explained the origin of personal images used in the works alongside the various existing consequences of urban life. A full version of this exegesis is located under section C of this portfolio and an abstract of this paper appears on the following page.
ABSTRACT

Imagery and Origins

This paper as part of a series of four exegeses in conjunction with a number of painting exhibitions outlines the theme of the urban experience. Images portraying aspects of alienation, detachment and displacement form the basis of subject matter in the body of paintings. The work with exhibition 1 entitled Imagery and Origins describes verbally and visually aspects of the human condition that remain consequences of personal urban experiences. Other contemporary artists’ works were reviewed to outline similar subject matter. A parallel was drawn with other artists’ works and the underlying theme in the accompanying body of artworks.
ABSTRACT

This paper as part of a series of five exegeses in conjunction with a number of painting exhibitions outlines the theme of the urban experience. Images portraying aspects of alienation, detachment and displacement form the basis of subject matter in the body of paintings. This paper isolates personal experiences and influences that had some bearing on the final artworks. Recall of personal experiences assisted in the development of the painting themes. The recollection and translation of these alienating experiences provided the focus for the paintings. Personal techniques are analysed in relation to other artists' works. Outlining of techniques and influences assisted in defining the current focus and future direction for the production of paintings.
3.2 Focus and Techniques

Exhibition two was accompanied by another exegesis. This paper refined the focus of the urban experience theme and outlined the subject matter of the paintings. Examples of personal painting techniques were elaborated upon and the development of processes were aligned to other artist's works and a process plan was established for further paintings. An abstract of this exegesis follows but the full paper is documented in Section C Supporting Material.
3.3 Immediacy and Translated Experiences.

The third exegesis outlines the translation of personal experiences into the body of artworks exhibited in 2001. The paper discussed personal imagery, symbolism, themes and techniques associated with exhibition three titled 'Uptown'. It outlined personal shortfalls in painting processes and established priorities in the development of further artworks. An abstract of this paper follows and the full version appears in section C supporting material. 3.4 Synthesis and Consolidation

The final exegesis provides and overall summary of the entire inquiry. Results are synthesised and consolidated into a narrowed project for exhibition five. Whilst the previous exhibitions were based on past experiences within urban environments, this show concentrated on one particular aspect of the urban infrastructure. The immediate environment was canvassed in order to convey ironies involved within a current situation. An abstract of this paper follows but a full exegesis appears in Section C supporting material.
ABSTRACT

Immediacy and Translated Experiences.

This paper as part of a series of four exegeses in conjunction with a number of painting exhibitions outlines the theme of the urban experience. Previous exegeses explained the images portraying aspects of alienation, detachment and displacement in the body of paintings. This paper briefly revisits the translation of personal experiences into the final artworks. Alienating experiences were previously depicted through specific iconography in the paintings. This paper addresses the previous series’ shortfall in personal techniques and theme development. New objectives emerged through the process of painting with more emphasis being placed upon immediacy being depicted via methods and processes rather than iconography. Personal techniques focused more upon the process of painting than the production of communicating iconography.
3.4 The Inclusiveness of Diversity

In December 1999 a Postgraduate Symposium was held at the University of Western Sydney. The artist was invited to present a paper on the theme of 'Diversity in Contemporary Arts'. The spoken address "The Inclusiveness of Diversity" was delivered to outline painting as a contemporary artform. Current paintings were presented as part of a contemporary history of painting. This paper was then to be published in a University publication titled 'Occasional Papers'. An abstract of this paper appears on the following page and a complete transcript within section C.
ABSTRACT

THE INCLUSIVENESS OF DIVERSITY.

As contemporary art has embraced technology, utilized mass media and incorporated temporality, conventional formats such as painting have been abandoned by many artists. The past 50 years has seen the supersession of painting for more contemporary artforms and media. Many new and diverse forms of work evolved but diversity by its very nature is inclusive. This paper attempts to include painting as a contemporary artform via context, technique and process. By outlining a series of paintings personally produced and a brief history of less conventional formats, an essence of contemporaneity is presented. The idea of translating experience with expression provided the focus for the body of paintings. The process of painting manifested a suggestion of the theme of human alienation rather than a definitive description. This approach allowed the emergence of technique rather than prioritizing the specific communication of personal experiences.
3.5 Community Art Paper

Parallel to this inquiry was a separate study to isolate a strategy for a community. The artist was invited to be involved in a project team to develop a public art strategy for the Moonee Ponds Creek. This project was funded by the Australian Council for the Arts and depended upon collaboration with a team of professional artists, after extensive community consultation and research a paper entitled "Moonee Ponds Creek Public Art Strategy" was published in June 2000. An abstract of this publication appears overleaf yet the complete document is included in section C of this portfolio.
ABSTRACT

This paper outlines responses after consultation with an identified community on issues relating to the Moonee Ponds Creek. Workshops, meetings and interviews were held with 6 groups and individual residents of the community. This report identifies themes and issues as important information to be utilized in the development of a practical art project. These community aspirations and expressions included heritage structures, memories of the environment as a recreation area with the abundance of native animals, a major resource for grazing and market gardens as well as the impact development has made. This paper outlines these themes and others as key community concerns of relevance to the Moonee Ponds Creek Public Art Strategy.
3.6 Reviews

Previously media representatives attended mentioned exhibitions. As a result some of the works appeared in publications. Newspapers and magazine arts writers published articles on the paintings and exhibitions. The following is a list or reference guide to publications in which reproductions, reviews and/or mention of the paintings appear. Full reviews, articles and listings have been included in section C supporting material.

List of Reviews

Newspapers

- The Age, February 2000
- Herald Sun, February 2000
- Moreland Community News, June 2000
- Western Weekender, Sydney, October 2000
- Melbourne Times, May 21 2001, page 10

Magazines

- Art Almanac February 2000
- Art Almanac December 2000
- Art Almanac-Profiles January 2001 page 92
- Art Almanac-Profiles March 2001 page 89
- Art Almanac July 2001

Pollack Krasner Foundation Newsletter, July 18, 200 page 2
4. Public Presentation and Exhibition

Five previously mentioned painting exhibitions were held throughout this inquiry. As well as these individual exhibitions the artist contributed to many selected group shows and was involved in a number of spoken addresses. Numerous applications were made to various art award exhibitions, public presentations and gallery proposals. The following is a record of public presentations, exhibitions and application to such.

4.1 Individual Exhibitions

The five exhibitions required substantial management and organisation ranging from visual documentation, advertising, printing and invitation to press releases and trucking. Some exhibitions required personal installation whereas others were fully managed. Each individual exhibition has been documented in chapter two of this portfolio. Further documentation is provided in section C Supporting materials.

4.2 Selected Group Exhibitions

Over the period of this inquiry the artist contributed to at least ten group exhibitions. These are shows where a number of artists are selected or invited to exhibit their works. Some such shows can be 'hazardous' to an artist's professional reputation due to the standard of themes required. The shows in which the artist contributed were community based or Melbourne City based. Personal involvement in the following exhibitions included at least 2 paintings in each group show.

Further documentation is contained in section C of this portfolio.
4.21 List of Group Exhibition Contributions

Christmas Summer Collection 1999-2000, Goya Galleries Catalog
Williamstown Festival Contemporary Art Prize 1999, confirmation letter
The Truly Intriguing Art Exhibition, invitation 2000
The Goya Collection 2000, invitation flier
Williamstown Festival Contemporary Art Prize 2000, confirmation letter
Williamstown Festival Contemporary Art Prize, catalog
50 Most Collectable Artists, Goya Galleries 2000, Poster invitation
50 Most Collectable Artists 2001 Goya Gallery Sounthbank
Not So Roar- Goya, Gallery February 2001 Latrobe Street
4.3 Art Award Exhibitions

In order to maintain professional status as an artist, over six art award exhibitions were applied for. Most of the applications were unsuccessful in that the proposed works were not chosen for exhibition.

The following is a list of Awards or Prizes to which application was made:

- Geelong Contemporary Art Prize 2000
- Herman's Art Award 2000
- National Works on Paper 2000
- Roche Contemporary Art Prize 2000
- Werribee Contemporary Art Prize 2000
- Federation Art Award Moonee Valley 2001-06-10

Full documentation of applications and replies are contained in section C supporting materials.
4.4 Public Presentations

In 1999 two postgraduate Symposia were attended at the University of Western Sydney. The artist delivered a spoken address to the Symposium 'Diversity in Contemporary Arts' in December 1999. This paper is further outlined in chapter 3 publications and a full transcript is enclosed in section C supporting material.

Other spoken addresses included community arts meetings and exhibition openings. A number of Symposium proposals were written and submitted to Universities. A list of such proposals follows whereas full applications and replies are included in section C.

4.41 Symposium Proposals and Applications

- University of Western Sydney Postgraduate Symposium
  Semester 1, 1999
- UWS Postgraduate Symposium Semester 2, 1999
- Moonee Ponds Creek Arts Public Meeting February, 2000
- Consultation and Issue Identification
  Moonee Ponds Creek Arts April 2000
- University of Washington Graduate Students of Art Colloquium
  December 2000
- University of Arizona Symposium March 2001
- University of Southern California Graduate Symposium April 2001
4.5 Further Applications and Proposals

In order to vary the viewing population other exhibition venues were applied for either verbally or written. Proposals were sought for 'First Site' a gallery situated within Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Other proposals were presented in person to various galleries in Sydney and Los Angeles. The full proposals and replies appear in section C of this portfolio.
CHAPTER 6. PROFESSIONAL INTERFACE
6. Professional Interface with Authorities

As seen in the research overview, it has been necessary to solicit funding from many authorities in the form of grants, awards and fellowships. Funding was only one aspect of research. Space to produce in the form of artist in residencies was also sought. Presentation of the results required spoken addresses and exhibition of the work. It was necessary to make many applications and proposals to universities, galleries and community groups in order to utilise a few venues.
6.1 International Authorities

As well as written proposals and applications, constant communication in the form of letters, email and phone calls to Great Britain, U.S.A. and France was made. Most proposals required written documentation and visual reproductions of personal artworks. Almost all applications were met without success. The following list is a brief summary of international authorities whereby constant communication and application was made. Copies of documents are located in the section C supporting material.

6.11 International Communication and Application List

- Pollock Krasner Foundation, New York, USA
- Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation, New York, USA
- Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, New York, USA
- Centrum Artist in Residency, Seattle, USA
- Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, USA
- National Humanities Center North Carolina, USA
- University of Michigan- Society of Fellows, USA
- University of Washington, USA
- University of Arizona, USA
- Edindurgh College of Art, Great Britian
- La Belle Auriole Residency, France
- Cyprus Artist in Residency, Cyprus
6.2 National Authorities

In addition to international opportunities, many proposals and applications were made to Australian institutions. Most applications were for funding but met with unsuccessful replies. Many other applications such as exhibition award proposals or employment applications have been included in other sections of this portfolio. The following list is a summary of National authorities to which constant application has been made. Full documentation including replies is included in section C of this portfolio.

6.21 Interface with National Authorities List

- Australian Council for the Arts
- The Australian National University
- The National Gallery of Victoria
- University of Western Sydney
6.3 State Authorities

The artist was involved in many activities with the local and wider community. Statewide opportunities existed and applications were made for funding, residencies, cultural planning groups and exhibition spaces. The following list is a brief summary of the many state authorities to which interaction occurred. Further documentation has been included in section C of this portfolio.

6.31 Interface with State Authorities List

- City of Melbourne
- City of Moonee Valley
- City of Moreland
- St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne
- Moonee Ponds Creek Arts
- Collaborations
- Dagmar Art Consultants
- Goya Galleries
CHAPTER 7. REVIEWS, CITATIONS, PUBLICITY
7. Reviews Citations Publicity

Where the writer depends on written articles being published, the visual artist depends upon the art pieces being reproduced in magazines, newspapers and newsletters. The visual artist also depends upon favourable reviews or articles in publications written about the artworks or exhibitions. This section summarises activities resulting in such publications, reviews or citations but full documentation or the articles themselves are included in section C of this portfolio Supporting Materials.
7.1 Magazines and Newspapers

A listing of exhibitions and galleries across Australia appears in the publication titled 'Art Almanac'. Each month this magazine also features profiles on selected exhibitions. Four personal exhibitions received publicity in these Profiles sections. Other listings also appeared on separate sections of these magazines on many occasions.

**Reviews of exhibitions and reports on personal paintings appeared in the following daily newspapers and magazines:**

- Art Almanac February 2000
- Art Almanac December 2000
- Art Almanac March 2001
- Art Almanac July 2001
- The Age, February 2000
- Herald Sun, February 2000
- Moreland Community News, June 2000
- Western Weekender, Sydney, October 2000
- Melbourne Times, May 21 2001, page 10
7.2 Corporations Foundations Institutions

Reviews and citations also appeared in local and international publications such as:

- The Pollock Krasner Foundation Newsletter
- St. Vincent's Hospital Newsletter
- University of Western Sydney, New Acquisitions Catalogue 2000

Personal letters of congratulation, citations and certificates of appreciation were forwarded from the following:

- The Pollock Krasner Foundation Chairman
- St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne
- City of Moonee Valley

7.3 Published Articles, Papers

A full list of these are mentioned in chapter 3 entitled Publications but the following should also appear in the chapter:

- The Inclusiveness of Diversity in Occasional Papers, U.W. S.
- Moonee Ponds Creek, Public Art Strategy
CHAPTER 8. FURTHER ACTIVITY
8. Further Activity

At the time of writing all previous activities have been summarised in
chapters 1-7 of this portfolio. However, further information on the artist
became available at the time of publication. These activities, reviews and
articles appear listed below in this chapter: